



Coaches' Corner March 2024

Did That Just Happen?

During performance times, mistakes can happen, and solutions will be created on the spot. This is just one of the things that make OM unique. But how to prepare for the inevitable?

The First Thing to Do...Practice. Make your mistakes at home and learn from the experience. The best way to avoid issues on stage and to prepare for when something goes wrong on stage is to practice, practice, and practice!

Second...Breathe. What you have feared for the last few weeks has just happened on competition day during your team's performance: someone forgot their lines, a prop broke, or didn't function. The first thing that you must do is breathe! Mistakes can, and will, happen. Take a deep breath and focus on solutions.

Third... Always Stay Positive. When something goes wrong during your team's performance, don't show your stress. Let your team see your confidence in their ability to work through anything, by remaining composed and encouraging on the sidelines.



ATTENTION COACHES – NEW THIS YEAR

To improve our competition experience together, CTOM will be providing "COACH ID" tags at our State Competition. This will help us identify you throughout the day and allow you speedy access to your Long-Term and Spontaneous competition sites. THE COACH ID SYSTEM IS SELF-SERVE. Look for conveniently placed batches when you enter Pelz Gym from the garage side entrance and Engleman Hall from the main parking lot, or at our information table in the main lobby. These locations will also serve as Coach-tag return stations at the end of the tournament.

Competition Edition



We can't wait to be inspired on Saturday, March 16, 2024

**CTOM State Tournament
Southern CT State University**

[See website for details and map](#)

And...we can't wait to celebrate with you all at the Tournament closing event starting at 3:45pm in Pelz Gym. Don't miss Jon Cap, Magician-Balloon Artist-Comic, and of course the CTOM Award Ceremony.



CTOM Office Hours

Login to Microsoft Teams for comradery, questions, and insights.

EVERY MONDAY, 7-8pm

Join us here:

[Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)



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

www.ctom.org



Planning your Competition Day

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.



Before You Leave Home

Before your team leaves for the tournament, review your check-list and make sure all sets, props, costumes and any necessary tools and team forms have been packed.

Keep in Touch Along the Way

Before the day of the competition, create a cell-phone call list 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. Maps and parking instructions are on our website.

Create a Schedule for the Day

Plan to arrive at least 1 hour 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.

Food on Campus

SCSU's Bagel Wagon will be open in the Engleman Hall Student Lounge from 9:00 am until 1:30 pm. Starbucks coffee, juice, chips, granola bars, muffins, bagels, and the like are available. Enjoy refreshments and check out our CTOM Merchandise table, also located in the lounge! Lunch food is not available anywhere on campus. Teams should bring their own bagged lunch, tailgate, or eat at a local restaurant.

When You Get to Campus

If you are dropping off team props, use approved [prop drop](#) spots. Unload them on the sidewalk. Do not leave the car unattended. Immediately drive to the [parking area](#) assigned for your problem. Parents are ALLOWED (and encouraged) to help carry props to the performance site.

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. Take a few moments to inspect the competition space. 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.





Bring a 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 the Program Guide for exemptions.



Don't Forget the FORMS!

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 PROBLEM SPECIFIC forms (available for download from the Team Area of the website)
- 1 Copy of any TEAM SPECIFIC clarifications (if any were submitted)

Do It With STYLE

Each problem has two required elements and two items of the team’s choice. The form 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. 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 the Program Guide for more details





MARKET PLACE

CTOM Historic Pins Collection

Don't miss the (informal) unveiling of the CTOM collection of state, town, and team pins from around Connecticut. The exhibit spans 25 years of Connecticut OM pin trading tradition.

On view at the 2024 CTOM State Tournament, in the Student Lounge at Engleman Hall 8AM-2PM.



ENTER the CTOM State Tournament PIN RAFFLE

Remind your competitors to enter our FREE annual tournament raffle!

The prize, a pin collector towel laden with Odyssey of the Mind pins from around the world, traveled to Connecticut from last year's World Finals competitions.

One winner takes all!

Raffle tickets packets will be distributed to coaches, one per team, at the Spontaneous Problem site, and can be entered in the Engleman Student Lounge.

2024 CTOM State Tournament MERCHANDISE table



2024 CTOM Tournament Merchandise sales will be operating during tournament hours - in the Student Lounge at Engleman Hall 8AM-2PM and outside Pelz Gymnasium during Closing Ceremonies 3-4:30PM.



PINS

For more CTOM Market Place information visit [here](#)





Be Prepared, Be Spontaneous

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 team members may follow the official to the competition site. The entire team enters the spontaneous room and solves the problem. Remember, there are no spectators for spontaneous!

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

Coaches wait for their team in the debriefing room while they compete. 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.

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 Awards.

Competition Day:

Getting Your Scores

As a reminder, scores will be delivered ELECTRONICALLY following the competition. Coaches will be contacted via email when scores are available.

Competition Score Breakdown:

100 Spontaneous

200 Long-term

50 Style

350 TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS

Celebratory Magic and Comedy Show

All teams, family members and special guests are invited to join us in **Pelz Gym starting at 3:45pm!** Look out for **Magician Jan Cap** for his pre-show balloon art walkaround.

Closing Ceremony and Awards

The 2024 CTOM Awards Ceremony will be held in Pelz Gym at 4:30pm!

