COMPETITION RULES

31st Annual Tulane Mardi Gras Invitational

January 21-23, 2027

New Orleans, Louisiana

Section One: Administration

The Mardi Gras Invitational is organized by the Tulane University Law School Moot Court Board and The Sports Lawyers Journal, which is published annually and edited by students of Tulane Law School.

These rules reference the Mardi Gras Invitational Committee (MGIC), which is a component organization of the Tulane Law School Moot Court Board. Headed by the Administrative Justices for Special Competitions, Anna Skidmore and Emma Schultz, the MGIC directly administers the competition by coordinating the joint efforts of student participants and organizers, judges, faculty, and practitioners. Other MGIC members include, but are not limited to, the Chief Justice, the Administrative Justice for Intraschool Competitions, the Administrative Justice for Business Affairs, the Appellate Chair for Intraschool Competitions, Justices of the Moot Court Board, the Editor-in-Chief and the Senior Managing Editor of The Sports Lawyers Journal, and faculty advisors to the Moot Court Board and The Sports Lawyers Journal.

Section Two: Teams

2.1 A team must consist of two or three law students attending the same American Bar Association (ABA) approved law school. Under these rules, an individual, who is pursuing a Juris Doctorate degree during the semester or quarter of the competition, is eligible to participate.

2.2 Each team entering the competition must submit a registration form and the applicable entry fee to the MGIC care of the Moot Court Board by **November 1, 2026**.

2.3 The deadline for submitting the finalized roster of team members is **December 1, 2026**. After this deadline, a team must obtain approval to substitute a team member. Team members may not be substituted, except for good cause such as death, severe illness, or other uncontrollable circumstances.

2.4 During the competition, anyone affiliated with a team, including but not limited to team members, coaches, and observers, may not directly or indirectly divulge their law school's identity to the judges until after the scores have been calculated and the results have been announced. Any violation of this rule may result in a penalty, up to and including disqualification.

Section Three: Courthouse Rules

3.1 Furniture and Equipment

a. All oral arguments will be held at the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, or the Louisiana Supreme Court unless otherwise indicated. Only the competition organizers, consisting of the MGIC, may move furniture or turn off or unplug any electrical or electronic equipment (including microphones and video monitors).
b. By participating in the competition, team members agree to refrain from moving any furniture, including the podium, or disturbing any equipment, including, but not limited to, monitors, microphones and electrical or electronic cords in any of the courtrooms employed for the Mardi Gras Invitational, even if the judge requests that a competitor move it. Any violation of this requirement may result in the imposition of penalties.

3.2 Participants and Observers

a. Prior to the competition, the MGIC provides the judges, attorneys, and staff of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana with a list of people associated with the competition. In addition to the team members' names, which must be submitted by **December 1, 2026**, each participating school must report the names of their coach(es), bailiff(s) and any guests via email to Anna Skidmore and Emma Schultz at **mardigrasinvitational@gmail.com**. The deadline for submitting the names is **December 28, 2026**. Each team is allowed a maximum of five guests.

Section Four: Competition Mechanics

4.1 On the morning of **January 21, 2027** there will be a mandatory welcome meeting. At least one representative per team must attend. During this meeting, the initial team pairings for Rounds 1 and 2 will be announced and brief scores will be returned.

4.2 Rounds 1 and 2 will take place on day one, **January 21, 2027**, of the competition. Round 3 and the Quarter-finals will take place on day two, **January 22, 2027**. The Semi-finals and Finals will take place on day three, **January 23, 2027**. Rounds will be held at the Eastern District of Louisiana (600 S Maestri Pl.), the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit (500 Poydras St.), or the Louisiana Supreme Court (400 Royal St.) unless otherwise indicated.

4.3 Each team will argue at least three rounds. The MGIC will set pairings based on the following criteria.

a. Round 1 – Teams will be power ranked by their brief score as compared with all other briefs on their side. (i.e. the #1 Petitioner argues against the last Respondent, the #2 Petitioner argues against the 2nd to last Respondent). A team will not compete against another team from the same school. MGIC may adjust pairings as necessary to avoid same-school matchups, and any such adjustment shall not alter the underlying seeing of the teams. Teams may not necessarily be arguing for the party they briefed.
b. Round 2 – Teams will be power ranked by their brief score as compared with all other briefs on their side. A team will not face the same team they faced in Round 1. Teams will argue the opposite side they did in Round 1. A team will not compete against another team from the same school.

c. Round 3 – Teams will be power matched by win/loss record (i.e. 2-0 team with the highest cumulative margins competes against 2-0 team with the lowest cumulative margins, etc.; 1-1 team with the highest cumulative margins competes against 1-1 team with the lowest cumulative margins, etc.; 0-2 team with the highest cumulative margins competes against 0-2 team with the lowest cumulative margins). If an odd number of teams have the same record, then the lowest seeded team will play the highest seeded team with one more loss. A team will not compete against another team from the same school. MGIC will randomly assign the sides each team will argue.

4.4 A bye round will be necessary if an odd number of teams compete in the competition. In this circumstance, one team will be selected at random to argue twice in Round 1. The selected team will not argue during Round 2; rather, this team will argue once for the Petitioner and once for the Respondent during Round 1.

4.5 If an odd number of teams compete, the highest seeded team will receive the bye in Round 3. That team will automatically be the top seed in the quarterfinals.

4.6 Eight teams advance to Quarter-finals. Teams will be seeded and placed in a bracket according to the following criteria: (a) Win/Loss record, and (b) Highest cumulative margin of victory. The highest seeded team will face the lowest seeded team, etc. However, the competitor organizers will alter the pairings prior to Quarter-finals to prevent two teams from the school from competing against one another in subsequent rounds (with the exception of the Final Round). A coin toss prior to the start of Quarter-final Rounds will determine which team gets to choose the side it would like to argue.

4.7 Quarter-final winners (4 teams) will advance to the Semi-Final Round. A coin toss prior to the start of the Semi-final round will determine which team gets to choose the side it would like to argue.

4.8 Semi-final winners will compete in the Final Round. A coin toss prior to the start of the Final Round will determine which team gets to choose the side it would like to argue.

Section Five: Oral Argument

5.1 Two team members will argue in each round of oral argument. A team may vary which members will argue from round to round. Only those team members who are arguing may sit at the counsel table.

5.2 Oral argument is limited to a total of 30 minutes per team.

a. Although a team may divide its time allotment as it chooses, no more than 17 minutes may be allotted to one advocate.
b. At the beginning of the argument, the Petitioner may reserve up to a maximum of three minutes for rebuttal. Note that the rebuttal time is deducted from the 30 minutes allocated, so only the amount of time remaining at the end will be available for rebuttal regardless of the amount of time reserved (i.e. if Petitioner uses 29 minutes for oral argument, only 1 minute will remain for rebuttal despite the reservation of 3 minutes at the beginning). Although the Petitioner need not identify which team member will do the rebuttal prior to the round, only one team member may argue rebuttal.
c. The judges retain the discretion to extend any advocate's time.

5.3 The MGIC will assign sides for the first three rounds at the competition. In the first round, teams, if possible, will argue the side they wrote the brief for. In the second round, teams will argue the opposite side they argued in round 1. In round 3, MGIC will randomly assign the sides. In every other round, a coin toss will determine which team has the choice of side.

Section Six: Briefs

6.1 After the registration deadline, the MGIC will notify each team whether they have been assigned to write the brief of Petitioner or Respondent and will assign each team an anonymous identification number.

6.2 All citations should conform to the most recent edition of A Uniform System of Citation (the Bluebook).

6.3 Briefs must be in Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, with page numbers at the top of each page. Briefs not in this format will be subject to a penalty.

6.4 Briefs shall not exceed 7,500 words. The word limit does not include the brief cover or pages containing the question(s) presented, the table of contents, the table of authorities, or the appendix. All other sections or parts of the brief not specifically excluded will count towards the word limit.

6.5 All briefs must be aligned on the left using a paper size of 8.5 x 11".

6.6 Typed matter in the briefs must be double-spaced, except footnotes, argument headings, and extended quotations, which may be single-spaced. Footnotes, argument headings, and single-spaced quotations must appear in the same size font as the option selected under subsection 3 of this Rule.

6.7 The packet is OPEN, meaning that in the brief teams are allowed to cite to cases and statutes cited in the problem packet as well as cases and statutes outside of the packet. It is up to the team members to use their collective judgment when examining the credibility of the source cited and briefs will be graded accordingly.

6.8 Clarification of Packet

a. All questions related to clarification of the packet issues must be submitted in writing through a letter addressed to Anna Skidmore and Emma Schultz, AJs for Special Competitions, in an email to **mardigrasinvitational@gmail.com** with a subject heading titled "Mardi Gras Invitational Packet Clarification."
b. The deadline for receipt of clarification issues or questions is **November 11, 2026.**

6.9 Service of Briefs

a. Each team must serve two electronic copies of its brief upon the Tulane Moot Court Board at the **mardigrasinvitational@gmail.com.**

6.10 Deadlines for Service

a. **The electronic copy must arrive by 5:00pm CST on Tuesday, December 22, 2026.**
b. Any failure to comply with these deadlines for service will result in a penalty.

6.11 Method of Delivery

a. The electronic copies of the brief must be sent both as a searchable/OCR Portable Document Format file (Adobe PDF) and as a Word Document and attached to an email addressed to **mardigrasinvitational@gmail.com.**
b. The subject line of the electronic brief submission must contain the words "Team [anonymous identification #] Mardi Gras Invitational Brief Submission."
c. The email attachment must contain only the electronic copies of the submitted brief.
d. The email and the attachment must be free of viruses or any other files.
e. The electronic copies of all briefs will be emailed to all participating teams no later than **January 14, 2027, one week before competition.**

6.12 Brief Covers

a. Only the anonymous identification number (relating to either the law school or individual team members) may be included on the cover and inside the brief.
b. The electronic version of the brief should have only one cover. The cover should include the team's anonymous identification information (only the numerical designation assigned by the MGIC – team member names and/or the law school name should be omitted) in the lower right corner. No identifying information (relating to either the law school or individual team members) may be included on the cover or anywhere inside the brief.

6.13 A team may not revise or amend its brief after submission, even if the deadline for submission has not yet passed.

Section Seven: Scoring

7.1 Brief Scoring

a. Members of the MGIC will serve as anonymous brief judges. The briefs are blind-graded, meaning that the brief judges will have no knowledge of the identifying information of any particular law school or team member.
b. Each judge will evaluate the briefs based upon a standard scale
c. The grading criteria will include, but not be limited to, knowledge of the substantive area of the law, persuasiveness, organization, style, form, appearance, and adherence to proper Bluebook format.

7.2 Oral Argument Scoring

a. Members of the bench and bar will serve as oral argument judges. Each advocate will be evaluated under a standardized rubric. If necessary due to last minute judge cancellations or no-shows, a third-year law student with moot court argument experience may serve as a judge.

7.3 In Rounds 1, 2, and 3 of the competition, each team's score will be computed by weighing the oral argument 60% and the brief 40% to determine which competitors will proceed to the Quarter-final round. In all subsequent rounds, the winner will be the team that receives the higher argument score on a majority of the ballots submitted by each of the oral argument judges; however, in the event that neither team receives a majority, the winner will be the team with the highest total argument score.

7.4 In the Final Round, a simple majority of the oral argument judges determines the competition winner. In the event of a tie vote, the team with the highest brief score will be the winner.

7.5 The team's margin of victory will be calculated by subtracting the losing team's point total from the winning team's point total.

7.6 If there is a tie after the oral argument and brief scores are considered, the team with the higher oral argument scores will be declared the winner of the round. In this situation, the margin of victory for the winning team will be zero and the margin of loss for the losing team will be zero.

7.7 In the event that a team forfeits an assigned round due to an unforeseeable occurrence (i.e. serious illness), the team's scheduled opponent will be declared the winner of that round and their margin of victory will be one point, unless their opponent's reduced brief score is more than one point higher than the forfeiting team's reduced brief score, in which case the margin of victory for the opponent (the non-forfeiting team scheduled in that round) will be the difference between the reduced brief scores. For the purpose of this Rule, the reduced brief score constitutes a reduction of the brief score on a 0/100 point scale to a 0/40 scale in accordance with the weight assigned to the brief score in relation to the oral argument scores for purposes of determining the winners of Rounds 1 through 3.

Section Eight: Assistance

8.1 Under the rules of this competition, a team may only receive limited faculty assistance, which is defined to be exclusively a discussion of the issues with the students. Until the team brief is submitted to the MGIC, no one other than a student member of that team may review or comment upon a draft of the brief. Further, research on the competition topic may only be conducted by student team members. The MGIC will consider a submitted brief to constitute each team member's attestation that no member has received impermissible assistance with preparation of the team's brief and that the entire team has complied with all provisions of this rule.

8.2 Team members may not use any generative artificial intelligence or artificial-intelligence-assisted tool in connection with any aspect of the competition, including the preparation of the written brief or oral argument. Prohibited uses include but are not limited to ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Claude, etc.

8.3 After the brief is filed, team members may receive assistance from personnel in the preparation of their oral arguments.

8.4 During oral argument, an advocate may only receive assistance from another team member seated at counsel table.

Section Nine: Protests

9.1 Written Brief

a. A protest against another team's brief must be served on or before the fifth day after the briefs have been made available or posted to the website. The protest must be in writing and state with specificity the nature of the complaint and the particular rule the brief allegedly violated.
b. The team alleged to have committed a violation will be accorded an opportunity to respond to the MGIC. This response must be served on or before the fifth day after the

protest was filed. Failure to file a response constitutes an admission of all allegations raised by the protest.

c. The MGIC may raise any rule violation on its own accord.
d. Protests must be served by overnight delivery or via email to **mardigrasinvitational@gmail.com.** The service date is considered the mailing date, for the purpose of this rule.
e. If the deadline for service falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the time for service will be extended to the end of the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.
f. All participating teams will be notified of the MGIC's final ruling on a protest prior to the beginning of the competition.

9.2 Oral Argument

a. Oral argument score sheets will be provided for review to a designated representative of a team during certain designated times each day of the competition. Those times will be provided at the mandatory meeting that will take place on the morning of the first day of the competition.
b. Any and all protests arising out of oral argument will be considered waived unless the protest is brought to the attention of the MGIC within 15 minutes of the conclusion of the round.

Section Ten: Penalties

10.1 The MGIC, in its sole discretion, will assess penalties for violation of these rules. Uniform penalties will be assessed for each type of violation.

10.2 Brief Score Penalties

a. All brief penalties are deducted from the reduced average brief score.
b. Teams who fail to submit their electronic briefs by the deadline will receive an initial five-point penalty against their brief score, with an additional 5-point penalty for every subsequent 24-hour period that their brief is late.

10.3 Additional violations will be assessed by the MGIC based on the circumstances.

10.4 Furniture-Moving Penalties: The unauthorized moving of furniture or any other item in the courtroom shall result in the imposition of significant penalties, up to and including disqualification, depending on the circumstances.

Section Eleven: Information

11.1 The MGIC will provide additional information on the Mardi Gras Invitational, including the anonymous identification number for each team participating, after the registration deadline. The competition problem will be posted to the official website.

Any request for information or rule interpretation should be sent in writing to **Anna Skidmore and Emma Schultz**, the AJs for Special Competitions, via email at **mardigrasinvitational@gmail.com**, respectively, or via U.S. mail to:

Ms. Skidmore and Ms. Schultz

Moot Court Board, Office 265

Tulane University Law School, Weinmann Hall

6329 Freret Street

New Orleans, LA 70118-6231

11.2 Send questions regarding brief interpretation and rule issues to the above addresses only.

Section Twelve: Scouting

12.1 Scouting is prohibited. No team member still participating is permitted to attend the argument of any other team or receive information from any person who has attended an argument of any other team.

12.2 If a school sends two teams, faculty advisors are permitted to attend the argument of each of their teams.

Section Thirteen: Awards

13.1 Awards will be given to the first place team, the second place team, the semi-finalists, the top three individual oralists, and the top three briefs.

13.2 Best Brief will be given to the team with the highest brief score. Second Best Brief will be given to the team with the second to highest brief score. Third Best Brief will be given to the team with the third to highest brief score.

13.3 In order to be eligible for the individual oralist awards, competitors must compete in at least two (2) of the three (3) preliminary rounds of the competition. If a competitor competed in more than two (2) rounds, then the scores from the round he or she achieved the lowest score in will be dropped when calculating the average score used for the best oralist determination. (i.e. An individual who competed in all three (3) preliminary rounds with average scores of 70, 80, and 90, respectively, will have the score of "70" dropped, therefore have an average score of 85 for purposes of determining best oralist.) Subject to those conditions, Best Oralist will be the individual with the highest average oral argument scores in the first three (3) rounds of the competition. Second Best Oralist will be the individual with the second highest average oral argument scores in the first three (3) rounds of the competition. Third Best Oralist will be the individual with the third highest average oral argument scores in the first three (3) rounds of the competition.

Section Fourteen: Team Cancellations

14.1 If a team cancels for whatever reason more than one (1) week before the first round of the competition, the team will be completely removed from the competition, as if they never registered, and the preliminary rounds will be adjusted accordingly.

14.2 If a team cancels less than one (1) week before the first round of the competition, then it will be treated as if that team forfeited the preliminary (first three) rounds.

14.3 Registration fee: If a team cancels at any time after the registration deadline closes, their registration fee is forfeited if another team cannot be found to take its place.

Section Fifteen: Interpretation of the Rules

15.1 The MGIC, in its sole discretion, shall interpret these rules. All decisions are final.

15.2 Requests for interpretations of the Rules must be submitted in writing at the earliest date possible and will be answered as promptly as possible. All inquiries should be addressed by email to mardigrasinvitational@gmail.com.

15.3 Any major clarification of the rules shall be sent to all participating schools by email and posted on the website. The MGIC will determine whether a Rules clarification is a major one.

15.4 All such interpretations and any decisions, penalties, or other actions will be made by the MGIC. All such determinations shall be final and binding on all participants.

15.5 The MGIC reserves the right to make any further rules and procedures deemed advisable for the conduct of the Tournament and shall promptly notify all registered teams of any such changes. The MGIC reserves the right to modify, in whole or in part, any rules, grading forms, and guidelines.

Section Sixteen: Supplemental Rules and Standards

16.1 The MGIC, in its sole discretion, may create additional rules and standards to address situations not presently covered or contemplated by these rules.

Section Seventeen: Conduct

17.1 The conduct of all participants in the competition, including team members, coaches, bailiffs, and student organizers, will be governed by the standards set out in the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct.

17.2 MGIC may take reasonable administrative action necessary to preserve fairness and orderly administration of the competition when circumstances are not expressly addressed in the rules.