



YOUNG BARRISTERS' COMMITTEE

Phillip C Jessup International Law Moot UK National Rounds

Introductory Remarks, 22 February 2018¹

Richard Hoyle, Chair of the Young Bar

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and welcome to the 2018 Jessup UK National Round. My name is Richard Hoyle and I am the Chair of the Young Bar of England & Wales, which represents barristers in their first 7 years of practice.

However, like you, I once sat in this hall listening to someone give an opening speech. And like you, I wished that the speeches would hurry up so that I could just get on with the moot. So I apologise for getting between you and your first pleading, but I hope you might lend me your ears for a few minutes.

Someone said to me when I was taking part in this competition that winning is not the point. I was very confident at the time that such a defeatist statement was simply wrong. Of course winning was the point. But I am equally confident now that it was the younger version of me that was simply wrong. Winning is not the point of this competition.

¹ With the usual caveat that there were minor differences in the delivered version.

How do I know that? Because every single team in this room, potentially bar one, will lose at some point over these next days. And it is statistically very likely that a team that does not lose here in London will lose in Washington. So if you see the most important thing about this competition is winning, you are likely to be disappointed. That is not to say that you shouldn't celebrate your victories, and mourn your defeats. If you are knocked out, you will undoubtedly reflect on your team's performance – perhaps that you should have moved to Prayer 2 a few minutes earlier, or that you thought your team mate let you down, or that the judge happened to be a complete idiot. There is a place for all that. But hopefully you can move past those emotions relatively quickly.

What then, is the real value of this competition? I would suggest there are three main aspects.

First, there is your own personal and professional development. If you are sitting in this hall then you have learned an entirely new area of law from scratch, in a limited period of time, without any direct teaching. You have put together substantial written pleadings. You will have become comfortable with speaking in public with a fluency that you could only have dreamed of at this time last year – although of course the nerves never entirely go away. These things are all highly impressive achievements, and once which both barristers chambers and solicitors' firms will place great store in. The written aspects of advocacy are a major part of practice that are often overlooked by students – this is a rare and perfect example which should be in full view on your applications.

Second, something which is partially personal and partially professional. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to get to know people from different law schools, to bond over a common experience, and to establish links which may lead to friendships or professional working relationships in the future. Take this chance. And if you return to this competition as a coach or a judge in future, these may be some of the faces that you will see again and again.

Finally, through your participation, you will hopefully have begun to realise the value of a rules based international order based on respect for international obligations, which facilitates, wherever possible, the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the law. The existence and maintenance of such a system is not automatic, and when it is threatened it relies heavily upon lawyers to make the case in its favour. I am hopeful that, regardless of your future areas of practice, this competition will have helped you to understand the importance of the rule of law, both international and domestic, and that if the time comes when you, the lawyers of the future, have to stand up for it, that you will not fail in your endeavours.

Thank you – and good luck with the competition.