

# MOCK TRIAL MATTERS



NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL  
MOCK TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIP

A WORD FROM OUR  
CHAIR

I can't believe it's been almost a year! As I reflect on my first year as Chair of the NHSMTC Board, I am thankful for everyone who makes mock trial the great program that it is. Your National Mock Trial Board has been working hard over the last year to make some exciting changes. Read on to find out just a few of the ways we hope to serve the mock trial community in the coming year. [READ MORE](#)

## JUSTICE FRANCHINI GOLDEN GAVEL AWARD

While the deadline has passed to nominate someone for the 2018 Golden Gavel Award, it's never too early to start thinking about next year's award. The award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to the goals and ideals of the national mock trial program. [READ MORE](#)

## BOARD & COMMITTEE REPORTS

The National Mock Trial Board of Directors held their mid-year meeting in Reno on October 7, 2017. Highlights from meeting include rolling out a newly formatted newsletter (the one you're reading right now!), updated case drafting timelines for hosts, and updates to the Courtroom Artist Competition rules [READ MORE](#)

VOLUME XIX, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2018

## DATES & DEADLINES

- ★ April 1: Case Released
- ★ April 13: Registraton Closes
- ★ April 20: Payment Deadline
- ★ May 9 and 10: In Person Registration & Team Box Pick-up
- ★ May 10: Coordinator's Roundtable and Meeting
- ★ May 10: Team and Coach Orientations
- ★ May 10: Pin Exchange
- ★ May 11: Competition Rounds 1 & 2
- ★ May 11: Friday Night Team Event
- ★ May 12: Competition Rounds 3 & 4 and Championship Round
- ★ May 12: Awards Ceremony
- ★ May 13: Scoring Ballots Pick-up

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL CALENDAR OF EVENTS](#)


## CALLING ALL POTENTIAL HOSTS!

The time has come for us as a mock trial community to rise to the occasion, as Frodo did when he endeavored to carry the ring of power to the fires of Mount Doom. As Elrond said, "One of you must do this." NHSMTC is excited to have wonderful hosts lined up for 2019 and 2020, but we need a state to step up and take on hosting duties for 2021. [READ MORE](#)


## TIPS & TRICKS

Each year, mock trial coordinators look forward to interacting with each other during Coordinator's Roundtable. The meeting provides coordinators an opportunity to bounce ideas off of each other and get pressing mock trial questions answered. Starting with this edition of *Mock Trial Matters*, we will begin sharing some of these ideas between our visits to nationals. [READ MORE](#)


## HOST REPORTS



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Two years out from hosting, Indiana is already busy at work getting ready to welcome mock trial to Evansville. In fact, you can already find them online at indianamocktrial.com. [READ MORE](#)

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## SPRING 2018 *MOCK TRIAL MATTERS* NEWSLETTER

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### A Word From Our Chair

I can't believe it's been almost a year! As I reflect on my first year as chair of NHSMTTC Board, I am thankful for everyone who makes mock trial the great program that it is. Your National Mock Trial Board has been working hard over the last year to make some exciting changes. Read on to find out just a few of the ways we hope to serve the mock trial community in the coming year.

### **New and improved Mock Trial Matters Newsletter**

Thanks to the Newsletter Committee, the NHSMTTC Mock Trial Matters is being reformatted. One of the new features will include a "Tips & Tricks" section which will focus on a topic of interest to state coordinators. I'm looking forward to reading all the great ideas on how we can make our individual state programs even better.

### **Innovative mini-grant program**

Do you have an idea that would help your state mock trial program but don't have the funds to try it? Let NHSMTTC help. We are excited to announce a pilot mini grant program for state coordinators. More details will be available at the May Coordinator's meeting.

### **New resources for future hosts**

Thanks to the Idaho and Nevada hosts, team registration and website templates are available to pass on to future host states. This is a great way for potential hosts to save on their IT budget.

### **New national scoring rubric**

An ad hoc committee recently completed a new Scoring Matrix and a "What to Look for When Scoring Teams" document. Visit the "State Coordinators Resources" page of the NHSMTTC website for more information.

### **New resources added to the coordinator page**

Don't forget to check the State Coordinators Resource Page for sample PowerPoints, forms, training videos, etc.

### **Recruitment help for your mock trial program**

Need help recruiting coaches and legal volunteers for your competition? ABOTA, one of NHSMTTC sponsors, is waiting to help you find volunteers for your trials. To request volunteers, simply email [Tamara Franco](mailto:Tamara.Franco@abota.org).

We hope you find these resources useful. To continue moving NHSMTTC forward we also need your help. You can help the mock trial community by:

- 1) Adding your forms, recruitment materials, etc. to the state coordinator resources page on the NHSMTTC website. Send your submissions to [Michael Nixon](mailto:Michael.Nixon@nhsmttc.org).
- 2) Submitting your case to the NHSMTTC case database. To submit your case, simply log-in to the [Members Area](#) of the NHSMTTC website and navigate to the "State Coordinator Resources" page to upload your case. We can't grow this tremendous resource without your help!
- 3) Consider hosting in **2021**. What would the mock trial community do without a national competition? Join our awesome upcoming hosts from Nevada, Georgia, and Indiana, and

consider hosting NHSMTC in your state. We can help make hosting easy and cost effective. Interested state coordinators should contact [Gordon Widenhouse](#).

Lastly, we are truly thankful for the Nevada State Bar and 2018 Host Director Don Christensen for all their work preparing to host your students in 2018. Reno is a beautiful city with great facilities and an energetic legal community. Please take a look at the [official 2018 NHSMTC website](#) for registration and competition details. We look forward to seeing you and your students in May. Until then we hope you are having a great mock trial season!



Laura Wesley  
Chair, NHSMTC Board of Directors

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## Justice Franchini Golden Gavel Award

While the deadline has passed to nominate someone for the 2018 Golden Gavel Award, it's never too early to start thinking about next year's award. The award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to the goals and ideals of the national mock trial program.

The Justice Franchini Golden Gavel Award is named after a long time and avid mock trial supporter who passed away in 2009. His unfailing passion for helping young people learn about the law led him to serve each year as a judge in regional, state, and national mock trial competitions.

To nominate someone for the award, submit an essay of 500 words or less describing why the person is deserving of the award. Ideas to consider when making the nomination include the nominee's length of service to mock trial, the extent of their participation, the significance of their contribution, and how these qualifications help to further the goals and mission of National Mock Trial. In addition to the nomination essay, a person making the nomination can submit up to five letters of recommendation. Nominations remain on file and can be considered for up to two years after submission.

Nominations are due each year by March 1. You can find the [Nomination Packet](#) on our website. Questions about the award should be directed to [Cynthia Cothran](#).

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## Board & Committee Reports

The *National Mock Trial Board of Directors* held their mid-year meeting in Reno on October 7, 2017. Highlights from meeting include rolling out a newly formatted newsletter (the one you're reading right now!), updated case drafting timelines for hosts, and updates to the Courtroom Artist Competition rules.

Full Reports for Board Committees are available in the [Members Area](#) of the National Mock Trial website, under the "Archives" heading.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Summary of Committee Actions</b>
<b>Archives</b>	The committee discussed what types of archival information NHSMTC would like hosts to provide related to the National Championship. That includes in electronic format a list of all the awards winners, a copy of the awards program and a copy of the competition program.
<b>Case</b>	The committee discussed the draft of the 2018 National Case (Nevada) and the preliminary ideas for the 2019 National Case (Georgia). The committee also discussed amendments to the <i>Case Drafting Guidance</i> as it related to the timeline for hosts to submit drafts. The new timeline will allow more time for national committee review before the national competition.
<b>Communications &amp; Technology</b>	The committee (acting then under different separate names) discussed changes to the NHSMTC policy manual as it relates to merging several committees into the Communications and Technology committee. The new committee will work with communications, the website and social media. The committee added an archives section to the Members Area making available former officer and committee reports to state coordinators. The committee is currently working on compiling a comprehensive media guide.
<b>Finance &amp; Development</b>	The committee is exploring options for holding the NHSMTC funds in an account earning higher interest than its current account.
<b>Newsletter</b>	The committee proposed altering both the look and function of the NHSMTC newsletter as well as its publication dates. The newsletter will now be published in January (in anticipation of the next national competition) and in June (in reflection on the most recent nationals). Both dates follow the May/October Board meeting and announce relevant changes and information resulting from those board meetings. The new newsletter will be posted on the NHSMTC website and will consist of a one-page document with short headlines and summaries of information with links to “Read More “ for full articles.
<b>Nominating</b>	The committee announced that four at-large director positions will be up for election at Nationals this year. Additionally, the Idaho Host Director’s position is expiring. Any person interested in running for an at-large position on the board should submit a letter of interest to <a href="#">David Berlin</a> by March 15 in order to be on the ballot in May.
<b>Policy</b>	The policy committee oversaw the merging of the two committees into the Communications and Technology committee via changes to the policy manual.
<b>Rules</b>	The rules committee formalized rules related to the Courtroom Artist competition.
<b>Site Selection</b>	The committee discussed the immediate need for a 2021 host and is working on contacting potential state coordinators. The committee also discussed streamlining information on the website to make it more user friendly for potential hosts.

## Calling All Potential Hosts!

The time has come for us as a mock trial community to rise to the occasion, as Frodo did when he endeavored to carry the ring of power to the fires of Mount Doom. As Elrond said, “One of you must do this.” NHSMTC is excited to have wonderful hosts lined up for 2019 and 2020, but we need a state to step up and take on hosting duties for 2021.

Those who have hosted in recent years will attest that taking on this project is exhilarating and can benefit your state mock trial program. Carey Shoufler, Host Director for the 2016 national competition in Idaho shares that hosting was one of the best things that happened to her program. “I truly believe that anyone can host a successful national competition. We received a lot of support from both the National organization and our local community. If a market the size of Boise can do this, really anyone can. Plus, hosting nationals raised the visibility of our Idaho mock trial program. Our competition has grown by 30% in the last two years.”

Gordon Widenhouse, the Site Selection Committee Chair knows that NHSMTC happens if, and only if, a state agrees to host it. “We all agree that national mock trial is worthwhile, otherwise we would not be involved. So, please, please, please talk to colleagues in your home state and rise up!”

For more information, contact Gordon at [mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com](mailto:mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com) or (336) 758-2527. The National Mock Trial Board can help make the process of hosting easy and rewarding. NHSMTC needs you, and needs you NOW!

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## Tips & Tricks

Each year, Mock trial coordinators look forward to interacting with each other during the Coordinator’s Roundtable. The meeting provides coordinators an opportunity to bounce ideas off of each other and get pressing mock trial questions answered. Starting with this edition of Mock Trial Matters, we will begin sharing some of these ideas between our visits to nationals.

Kristen Leeds from New Mexico asked if state coordinators could share some of their fundraising ideas. We received two responses:

- **Sue Johnson from North Carolina:** We have an ongoing grant to fund an outreach program to schools in under-served areas that covers on-site training materials and sessions and provide some need-based scholarships to our summer camps. North Carolina has also approached local bar associations to request sponsorships to defray the costs of security at our regional sites. Sponsors are recognized on the North Carolina website, in the monthly newsletter, and on the sports bags given to regional participants.
- **Carey Shoufler from Idaho:** As part of our recently created strategic plan, Idaho’s mock trial program has developed a grant proposal for a Rural Mock Trial Initiative that focuses on the practical needs for smaller, more rural school districts that want to participate in mock trial. The project is being developed in cooperation with one of Idaho’s universities and includes funds for recruitment, training, a cooperative team preparation model, and travel, lodging, and other costs that make it possible for teams to participate in competitions. This has been an effective model for us, as we have been able to connect our legal communities to school districts that don’t normally have access to activities like mock trial.

For the next issue of the newsletter, we will be sharing tips for team and judge recruitment. What are some of the things you do to get people involved with your programs? Additionally, we are looking for other ideas to share in future editions.

Next time, our hope is that more coordinators will share the tips & tricks from their own states; this newsletter section will only be as good as the level of participation from our coordinators. Coordinators all have a lot we can learn from one another! Send your recruitment tips and tricks or your ideas for other topics to [Carey Shoufler](#).

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## Host Reports

### Nevada - 2018



Head west where the sun always shines! Nevada is excited to host the 2018 National Championship in Reno, “The Biggest Little City in the World.”

The theme of this year’s championship is BELIEVE. The giant BELIEVE sculpture in City Plaza is inscribed with a quote that says: “Imagine with all your mind. Believe with all your heart. Achieve with all your might.” The sculpture and quote will be featured throughout competition weekend.

Our host hotel is the Silver Legacy Resort, which features affordable rooms, free transportation to and from the airport and within easy walking distance of the competition courthouses.

When not in trial – or practicing for the competition – we have selected events and activities that will highlight our great city. Thursday night kicks off with a Pin Exchange, at the National Automobile Museum. Saturday night will cap off the weekend’s activities with a Gala and Awards ceremony at the Reno Ballroom that will include some of the artistic works of Burning Man at an Urban Art Party that features street art, a graffiti photo booth, and a DJ to keep the party going.

Come prepared for weather on the cool side. The average high temperature in Reno for the dates of the Competition is about 74 degrees with an average nightly low of about 44 degrees.

We look forward to seeing you soon! In the meantime, we have set up accounts on Instagram ([natlmocktrial](#)) and Twitter ([#natlmocktrial](#)). For more information visit the [2018 National Mock Trial website](#).

### Georgia - 2019

Georgia is excited be hosting the 2019 National Mock Trial next May 16-19 in Athens. We cannot wait to showcase the University of Georgia and the Classic City!

Georgia will have events both on UGA’s historic North Campus and throughout downtown Athens during the weekend, giving teams a chance to experience a true southern college town in the spring. Once teams arrive, everything will be in easy walking distance, including hotels, courtrooms, restaurants, and team events.



While Athens is best known as the home of the University of Georgia, the oldest state-chartered university in the nation, Athens is also home to a rich music legacy, both in musical talents and venues. Teams will have the opportunity to see various sites of Athens' music history, such as the Georgia Theatre and the 40 Watt Club and see where musical legends were born, such as Pylon, the B-52s, R.E.M., and Drive-By Truckers.

The 2019 website will be up soon, providing more information and previews of events, locations and other details of the weekend. In the meantime, if you have any questions, contact [Michael Nixon](#).

## Indiana - 2020



Two years out from hosting, Indiana is already busy at work getting ready to welcome mock trial to Evansville. In fact, you can already find them online at [indianamocktrial.com](http://indianamocktrial.com).

Indiana's Steering Committee is in place and has been meeting every other month. They are planning their logistics, including recruiting a retired deputy sheriff to help with planning. They have submitted summary of their case to the National Case Committee, and are already working to recruit judges, attorneys, and other volunteers. Finally, they have secured \$55,000 in funding and are working to raise more. Indiana is really looking forward to sharing the Hoosier State with mock trial nation! For questions, contact [Chuck Dunlap](#).