

El Dorado Mock Trial Team

ORANGE COUNTY CHAMPIONS 1988, 1992, 1994, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2019, 2024

ORANGE COUNTY RUNNERS-UP 1985, 1993, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2022

CALIFORNIA THIRD RUNNERS-UP 2025



What is Mock Trial?

A mock trial is much like a real criminal court trial. Team members, acting as attorneys, witnesses, a bailiff, and a court clerk, prepare a case for trial before real judges. All competing teams prepare the same case. Local teams compete in the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Orange County competition with the winner advancing to the statewide competition in March. The state champion has the option of competing nationally in May. Local teams also compete (with a different case) in the J. Serra Invitational Tournament in the spring.

What does a team do?

With the help of attorney and teacher coaches, teams prepare for competition according to established rules of trial procedure, which have been modified somewhat from those of formal trials. Team members learn the trial rules, rehearse their own roles in a trial, prepare strategy, and must be able to think quickly during competition. Teams are judged on their ability to follow procedures and present a plausible case.

Who is eligible to try out?

Any El Dorado student, grades 9-12, in good academic standing is eligible to audition. Prior experience is not necessary, though you should be comfortable with public speaking and excited about contributing to a team endeavor with a positive attitude and your best effort.

How many people are on the team?

It varies - there are 8 attorney roles, 8 witness roles, a clerk role, and a bailiff role on each team, for a total of 18 speaking roles. In some years, other students may be part of the team and enrolled in the class, but generally are not able to take part in the competition. Sometimes, one individual may have multiple roles on the team. Sometimes, two people may share one role. Most years, El Dorado fields two teams in the fall competition. In 2023-24, we also fielded two teams in the J. Serra Invitational. In 2024-25, we fielded one team in the fall competition and one team in the J. Serra Invitational.

How many teams will you field in 2025-26?

We'll see! We make our decision based on anticipated personnel on both the coaching side and the student side. At present, we only plan to field one fall team, with a possibility of adding a second team midyear to enter the J. Serra spring competition.

When are practices and competitions?

Practices are generally held on Thursdays within the 6:00-8:30 p.m. window and Sundays from 5:00-8:30pm. Evening and weekend practices allow our attorney coaches to be here after work, while one longer weekend and one weeknight practice help team members better manage their other scholastic and family commitments. Students are encouraged to meet on their own for team-driven practices as well, and attorneys may be asked to come to one extra practice some weeks to focus on specific skills. Generally, fall competitions are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings beginning in November and J. Serra competitions are held on four Saturdays in February and March. Students should only miss practices and trials under exceptional circumstances, and are expected to proactively communicate in advance should a conflict arise.

Is Mock Trial a class or a competitive team?

It is both! Students are enrolled in a semester "Academic Competition Elective" course on contract and are also part of our competitive team.

Will I have to work hard?

Of course. To be the best takes effort. We want people on our teams who are willing to give this their best offering, have a positive, team-oriented attitude, and make a devoted commitment to excellence!

Is El Dorado any good?

Yes. We are one of the best teams in Orange County. We are the defending Orange County Champions and finished fourth in the 2025 California State Finals. We have been county finalists 14 times (the most of any school in the county), have been champions 8 times (tied for most in the county), and have won a championship in every decade the Mock Trial program has existed in Orange County! As well, one of our students has been named Orator of the Year, the highest individual honor in the CRF-OC program, in each decade, and more EDHS students have received that honor than any other school. We were also the 2023-24 J. Serra Tournament Champions. We are proud to routinely rank among the top 4-8 teams in Orange County and of the exceptional record we have earned over our 44 years in the program.

I'm Like So Busy and Stuff. What about . . . band. choir. sports. church. drama. etc.)?

Yes, we know you are busy. We are all busy. You need to be the one to decide how much you can handle. If you make the commitment to join Mock Trial, then we will expect your *absolute best effort*. All of our team members do many different things here at El Dorado and are still able to participate fully in Mock Trial. We are generally able to work out practice and competition conflicts that arise with other programs. El Dorado is committed to producing well-rounded students and we are committed to supporting that endeavor. We want you to do a great job in your classes, other activities, and mock trial.

Is Mock Trial fun?

Yes. (Wicked-Crazy-Fun!)

How can I try out?

We're glad you asked! Tryouts are held at the beginning of school year and typically consist of delivering trial material as both a witness and an attorney during an audition window and providing a written application, as well as potentially participating in strategy sessions regarding the current year's case, all of which are used to evaluate prospective members for placement on the team. We typically finalize roles and responsibilities in mid- to late September.



El Dorado Mock Trial Grads – what do they do?

EDHS Mock Trial team members are routinely among the elite students here at EDHS and at major universities throughout the nation. A significant percentage of El Dorado's Hawk of the Year, Golden Hawk Award, Distinguished Service Plaque, and Spirit of Commitment Award winners have been a part of our program. Team members have attended law school at, among other places, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Oxford, Cambridge, Georgetown, UCLA, UCSF-Hastings, UC Davis, LMU, and Chapman. Additionally, mock trial grads have gone on to elite undergraduate universities that include Yale, Stanford, Harvard, MIT, Northwestern, Dartmouth, UC Berkeley, UCLA, UCSD, UCI, UCSB, UCSC, UCR, USC, Cal Poly SLO, CSUF, CSULB, CSUSF, CSUS, Claremont McKenna, Chapman, Occidental, and Illinois. EDHS mock trial members have competed in collegiate mock trial at some of the country's best programs, including Cal, Yale, USC, UCLA, Northwestern, Georgetown, UCI, Boston College, UCSD, and Chapman, and have gone on to become, among other things, attorneys, doctors, teachers, directors, entrepreneurs, motivational speakers, law enforcement officers, military servicemembers, actors, and Congressional staff members.

Who are the Mock Trial Coaches?

Currently, our teacher coach is Mrs. Cavalluzzi, who is herself a four-year EDHS Mock Trial alum. Attorneys Tony Cavalluzzi, Nina Kovach, and EDHS alum Robyn Bladow all serve as attorney coaches, while other program alumni and supporters who now serve as legal professionals also frequently spend time at our practices to offer their wisdom.

What if I have a question you haven't addressed here?

If you or your grownups have any questions about Mock Trial, please contact Mrs. Cavalluzzi at (714) 786-9580 (x11303) or via email at scavalluzzi@pylusd.org