

Odyssey of the Mind™

TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

DEAR VA REGION 9 COACHES:

Tournament Day, **Saturday March 12**, is almost here!

Please read this entire letter carefully. Share with your team the information they need to know. Share with parents the information *they* need to know. Be sure that **everyone** planning to attend has the information they need about times, parking, your team's problem and division, and your schedule for the day. Review long term and spontaneous procedures with the team.

PLEASE ask your team and all parents, friends, and other supporters to wear sneakers or other soft-soled, closed-toe, shoes to the Tournament. Shoes with heels are not permitted in several of the performance sites because walking on the floor can cause damage.

The performance schedule for Tournament Day is posted at www.novanorth.org. Teams from schools/organizations with more than one membership have a "Team A", "Team B", etc. designation as part of the membership name. This is reflected on the schedule. Teams must include this designation on the membership sign and required tournament forms; this is part of the team's official membership name and number (see the Program Guide p. 42 & 44).

Be sure that all parents know their responsibilities, important times, lunch and dinner plans, and so forth. A letter to the parents is a great way to ensure that they all know what to expect.

REMEMBER: The goal of this Tournament and the Odyssey Program is to benefit our participants- teaching them teamwork, creativity, problem-solving, and sportsmanship. The primary focus of Tournament Day is to have fun sharing the teams' solutions. Relax, enjoy, and keep the day's events in perspective. Let's all celebrate our children's hard work and creativity.

PARKING: Please arrange with your team's parents to carpool if possible. **DO NOT BLOCK FIRE LANES OR BUILDING DOORWAYS;** our children's safety is more important than your convenience! For additional parking, please use the Vienna Metro Station North Parking Garage which is free on weekends and a short walk from Oakton HS. There is a **free** shuttle bus to Oakton HS door 14 from the Metro on March 12th, operating from 6:45-9:45 am & 2:30-5:00pm.

TOURNAMENT SIGN-IN: Sign-in for teams the morning of the meet will be just inside door 14, from 8:00 – 1:00 p.m. It will only take a few minutes, but we need to know you are here, and there are important items in the package, including an Entry Card for Spontaneous. If the coach is unable to sign in, ask a team member's parent to sign in the team & retrieve the packet. The Coach needs the enclosed Spontaneous Entry Card which is required for Spontaneous check-in.

PROPS DROP-OFF: **DO NOT LINGER in the drop-off areas.** Plan to unload quickly and move your car/van back to a parking space. The drop-off areas around the school entrances are only large enough for 2-3 vehicles at a time, and we have 134 teams who need to unload props. We recommend having at least two adults help the team unload (and reload) props – one to stay with the team and props while the other drives to/from parking. The driver must remain with the vehicle and should occupy a drop-off space for no more than 10 minutes. **BRING PROPS AND SCENERY INTO THE BUILDING ABOUT ONE HOUR BEFORE YOUR TEAM'S LONG TERM PERFORMANCE.** There is not enough space in the building to hold all teams' stuff for longer!

Also, please return everything to your car/van immediately after the team's performance. Courtesy is always important, especially with so many participants.

Coaches and parents may help team members move props to the performance staging area. (Helpers, be careful not to break anything – and be sure to let the TEAM fix anything that does break.) Once the team is in the staging area, please have parents leave the area – most staging areas are quite small, and extra adults can be hazardous to the team's props and scenery. Also, parents will enter the performance room through the Audience Entrance, which is often not the same as the team entrance.

Drop off locations (see enclosed map of OHS):

- Problem 1-'No-Cycle Recycle' -- Door 11
- Problem 2-Something Fishy – Door 11
- Problem 3-Aesop Gone Viral -- Door 6
- Problem 4- Stack Attack! – Door 10
- Problem 5-Furs, Fins, Feathers & Friends – Door 3
- Primary-Stir the Pot – Door 5

Please drop off at the listed door for your team's long term performance site. While it may appear on the map that a different door is more convenient, we have assigned doors to avoid traffic jams in the corridors and to accommodate staging arrangements. Trust us. ☺

FORMS: Make sure your team fills out and brings their required forms: 4 Style Forms, 1 Material Values Form, 1 Outside Assistance Form, and 4 copies of any list required for the problem. Have the team read and follow the instructions on pages 47-49 of the Program Guide when filling out the Material Values Form. The team must have all forms ready to give to the staging judge(s) in the staging area before their Long Term performance. Remember that **all costume items must be included in materials value**, whether or not that costume is being scored. Bring copies of any team-specific problem clarifications your team received and give them to the staging area judge. (Paperwork is optional for Primary teams, but we like to have Lists and Style Forms, to help the judges in making comments.) Please use this year's forms as provided in the Program Guide and our website. Teams may scan into a computer the Outside Assistance, Materials Value, and Style forms in order to complete them, but teams must not alter the forms in any way (including font size). Note that the Outside Assistance Form should be signed by each team member and by the coaches. Keep a copy of all forms – the team will need these if they go to the State Meet. There is **no photocopier** available in the building; teams should bring enough copies of each completed form. DO NOT plan to complete the forms on Tournament Day; this is not good for your staging judge's nerves.

CLARIFICATIONS: General Clarifications for all competitive Long Term problems are available at www.odysseyofthemind.com. Clarifications have the force of rules; teams should check for new clarifications every day during the last 2 weeks before tournament, to be sure they have the most recent clarifications. Be sure your team reads all clarifications for the problem they are solving! Clarifications take precedence over the original problem descriptions, and are binding on all teams. Teams are also responsible for knowing the Region 9 House Rules as posted at www.novanorth.org.

WEAPONS: CCI has a rule regarding weapons at tournaments (see the Program Guide p. 38). In addition, Fairfax County Public Schools prohibit actual weapons and any toy or simulated weapons that could possibly be mistaken for actual weapons. No such items may be used in any Odyssey performance. Teams are encouraged to solve their long term problems without

depicting weapons of any sort. If a team believes that the depiction of a weapon will enhance their performance, the team must find a way to represent that weapon without the use of anything that might cause concern about injury, or might be mistaken for a real weapon by officials or security personnel. Judges have discretion to prohibit the use of an item that causes concern, up to and including confiscation in the middle of a performance. The Regional Director, Tournament Director, and Problem Captains will not advise a team about any specific depiction of a weapon prior to the team's performance. The acceptability of the depiction will be determined by the judging team at the site on Tournament Day.

COURTESY: Please instruct your students and parents to enter and leave the competition areas only *between* performances, *not during* a performance. Doors will be closed during the performances to avoid distractions. **No one, including parents, may enter a room during a performance.** At some sites, audience and team members will be entering and exiting through the same door, so ask everyone to be considerate of teams and their props. **Please silence cell phones during performances.**

PROGRAMS: The Tournament schedule is posted at www.novanorth.org and there will be several copies of the program in the packet the coach receives at sign-in on March 12th.

SCHEDULE AND SITES: Teams must report on time to the staging area for their Long Term Performance (30-40 minutes before scheduled performance time), and to the table near Stairway by Door 4 for Spontaneous (5-10 minutes before scheduled time). Be prompt! Be prepared! Late and unprepared teams can cause serious delays in a very tight schedule (and such delays may be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct).

SITES: All performance areas are at least the sizes specified in the problem statements. TEAMS PLEASE NOTE – plan to wear sneakers or other soft-soled footwear for your performance; absolutely no narrow or “spike” heels. Scenery, props, and vehicles must be designed not to mark or damage the floor. Teams must carry, not drag, props and scenery.

Primary/Stir the Pot: The classrooms (151, 155, 159) for Primary performances have linoleum floors. There is only 1 door in each room.

Problem 1/No-Cycle Recycle: The Cafeteria has linoleum. Vehicles must not damage the floor.

Problem 2/Something Fishy: The Main gym has a standard wood gymnasium floor.

Problem 3/ Aesop Gone Viral: The Auditorium stage has a painted hardwood floor. Teams will enter & exit from the stage – audience members will use rear doors to seating.

Problem 4/Stack Attack!: The Auxiliary gym has a standard wood gymnasium floor.

Problem 5/ Fins, Furs, Feathers, Div 1A/1B: Classroom 138 has linoleum. There are 2 doors.

Problem 5/ Fins, Furs, Feathers, Div 2/3: The Lecture Hall stage has a painted hardwood floor. Teams will enter from the stage – audience members will use rear doors to seating.

LONG TERM PROCEDURES: Teams must arrive at the site staging area 30-40 minutes before their scheduled performance time. Follow the signs that say “STAGING” for your problem, division, and site. Parents may help carry scenery and equipment. A staging area judge will meet the team here to review the team's forms and check compliance with other problem requirements. The team should be in costume and ready to go. Because we have a staging area outside the

performance room for every site, we do not use the “3-minute rule” – anything left outside the performance room will be unavailable to the team for its performance and will be put aside by the staging judge. Teams should plan to double-check that they have retrieved everything before the door is closed between them and the staging area. When the Timekeeper asks the team if they are ready, only brief responses should be made.

CLEAN-UP: Teams should leave the building at least as clean as they found it. We would like to be welcome here again, and Odyssey participants have a reputation to maintain as great guests. **ALL TEAMS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CLEANING UP AFTER THEIR LONG-TERM SOLUTION PERFORMANCE.** Please bring appropriate cleaning supplies as we will not provide them. Parents and coaches may help the team to remove props and clean the site after the performance is over, but please don’t interfere with the judges discussing the performance with the team. **MAKE SURE RESTROOMS ARE LEFT CLEAN.** We would like the staff at Oakton High School to say that we are among the best-mannered groups to use their facilities. Props, costumes, equipment, etc., must not be abandoned anywhere in the building or on campus – please make sure that you, your team, and your fans take away or properly throw away everything you bring to the tournament.

Stack Attack! Weigh-In: Two members from each team should bring the structure to Weigh-In (**room 174**) at least 45 minutes before their scheduled Long Term performance time. If your team has Spontaneous before Long Term, and less than 90 minutes between the two performances, the team may report to Weigh-In 1 hour before Spontaneous. Check the schedule to determine your performance times. Any team whose structure does not meet problem specifications will have 20 minutes to modify the structure and return to Weigh-in. Each approved structure will be sealed in a bag/box and kept by the Weigh-In judges until the team meets with the Staging Judges. We recommend that teams provide a sturdy container for their structure, to help protect it against bumps while carrying it through hallways; this container should have the team’s membership name and number on the outside. Two team members may retrieve the structure from Weigh-In when the team begins talking with the Staging Judges. The team should not open the sealed bag until asked to do so by the Staging Judges. Please review the problem rules for further weigh-in information. We have a regional policy that the team presents a copy of their balsa receipt and the glue used for the Weigh-In judges.

PHOTOGRAPHY: The Staging Judge will ask your team whether they will allow video recording of their performance. Please discuss this with your parents and team in advance. If the team does NOT give permission, NO ONE may record the performance. **FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY IS NOT ALLOWED** during any performance at any site. Also, we do not permit special lighting in the room to accommodate cameras. Parents and coaches may photograph their own team at any time. Photographing teams other than your own is not permitted anywhere or anytime other than during the team’s performance. Similarly, no one except Tournament Officials should ask the team to explain their solution, or to describe how/why they decided to solve the problem a certain way. Teams are encouraged to respond to questions from other teams, coaches, or parents with a (polite) “that’s a secret”. Also, only the parents and coaches of a team may enter the performance area after the team has completed its performance; all other members of the audience should remain in the audience seating area or leave the room.

SPONTANEOUS PROCEDURES: *Please make sure that all parents understand that they cannot watch Spontaneous.* All teams (including Primary if they choose to do Spontaneous) should report to the stairway near Door 4 to check in about 5 minutes before their scheduled Spontaneous time. **Only team members and one accompanying coach or adult escort will be escorted to the designated Holding Area.** All team members may enter the spontaneous

room then decide which 5 will participate. (If a team has five or fewer team members, all must participate). Any non-participating team members will remain silently in the room. If a non-participating team member affects the spontaneous solution in any way, that part of the solution will not be scored, time will continue, and the team may be penalized. The coach or escort must stay in the Spontaneous Holding Room while the team is competing, then will accompany the team back downstairs.

Please ask parents to stay far away from the Spontaneous check-in area – there is nothing to see, and this is a high-traffic area. Encourage them to go watch other teams perform, and arrange to rejoin them after Spontaneous at a specific location somewhere else in the building.

Remind your team to say NOTHING about their Spontaneous problem – not even whether it was verbal or non-verbal. Any discussion may be overheard. Remember that later performing teams can gain an advantage from overhearing. Teams have received a Spontaneous score of “0” for discussing the problem after leaving the room. **We are very serious about this rule.** Spontaneous problems should not be discussed even after our Tournament, since the same problems may be used in other Tournaments occurring later in March or April. If your team is ‘bursting’ to talk about the problem, take them out to the car/van and close the doors and windows so that they cannot be overheard.

PRIMARY DIVISION (K-2): Please see the separate “Special for Primary” page for information specific to Primary teams.

AWARDS CEREMONY: A Creativity Celebration will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium, featuring music, photo slide show, lost and found, followed by the Closing Ceremony at about 7:00 p.m. Please plan to attend with your team. The Closing Ceremony is when we announce the First, Second, and Third place teams in each Problem and Division, and present Omer’s and Ranatra Fusca Awards. We all have a lot of fun, and it’s a great final validation of the teams’ hard work and creativity.

FIRST PLACE TEAMS: The first place team from each problem site and division is eligible to go to the Virginia State Tournament on Saturday, April 16, 2016, at Menchville High School. Coaches of teams eligible for the State Tournament **must meet with the Regional Director**, immediately following the Closing Ceremony. Coaches will be given State Tournament registration information. Each team competing in the State Tournament is required to provide a trained judge for that tournament, and the tournament needs more judges than there are teams. Regardless of whether your team wins, please ask your team’s judge if s/he is available and interested in judging at the State Tournament; state tournament judge registration is online at <http://va.odysseyoftthemind.org>.

Please discuss with your team and parents whether your team will participate at the State Tournament if they are eligible to go. The State Tournament Director usually asks that eligible teams register for the State Tournament within **3** days after the Regional Tournament.

SUPERVISION: Remember that your team is your responsibility all day. Coaches or parents must take responsibility for all team members when the team is not performing. Good manners and good sportsmanship are expected all day. If you are coaching more than one team and find a conflict in your schedule (i.e., Long Term for one team conflicts with Spontaneous for another) give the Long Term problem priority and ask a parent or assistant coach to take the other team to Spontaneous.

RESTROOMS: Restrooms must be kept open and available to everyone (teams, judges, volunteers, audience, etc.). Teams should consider costumes that can be worn all day or worn over street clothes. Also, consider whether a van or SUV can be used for changing. A team may be assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for misusing the facilities.

KEEPING YOUNG MINDS BUSY: Odyssey participants are creative and energetic. Coaches should consider bringing games, books, puzzles, mini-spontaneous problems, or other items to keep team members busy. You can also examine the schedule in advance and choose other performances that your team wants to watch. Teams are encouraged to support other teams from their school and to watch other performances, both in their problem and in other problems.

EMERGENCY CARE FORM: We ask that each coach carry an emergency medical information/release form (attached), completed and signed for each team member. We hope and expect not to need these, but coaches should have them in case of an unforeseen emergency. Photocopy **one per team member** and have parents complete the form and return it to you. A copy is available on the parents page at www.novanorth.org as well. Carry the completed forms at the Tournament in your folder/binder/organizer.

SCORES: At Long Term performance sites, the team name will be posted when that team's raw scores are available. Once your team's LT and Style scores are ready, you should meet the Head Judge at your team's site between performances. The Head Judge will privately review the scoring system, explain any penalties or zero scores, and pass along any comments from the judges to the team. For the first few teams of the day, your scores will not be ready for about 2 hours after the performance. For later teams, it will typically be 45-60 minutes. **Scores will only be released to the person wearing the coach's name tag, which is in the check in packet.** (Coaches with more than one team will have a name tag for each team.) Remember that the raw scores will be normalized and combined as described in the Program Guide, and that Spontaneous scores will also help determine a team's placement in the competition. Penalties will be subtracted from the final score. About an hour after the last team's performance, unclaimed coaches' copies of the raw scores and judge comments will be collected by the Problem Captain. We will try to have all unclaimed coach's copies at the closing ceremonies, but the Head Judges will not be available to discuss them.

If the coach has questions about the Long Term raw scores, the coach should return to the site **WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF RECEIVING THE SCORES** to discuss them with the Head Judge -- after that, all scores are final. Discussions with the Head Judge should be conducted tactfully, politely, and out of hearing of the audience and all teams including your own. You may not discuss scores with any judge other than the Head Judge for your site.

If the Head Judge cannot resolve your concern, s/he will take it to the Problem Captain. If the Problem Captain cannot satisfactorily resolve the matter, the coach may request a Tribunal. A Tribunal request form may be obtained from the Problem Captain or the Tournament Director. Only official coaches may request a Tribunal, and the Tribunal's decision is final. **Tribunals cannot address subjective scores, unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, outside assistance penalties, what did or did not happen on stage, or time violations.** They can review rule interpretations, cost or "Spirit of the Problem" penalties, and irregular procedures.

STYLE SCORES: We will include the team's raw Style scores on the coach's copy of the long term score sheet that you pick up from the head judge. **Keep a copy of your team-submitted Style Form** to interpret these scores: we will not copy the descriptions, nor return one of the Style Forms. The numbers you receive will be the **average** of the style judges' scores. These scores

are provided as feedback only, to show which of your team's style items the judges liked best. Because Style scores are the subjective opinion of one set of judges on one day, they are **not open to debate or review**.

SOUVENIRS: We will have Souvenirs such as T-shirts and pins for purchase in the Cafeteria. Prices range from approximately \$2.00 to \$20.00. Proceeds help to cover the costs of the Tournament and NoVA North start-up costs for next year. We accept VISA and MasterCard for purchases over \$25. We have limited cash for making change (especially in the morning) so please bring small bills for any cash purchases.

FOOD: Teams may bring picnic lunches, or may purchase food from Concessions in the front Cafeteria. All items are "first-come-first-served" while it lasts. *Please* do not bring food or beverages into any performance site. Please dispose of all trash properly. Again, we have limited cash for making change (especially in the morning) so please bring small bills (nothing larger than \$20 will be accepted) and coins.

LOST AND FOUND: There will be a Lost and Found collection at the Team Check In table. If you find something abandoned at a performance site, please give it to the Head Judge or Problem Captain at that site. They will deliver it to the Lost and Found if no one claims it within an hour or so. If you find something elsewhere, bring it to the Lost and Found yourself.

Lost and Found Children: Coaches are responsible for the team members all day. Coaches must not leave the Spontaneous holding room while a team is in Spontaneous – the team will be back sooner than you think. Please make sure that all children understand that they should stay with the team or with adults they know and that they shouldn't leave the building. Unattended children will be given a free puppy and a Mountain Dew...just checking to be sure you were still reading☺ Seriously, an Official will bring the lost child to the Team Check In table and stay with the child until the team/parents are located.

SNOW PLAN: If Fairfax County Schools are open, we will hold the Tournament, regardless of the conditions in your neighborhood. If the schools are closed on Tournament day, the Tournament will not occur on that day. If you think the weather is questionable, monitor the news media announcements or FCPS website. We will post any cancellation notice on the Regional website as early as possible, but we cannot contact each coach or team individually. If the Tournament is postponed, we will schedule one problem per night over the following 2 - 3 weeks at a location to be determined. If this occurs, the Regional and Tournament Directors will work with **the school coordinators** to arrange and confirm alternate plans.

THANKS: After the Meet, please encourage your team to write a brief thank you note to the person who judged on their behalf, and to Oakton High School for the use of their facilities. Please express your appreciation to: Dr. John Banbury, Principal or Pam Burke, Building Use , 2900 Sutton Road, Vienna, VA 22181.

Last, but not least, THANK YOU, COACHES – for all you have done to make creative thinking and teamwork a reality for so many children!

PERFORMANCE SITES 2016 QUICK REFERENCE

Primary: Stir the Pot--
3 Sites – Rooms 151,155,159

Problem 1: No-Cycle Recycle –
Div 1/2/3--rear Cafeteria

Problem 2: Something Fishy –
Div 1/2/3—Main Gym

Problem 3: Aesop Gone Viral --
Div 1/2--Auditorium

Problem 4: Stack Attack! –
Weigh-in: room 174
Div 1/2—Aux Gym

Problem 5: Furs, Fins, Feathers –
Div IA/ IB--room 138
Div 2/3 -- Lecture Hall

Spontaneous Check-in – At stairwell by Door 4. Remember: **No Audience**

Please consider parking in the Vienna Metro parking garage and taking the **free** shuttle bus to Door 14 at the school. The shuttles will run from 6:45 to 9:45 am and 2:30 to 5:00 pm.

COACHES' TOURNAMENT CHECKLIST

- Emergency Medical Form completed for each team member
- Meet Registration Ticket given to the person who will pick up Registration Packet, 8:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Parents informed of schedule, parking, souvenirs, the team's plans for the day.
- Parents reminded about Outside Assistance penalties. Team & Parents asked about videotaping permission.
- Plans made for lunch, and possibly dinner, with team. Plans made for attending Closing Ceremony.
- Team membership sign made.
- Four** *Style* forms, **one** *Materials Value* Form, **one** *Outside Assistance* Form, and **four** copies of any required *Lists* completed.
- Any required documentation collected and organized.
- Copy of clarifications sent specifically to your team (if any) and copyright permission (if applicable).
- Plans made for getting props to the Tournament.
- Spontaneous procedures reviewed with team, including reminder not to discuss their problem, even after our Tournament.
- Invitations given to teachers, administrators, friends; and copies of the schedule made.
- Problem reviewed with team to be sure all criteria have been met.
- Possible difficulties on tournament Day examined by the team and plans made by the team for dealing with them. (FIX-IT Kits are good – remember that the team must decide what to include ☺).
- Reminded yourself and the parents that this is the team's problem and the team's solution.
- Remembered that the goal of this Meet and the Odyssey of the Mind Program is to benefit the kids; teach them teamwork, creativity, sportsmanship, and problem-solving; and let them have FUN. So relax, enjoy the creativity, and keep the day's events in perspective.
- Thank you notes written to PTA / school / judges / any others as appropriate.