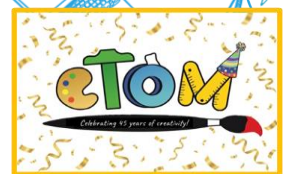




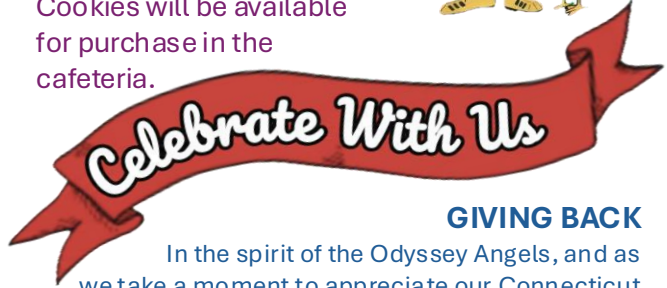
CTOM IS CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF CREATIVITY



Coaches' Corner
March 2026



BIRTHDAY FUN
Look for fun ways to celebrate CTOM's 45th Anniversary with us. Join us for the Closing Ceremonies. Birthday treats from Sugar Blooms Cookies will be available for purchase in the cafeteria.



GIVING BACK

In the spirit of the Odyssey Angels, and as we take a moment to appreciate our Connecticut Odyssey community through the years, we also want to remember our responsibility of giving back to the larger community. On this special 45th Anniversary Tournament, we are partnering with Daily Bread Food Pantry who will be placing a collection bin for non-perishable food items in the entrance lobby. Please consider bringing an item to donate to their cause.



Competition Edition



We can't wait to be inspired at the
2026 CTOM STATE TOURNAMENT
Saturday, March 28
Bethel Middle School

Tournament Schedule

For detailed information and downloadable program guide, go to
CTOM 2026 Tournament Overview

CLOSING CEREMONY

Bethel Middle School Auditorium

2:15PM

"JonCap Magic Show"

3:00PM

2026 CTOM Award Ceremony & Pin Towel Raffle





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... Stay Positive. If something goes wrong during your team's performance, don't show stress. Let your team see your confidence in their ability to work through anything.

Pre-tournament
Virtual Q&A session:
With any last-minute
questions/concerns,
login to Microsoft Teams

[Microsoft Team Meeting](#)

MONDAY March 16
7-8PM



Post tournament
World Finalist Coaches'
informational meeting will take
place virtually

MONDAY March 30
7-8PM

Invitation to meeting link will be
sent to qualifying team coaches
after the conclusion of the State
Tournament.



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CTOM Coaches Corner
March 2026
www.ctom.org



Planning Competition Day

The CTOM competition will be an exhausting whirl of excitement and emotions. 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 group chat and share with all. NOTE: there is NO guest WIFI on campus, so plan accordingly. This 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

Arrive with team snacks as needed throughout the day. For lunch hour, we have enlisted Fat Tony's Deli for a group food delivery. If your team would like to take advantage of this option, orders may be placed/paid by you at the custom link provided on the [CTOM Website/CTOM Tournament Program Guide](#). For a sweet treat, Sugar Blooms Cookies will host a table in the Cafeteria throughout the day. (Note: food vendors operate independently from CTOM.)

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. 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 differences 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

OM praises creative problem solving, and rewards being prepared. As your team finalizes their props and costumes, create a toolbox. During dress rehearsals, have the team think about what may need fixing and what is needed to fix them. Include typical items: tape, scissors, duct tape, Velcro, etc., but also team specific spare parts or tools. Have toolbox near performance area for setup, but it should not be part of the solution. See the [OotM Program Guide](#) for exemptions.

Don't Forget the 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. Forms are available for download from the [Member Area](#) of the Odyssey of the Mind website.

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
- 1 Outside Assistance Form (signed by all team members and coaches)
- 1 Cost Form
- 1 Copy of any PROBLEM SPECIFIC forms 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 Long-Term solution 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 [OotM Program Guide](#) for more details.





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 designated adult) 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. The team will be escorted back to the debriefing room to discuss/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. The Jill Riggles Award recognizes teams with the highest spontaneous score in their problem division.





MARKET PLACE

8AM – 2PM Bethel Middle School Cafeteria



ENTER THE RAFFLE

Remind your competitors to enter the tournament raffle! The prize: pin collector towel laden with OM pins from around the world.

Winner takes all!

Drawing will take place at the Award Ceremony.

FREE Raffle tickets packets will be distributed to coaches at the Spontaneous Problem site.

VIEW the CTOM Historic Pins Collection

Don't miss the CTOM collection of state, town, and team pins from around Connecticut. The exhibit spans 45 years of Connecticut OM pin trading tradition.



SHOP for your 2026 CTOM Pins and T-shirt at the 2026 CTOM State Tournament MERCHANDISE TABLE



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Insta #ctom2026





**We're excited to welcome you to the
45TH ANNUAL CTOM State Tournament!**

COMPETITION DAY



GET THERE EARLY

Bethel Middle School
600 Whittlesey Dr, Bethel CT

Find competition information on our website:

[CTOM COPETITION SCHEDULE](#)
&
[CTOM TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW](#)

We recommend coaches download a copy
for the day of the tournament.

Getting Your Scores

Long-term raw scores will be
available to coaches in the
SCORE ROOM

Competition Score Breakdown:

100 *Spontaneous*
200 *Long-term*
50 *Style*

350 TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS

Join us in the Cafeteria for our 45th
anniversary celebration, followed by a
magic show and the CTOM State
Tournament Awards Ceremony in the
Auditorium

STAY TILL THE END

*(Final scores will be posted online after all
events have concluded.)*

