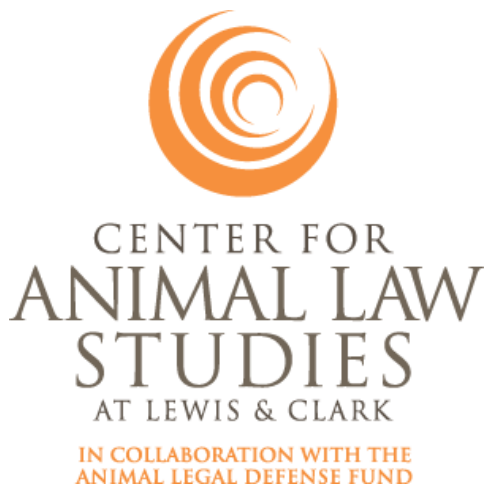




**CLOSING ARGUMENT  
COMPETITION  
2015 RULES**

**PRESENTED BY**



**HOSTED BY**

**Harvard Law School**

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## RULE I. ORGANIZATION

The National Animal Law Competitions (NALC) is an inter-law school competition comprised of three separate events:

- Appellate Moot Court Competition
- Closing Argument Competition
- Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition

NALC is an exciting and educational event presented annually by Lewis & Clark Law School's Center for Animal Law Studies in collaboration with the Animal Legal Defense Fund. The purpose of the event is to provide law students an opportunity to develop knowledge in the field of animal law and hone their written and oral advocacy skills.

## RULE II. PARTICIPATION

### A. Competitor Eligibility.

Participation in the Closing Argument Competition is done on an individual basis. The Competition will be open to the first sixteen (16) students to register and arrange payment. Should the competition sell out, potential competitors are encouraged to register for the waitlist as a spot may become available.

Each law school may enter up to three (3) competitors. Competitors must be full- or part-time students seeking a J.D. or LL.M. at any ABA-approved law school in the United States and who have completed at least one year of their studies.\*

*\* First year law students are eligible to compete in the Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition of the National Animal Law Competitions. Competitors from non-ABA-approved law schools may be considered at the discretion of the competition administrators.*

### B. Substitution.

In the event of an emergency, schools may send an alternate competitor. The law school or individual competitor must immediately notify the competition administrators of the change.

### C. Registration.

Registration for the 2015 competitions will open on Monday, November 3, 2014, at 11 a.m. (PST). Registrations will not be accepted before then. Registrations are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. The online process will shut down automatically when the event is at capacity. To be added to the waitlist, email Competition Administrator Liberty Mulkani at [lmulkani@aldf.org](mailto:lmulkani@aldf.org). The waitlist order will be determined by the time and date stamp of the email request.

Competitors must submit a completed registration form and arrange payment for the registration fee of \$225 (per individual competitor). Registrations may be completed by the individual competitor or by an agent acting on their behalf.



Should a competitor need to withdraw from the competition, a full refund minus a \$15.00 administrative fee is available until December 19, 2014. There will be no refunds after that date.

Because many law schools hold in-school competitions to select their representatives, specific competitor information is preferred but not necessary at the time of registration. All other fields on the registration form, however, must be complete and payment must be arranged. If not, the registration will not be valid. Specific competitor information must be supplied to Liberty Mulkani, [lmulkani@aldf.org](mailto:lmulkani@aldf.org), as soon as possible.

## **RULE III. COACHING**

### **A. Restrictions.**

Competitors *may not* receive any coaching, advice, or assistance from individuals who:

1. Are involved with the writing of the 2015 Closing Argument Competition problem;  
or
2. Are serving as a judge for the 2015 Closing Argument Competition.

The burden of determining coaching eligibility rests on the competitor. Therefore, competitors should first inquire whether a would-be coach was involved in authoring the problem or if he or she will be a judge for the 2015 Closing Argument Competition.

### **B. During the Competition.**

Every effort is made to make NALC as fair as possible. Consequently, competitors and their coaches may not observe any rounds other than those in which they or their team are participating. Otherwise, all rounds are open to the public,

### **C. Communication with Judges.**

During the competition, competitors and coaches may not discuss the rules, problem, cases, strategy, or scoring, and may not receive any advice, feedback, or coaching from the NALC judges beyond feedback provided immediately after each round. Likewise, competitors may not disclose what school they represent until the competition has concluded.

## **RULE IV. COMPETITION PROBLEM**

### **A. Distribution and Components.**

The problem consists of the Trial Record, which includes a transcript of testimony, documents received in evidence, and jury instructions. The problem is posted on the NALC website, under “Problems.” Please visit: [www.NationalAnimalLawCompetitions.org](http://www.NationalAnimalLawCompetitions.org).



## **B. Questions and Competition Administrators.**

Contact Competition Administrator Liberty Mulkani, (lmulkani@aldf.org), with questions. Be sure to read both the problem and the rules in their entirety before requesting clarification. Also be sure to refer back to the rules from time to time prior to the competition. Ms. Mulkani will not be able to respond to questions that are answered in the rules and, if needed, can only provide minimal clarification on the problem.

Ms. Mulkani works closely with fellow Competition Administrator Natasha Dolezal. Competitors will be receiving communications from both administrations prior to and during the event.

## **RULE V. FORMAT OF PRELIMINARY ROUND**

### **A. Format of the Problem.**

Using the trial record, each competitor will prepare a closing argument for *either* the plaintiff or the defendant to be delivered to a panel of three (3) to six (6) jurors who also act as competition judges. The competitor need only prepare a closing argument for one side (plaintiff or defendant) and present this argument in both the preliminary round and, should she or he advance, the final round. Each competitor will be allowed a maximum of twenty (20) minutes to present his or her argument.

### **B. Preliminary Rounds.**

There will be one preliminary round during which each competitor will present a closing argument to a panel of jurors/judges in a standard jury trial format. Competitors and their coaches will not be permitted to sit in on other closing arguments during the preliminary round and will be called into the room one at a time. Otherwise, rounds are open to the public.

### **C. Format of Argument.**

At the commencement of each presentation, the competitor shall introduce him or herself and inform the jurors/judges for which party they are delivering his/her closing argument. The competitor will then be allowed a few moments to prepare for delivery of his or her argument. When the jurors/judges are ready to begin, the Bailiff/Timekeeper will announce that the competitor may begin and the twenty (20) minute time period will commence.

### **D. Timekeeping.**

The Bailiff/Timekeeper will display a green card until only three (3) minutes of the competitor's allotted time remain. At the three (3) minute mark, a notice will be given (a card displaying the number three (3) will be displayed). When one (1) minute remains, a yellow card will be displayed. When the competitor's time has expired, a red card will be displayed, signaling that the competitor must conclude promptly.



## RULE VI. VISUAL AIDS AND PROPS

Visual aids are a scored element of the Closing Argument Competition. Visual aids and props may include posters, boards, enlarged photographs, or other items. This shall not include any photograph not provided in the competition problem. Competitors may also fulfill this element entirely through the use of PowerPoint. Competitors wishing to use PowerPoint must email a copy of their PowerPoint presentation to the Competition Administrator (lmulkani@aldf.org) no later than 5:00 p.m. (PST), February 23, 2015, to be pre-loaded onto the presentation room computer. Any PowerPoint presentations received after this deadline will not be accepted. A computer, a PowerPoint projector and two easels will be available for use during a competitor's closing argument.

## RULE VII. SCORING

### A. Scoring

Each individual juror/judge will be asked to rate each competitor on five different factors using a scale of one (1) to ten (10); representing the following:

- 1 - 2:** Below average performance
- 3 - 4:** Minimum level of acceptability
- 5 - 6:** Average performance
- 7 - 8:** Good performance
- 9 - 10:** Outstanding performance

The scores from all five juror/judges are then added together and averaged for each competitor. The maximum score that any competitor may receive from both the individual juror/judge, and after averaging all five juror/judges score sheet, is 50 points.

### B. Scoring Considerations

Each juror/judge will consider the following factors in assigning a rating to each competitor:

1. Use of facts (1-10 points). Selecting and using the strongest facts effectively, including the ability to address negative facts. Stating facts accurately and not misrepresenting them.
2. Use of jury instructions (1-10 points). Educating the jury as to the criteria to be used in rendering a verdict. Effectively weaving in discussion of the jury instructions with the facts.
3. Persuasive content of presentation (1-10 points). Whether the presentation is persuasive, creative and memorable.
4. Demeanor (1-10 points). Demonstration of a professional level of confidence, delivery, pronunciation, diction, eye contact, appearance, overall effectiveness of the advocate.
5. Effective use of appropriate visual aids (1-10 points)



## RULE VIII. ADVANCING TO THE FINAL ROUND

### A. Judging Competitors.

Following the presentation of each argument, the jurors/judges will complete an evaluation for each competitor. At the conclusion of the preliminary round, the jurors will also rank the top four highest scoring competitors who will advance to the final round. The same panel of jurors/judges will score each of the competitors in all rounds.

### B. Tie-Breaking.

In the event of a tie, the tie will be resolved by consideration of the rankings given by the jurors/judges. The rankings will be evaluated by assigning to them the following points:

**1<sup>st</sup> = 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> = 4, 3<sup>rd</sup> = 3, 4<sup>th</sup> = 2, 5<sup>th</sup> = 1, no ranking = 0 points.**

The competitor with the highest ranking will advance.

### C. Notification of Advancement.

The names of the competitors advancing to the final round will be announced at the Saturday evening results reception.

## RULE IX. FORMAT OF FINAL ROUND

### A. Format Change.

The format of the Closing Argument Competition changes in the final round. In the final round, competitors will deliver their closing argument as if at a bench trial. The standard jury trial format will only apply in the preliminary rounds. In the final rounds, the “jurors” are now “judges” and will act as such. Competitors should be ready to answer questions interjected by the panel of judges in this bench trial format.

### B. Competitor Order.

The four finalists will be randomly assigned a presentation order in the final round.

### C. Round Closed to Finalists.

The competitors in the final round will not be permitted to view the closing arguments of their fellow finalist competitors. Otherwise, the rounds are open to the public.

### D. Judges.

The same judges will hear and score all arguments in the final round.

### E. Determining Placing.

Upon completion of the final round, the competition winner will be determined by considering the total score given to each competitor. In the event of a tie, the rankings



given to each competitor will determine the winner. *See* Rule VIII(B).

## **RULE X. AWARDS**

The winner of the competition will receive an individual plaque, as well as a plaque for display by his or her law school. The competitor placing second will receive an individual plaque and semi-finalists will receive individual certificates.

Winners' names and photos may be posted on the NALC, CALS and ALDF websites.

## **RULE XI. PENALTIES**

Penalties, including disqualification, may be assessed at the competition administrators' discretion for failure to comply with any rule or deadline set pursuant to these rules.

## **RULE XII. INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES**

Requests for interpretation of these rules should be made at the earliest date possible. Competitors will receive prompt notification of any new rules, as well as revisions to or interpretations of existing rules. All competitors shall be bound by any changes, effective at the time of notification.

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**The Center for Animal Law Studies at Lewis & Clark, in collaboration with the Animal Legal Defense Fund, wishes you an exciting and productive 2015 Closing Argument Competition. Best of luck to all competitors!**

