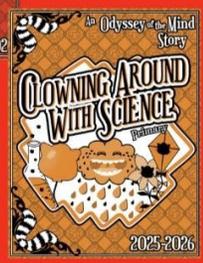
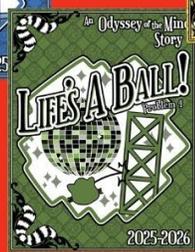
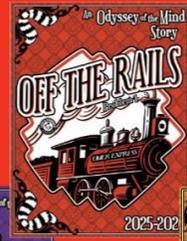
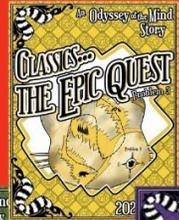
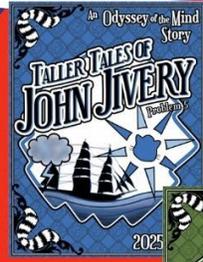




# VERMONT Odyssey of the Mind<sup>®</sup> STATE TOURNAMENT 2026

*Celebrating 47 years of Creativity!*

SATURDAY, MARCH 21ST  
CVU HIGH SCHOOL  
369 CVU RD., HINESBURG VT



### Questions ??

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Vermont  
OM Website



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## LOCATION:

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL, 269, CVU Rd., Hinesburg, VT

## SCHEDULE:

Check <http://vt.odysseyofthemind.org> for the final schedule. Each team is assigned a Long Term Performance time and a Spontaneous Competition Time.

8:30 am	Doors and Registration Desk Open
9:30 am - 2 pm	Team Competitions
10 am-2 pm	Store and Snack Bar Open
10 am-2 pm	OM Fun Zone – in the cafeteria ( <i>adult supervision required</i> )
2 pm	“Parade of Teams” followed by the “Coach Hat Competition” and Awards Ceremony (approximate end time 3:00pm)

*The Coach should set the team's activity schedule during the day at the Tournament. The Coach should determine when the team snacks, eats lunch, puts props together, rehearses, practices Spontaneous Problems etc.*

Teams should be in the pre-staging area at least 45 minutes before their performance times to get prepared and are advised to keep a close eye on the flow of the performing teams. Teams should be ready 15-20min before scheduled performance time when called upon by the Staging Area Judge. Be sure the team has all required paperwork in hand.

When the doors to a performance area close – they will remain closed until the Long-Term solution is complete. Late-arriving individuals will NOT be allowed to enter the room, even if the team they are there to watch is performing. *Please let all guests know the full Membership name, Long-Term Problem name and Division – we frequently have friends and relatives show up at the Info Desk at the last minute to see a team perform, only knowing they came to watch a “skit”. With so many teams participating, narrowing it down to a single team is difficult.*



## HIGHLIGHTS

**REGISTRATION:** Coaches may pick up their registration card. Only coaches should register. Teams will use this card as an ENTRY TICKET INTO LONG-TERM AND SPONTANEOUS COMPETITION. Nomination Forms for OMER awards are also available at the registration table.

**LONG-TERM AND SPONTANEOUS PROBLEM COMPETITION:** A copy of the final schedule will be emailed to the coaches and found at <http://vt.odysseyofthemind.org>. Be on time and ready to perform at the scheduled time. You may be placed at the end of the schedule, if you are late. Plan to cheer on fellow problem solvers from around the state.

**OM FUN ZONE:** In the cafeteria, there will be a photobooth, assortment of games, crafts, activities, a pin trading area, and more. Team members, friends, and families are all welcome to participate.

**PARADE OF TEAMS:** The Awards Ceremony will begin with a Parade of Teams in the Gymnasium. All teams should line up together near the Large Gym entrance just before the beginning of the Awards Ceremony. You may line up as individual teams or a full membership. Feel free to carry a banner or team sign. Teams will be announced as they enter, parade around the gym, and sit as a team.

**JUDGE AND COACH HAT COMPETITION:** The competition isn't quite over because now it's time to let the KIDS JUDGE the Judges and Coaches. This is a fun part of the event. We encourage all judges and coaches to participate. Start rummaging around for a unique hat you can wear, or better still...put your creativity to the test by making a hat of your personal design. Wear it all day or unveil it at the contest. The idea is to have fun and let the kids have some fun by giving them a chance to pick the winners. The Hat Contest will be held following the Parade of Teams. And yes...there will be prizes.

**AWARDS CEREMONY:** We believe that the process of creative problem-solving is the true reward and that every team presenting a solution is a winner. Coaches can download participation certificates in the Member Area of the Odyssey of the Mind website. However, because this is a competition, awards will be given to the top-ranked teams. OMER's Awards ribbons and certificates will be given to recognize teams or individuals exhibiting outstanding sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, or exceptional talent. OMER award nominations can be made by coaches, parents, spectators, etc. Those teams ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> will be invited to the podium to receive trophies and certificates. In addition, teams and individuals may be recognized for outstanding creativity by being awarded a *Ranatra Fusca* plaque and medals. ***Out of respect for those being recognized, we request that all Awards Ceremony attendees remain until the end.***

**OM STORE AND SNACK BAR:** The store will sell OM pins, shirts, bags, hats, snacks, drinks and more... *Be sure to check out the new 2026 Vermont Champ and Pin Set!*

*Vermont's Odyssey of the Mind program is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization-purchases from our souvenir store help to fund the operations of the Vermont OM program. We have no other consistent source of external funding. Proceeds from the sale of pins and OM Swag help to defray the costs associated with this program and allow us to keep fees low. We appreciate your interest in and support of Odyssey of the Mind. Donations can also be made via our website: <http://vt.odysseyofthemind.org>. THANK YOU...THANK YOU...THANK YOU!*

## HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION-

**In an emergency, dial 911.** The well-being of our participants and supporters is of paramount importance to the VT tournament organizers. To assist us and to ensure the safety of all participants in the State Tournament, we request that you make your team and supporters aware of the following important safety rules. There will be a 1<sup>st</sup> aid kit available at the registration desk. Also, there is a quiet space available upon request to the tournament director.

- No running or horseplay in the buildings
- No skateboards, rollerblades, etc. allowed in buildings except as needed in a long-term performance.
- Be sure to refer to the Program guide for prohibited items. Remember that real weapons or team-created replicas of weapons that are easily mistaken for real weapons are NOT allowed at the tournament.
- *We are very fortunate to have CVU allow us to use their space for the event. Please respect school property throughout the event. **Tobacco and Vaping use is strictly prohibited** inside the building and anywhere on school grounds. *Please share this information with all participants and attendees.**



## PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Make sure that all team members and parents understand the importance of being there and being on time. *We cannot make schedule changes easily. When the doors close just before a team begins their performance, they will not be opened again after the team finishes their performance. Please have guests plan to arrive early and stay throughout the entire performance.*
- Bring a copy of your Long-Term problem.
- Bring copies of any "Team" clarifications you may have received.
- Do an inventory of props and assign everyone something to carry (parents can carry things to the site).
- Bring a "repair" kit and toolbox for last-minute fix-its.
- Know where you're going (see the map at the end of this handbook).
- Know when and where the team will meet (be specific....it is a big building).
- Have all your required paperwork ready to go (forms available online).
- Have a general idea of the team's schedule for the day, but be *flexible*.
- Read all clarifications for your Long-Term problem.
- Read the Competition details contained within this document.**PARKING**

There is ample parking space available in the front or back of CVUHS. Parking in the Fire Lanes immediately adjacent to the building is NOT allowed. Pulling up to drop off people and props is OK, but cars should NOT be left unattended. Unattended vehicles will be towed at the Owner's expense. Please drive carefully, as several pedestrians (including children) will be present, especially after the Award Celebration.

## FOOD and DRINKS

**No Food and No Drinks are allowed in competition sites or the large gym.** The cafeteria space will be available all day for teams to gather, eat, and drink. Team members are responsible for bringing their lunch and desired snacks. Light snacks will be sold at the OM Store.

## COACHES RIBBON

Wear the “Coach” ribbon supplied at registration so judges can recognize you as the team coach when it is time for your team to compete and when you go to retrieve the team scores. Only people listed as “Coach” on the tournament registration form should wear a Coach ribbon.



## ETIQUETTE AND ATTITUDES

Coaches and accompanying parents are responsible for supervising participants throughout the day. Nothing more should need to be said in this section. It is a privilege to be here, and many schools and teams will be represented. Please have your teams behave with the respect and dignity the situation requires. Teams may be penalized or disqualified for inappropriate behavior at any time throughout the day. It is the coach’s responsibility to make sure that the team is ready to compete and acts responsibly after it has competed. All teams and individual team members are expected to exhibit behavior of which all of us can be proud. Some teams may have several hours of "FREE TIME". Please make plans to engage your team in some activities during their free time and encourage them to watch other performances. We will have some activities available as well. The State Tournament can prove to be a long and exciting day. As the day progresses, some young people can reach a point where they cannot moderate their behavior. You must make sure that your team is under your control. This is particularly true when observing or in areas near ongoing performances. Treat other teams as you wish your team to be treated. Please don’t touch or move another team’s props, disturb other teams during meetings, or insult them. Good sportsmanship is vital to having fun. Please help us ensure that everyone -- team members, coaches, parents, officials, and guests have a pleasant experience this day. The ultimate consequence of improper behavior by a team member or team supporter may be disqualification from the competition, or, in extreme cases, a membership may be suspended from participation in Odyssey of the Mind in the subsequent year. *Thank you in advance for your cooperation.*

## SURVIVAL TIPS TO COACHES

- Ask for help. Don't try to do it all yourself.
- Keep your sense of humor. Take a few minutes to savor the day at the Tournament. Enjoy yourself!
- Keep your papers organized by using a three-ring notebook. If you get a set of dividers, you can sub-divide all your papers, e.g., LT Problem, Cost Forms, Style Sheets, and Outside Assistance Forms.
- Have team members bring money for souvenirs or snacks from the Odyssey of the Mind Store.
- Call for help when you don't know. If you need help, see or contact the Tournament Director, Stephanie Fournier, 802-233-3844.

## PRE-COMPETITION

- Register the team and get settled.
- Go over the Schedule, find your competition site, and where the staging/pre-staging areas are.
- Find a location near the competition site to store and prepare.
- Put props back together and rehearse some more.
- Practice Spontaneous Problems
- Let the kids have some fun.

*It is always a good idea to see the team competition site before it is time to compete. Sometimes, the set-up is not as expected, so this gives the team time to figure out how they will position their props differently, etc.*

## PRE-STAGING AREA

- The Staging Judge will check in with the team about 15-20 minutes before the performance start time.
- The Staging Judge will meet the team to collect paperwork, check foot coverings, and so on.
- The Staging judge can answer questions if the team has any, ie. show the team where the three-prong outlet is located, etc.
- The time-keeper/announcer will ask (1) if the team allows flash photography and videotaping during their performance, (2) if team is using a strobe light, and (3) team's signal that its performance is finished.

## COMPETITION

- Go over the schedule with your team and their parents early to avoid confusion.
- Keep the team to yourself that day until they are finished competing.
- Have parents watch the team's competition.
- Allow time to get the props and team to the competition site.
- Allow time for the team to get ready.
- Remind the team that it is a privilege to be there and how PROUD you are of them. *(We have seen some coaches' speeches bring tears to the eye).*
- Create an environment where the team can do its very best.
- The announcer will introduce the team and ask, "Team, are you ready?" The team can respond enthusiastically with a "YES" or provide a short response that might relate to their solution.
- When the Timer/Announcer says, "Team, you may begin," the team should move their supplies out into the Performance Area and begin their performance.
- Be proud of them as they compete.
- Remember, the judges will come up to the team after their performance to look at the team's creations more closely and learn more about the items the team made. Coaches and team parents should NOT be part of these conversations. Take a big step back and let them self-advocate and shine!
- Parents may help move supplies after the team speaks with the judges. Make sure the floor is clean for the next performance. Bring your own cleaning supplies.



## POST COMPETITION

- Let them and you unwind after the team's performance is over.
- Sit down with the team for a few minutes and let them know you are proud of them.
- REMOVE ALL PROPS, COSTUMES, TEAM SUPPLIES, ETC. FROM THE SCHOOL. RETURN THEM TO YOUR VEHICLE. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE THEM IN THE SCHOOL.
- Decide upon what to do the rest of the day and how they will meet for the Parade of Teams.
- **\*\*ONE coach should return to the long-term performance site ~30 minutes after the performance** to see the Head Judge (wearing an orange t-shirt) to receive scores. Usually, a list is posted outside the long-term problem site, so you know when your team scores are available for pickup. If you are the last team of the day to compete, please be sure to pick up scores as soon as they are ready.
- Parents should NOT attempt to retrieve or discuss scores with judges.
- Review scores alone or with the team (if they wish). Teams usually enjoy reviewing the “sticky note” comments the judges give.
- Once coaches review the team’s long-term raw scores with the Head judge, they have 30 minutes to raise any questions. All raw long-term scores become official 30 minutes after the review. Only long-term raw scores and averaged Style scores are given to teams; individual long-term, style, and spontaneous raw scores are not provided to the teams.
- Before the 30-minute period expires, if the team has a question about a scoring element, it should discuss it with the Head Judge and, if necessary, the Problem Captain. If the question involves an interpretation of the rules and if the team is not satisfied with the explanation, the team may ask that a “Tribunal” be convened.
- Encourage your team to watch other teams compete. This can be done as a team or with their families. It is always fun to support and appreciate the creativity of other VT teams.

## TEAM MEMBER & COACH RECOGNITION

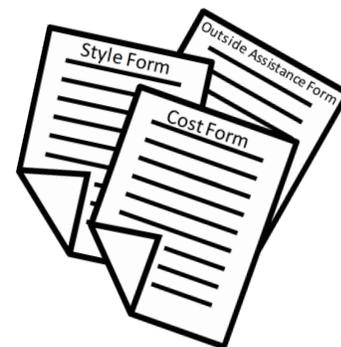
All members of an Odyssey of the Mind team and the Coaches are very important to us. We want to give proper recognition to not only the team members who are competing or performing, but also to the coach. At each problem site, there will be chairs set to the side near the competition area where coach(es) can sit. The timekeeper will take a moment, before the start of the problem, to invite any coach(es) to have a seat and point out to the audience who they are.

## AWARDS CEREMONY

Please Stay for the ENTIRE ceremony. Before the Awards Celebration, spend a little time alone with your team. Tell them again how very proud you are of them. Remind them there are many teams at the State Tournament, and only the top teams in each problem and division advance to World Finals. Participation certificates can be downloaded from the HQ website for coaches to distribute. Talk about the benefits they have received and the fun you have had working with them this season – no matter what!

## REQUIRED PAPERWORK

All teams must submit completed copies of the following standard Odyssey of the Mind forms to the Staging Area Judge. No other forms or pieces of paper will be accepted. Teams will be penalized for submitting Style Sheets, Cost Sheets, and Outside Assistance Forms on any other form or piece of paper. These forms are available here: <https://www.odysseyofthemind.com/member-resources/>



If you have problems or questions, reach out to your membership coordinator, Regional or Association Director before the Tournament. It is a good idea to bring extra copies of completed forms and blank forms, in case any changes need to be made. Keep copies for yourself.. you'll need these if your team advances to World Finals.

1. **REGISTRATION CARD** (Pick up at Registration Desk)
  - Show to Staging Area Judge & Spontaneous Check-in Official to verify your team identification.
2. **STYLE FORMS** (4 COPIES)
3. **COST FORM** (1 COPY)
4. **OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE FORM** (1 COPY)
5. **PROBLEM-SPECIFIC TEAM LIST** (4 COPIES, if required by the Problem)
6. **TEAM CLARIFICATIONS** (if your team requested any)

### DETAILS...DETAILS...DETAILS!

The team coach is ultimately responsible for knowing and understanding everything in the Odyssey of the Mind Program Handbook and Rulebook. Raw Long-Term and Style Scores for your team will be available from the Long-Term Problem Head Judge approximately 30 minutes after your competition. Spontaneous scores are not distributed. Final scores will be posted in the lobby immediately after the Awards Ceremony and posted on the website [vt.odysseyofthemind.org](http://vt.odysseyofthemind.org)

### THE TEAM'S MEMBERSHIP SIGN

Make sure that you have met ALL the requirements for the team Membership Sign(s). Please refer to the current Odyssey of the Mind Program Handbook for complete information.

## SPONTANEOUS COMPETITION

**ONLY ONE COACH SHOULD BRING THE TEAM TO THE SPONTANEOUS CHECK-IN AREA.** The coach can stay with the team in the holding room until they are called in for competition. It is always a good idea to pick a location to reconnect the team members with family and friends after the spontaneous competition. Friends and families are encouraged to enjoy the tournament activities during this time.



## SPONTANEOUS PROBLEM CHECKLIST

Coaches: Please review this list with your team **BEFORE** your team competes in their Spontaneous Problem! Teams exhibiting un-sportsman-like conduct or discussing the Spontaneous problem they were given (except in the debriefing room) **WILL** be assessed a penalty.

- Go to the Spontaneous Problem competition area no more than **10-15 minutes** before it is time for your team to compete. **BRING YOUR REGISTRATION CARD.** Do not go early. Only **ONE** Coach should accompany the team to the Spontaneous area – **WEAR THE “COACH” RIBBON PROVIDED** and bring your registration card to show to the Spontaneous Check-In Official so they can verify your team identity. No parents or other visitors are allowed in the Spontaneous area.
- Sign in at the Spontaneous Registration Desk.
- Wait in the Spontaneous Problem Holding Area until a judge announces it is time for your team. This is always a good time to warm up your team with some simple but fun, spontaneous-type problems you bring.
- While your team is waiting for their turn to compete, they must be quiet and orderly.
- Do not enter the competition room until the judge asks you to do so.
- When entering the competition room, your team must do so in a calm, quiet, and orderly manner and follow the instructions of the judges very carefully.
- The Coach may wait in the designated area or a pre-arranged location for their team to finish.
- Following the Spontaneous problem, if necessary, the team will be allowed to discuss any problems that might have happened during this time with their coach. A private room (Spontaneous Debriefing Room) will be available for this within the Spontaneous competition area. If there is an issue requiring intervention,
- Coaches may request a private meeting with the Spontaneous Problem Captain. After leaving this room, there can be no further discussion of the Spontaneous problem. Discussion of the problem, if overheard, may give other teams an unfair advantage and result in penalties or disqualification for any teams involved.
- After your team completes their Spontaneous Problem, they should leave the Spontaneous competition area quickly and quietly.
- Spontaneous problems are “top secret.” Teams participating in the same long-term problem and division will solve the same spontaneous problem, so to ensure fairness, no one must discuss the problem outside of the room until all teams have competed. Even then, you may only discuss it within your group. Letting other teams know the problem they may receive could give them an

advantage in a tournament. Anyone who reveals a spontaneous problem to others is subject to disqualification and/or disciplinary action against the entire team.

- It is essential that these procedures be followed carefully and thoroughly so that all teams are given a fair and equal chance to compete. We appreciate your help in this matter, and we thank you for your assistance!!!!

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

No amount of looking over the shoulders of judges or applying fancy technology can ever completely reduce errors of human judgment. We cannot allow ourselves the luxury of ignoring the very human factors of both sides of this issue. This is, of course, true not only in terms of judges and tournament officials but also in terms of coaches and their young team members. Sometimes, judges and officials will muff judgement calls and decisions on the competition field. Their mistakes are often noticed by coaches and spectators observing the competitions. However, we cannot ignore that human fallibility is an intrinsic part of this competitive process. Remember that everyone involved in running the Vermont Odyssey of the Mind tournament, from the doorkeeper to the Tournament Directors, is a volunteer.

## REQUEST FOR PROBLEM INTERVENTION- TRIBUNAL PROCEDURE

Generally, problems can be resolved by discussing them with the Head Judge and/or Problem Captain. Tribunals are *very rare*; however, if necessary, the following procedures allow teams to ask for a Tribunal.

### General Procedures:

To adjudicate any on-site problem concerns, you must use the following format and complete the "Request for Problem Intervention" form (available from the Problem Captains). Please read and complete this form carefully, clearly stating your concern. When you have completed it, return the form to the Problem Captain for your problem. Please note: Completing the form implies that you have already discussed your concern(s) with the Head Judge of the on-site judging team, and you wish to appeal their decision.

### The Coach's Role:

Once you submit a Request for Problem Intervention form to the Problem Captain, find out where and when the Problem Captain and/or the Tribunal will meet with you. They will give you the Tribunal's decision or, if necessary, question you and/or your team members. You must arrive at that meeting place on time.

### The Problem Captain's Role (they wear a yellow t-shirt):

Upon receiving a completed Request for Problem Intervention form, the Problem Captain will discuss it with the coach involved. If the matter involves a subjective opinion of the judges, the Tribunal will not hear the case. A Tribunal will convene only if the issue consists of a rule interpretation question or a procedural issue. Once the Tribunal has made a decision, that decision is final unless new information pertaining directly to this issue comes to light. As with any competitive event, concerns are raised following proper procedures and rules. We have provided for a process whereby a team may challenge an alleged infraction of the rules of the competition.

The call for the grievance process to begin must occur immediately after the alleged infraction or no later than 30 minutes after the coach meets with the Head Judge to review the raw scores or 30 minutes past the time the team exits the Spontaneous competition area.

A tribunal of officials has been established to act on questions regarding the interpretation of rules. When any team has a question concerning tournament rulings, the following sequence must be followed:

1. The team Coach (not the students or parents) requests clarification from the Head Judge.
2. The Head Judge may confer with the judging team and then make a ruling based upon the information presented. The Head Judge will discuss the ruling with the team coach.
3. Teams involved may choose to either accept the ruling or ask to speak to the Problem Captain. If, after talking with the Problem Captain, the coach still feels there was an improper application or violation of the rules, and the matter cannot be corrected satisfactorily through discussion with the Problem Captain. In that case, a formal grievance may be filed using the "Request for Problem Intervention" form, and the matter goes to Tribunal.
4. A Tribunal will be convened. It will consist of 3-5 persons, including at least one tournament director or assistant director and several officials unassociated with the problem in which the grievance was filed.
5. The coach/team's and the judging team's positions will be heard separately. The members of the Tribunal are allowed to ask questions of any party.
6. The Tribunal will decide on the case within 15 minutes without the parties' being present.
7. The decision of the tribunal is FINAL. No further appeals will be entertained.

## OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE AND HELP

"Each team must have a coach who is responsible for selecting and training the team. The coach is not to work on the solution to a problem. The coach's role is to assist in selecting the problem, presenting the problem, conducting brainstorming sessions to develop solutions to the long-term problem, conducting and critiquing spontaneous problem practice sessions, helping the team obtain materials and knowledge necessary to solve the long-term problem, supervising practice sessions, and accompanying the team to competitions. The coach can assist the team by having guest speakers visit and talk about general principles which may be useful in solving the problem, showing films, and providing books that also give the team basic techniques with which they may work."

"Teams must design and produce their own problem solutions. Their solutions must be limited to the use of materials and methods which they can handle without assistance. Teams may be shown the basic skills necessary to produce their solution to the problem (i.e., sewing, nailing, sawing, photography, acting, etc.). Still, only seven team members may work on the problem solution. Costumes and the problem solutions may utilize ready-made pieces put together in a manner designed by the team. It is the final product which the team must design and produce, not necessarily each of its parts."

"...When it comes time to invent, create, problem-solve, build, construct, design, assemble, etc.', let the team do it."

Before the team began their work on their Odyssey of the Mind problem, I read this statement titled "We Can Do It All Ourselves!!!" and discussed it with the team members. I pledge to encourage the team to work together to solve their Odyssey of the Mind problem themselves without any outside assistance, as in the spirit of the Odyssey of the Mind competition and rules. I will assist them in resisting any temptations to use outside assistance. I will carefully consult the rules and/or check with the Odyssey of the Mind directors before giving assistance that might be interpreted as a violation of the rules.

### "WE CAN DO IT ALL OURSELVES!"

#### TIPS FOR TEAM MEMBERS:

**THE TRUE ODYSSEY OF THE MIND SPIRIT:** Odyssey of the Mind is exciting, fun, and challenging. You are faced with a tough problem that has more than one correct answer. That makes Odyssey of the Mind difficult, but it also makes it great. By the time you finish this year's competition, you and your team will have accomplished and learned a lot. For your team to enjoy what you accomplish, it must be all yours. That is why the Odyssey of the Mind rules allow help from only your team members to solve your problem. The rules say, "All problem solutions and style props, as well as costumes and membership signs, must be designed and made by team members."

**SOLVING THE PROBLEM AS AN ODYSSEY OF THE MIND TEAM:** You and your team will struggle with many parts of your Odyssey of the Mind problem. It will be fun most of the time, but not always. You will get frustrated when something does not work right or doesn't seem good enough. You may argue with each other and even get mad sometimes. After hours of work, you might reach a dead end and may start with different ideas. But eventually, if you stick with it and trust each other, you will solve the problem. That is the whole point of Odyssey of the Mind: working hard together to solve tough problems. It is important

that only you and your team solve the problem. NOT your coach. NOT your parents. NOT your teachers. NOT anyone else but you and your team!!! However, some kinds of help are OK for you to receive.

### **When Help IS OK!!**

Someone shows you how to brainstorm different ideas.

Someone shows you how to use some tools but does not work on your props.

Someone teaches you acting skills. Your team then practices making the performance better

When a part of your solution breaks, you ask a mechanic what tool would fix it. Then you make the repairs.

### **When Help IS NOT OK!!**

Someone else brainstorms the ideas that help to solve the problem.

Someone helps to build your props.

Someone tells you how to change your performance.

Someone else fixes your broken part.

### **REJECTING HELP -- BUT DOING IT POLITELY**

It is your team. You can do it yourself. You can ask for the right kind of help by saying, "Can you show me how the sewing machine works?" "How do we use the computer to make banners?"

You can help your coach, parents, and others if they offer help you don't need or can't have under the rules. Tell them, "Thanks, but we want to do this ourselves, our way." or "We can't have that kind of help, but we would like your help in learning how these tools work. Then we can use them ourselves" or "Instead of telling us what to do, maybe you can ask us a few questions to get us thinking for ourselves to solve this problem."

Remember, everyone hopes you do well and enjoy Odyssey of the Mind. For that to happen, this must be all your own doing. GOOD LUCK and GOOD CREATIVITY!!

Before we begin working on our Odyssey of the Mind problem, we have each read the statement above, "We Can Do It All Ourselves!!!" and have discussed it with our coach and parents. We pledge to work together to solve our Odyssey of the Mind problem ourselves, according to the rules, without any outside assistance.

We WANT to do it ourselves!

## PARENTS & SIBLINGS- HOW THEY CAN HELP?

Parents are the drivers, the carriers, the huggers, the cheerers, the last-minute hardware store runners, the door holders, the floor sitters, and the mighty prop protectors. Their role at competitions is quite complicated. They have to be supportive without getting in the way. They must realize that until their children's Spontaneous and Long-Term competitions are over, they don't own their children; their coach needs them to be part of the team.

Parents should not go too close to where the children are making last-minute repairs and should not try to make conversation. Their child's concentration is entirely on Odyssey of the Mind. Try to stay around the periphery of the teamwork area. That way, they can find you if they need something within your realm to provide.

One important thing to remember is that PARENTS DO NOT TOUCH! Yes, they can help unload the vehicle and carry the stuff to the competition area. But you cannot cut one extra string off a costume or pick up a paintbrush to make that sign a little bit neater. That could cost the team an "OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE" penalty.

Parents must refrain from talking to the judges ...NO MATTER WHAT. That is the coach's job. If things go wrong, try to discourage team members from blaming teammates, coaches, judges, or other teams. Make sure they don't attach blame, either. All good teams have lived through significant disasters on their way to becoming champions.

Most of all, parents should cheer their team and for everyone else's, too. When the competition is over, drive home and fall on the couch. You will be far more exhausted than the team members. Staying out of the way can be more tiring than competing. So, let them order the pizza for dinner! See you at the next competition. Coaches should put themselves in a parent's place, standing around waiting and watching for hours, trying not to get in the team's way and wishing to be helpful. Parents are typically glad to have something they can do to help you. Give them something to do, such as:

- Watching the competition
- Keeping an eye on props when the team is at Spontaneous
- Taking siblings around campus
- Helping move props from the vehicle to the Long-Term Problem Pre-Staging Area
- Helping transport the team
- Taking kids to get something to eat
- Videoing the team as it prepares and presents
- Taking pictures for a memento album
- Going for this and going for that
- Bring the team or their child to the Odyssey store and to see other performances

### SIBLINGS-

Try very hard to find something special for them to do. They will live in the shadow of this State Tournament-bound team member for several more weeks. Siblings get tired of hearing about the Tournament (day and night). See if you can give them an Assistant-Something Job.

Hint - We have traditionally let the siblings of Odyssey of the Mind teams be tripod carriers, camera carriers, and banner makers. They can enjoy the OM fun zone with the team and visit the Store for a special treat.

## SOME DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PARENTS AT AN ODYSSEY OF THE MIND COMPETITION

### DO

- Remember that the coach is the adult directly responsible for the team and the only adult who can approach officials on the team's behalf. Any concerns you have should be discussed privately with the coach. If you confront any official, you risk having a stiff penalty assessed against your team.
- Help locate appropriate places for team meetings, working on props, etc., and volunteer to chaperone visits to the Odyssey Store, outside to play, or to watch other team competitions so children can "vent their energies" without disturbing others.
- Help the team and coach move props from the vehicle to the Long-Term Problem Pre-Staging Area.
- Remember that even if you observe an apparent penalty, you will not know if that team is penalized.
- Encourage team members to have contingency plans if the music/tape recorder doesn't work.
- Help them relax so they can do their best.
- Remind any non-team member who appears to be giving outside assistance to any team that officials are always on duty. You might say, "we are not allowed to do that in our membership."
- Exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. Applaud for each team at the appropriate time; offer to help teams in need by loaning tools, materials, etc.
- Stay away from the spontaneous competition area. Have groups of adults hovering outside the spontaneous competition area may be intimidating to out teams. Only the spontaneous team members should go beyond the waiting area.
- Try to sit with other parents from your team and membership at the ceremonies and stay for the whole ceremony!
- Tell your child you are proud of their accomplishments.
- Remind your team to have a good time! Remember, what is important in Odyssey of the Mind is the *process*, not the result.

***Remember -- all teams at the State Tournament are winners!!***

### DON'T

- Flash signs such as "We're #1" or chant in front of other teams. Doing so marks your school as poor sports and does not help make friends.
- Allow children to scream or to be rowdy near competition areas. Sound travels, and such rowdiness lends credibility to a reputation of having wild or unruly children.
- Cost your team an outside assistance penalty! Don't say ANYTHING, e.g., "Turn it up", "The membership sign is crooked," or do ANYTHING for any team, especially in the competition area. Outside of the competition area, DON'T apply makeup, style hair, help put on costumes or assemble props and equipment.
- Go near the spontaneous problem competition area – use this time as a quick break.

- Ask your child questions about the spontaneous problem. Discussing the problem before the end of all competitions can disqualify the team. It is tempting to ask how the children feel they did, but it is best to avoid the topic entirely or save it for a “ride home” conversation.
- Speak with the judges (unless to say “Thank you” – remember... all these people are volunteers).
- Alter seating boundaries for the performance areas or the Awards ceremony.

## TOURNAMENT QUESTIONS? /HELP NEEDED

Contact the State Tournament Director, Stephanie Fournier, TDvtootm@gmail.com, Cell # 802-233-3844

## VERMONT ODYSSEY of the MIND ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

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**Association FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM Pages:** Vermont Odyssey of the Mind (vtootm)



# MAP OF CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL

(269 CVU Rd., Hinesburg, VT)

