



8-WEEK ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

It is not too late to start a team to compete in the 2025 CTOM State Tournament.

With effective time management and the active participation of each team member, a more focused and compact 8-week competition schedule can work well. Teams on this type of schedule have competed successfully in state tournaments.

Here is a breakdown of an 8-week Odyssey of the Mind team schedule:

WEEK 1 Select team Long-Term problem. Assign roles within the team. Brainstorm initial ideas.

WEEK 2-3 Deep-dive into Long-Term problem analyzing requirements and potential solutions. Develop a detailed outline of key components and design elements of the team solution. Brainstorm creative elements for the "Style" element of the presentation.

WEEK 4-5 Begin construction of the physical components of the solution (if applicable). Practice performance elements, i.e. dialogue, choreography, or technical aspects. Incorporate feedback from team members to refine solution.

WEEK 6-7 Focus on polishing the final presentation, including costumes, props, set design. Practice the performance with emphasis on timing and delivery. Complete required forms.

WEEK 8 Final run-through of the complete performance. Review Spontaneous problem strategies. Address last minute concerns.



Coaches' Corner

January 2025

**2025 CTOM STATE
TOURNAMENT REGISTRATIONS
are ongoing**

**TEAMS
REGISTER
HERE**

**Judges
Register
HERE**

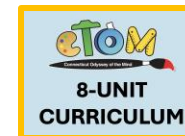
**Volunteers
Register
HERE**

RESOURCES



Any questions? Come to
CTOM Office Hours
MONDAYS 7-7:30PM

[Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)



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

www.ctom.org



Find Inspiration - in the *recycling bin!*?!

Finding the perfect material to build a set or bedazzle a costume can be challenging and overwhelming. Before you pull your recycling bin to the curb, encourage your team to peer inside. Team members should look at each item not for what it is supposed to be used for, but for what it could be used for. What could be created with 10 of the items, what about 100? How could the item be altered to create a unique effect? Encourage your team to look at the material in front of them from a different perspective. What happens when it's layered? Broken into pieces? What does it look like when similar colors or shapes are grouped together?



Stop. Reset. Restart.

After weeks of working on a solution fatigue can set in (for both team members and coaches). Whenever your team seems stuck, unable to think, create, complete a task, work together...DO A SPONTANEOUS PROBLEM or get up and move. Run a quick lap around the outside of the building. Most importantly - make it fun!!! If that does not work, look at your set from the perspective of an ant, an alien or a giant. Remember this should be an enjoyable odyssey for all, and inspiration can spark at any moment!

Scoring Teamwork on a Scale of 1 to 10

One of the keys to coaching Odyssey is encouraging teamwork. All teams go through growing pains, but members will learn to work together in time. Everyone's idea is important to the group. Sometimes the best way to illustrate how well your team is doing is by giving them a score. To evaluate teamwork, start with 5 points. Add (+1) for a "yes" to any of the first questions. Subtract (-1) for a "yes" to any of the second questions.

+1 Questions:

- Did the team approach the problem with enthusiasm and cheerfulness?
- Was every team member listened to and fully involved in developing a solution?
- Has a team leader already emerged? Do the other team members respect this position?
- Did the team manage time well? Did the team manage materials well?

-1 Questions:

- Did anyone speak angrily to a teammate or use profanity?
- Was anyone ignored or did a team member choose not to participate?
- Did any team member try to impose their solutions on the team?
- Did the team use up or waste materials prior to planning or testing a solution?
- Did the team become flustered and panic as time ran out?





WORK SMART, NOT HARD

Remind the team to reread their long-term problem details often and review its scoring criteria regularly. Sometimes great presentations are scored lower than expected because the team did not emphasize the work on the scored element.



Don't Forget About SPON ZONE

The Spontaneous portion of the competition (worth up to 100 points) requires that the team solve a problem they have never seen, before a team of judges. All team members (up to 7) are encouraged to participate in the Spontaneous portion of the competition. The coach does not go with the team into the spontaneous room. There will always be at least two adults with the team during the entire spontaneous process. For tips on teaching Spontaneous, sample problems, and insights from CTOM's Spontaneous Problem Captain, Dave Schaller, make sure to visit the [SPON ZONE](#) section of our website!

Field Trips and Expert Advice

Having an OM related outing or inviting an outside expert is a great way to both "team-build and skill-build". Consider what skills or knowledge your team may be lacking. Your local hardware or craft store can be great places to learn about tools and materials. Your local high school tech teacher may be willing to give a short engineering lesson. Your hobby-seamstress neighbor could teach easy sewing techniques.

Or you may get permission to visit a local school theatre to practice projection off a real stage in a large space. Always keep in mind though, **NO OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE!** While you and others you invite can teach your team skills, they cannot give them specific advice toward their long term solution, or work with them on any part of their solution that will be presented at competition.



Find Inspiration on YouTube

State Organizations and individual coaches from across the country post how-to and training videos on YouTube. If your team is struggling with or unfamiliar with a specific type of Spontaneous Challenge, share one of these videos during an upcoming team meeting:

- [Buckets - spontaneous hands on example problem Odyssey of the Mind - YouTube](#)
- [Up, Up, And Away - spontaneous hands on example problem Odyssey of the Mind - YouTube](#)
- [Perpetual Motion - spontaneous hands on example problem Odyssey of the Mind - YouTube](#)
- [Heads and Tails- spontaneous hands on example problem Odyssey of the Mind - YouTube](#)





Recruiting a Judge

CTOM is run entirely by volunteers. Every team is required to provide both a judge and a volunteer to help at the tournament. The roles are quite different, so please start thinking of potential candidates well before the January 31st registration deadline. Judges and volunteers must be 18+ years on tournament day.

Who would make a great judge? Anyone who loves seeing creativity on display, can follow instructions, and can make a two-day time commitment would be an excellent judge. No prior Odyssey knowledge is needed.



Our judges often find the opportunity both fun and inspiring. Judges must attend training on Saturday, March 15, 8:30am–1:00pm and attend the tournament on Saturday, March 29 for the duration of the competition they are assigned to judge (between 7:00am–4:00 pm). For a fair competition, the judging team for a problem must be consistent throughout the day. Judges are not allowed to leave their posts to watch other teams compete in other problems. For this reason, we recommend that you do not ask parents to judge, but parents can amplify your efforts by tapping their networks. Creative teams have also recruited from senior centers, honor societies, civic groups, churches, and former Odyssey teams with great success.



Please see the Register as a [Judge](#) / [Volunteer](#) pages at www.ctom.org

Finding a Volunteer

Team parents make good tournament volunteers. Tournament day is long. The team is often with the coach, leaving a parent free to work a shift of 3 – 4 hours. No special training is needed. Volunteer jobs include easy but necessary tasks such as door holding, running errands, selling merchandise, and giving directions. Job shifts can be scheduled around the team's performance.



One volunteer must work the entire volunteer shift. Parents cannot split one shift among themselves. There are also a limited number of volunteer openings on Friday, March 28, helping to set up for the tournament. For some parents, this may be more convenient. Of course, other adults may serve as the team-provided volunteer as well.





Use Spontaneous Challenges to Build Skills and Teamwork

Use Spontaneous Challenges to identify team member skills, foster teamwork and move their long-term solution forward.

REMEMBER: *There are no outside assistance rules in Spontaneous. Use your spontaneous time as an opportunity to teach your team skills and tactics. Encourage the team to always start by identifying WHAT is being scored and HOW points are awarded.*



Identify a team captain: A captain can organize the flow of discussion, testing, building, and scoring, especially when splitting up in smaller groups to solve the problem.

Designate a problem reader: Understand the exact wording of a problem. You only get points for what the judge is scoring!

Assign a time-keeper: Too often teams lose track of time while brainstorming or focusing on a specific task. The time-keeper keeps an eye on the clock and asks the judges repeatedly for how much time remains.

Empower your tinkers: Assign one or two team members to be the creative force. If the team is given a hands-on or verbal hands-on problem, the role of the tinkerer is to come up with one or two creative ideas of how to solve the problem. The team can vote on which idea they want to use and move forward, working together to enhance the idea and create their solution.

Recognize the writers: If the challenge involves creating a story, have your strongest writers work collaboratively to develop the story while others complete the hands-on challenge. Remember, the spontaneous judges do not see your long-term solution. Is there a theme or setting that can be used to tell a story in a verbal spontaneous?

Use your time WISELY

Every team member will perform better if they know what their role is. Assigning roles, based on member skills, is an ideal way to help a team bring out the best in each other.

Ask QUESTIONS

In Odyssey, if it doesn't say you can't, you probably can! Always ask the judges if you can alter items before you begin.





SPONTANEOUS SCRIMMAGE – March 1

CTOM is partnering with Trumbull OMC in hosting a Spontaneous Scrimmage. The event will take place on Saturday, March 1, at Hillcrest Middle School in Trumbull, CT. For more information and to sign up, follow this link: <https://ctom.org/spontaneous-scrimmages/>



KEY DATES

JANUARY 11
Coach Training B

JANUARY 15
Tournament Registration DEADLINE
Reg Fee: \$225
After this date, late fee of \$50 applies

JANUARY 31
Tournament Registration CLOSES
&
Judge/Volunteer Registration CLOSES
After this date, automatic waiver fees apply:
\$250 no judge, \$100 no volunteer

MARCH 1
Trumbull Spon Scrimmage

MARCH 15
Judge Training

MARCH 29
CTOM STATE TOURNAMENT

2024-25 CTOM events hosted by
BETHEL MIDDLE SCHOOL

The CTOM problem captains and team are here to support. Email to: assndir@ctom.org