

Official Rules and Standards

Anderson Center Seventh Circuit Moot Court Competition

2024

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OVERVIEW/ADMINISTRATION

The Anderson Center Seventh Circuit Moot Court Competition (“Competition”) presents a unique problem comprised of issues involving both substantive law and professional ethics, permitting law students to explore the critical intersection between advocacy and professionalism.

The Competition is coordinated by the Anderson Center Seventh Circuit Moot Court Competition Committee (“Committee”) which is comprised of University of Illinois administrators, faculty advisors, professional staff, Seventh Circuit Bar Association members, and outside advisors.

CONDUCT OF ADVOCATES

This is a professional competition and participants are expected to follow all competition rules, exemplify the highest ideals of the legal profession, and maintain high standards of ethical conduct. Professional conduct and courtesy are required toward opponents, judges, competition officials and staff at all competition-related events at all times (including on social media). Good sportsmanship should be apparent during the competition, between rounds, and during award presentations.

UNETHICAL CONDUCT

The Committee strives to make the competition fair and rewarding for all involved. The Committee retains the right to disqualify any participant for conduct deemed unethical.

Practice oral arguments may **not** be conducted until after submission of your team’s brief. If a school has been able to enter a second team through the lottery system, oral arguments may not be conducted until after both teams’ briefs have been submitted.

With the exception of your teammate, you may not consult others regarding proper citations.

Coaches may provide assistance as to preparing for oral arguments, but not for the drafting of the brief or any other aspect of the brief’s creation. The brief must be the sole work product of the competing students. (See *Written Certification* on page 10.)

When a school has been permitted to enter two teams, the teams may not collaborate in any way with researching or drafting the brief; this prohibition includes a ban on students from two different teams discussing the problem at any time between the

release of the problem and the time when both of the school's teams have submitted their briefs.

When a school has been permitted to enter two teams, those teams may share a coach, however, they are limited to conducting two cross-team practice rounds.

Coaches, team members and alternates may not "scout" other teams during the preliminary rounds. A coach, team member, or alternate may only attend preliminary rounds where one of their students or team members is competing.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and if discovered will be grounds for disqualification.

You should contact the Committee with any questions regarding unethical conduct. Email anderson-scmc@illinois.edu with your questions and put "Unethical Conduct" in the subject line.

THE PROBLEM

Each year the competition will feature a problem involving legal ethics prepared by legal and academic professionals ("Problem"). The Committee will post the Problem on the Competition's website (<https://anderson-scmc.law.illinois.edu/>) on a pre-scheduled date after the registration period for the Competition has ended.

SCHEDULES

The **2024** Competition will take place over two days in **March of 2024**. There will be preliminary rounds, a semifinal round, and a final round. The preliminary rounds will take place on **Friday, March 8, 2024**. The semifinal and final rounds will take place on **Saturday, March 9, 2024**.

2024 Competition Calendar of Events

September 29	Early Bird Registration Opens (\$450 / team)
October 29	Early Bird Registration Closes
October 30	Regular Registration (\$550 / team)
December 22	Registration Closes (or if slots are full – whichever comes first)
January 12	Anticipated Problem Release Date
January 29	Last day for Questions / Problem Clarification
February 15	Briefs Due by 5:00 pm (CST)
March 7	Seventh Circuit Bar Association Welcome Event
March 8 am	Preliminary Rounds (morning / afternoon)
March 8 pm	Reception / Advancement Announcements / Awards
March 9	Semifinal and Final Rounds / Winner Announced

Schedule for Participant Registration and Fees

Early Bird Registration will open **September 29, 2023**. Schools that register their team between September 29 and October 29 may do so at the reduced rate of \$450 per team. Teams that register **October 30, 2023, or later** will pay the regular registration fee of \$550 per team. Registration closes on **December 22, 2023**, or whenever available slots have filled up – whichever comes first. Registration may be done online, and payment accepted via credit card. Registration is non-refundable. There is a twelve-team maximum (8-team minimum) for this competition. Each eligible school is allowed to register one team and may submit an additional team for entry in any raffle drawing. The first twelve schools to register a team will be entered into the competition. Schools that register after the first twelve teams have been registered will be placed on a waiting list. In the event another team does not follow through with registration payment or withdraws from the competition prior to the registration deadline, open spots will be filled from the waiting list. (See “REGISTRATION” for further information regarding waitlisted teams.)

Schedule for Problem Release and Problem Clarification

The problem will be released to all paid registered teams on **January 15, 2024**. Questions regarding the problem will be accepted from **January 15, 2024** through 5:00 p.m. (CST) on **January 29, 2024**. Answers will be posted to the Competition website every Wednesday, with the final posting to be made available no later than **January 31, 2024**. Questions received after **5:00 pm (CST)** on Wednesdays will be included in the following week’s posting.

The questions will be posted without identifying the school or author. Direct all questions about the problem to anderson-scmc@illinois.edu with “Problem Clarification” in the subject line.

Requests regarding *rules and procedures clarifications* can be made at any time.

TEAMS

Teams may be comprised in one of the two following formats:

- **Two-person teams.** Both participating competitors collaborate on the brief. One team member will be the *On-Brief Specialist*, and one team member will be the *Off-Brief Specialist* for oral arguments. All two-person teams must identify an alternate who would be able to fill in due to illness or emergency.

- **Three-person teams.** All three participating competitors collaborate on the brief. One team member will be the *On-Brief Specialist*, and a second team member will be the *Off-Brief Specialist* for oral arguments. The third team member will serve as an *alternate* who would be able to fill in due to illness or emergency and may serve as a *second chair* in oral argument rounds. Unless a team's designated On-Brief Specialist or Off-Brief Specialist is unable to compete in oral arguments, the third team member will collaborate on the brief, but will not deliver oral argument during the competition.

Once teams are registered there shall be no substitution of members, therefore, all schools must either enter as a two-person team and identify an alternate on their registration form OR the school must enter as a three-person team for the competition. If registering a three-person team, the third team member may automatically serve as the alternate and/or second chair for all rounds. If registering a two-person team, an alternate must be listed. The alternate may attend the competition and should be prepared to fill in for any team member who is unable to compete due to illness or legitimate emergency.

Each team must prepare and submit a single written brief on behalf of their assigned party. Each team will compete both on-brief and off-brief in the preliminary rounds of oral argument. However, the competition is designed to provide an oral argument experience that resembles practice; to this end, team members present separate oral arguments and each team member must be prepared to address all issues on appeal. The oral argument structure is explained further in the "Oral Rounds" section of these Rules.

The brief score and oral argument scores in the preliminary rounds will determine which teams advance to the semifinal rounds. Unless there is a tie, the semifinal and final rounds will be single elimination and based on oral argument scores only. In the event of a tie in the semifinal or final rounds, the team with the higher brief score will advance or win.

- Awards will be given for
- *Best Oral Advocate*
 - *Second-Best Oral Advocate*
 - *Best Appellant Brief*
 - *Second-Best Appellant Brief*
 - *Best Appellee Brief*
 - *Second-Best Appellee Brief*
 - *ACSC Finalist*
 - *ACSC Champion*

REGISTRATION

This competition is open to all ABA accredited law schools in the Seventh Circuit. Students must be enrolled in a full- or part-time J.D. program. Teams must be comprised of members from the same school.

The **2024** competition is limited to twelve teams. Each law school shall determine its own method in identifying a team to send to the competition.

Waitlist

If more than twelve schools register a team, the first twelve schools to register a team will be entered into the competition. All other school's submissions will be placed on a waitlist in the order we received their registration forms.

Raffle Drawing

If for any reason fewer than twelve teams are registered by the deadline date, and one team from each registered school has been entered in the competition, schools which have already registered and have submitted a request for a second team will have the opportunity to enter more than one team. This will be determined by a raffle drawing. If a school wishes to send more than one team in the event there is room, the school must check the appropriate box on the online registration form. Schools will be notified before the problem release date if a raffle drawing is to take place. (Note that there is a fee to enter additional teams. See "Fees" section.)

FEES

All teams must register via the Competition website. Payment must be made by credit card via the online system.

Registration fees for the **2024** Competition will be **\$550** per team (early bird fees will be \$450 per team) and are non-refundable once registration has closed. In the event there is a raffle drawing and a school is eligible to send another team, the cost will be **\$300** for the second team and is non-refundable.

As stated earlier, once teams are registered there shall be no substitution of members. Teams must identify an alternate team member (if a 2-person team) or enter as a 3-person team.

BRIEFS

Each participating team must submit a brief. The competition's director (Competition Director) will assign sides once the registration deadline has passed. A team will

write on behalf of either the plaintiff/petitioner or the defendant/respondent. If a school has won the raffle and been allowed to enter more than one team (and thus, has two teams in the competition), then one team will write for the plaintiff/petitioner and one team will write for the defendant/respondent.

Submission & Penalties

Teams must submit all of the following: one *Original Brief*, one *Scoring (Clean) Brief*, **and** one *Written Certificate*. These materials are due by **5:00 p.m. (CST) on February 15, 2024**. Briefs should be submitted via Box on the Competition’s website in PDF format only. Failure to submit **BOTH** of the briefs **and** the Written Certificate before the deadline shall result in the following scoring penalties:

<i>Between</i>	Feb 15 @ 5:01 p.m. (CST)	Feb 15 @ 6:00 p.m. (CST)	20-point penalty
<i>Between</i>	Feb 15 @ 6:01 a.m. (CST)	Feb 16 @ 5:00 p.m. (CST)	40-point penalty
<i>After</i>	Feb 16 @ 5:01 p.m. (CST)	Full Penalty	ZERO SCORE

Teams are encouraged to submit their briefs earlier to avoid last-minute problems. If you are experiencing technical difficulties it is recommended that you email your brief directly to the Competition Director at anderson-scmc@illinois.edu to ensure it is submitted on time. Please be sure to include your team number and the word “Briefs” in the subject line. Once a brief has been submitted, no exchanges or further alterations are allowed. Copies of all Scoring (Clean) Briefs will be posted to the Competition website no later than one week after all briefs are filed. **No briefs will be accepted after 5:01 p.m. (CST) on February 16, 2024.**

Identification

The Competition Director will assign each team a Team Letter and each team member a Team Number as a means of identification after registration closes and/or raffle (if applicable) has concluded.

Example: Team Letter = **Z**
 On-Brief Specialist Team Member Number = **078**
 Off-Brief Specialist Team Member Number = **951**

Teams should use their team letters on their briefs in any place where the name of the attorney filing the brief would normally appear. Participants and coaches may not include or disclose any identifying information in regard to the school they represent to anyone associated with the competition. This includes, but is not limited to, the judges, the bailiffs, the Committee, or competition officials or staff. Only the Competition Director will know the team number assignments. Teams and coaches should take care not to wear clothing or carry any items that could identify their school (neck ties, jewelry, pens, folders, etc.) and should be extra cautious not to

reveal the name of their law school during and throughout the competition. Doing so could result in scoring penalties or elimination from the competition.

Research

With the exception of filed briefs, teams have an open universe in which to research legal issues. Teams should only address the issues specified in the competition materials. Unless specified as an issue on appeal, teams should not present arguments regarding standing, mootness, ripeness, or jurisdiction whether or not discussed in the materials.

Requirements

Each team must submit electronic versions of their brief in both an **Original Brief format** and a **Scoring (Clean) Brief** format via Box on the Competition's website (see *Submission & Penalties*).

An **Original Brief** should include the following on the cover page: School Name, Team Member Names, Designated On-Brief Specialist, Designated Off-Brief Specialist, Second-Chair/Alternate (if applicable) and Team Numbers.

A **Scoring (Clean) Brief** should **not** include any identifying factors on the cover page or within the document. Be sure to clear the School Name, Team Member Names, Designated On-Brief Specialist, Designated Off-Brief Specialist, Second-Chair/Alternate (if applicable) and Team Number, and/or any signatures.

Metadata and Anonymity

Competition briefs may be reviewed/graded electronically, therefore some information in your document (metadata), may be visible to some judges. This information could include anonymous information about your team and identify your school to the judges which would result in a penalty.

If you are using MS Word, you can save your document with the correct file name first and then convert it to PDF. You can also change your title in other properties (in Word) under File > Info. If you have Adobe Pro, you can change your metadata directly in the PDF document. See: <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/pdf-properties-metadata.html>.

Format

All students, including those writing on behalf of the appellee, are required to submit a brief that complies with the requirements set out in Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 28(a) and Circuit Rule 28(a),¹ except that the Rule 28(a)(1) disclosure statement should not be included.

¹ https://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/frap/rule_28, <https://www.ca7.uscourts.gov/rules-procedures/rules/rules.htm#cr28>

The form of the brief must comply with the requirements set out in Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 32(a),² with the following exceptions:

- Rule 32(a)(1) and (3) are stricken: The briefs will be submitted in electronic form only.
- Rule 32(a)(2) is partially amended: Do not submit a document with a colored cover page; rather, you should indicate the color of the cover page by placing the word “red” or “blue,” as appropriate, in the upper right-hand corner of the cover page. This is the only amendment to Rule 32(a)(2).
- Rule 32(a)(5) is amended: The brief must use 12-point Century-style font.
- Rule 32(a)(7) is amended: The entire brief may not exceed 25 pages. Section 32(a)(7)(B) is stricken.

Briefs must use citations utilizing *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*.

Written Certification

By submitting the brief, each team is verifying that the work product in its entirety is theirs alone, that the brief was prepared in accordance with the Competition Rules, and that they did not receive help from any faculty or other members of the bar. A separate written statement must be included when submitting the brief and should be signed by all participating team members.

The Written Certification is not part of the Original Brief and should be submitted as a separate document.

Copies

Electronic copies must be in text-searchable portable document format (PDF) compatible with the latest version of Adobe Reader.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and any violation shall constitute immediate disqualification of all team members.

ORAL ROUNDS

The Preliminary Oral Argument rounds will be conducted using a Round Robin format (see example [here](#)) with four groups total. Each group is comprised of three teams who all briefed on behalf of the same client. During the preliminary rounds, each competitor will argue twice. Four teams will advance to the semifinal rounds (one from each of the original four groups) where each competitor will argue once. Two teams will advance to the final rounds (one from each side of the bracket) where

² https://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/frap/rule_32

each competitor will argue once. Arguments will take place **March 8 and March 9, 2024**, at the Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse.

Team assignments, schedules, notification of advancement announcements and other important communications will be posted online, and it is the responsibility of each team to view the Competition website regularly for important updates.

During rounds, teams may not reveal the name of their law school to the judges and must identify themselves only by team number and side represented.

Oral Argument Structure

The competition’s intent is to provide an oral argument experience that resembles practice. Because advocates never argue on behalf of both parties, the Competition does not require individual advocates to switch representation during the oral argument rounds.

Each team will designate an “on-brief specialist” and an “off-brief specialist” (each a “specialist”). During the oral argument rounds, the on-brief specialist will always present the team’s argument in support of the party for which it wrote its brief. The off-brief specialist will always present the team’s argument in support of the party the team did not represent in their brief.

For example, for a problem where the parties are Smith, Plaintiff-Appellant, and Jones, Defendant-Appellee, the team structure would be as follows:

Assigned Side for Brief	On-Brief Specialist’s Oral Rounds	Off-Brief Specialist’s Oral Rounds
Smith Plaintiff-Appellant	Covers all issues on appeal, argues on behalf of Smith	Covers all issues on appeal, argues on behalf of Jones
Jones Defendant-Appellee	Covers all issues on appeal, argues on behalf of Jones	Covers all issues on appeal, argues on behalf of Smith

Under this structure, while *teams* are prepared to argue both sides of the issue, *individual team members* focus exclusively on perfecting their position for a single client.

During each round of the competition, an on-brief specialist will argue against an off-brief specialist. Each specialist has a total of 15 minutes for oral argument and should plan to discuss all the issues on appeal. The specialist arguing on behalf of Appellant may opt to reserve some of their time for rebuttal; time reserved for rebuttal will be subtracted from the time available for their argument-in-chief.

For example, if Appellant reserved 2 minutes for rebuttal, each advocate’s argument time would be as follows:

	Appellant’s Argument	Appellee’s Argument	Appellant’s Rebuttal
Time:	13 minutes	15 minutes	2 minutes

The Bailiff will notify the specialists and judges when **5 minutes**, **2 minutes**, and **1 minute** of time remain and when **Time** is up. Where an appellant has reserved rebuttal time, the notifications during the specialist’s argument-in-chief will be in terms of the argument-in-chief time only. For example, when using the division of time in the chart above, the Bailiff would indicate that 5 minutes of Appellant’s argument time remained after 8 minutes of the Appellant’s argument had elapsed.

A specialist intending to take rebuttal must request/reserve that time at the beginning of the round; a specialist who fails to do so will have forfeited the option of taking rebuttal. Specialists are encouraged to let the Bailiff in their room know, in advance of the round, if they plan to take rebuttal.

Bailiffs will be provided to distribute score forms to the judges, call the court to order, keep time during the argument, collect score forms, and transport scores to the Scoring Committee. Bailiffs must keep all scores and comments confidential.

Preliminary Rounds

Two team members will participate in the preliminary rounds of argument – one will argue as an *on-brief specialist* and one will argue as an *off-brief specialist*. For a 12-team tournament, each specialist will argue twice in the round-robin preliminary rounds. (For an 8-team tournament, each team will argue three times in the round-robin preliminary rounds.) For teams with three members, only two members will participate in oral rounds and one member will act as alternate and be able to fill in for a *specialist team member* in the event of illness or emergency and may act as second chair during a team member’s round. Only team members participating in the round may sit at counsel’s table during arguments.

Teams with the highest combined score in each Group (from the oral argument scores and brief scores) will advance to the semifinal rounds to be held on the morning of **Saturday, March 9**.

If, after the preliminary rounds, it becomes necessary to resolve a tie (or ties) between two or more teams in order to determine advancement, ties will be resolved as follows:

- 1) The tied teams will be ranked after combining each teams highest oral argument scores. The team with the highest oral argument score will then advance to the semifinal round;

2) If a tie still remains amongst the teams, the tied teams will be ranked by their off-brief oral argument score. The team with the highest off-brief oral argument score will then advance to the semifinal round;

3) If a tie still remains amongst any teams, remaining ties may be broken by coin toss or by any other means the Committee deems fair and acceptable under the circumstances considering the nature of the tie, time constraints, and the best interest of the Competition.

Limited Observation of Preliminary Rounds

Preliminary Rounds are closed to observation to anyone who is not one of the following:

- (a) a coach of a specialist arguing in that round;
- (b) a team member of a specialist arguing in that round;
- (c) an alternate for a team that has a specialist arguing in that round; or
- (d) an Anderson Center Seventh Circuit Moot Court Competition Committee member.

Anyone observing an argument round should ensure that they are seated behind the competitors. Sitting in the jury boxes is not permitted.

Semifinal Rounds

The teams with the highest Advancing Scores (calculations discussed below) from each group will advance to the semifinal round on their side of the bracket. Semifinal rounds will be held on **Saturday, March 9**.

Except in the case of a tie, advancement from the semifinal rounds will be determined by comparing the Oral Argument Scores only; the team with the higher Team Oral Argument Score on each side of the bracket will advance to the Final Round. In the event there is a tie during the semifinal rounds, the team that has the highest scoring brief will advance to the final round.

Final Round

The team with the highest scores from the semifinal round from each bracket will advance to the Final Round in the afternoon on **Saturday, March 9**. Except in the case of a tie, the winner will be the team with the higher Team Oral Argument Score. In the event there is a tie during the final round, the team that has the highest scoring brief will win the competition.

Observation of Semifinal and Final Rounds

All participants are invited to attend the Semifinal and Final Rounds of the competition. Anyone observing an argument round should ensure that they are seated behind the competitors. Sitting in the jury boxes is not permitted.

SCORING

Members of the Seventh Circuit Bar Association will numerically score all briefs submitted and select the best brief and second-best brief for each side of the Competition. The brief score will be used in addition to the preliminary oral argument round scores to determine which teams advance to the semifinal rounds.

Overall scores for preliminary rounds will be 40% of the team’s brief score and 60% of the individual participant’s oral argument score. Scores are calculated as follows.

The total possible points available for the team’s brief is 100 points. Three graders will score each brief out of 100 and the scores from the three graders will be averaged to determine the brief score. For example:

Grader 1’s Score for Team Brief	Grader 2’s Score for Team Brief	Grader 3’s Score for Team Brief	Brief Score
88	95	93	92

Each preliminary round will be judged by 3 judges, who will individually score competitors. Each judge may award up to 25 points for the round. The average of the three scores a competitor receives for a round becomes the competitor’s final score for that round. For example:

Judge 1’s Score for Specialist	Judge 2’s Score for Specialist	Judge 3’s Score for Specialist	Round Score
23	25	24	24

After the preliminary rounds have been completed and the round scores calculated, the scores for each of the team’s preliminary arguments (two rounds by the on-brief specialist and two rounds by the off-brief specialist) are added together. For example:

Round Scores	On-Brief Specialist Scores	Off-Brief Specialist Scores
Round 1	23.5	24
Round 2	24.5	24
Specialist Oral Arg Score	48	48

Team’s Oral Argument Score: $48 + 48 = 96$

After determining the brief score and the total of all four of the team’s oral argument scores, the scores are weighted by multiplying the brief score by .4 and the oral argument score by .6. For example:

Team’s Brief Score:	$92 \times .4 = 36.8$
Team’s Oral Argument Score:	$96 \times .6 = \underline{57.6}$
Team’s Advancing Score:	94.4

AWARDS

Oral Advocate and Brief awards will be presented during dinner on Friday evening in addition to the announcement of advancing teams. At the conclusion of the final round on Saturday, the ACSC Champion and Finalist Awards will be presented at the courthouse.

Monetary Awards

- **ACSC Champion**
The team earning the most votes in the final round will win the competition and will receive \$1000. If a tie takes place in the final round, the team with the better brief score will be deemed the winner.
- **ACSC Finalist**
The second-place team will receive \$600 to recognize their achievement in the competition.
- **Oral Advocate**
The advocate award will be based on the individual competitor's scoring averages from the preliminary rounds.

The competitor earning the Best Advocate Award will receive \$600.
The competitor earning the Second-Best Advocate Award will receive \$300.

- **Best Brief**
The Scoring Committee will calculate the brief awards from the brief scores.

The team earning the Best Appellant Brief Award will receive \$600.
The team earning the Second-Best Appellant Brief Award will receive \$300.
The team earning the Best Appellee Brief Award will receive \$600.
The team earning the Second-Best Appellee Brief Award will receive \$300.

Team members who earn a monetary award will be sent an email following the competition with information on how the monetary awards are processed.

Non-Monetary Awards

- In addition to monetary awards, teams will be given plaques and there will also be a traveling trophy for the winning team to showcase at their school until the following year's competition. The winning school is responsible for returning the trophy at the following year's competition.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Please direct all questions and concerns regarding the competition to anderson-scmc@illinois.edu.