



ORAL ARGUMENT INSTRUCTIONS & JUDGING CRITERIA QUARTERFINAL & SEMIFINAL ROUNDS

You will be given score sheets that correspond with the criteria below prior to each round. For quarterfinal and semifinal rounds, the score sheets are to be used only as a guide; the panel in each courtroom will simply choose the best team from the three teams appearing before it. **Do not announce the winning team** in the courtroom.

Once you have chosen the winning team, complete the single Oral Argument Winner Designation sheet. Do not designate a Best Oralist.

IMPORTANT: The party that a team represents is chosen randomly. Each oralist should be **judged on his/her ability to argue the assigned position** rather than on the merits of the case.

To ensure fairness to all teams, competitors and judges are to adhere to the time limits set forth in Rule V (D)(2), which states that "[j]udges, at their discretion, may interrupt arguments to ask questions but may not allow additional time."

ORGANIZATION & PREPARATION

10 POINTS

- Does counsel state who he/she is and who he/she is representing, introduce the issues and facts clearly, present a strong opening, argue the strongest point first and present a persuasive and generalized conclusion?
- Is counsel clearly prepared and familiar with the cases on which his/her arguments rely?
- If rebuttal is used, is it used effectively?

COURTROOM PRESENTATION

10 POINTS

- Is counsel's presentation appropriately paced, free of mannerisms and loud enough?
- Does counsel use inflection to avoid monotone delivery, make eye contact with the bench, balance due deference with a forceful and professional argument, read arguments or argue them and "stick to his/her guns"?
- Is counsel poised and tactful under pressure?
- Most importantly, is counsel's presentation the most convincing and persuasive, regardless of the merits of the case?

HANDLING OF QUESTIONS

15 POINTS

- Does counsel answer questions directly and on point, properly turn the questions to his/her client's own advantage?

LEGAL REASONING

15 POINTS

- Does counsel use the best authorities, make policy arguments properly, emphasize the strongest points, anticipate opening arguments, persuasively distinguish opposing authority, and convincingly apply the argument and authorities to the facts of the case?

ADJUSTMENT

- If you do not feel that the total score represents the score that the individual oralist deserves, you may wish to adjust each oralist's score up or down.

TOTAL 50 POINTS