

# COMPETITION RULES



REGENT UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW  
LEROY R. HASSELL, SR. NATIONAL MOOT COURT COMPETITION

2025-26 RULES

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Competition Information	1
II.	Dates & Deadlines	2
III.	Rules	2
	1. Administration of the Competition & Responsibilities of Participants	2
	2. Competition Format	4
	3. Briefs	5
	4. Oral Argument	7
	5. Round Scoring	8
	6. Identity of Law Schools	9
	7. Awards	9
	8. Assistance	9
	9. Conduct	10
	10. Penalties	10

### I. COMPETITION INFORMATION

Competition Date: January 22-24, 2026

Competition Location: 1000 Regent University Drive, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23464

Competition Director: Lauren Kotlar

Competition Email: [mootcourt@mail.regent.edu](mailto:mootcourt@mail.regent.edu)

Competition Website: <http://www.regent.edu/nationalcompetition>

The Leroy R. Hassell, Sr. National Constitutional Law Moot Court Competition is designed to encourage law students with an interest in constitutional law to strengthen their appellate advocacy skills and to foster a continued spirit of kinship among competing teams.

### II. DATES & DEADLINES

All deadlines are at 11:59 P.M. ET

Problem Released: September 1\*

First Team Registration Deadline: September 5

Release of Team Briefing Assignments: September 8

Rule or Problem Clarification Request: September 21

Detailed Team Information: September 21

Brief Submission: November 10

Requests for Oral Argument Accommodation: September 10

\*The problem will be released only to teams that have registered and paid the fee.

### III. RULES

#### 1. ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMPETITION & RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPANTS

- 1.1 **Administrative Officers:** The Moot Court Board of Regent University School of Law (“Board”) hosts the Competition. The Committee of the National Constitutional Law Moot Court Competition (“Committee”), which is comprised of members of the Board, will apply and enforce these rules with due consideration for the teams and the Competition. The National Constitutional Law Competition Director (“Director”) will be responsible for the management of the Competition. The Committee and Director will work with guidance from the Board’s Faculty Advisor. All questions concerning the Competition must be brought to the attention of the Director as soon as possible at the email address noted above.
- 1.2 **Registration, Payment, and Refund:** Each team must submit a registration form containing all required information for the team and school, including the registration fee. The registration form and fee can be submitted online at <http://www.regent.edu/nationalcompetition>. The registration fee is **\$700 per team**, payable online with credit card or by check. The Competition will be limited to the first twenty-four teams to register. A team must submit the registration form and pay the registration fee to be registered. Each school may register one team as of the date of the first team registration deadline, and if the field is not full, may then register a second team. Schools may indicate the desire to register a second team when the first is registered and will be given priority to register the second team when second team registration opens after the problem is released. Any registered team that withdraws or is disqualified after registration will receive no refund, except as specified in rule 1.6.
- 1.3 **Eligibility:** Each team may be comprised of two or three team members. Team members must be current J.D. students in good academic standing at their home institution.
- 1.4 **Detailed Team Information:** Each team must notify the Director of the names and contact information of all team competitors and alternate, coaches, brief grader, and primary contact/representative(s) by the deadline noted above. A survey link will be sent to teams via the email provided in the registration form.
- 1.5 **Alternate/Substitution:** Each team may designate one alternate team member. The alternate may stay informed of the team’s progress but, as long as the member remains an alternate, may not contribute to research or brief writing. The alternate must be identified as the “alternate” in the list of team members. An alternate may be substituted for a team member only for good cause, such as severe illness or other similar extenuating circumstances. A team must obtain approval from the Director to substitute a team member after the problem is released. The alternate may not assist the team in its research or preparation of the brief unless and until substituted for a team member. If a substitution is made before the brief is turned in, the substituted team member may not provide any further assistance on the brief after the substitution.

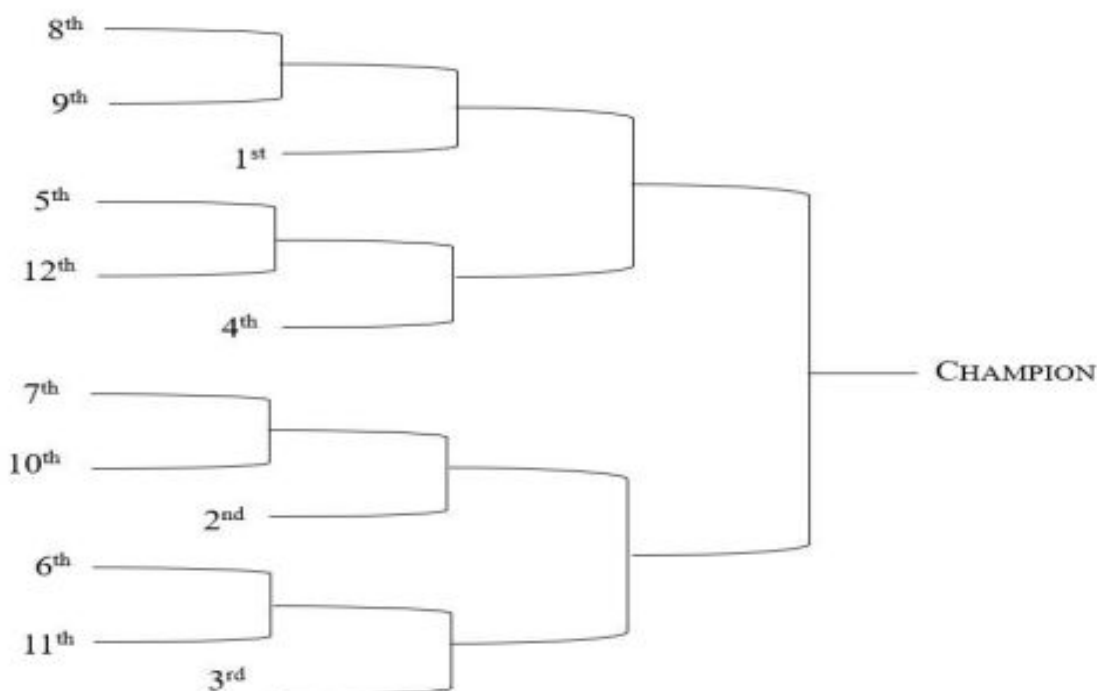
- 1.6 **Refund/Forfeiture Policy:** A registered team that withdraws after the First Team Registration deadline will be eligible for a refund only for an emergency, such as the team is incapacitated, the team's school has barred the team from competition due to no fault of the team members, etc. In any such situation, the team must notify the Director as soon as possible, and the Committee will determine if a refund is warranted.
- 1.7 **Team Number/Identification:** The Director will designate a team number for each team. This number will serve as the sole method of identifying the team during the Competition, including on the brief. Participants may not display law school identifying paraphernalia or otherwise divulge the names of their law schools directly or indirectly to the judges until after the completion of the Competition.
- 1.8 **Team Representative:** Each team must designate one representative to whom information may be sent, and with whom questions and concerns may be discussed, and provide contact information for the representative, including email address and cell phone number. This designation must occur when team members are registered pursuant to Rule 1.4. The representative must inform the Director of any changes to the school's contact information.
- 1.9 **Clarifications of Rules or Problem:** Requests for information or Rule or Problem clarifications must be sent to the Director by e-mail by the deadline noted above. The Director, with the assistance of the Committee and the Faculty Advisor, will issue a clarification of the Rules or Problem promptly to all teams via e-mail. In the event of an ambiguity in or conflict over the Rules, any interpretation provided via e-mail by the Director will govern.
- 1.10 **Modification or Waiver of Rules:** The Committee has the discretion to modify or waive any of these Rules as extraordinary circumstances may warrant, after consulting with the Faculty Advisor. Any such modifications or waivers will be communicated to all teams as soon as possible.

## 2. COMPETITION FORMAT

- 2.1 **Preliminary Rounds:** Each team will argue two preliminary rounds. The pairings for preliminary rounds will be released to the teams on or before the Monday of the week of the competition. Teams will be power seeded by brief score in each preliminary round, with teams in the top half of the brief scores randomly paired against teams in the bottom half of the brief scores. Teams will not be paired against the same team twice or against another team from the same school during the preliminary rounds. Each team will argue once for Petitioner and once for Respondent in the preliminary rounds.
- 2.2 **Procedure if an odd number of teams register:** Two "bye" teams will argue between the first and second preliminary rounds. The two teams will be the team with the middle brief score and the team with the score immediately below the middle score. The team with the middle score will receive a bye in the first preliminary round, and

the team with the lower brief score will argue Petitioner in that round. The team with the lower brief score will receive a bye in the second preliminary round, and the team with the middle brief score will argue Respondent in that round. In the supplemental bye round, the two bye teams will argue the opposite sides assigned above.

- 2.3 **Elimination Rounds:** The top twelve seeds will advance from the preliminary rounds to the elimination rounds. Teams will be seeded after the preliminary rounds by a combination of win/loss record and cumulative margin of victory. The teams will be power seeded by ranking. The top four seeds will receive a bye to the Quarter-final Round, resulting in the following bracket for the elimination rounds (the pairings in these brackets will not be adjusted to avoid two teams from the same school arguing against each other):



- 2.4 **First Elimination Round:** The pairings for the First Elimination round will be as noted in the bracket above. The higher seeded team will call a coin toss to choose which side to argue. However, if teams paired in this round argued against each other in a preliminary round, they must argue the opposite side of what was argued in the preliminary round.
- 2.5 **Quarter-final Round:** The four prevailing teams in the First Elimination Round will advance to the Quarter-final Round against the top four seeds and will be paired as noted in the bracket above. The higher seeded team will call a coin toss to choose which side to argue. However, if teams paired in this round argued against each other in a preliminary round, they must argue the opposite side of what was argued in the

preliminary round.

- 2.6 **Semi-final Round:** The four prevailing teams in the Quarter-final Round will advance to the Semi-final Round and be paired as noted in the bracket above. The higher seeded team will call a coin toss to choose which side to argue. However, if teams paired in this round argued against each other in a preliminary round, they must argue the opposite side of what was argued in the preliminary round.
- 2.7 **Final Round:** The two prevailing teams from the Semi-final Round will advance to the Final Round. The higher seeded team will call a coin toss to choose which side to argue. However, if teams paired in this round argued against each other in a preliminary round, they must argue the opposite side of what was argued in the preliminary round.

### 3. BRIEFS

- 3.1 **Side Briefed, Contents, and Format:** To have an equal number of teams briefing each side, the Director will assign half of teams to brief Petitioner and half to brief Respondent. Teams from the same school will be assigned to brief opposite sides. Briefs must contain only the following components in the following order: Cover Page, Table of Contents, Table of Authorities, Questions Presented, Statement of the Case, Summary of the Argument, Argument, Conclusion, and signature block. Appendices may be used only to report the content of statutes, constitutions, and regulations not generally available. Briefs must follow, in all aspects, the format prescribed for briefs by the Rules of the United States Supreme Court, except as otherwise specified by these Rules.
- 3.2 **Identification:** Only the team's assigned number and team designation (i.e., Counsel for the Petitioner or Respondent) may be used to identify counsel on the brief, which must not include information identifying the team members or school.
- 3.3 **Citation of Authorities:** All citations must conform to the most recent edition of The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation.
- 3.4 **Font:** Briefs must be submitted in 12-point Times New Roman font, except the cover page may include varying font size.
- 3.5 **Length:** Briefs may not exceed thirty pages. Any partially filled page will be counted as a page. Excluding the cover page, Questions Presented, Table of Contents, Table of Authorities, signature block, and any appendices.
- 3.6 **Page Size and Margins:** Each page of the brief must be 8.5 in. x 11 in. There must be one-inch margins on the top, bottom, left and right of each page. The page number is not included in this margin requirement.
- 3.7 **Spacing:** Typed matter must be double-spaced except for Questions Presented, table entries, footnotes, argument headings, and block quotations that comply with The

Bluebook, which must be single-spaced.

- 3.8 **Record Citations:** Citations to the Record should be in the following format: R. at 3. No parentheses should be placed around the record citation. The use of “id.” when citing to the record is allowed. The bluebook scoring rubric that will be used for brief scoring is included in these rules as an Appendix.
- 3.9 **Submission and Distribution:** Each team must submit one electronic copy of its brief in PDF format to [mootcourt@mail.regent.edu](mailto:mootcourt@mail.regent.edu) by the deadline noted above. Briefs must be saved in a “Team[number][side briefed]” format. For example, “Team1Petitioner” or “Team2Respondent.” If a team fails to properly serve its brief under these rules, the date of service will be considered the date the brief is properly received. Team briefs will be posted at [www.regent.edu/nationalcompetition](http://www.regent.edu/nationalcompetition) at four weeks before the first preliminary round. If, after submission of its brief, a team wishes to change its brief for a different version, it may do so if the alternate version is submitted before the brief submission deadline. When submitting a corrected version, the team must indicate that the alternative brief should be substituted for the original brief.
- 3.10 **Certification:** Each team submitting a brief must certify that the team members and coaches have read and understand the rules of the Competition, the brief has been prepared in accordance with the Rules of the Competition, and the brief represents the work product solely of the team’s members. This certification must be submitted with the brief through the link for brief submission. The Certification Form is attached to these rules. The certification must be submitted as a separate document from the brief.
- 3.11 **Brief Grader and Scoring:** Briefs will be anonymously graded by brief graders designated by the Committee and Faculty Advisor. Each grader will evaluate the briefs using the score sheet attached to these Rules. Each brief will be scored by five graders. The brief score will be the average of the three middle scores, i.e., the highest and the lowest of the five scores will be dropped.
- 3.12 **Plagiarism:** Teams may research and review, but not copy, any relevant legal source except as noted in Rule 8.4. The Director will review and have access to relevant sources that involve the issues in the problem and will check the teams’ briefs for plagiarism (e.g., including, but not limited to, copying or failing to properly attribute a source). Plagiarism will result in a penalty up to disqualification. See Rule 10.2.

#### 4. ORAL ARGUMENT

- 4.1 **Schedule:** The Director will determine the schedule for each preliminary round and notify each team of the preliminary round schedule by the week of the Competition. The times for rounds will be provided on the competition website at <http://www.regent.edu/nationalcompetition>.
- 4.2 **Time Allocation:** Each team will have thirty minutes of oral argument per round to be divided between two oralists. Each oralist must be allocated a minimum of twelve

minutes per round to argue. Each team must inform the Bailiff prior to the beginning of the round how the team members wish to allocate their time.

- 4.3 **Rebuttal:** The first Petitioner counsel must request and receive the Chief Justice's permission for rebuttal, which is not reserved by communication with the Bailiff. Rebuttal will be waived if this request is not made to the Chief Justice. The Petitioner team may reserve up to five minutes for rebuttal. The Chief Justice has the discretion to allow additional time for the advocate's response during rebuttal. Only one advocate may present rebuttal. It is not necessary to designate in advance who will give rebuttal, but the allocation must result in each advocate being allocated at least 12 minutes. Respondent may not present a surrebuttal.
- 4.4 **Communications During Rounds:** Competitors may communicate only with their partner, judges, and the Bailiff, and thus may not communicate with coaches, the third team member, or anyone else, during a round.
- 4.5 **Challenge:** A challenge to a round may be made only for a rule violation or serious misconduct by a competitor or unprofessional behavior by a judge (e.g., acknowledging knowing a competitor, falling asleep or not paying attention during a round, etc.). A challenge must be made by a competitor or coach to the Bailiff within 10 minutes of the conclusion of the round. Any challenge submitted after 10 minutes of the conclusion of the round is waived.

## 5. ROUND SCORING

- 5.1 **All Rounds Except Final:** For all rounds other than the final, the scores of the teams will be computed by weighing the oral argument two-thirds (66.67%) and the brief one-third (33.33%). Each individual competitor's oral score will be the average of the scores assigned to that competitor by the members of the judging panel. The team's brief score will be added to the average oral score of each competitor, and thus each round is worth a total of 300 points per team.
- 5.2 **Scoring and Critique:** Each judge will evaluate each advocate on a one-hundred-point scale using the score sheet attached as an Appendix to these rules. At the conclusion of each round, the judges may offer brief comments to each of the competitors addressing only stylistic or non-substantive issues. The Bailiff will inform the judges of time limitations for this critique and will track time to ensure that rounds remain on schedule.
- 5.3 **Tie In Any Round Except Final:** A mathematical tie in any round other than the final will be broken in the following sequence: (1) the team that won the majority of the oral argument judges' ballots; (2) the team with the higher brief score. If these methods do not differentiate the teams in a preliminary round, the round shall be considered a tie for the teams' win/loss records. If these methods do not differentiate the teams in an advancing round, the higher seed will be the winner.



- 5.4 **Seeding:** For seeding, a team's margin of victory will be the difference between the winning team's point total and the losing team's point total. If a tie occurs in a preliminary round, the winning team will be decided in accordance with paragraph 5.3 above and both teams will have a margin of victory/loss of zero.
- 5.5 **Final Round:** For the final round, the judges will submit scoresheets for the advocates. The team that wins the majority of the judges' ballots will win the competition. A tie on the ballots will be broken in the following sequence: (1) total oral score in the final round; (2) brief score; (3) higher seeded team.
- 5.6 **Access to Scores:** Teams and coaches will not have access to judges' scoresheets or scores. Within two weeks of the competition, the Director will send each team summary information about its performance, including brief score, round results, and oral average scores.

## 6. IDENTITY OF LAW SCHOOLS

- 6.1 **Non-Disclosure:** Team members may not reveal their law school's identity at any time before the completion of the Competition. Participants may not display any school-labeled paraphernalia during the Competition.
- 6.2 **Duty to Disclose Conflict:** Team members and coaches must notify the Director or Bailiff immediately if they know a judge before whom the team is slated to argue. Failure to do so will result in the team losing the round and may result in the disqualification of the team from the Competition. Except the Final Round, the Director will, if possible, reassign judges to avoid any conflict identified by a judge or by a team. It is not a conflict to have been judged by the same judge in a previous round, provided the team argued the opposite side (but the Director will make every reasonable effort to avoid having a team judged by a judge more than once).

## 7. AWARDS

- 7.1 **Awards Provided:** At the awards ceremony following the second preliminary round, awards will be given for the top three Petitioner Briefs, the top three Respondent Briefs, and the top five Oralists from the preliminary rounds, and the teams advancing to the Elimination Rounds will be announced.
- 7.2 **Eligibility for Oralist Award:** An advocate must argue both preliminary rounds to be eligible for an oralist award.

## 8. ASSISTANCE

- 8.1 **Brief; Artificial Intelligence:** Teams may not use generative artificial intelligence (AI) programs, including but not limited to ChatGPT or AI embedded in other programs such as Microsoft Word, Westlaw, or Lexis, for initial or primary drafting of the brief. Teams may use non-generative AI for legal research and word processing, including for

final proofreading that can include suggested textual edits but not generation of text. Teams may not receive assistance from anyone else, including a coach, team alternate (except as allowed by Rule 1.5), or members of another team from the same school, in preparing the brief, which must be the sole work product of the team members only. may not receive any assistance from anyone else, including from a coach, team alternate (except as allowed by Rule 1.5), or members of another team from the same school, in preparing the Brief, which must be the sole work product of the team members only.

- 8.2 **Oral Argument:** After the brief is filed, teams may receive assistance in preparing oral arguments.
- 8.3 **During Rounds:** During oral argument, a speaker may receive assistance only from the co-counsel arguing the other issue, and not from anyone else, including a coach or third teammate. Communication between oral advocates must occur only when the other team is arguing.
- 8.4 **Review of Briefs:** Before turning in briefs, competitors may not read or review any brief filed in any court or moot court competition related to the issues.

## 9. CONDUCT

- 9.1 **General Standard; Scouting Prohibition:** The conduct of all participants, including team members and coaches, will be governed by the ABA Model Code of Professional Responsibility and the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct. Scouting is prohibited. No team member still participating may attend the argument of any other school or team, including another team from the same school, or receive information from any person who has attended an argument of any other school or team. Any team found to have scouted will be disqualified from the Competition.
- 9.2 **Attendance:** Guests may attend arguments. All observers must be quiet, including silencing all electronic devices and not talking, and may not interact with the coaches or team members during the rounds
- 9.3 **Coaches of Two Teams:** If a school sends more than one team with only one coach, the coach may attend the arguments of both teams. However, the coach and team members may not discuss a round with the school's other team until both teams are no longer competing.
- 9.4 **Lateness:** All rounds will begin by the scheduled time. An oralist who is not present when a round is scheduled to begin will be penalized in accordance with Rule 10.2.

## 10. PENALTIES

- 10.1 **General Standard:** The Committee may assess penalties, including disqualification, as it deems reasonable and appropriate for any rule violation or act of misconduct not specified in Rule 10.2.

**10.2 Specific Penalties:** The following specific penalties shall be assessed:

- A range of a minimum of ten (10) points on the average brief score to a maximum of disqualification for plagiarism.
- Ten (10) points on the average brief score for both teams from the same school briefing the same side.
- Ten (10) points on the average brief score for briefing the wrong side.
- Ten (10) points on an oral advocate's average score for failure to allocate at least 12 minutes for that advocate's argument.
- Ten (10) points on an oral advocate's average score for failure to arrive before the schedule start time of a round.
- Two (2) points per calendar day on the average brief score for late or improper service of the brief, with a maximum of ten (10) points.
- Two (2) points for improper submission of the brief as required by Rule 3.9.
- Three (3) points on the average brief score for failure to submit the Certification required by Rule 3.10.
- Forfeiture of a round for a team's disclosure of its school before or during the round to a judge of that round.
- Unless otherwise explicitly stated in Section 9, any infraction of the rules in Section 9 will result in a loss of five (5) points from a team's overall score in the round in which the infraction occurs.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**BRIEF SCORE SHEET**

TEAM BRIEF NUMBER:

<b>BRIEF ATTRIBUTES</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS GIVEN</b>
<b>Cover</b>	Does the cover include all proper information?	(1) 0 - No 1 - Yes	
<b>Table of Contents</b>	Does the table list all sections in the brief in proper order and is it neatly organized?	(3) 0.75 - Poor 1.5 - Acceptable 2.25 - Good 3 - Excellent	
<b>Table of Authorities</b>	Are the citations sensibly arranged (separating decision by court and further separating Constitutional provisions, statutes, and secondary sources)?	(5) 2 - Poor 3 - Acceptable 4 - Good 5 - Excellent	
<b>Questions Presented</b>	Are the issues adequately described before the court? Are the issues phrased such that the answer naturally favors the party propounding them?	(5) 2 - Poor 3 - Acceptable 4 - Good 5 - Excellent	

<b>Statement of the Case</b>	Are the essential facts stated in as favorable a way as possible without leaving out material facts? Is the statement accurate?	(5) 2 - Poor 3 - Acceptable 4 - Good 5 - Excellent	
<b>Summary of the Argument</b>	Does this section provide a concise and persuasive summary of the arguments in the Argument?	(5) 2 - Poor 3 - Acceptable 4 - Good 5 - Excellent	
<b>Argument Structure</b>	Is the structure logical and indicative of the issues? Are the arguments organized in a clear and persuasive manner? Do the arguments flow logically, compelling a conclusion in the writer's favor? Was the Argument, including both the headings and text, persuasively written?	(15) 6 - Poor 9 - Acceptable 12 - Good 15 - Excellent	

<b>Identification of Issues and Use of Authority</b>	Have the leading cases been used? Do the authorities support sound legal analysis? Have persuasive secondary authorities been used? Has there been an excessive reliance on secondary materials? Have policy arguments been developed when appropriate? Has the brief appropriately analyzed analogous cases? Have the cases and authorities been used as effectively as possible? Has the brief distinguished unfavorable cases and important authorities?	(30) 12 - Poor 18 - Acceptable 24 - Good 30 - Excellent	
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<b>Overall Appearance, Style &amp; Persuasiveness</b>	Evaluate the overall neatness of the typing and physical presentation. Is the brief clear and unambiguous? Does the brief look polished from re-drafting and re-writing? Has there been appropriate (not excessive) use of quotations? Has the brief effectively used the allotted space?	(20) 8 - Poor 12 - Acceptable 16 - Good 20 - Excellent	
<b>Conclusion and Signature</b>	Does the brief contain a proper conclusion statement and signature block?	(1) 0 - No 1 - Yes	

**FINAL SCORE (out of 90 possible points): \_\_\_\_\_**

Do not score the Citations (10 points), which will be scored by another grader.



<u>Extemporaneous Ability:</u> 15 points possible Ability to speak without notes or with unobtrusive notes, speaking voice, poise, gestures, mannerisms, and courtroom etiquette. Poor Acceptable Good Excellent Perfect 3 6 9 12 15		of 15	of 15	of 15	of 15
<u>Closing:</u> 5 points possible Effective summary of the argument and conclusion. Poor Acceptable Good Excellent Perfect 1 2 3 4 5		of 5	of 5	of 5	of 5
Scorer's use only:	TOTAL SCORES	_____ ___ of 100	_____ ___ of 100	_____ of 100	_____ of 100



## **BRIEF CERTIFICATION FORM**

### **LEROY R. HASSELL, SR. NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL LAW MOOT COURT COMPETITION**

Law School:

Team Number:

Brief Side:

We hereby certify that team members and coaches have read and understand the Rules of the Competition, the brief has been prepared in accordance with the Rules of the Competition, the brief represents the work product solely of the team's members, and that the team has not received any other assistance in connection with the preparation of this brief.

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_