



2026 ORAL ARGUMENT PROCEDURES

These oral argument procedures are provided to clarify Rule V (D)(1)-(2) of the NELMCC Official Rules. Oralists are graded on four basic areas: legal reasoning, organization and preparation, courtroom presentation, and handling of questions.

Generally, there will be three teams present in a room, each representing a different party. Only two oralists from each team may argue in any one round and they must address ALL the issues. The two oralists may split the issues between them and determine the order of the issues any way they wish. Be aware that the judges may ask questions of an oralist about issues argued by his/her teammate.

If there are more than two members on a team, each must argue at least once in the preliminary rounds. During the preliminary rounds, except for byes, a team will argue once for each of the three parties. A team advancing beyond the preliminary rounds will be assigned to argue for a party without regard to how often the team has argued that party previously. Each team is limited to a total of 30 minutes to argue; 15 minutes for each oralist, except as discussed below in the rebuttal section. The bailiff will hold up yellow timecards visible to the oralists indicating 10, 7, 5, 3, 1 & 0 minutes remaining.

Each team may reserve up to 5 minutes for rebuttal. Rebuttal time may be subtracted from either or both of the two oralists' time allotment. Only one oralist may rebut. NOTE: A team may reserve less than 5 minutes for rebuttal.

Example: Oralist 1 announces that 5 minutes has been reserved for rebuttal; Oralist 1 argues for 13 minutes, Oralist 2 argues for 12 minutes; then either Oralist 1 or Oralist 2 rebuts.

The procedure for reserving rebuttal time requires notification to the bailiff and the chief judge. To reserve rebuttal time, the team must first inform the bailiff. The bailiff will be present in the courtroom before the judges arrive. The team instructs the bailiff that it requests rebuttal time, the amount of time it wants to reserve, and the amount of time to be deducted from each oralist's argument time. If a team requests rebuttal time but does not describe how to allocate the five-minute rebuttal time, the bailiff will reserve the entire five minutes from the first oralist's time. Also, rebuttal time can only be reserved in whole minutes. The bailiff will then bring in the judges.

At the beginning of each team's argument, the first oralist of each team must notify the chief judge the time the team has reserved for rebuttal. Rebuttal is made after all the teams have made their initial arguments. Rebuttal time previously reserved may be waived if the team does not wish to rebut the arguments of the other teams.

To ensure fairness to all teams, judges and competitors are to adhere to the time limits set forth in Rule V (D)(2), which states that "[j]udges, at their discretion, may interrupt arguments to ask questions but may not allow additional time." Oralists: When notified that your time is up, ask the judges if you may briefly conclude and then finish promptly.

The order of the teams in oral arguments is as follows. Rebuttals follow the same order:

1. State of New Union
2. Innocent Purchasers of Homes (IPoH)
3. United States of America