




# Coaches' Corner

## Tips from your CTOM Coach!

March 2020

*Preparing skillful, team-playing, out-of-the-box thinkers!*

*In this Issue*

# Planning your Competition Day!

By Kim Kempton

You are about to guide your students through an adventure like no other. The CTOM competition will be an exhausting whirl of excitement, emotion and (occasionally) drama. First, take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back. Your job is almost done! You have successfully delivered the team to the competition. Congratulations! Here are a few coaching suggestions to make sure that the day runs smoothly, and that the drama is limited to the performances.

### Keep in Touch

First and foremost, inform yourself, your team and the families. Before the day of the competition, create a cell-phone call sheet or group chat and share with all. **NOTE:** there is NO guest WIFI on campus, so plan accordingly. While Southern Connecticut State University is not a huge campus, it is still quite easy to get separated. A phone or group chat is the most efficient way to ensure your team can quickly reconvene. Similarly, make sure that EVERYONE has the schedule and location for BOTH the Long-term and Spontaneous competitions. Take the time to review the maps and parking instructions on our website.

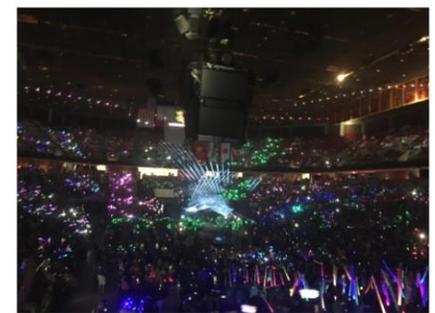
### Create a Schedule for the Day

I would recommend arriving at least 1.5 to 2 hours before your first competition, regardless if it's long term or spontaneous.

The reality of competition day doesn't sink in until you pull onto campus. Give your team the opportunity to relax and allow the anxiety to subside. Expect someone to get lost, be delayed or just be nervous. Plan an adequate cushion of time for everyone to come together and gain composure. If you have an issue, please inform the tournament director or problem captain as quickly as possible.

### When You Get to Campus

Once you've all arrived on campus, be sure to use approved prop drop locations and designated parking for your problem (see map on our website). Organize everyone to help move the team props and costumes to the building where they will compete. While we recognize the need to temporarily park while unloading, please do not leave vehicles unattended. Parents ARE ALLOWED (and encouraged) to help unload props and move items through the hallways. Be warned, the hallways will be crowded with props, kids in costumes and overwhelmed looking parents. Find your problem's prop storage room or a spot in a nearby hallway and allow the team to get organized. (cont.)



**Earning an Invitation to the World Finals** Page 4



### PHOTOBOMB CTOM!

To be included in the Awards Ceremony montage, send your team photos to [photos@ctom.org](mailto:photos@ctom.org)

### For More Information

CTOM is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to Odyssey of the Mind in CT

Please visit our website at [www.ctom.org](http://www.ctom.org)



# Competition Day *(Continued)*

## Settling In

Once everything is unloaded from the cars and the team has checked to make sure everything is accounted for, take a few moments to warm up for spontaneous, organize props, assemble sets and repair any damage that may have occurred during transport. Be vigilant about the outside assistance rule... only team members can assemble or repair. If you have overinvolved parents, send them to watch another performance (especially an older division, to see how far the program can take you). Next, have the team check out the performance area. Note which way the team will enter the performance area from staging. Where is the outlet (if needed)? Are there changes in the room set-up compared to where the team practiced? Revert to asking questions and make sure everyone is comfortable with the logistics.

## Long-Term Problem

Arrive at the pre-staging area at least 20 minutes before the performance time. (There is always a team in pre-staging, staging and performing and it is critical the tournament stay on time.) Once you arrive at pre-staging, parents should move into the audience area. Remind parents that they cannot communicate with their children from the audience until AFTER the performance, and AFTER judges have asked questions. Once the judges are finished, parents SHOULD help the team move their props out of the performance area and clean up (as needed). Don't forget, you DO NOT want to damage props before the awards ceremony. Take care to return everything to the vehicles in which it arrived.

## Spontaneous Competition

Depending on the schedule, your team may participate in spontaneous before or after your long-term solution. Only team members and coaches should go to the Spontaneous area. Similar to the long-term, be sure to arrive at least 20 minutes before your scheduled competition time. There will likely be



a line of teams waiting, and plenty of volunteers to help guide you. Once it is your time, the team will be ushered from the waiting room to their spontaneous challenge. Once completed, the team will be reunited with their coach and given time to debrief in a classroom. Once your team leaves the Spontaneous area, there should be no further discussion about the spontaneous problem.

## Remember to HAVE FUN!!!

Once both the long-term and spontaneous are done, enjoy the day. Watch other performances, visit the SCSU STEM Festival, join the dance party and be sure to stay for the awards! You never know who will earn an invitation to the World Finals!

## What Should the Parents DO??

Parents are the ones who have been driving the carpools, picking up the pizzas, cleaning up cardboard, scraps of paper and hot glue from their living rooms and basements, delaying dinners because a prop needed one more embellishment... generally watching from the sidelines while the team "was being creative!"

On the day of the competition, the parents' job is simple. Be supportive. Explain to your team parents that they simply need to encourage their child, the team, and the coach. When the team is "working", parents need to step back and let them work. The kids have been working hard for this all year, and having their families and friends in the audience, applauding and cheering, is important to them. Parents should keep comments positive, and have fun!

## Avoid Outside Assistance

Parents can bring props into the facility and all the way to staging. They can also clean up and are encouraged to do so. They CANNOT put on costumes and make up, etc. We know it is tempting to just do something for the kids - but teams take pride and ownership in completing the task on their own. Judges will be asking the kids how they completed various things - and they have to be able to honestly talk about how they did it themselves. We don't want to put them in a difficult situation the day of the event, or incur penalty points because outside assistance was provided. So please be sure to keep that in mind!



# Spon Zone

During the competition, every team solves a spontaneous problem, an opportunity to show the judges their ability to think on their feet. Teams participating in the same problem and division will solve the same spontaneous problem. To ensure fairness, there is no discussion of the problems outside of the room.

## What to Expect at the Competition

Arrive at the designated Spontaneous area 20 minutes prior to your assigned spontaneous competition time. Only coaches (or one parent) should accompany the team. Follow the signs to the check-in desk. You and your team will be assigned to a holding room where you will wait until it is time to compete. When it is time for your team to compete a judge will come to your holding room to call your team's name and escort them to their competition room. At this time, only the 7 members may follow the official to the competition site. Remember, there are no spectators for spontaneous! Coaches wait for their team in the

debriefing room while they compete. Once in the spontaneous room, the team will have 1 minute to select the 5 members who will participate. Problems range from 5-15 minutes. Following completion of their problem, the team will be escorted to the debriefing room to discuss and decompress with their coach.

Once you leave the debriefing room, you ARE NOT ALLOWED to discuss the spontaneous problem. Period.

*To prepare for Spontaneous, teams should practice all three types of spontaneous problems as listed above. However, they should also be prepared for the unexpected.*



## Scoring Spontaneous

In competition, the spontaneous problem is worth up to 100 points. The team with the highest raw score in each problem receives 100; every other team receives a percentage of 100 based on its raw score.

In verbal spontaneous problems, creative responses are scored higher than common responses.

In hands-on, team members are scored for solving the problem and, oftentimes, for how well they work together and the creativity of their solution.

Verbal/hands-on problems usually require some type of verbal responses, combined with an application or technical component.

Spontaneous scores are not released during the competition. Spontaneous scores can be viewed on the website once all scores are published following the conclusion of Closing Ceremonies.

### Competition Score Breakdown:

100	Spontaneous
200	Long-term
50	Style
350	<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS</b>

## Don't Forget Your TOOLBOX

Odyssey praises creative problem solving, but it also rewards being prepared. As your team finalizes their props and costumes, create a toolbox. Include all the things that may be needed in an emergency on competition day. Have the team think about what tends to break and what is needed to fix them. Problems during dress rehearsals often reveal additional tool kit supplies! Include typical things such as tape, scissors, duct tape, Velcro, zip ties, spare prop parts, screwdrivers, etc. Bring the team toolbox to the staging area to use for setting up the performance or for repairs. The toolbox should not be part of the solution. See page 49 in the Program Guide for exemptions.

# PhotoBomb the Awards!

We are collecting pictures for our annual CTOM Photo-bomb slide show, so strike a pose, show off your creative powers, and make our teams laugh! Starting immediately and continuing through tournament day we invite teams to take pictures while practicing for competition, working on a spontaneous problem, team building, performing your long-term solution at tournament and having fun. We will be showing a selection of the pictures on the big screen during our Awards Ceremony!

All you need to do is snap a picture and email it to [photos@ctom.org](mailto:photos@ctom.org).

## Don't Miss the Awards Ceremony!

*Awards start at 5:30pm in the Lyman Auditorium*

- Medals will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams for each problem/division
- The Jill Riggles Award for Excellence in Spontaneous will be awarded to the highest spontaneous score for each problem/division
- Omer and Ranatra Fusca Awards will be given out after the team medals



# Forms and MORE Forms

By Kim Kempton

## Be Prepared

Odyssey teams could likely learn a great deal from the Boy Scout motto "be prepared" when it comes to forms. DO NOT wait until the last minute to complete your forms. Once completed, make multiple copies. Keep one set of forms with you and place a set in a box with props or costumes.

## When Do We Need the Forms?

Forms will be given by the team to a judge in the Staging Area, just prior to performance. Required paperwork includes:

- 4 Copies of the Style Form
- 4 Copies of the Team List Form (available for download from the Team Area of the website)
- 1 Outside Assistance
- Form (signed by all team members and coaches)
- 1 Cost Form
- 1 Copy of any TEAM SPECIFIC clarifications

## Do It With STYLE

Style is worth up to 50 points, so make sure the team gives this form the required attention. Each problem has

two required elements, and two items of the team's choice. Draw attention to elements that are extremely creative, but are not being scored as part of the long-term problem. The form also requires a paragraph that explains how well the 4 Style elements fit together and enhance the solution.

## Team List Form

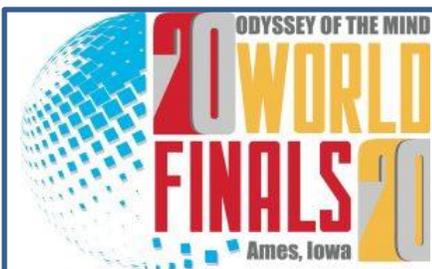
The problem specific team list form simply helps the judging team know what to look for and provides a brief description of scored elements.

## Outside Assistance Form

This form is signed by the team members indicating they completed all parts of the skit themselves, or indicated on the form the type of outside assistance that occurred.

## Cost Form

Only what is in the final solution is counted in the cost form. Group similar items into single cost lines (PVC, paint, fabric). Remember the three categories for items: cost, exempt, and assigned values. Be sure to have the team add up the cost and verify it meets the allowed amount for the problem solution. See page 47 in the Program Guide for more details.



Iowa State University, in Ames, Iowa will host the Odyssey of the Mind 2020 World Finals from May 27<sup>th</sup>–30<sup>th</sup>! Last year, over 900 teams from across the USA and 30 other countries competed at the World Finals!

# Invitations to Worlds

By Bob Zinser, CTOM Problem Captain, Problem #1

As a reminder, in those problems where the number of teams registered exceeds that which can be handled by a single judging team, the teams will be randomly assigned to smaller sites (Section A and Section B). Each site will run a standard competition, with teams presenting their long-term solutions and competing in spontaneous. In a departure from previous years, in problems and divisions where multiple sites are necessary, only the first place team in each site will be extended an invitation to World Finals. While the outcome will result in fewer teams attending World Finals, the teams that do attend should be CTOM's best teams.

## Dates, Details & The Drill

### Key Dates

Saturday, March 7, 2020

### Judge Training

(In the event of weather, access and procedures for remote training will be sent via email.)

Saturday, March 21, 2020

**(snow day, Sunday, March 22)**

### State Tournament

**Southern CT State University**

Saturday, March 28, 2020

### World Finals (Coach) meeting

### Spotlight

Connecticut Odyssey of the Mind is pleased to announce this year's recipients of its Anderson Award. The Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy from Windham and Norwalk's West Rocks Middle School both received start-up funding and support from CTOM. The award covers membership and registration costs for first year teams and enables the schools to add this popular STEAM-learning activity to this year's education programs. To make a donation to support future Anderson Awards or to learn more, please contact the CTOM Board at [AssnDir@ctom.org](mailto:AssnDir@ctom.org).

### The Drill

If you have questions or need reassurances, contact your Problem Captain or Kim Kempton at [kkempton@optonline.net](mailto:kkempton@optonline.net).

### Tournament Schedule

7:45am – 4pm Competition

1 – 4pm SCSU STEM Festival

(Academic Science and Laboratory Building)

3:45 – 5:15pm Dance Party

(Adanti Ballroom)

5:30pm Awards Ceremony

(Lyman Center Auditorium)