

MEMORANDUM

FROM David C. Schott, Director – The Center For Advocacy
DATE 3.10.2017
RE 2017-2018 Tryouts for *Trial Practice III – The National Trial Team*

On **March 30th and April 1st**, The Center for Advocacy (CFA) will be holding **TRYOUTS for *The National Trial Team (NTT)* for the 2017-2018 academic year in Room 180.**

First... congratulations on having the courage to try out. Having such courage is a big step in developing your critical thinking and advocacy skills. The rewards of being on the *National Trial Team* are exponential. You will learn a great deal and be as prepared in the world of trial practice as many practicing attorneys. If you successfully commit yourself, at the end of your experience you will be ready to embark on a very effective trial practice and litigation career. **You do not need to have taken Evidence or Trial Practice I to try out.** We know that you have likely not taken these courses yet.

What is The National Trial Team? Next year there will be approximately 28 to 32 students on The National Trial Team. Approximately 8 of these students will be returning veterans. **Important:** Only 16 students will travel to compete nationally each semester. The other students will receive intense coaching to compete in The Hoffman Cup and The Advocates Cup. Students on the NTT will work extremely hard, but it will be one of the most beneficial experiences of law school. NTT members learn how to analyze cases, become well-versed in the Rules of Evidence, become proficient in presenting cases for trial, and learn the value of working with others when preparing cases for trial. The NTT course is three (3) graded credits each semester. With instructor approval, students can be on The National Trial Team for multiple semesters up to 2 years, in both their 2L and 3L years. **Important:** Being on the team one year is not a guarantee that you will be invited onto the team the next year.

What is required of a member of the National Trial Team? Being on the team will require more work than the average law school course. It will require very rigorous classes and practices. Classes meet on Thursdays from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. Class times are mandatory. Additionally, practices for the team are usually held on Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the weeks (10-12 weeks/year) leading up to each semester's tournament, whether the tournament is a national tournament or one of SCOL's in-house tournaments (Hoffman Cup; Advocates Cup). Students should be prepared to work a minimum of 10 to 15 hours a week in class, practice, and case preparation. Students are also expected to be meeting with each other outside of class.

When are the tryouts? We have expanded the tryout process in response to student suggestion, so all students who are trying out can maximize their opportunities to put their best foot forward. The NTT course is by invitation only. **The Tryouts occur on Thursday, March 30, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and on Saturday, April 1st, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. STUDENTS ONLY NEED TO SIGN-UP FOR ONE SLOT ON EITHER THURSDAY OR SATURDAY, NOT BOTH. All Tryouts will be in Room 180.**

What is involved in the tryouts? The tryouts occur in 10 minute intervals. In **Part I** each student will present an Opening Statement or a Closing Argument (student's choice) to the NTT coaches. In an effort to reduce the amount of time required to prepare for the tryouts – particularly as Finals approach —Openings and Closings can be based on the factual scenario used in The Advocates Cup (which can be found on the CFA website), or whatever case a student desires. Openings/Closings should not be longer than 5 minutes. **Part II** will be an impromptu Cross Examination. Students do not need to prepare in advance for this second part. Students will be given a witness statement upon arrival and given 15 minutes to draft a short Cross Examination of the witness per the provided statement.

What happens next? Within seven (7) days after the tryouts students will receive an email letting them know whether they have been invited to be on the team. Approximately 24 to 26 new students will be invited to team. Students invited to join the team who have not taken Trial Practice I will be encouraged to enroll in *Trial Practice I – Intensive*.

What is *Trial Practice I – Intensive*? *TP1-Intensive* is the same course as *Trial Practice I – Basic Courtroom Skills*. So students who enroll in *TP1-Intensive* and who complete the course, will receive three (3) graded credits. *TP1-I* will be offered over the course during the first week of the Summer Session (**May 25, 26, 30, 31; June 1, 2, 3**). *TP1-I* will be taught by Profs Schott and Olson, and there will be current team members available during the course to serve in a “Senior Associate” capacity (i.e. T.A.) to assist the *TP1-I* students develop their advocacy skills. Once *TP1-I* concludes, all team students are invited to enroll in the team’s summer course which meets on Thursday evenings in the summer from 6 to 10:30 p.m. during the summer session. **Important.** A student’s inability to attend the **TP1-I** course (e.g. summer internship, etc.) does **not** automatically exclude them from being the National Trial Team.

How do sign-ups work? Tryouts are open to all current 1L and 2L students, and 3L-Evening students (i.e. anyone not graduating this spring). Sign-up slots will be posted starting at **1:00 on Tuesday, March 14th, after the Informational Meeting at noon**. After that meeting, the sheets will be posted outside of Suite 390.

Will there be an Informational Meeting? A non-mandatory meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 14th, 2017, at 12:00 noon and 5:30 in Room 180**. This is a great opportunity for students to ask questions about the NTT.

Will there be magic or sorcery involved in the tryouts? No. Magic and sorcery were removed from the program after the unfortunate “three-headed dog incident” a few years back.

Are there any forms that I need to complete for the tryout? Yes. There are two forms that each student must complete to be able to tryout. First, when you sign-up for a time slot, **you must email a completed [Candidate Information Sheet \(CIS\)](#) to Diana Sada (DSada@law.du.edu)**. The blank CIS form is available on The Center for Advocacy webpage as a [PDF](#) or as a [Word Document](#). (Your sign-up time slot will not be honored until you complete and submit this informational form.) Secondly, also on the webpage is a [Letter-Agreement](#). You will need to also read this form and submit it with your CIS. Please read it carefully before signing it. This assures that you are aware of the commitment required for the National Trial Team.

What should I wear to my tryout? Courtroom attire is recommended. (Suit and tie, etc.)

Should I use visual aids in my tryout? If you elect to use a visual aid, do not spend a lot of money on it. You are not being judged on your visual aids. Rather, we are looking at things such as the structure of your Opening/Closing, your efficiency of words, the clarity of your presentation, etc. But if such an aid helps you, then you can certainly use one.

Can I be involved in other student organizations or on a law review and also be on The National Trial Team? You bet. We have a strong history of students being members of The National Trial Team while also being on a law review, or an officer of The Moot Court Board, or the Student Bar Association, and more. In fact, we have had National Trial Team members who were simultaneously on a law review AND enrolled in a clinic all in the same semester/year.

Can I be on another mock trial or moot court team in addition to being on The National Trial Team? Unfortunately, no, because of the potential travel conflicts.

What are some other courses offered through The Center for Advocacy that will help develop my advocacy skills? Trial Practice III- The Mentors Practicum; Day 1 – The Civil Practice Lab; Day 1 – The Criminal Practice Lab; Trial Practice II - Depositions; Trial Practice II - Advanced Trial Practice; Trial Practice II – Litigation Technology; Trial Practice II – Voir Dire; Evidence Practicum, and; Motions Practice.

What other trial advocacy activities are there at SCOL? Any student not invited onto the team is always invited to compete in [The Hoffman Cup](#) in the fall (October), and [The Advocates Cup](#) in the spring (March).

We look forward to seeing you at the tryouts. Most of all, good luck!

Professor Schott, Director – The Center for Advocacy