

## James Patterson McBaine Honors Moot Court Competition *2026 Oral Argument Rubric & Scoring Sheet*

Name of Scorer/Judge:		Date:	
Email:		Phone Number:	

### SCORING & FEEDBACK EXPECTATIONS FOR JUDGES

Thank you for your invaluable support of Berkeley Law students through these advocacy competitions. We are incredibly grateful for your time and expertise, as these events would not be possible without you.

These competitions expose law students to legal practice through a constructive learning environment. To ensure a positive experience for all participants, we ask that you keep the following expectations in mind:

- **Professionalism and Kindness:** Please interact with students in a kind and professional manner. Many of them are participating in a competition of this nature for the first time.
- **Targeted Feedback:** All feedback should be specific, tied directly to the criteria you have been asked to assess, and focused on the skills demonstrated.
- **Time Management:** Oral feedback following the round should be limited to 5-7 minutes per judge.
- **Constructive Oral Feedback:** When providing oral feedback, please identify 1-2 things each team did well and 1 specific area for improvement with actionable suggestions.

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All judges should give separate scores for **each student** evaluated, starting on pages **3 and 6**.

## SCORING GUIDELINES

We expect all judges to be fair and objective in their evaluations of student performance. Unconsciously, we all carry favorable and unfavorable biases that can impact our assessments of others. These attitudes and stereotypes can shape our decisions without our knowledge, so it is important to be mindful of implicit bias when judging students in an advocacy competition. As a judge, you are encouraged to think critically and assess all students' performances consistently.

## SCORING STANDARDS

To ensure uniformity in scoring, please keep the following standards in mind:

Poor	<u>Lacking fundamental</u> knowledge, preparation, or skill
Fair/Developing	Exhibiting <u>basic</u> knowledge, preparation, or skill
Good/Average	Exhibiting a <u>solid base</u> of knowledge, preparation, or skill
Very Good	Exhibiting <u>advanced</u> knowledge, preparation, or skill
Excellent	Exhibiting <u>exemplary</u> knowledge, preparation, or skill
<i>A detailed description of an excellent score will be provided with each question.</i> Overall, a perfect score is one that you would feel very comfortable and confident having this advocate argue a case in which you were a party before an appellate court.	

- **To encourage equity and uniformity in scoring**, please use "Good" as your starting benchmark for scores.
- You must score the arguments based on the quality of the presentation and skills demonstrated, not on the actual merits of the case.
- Half points are not allowed.
- The completed evaluation will not be distributed to competitors and will be used solely to determine which competitors advance to the next round.

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OA Session	
Petitioner Name	

Notes will not be shared with students. Give pertinent feedback orally.

## ***I. OPENING STATEMENT***

Score:  /15

Poor	Fair/Developing	Good/Average	Very Good	Excellent
8	9 - 10	11 - 12	13 - 14	15

A top-scoring competitor will:

- Accurately state the reason for the appeal
- Concisely summarizes their position
- Addresses weaknesses and strengths of the case

Notes:

## ***II. PRESENTATION OF THE MERITS***

Score:  /35

Poor	Fair/Developing	Good/Average	Very Good	Excellent
17 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 27	28 - 32	33 - 35

A top-scoring competitor will:

- Be coherent, clear, and direct
- Understand weak points and address them persuasively
- Make reasonable points driven by logic, policy, and analysis
- Use a persuasive theme and appropriately use legal authority
- Clearly understand the questions presented and the relevant legal issues
- Show thorough knowledge of the record and the facts
- Logically orders the argument and effectively uses the time permitted

Notes:

## III. QUESTIONS FROM THE COURT

Score:  /35

Poor	Fair/Developing	Good/Average	Very Good	Excellent
17 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 27	28 - 32	33 - 35

A top-scoring competitor will:

- Be responsive and rely upon the appropriate authority to answer the court's questions by direct reference or implication
- Persuasively emphasizes relevant legal issues and deftly handles weaknesses of the case
- Uses questions to advance the client's position
- Fluidly moves back into the argument after answering questions

Notes:

## IV. CLOSING AND REBUTTAL

Score:  /5

Poor	Fair/Developing	Good/Average	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

A top-scoring competitor will:

- Uses an actual argument and not a scripted statement
- *If applicable*, uses rebuttal to capitalize on the Respondent's weaknesses and questions from the Court

Notes:

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## V. Delivery

Score:  /10

Poor	Fair/Developing	Good/Average	Very Good	Excellent
3	4 - 5	6 - 7	8 - 9	10

A top-scoring competitor will:

- Conversational, not stiff or overly formal
- Tone of voice: inflection variety, moderate pace, indicates conviction

Notes:

## END OF ROUND

At the end of the round, and before providing any feedback, judges should total the scores below.

*\*Tournament Organizers will double-check the overall score*

Total Team Score:  /100

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