

## ***Odyssey of the Mind<sup>tm</sup> TOURNAMENT INFORMATION 2019***

Dear VA Region 9 Coaches,

Tournament Day, **Saturday March 9**, is almost here! We know that you and your team have worked hard to get ready for Tournament Day. The information below is intended to make sure the day runs smoothly, is fun for all, and is as free as possible from conflict and confusion.

*We realize that this is a long letter, but ask you to please read it in its entirety because it will help your team at the Regional tournament.*

### **Between today and March 8**

1. **Share important information with parents and other supporters.** For your convenience, we have put together a letter for you to share with them in print or online – it is attached.
2. **Review the attached checklist.**
3. **Review long term and spontaneous procedures with the team.** Specific team reminders:
  - Make sure the team has prepared all the required forms (Style, Team Long-Term List, Cost Form, Outside Assistance Form) and has made enough copies. These forms are for the team's benefit because they help the judges know what to look for in the performance. *See below for more reminders about forms.*
  - If another team from your school, in the same division, is solving the same as your team, remember to include both the team number and "Team A" or "Team B" on your membership sign and forms. This is part of the team's official membership name and number (see the Program Guide p. 42 & 44).
  - Check [www.odysseyofthemind.com](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com) for any clarifications related to your problem every day during the last 2 weeks before tournament, to be sure you have the most recent clarifications. Clarifications have the force of rules, take precedence over the original problem descriptions, and are binding on all teams solving that long-term problem.
4. **Teams are responsible for knowing CCI, Fairfax County School and Region 9 House Rules (as posted at [www.novanorth.org](http://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 be mistaken for actual weapons. If a team believes that the depiction of a weapon is essential to their solution, it 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. 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.
  - Shoes – Team members must wear shoes throughout the performance that protect their feet from splinters and other protrusions or sharp objects. Socks are not sufficient.
5. **Touch base with your team's volunteers.** Remember – each team needs to provide TWO adult volunteers or risk being penalized for poor sportsmanship. Your Judge has completed a day of training. Your 2 hour tournament helper:
- Can be anyone 18 years-of-age or older and does not need training.
  - Should report to the Helper Sign-in table (inside Door 1) at least five minutes before the time listed on the tournament schedule to ensure that he/she is able to relieve the person working the previous shift promptly.
  - Is expected to work a two-hour shift.
  - Should not bring young children. The volunteer needs to be able to focus on the job at hand and not be distracted by watching a child.

### Forms

1. Make sure your team fills out and brings their required forms. 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.
  - Four copies of the List required for the problem
  - Four copies of the Style Form,
  - One copy of the Outside Assistance Form, signed by each team member and by the coaches, and
  - One copy of the Cost Form. Have the team read and follow the instructions on pages 47-49 of the Program Guide when filling out the Material Values Form. Remember that **all costume items must be included in materials value**, whether that costume is being scored or not.
2. The team must have all forms ready to give to the staging judge(s) in the staging area *before* their Long Term performance.
3. Bring copies of any team-specific problem clarifications your team received and give them to the staging area judge.
4. Please use this year's forms as provided in the Program Guide and our website. Teams may scan into a computer the Outside Assistance, Cost, and Style forms, but teams must not alter the forms in any way (including font size).
5. Keep a copy of all forms – the team will need these if they advance to the State Tournament.

## General and Logistic Information about Tournament Day

1. **Remember:** The goal of this Tournament and the Odyssey Program is to benefit our participants- teaching them teamwork, creativity, problem-solving, and sportsmanship. Tournament Day should fun! Relax, enjoy, and keep the day's events in perspective. Let's all celebrate our children's hard work and creativity.
2. **Courtesy:** Courtesy is always important, especially with many participants.
  - Observers may only 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.**
  - Remember that everyone involved with Odyssey is a volunteer. Remind team members and supporters to be considerate of judges, volunteers, officials, other teams, and other supporters in the audience who are trying to watch and hear performances. Please silence cell phones and turn off camera flashes during performances.
  - We are guests at TJHSST. Please insure that your team and other children do not damage school property, including lockers and student artwork in classrooms or hallways. Please respect custodial and other school staff supporting our tournament.
3. **Programs:** The Tournament schedule is posted at [www.novanorth.org](http://www.novanorth.org) and there will be several copies of the program in the packet the coach receives at sign-in on March 9<sup>th</sup>.
4. **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 team to Spontaneous.
  - Keep 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 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.
5. **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. Clean up any spilled makeup or hair products. A team may be assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for misusing the facilities.

## 6. Emergencies:

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](http://www.novanorth.org) as well. Carry the completed forms at the Tournament in your folder/binder/organizer. See the enclosed Safety & Security document for more information.

## 7. Protecting the School

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.

1. Special attention must be paid to preventing damage to the school's floors:
  - Plan to wear sneakers or other soft-soled footwear; no "spike" heels.
  - Scenery, props, and vehicles must be designed not to mark or damage the floor. Teams must **carry**, not drag, props and scenery.
  - Take precautions so that liquids (especially liquids with dyes) do not spill.
2. All teams are responsible for cleaning up after their long-term solution performance. Please bring appropriate cleaning supplies, including a hand vacuum or broom, as we will not provide them. Parents and coaches are encouraged to help the team remove props and clean the site after the performance is over if they do not interfere with the judges discussing the performance with the team.
3. Make sure restrooms are left clean.
4. After your team's performance, do not abandon props, costumes, equipment, etc. anywhere in the building or on the campus – please make sure your team and supporters take away or properly throw away everything in provided trash cans.

**8. Souvenirs:** We will have Souvenirs such as T-shirts and pins for purchase. 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 (nothing larger than \$20 will be accepted) and coins.

**9. Food:** Teams may bring picnic lunches or may purchase food from the Boosters throughout the school. 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.

## 10. Photography and privacy:

1. 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.

2. Flash photography is not allowed during any performance at any site. Also, we do not permit special lighting in the room to accommodate cameras.
  3. Parents and coaches may photograph their own team at any time. Photographing teams *other than your own* is not permitted anytime other than during the team's performance.
  4. 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".
11. **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 items will be displayed at the Closing Ceremony.
12. **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.
  - We encourage coaches and parents to give their children (team members and siblings) a paper with their cell phone number in case an official needs to reach them.
  - Unattended children will be given a baby rat and a double espresso...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.

### When you arrive on March 9

#### **Tournament Sign-in:**

Sign-in for teams the morning of March 9th will be just inside door 1, from 8:00 am– 1:00 pm. 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:**

1. 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.

### **Drop off locations (see map of TJHSST):**

- Problem 1-OMER to the Rescue, Again -- Door 10
  - Problem 2-Hide In Plain Sight – Door 9
  - Problem 3-Leonard’s Workshop -- Door 3
  - Problem 4-Structure Toss– Door 11
  - Problem 5-Opposites Distract – Door 12
  - Primary—Museum Makers – Door 8
2. **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 over 100 teams who need to unload props.
  3. 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.
  4. Bring props and scenery into the building about **one hour** before the team’s long-term performance to avoid damage to props. Hallways are crowded and have a lot of traffic.
  5. Similarly, plan to return everything to your car/van immediately after the team’s performance to keep hallways clear.
  6. Coaches and parents may help team members bring props into the building and to the performance staging area. Be aware, however, that **the team** must assemble props taken apart for transport and fix anything that breaks. It is Outside Assistance if coaches or parents fix props and costumes or do hair and makeup.
  7. Once the team is in the staging area, parents should 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.

### **Your Team’s Long-Term Performance**

1. Teams must report on time to the Staging area for their Long Term Performance (30-40 minutes before scheduled performance time). Be prompt! Late and unprepared teams can cause serious delays in a very tight schedule (and such delays may be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct).
2. Information about specific performance sites:
  - **Primary/Museum Makers** The classrooms (82, 85) have linoleum floors. There is only one door in each room for audience and teams to enter and exit.
  - **Problem 1/ OMER to the Rescue, Again:** Gym 2 has two doors and wood floors. Vehicles must not damage the floor.
  - **Problem 2/Hide In Plain Sight:** Room 88/89 has linoleum. There is 1 door.

- **Problem 3/ Leonardo’s Workshop:** Cafeteria has a linoleum floor and separate doors for the team and audience.
  - **Problem 4/Structure Toss:** Room 100 is the performance space. Weigh In is down the Hall in room 107
  - **Problem 5/Opposites Distract:** The Auditorium has multiple doors for Audience entrance. The teams will enter and exit from the Stage.
3. Teams should 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. Teams should plan to double-check that they have retrieved everything before the door is closed between them and the performance area.
  4. When the Timekeeper asks the team if they are ready, only brief responses should be made.

### Balsa Weigh-In

1. Two members from each team should bring the structure to Weigh-In 60 minutes before their LT. We have a regional policy that the team presents a copy of their balsa receipt and the glue used for the Weigh-In judges.
2. If the structure does not meet specifications, Weigh-In Judges will try to give the team an opportunity to bring it into specification or submit a different structure before the team’s competition time. In most cases, corrections should be completed no less than 20 minutes before competition time.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Please review the problem rules for further weigh-in information.

### Your Team’s Spontaneous Challenge

1. Your team should report to the Turing hallway for Spontaneous 5-10 minutes before their scheduled competition time.
2. Remember to bring the Spontaneous Check-in ticket from the envelope given to your coach at the team check-in.

3. ***Please make sure that all parents understand that they cannot watch Spontaneous.***  
Please ask parents to stay far away from the Spontaneous check-in area – there is nothing to see. Encourage them to go watch other teams perform, and arrange to rejoin them after Spontaneous at a specific location somewhere else in the building.
4. **Only team members and one accompanying coach or adult escort will be escorted to the designated Holding Area.** The coach or escort must stay in the Spontaneous Holding Room while the team is competing, then will accompany the team back.
5. All team members may enter the spontaneous room then decide which five will participate. (If a team has five or fewer team members, all must participate).
6. 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.
7. **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 Regions later in March. 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.
8. **Please remember that teams and coaches will not be given their spontaneous scores until after the tournament Closing Ceremony.** Because scoring is subjective, there are no discussions or appeals about the spontaneous score.

### **Primary Division (K-2)**

Please see the separate “Special for Primary” page for information specific to Primary teams.

### **Scores**

1. Long-Term Scores
  - At Long Term performance sites, the team name will be posted when that team’s raw scores are available. For the first few teams of the day, your scores will not be ready for at least 2 hours after the performance. For later teams, it will typically be 1 hour.
  - Once your team’s LT and Style scores are ready, the Coach 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.
  - **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.

- Remember that raw scores will be normalized and combined as described in the Program Guide. 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 can review rule interpretations, cost or "Spirit of the Problem" penalties, and irregular procedures. They cannot address subjective scores, unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, outside assistance penalties, what did or did not happen on stage, or time violations.

## 2. 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.
- Because Style scores are the subjective opinion of one set of judges on one day, they are **not open to debate or review**.

## 3. Spontaneous Scores

- Spontaneous scores are not shared with anyone (including coaches) until after the tournament's Closing Ceremony.
- All raw and normalized scores will be posted outside the Closing Ceremony and will be available online at [www.novanorth.org](http://www.novanorth.org) on the day after the tournament.
- Because Spontaneous scores are the subjective opinion of one set of judges on one day, they are **not open to debate or review**.

## Ending the Day

The Closing Ceremony begins at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium. At the Closing Ceremony, we announce the First, Second, and Third place teams in each Problem and Division, and present OMER's Awards (for outstanding sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, or exceptional talent) and Ranatra Fusca Awards (for extraordinary creativity). We all have a lot of fun, and it's a great final validation of the teams' hard work and creativity.

### First Place Teams and Ranatra Fusca winners

1. The first-place team from each problem site and division (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers for Division 3 only) and Ranatra winners are eligible to go to the Virginia State Tournament on Saturday, April 6, 2019, at Manassas Park HS.
2. Coaches of teams eligible for the State Tournament **must meet with the Tournament Director, immediately following the Closing Ceremony** to receive State Tournament registration information. Each team competing in the State Tournament is required to provide a trained judge and a two-hour volunteer for that tournament.
3. 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 [https://www.odysseyofthemind.com/reg/registration\\_step.php?g=ootm&s=judge&c=17211](https://www.odysseyofthemind.com/reg/registration_step.php?g=ootm&s=judge&c=17211)
4. Please discuss with your team and parents whether your team will participate at the State Tournament if they are eligible to go. The State Association Director asks that eligible teams register for the State Tournament within **3** days after the Regional Tournament.

## Snow Plan

If Fairfax County Public 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 reschedule over the following 2 - 3 weeks at a location to be determined. If this occurs, the Regional and Tournament Directors will post alternate plans as quickly as possible.

## 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 the school PTA for their financial support.

We thank the coaches for all you do to make creative thinking and teamwork a reality.

## COACHES' TOURNAMENT CHECKLIST

- Emergency Medical Form completed for each team member
- Parents informed of schedule, parking, souvenirs, the team's plans for the day.
- Parents reminded about Outside Assistance penalties. Team & Parents asked about video recording 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.