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**'Deflategate' topic of Moot Court National Championship hosted by UH Law Center on eve of Super Bowl**

*Nation's 16 best teams will argue Tom Brady's 'appeal' before 'Supreme Court' on Jan. 26 – 28*

**Jan. 9, 2017** — Days before Super Bowl LI is played in Houston, another national championship will be decided in the city: 16 of the nation's top law school moot court teams will square off over the hypothetical question of how they would have argued the NFL's "Deflategate" controversy if the case had gone all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Hosted by the University of Houston Law Center, the Andrews Kurth Kenyon Moot Court National Championship draws teams from across the country to compete for the crown Jan. 26-28. Super Bowl Sunday is Feb. 5 at NRG Stadium.

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady was accused of violating league rules by conspiring to deflate footballs prior to the start of a 2015 playoff game in order to give him a better grip in cold weather. The league ordered a four-game suspension for Brady, which was upheld by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell. The suspension was vacated by a federal judge, but reinstated by an appeals court after which Brady declined further appeals and agreed to sit out four games at the beginning of the 2016 season.

The legal issue facing the young lawyers is how they would have presented the case for and against the suspension if Brady had taken the case to the highest court.

Over the course of three days, local, state and federal judges and attorneys will hear arguments at the Bob Casey Federal Courthouse in downtown Houston.

"People have heard a lot about "Deflategate" and what *actually* happened. But this is the perfect "what if" opportunity to argue what *might* have happened, especially with the Super Bowl occurring in Houston the following weekend," said Jim Lawrence, director of the Law Center's Blakely Advocacy Institute which conducts the tournament, held annually since 2009. Lawrence devised the system by which law school teams qualify for the championship based on points earned at major national tournaments during the previous year. "Who knows," mused Lawrence, "maybe Brady will show up to hear how his appeal might have turned out?"

The law firm of Andrews Kurth Kenyon LLP sponsors the competition and a symposium related to sports law that will be held during the day on Jan. 26 before competition starts that evening.

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