



Trial Advocacy



PURPOSE

To provide SkillsUSA members with an opportunity to experience trial preparation and participate in portions of a mock trial. The team will also take a written test demonstrating legal and trial knowledge.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to active SkillsUSA high school or college/post-secondary members enrolled in career and technical education programs with Law and Public Safety as the occupational objective. This competition requires a **team of two**. Each school may send two teams.

Student competitors **must** be enrolled in, or just have **completed** (within the current membership year), a law and public safety program, or other closely related technical, skilled, or service occupation.

This contest DOES NOT advance to the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference.

CLOTHING REQUIREMENT

Class A: SkillsUSA Attire

- Official SkillsUSA red blazer or official SkillsUSA red jacket
- Button-up, collared, white dress shirt (accompanied by a plain, solid black tie or SkillsUSA black tie), white shirt (collarless or small-collared) or white turtleneck, with any collar not to extend into the lapel area of the blazer, sweater, windbreaker or jacket

- Black dress slacks or black dress skirt (knee-length at minimum)
- Black dress shoes

Note: The official SkillsUSA windbreaker, sweater and black Carhartt jacket are no longer available for purchase in the SkillsUSA Store. However, these clothing items are grandfathered in as previous official SkillsUSA clothing and can be worn in SkillsUSA competitions as directed in this document.

Note: Wearing socks or hose is no longer required. If worn, socks must be black dress socks and hose must be either black or skin-tone and seamless/non pattern

These regulations refer to clothing items that are pictured and described at: www.skillsusastore.org. If you have questions about clothing or other logo items, call 1-888-501-2183.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Supplied by the technical committee: All necessary materials for the competition.

- Case: [Binder v Skills](#)
- Witnesses, judges, and other trial actors

RESUME REQUIREMENT

Competitors must create a one-page resume to submit online. SkillsUSA South Carolina competitors should submit their resume by the deadline published on the competition updates page of our website. Failure to submit a resume will result in a 10-point penalty.

Your resume must be saved as a PDF file type using file name format of “Last Name_First Name.” For example, “Amanda Smith” would save her resume as Smith_Amanda. If you need assistance with saving your file as a PDF, visit the Adobe website for more information.

Note: Check the Competition Guidelines and/or the updates page on the state website.

PROHIBITED DEVICES

Cell phones or other electronic devices not approved by a competition’s national technical committee are NOT allowed in the competition area. Please follow the guidelines in each technical standard for approved exceptions. Technical committee members may also approve exceptions onsite during the SkillsUSA Championships if deemed appropriate.

Penalties for Prohibited Devices

If a competitor’s electronic device makes noise or if the competitor is seen using it at any time during the competition, an official report will be documented for review by the SkillsUSA Championships director. If confirmed that the competitor used the device in a manner which compromised the integrity of the competition, the competitor’s scores may be canceled.

SCOPE OF COMPETITIONS

The competition is defined by industry standards as identified by the SkillsUSA technical committee. The following is a list of resources and materials used in the formation of the competition:

- [Street Law's Guide to Mock Trials](#), Street Law
- [Classroom Mock Trial Evaluation & Rubric Resources](#), Classroom Law Project
- [California Mock Trial Program 2019-2020 Team Rulebook](#) (Evaluation Criteria pages 15-19), Constitutional Rights Foundation

KNOWLEDGE PERFORMANCE

The competition includes an exam assessing knowledge of legal procedure, the American court system structure, objections, trial procedure, and general legal knowledge. Each team member takes the exam individually. The collective scores from the test are worth 150 points. See Appendix A for a study guide. Competitors are also required to take the SkillsUSA professional development test. This test is worth 50 points. 200 points come from this section.

SKILLS PERFORMANCE

1. Objections (200 Points) – The team will be given scenarios, printed or recorded, and be asked if an objection is necessary, to identify proper objections, and/or defend an objection.
2. Mock Trial (600 points) - The team will use the *Binder v Skills* case for this portion of the competition. The team will prepare for both prosecution and defense. They can prepare throughout the school year. The Technical Committee will declare the side of the case (prosecution or defense) as well as the specific parts of the trial that will be assessed at least 24 hours prior to the competition to allow for final preparation. Only two parts will be assigned, one per team member. Each team member will complete a part individually. The team will declare which member will perform which part when they enter the competition area. The team together will have 15 minutes total to present their two parts. They may distribute their time however they choose to their two parts.

Parts of the trial that may be designated:

- Opening statements
- Direct examination
- Cross examination
- Closing argument

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

1. Each team must work independently without assistance from instructors, other competitors, or observers. Contact with competitors must be coordinated through designated event staff only. Any violation of this may disqualify the competitor.
2. Cell phones, iPads/tablets, smartwatches, wearable technology or any other electronic device is prohibited from the competition area.

3. Competitors are encouraged to not refer to notes while presenting. While not prohibited, frequent reference to notes will negatively impact evaluation scores. Also, teams may not use electronic notes or items prohibited in #2 for notes.
4. Only competitors, judges, and event staff are allowed in the competition area at any time. Observation is limited to the area designated by the judges or event staff. Any violation of this may disqualify the competitor.
5. No one may contact judges in any way and at any time without the expressed permission of the competition coordinator.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The list below is not exhaustive but represents what test items will be evaluated.

- Reasonable suspicion
- Probable cause
- Beyond a reasonable doubt
- Preponderance of the evidence
- Hostile witness
- Expert witness
- Types of juror challenges
- Real evidence
- Hearsay evidence
- Circumstantial evidence
- Direct evidence
- 1st-10th & 14th Amendments and application to trials
- Objections
- Relevance
- Hearsay
- Speculation
- Narrative
- Relevance
- Improper character evidence
- Leading
- Compound
- Argumentative question
- Purpose of cross examination
- Strategy of cross examination
- Leading questions
- Standard of proof
- Protected plea discussion
- Stages of trial
- Pretrial process
- Plea bargaining
- Voir dire