



Timekeeper Training

Purpose: To review the role of timekeepers for a high school mock trial competition.





What Is Timekeeping?

The official timing of each of the trial segments performed by the timekeepers from each team.



Who are Timekeepers?

Each team is to provide a timekeeper.

Witnesses on a team may trade off timekeeper duty, if the team only has six members.

If a team is shorthanded and its witnesses are unwilling to also keep time, time will be kept by the other team.

Competition Rule 4.1(A)(4)



Timekeeper Duties

To accurately keep and report the time.

Each timekeeper tracks both teams based upon their own independent timing.

Trial Segments *(Comp. Rule 4.5)*

Opening Statements = 5 minutes per side

Direct and Redirect Examination = 25 minutes per side

Cross and Re-Cross Examination = 18 minutes per side

Preparation for Closing Argument = 2 minutes

Closing Argument and Rebuttal = 7 minutes per side (up to 3 minutes of time not used by the prosecution/plaintiff attorney will automatically be reserved for rebuttal, however, rebuttal not required.)

Team Conference = 2 minutes



Trial Segments

Time runs from the beginning of each segment; continues running subject to specific exceptions; and stops when the segment ends.

Unused time does not carry over.

- If a team only uses four minutes for its opening statement, for example the remaining minute is not added elsewhere.

Competition Rule 4.6



Time Only Stops For:



OBJECTIONS

Stop when objection is made and restart when court rules on the objection and instructs the attorney to proceed.

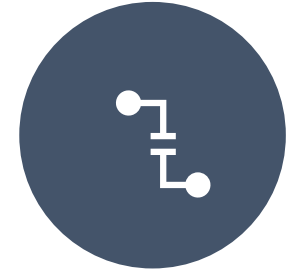


WHEN A JUDGE REQUESTS IT

May be due to the presiding judge has a question to ask of a team or of the timekeeper



ADMINISTERING THE OATH



LOSS OF CONNECTION IN VIRTUAL ROUND

This is to be handled by the presiding judge.



Trial Segments

If the opposing team runs out of time, timekeeper is to stand and announce “STOP” and tell the presiding judge that time has expired.

A timekeeper who fails to do so may not later argue that the opposing team should be penalized for using more time than permitted.

Competition Rule 4.6



Time Checks

The presiding judge will ask for the time remaining for direct and cross examinations:

- After each of prosecution's first two witnesses; and
- After each of defense's first two witnesses.

The judge will resolve any discrepancy.

Competition Rule 4.6



Time Extensions

Time may be extended only at the presiding judge's sole discretion.

Competition Rule 4.7



Trial Communication

With other team's timekeeper:

- For in-person trials, timekeepers should seek to locate near each other so they may quietly confirm they are relatively close in time remaining.
- For virtual competition, communication should be by chat function.

Competition Rule 4.12



Trial Communication

With own team:

- By display of timecards;
- If an attorney asks for time remaining before direct or cross examination or their closing rebuttal argument; and
- During team conference.

Competition Rule 4.12



Timekeeper Seating

The timekeeper sits in either:

- The jury box; or
- The witness stand for opening & closing statements, with court's permission.

Timekeeping Aids



Each party must have timekeeping aids:

- Timer;
- Timecards;
- Worksheets for time remaining; and
- Timesheets.

Competition Rule 4.6



Timer

Two timing devices are recommended to permit separate tracking of time remaining for direct and cross examination.

May use electronic device (smart phone, tablet, or laptop) with presiding judge's permission.

Competition Rule 4.6

Timer



Example of digital side-by-side “chess clock”:





Timer

Example of online side-by-side “chess clock”:





Timecards

Should be printed; full-page; and 2-sided.

Must show time remaining in these increments:

(7:00; 6:00; 5:00; 4:00; 3:00; 2:00; 1:00; :45; :30; :15; STOP)

May also show 1:00 increments above 7:00

(8:00, 9:00, 10:00, etc.)

Competition Rule 4.6



Timecards

Timecards in the specified increments may be downloaded from the **Training Resources** section on the **Case 2023-24 Case Materials** page on the MSBA Mock Trial Website.



Worksheets for Time Remaining

Record the total time remaining (as approved by the presiding judge) after the direct and cross examinations of each witness.

May also be downloaded from the MSBA's **Training Resources** section.



Timekeeping Sheets

Record the time that your team spends on each trial segment; help teams evaluate how time is being allocated between witnesses.

May also be downloaded from MSBA's **Training Resources** section.



Virtual Trials

Timekeepers should compare time in chat after first two witnesses on each side:

- If agree, post remaining time in chat.
- If disagree, notify presiding judge for decision.

VC Modification to Rule 4.6



Virtual Trials

Timekeepers should:

- Use own computer & not share a screen.
- Always be on camera & muted during their own team's presentation.
- When time expires, unmute their microphones & say "STOP."

VC Modification to Rule 4.6



Virtual Trials

If a timekeeper loses a connection:

- The team shall defer to its opponent's timekeeper for that trial segment; and
- The team may substitute another timekeeper.

VC Modification to Rule 2.7



Timekeeper Tips

- Practice with timer and timecards before trial.
- Always be prepared to answer the question, “how much is remaining” for a particular segment.
- Know the timekeeping rules and have them at the ready in case questions arise.



Questions?





Resources

MSBA Mock Trial Webpage (Case/Resource):

<https://www.mnbar.org/public-resources/mock-trial/case-and-resources>



Thank You!

You are a very important part of your team!

Enjoy the upcoming season.

