

# Vermont Odyssey of the Mind

35<sup>th</sup> Annual State Tournament March 22,  
2014

Champlain Valley Union High School  
Hinesburg, Vermont

## *The Day's Highlights & Schedule*

### Team Registration

The doors of Champlain Valley Union High School will open at 7:30am, and Coaches may pick up their registration cards anytime after 7:30AM. Only Coaches should pick up the registration card. **PLEASE KEEP THIS CARD WITH YOU THROUGHOUT THE DAY - IT IS YOUR ENTRY TICKET INTO THE LONG-TERM AND SPONTANEOUS COMPETITION.**

### Long-Term and Spontaneous Problem Competition

Long-term and Spontaneous performance times will begin as early as 8:30 AM and continue throughout the day. Please check the **TENTATIVE** schedule provided on the web at <http://vt.odysseyofthemind.org> . Be on time and ready to perform at the scheduled time. If you are late, you will be placed at the end of the schedule (IF TIME PERMITS). Plan to cheer for your schoolmates and fellow problem-solvers from around the state.

### Parade of Teams

The Closing and Awards Ceremony will begin with a Parade of Teams beginning at **4:30 PM** in the Gymnasium. All teams should line up together near the Large Gym entrance just prior to the beginning of the Awards Ceremony. You may line up either as individual teams, or as a full membership. There is no specific order to line up in. Teams will be announced as they enter, then parade into the stands to take their seats. **NO FOOD OR DRINK IS ALLOWED IN THE GYM.**

### Annual Judges' and Coaches' Hat Contest

The competition isn't quite over because now it's time to let the KIDS JUDGE the Judges and Coaches. Start rummaging around for a unique hat you can wear, or better still...put your own 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. Categories will be announced at the contest. And yes....there will be prizes.

### The 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 of the day. OMER's Awards ribbons and certificates will be given in recognition of teams or individuals exhibiting outstanding sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, or exceptional talent. 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. The awards ceremony will begin immediately after the Parade of Teams (at approximately 5:15PM). We hope to end by 6:30PM. Out of respect for those being recognized, we request that all Awards Ceremonies attendees remain until the end.

### **Meals**

Food, drinks and snacks will be on sale in the CVUHS Cafeteria throughout the day. You may also bring your own food or patronize any of the several local stores and restaurants.

## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION **In an emergency, dial 911.**

The well-being of our participants and supporters is of paramount importance to the Vermont Odyssey of the Mind organizers. To assist us and to ensure the safety for all participants of the State Tournament, we request you make your team and supporters aware of the following important safety rules.

- No running or horseplay in the buildings
- No skateboards, rollerblades, etc. allowed in buildings except as needed in a Long-Term performance.
- No weapons of any kind are allowed at the tournament **(if your team plans to use a weapon or a simulated weapon in their skit, call me).**
- Please take care in parking areas, crossing roads, and in other vehicle traffic areas.
- Follow the instructions of all security and tournament officials

## BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT

Make sure that all team members and parents understand the importance of being there, and being on time. We cannot make schedule changes easily, so rescheduling a missed performance time might not be possible. When the doors close just before a team begins their performance, they will not be opened again until after the team has finished their performance. Please plan to arrive early and stay throughout the entire performance. A few hints:

- Bring a copy of your Long-Term problem.
- Bring copies of any “Team” clarifications you may have received. Judges may ask to see them.
- 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 map in this package and on the tournament schedule).
- Know where and when the team is going to meet (be specific....it can be rather crowded at times).
- Have all your required paperwork ready to go (forms at end of this document).
- 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 Problem Procedures contained within this document.

## AT THE STATE TOURNAMENT - REGISTRATION AND CHECK-IN

COACHES SHOULD CHECK-IN AT THE REGISTRATION TABLE IN THE CVUHS MAIN LOBBY. The Registration Table will be open all day. The team's competition times (Long-Term and Spontaneous) will be available at check-in. Please verify whether your times have changed from the preliminary schedule published on the website.

- Competition will begin in designated areas as early as 8:30 AM
- Parade of Teams, Hat Contest, will begin around 4:30 PM
- Awards Ceremonies will begin around 5:15 PM and end around 6:30 PM

## AT THE STATE TOURNAMENT - THE TEAM'S SCHEDULE

The team's activity schedule during the day at the Tournament should be set by the Coach. The Coach should determine when the team snacks, eats lunch, puts props together, rehearses, practices Spontaneous Problems etc. One or two solid leaders make for a cohesive team and group of parents/siblings. You will be doing everyone a favor if you let the parents know ahead of time when and where you would like their children.

### IMPORTANT NOTE --- PARKING ISSUES

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 there will be a number of pedestrians (including children) present, especially after Closing Ceremonies is over.

***Coaches Hint** ... 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. Max of 2 ribbons per team.*

## SCHEDULE FLEXIBILITY

The tournament schedule is VERY full. Teams **MUST BE PREPARED TO PERFORM THEIR LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS UP TO 15 MINUTES PRIOR TO THEIR SCHEDULED TIME AS DETERMINED BY THE STAGING AREA JUDGES.** Teams should be in the pre-staging area at least 45 minutes prior to their performance times and are advised to keep a close eye on the flow of the performing teams and to be ready when called upon by the Staging Area Judge or Assistant Staging Area Judge.

Please let anyone know who is coming to the tournament to watch the team perform that there is a somewhat wider window of time in which the team may perform. 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 knowing only that they came to watch a “skit”. With so many teams participating, it is difficult to narrow it down to a single team.**

## AT THE STATE TOURNAMENT - 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 there will be many schools and teams 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 responsibility of the coach to make sure that the team is ready to compete and also to make sure the team acts in a responsible manner after it has competed. It is expected that all teams and individual team members will exhibit behavior of which all of us can be proud. Some teams may have several hours of "SLACK TIME". Make plans to engage your team in some activities during their free time.

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 are unable to moderate their behavior. It is imperative that you 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. Don't touch or move another team's props, disturb other teams during meetings, or insult them. Good sportsmanship is key to having fun.

Please help us ensure that everyone -- team members, coaches, parents, officials and invited 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 from the Odyssey of the Mind Store or snacks.
- Call for help when you don't know. See phone numbers at the bottom of this section.

## AT THE STATE TOURNAMENT - PRE-COMPETITION

- Register the team and get settled
- Go over the Schedule, find your competition site and where the staging/pre-staging areas are
- Put props back together and rehearse some more
- Practice Spontaneous Problems
- Let the kids have some fun.
- Shop for souvenirs at the Odyssey store.

Make sure to take the team to see their competition site before it is time for them to compete. If it is a good one, then you and your team are happy. If it is not the ideal site (and at times it is not), then the team has time to figure out how they will position their props differently, etc.

**Coaches Hint ...** There will be a message board near the Registration Desk in the CVUHS lobby. You can leave messages there for parents or team members.

## AT THE STATE TOURNAMENT - 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 a lot of time to get the props and team to the competition site.
- Allow a lot of time for them 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 coach's speeches bring tears to the eye).
- Create an environment where the team can do its very best.
- Be proud of them as they compete.
- Let them and yourself unwind after the team's performance is over.



## AFTER YOUR TEAM COMPETES

- Sit down with the team for a few minutes and let them know you are proud of them
- 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 Problem Site 30-45 minutes after performance to see the Head Judge (wearing an **Orange** T-Shirt) to receive scores. Usually there is a list of team scores available for review with the Head Judge. The first three-four teams to compete may have to wait a little longer. Parents should **NOT** attempt to retrieve or discuss scores with judges.
- Review scores alone, or with team (if they wish). Ask Head Judge to explain anything that is not clear.

## TEAM MEMBER RECOGNITION - RECOGNITION OF ALL TEAM MEMBERS AND COACHES

All members of an Odyssey of the Mind team as well as the Coach or Coaches are very important to us. We would like to give proper recognition to not only the team members who are actually competing or performing, but also any other team members who have played an important role in the development of the team's solution. At each problem site there will be chairs, set to the side near the competition area for any non-performing team members and the coach(es) to sit. The timekeeper will take a moment, before the start of the problem, to invite any non-performing team members and coach(es) to have a seat and point out to the audience who they are.

## AT THE STATE TOURNAMENT - AWARDS CEREMONY

**It will be one of the most memorable experiences of your life!** Arrive **EARLY** - At least a half hour before. Stay for the **ENTIRE** ceremony. Before you get to the Awards Ceremony, 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. Talk about the benefits they have received and the fun you have had working with them this season - no matter what!

## PHONE NUMBERS WHERE YOU CAN GET INFORMATION/HELP

**State Tournament Director**

**State Assistant Tournament Directors**

Kathy Jacob

Tim & Anita Perkins

Cell 802-417-1149

Cell 802-310-7469

## SUMMARY OF PAPERWORK REQUIRED FOR THE STATE TOURNAMENT

All teams must submit to the Staging Area Judge completed copies of the following standard Odyssey of the Mind forms. 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 in your Program Guide available through the membership coordinator, in the back of this guide, or on the web at <http://vt.odysseyofthemind.org> (look under “Info and Forms”). It isn’t a bad idea to bring extra copies of completed forms, as well as blank forms to the tournament. **Keep copies for yourself...** you’ll need these if your team advances.

- (A) **REGISTRATION CARD** (Pick up at Registration Desk)
  - Show to Staging Area Judge to verify your team identification.
  - Show to Spontaneous check-in Official to verify identification
- (B) **STYLE FORMS (4 COPIES)**
  - Submit to Staging Area Judge at time of competition
- (C) **MATERIALS VALUE FORM (1 COPY)**
  - Submit to Staging Area Judge at time of competition
- (D) **OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE FORM (1 COPY)**
  - Submit to Staging Area Judge at time of competition
- (E) **TEAM CLARIFICATIONS** (If you requested any)
  - Submit to Staging Area Judge at time of competition
- (F) **ANY SPECIAL DOCUMENTS YOUR PROBLEM REQUIRES (4 COPIES)**
  - Submit to Staging Area Judge at time of competition

## PLEASE PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION

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 team’s competition. Spontaneous scores are not distributed. Final scores will be posted in the lobby immediately after Awards Ceremony.

## THE TEAM'S MEMBERSHIP SIGN

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

## *ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU MAY FIND HELPFUL*

### FOOD AND DRINK

Breakfast, lunch and snack items will be available for purchase in the cafeteria. You may also bring your own food, drink or snack items you want. The cafeteria will be open for lunch seating.

**Food/Drink are NOT allowed in competition areas or gym.**

### “ODYSSEY OF THE MIND STORE”

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 Odyssey of the Mind program. We have no other consistent source of external funding. Proceeds from the sale of pins and T-Shirts help to defray the costs associated with conducting this program and allow us to keep registration fees low. We appreciate your interest in and support of Odyssey of the Mind. THANK YOU!

***ONLY ONE COACH SHOULD BRING THE TEAM  
TO THE SPONTANEOUS CHECK-IN AREA.  
OTHER SPECTATORS SHOULD REMAIN ON THE FIRST***



## SPONTANEOUS PROBLEM CHECKLIST

Coaches: Please go over this list with your team BEFORE your team goes to compete in their Spontaneous Problem!!!!  
**Teams that are observed exhibiting unsportsman-like conduct or discussing the Spontaneous problem they were given (except in the debriefing room) WILL be assessed a penalty.**

1. 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.
2. Sign in at the Spontaneous Registration Desk.
3. Wait in the Spontaneous Problem Holding Area until a judge announces it is time for your team.
4. While your team is waiting in the hallway for their turn to compete they must be quiet and orderly.
5. Do not enter the competition room until the judge asks you to do so.
6. 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.
7. The Coach may wait in the designated area or a pre-arranged location for their team to finish.
8. Following the Spontaneous problem, if necessary, the team will be allowed to discuss with their coach any problems that might have happened during this time. There will be a private room (*Spontaneous Debriefing Room*) 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.
9. After your team completes their Spontaneous Problem they should leave the Spontaneous competition area quickly and quietly.

It is extremely important that these procedures be followed carefully and fully 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 judgement. 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, what we cannot ignore is that human fallibility is an intrinsic part of this competitive process. Keep in mind that every person involved in running the Vermont Odyssey of the Mind tournament, from the door-keeper to the Tournament Directors, are volunteers.

## REQUEST FOR PROBLEM INTERVENTION

**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 (**PINK** form available from the Problem Captains). Please read and complete this form carefully, stating clearly what your concern is. When you have completed it, return the form to the Problem Captain for your particular problem. *Please note: Completion of 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:

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 it involves 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 there are always concerns raised about proper procedures and rules. We have provided for a process whereby a team may challenge an alleged infraction of the rules of the competition.

**In any event 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 rules interpretation. 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 speaking 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, then 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 position of both the coach/team and the judging team will be heard separately. The members of the Tribunal are allowed to ask questions of any party.
6. The Tribunal will issue a decision on the case within 15 min without the parties 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 that of assisting 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 basic skills necessary to produce their solution to the problem (i.e. sewing, nailing, sawing, photography, acting, etc.) but no one but the seven team members may work on the problem solution. Costumes as well as 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 has begun their work on their Odyssey of the Mind problem, I have read this statement titled *We Can Do It All Ourselves!!!* and have 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 very challenging. You are faced with a tough problem that does not have only one right answer. That makes Odyssey of the Mind difficult but it also makes it great. By the time you finish with this year's competition, you and your team will have accomplished a lot and learned a lot. For your team to totally enjoy what you accomplish, it has to be all yours. That is why Odyssey of the Mind rules do not allow help from anyone other than 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 have to start all over 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 to make your 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 has to be all your own doing. **GOOD LUCK and GOOD CREATIVITY!!**

Before we begin our work 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 that we will 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 AT THE STATE TOURNAMENT - 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 have to 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 completely on Odyssey of the Mind. Try to stay around the periphery of the team work 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 in 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 just 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. Try to discourage team members from blaming teammates, coaches, judges or other teams if things go wrong. Make sure they don't attach blame either. All good teams have lived through major disasters on their way to becoming champions.

Most of all, parents should cheer for 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 seems to 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 out. Give them something to do, such as:

- Watching the competition
- Keeping an eye on props when team is at Spontaneous
- Taking siblings about 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 the exhibits

At the end of this section is a *Parents Do's and Don'ts*. Distribute it to each of your team member's parents.

## SIBLINGS -

Try very hard to find something special for them to do. They are going to live in the shadow of this State Tournament-bound team member for several more weeks. Siblings get very 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 tri-pod carriers, Video camera case carriers, banner makers. One elementary sibling was made the "official assistant" of the team. His job was to carry the "lucky stuffed mascot" of the team and to be with the team whenever they performed. He was presented with an official Odyssey of the Mind tee-shirt by the team. He loved it. It made a world of difference to one little 8 year-old boy.

### **Coaches Hint ... Have questions?**

Ask an Odyssey of the Mind Judge or Official

**TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR - TAN** shirt

**PROBLEM CAPTAIN - YELLOW** t-shirt

**HEAD JUDGE - ORANGE** t-shirt

**JUDGE - RED** shirt

**OFFICIAL - WHITE** t-shirt



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

## **DO**

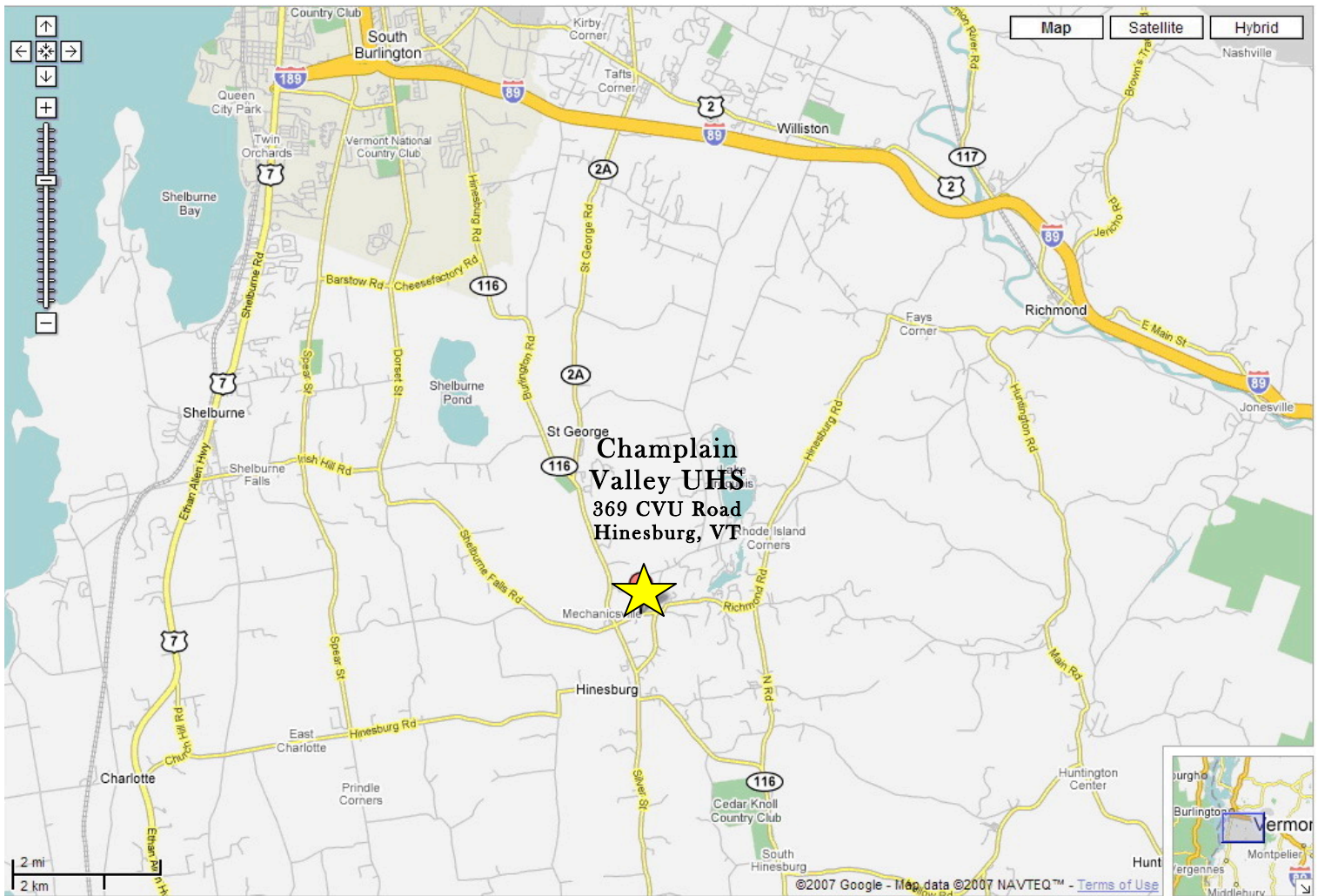
- ☐ Remember that the coach is the adult directly responsible for the team and the only adult who can approach officials on the team's behalf. Any concerns you have should be discussed privately with the coach. If you confront any official, you risk having a stiff penalty assessed against your team.
- ☐ 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, "In our membership, we are not allowed to do that."
- ☐ 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. It may be intimidating to other teams to have groups of adults hovering outside the spontaneous competition area. Wait in designated areas or outside the building. Only the spontaneous team members should go beyond the waiting area.
- ☐ Try to sit with your delegation 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 competition 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 to 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 prior to the end of all competition 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 of these people are volunteers).
- ☐ Alter seating boundaries set up for the performance areas or the Awards ceremony.

## MAP OF CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UHS TOURNAMENT SITE LOCATION



CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL  
369 CVU Road  
Hinesburg, VT 05461