Mock Trial 2022-2023
Rules & Competition Proposed Changes

Proposal 1: Bye Mitigation

#1 - Issue/Problem:
When there are an odd number of teams competing either at the Regional or State competition level, this creates a situation in which one team does not participate in a round of competition because they do not have an opponent for said round. For teams affected by the bye, this limits the amount of times they will ultimately compete in either a Regional Competition (2 out of 3 times) or State Competition (3 out of 4 times). Thus, teams that are assigned byes, have one less opportunity to perform and score better than their two (or three) other performances, which may hurt their chances of advancing in the competition.

#1 - Objective:
Students, teachers, and coaches have spent many hours preparing for these competitions. This preparation and dedication is done so with the understanding that they would, in all likelihood, be participating at least three times at the Regional level. The goal is to afford teams as many 'at bats' as possible during the competition and to be able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have worked so hard on for all the possible rounds of competition.

#1a - Proposed Change:
In an effort to allow the team that qualifies for a bye to compete in all rounds of competition, the following change to the rules of competition is suggested. During the registration process, teams who qualify, will be asked if they are interested in participating as Bye round competition. Participation in Bye round competition will be completely voluntary. In order for a team to qualify as Bye round competition, they must be able to field a full team of Plaintiff/Prosecution and/or Defense/Defendant and have enough team members left over to field a full second side team (i.e., Plaintiff/Prosecution or Defense/Defendant). The volunteer Bye round competitor will not have their score added to their overall team score, and will only serve as a live competitor for the team that qualified for the Bye. The team that qualified for the Bye will, per the pre-existing rules, be awarded a win, regardless of trial outcome, but will be awarded the total number of Ballots and Points, based upon the Judges' scores. Meaning, at the end of the round, the team that qualified for the Bye will have a Win, and their total Ballots and Points applied to their overall competition score and rankings.

An example scenario: Team X has been assigned the Plaintiff role in Round 2 of a Regional competition against Team Y. Team A qualifies to be the bye team for Round 2. Thankfully, Team X can field their Plaintiff side against Team Y and have enough team members left to field a Defense team. During the registration process, Team X volunteered to be a Bye round competitor. So Team X will serve as Team A's competition for Round 2, with Team X being Defense and Team A being the Plaintiff. In the head-to-head competition between Team A and Team X, Team A will be awarded a Win and have their earned Ballots and Points count toward the overall score and standings. Team X's Round 2 performance against Team Y will be the score that counts towards their overall score and standings.

This proposal affords a team assigned a Bye in a round, which under current rules would have them not competing in their Bye round, to compete, be awarded a Win, and earn Ballots and Points that counts towards their overall score and standings. This proposal also affords a team who volunteers to be a Bye round competitor another, non-scored, opportunity to compete in a live action scenario.

#1b - Proposed Change:
If it is impossible for all teams within a region/division to field a second team, and hence not be able to volunteer a fully equipped Bye Competition team, another option is the creation of a Bye-Buster using competitors from various teams. Specifically, Mock Trial students that are not competing in the immediate round that requires a Bye-Buster team could be required to serve on a Bye-Buster team at the discretion of the Competition Coordinator.

Some proposed provisions regarding a Bye-Buster Scenario:

- The Bye-Buster team is not eligible for team awards, but individuals who compete on the Bye-Buster team may earn ranks towards individual awards.
- Students may not compete on the Bye-Buster team against their own school.
- Students serving on the Bye-Buster team shall not tell the judges what schools they are from, so as to avoid judging conflicts in later rounds. They may tell the judges they are a collection of students from various schools.

An example Scenario:

- Student A is on the roster of Team AB
- She is an attorney when her team is Plaintiff, but has no role when her team is on the Defense
- In Round 1, Team AB is Defense, so Student A volunteers/is volunteered to be on the Bye-Buster team, which is randomly paired to be Plaintiff
- In Round 3, the Bye-Buster team is again scheduled to be Plaintiff
- Student A should be used if she is not needed to compete on her regular team in Round 3

Note 1: If no teams in a Regional or Divisional competition volunteer to be a Bye round competitor, and there are not enough non-active student participants to field a Bye-Buster Team, then the old Bye rules would still apply and the team assigned a Bye for a round will not compete in that round.

Note 2: If multiple teams volunteer to be Bye round competitors, then during each round of competition the Bye round competitors will be chosen randomly. All efforts will be made to ensure that if there are multiple volunteer teams in a competition, each volunteer Bye round competitor will be chosen before any one team volunteers more than once.

Proposal 2: Regional Structure Changes (Divisions)

#2 - Issue/Problem:
There are currently seven (7) Regions that compete at the Oregon High School State Competition. Those Regions are Region 1 - Clackamas, Region 2 - Deschutes, Region 3 - Eastern, Region 4 - Jackson, Region 6 - Multnomah, Region 7 - Washington. In the Portland Metropolitan area there is an uneven distribution of the number of competing High School Mock Trial teams within the various Regions. Some Regions average 17 teams per Regional competition while others average closer to 8 teams. Especially in the Regions with a smaller number of teams competing, but in all Regions, the opportunity in which two teams from the same school are assigned to compete against one another is high. Teams from the same school competing against one another is less than ideal, as it is not as robust an experience for the students, who presumably have already scrimmaged against the other teams at their school and it may put one or both teams at a competitive disadvantage when competing for position on the overall ranking board.

Another issue is competitive familiarity that builds between teams who, year after year, compete against each other, both at Regional events, but also outside scrimmages and other Mock Trial invitational events. This level of familiarness may affect team enthusiasm levels and concentrate the overall success within a Region to only a few teams.

#2 - Objective

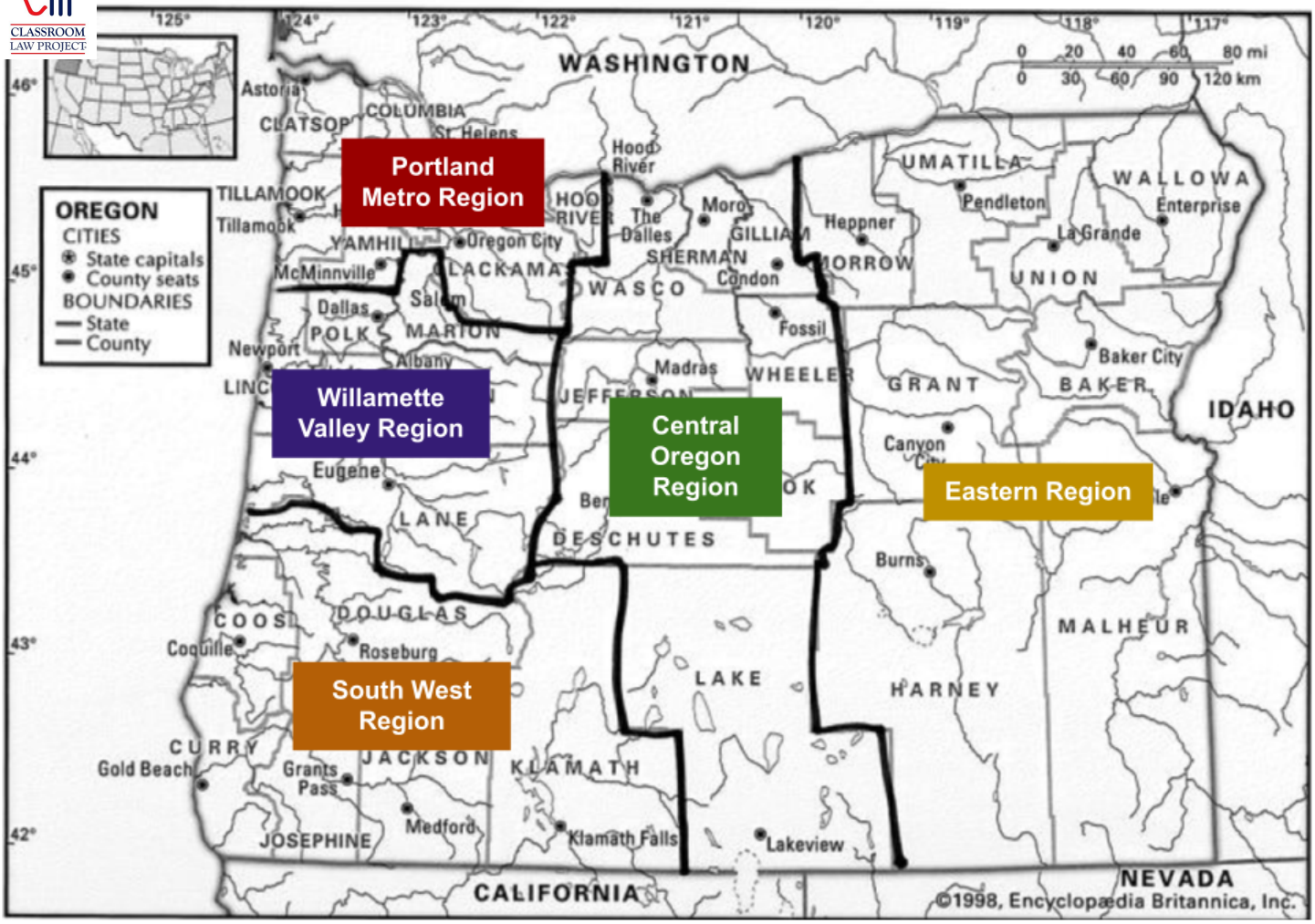
Mock Trial should be as enjoyable an experience as possible, that, in part, affords students the opportunity to compete against as many other students from around Oregon as possible. Additionally, competitive parity should be sought and implemented when possible, as exemplified by the ranking system during the Power Matching process. As much as possible, avoiding teams competing against other teams from the same school, or from the same handful of schools, should be attempted.

An additional objective of Proposal 2 is to help mitigate the need for Byes, as it affords Competition Coordinators the ability to evenly distribute competing teams, as much as possible.

#2 - Proposed Change

The proposal is multi-faceted, and includes changes to the Regional composition of the State Competition as well as changes within the Regional structure to afford for more parity and the ability of schools, who are interested, to spread out their teams to ensure they do not compete against each other in a Regional competition, as well as lessening the likelihood of Byes.

Proposal two (2) is predicated on a slight change to the Regional composition that would update the current Regional breakdown (of 7 Regions) to the proposed breakdown, see map.



In the new map breakdown, the Regions are condensed from seven (7) to five (5). The proposal suggests combining Region 1 - Clackamas, Region 6 - Multnomah, and Region 7 - Washington into one region, Portland Metro.

This suggestion is coupled with the next component of the proposal, a Divisional system within a Region. Each Region may have anywhere from 1 to 4 Divisions depending upon the number of teams registered to compete in that region.

The Divisional breakdown within a Region:

- 1-18 teams (1 division)
- 19-28 teams (2 divisions)
- 29 - 49 teams (3 divisions)
- 50+ teams (4 divisions)

Team's Divisional assignments will be made randomly by the Regional Competition Coordinator, with a directive to avoid Byes, whenever possible, and scatter the previous year's schools who competed in the State Competition amongst the divisions. Schools with multiple teams will be assigned to the same division, to ensure they compete on the same day/location, but will be afforded the opportunity to opt-out of same

Division placement, if they so choose. If a school opts-out of the same Division placement, their teams will be randomly assigned a Division to compete in.

The Divisional competition winners will compete at the State Competition and the ratio of teams qualifying for the State competition will remain the same as in previous years.

Number of Teams Competing in a Division	Number of Teams Advancing to State
5 of less	1
6-10	2
11-15	3
16-20	4
21-25	5
More than 25	TBD by Classroom Law Project

Comparative Scenario:
In 2021-2022, Region 1 - Clackamas had four (4) teams compete in their Region. Region 6 - Multnomah had seventeen (17) teams compete in their Region. Region 7 - Washington had fifteen (15) teams compete in their Region. This meant that Region 1 had one (1) team qualify for the State Competition, Region 6 had four (4) teams qualify, and Region 7 had three (3) teams qualify. That is a total of eight (8) teams qualify under the current Regional model.

Under the new model, if the thirty six (36) teams [4+17+15] competed in the Portland Metro Region, it would trigger three (3) Divisions. Each Division would have twelve (12) teams compete within the Divisional competition. Thus each Division would have three (3) teams qualify for the State Competition, for a total of nine (9) teams. **(more scenarios)**

Proposal 3: Mock Trial Case Publication Date

#3 - Issue/Problem:
In recent years the publication date for the season's Case Materials has been moved up to early Fall, from its historical publication date of late Fall/closer to the end of the year. This change was made, in large part, because Mini Mock was no longer hosted by Classroom Law Project, and the assumption was made that outside scrimmages and competitions (e.g., Duckpond) would use the Case Materials for that season's State Competition. Some teams are concerned about using the season's Case Materials against would-be opponents in scrimmages and invitationals, because they would be allowing these competitors the advantage of gaining exposure to their theory of case, prior to the Regional/State competition.

#3 - Objective:
The goal is to allow teams to practice their Mock Trial skills in live, real world scenarios such as scrimmages and invitationals without the burden of giving up carefully crafted case strategy prior to Regional and State competition.

#3 - Proposed Change:
A Demonstration/Mini Mock Case Materials packet will be published by Classroom Law Project early in the school year. The Competition Case Materials would be published a month later, for those interested solely in the Competition Case. This will allow for a common case to, theoretically, be used by any team looking to practice their Mock Trial skills with outside schools without the concern that they are sharing delicate strategy information. It also affords teams, who are not in a position to practice with outside teams in a scrimmage or invitational capacity, to have ample time with the competition Case Materials so they can be properly prepared for their competition season.

Proposal 4: State Competition-Specific Bye Mitigation

#4 - Issue/Problem:
As mentioned in Proposal 1, there are a number of issues that arise when there are an odd number of teams competing in a Regional or State competition. One team does not participate in a round of competition because they do not have an opponent for said round. For teams affected by the bye, this limits the amount of times they will ultimately compete at a State Competition (3 out of 4 times). Thus, teams that are assigned byes, have one less opportunity to perform and score better than their three other performances, which may hurt their chances of advancing in the competition.

#4 - Objective:
As stated earlier, students, teachers, and coaches have spent many hours preparing for these competitions. This preparation and dedication is done so with the understanding that they would, in all likelihood, be participating in all four rounds of State competition. The goal is to afford teams as many ‘at bats’ as possible during the competition and to be able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have worked so hard on for all the possible rounds of competition.

#4 - Proposed Change:
When there are an odd number of teams that qualify for the State competition, one additional team is added to the State competition to ensure that the State rounds do not need to implement bye rules. The additional team will be considered the “Wild Card” team. This, “Wild Card” team, will be determined by reviewing the total number of Wins, Ballots, and Points awarded to all the teams that competed at the Regional level who did not qualify for the State competition. The highest performing team, measured first by Wins, then by Ballots, and finally by Points, will be invited to compete at the State competition.

Note 1: The team that qualified to be the “Wild Card” team will have a finite amount of time to respond to the State competition invitation. If the team does not reply, or declines the invitation, the next highest performing team will be invited to participate as the “Wild Card” team, and so on.

Note 2: If the original number of teams that qualify for the State competition is an odd number, but then a qualifying team has to drop out, leaving a now even number of qualifying teams, then the “Wild Card” team’s invitation will be suspended. The “Wild Card” team will be instructed to be on standby, in case the number of qualifying teams competing at the State competition reverts to an odd number.