

Official Tournament Rules of the American  
Moot Court Association  
(with relevant bylaws embedded)

AMCA



Revised July 26, 2024

# Table of Contents

## Chapter 1: General Rules

- 1.01 Title and Purpose
- 1.02 Authority
- 1.03 Amendments
- 1.04 Definitions

## Chapter 2: Registration and Eligibility

- 2.01 School Membership.
- 2.02 Coach is required.
- 2.03 Coach need not be the signatory on the authorization letter.
- 2.04 Schools with multiple campuses.
- 2.05 Eligibility.
- 2.06 Dual-enrollment high school students.
- 2.07 Hybrid teams.
- 2.08 Regional tournament registration required.
- 2.09 Teams must be selected to participate in the National Tournaments.
- 2.10 Declined National Tournament bids.
- 2.11 Registration fees.

## Chapter 3: Tournaments

- 3.01 Oral Arguments and Brief Writing.
- 3.02 Location and dates.
- 3.03 Responsibilities of Tournament Officials
- 3.04 Pairings in preliminary rounds in the Regional Tournaments.
- 3.05 Pairings in preliminary rounds of the National Tournaments.
- 3.06 Seeding at the National Tournaments.
- 3.07 Elimination rounds.
- 3.08 Brackets.
- 3.09 Coin toss.
- 3.10 Time Keeping
- 3.11 Tabulation Procedures
- 3.12 Video and audio recording at Regional and National Tournaments.

## Chapter 4: Judges

- 4.01 Judges.
- 4.02 Preparation of Judges.
- 4.03 Critique.

## Chapter 5: Penalties and Sanctions

- [5.01 Withdrawal Penalties for AMCA Tournaments.](#)
- [5.02 Withdrawal penalties for regional tournaments.](#)
- [5.03 Withdrawal penalties for National Tournaments.](#)
- [5.04 Complaints and sanctions.](#)
- [5.05 Egregious violations.](#)
- [5.06 Definition of egregious violations.](#)
- [5.07 Sanctions at AMCA Regional Tournaments.](#)
- [5.08 Sanctions at the AMCA National Tournament\(s\).](#)

## Chapter 6: Facilities.

- [6.01 Facilities.](#)
- [6.02 Accessibility.](#)
- [6.03 Request for accommodation.](#)
- [6.04 Provision of accommodation.](#)

## Appendix A: Official AMCA Ballot

## Appendix B: AMCA Brief Writing Competition

- [B.01 Brief competition rules.](#)
- [B.02 Disqualification.](#)
- [B.03 Judging Criteria.](#)
- [B.04 Eligibility form.](#)

## Appendix C: Procedural Guidelines.

- [C.01 General procedures.](#)
- [C.02 Use of gestures.](#)
- [C.03 Use of notes.](#)
- [C.04 Opening statement.](#)
- [C.05 Statement of the facts of the case.](#)
- [C.06 Presenting arguments.](#)
- [C.07 Conclusion.](#)
- [C.08 Petitioner's rebuttal.](#)
- [C.09 Questioning by Judges.](#)

## Appendix D: Calculating Ballots Awarded Based on Judges' Scores

## **Chapter 1: General Rules**

### **1.01 Title and Purpose**

The official title of this document is the "Official Tournament Rules of the American Moot Court Association" (AMCA). The purpose of these rules is to provide, in conjunction with the Bylaws of the American Moot Court Association, a standardized set of guidelines and procedures for the organization, conduct, and adjudication of AMCA-sanctioned moot court tournaments, ensuring fairness, consistency, and the promotion of educational objectives.

### **1.02 Authority**

These rules are established under the authority of the American Moot Court Association (AMCA). The AMCA Executive Cabinet has the authority to interpret, enforce, and amend these rules as necessary to fulfill the purpose and objectives of the organization. All of these rules apply to any Regional Tournaments sanctioned/accredited by the AMCA and the AMCA National Tournaments.

### **1.03 Amendments**

The AMCA Executive Cabinet may amend these rules at any time. Amendments will be communicated to all member schools and will take effect as specified by the Executive Cabinet. Schools and participants are responsible for keeping themselves informed of any changes to the rules.

### **1.04 Definitions**

**AMCA:** American Moot Court Association.

**Board of Governors:** The governing body of the AMCA responsible for exercising the corporate powers of the AMCA.

**Executive Cabinet:** The executing body of the AMCA responsible for assuming general supervision of the business and affairs of the corporation.

**Tournament Director:** A faculty or staff member at an accredited American college or university, or an attorney or other person designated by the AMCA, who organizes an intercollegiate undergraduate tournament.

**AMCA Representative:** A member of the Board of Governors assigned by the AMCA Board of Governors or Executive Cabinet to attend the tournament and provide support.

**Coach:** The primary contact person designated by a member school responsible for overseeing the school's moot court teams; must meet the requirements in Article 3 of the Bylaws.

**Team:** A pair of undergraduate students from an accredited institution of higher education participating as attorney-contestants in AMCA-sanctioned tournaments.

**Regional Tournament:** A qualifying moot court competition recognized and supported by the AMCA Board of Governors.

**Preliminary Rounds of the National Tournament (PRONTs):** The opening stage of the national tournament, featuring top teams from Regional Tournaments

**Final Round of the National Tournament (FRONT):** The final moot court competition of the academic year, featuring top teams from the PRONTs.

## **Chapter 2: Registration and Eligibility**

### **2.01 School Membership.**

- a. Pursuant to Article 3 of the Bylaws, only schools who are members in good standing may participate in AMCA events.
- b. To be a recognized member of the AMCA, each school must provide an authorization letter annually. That letter must contain the following components.
  1. The letter shall be printed on the official letterhead of the school.
  2. The letter shall indicate the school's authorization for moot court teams to register and participate in sanctioned tournaments.
  3. The letter shall indicate the signer's willingness to serve as the Coach for the team as defined in the AMCA Bylaws Article 3 (unless they are also electing to designate an alternate contact person as discussed in Rule 1.04, hereby the signer elects to only be the point of contact for major violations or grievances involving the school's moot court teams).
  4. The letter shall indicate the school's assumption of responsibility for the conduct of the school's moot court teams and its participants, including any fees and penalties incurred.
  5. The letter shall have a handwritten signature of the signer, which is then scanned and submitted to the AMCA. The letter shall have a date indicating when the letter was signed, which must be within 30 days of receipt by the AMCA.
  6. The letter must contain the Coach's current email address, office telephone number, cell phone number and mailing address.
  7. The letter may also designate assistant coaches pursuant to AMCA Bylaws Article 3.
- c. The letter described in subsection (b) must be signed by:
  1. An administrator of the school or an academic unit or office thereof, including but not limited to titles of president, vice president, chancellor, provost, dean,

department chair, and assistants and deputies thereof; a full-time faculty member of the school; a professional staff member of a school's student affairs or student organization office; or an employee of the school holding a position or title substantially equivalent to any of the positions in this section.

2. The letter may not be signed by: a part-time faculty member, adjunct faculty, instructor, lecturer, or other equivalent titles; a person not employed by the school or a person employed by the school but not permitted to act on its behalf; a person who is an undergraduate or law student at the school and does not hold any of the credentials in subsection (c)(1).
- d. Schools are required to renew their membership annually with the AMCA and pay an annual membership fee set by the AMCA Executive Cabinet. Membership information shall be available on the AMCA web site, and the application for membership and payment of fees shall be completed online before the school may register for any AMCA sponsored tournaments. To complete the membership application schools must provide a school authorization letter as described in (b).
- e. The annual school membership fee shall be waived for any school sponsoring an AMCA Tournament in that academic year. The other school membership requirements, including submission of the school authorization letter and providing the contact person's contact information shall not be waived. They must be submitted before the sponsoring school can register for any AMCA sponsored events. *Note: The Executive Cabinet has established an annual membership fee of \$50 per school. The Executive Cabinet will designate a member of the Board of Governors to consider fee waiver requests for new member schools. The other school membership requirements, including submission of the school authorization letter and providing the contact person's contact information shall not be waived. They must be submitted before the new school can register for any AMCA sponsored events.*

[Relevant portions of Article 3 of the Bylaws:

### **3.03 Requirements for Affiliated Institutions**

**(a) Good Standing.** Only affiliated institutions in good standing may register and send teams to compete in AMCA-sponsored events. An affiliated institution is "in good standing" if it is in substantial compliance with all applicable AMCA rules and policies. "Substantial compliance" means that any defects in compliance are purely technical and non-material in nature, such that the essential purposes of the AMCA policies are satisfied.

**(b) Substantial Compliance.** An institution seeking affiliation who is not in substantial compliance will be denied affiliation until it comes into substantial compliance. At the

discretion of the Board of Governors, or any committee specifically empowered by charter to review affiliation applications, an institution seeking affiliation that is in substantial compliance but as to which there remain technical or non-material defects may be granted provisional affiliation subject to a requirement to cure such defects. Failure to cure such defects within the specified time may be grounds for the affiliated institution to be deemed “not in good standing.”

**(c) Loss of Substantial Compliance.** A fully or provisionally affiliated institution that falls out of substantial compliance may be deemed “not in good standing” by the Board of Governors, or any committee authorized by these Bylaws or its charter to make such a determination. Affiliated institutions that are not in good standing may not submit new registrations for AMCA-sponsored events and will have existing registrations cancelled if substantial compliance is not achieved within a reasonable cure period determined by the Board or an authorized committee.

**(d) Serious Misconduct.** An affiliated institution may also be deemed “not in good standing” by the Board, or a committee specifically empowered to make such determinations, after finding that the institution, its students, or its coach have engaged in serious misconduct related to participation in AMCA-sponsored activities.

**(e) Coach.** Every affiliated institution must have a coach who meets the following eligibility criteria and agrees to perform the following functions.

**(f) Eligibility.** The coach must be (1) a person over the age of 21, (2) authorized by the affiliated institution to act on its behalf in matters related to AMCA, (3) is not a student undergraduate or otherwise, and (4) neither a coach nor assistant coach for any other affiliated institution’s AMCA program.

**(g) Responsibilities.** The coach agrees to assume the following responsibilities and such other responsibilities as may be required by policy:

- (i)** The coach is responsible for general day-to-day oversight over the institution’s program;
- (ii)** The coach is responsible for registering teams for tournaments and ensuring that the institution pays all fees;
- (iii)** The coach is responsible for ensuring that the institution’s teams comply with the rules and policies of AMCA and with the institution’s own policies, including policies related to discrimination and harassment;
- (iv)** The coach is responsible for attending each tournament to which their institution sends a competition team or, if not attending in person, to being available during that tournament by email and telephone in the event issues arise; and
- (v)** The coach is responsible to perform these functions personally and may not delegate these responsibilities to any non-coach, including a competitor, except as expressly

authorized by these Bylaws or other AMCA policy.

**(h) Assistant Coaches.** The affiliation policy promulgated under Section 3.02 may authorize coaches of affiliated institutions to designate assistant coaches. If such authorization is granted, the policy must require, at a minimum, that the coach (1) designate assistant coaches in writing prior to them performing any functions of a coach at or during an AMCA-sponsored event and (2) certify that each assistant coach meets the eligibility requirements for a coach under Section 3.03(e)(f).

**(i) Exclusivity.** In general, AMCA shall engage in official communication solely with the coach identified in the application. If a program's coach is not present at an AMCA tournament, a previously designated assistant coach who is present may act as the coach for purposes of issues relating to that tournament. Individuals not properly identified in writing as coaches or assistant coaches to AMCA will not be permitted to fulfill any of the functions of a coach. Performance of the responsibilities defined by Section 3.03(e)(g), or reserved to the coach by the affiliation policy, by an unauthorized person is grounds for deeming an affiliated institution "not in good standing" and for referral to the judicial committee for disciplinary action under Section 6.02.

**(j) Selection.** Each school shall designate its Coach. The AMCA shall not intervene in internal school disputes regarding designation of a Coach or Assistant Coaches regarding which teams are authorized to represent a particular school. The administrative authorities of each school shall identify the Coach, any assistant coaches, and determine which teams are officially sponsored by that school.]

## **2.02 Coach is required.**

Each member school shall designate a Coach who meets the criteria in AMCA Bylaws Article 3. The Coach must meet all of the duties in AMCA Bylaws Article 3 including that the Coach agrees to check email during tournaments when teams are competing. The AMCA shall only send official communications to and accept official communications from a school's Coach. Member schools are responsible for notifying the AMCA of changes regarding their Coach. All changes in primary contact person must be initiated through a letter from the appropriate administrator as defined by Rule 1.03(c)(i).

## **2.03 Coach need not be the signatory on the authorization letter.**

The school may request that the Coach be someone other than the signatory on the authorization letter. The Coach may not be a student (undergraduate or otherwise). The Coach's title/position and relationship to the school must be set forth so that AMCA can determine eligibility. If a school wishes to designate someone other than the signer of the letter as described in 2.01(c)(1) to be the Coach, the school must receive prior approval from the AMCA. The school's authorization letter must acknowledge that the person is approved and authorized by the school. This letter must be signed by the appropriate administrator as defined by Rule 2.01(c)(1) and must state the current

email address, the office telephone number, the cell phone number, and the mailing address of both the signer and the Coach.

#### **2.04 Schools with multiple campuses.**

If a school has multiple campuses that grant separate degrees, each degree-granting campus shall be considered a separate school. If multiple campuses do not grant separate degrees, the multiple locations shall collectively be considered one school. However, if two member schools are consolidated and maintain separate campuses, they may petition the AMCA Executive Cabinet to continue to participate as two separate schools.

#### **2.05 Eligibility.**

Part- or full-time students are eligible to compete in national tournaments for a five-year calendar period commencing at the first entry of the student into any regional or national tournament held by AMCA. Students enrolled in a graduate program of studies, such as a J.D. program, are not eligible to compete in AMCA tournaments. Students with a baccalaureate degree who are enrolled in other baccalaureate programs but who are not seeking and have not earned a professional or graduate degree may continue to compete in moot court competitions if their school permits such competition. The Tournament Director or AMCA Representative may request proof of "undergraduate status" from contestants and may determine a team ineligible to compete.

#### **2.06 Dual-enrollment high school students.**

Dual-enrollment high school students may not participate in AMCA tournaments, absent approval from both the college/university in which they are dually enrolled and AMCA. The five-year calendar limit on eligibility described in Rule 2.05 applies to dual-enrollment students.

#### **2.07 Hybrid teams.**

The general rule is that a team may consist only of eligible students from a single member school. However, a hybrid team, which is a team composed of students from two different member schools may be allowed to participate if:

- a. The primary contact persons for the two member schools successfully petition the AMCA President to be permitted to form a hybrid team to compete in Regional Tournaments. The deadline for such petitions is October 15th; or
- b. The AMCA Regional Tournament Representative authorizes the participation of a hybrid team in a tournament in order to replace a student or team that cannot participate due to illness, an emergency, or failure to appear at the tournament.

Hybrid teams shall be considered unaffiliated for purposes of team limits and same school restrictions.

**2.08 Regional tournament registration required.**

Teams must register and remit the required registration fees by the dates posted by the AMCA in order to be eligible to participate in Regional tournaments. Regional registration dates are set by the AMCA. In the first round of registration, each school may register up to five teams. The following weeks, in rounds two and three, another five teams each week may be registered. In round four, all remaining spots are available on a first come, first served basis.

**2.09 Teams must be selected to participate in the National Tournaments.**

The Tournament Administration Committee shall allocate automatic bids to the Preliminary Rounds of the National Tournament to the top teams competing in each of the AMCA sanctioned Regional Tournaments. The Tournament Administration Committee shall allocate automatic bids to the Final Round of the National Tournament to the top teams competing in each of the AMCA PRONTs.

- a. Criteria. At each Regional, the top 25% of teams will automatically qualify for the Preliminary Round of the National Tournament. At each PRONT, the top 8 teams will automatically qualify for the Final Round of the National Tournament.
- b. Determination of automatically qualifying teams for PRONTs. The teams that finish highest in the elimination rounds of each Regional Tournament will qualify for the National Tournament according to a percentage determined by the Executive Cabinet. In cases where the percentage of qualifying teams exceeds the winners of a particular elimination round, the remaining qualifying teams will be selected from the teams that had lost in the preceding round on the basis of ballots won (as formulated in Rule 5.03 and Appendix D) in both the preliminary rounds and the elimination rounds beginning with the round of 16. In the case of a tie, the first tie breaker shall be opponent strength followed by point differential. *Note: For example, if 10 teams were supposed to qualify at a Regional Tournament according to the percentage announced by the Tournament Administration Committee, the 8 teams that finished in the quarterfinals or above would automatically qualify. The remaining 2 qualifiers would be selected from the 8 teams that lost in the round of 16 based upon the total of their ballots won in the preliminary rounds and the round of 16.*
- c. Determination of automatically qualifying teams for the FRONT. Teams that advance to the quarterfinals shall automatically qualify for the FRONT.

- d. Allocation of remaining bids for PRONTS. The Tournament Administration Committee shall allocate any remaining bids (beyond the bids automatically allocated to the Regionals) on the basis of the total ballots won by teams in their regional preliminary and elimination rounds. In case of a tie, the first tiebreaker is that teams from schools that already have qualified teams for the tournament will be passed by in favor of selecting teams from schools that have no teams that have already qualified for the tournament. The second tiebreaker is regional strength.
- e. Receipt and return of tournament bids. Schools that qualify teams to the National Tournament(s) must notify the AMCA President to certify their acceptance of the bids, and they must follow all instructions to complete registration forms and pay registration fees by the established deadline. Any team that does not inform the President of their intention to accept their bid and/or fails to return its registration form and fees by the date specified forfeits its bid.
- f. Substitutions. If both members of a team that has received a bid are unable to compete at the National Tournament, the bid is forfeited and will be reallocated by the Tournament Administration Committee. If one member of a team that has received a bid is unable to compete due to medical or academic reasons, a substitution is allowed subject to the prior approval of the Tournament Administration Committee. If a substitution is approved, the team shall retain its seeding.

## **2.10 Declined National Tournament bids.**

The Tournament Administration Committee shall be responsible for the reallocation of declined and forfeited bids on the basis of the procedure stated in Rule 2.09(d) above. When a bid is declined or forfeited, a bid shall be offered to the next eligible team in the Regional Tournament from which the original bid was declined or forfeited. In order to be eligible for a national bid, a team must have a score of at least four ballots. If the next team from the Regional Tournament does not have four ballots, the bid shall be offered to the next eligible team at another Regional Tournament assigned to the same Preliminary Round of the National Tournament. In the case of a tie on the total number of ballots won, the first tie breaker shall be regional strength, followed by opponent strength, then point differential. If there are no teams at another Regional Tournament assigned to the same Preliminary Round of the National Tournament with at least four ballots, the bid shall be offered to the next eligible team at a Regional Tournament assigned to a different Preliminary Round of the National Tournament based on the number of ballots won. In the case of a tie on the total number of ballots won, the first tie breaker shall be regional strength, followed by opponent strength, then point differential.

## **2.11 Registration fees.**

The AMCA shall set the registration fees for Tournaments. The AMCA is also responsible for collecting and forwarding to hosts all registration fees that are established by the Executive Cabinet.

# **Chapter 3: Tournaments**

[Relevant portions of Article 7 of the Bylaws:

## **7.01 Code of Professional Conduct and Decorum**

**(a) Ideals of the AMCA.** The ideals of fair play, civility, and professionalism shall guide the conduct of all participants—including students, coaches, and judges—throughout all moot court activities including, but not limited to tournament hearings, breaks between hearings, organizational meetings, and team practices.

**(b) Integrity.** Participants shall strive to exemplify the highest ideals of the legal profession, to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct, and to achieve excellence and integrity.

**(c) Courtesy.** Courtesy toward opposing team members, judges, tournament officials, coaches, and one's own team members is expected of all participants

**(d) Demeaning, harassing, or disruptive behavior.** Participants shall not engage in any behavior designed to demean, harass, or embarrass any other participant or solely to garner notoriety or publicity for themselves or their school.

**(e) Abiding by the rules.** All participants in moot court, including students, coaches, and judges, are expected to abide by the rules as established in this document and in the Official Tournament Rules of the American Moot Court Association. Failure to conform to the rules may lead to a loss of points or sanctions.

## **7.02 Tournament Structures and Procedures**

**(a) Accreditation.** All Tournaments are established and accredited by the Executive Board of the AMCA and shall follow these bylaws and all Official Tournament Rules of the American Moot Court Association.

**(b) Type of Tournaments.** The AMCA recognizes Regional and National Series Tournaments.

**(c) Competitions are open to the public.** All hearings shall be open to the public. However, the Chief Justice may clear the courtroom so that judges may enter and calculate their scores at the end of a hearing. Note: Due to technological limitations, virtual tournaments will not be open to the public.

**(d) Hearing.** A hearing consists of forty (40) minutes total of oral argument, including

questioning of judges, of both Petitioner and Respondent teams. Each team is permitted a maximum of twenty (20) total minutes.

(e) Each team may divide their time as they wish with the following constraints:

- (i) Both Petitioner and Respondent must state how they will divide their time before the beginning of the round.
- (ii) Each individual speaker must present a minimum of seven (7) minutes of oral argument, including questioning.
- (iii) With the exception of Petitioner's rebuttal, each speaker has only one opportunity to present an argument. The required order is: first speaker for Petitioner; second speaker for Petitioner; first speaker for Respondent; second speaker for Respondent; opportunity for Petitioner's rebuttal.
- (iv) Petitioners may reserve, before the round begins, a maximum of three (3) minutes of "rebuttal" from their twenty (20) minute total. Respondents may not be given time for a rebuttal.
- (v) Only one team member may deliver the rebuttal, but the name of the speaker doing rebuttal need not be identified at the beginning of the round. *Note: Since the AMCA scoring guidelines state that teams must make full use of their allotted time, teams that reserve time for rebuttal and then fail to give a rebuttal may be penalized in scoring.*

(f) Tournaments: Preliminary rounds. Tournaments shall consist of at least three preliminary rounds of competition in which all teams compete. Each competing team shall represent each side of the case at least once. If there are four preliminary rounds, then each team represents each side twice.

(g) Pairings at Tournaments. Where practicable, teams shall present Oral Arguments before different Judges in each round, and no two teams shall be paired for more than one hearing during the preliminary rounds.

(h) Same school constraint. Where practicable, teams shall be paired against other teams except that teams from the same school should not be paired during the preliminary rounds at Tournaments. It is permissible for a team to face a different team or teams from the same school.

(i) Advancing to elimination rounds. The first criterion for ranking teams shall be the number of ballots won in the preliminary rounds as calculated by the formula in these bylaws. Other ranking criteria may be determined by the Executive Cabinet.

(j) Number of teams that break. Tournaments must break at least 16 teams unless granted an exemption by the Executive Cabinet.

(k) Ties in Tournament elimination rounds. All panels of judges in elimination rounds should, if possible, be made up of at least three judges and should consist of an uneven number of judges. If the outcome of an elimination round results in a tie, the victory will be awarded to the team

with the higher seed (based upon record, strength of opposition, overall point differential, and other criteria used by the AMCA scoring system). However, an AMCA Representative or Tournament Director (if she or he is an AMCA Board of Governors member) may ask a judge for clarification of her ballot if a tied ballot is the consequence of an incomplete or unclear judging form. *Note: The AMCA judges' orientation includes a strong recommendation that judges avoid tied ballots and select a winner when completing ballots in elimination rounds. However, pursuant to these Bylaws a judge's decision is final, and a Tournament Director or AMCA Representative does not have the authority to force judges to change their ballots to avoid ties.*

**(l) Breaking brackets.** In all Tournaments, brackets shall NOT be broken to prevent teams from the same school from competing during the elimination rounds.

**(m) Bids to the National Tournament.** Teams must qualify to compete in the National Tournament(s) by competing for and winning a bid at a Regional Tournament sanctioned by the AMCA.

**(n) Number of bids.** The AMCA Board of Governors determines the number of bids to the National Tournament(s). Note: The current policy established by the Executive Board sets a total of 128 bids to the Preliminary Rounds of the National Tournament. The top 8 teams from each preliminary round tournament will then form the 32-team Final Round of the National Tournament, considering the school bid limitations imposed under these Bylaws.

**(o) Team limits.** There are no limits on the number of teams that a school may register for regional competition. Although schools may enter teams in any Regional Tournament (subject to space limitations to be set by the Regional Tournament Director), no individual may enter more than one Regional Tournament in a given year. Only twelve teams from an institution may qualify for the Preliminary Rounds of the National Tournament. If more than twelve teams from the same school earn bids, the school may determine which twelve teams will represent it. Only four teams from an institution may qualify for the Final Round of the National Tournament.

**(p) Coaches as Judges.** Whenever there are insufficient Judges to provide adequate Judges for a round of competition, the Tournament Director and AMCA Representative may recruit Coaches to serve as Judges. When Coaches serve as Judges, they may not judge any oral arguments involving their own teams. Coaches who serve as Judges shall set aside any partisan interests and shall be fair and reasonable in presiding and scoring as Judges.

### **7.03 Hearing Conduct and Regulations.**

**(a) Identification.** Teams may not be identified or identify themselves by institutional affiliation. Note: For virtual tournaments, students must rename their Zoom screen name to match the name and team number for that tournament (for example, John Smith, team 101). Teams may not be identified or identify themselves by institutional affiliation. Nothing in the background can show any university affiliation.

**(b) Rebuttal.** Petitioners must reserve time for rebuttal before beginning their oral argument. The purpose of a rebuttal is to respond to the Respondent's arguments, and Petitioner may not introduce new constitutional or legal issues in the rebuttal unless responding to a judge's

question that introduces a new constitutional or legal issue. Note since the AMCA scoring guidelines state that Petitioner must reserve time for rebuttal and may not introduce new constitutional or legal issues in the rebuttal, teams may be penalized in scoring if they do not adhere to this bylaw.

**(c) Use of notes and visual aids.** Attorney-contestants may use notes at any time during the hearing. No presentation devices or exhibits of any kind (outside of specific reasonable accommodations approved by the Executive Cabinet) may be used in oral argument. Attorney-contestants may not submit a written brief to the judges.

**(d) Extension of oral argument.** Judges may permit a brief extension of oral argument if an attorney-contestant's time is exhausted while she is answering a judge's question and she requests such an extension. Outside this exception, attorney-contestants shall stop when their time is up (outside of specific reasonable accommodations approved by the Executive Cabinet).

**(e) Scouting.** "Scouting" is defined as gathering information about opponents in the AMCA Regional or National Tournaments for competitive advantage.

**(f) Observation of teams from other schools is scouting.** No person, including coaches, students, parents, and other spectators, who is affiliated with any team or school may watch or listen to any oral argument other than one involving the team or school with which he or she is affiliated until all teams from that school have been eliminated from the tournament.

**(g) No note taking during rounds.** The attorney-contestants may take notes when they are participating in oral argument. However, during rounds, parents and other spectators may not take notes, regardless of who is presenting. Notes may be taken during the oral critique following the hearing. Coaches may attend and take notes during rounds except as prohibited by these bylaws.

**(h) Use of cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices by participants.** Cell phones, laptops, tablets and other electronic communication devices are prohibited at the counsel table at AMCA Regional and National Tournaments. Note: Virtual tournaments will be conducted on Zoom. Students may participate using either a computer or tablet (however a Chromebook is not compatible with this technology and cannot be used). Cell Phones remain prohibited. This prohibition does not apply to communications with the tournament host. Technological problems should be addressed to the tournament host.

**(i) Electronic devices in the courtroom.** Students, parents, and other spectators must turn off all electronic devices present in the courtroom during all preliminary and elimination rounds at AMCA Regional and National Tournaments. Coaches may use electronic devices, provided that they are not disruptive and that they do not violate AMCA rules against scouting and recording. Note: Virtual tournaments will be conducted on Zoom. Only competitors, judges, bailiffs, and coaches may log in to the virtual rounds. Judges must have their video and audio on at all times. All other participants in the round must turn on video and mute audio unless speaking or on a shared device.

**(j) No substitutions.** A team of the same two attorney-contestants must represent the Petitioner

and/or the Respondent for every hearing of the Tournament. Substitutions are not permitted once the Tournament begins. If a team member is unable to complete the competition, that team will forfeit their next round.

**(k) No coaching during hearings.** Coaches must not contact or attempt to contact by any means, whether personally or through another person, directly or indirectly, verbally or nonverbally, a member of a team during a hearing.

**(l) Closed problems.** The problems presented for the AMCA Tournament are closed problems. Students may discuss cases outside the Table of Authorities solely to the extent that they are quoted and cited within the official cases. Judges are to be informed to deduct points as a penalty for use of prohibited materials. *Note: For example, if a case is simply included in a string quotation, that case cannot be discussed unless the student says that this case of X v. Y was cited by the Court in [official case within the record] to support its holding. Any detailed discussion of the facts or reasoning of X v. Y would be inappropriate unless those matters specifically appear in the official case.*

**(m) Bench briefs.** The AMCA may distribute bench briefs to judges for the purposes of briefing them on the constitutional issues presented in the problem. Students are not to have access to the bench brief. Students with such access are subject to disqualification.

**(n) Judges' decisions final.** All decisions of the Judges regarding scoring are final subject to the certification of the ballots by the AMCA Representative or Tournament Director (if she or he is an AMCA Board of Governors member) and, in the case of the National Tournament, by the Tournament Administration Committee. In case of an incomplete or unclear judging form, the AMCA Representative or Tournament Director (if she or he is an AMCA Executive Board member) shall have the final determination.

**(o) Rules specific to virtual tournaments.**

- (i) Use of the chat function in Zoom will be enabled but is limited to essential communication with tournament officials. No other use of the chat function is allowed.
- (ii) Based upon individual circumstances, students are permitted to compete from different locations or in a single space sharing a computer screen. However, only one student may appear on the screen at a time.
- (iii) As virtual backgrounds will not work with all computers, competitors are not permitted to use this feature.
- (iv) Participants must use the gallery view in Zoom during all competitions.
- (v) Competitors must download and use the Zoom App for competitions.
- (vi) Students may not receive outside assistance from anyone during the competition rounds.
- (vii) Should a judge lose connectivity and be unable to complete the round, the remaining

judge(s) ballots will be counted to determine the outcome of the round.

(viii) Given that connectivity issues for participants may occur, judges should use their discretion in addressing minor issues. Delays longer than a few minutes should be addressed to the tournament officials. ]

### **3.01 Oral Arguments and Brief Writing.**

All tournaments must include oral arguments, but the AMCA only sanctions one brief-writing competition, the National Brief Writing Competition. Written briefs may not be submitted at Regional Tournaments. Any pair of students eligible to participate under Rule 2.05 is eligible to participate in the National Brief Writing Competition, which is separate from the oral argument competition at the National Tournament. Information on the National Brief Writing Competition shall be posted on the AMCA website. See Appendix B for the Brief Writing Competition Rules, Brief Writing Competition Certification Form, and the official AMCA Brief Writing Judging Form.

### **3.02 Location and dates.**

The AMCA Board of Governors shall establish the location and dates of all tournaments. The locations and dates of the tournaments shall be posted on AMCA website.

### **3.03 Responsibilities of Tournament Officials**

- a. Officials. The AMCA may recognize a Tournament Director, an AMCA Representative, and a Tabroom Director for each tournament if it chooses.
- b. Responsibilities of the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director is responsible for securing the necessary rooms and equipment, recruiting judges and timekeepers, and providing meals for competitors as described in the Host Guidebook. *Note: If the regional tournament must be held virtually, the regional tournament director will work with the AMCA as these events will be hosted on an AMCA sanctioned Zoom account.*
- c. Responsibilities of the AMCA Representative. The AMCA Representative is responsible for enforcing AMCA rules, resolving problems, and conflicts and providing judges' orientation. The AMCA Representative, or the Executive Cabinet, may recruit such other officials as are needed to assist with the smooth operation of the tournament. At the FRONT the President of the AMCA shall act as the AMCA Representative.
- d. Responsibilities of the Tabroom Director. The Tabroom Director is responsible for entering teams, and scores into the AMCA scoring system, and forwarding the results of the tournament to the AMCA President and Tabulation Director.

- e. Closing Tabroom. These officials have the authority to ask coaches to clear the tab room if necessary for entering scores, copying ballots, or settling disputes.

### **3.04 Pairings in preliminary rounds in the Regional Tournaments.**

Pairings in Regional Tournaments shall be randomly assigned subject to the constraints in the bylaws

### **3.05 Pairings in preliminary rounds of the National Tournaments.**

Matchups in the preliminary rounds at the national tournaments shall be determined by the Tournament Administration Committee, using seeding based on Rule 3.06, subject to the constraints in the bylaws.

### **3.06 Seeding at the National Tournaments.**

The Tournament Administration Committee shall be responsible for seeding the teams that qualify for the PRONTs based upon their performance at the Regional Tournaments and seeding teams that qualify for the FRONT based upon their performance at the PRONTs. Tournament Champions shall be seeded first, following the same criteria used to rank the remaining teams. Teams shall be seeded according to the following criteria: 1) total number of ballots won in elimination and preliminary rounds; 2) regional strength determined by the ballot variance; 3) combined strength; and 4) point differential. If this formula results in a seeding tie, the tiebreaker shall be a coin flip.

### **3.07 Elimination rounds.**

The number of teams that advance to elimination rounds shall be determined first based on the provisions in the AMCA Bylaws Article 7. Second, at the National Tournaments, all teams that finish with at least 3 ballots (according to the formula in the Bylaws) or with a 2-1 win-loss record in preliminary rounds shall advance to elimination rounds.

### **3.08 Brackets.**

Teams in the elimination rounds shall be paired according to a “brackets” scheme such that the highest seeded team shall be paired against the lowest seeded team based on the teams’ performance in preliminary rounds. Teams shall be ranked first based on the provisions in the AMCA Bylaws Article 7 (ballots won). In the event of a tie on that criteria, strength of opposition, overall point differential, and other criteria used by the AMCA scoring system shall determine seeding.

### **3.09 Coin toss.**

In elimination rounds at Regional Tournaments and National Tournament(s), competing teams shall determine which team represents Petitioner and Respondent using a coin-toss procedure unless the two teams have already met in the preliminary rounds of the same tournament. If two teams were previously matched in the preliminary rounds, they will switch sides (from Petitioner to Respondent and from Respondent to Petitioner) in the elimination round in which they are matched again.

### **3.10 Time Keeping**

Prior to the beginning of each round, each team shall indicate to the timekeeper and judges how it wishes to allocate its time (subject to the constraints in AMCA Bylaws Article 7).

- a. Timekeeping procedures. Timekeepers shall display timecards at minute intervals, beginning one minute into each speaker's argument and ending with a "30 second" warning card and a "Stop" card. Timekeepers shall display timecards so that they are visible to the attorney-contestant who is presenting oral argument and to the panel of judges. At the end of the time allocated for each attorney-contestant, the timekeeper shall announce "time" so that the attorney-contestant and judges will know that time has expired.
- b. If there is no official timekeeper. If there is no timekeeper to monitor time, and there is no other individual in the courtroom whom the judges can appoint as timekeeper, each team shall keep time for the opposing team. Under no circumstances should a judge serve as timekeeper.

*Notes: Although Tournament Directors shall attempt to recruit timekeepers for all hearings, there will be hearings in which teams must keep time for their opponents. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that their teams are familiar with the rules regarding allocation of time and experienced in keeping time. The Tournament Director shall provide a watch or timer that allows for accurate timekeeping. Failure to receive proper time warnings does not constitute grounds for an appeal. Virtual tournaments may use a clock or timer on screen in place of a traditional timekeeper. If no timekeeper is available, each team shall keep time for the opposing team. Screen sharing is not allowable unless serving as a bailiff for time keeping purposes.*

### **3.11 Tabulation Procedures**

All AMCA sanctioned tournaments shall adhere to the scoring requirements in the AMCA Bylaws Article 7.

- a. Verification of scores. At the conclusion of the preliminary rounds, a summary of the data input as well as the win/loss decision of each round shall be made available to the Coaches

for inspection. Where paper ballots are used, coaches shall have the opportunity to match the score sheets against the data input to ensure that no errors were made prior to the assignment of the next round. Teams without Coaches shall not have access to this material, but they may request that a Coach review their scores for possible errors.

- b. Announcement of scores. All scores shall be kept confidential. Only the tabulators, Coaches, and the tournament officials shall have access to ballots. Announcement of scores to student-competitors shall be made only after all ballots have been entered and verified for accuracy.
- c. Distribution of score sheets. At the conclusion of the Tournament, the Tournament Director and AMCA Representative shall provide copies of the score for all the teams from each school to the Coach of that school.

### **3.12 Video and audio recording at Regional and National Tournaments.**

- a. By the AMCA. The Championship Round and other rounds may be videotaped, photographed, or otherwise recorded by the AMCA at the Regional and National Tournaments. A student's decision to enter and participate in the tournament constitutes consent to videotaping, photography or other recording, unless state law imposes stricter requirements. Videos, photographs, and audio recordings may be posted on one of the AMCA's websites, used in print publications, or otherwise distributed by the AMCA. No video or audio recordings of any rounds at Regional Tournaments may be posted on the web or otherwise distributed until the National Tournament has ended.
- b. By the News Media. The news media may, with the permission of the AMCA or Tournament Director, videotape, record, or photograph during hearings at any sanctioned tournament. By competing in a sanctioned tournament, each participant grants the right to have the participant's likeness and recording used for media purposes, unless state law imposes stricter requirements. *Note: Due to technological limitations, virtual tournaments will not be open to the media.*
- c. By others. No video or audio recording by schools, teams, parents, or other spectators is permitted at the Regional and National Tournaments. No team or school may post on the web or otherwise distribute the video or audio recordings of another team or school's arguments without their prior permission to do so.
- d. Distribution. Recordings may not be distributed until the National Tournament has ended.
- e. Exceptions. Any exception to these rules on video and audio recording at the Regional and National Tournaments must be approved by both participating teams and by the AMCA or Tournament Director.

## **Chapter 4: Judges**

[Relevant portion of Article 7 of the Bylaws:

### **7.04 Judging Criteria**

- (a) Scoring system. All tournaments sanctioned by the AMCA shall use the 400-point scoring system outlined on the AMCA Official Ballot (Official Tournament Rules of the American Moot Court Association, Appendix A). Note: The AMCA will use a modified ballot for virtual competitions.
- (b) Scoring based on presentation. Oral arguments shall be scored on the basis of quality of presentation, not on the merits of the case.
- (c) The AMCA scoring system is standardized to two ballots. The scores for each preliminary hearing are calculated in a manner that assumes there are two ballots. Thus, in three preliminary rounds, the maximum score a team can attain is 6-0, or 6 ballots; and the worst record is 0-6, or 0 ballots. Ties count as .5 ballots. The scoring system tabulates a team's score based upon the portion of the ballots that it actually receives from the number of judges assigned to a particular hearing as indicated in the Calculation Sheet (Official Tournament Rules of the American Moot Court Association, Appendix D).
- (d) Brief writing competition. The National Brief Writing Competition shall be scored using the nine criteria summarized on the AMCA Brief Writing Evaluation Form (Official Tournament Rules of the American Moot Court Association, Appendix B). Closed case Bylaws applies to the Brief Writing competition: "The problems presented for the AMCA Tournament are closed problems. Students may discuss cases outside the Table of Authorities solely to the extent that they are quoted and cited within the official cases." See Official Tournament Rules of the American Moot Court Association, Appendix B for the Brief Writing Competition Rules, Brief Writing Competition Certification Form, and the official AMCA Brief Writing Judging Form.]

### **4.01 Judges.**

Judges for tournaments may be recruited by the Tournament Director from local bar associations, institutional moot court and law school alumni, or any other reasonable source. Tournament Directors shall make every effort to recruit at minimum two individuals to act as Judges for each hearing.

### **4.02 Preparation of Judges.**

The Tournament Director and AMCA Representative are responsible for ensuring that Judges are instructed regarding the Tournament Rules and the scoring system. The Tournament Director shall provide Judges with copies of the case problem and bench briefs (if available) in advance of the

tournament. The AMCA Representative shall provide a judges' orientation that summarizes AMCA rules and scoring.

#### **4.03 Critique.**

After hearing arguments of both teams, judges should, if time permits, offer evaluations of performance in a short "feedback" period.

### **Chapter 5: Penalties and Sanctions**

#### **5.01 Withdrawal Penalties for AMCA Tournaments.**

AMCA Regional tournaments determine bids to the pre-National and National Championship Tournament (NCT). Regional registration numbers are used to ensure balanced competitions and to set the percentage of teams that advance to the NCT. Given the need for reliable information regarding registration numbers at regional tournaments, the AMCA will impose a penalty on schools that drop teams close to the start of a regional tournament

#### **5.02 Withdrawal penalties for regional tournaments.**

- a. **Penalty Structure.** Late cancellation and/or failure to appear at a regional tournament, without good cause, will subject a school to the following penalties:
  - i. \$50 for teams that drop within 14 days of the start of the tournament, but more than 7 days before the start of the tournament;
  - ii. \$100 for teams that drop within 7 days of the start of the tournament, but more than 48 hours before the start of the tournament;
  - iii. \$200 for teams that drop within 48 hours of the start of the tournament, but more than 24 hours before the start of the tournament;
  - iv. \$250 for teams that drop within 24 hours of the start of the tournament, but before the start of the tournament;
  - v. \$300 for teams that drop after the start of the tournament, that fail to show for the tournament, or that leave the tournament early without permission of the AMCA Representative.
- b. **Substitutions.** While substitutions will still be allowed, if within the same competition season, if an institution has more than one team drop from a regional tournament less than seven days before it is scheduled to start, students from that institution will not be allowed to participate in the following competition season.
- c. **Nonpayment.** Failure to pay the above fines by September 1 will ensure that students from that institution will not be allowed to participate in the upcoming competition season.

- d. Definition Of “Start Time.” The start time of a tournament is deemed to be the start of the check-in/registration period. For example, if a regional tournament’s check-in period begins at 2:00 p.m. Pacific Time on November 15, a team would have to cancel by 2:00 p.m. Pacific Time on November 1 to avoid any penalty.
- e. Appeal Of Penalty. The Competition Issues Committee may consider appeals of penalty assessments and may waive or reduce fines if it determines that extraordinary circumstances are shown as to the school’s failure to timely communicate withdrawal of its team(s) and/or that sufficient steps have been taken by the school to prevent the actions that resulted in the fine being incurred from reoccurring. Extraordinary circumstances are a determination to be made at the discretion of the Committee but may include serious illnesses, canceled flights/accommodations, and sudden deaths of close family members.

### **5.03 Withdrawal penalties for National Tournaments.**

- a. Penalty Structure. The following penalties shall be assessed to each school that returns a previously accepted bid, fails to appear at a championship series tournament, or leaves a championship series tournament early:
  - i. \$50 for each team that drops 7 or more days before the start of the tournament to which it accepted a bid;
  - ii. \$150 for each team that drops less than 7 days but at least 72 hours before the start of the tournament;
  - iii. \$250 for each team that drops less than 72 hours but at least 48 hours before the start of the tournament;
  - iv. \$350 for each team that drops less than 48 hours but at least 24 hours before the start of the tournament;
  - v. \$500 for each team that drops less than 24 hours before the start of the tournament, or fails to appear at the tournament, or leaves the tournament early without permission of the AMCA Representative.
- b. Substitutions. While substitutions will still be allowed if within the same competition season, an institution has more than one team drop from a regional tournament less than seven days before it is scheduled to start, students from that institution will not be allowed to participate in the following competition season.
- c. Nonpayment. Failure to pay the above fines by September 1 will ensure that students from that institution will not be allowed to participate in the following competition season.
- d. Definition Of “Start Time”. For the purposes of assessing penalties under this Rule, the start time of a tournament is deemed to be the start of the check-in/registration period. For example, if a tournament’s check-in period begins at 2:00 p.m. Pacific time on January 14, a

team would have to cancel by 2:00 p.m. Pacific time on January 7 to receive the lowest penalty.

- e. Appeal Of Penalty. The Competition Issues Committee may consider appeals of penalty assessments and may waive fines if the reasons for failing to comply with this Rule are extraordinary. Extraordinary circumstances are a determination to be made at the discretion of the Committee but may include serious illnesses, canceled flights/accommodations, and sudden deaths of close family members.
- f. Procedure For Drops. To properly withdraw a bid after acceptance, a team must notify the Tournament Administration Committee Chair. The time of notification of withdrawal does not occur until the TAC is notified.

#### **5.04 Complaints and sanctions.**

As specified under the AMCA Bylaws Article 7, all decisions of the Judges regarding scoring are final. If a team believes that an opposing team has violated the Tournament Rules, such as by utilizing material from cases outside the Table of Authorities, it is the responsibility of that team to bring such a violation to the attention of the Judges during the course of oral argument. The Judges shall deduct points for any rule violation as they deem appropriate.

#### **5.05 Egregious violations.**

A Coach may file a complaint of an egregious violation of the Tournament Rules (defined in Rule 5.06 below) with the AMCA Representative or Tournament Director (if she or he is an AMCA Board of Governors member). The AMCA Representative is empowered to meet with the Coaches of the teams involved in the complaint and to seek a mutually satisfactory resolution of the complaint.

#### **5.06 Definition of egregious violations.**

Violations of the rules that are sufficiently egregious to warrant AMCA sanctions include, but are not confined to, the following:

- a. Coaching during a hearing;
- b. Physical or verbal abuse of any participant, including students, coaches, judges and tournament officials;
- c. Destroying or defacing an opponent's notes or other property; or
- d. Using an ineligible person as a team member.

These examples are not intended to provide an exclusive list of egregious violations, but rather are intended to serve as a guide for participants. However, minor, inadvertent, or harmless rule infractions shall not be used as a means to gain strategic advantage or to harass an opponent.

### **5.07 Sanctions at AMCA Regional Tournaments.**

If informal resolution of a claimed rule violation is not possible and the complaint involves egregious conduct, the Regional Tournament Director, the AMCA Representative, or a Coach may file a written appeal documenting the violation in question to the Executive Cabinet of the AMCA. The Executive Cabinet of the AMCA may refer the violation to the Board of Governors who, by a majority vote, sanction a student, team, or coach for an egregious violation of the rules. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. verbal or written warning
- b. loss of seeding
- c. loss of individual or team awards
- d. exclusion of an individual, team, coach, or observer from further attendance at, or participation in the next National Tournament, or
- e. exclusion of an individual, team, coach, or observer from future participation in AMCA Regional Tournaments.

### **5.08 Sanctions at the AMCA National Tournament(s).**

If informal resolution of a claimed rule violation is not possible and the complaint involves egregious conduct, the President of the AMCA may, in consultation with and the agreement of at least two members of the Board of Governors not involved in the complaint, impose sanctions on the offending team. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. verbal or written warning
- b. loss of points
- c. loss of individual or team awards
- d. re-argument of a particular hearing before a new panel of judges, or
- e. exclusion of an individual, team, coach or observer from further attendance at, or participation in, the current tournament.

In addition, by a majority vote of the Board of Governors, a team may be excluded from future participation in AMCA-sanctioned tournaments.

## **Chapter 6: Facilities.**

### **6.01 Facilities.**

The Tournament Director shall provide facilities that are adequate for the tournament. Each hearing shall be held in a separate room. The tournament host is responsible for providing lecterns

or podiums, timecards, and timers or watches for all rooms where hearings are held. *Note: Virtual tournaments will be conducted on an AMCA sanctioned Zoom platform.*

#### **6.02 Accessibility.**

The AMCA is committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities at its Regional and National Tournaments.

#### **6.03 Request for accommodation.**

Any member institution requesting special accommodations for one of its students must submit specific, written information to the AMCA Executive Cabinet at the time of registration or as soon as is practicable thereafter if a student's situation changes. This information should include: 1) the specific nature of the disability, 2) the specific functional limitations of the student, and 3) the specific accommodation that is requested.

#### **6.04 Provision of accommodation.**

The AMCA or the Tournament Director may provide the accommodation recommended, or such other accommodation that it/he/she deems reasonable to address the identified functional limitation. Coaches may appeal the decision of a Regional Tournament Director to the Executive Cabinet of the AMCA. Any accommodations provided will be with the intent to provide an equal but not advantageous opportunity for the student to compete and is not intended to alter the fundamental nature of the activity of moot court.

## Appendix A: Official AMCA Ballot

Note: when eballots are used, the same information shall be included in the online form used for scoring arguments. A PDF of the ballot is available for download on the AMCA website.

# AMERICAN MOOT COURT ASSOCIATION

## Official Ballot

Prelim I

Prelim II

Prelim III

Round 16

Quarter

Semi

Final

Judge Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please read the guidelines on the back which correspond to specific content areas before filling out your ballot.*

### Petitioner Team # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Petitioner #1 Name

Score 100 points for each content area  
400 points maximum for each speaker  
  
\_\_\_\_ Knowledge of Subject Matter (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Response to Questions (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Forensic Skill & Courtroom Demeanor (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Organization, Logic & Clarity of Argument (0-100)  
  
**#P1 TOTAL POINTS**

Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Petitioner #2 Name

Score 100 points for each content area  
400 points maximum for each speaker  
  
\_\_\_\_ Knowledge of Subject Matter (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Response to Questions (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Forensic Skill & Courtroom Demeanor (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Organization, Logic & Clarity of Argument (0-100)  
  
**#P2 TOTAL POINTS**

Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Total Petitioner Team Points:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(both speakers #P1 & #P2)

### Respondent Team # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Respondent #1 Name

Score 100 points for each content area  
400 points maximum for each speaker  
  
\_\_\_\_ Knowledge of Subject Matter (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Response to Questions (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Forensic Skill & Courtroom Demeanor (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Organization, Logic & Clarity of Argument (0-100)  
  
**#R1 TOTAL POINTS**

Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Respondent #2 Name

Score 100 points for each content area  
400 points maximum for each speaker  
  
\_\_\_\_ Knowledge of Subject Matter (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Response to Questions (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Forensic Skill & Courtroom Demeanor (0-100)  
\_\_\_\_ Organization, Logic & Clarity of Argument (0-100)  
  
**#R2 TOTAL POINTS**

Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Total Respondent Team Points:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(both speakers #R1 & #R2)

**Scoring Guidelines**  
**American Moot Court Association**

**Scoring Advocates:**

Please score each speaker on a 100-point scale for each of the four different categories described below. Excellent advocates should earn the equivalent of an A (90-100), good advocates should earn a B (80-89), satisfactory advocates should earn a C (70-79), and poor or unsatisfactory advocates should earn a D or F (0-69). Accurate scores assist us to distribute orator awards and rank teams.

**Knowledge of Subject Matter** (100-point scale)

- Demonstrates thorough knowledge of the record
- Directs the Court to important points in the record
- Clearly identifies and focuses on the central constitutional issue
- Understands relevant constitutional doctrines and applies them clearly
- Demonstrates thorough knowledge of the cases in the Table of Authorities
- Provides case citations to support arguments
- Only uses cases outside the Table of Authorities solely to the extent that they are quoted and cited within the official cases.

**Response to Questioning** (100-point scale)

- Does not evade the Court's questions and answers questions clearly
- Answers questions with authority, identifying relevant rules and/or case names
- Fits relevant questions into overall analysis and presentation
- Makes clear transition back to argument after answering a question
- Listens carefully to the Court's questions
- Answers questions directly, starting with "Yes, Your Honor" or "No, Your Honor"
- Addresses questions posed by the Court to opposing counsel
- Uses questions to advance an argument by connecting responses to larger issues

**Forensic Skills and Courtroom Demeanor** (100-point scale)

- Demonstrates proper respect and courtesy toward the Court and opposing counsel
- Projects an image of professionalism in appearance and presentation
- Begins presentation with "May it please the Court," stays within the time limits, and ends with a specific conclusion
- Maintains eye contact and talks to the Court in a conversational manner rather than reading from notes
- Uses correct pronunciation and grammar, uses appropriate vocabulary, and avoids distracting "ahs," "ums," or "ers"
- Speaks in a conversational but formal style, with good inflection and clear voice
- Exhibits a professional stance at the podium and uses gestures effectively and appropriately for appellate argument

**Organization, Logic and Clarity of Argument** (100-point scale)

- Provides brief overview or "road map" of argument
- Presentation is well organized and focused on the constitutional question certified by the Court
- Clearly distinguishes central from marginal issues
- Arguments are clear and direct
- Central issues are clear to the Court when the advocate finishes
- Respondent does respond to the constitutional and legal arguments presented by petitioner
- Petitioner, in rebuttal, addresses and rebuts the constitutional and legal arguments presented by respondent
- Petitioner does NOT introduce new constitutional or legal issues in the rebuttal

## **Appendix B: AMCA Brief Writing Competition**

The AMCA National Brief Writing Competition is separate from the Oral Argument Competition at the National Tournament. Any two-person team meeting eligibility rules for the American Moot Court Association (AMCA) may participate.

### **B.01 Brief competition rules.**

**a. Eligibility.** Any team meeting eligibility rules for the American Moot Court Association (AMCA) may participate. The Brief Writing Competition is held in conjunction with the AMCA National Tournament but is not required in order to compete in oral argument. The AMCA Brief Writing Competition is open only to undergraduate students who are currently enrolled in a baccalaureate program. Anyone who has earned a graduate degree or is currently enrolled in a graduate program of studies, such as a J.D. program, is not eligible to enter the AMCA Brief Writing Contest.

### **b. Summary of rules.**

- i. **Scoring.** The AMCA Brief Writing Competition shall be scored using the criteria summarized on the AMCA Brief Writing Evaluation Form available in the next section. These rules distinguish between disqualification and scoring.
- ii. **AMCA Case.** The brief shall be a written argument reflecting the issues to be decided by the Court for the problem posted at the AMCA website. The problems presented for the AMCA Tournament are closed problems. Students may discuss cases outside the Table of Authorities solely to the extent that they are quoted and cited within the official cases.
- iii. **No outside assistance.** All teams submitting written briefs are expected to rely upon their own research and originality of thought in preparing their briefs. Teams may not seek any assistance from other students, from their professors and coaches, from tutors or writing centers, or from any attorneys, law professors, artificial intelligence or other sources.
- iv. **Submissions.** A team or individual may submit only one brief: either a brief for Petitioner or a brief for Respondent. Each team shall submit to the AMCA the original copy of its brief. The original shall be submitted electronically in PDF format. Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Each brief shall, without exception, be limited to TWENTY (20) double-spaced 8 1/2 x 11-inch pages, with printed matter (excluding page numbers) not to exceed 6 1/2 x 9 inches. The typeface/font used must be Times New Roman and 12-point font. This twenty (20) page limitation shall include only the argument itself and the conclusion (thus, the cover page, questions presented, table of contents, table of authorities, statement of the case, summary of the argument and appendices are not included in the twenty (20) page limit). Except to the extent that the

Rules herein are inconsistent, the Rules of the Supreme Court of the United States shall govern the format of the briefs. A formal statement of jurisdiction, however, will not be required. All citations shall be complete and in the form prescribed by A Uniform System of Citation (most recent edition). A team number assigned by the AMCA will be added to each brief as it arrives.

v. Anonymity. The name of the undergraduate college or university, the names of the team members, or the geographical region shall not appear anywhere on the brief. Briefs shall not be signed, and no information (real or fictional) serving to identify a team or team member shall appear on or within the brief itself.

### **B.02 Disqualification.**

Please know that we do not want to disqualify briefs but, as with real submissions to courts, briefs must comply with the rules to be considered! A brief will be disqualified, and thus not proceed to being scored, for any of the following reasons:

- Missing, Improper or Incomplete Eligibility Form. The required Eligibility Form is included at the end of this appendix. It requires both students who wrote the brief to certify that the brief is their original work and that they received no outside assistance. The Eligibility Form must also be signed by an administrator for the school attesting that the student is eligible to compete. Eligibility form may not be signed by a student and must be signed by the school's designated contact person, pre-law advisor, professor, or school administrator.
- Improper File Type. Only PDF versions of briefs are considered (no Word documents).
- One Student. A brief must be co-written by two students (no more and no fewer). Submissions with one student's name will not be considered.
- Multiple Briefs. Submission of multiple briefs disqualifies both from consideration.
- Late Submissions. The deadline date and time listed on the website are firm, to the minute.
- Page Length. Page length maximums are absolute. Briefs that exceed the page maximum, including with apparently accidental blank pages, are disqualified from consideration.
- Font and Format Issues. Improper fonts, multiple fonts, improper margins (to avoid page limitations) are all disqualifying.
- Identifying information. There should be nothing on the brief indicating student names or the school with which they are affiliated. This includes any metadata in the document.

### **B.03 Judging Criteria.**

#### **a. Substance of the Brief:**

i. Legal Argument and Analysis (100 Points Total):

1. Identifies and focuses on relevant legal issues derived from the case problem

2. Effectively utilizes legal rules, doctrines, and tests that are appropriate for addressing relevant legal issues, including accurately stating and explaining legal rules
3. Legal analysis is persuasive, demonstrating logic, critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and intellectual rigor; arguments by analogy are clear and useful
4. Successfully addresses “bad” facts and contrary law, distinguishing accurately where appropriate; identifies and defeats contrary arguments
5. States clear conclusions regarding the application of legal rules, doctrines, and tests as applied to issues derived from case problem
6. Establishes a clear theme for each issue that is argued consistently throughout all sections of the brief and helps the reader understand the argument

ii. Use of Legal and Case Problem Resources (100 Points Total):

1. Effectively uses cases in the provided Table of Authorities to advance, support, and focus arguments
2. Includes all material facts; excludes extraneous facts
3. Successfully and accurately uses facts to support and advance one’s position including but not limited to using any statutes/initiatives, statistics, and Appendices included in the record
4. Utilizes cases outside the provided Table of Authorities only to the extent that they are quoted and cited within the provided cases
5. Effectively engages the majority and dissenting opinions included in the record and addresses relevant legal strengths and flaws in lower court opinions provided in the case problem

**b. Writing Quality:**

i. Writing Style and Grammar (100 Points):

1. Clearly and cogently expresses arguments, avoiding excess verbiage and unnecessary use of “legalese”
2. Writing style, including word choice and sentence structure, make brief readable, engaging, and persuasive
3. Sections, subsections, and paragraphs are written and organized to bring clarity to arguments
4. Lacks grammatical and spelling errors and has correct capitalization.

ii. Legal Writing Mechanics (100 Points):

1. Organization and execution of various brief sections (i.e., the questions presented, table of contents, statement of the case, the summary of the argument, and argument) demonstrate understanding of the purpose of each section and work together to produce a coherent argument

2. Uses correct citation form (e.g., appropriate use of long cites, short cites, pin-cites, parentheticals, signals, italics), consistent with A Uniform System of Citation
3. Headings are appropriate and effective
4. Overall appearance of the brief, including proper cover page, margins, font, page numbering, and citations to the record, is appropriate for a legal brief submitted to the Supreme Court of the United States

**B.04 Eligibility form.**

See next page.

# **AMCA Brief Eligibility Form**

This completed certification form must be submitted in the same email as your written brief, but as a separate PDF document.

## **AMCA Eligibility Requirements**

The American Moot Court Association (AMCA) Brief Writing Competition is open only to undergraduate students who are currently enrolled in a baccalaureate program. Anyone who has earned a graduate degree or is currently enrolled in a graduate program of studies, such as a J.D. program, is not eligible to enter the AMCA Brief Writing Contest.

## **Brief Summary of Rules**

The AMCA Brief Writing Competition shall be scored using the criteria summarized in the Tournament Rules Appendix B.03 Judging Criteria. The problems presented for the AMCA Tournament are closed problems. Students may discuss cases outside the Table of Authorities solely to the extent that they are quoted and cited within the official cases. Students may not seek any outside assistance in writing the briefs that they submit to the AMCA.

## **Student Certification**

We, the authors of this brief, certify that we have not received any outside assistance in writing the brief that we are submitting to the AMCA Brief Writing Competition.

Signature:

Signature:

Printed name:

Printed name:

Email:

Email:

School:

School:

## **Confirmation Number from Registration:**

## **Eligibility Certification**

[To be completed by your coach, pre-law advisor, or other professor or administrator at your school.] I certify that the students listed above are currently enrolled at this college or university.

Signature:

Printed name:

Email:

School:

This form must be scanned and emailed as a separate PDF document along with your brief. None of this information will be shared with the judges who evaluate your brief.

## **Appendix C: Procedural Guidelines.**

The following procedural appendix is included as an aid in training teams for competition. Thus, most of the following points are recommended rather than required by AMCA rules. However, items in *italics* are mandatory as they are abstracted from the rules.

### **C.01 General procedures.**

As much as possible, moot court should resemble the form and procedures of an appellate court. Attorney-contestants should wear business apparel and always treat the court with respect. Attorney-contestants should avoid being overly aggressive in presenting their arguments and should never exhibit hostile behavior toward the court or to opposing counsel.

### **C.02 Use of gestures.**

Attorney-contestants should present their argument from behind the podium or lectern, and should avoid distracting gestures such as waving their arms or pounding the podium.

### **C.03 Use of notes.**

Attorney-contestants may use notes at any time during the hearing. However, they are encouraged to give their opening statements without notes and to minimize the use of notes at other times. Attorney-contestants should maintain eye contact with the Judges throughout their oral argument.

### **C.04 Opening statement.**

In their opening statement, attorney-contestants should state “May It Please the Court” and wait for an affirmation from the Court. The first speaker should introduce both him or herself and his or her teammate and should inform the court which question or issue each team member will address. The second speaker should also introduce him or herself to the court. The opening statement of each attorney-contestant typically provides a brief summary of the key points of argument to be presented or provides the court with a clear picture of the case.

### **C.05 Statement of the facts of the case.**

The first speaker for Petitioner should be prepared to provide a clear, concise statement of the facts. However, the statement of facts should be as short as possible to provide the factual context for discussing the legal and constitutional issues of the case. Sometimes the first speaker for Petitioner will simply ask the court if it wants a summary of the facts before moving to her main arguments. In general, Respondents should not provide a second statement of the facts, but

Respondents may want to draw attention to some facts that they believe have been omitted or misrepresented by Petitioner.

#### **C.06 Presenting arguments.**

Attorney-contestants should provide a “road map” of their overall argument, and they should start with their strongest points to ensure that they do not run out of time without presenting their strongest points. In general, attorney-contestants should state their conclusions first and then provide the facts and law to support their conclusions. Attorney-contestants should provide case citations to support their arguments but should avoid lengthy quotations from cases. Time permitting, each speaker should provide a summary of the arguments that integrates their main points into a coherent whole.

#### **C.07 Conclusion.**

Attorney-contestants should conclude with a one-sentence request for relief and an “unamplified identification of the ground on which the relief would be based.” A “prayer” is not a proper concluding request in the Supreme Court of the United States.

#### **C.08 Petitioner’s rebuttal.**

*As specified in Bylaws 7.02(e), Petitioners may reserve a maximum of three minutes of “rebuttal” from their twenty-minute total. As specified in Bylaws 7.02(e), Petitioners must make their request to reserve time for a rebuttal prior to the beginning of each round. The purpose of a rebuttal is to respond to the Respondent’s arguments, and it is inappropriate to attempt to introduce new arguments during the rebuttal.*

#### **C.09 Questioning by Judges.**

In a typical hearing, attorney-contestants will not be able to present their arguments without frequent interruption by Judges’ questions. When interrupted by a Judge’s question, an attorney-contestant should stop speaking immediately and focus on understanding and replying to the Judge’s question. When answering a Judge’s question, the attorney-contestant should address the Judge as “Your Honor.” Attorney-contestants should always attempt to provide clear and definite answers that address the Judge’s concerns. Evasive answers tend to engender more pointed questions and to lower the attorney-contestant’s scores. Unwillingness to answer a question will be interpreted as disrespect for the court. Once an attorney-contestant has answered a Judge’s question, she should return to the presentation of her argument.

## Appendix D: Calculating Ballots Awarded Based on Judges' Scores

A judge's decision (win-loss-tie) shall be determined based on the points awarded in the round. The team who earns the most points is awarded a win and the team who earns fewer points is awarded a loss. If the two teams earn the same number of points, each team is awarded a tie.

### If two judges:

Each judge's decision will count as an independent win, loss or tie based upon the criteria described in the Bylaws Article 7.04 and be awarded the corresponding number of ballots.

### If three judges:

A team would receive the following range of ballot: (win-loss-tie)

3 wins = 2 ballots (3-0-0 decision)

2.5 wins = 1.67 ballots (2-0-1 decision)

2 wins = 1.33 ballots (2-1 or 1-0-2 decision)

1.5 wins = 1 ballots (1-1-1 decision)

1 win = 0.67 ballots (1-2 or 0-1-2 decision)

0.5 win = 0.33 ballots (0-2-1)

0 wins = 0 ballots

### If four judges:

(win-loss-tie)

4 wins = 2 ballots (4-0 decision)

3.5 wins = 1.75 ballots (3-0-1 decision)

3 wins = 1.5 ballots (3-1 or 2-0-2 decision)

2.5 wins = 1.25 ballots (2-1-1 or 1-0-3 decision)

2 wins = 1 ballot (2-2 or 1-1-2 decision)

1.5 wins = .75 ballots (1-2-1 or 0-1-3 decision)

1 win = .5 ballots (1-3 or 0-2-2 decision)

0.5 win = .25 ballots (0-3-1 decision)

0 wins = 0 ballots

**If five judges:**

(win-loss-tie)

5 wins = 2 ballots (5-0 decision)

4.5 wins = 1.8 ballots (4-0-1 decision)

4 wins = 1.6 ballots (4-1 or 3-0-2 decision)

3.5 wins = 1.4 ballots (3-1-1 or 2-0-3 decision)

3 wins = 1.2 ballots (3-2, 2-1-2, or 1-0-4 decision)

2.5 wins = 1 ballot (2-2-1, 1-2-3, or 0-0-5 decision)

2 wins = 0.8 ballots (2-3, 1-2-2, or 0-1-4 decision)

1.5 wins = 0.6 ballots (1-3-1 or 0-2-3 decision)

1 win = 0.4 ballots (1-4 or 0-3-2 decision)

0.5 win = 0.2 ballots (0-4-1 decision)

0 wins = 0 ballots

**If six judges:**

(win-loss-tie)

6 wins = 2 ballots (6-0 decision)

5.5 wins = 1.83 ballots (5-0-1 decision)

5 wins = 1.67 ballots (5-1-0 decision, 4-0-2 decision)

4.5 wins = 1.50 ballots (4-1-1 decision, 3-0-3 decision)

4 wins = 1.33 ballots (4-2-0 decision)

3.5 wins = 1.17 ballots (3-2-1 decision)

3 wins = 1 ballot (3-3-0 decision)

2.5 wins = 0.83 ballots (2-3-1 decision)

2 wins = 0.67 ballots (2-4 decision)

1.5 wins = .50 ballots (1-4-1 decision)

1 win = 0.33 ballots (1-5-0 decision)

0.5 win = 0.17 ballots (0-5-1 decision)

0 wins = 0 ballots (0-6 decision)

**If seven judges:**

(win-loss-tie)

7 wins = 2 ballots (7-0 decision)

6.5 wins = 1.86 ballots (6-0-1 decision)

6 wins = 1.71 ballots (6-1 or 5-0-2 decision)

5.5 wins = 1.57 ballots (5-1-1 or 4-0-3 decision)

5 wins = 1.43 ballots (5-2, 4-1-2, or 3-0-4 decision)

4.5 wins = 1.29 ballots (4-2-1, 3-1-3, or 2-0-5 decision)

4 wins = 1.14 ballots (4-3, 3-2-2, 2-1-4 or 1-0-6 decision)

3.5 wins = 1 ballot (3-3-1, 2-2-3, 1-1-5 or 0-0-7 decision)

3 wins = 0.86 ballots (3-4, 2-3-2, 1-2-4, or 0-1-6 decision)

2.5 wins = 0.71 ballots (2-4-1, 1-1-5, or 0-2-5 decision)

2 wins = 0.57 ballots (2-5, 1-4-2, or 0-3-4 decision)

1.5 wins = 0.43 ballots (1-5-1 or 0-4-3 decision)

1 win = 0.29 ballots (1-6 or 0-5-2 decision)

0.5 win = 0.14 ballots (0-6-1 decision)

0 wins = 0 ballots

**If nine judges**

(win-loss-tie)

9 wins = 2 ballots (9-0 decision)

8.5 wins = 1.89 (8-0-1 decision)

8 wins = 1.78 ballots (8-1-0 or 7-0-2 decision)

7.5 wins = 1.67 ballots (7-1-1 or 6-0-3 decision)

7 wins = 1.56 ballots (7-2-0 or 6-1-2 decision)

6.5 wins = 1.44 ballots (6-2-1, 5-1-3, or 4-0-5 decision)

6 wins = 1.33 ballots (6-3-0, 5-2-2, 4-1-4, or 3-0-6 decision)

5.5 wins = 1.22 ballots (5-3-1, 4-2-3, 3-1-5, or 2-0-7 decision)

5 wins = 1.11 ballots (5-4-0, 4-3-2, 3-2-4, 2-1-6, or 1-0-8 decision)

4.5 wins = 1 ballot (4-4-0, 3-3-3, 2-2-5, 1-1-7, 0-0-9 decision)

4 wins = 0.89 ballots (4-5-0, 3-4-2, 2-3-4, 1-2-6, or 0-1-8 decision)

3.5 wins = 0.78 ballots (3-5-1, 2-4-3, 1-3-5, 0-2-7 decision)

3 wins = 0.67 ballots (3-6-0, 2-5-2, 1-4-4, or 0-3-6 decision)

2.5 wins = 0.56 ballots (2-6-1, 1-5-3, or 0-4-5 decision)

2 wins = 0.44 ballots (2-7-0 or 1-6-2 decision)

1.5 wins = 0.33 ballots (1-7-1 or 0-6-3 decision)

1 win = 0.22 ballots (1-8-0 or 0-7-2 decision)

0.5 win = 0.11 ballots (0-8-1 decision)

0 wins = 0 ballots (0-9 decision)