

GLENWOOD SPRINGS MOCK TRIAL

Student & Parent Information Packet · 2026 / 2027 Season

Mock trial is one of the most demanding — and most rewarding — activities a high school student can take on. It blends the preparation of a varsity sport, the precision of competitive debate, and the artistry of live theater. Students master a real case file, build legal arguments, examine and cross-examine witnesses, and perform under pressure in front of real judges. Along the way, they develop skills that pay off in every college classroom, job interview, and career.

Why Mock Trial?

At its core, mock trial teaches students to think clearly, speak persuasively, and stay composed when the stakes are high. A few of the things our students walk away with:

- Public speaking skills and presence — the ability to stand up, command a room, and make a case.
- Critical thinking skills — analyzing evidence, anticipating the other side, and adapting in real time.
- Teamwork under pressure — a team is only as strong as its preparation and its trust.
- Confidence that lasts — earned through hard work, not handed out.

And students get to compete and travel. Our teams travel across the country to face elite programs from around the world.

Fun, Friendship & Community

Mock trial is also a lot of fun. Between practices, road trips, and competitions, students become a tight-knit team and build friendships that often last long after graduation. They meet peers from across the country and around the world, celebrate wins together, pick each other up after tough rounds, and create the kind of shared memories that define a high school experience. For many students, the people they meet — teammates, coaches, and competitors — become some of the most meaningful connections and community in their lives.

Why Invest the Time?

Mock trial asks a lot. Practices resemble a competitive sport in their intensity, and tournaments require real commitment from students and families alike. But the return on that investment is extraordinary. The skills students build — argumentation, storytelling, composure, analysis, collaboration — are exactly the skills that distinguish standouts in college and in any career. Few high school activities develop so many of them at once, and even fewer let students practice them at this level of competition.

The Four-Year Advantage

Colleges are not looking for students who sampled a little of everything. They are looking for depth, commitment, and growth over time — a student who chose something hard and stuck with it. The most powerful move a student can make for a college application is to commit to one rigorous activity for all four years and rise within it.

Our four-year mock trial alumni consistently earn admission to top programs and universities. Four years of mock trial tells an admissions officer what a single season never could: a clear trajectory of leadership, resilience, and intellectual seriousness. That is why we encourage students to start as freshmen and stay all the way through — the compounding payoff over four years is real, both in skill and in how it reads on an application.

It's Not Just for Future Lawyers

A common misconception is that mock trial is only for students headed to law school. In reality, only about 10% of our alumni go on to become attorneys. The rest have built careers in engineering, design, fashion, finance, social media, Hollywood, academia, consulting, and so many other fields.

That makes sense once you see what mock trial actually teaches: how to analyze a complex problem, build a compelling argument, communicate it under pressure, and work as a team to win. Those skills are universal — they matter whether a student ends up in a courtroom, a boardroom, a design studio, a lab, or on set.

Where Our Alumni Go

Glenwood Springs Mock Trial has a long track record of sending students on to excellent colleges and universities. Among the over 300 alumni whose paths we've tracked so far, our students have gone on to attend schools such as:

- Yale University
- Vanderbilt University
- University of Denver
- Northeastern University
- Baylor University
- University of Colorado Boulder (including the Honors Program)
- Brown University
- University of Virginia
- Colorado State University
- American University
- Montana State University
- + *so many more*

Our alumni also go on to graduate and professional study at some of the most prestigious institutions in the world. It is amazing to see what our alumni go on to achieve!

Balancing Mock Trial with Sports, School & Life

We have a long history of helping students succeed not only in mock trial, but in their other high school endeavors — and well beyond, in their universities and their careers. That success is not an accident, and it does not happen alone.

It starts with a partnership between parents and coaches. Together, we help students build the habits that matter most: organized calendar management, planning ahead, clear communication, and a high work ethic. These are the same habits that carry students through demanding college courseloads and first jobs — mock trial is where many of them learn them for the first time.

We also work around students' other sports and commitments as much as we possibly can — especially when families give us advance notice. The one thing we cannot do is substitute a student during a competition; tournaments require the full team. So the earlier a conflict is on our radar, the more we can do to plan around it. When in doubt, communicate early and often.

Practice Schedule & Time Commitment

Mock trial is a serious commitment, similar in time to a competitive sport. Practices begin in mid-July. A typical week includes a Sunday afternoon/evening practice of 4–8 hours, plus 1–3 weeknights from 6:00–8:30 PM. Competition assignments are made after practices begin — not every student will be selected or qualify to attend every tournament.

2026 / 2027 Competition Calendar (tentative)

- Empire Atlanta — September 30 – October 5, 2026
- Empire Philadelphia — October 14–19, 2026
- Empire World Championship (Chicago) — November 11–16, 2026
- Boulder Battle at CU Boulder — late January 2027 (dates TBD)
- Regional Mock Trial (Glenwood Springs) — February 2027 (dates TBD)
- State Mock Trial — March 2027 (dates TBD)
- National Championship (St. Louis, if we qualify) — May 8–16, 2027
- Gladiator Individual National Championship (if a student applies & qualifies) — July 2027

Note: this calendar is tentative — there is always a possibility that some tournaments may be added or changed.

Attendance Policy — Mandatory

Attendance at practices and tournaments is mandatory.

1. Mandatory attendance at weekly meetings unless previously discussed with coaches because of other scheduling conflicts:

- a. Students must notify coaches in advance of the need to miss a practice;
- b. Students are expected to have completed assignments asked of them, including mandatory writing and editing of examinations and speeches at home in between meetings;
- c. We try to provide a practice schedule calendar in advance to avoid scheduling problems and conflicts;
- d. Communication is CRITICAL. We are trying to teach students the importance of responsibility, and that means letting people know when you have a conflict and won't be able to attend.

2. Attendance at tournaments is mandatory. If a student is on a team competing in one of the competitions listed above, they must be present (and we hope Parents/Guardians will come watch as well!!).

Get Involved

We are recruiting for the 2026–2027 season now, and we are open to high school students across the area (GSHS, RFHS, BHS, AHS, CRMS, CRHS, and home-school students). Learn more and sign up at gshsmocktrial.com/recruiting, or reach our coaches at icarlson@rfschools.com or zac.a.parsons@gmail.com. To join the program, please complete the information form on the following pages and return it to a coach.

Student & Parent Information Form

2026 / 2027 Season · Please complete all fields

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We have read, understand, and agree to the attendance policy above. We understand that attendance at all practices and tournaments is mandatory, and that the student must notify coaches in advance of any conflict.

Parent / Guardian signature

Date:

Student signature

Date:

Student Information

Student first name	<input type="text"/>
Student last name	<input type="text"/>
Preferred name / nickname	<input type="text"/>
Date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY)	<input type="text"/>
Graduation year	<input type="text"/>
New or returning member	<input type="text"/>
High school	<input type="text"/>
Shirt size	<input type="text"/>
Student email	<input type="text"/>
Student cell phone	<input type="text"/>
Student mailing address	<input type="text"/>

Parent / Guardian 1

First name	<input type="text"/>
Last name	<input type="text"/>
Relationship to student	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
Phone	<input type="text"/>
Preferred contact method	<input type="text"/>

Parent / Guardian 2 (if applicable)

First name	<input type="text"/>
Last name	<input type="text"/>
Relationship to student	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
Phone	<input type="text"/>
Preferred contact method	<input type="text"/>
Guardian mailing address (if different from student)	<input type="text"/>

Emergency Contact (if different from guardians above)

Name

Relationship to student

Phone

Health & Safety

Allergies / dietary restrictions

Medical information coaches should know

Medications the student takes or carries

Logistics

Known schedule conflicts (other sports, jobs, activities)

Anything else coaches should know

Acknowledgment

We understand mock trial is a major time commitment, similar to a competitive sport (see schedule above), and we are committing to participating in a full 2026/2027 season.

Parent / Guardian signature

Date:

Student signature

Date: