



Coaches' Corner

January 2024

IMPORTANT DATES

VIRTUAL COACH TRAINING THIS SATURDAY

For detailed information and to register visit our website ([here](#)):

**Reserve your spot by this
Friday, Jan 5, 2024**

REGISTRATION DEADLINES

STATE TOURNAMENT JAN 15

Late fees of \$50 will apply

JUDGE/VOLUNTEER JAN 31

\$250 no-judge/\$100 no-volunteer fees will apply

The CTOM Competition will be held on **Saturday, March 16, 2024**, at Southern Connecticut State University
All registrations close January 31

Trumbull SCRIMMAGE Saturday, February 3, 2024

Madison Middle School in Trumbull is hosting a Spontaneous Scrimmage on February 3rd from 9:00-12:30pm! Open to all registered CTOM teams. Space is limited and advance registration is required.

Learn more [HERE](#)

To register contact: Tara Figueroa at tarikanova@gmail.com

Team Tips (Especially for new coaches)

Planning Team Meetings

Review all OM and CTOM provided resources... the YouTube series, "Odyssey Academy" and our own CTOM 8-Unit curriculum provide a roadmap for bringing your team from their first meeting to a successful competition day. Create a simple agenda for each team meeting, including tasks to be completed (and an associated amount of time for each). Select activities for each meeting:

- Teach the team a skill - sewing, painting, cutting balsa, acting.
- Do at least one spontaneous problem.
- Include a fun (silly) activity or snack time. Non-work time is when a team truly starts to come together.
- Brainstorm solutions to parts of the Long-Term problem -- keep paper and pencil handy for ideas... and doodles.
- Work on Long-Term problem requirements and assign homework for independent progress on specific items (script, costumes, props, etc.)

Celebrate Along the Way

Be sure to recognize the work being accomplished and reward the team for meeting each simple goal (special treat, a half-hour of outdoor fun time, or an extra 'hands-on' activity).

Be a Role Model

A strong team is grounded in a strong coach. Be sure to model good behavior for your team members, and always encourage respect, understanding and compassion.

Evaluate and Improve

At the conclusion of each meeting, lead the team through a brief evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses:

What issues did you encounter today?

What came easily for each team member?

What did you do well?

Where could you improve?

Is there a skill or concept that the team needs to review / learn?



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

www.ctom.org



SUBMIT CLARIFICATIONS

Clarifications may be submitted until February 15!

Long-Term Problems are written to provide just enough guidance for teams to solve the problem without limiting creativity. Occasionally additional guidance is required from Odyssey of the Mind HQ or teams may have questions regarding their interpretations of the Long-Term Problem limitations and the rules, as stated in the [Program Guide](#). Clarifications are submitted by logging into the [Team Area](#).

Remember to check for problem specific clarifications early and often. There are three types of clarifications: General, Team-Specific and Judges Only.

General Clarifications amend or further explain a Long-Term problem's limitations. They take precedence over the limitations listed in the problem and the rules in the Program Guide. It's important that teams stay current on all general clarifications issued throughout the year.

Team-Specific Clarifications allow teams to submit a clarification request that asks if its ideas for a solution are allowed or if they meet the problem's requirements. These clarifications are kept confidential.

Where DID you get THAT?

Always remind your team that Odyssey rewards creativity with points. Encourage team members to look around their homes and communities for unique materials that can be used in creative ways to enhance a costume, set or prop.

Encourage team members to bring something new to every meeting. How can we use this? How can it be altered? What could we do with 100 of these?

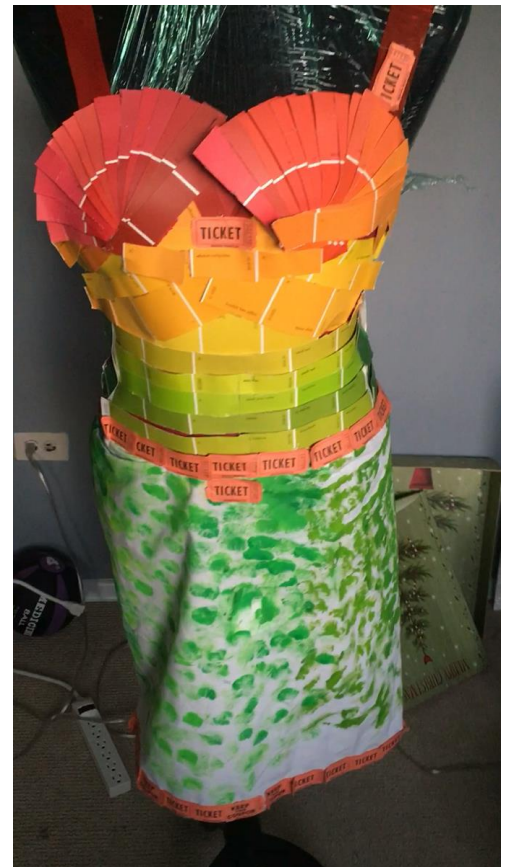
Use the Material Creatively

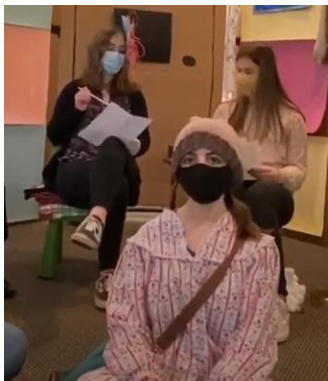
Encourage your team to look at every found item in a new or creative way. Almost every Odyssey team uses at least one roll of Duct Tape. Duct Tape has been solving problems since WWII. From patching up NASCAR

cars during races to connecting PVC on an OM set, the uses are boundless. Duct Tape was even used on the Apollo 13 to repair carbon dioxide filters! Challenge your team to find a "NEW" use for Duct Tape. Once they've found one... challenge them to find another material that could work even better!

ASK for Permission

CTOM encourages students to 'think outside the box' and creatively upcycle found items. Please teach the team to be respectful and ALWAYS ask permission before taking anything...even from a dumpster!





How to Avoid Outside Assistance!

Students learn best when they complete tasks on their own, and they develop a sense of pride and increased self-esteem when they go beyond what is expected. Although no one may assist the team members in solving the problem, it is not Outside Assistance to teach the team HOW to DO something.

Parents and other supporters may act as tutors or instructors, but they must not make suggestions on how to solve the problem. For example, a parent may teach the members how to sew if they ask but cannot sew and/or design a costume for the team's solution.

Spontaneous Spotlight

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. Helping your team learn one another's skills and developing a collaborative spirit are critical for teams to perform well under pressure. Spontaneous Challenges teach your team to think on their feet, work collaboratively and become mindful of their time management. Unlike the Long-Term Solution, where there is NO OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE ALLOWED, spontaneous skills can be taught.

Speaking and Presentation Skills

Help your team to develop their public speaking skills, avoid filler words in their spontaneous answers, learn about each other, PLUS identify skills that may be vital as they develop their long-term solution.

The Ah, Um Game

Sit the team in a circle and ask for a volunteer to go first. The team member must talk to their group about themselves for two full minutes without saying the following taboo words: "Ah", "Um", "Like", or "You Know", or pausing for 5 seconds. As soon as a taboo word is said, the person sits down, and the clock is reset. Then the next team member stands and begins. As the team improves, ask them to talk about their teammates and what unique skill they can use in OM. Help students to see and recognize the ability of each team member and capitalize on the strengths of ALL! You can also use the same game to help develop plots, characters and brainstorm solutions! What do you know about Arm & Hammer Baking Soda?

Rules of Engagement

Empower the team to make a clear set of rules that will be followed during team meetings and work sessions. Giving the team ownership of the rules will promote their following the rules by choice. It also begins teaching them that in OM they are encouraged –required, actually –to do all of the work themselves!

Suggest RULE #1: All ideas should be allowed and never criticized!

