

**ODYSSEY OF THE MIND**





Buccaneer Bay 2017-18  
Basic Coach Training

10/24/2017

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**BEFORE WE GET STARTED...**

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This coaches training is intended to be used as a brief introduction to the [Odyssey of the Mind](#)™ Creative Problem-Solving program. The BEST source of information is the current-year Program Guide. This training is intended only to help get you started.

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**What is Odyssey of the Mind (OTM)?**

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- International Creative Problem-Solving Program.
- Based upon the idea that creativity is a skill that can be taught and further developed with practice.
- Focus is to develop divergent, independent-thinking abilities (thinking outside the box, taking the path less traveled) through a challenging, but **FUN**, learning process.
- Team-effort, based loosely upon a sports model.
- Teams demonstrate their solutions at a tournament. Every team presenting a solution is a WINNER!
- Participants are K- College, but compete within grade Divisions
- OTM develops real-life communication and brainstorming skills, and rewards creativity and "calculated" risk-taking in the solution of complex problems.

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## What is divergent-thinking?

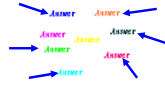
### Convergent Problem Solving

- for every problem, there is just one correct answer



### Divergent Problem Solving

- for lots of problems, there may be many correct answers



*Odyssey of the Mind* encourages young people to explore many possible answers and to be creative in finding a solution

Because there are no wrong solutions, teams are free to take calculated risks in attempting to solving the problem

*Odyssey of the Mind* allows kids to use their imaginations to interpret and solve complex problems in a FUN way!

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## History of *Odyssey of the Mind*

The program was started by a NJ College Educator, [Dr. C. Samuel Micklus](#) (Dr. Sam). Dr. Sam challenged students in his Industrial Design courses to solve assignments in unusual and creative ways. At the end of the semester, students presented their solutions in a competition.



The program expanded to NJ High Schools and in 1978-1979, the *Odyssey of the Mind* program began. Originally it was called Olympics of the Mind. New problems are written each year.

Non-profit organizations in individual states and countries run the program within their local areas and *Creative Competitions, Inc.* was formed to develop the problems and administer the program at the national, and later, at the international level

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## Program Structure -- Memberships

Memberships are from: schools, clubs, churches, libraries, community groups and home schools. A membership in *Odyssey of the Mind* costs \$135.

For each "Membership", there is a Membership Coordinator. This person serves as the conduit through which information flows. They receive the problems from the international organization, and communication and information from their Regional, State, Provincial, and International *Odyssey of the Mind* organizations.

To participate in a tournament, memberships have to:

- Register and pay a fee for each team
- Supply volunteers who can serve as judges or officials.

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## Program Structure -- Teams

Teams of 5-7 students participate in their choice of the current-year Long-Term Problems and practice Spontaneous Problems

- All Team Members may participate in the LT presentation
- Only 5 Team Members participate in Spontaneous (team choice). Others team members may observe.
- A maximum of 7 "Minds" can work on the problem

Teams participate within Grade Divisions. These are based upon grade of highest team member and the grade level.

- Primary (K-2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Div I (K-5<sup>th</sup>)
- Div II (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>)
- Div III (9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>)
- Div IV (HS degree or equiv & enrolled in College)

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## Memberships & Teams

Each membership is allowed to send one team per Division in their school per Long-Term Problem they are eligible for.

Thus:

K-5 School – usually up to 5 teams + 2 Primary Teams

K-8 School – usually up to 10 teams + 2 Primary Teams

5-8 School – usually up to 10 teams

K-12 School – usually up to 15 teams + 2 Primary Teams

9-12 Schools – usually up to 5 teams

Non-school memberships can field one team per problem (any Division) – up to a maximum of 5 teams

The purchase of additional (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>) membership allows more teams to participate in the same problem (Team A, Team B).

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## Outside Assistance

One of the most important parts of OOTM is that the Team MUST conceive, design, construct, and perform their own ideas. Help external to the team is termed Outside Assistance (OA).



The solution is the Team's design, their work, their performance, and their score. The Team is responsible for what they do, NOT the coach.

**OOTM is a Hands-On Program for Kids,  
but a Hands-Off Program for Adults**

**IT'S IMPORTANT THAT PARENTS KNOW THE  
OA RULES TOO!**

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## So What Is the Role of the Coach?

- ✓ Scheduler (how often and where team meets)
- ✓ Facilitator (helps the team stay organized)
  - determine goals and the path to reach them
  - helps them read and understand the problem
  - helps team keep track of tasks and deadlines
  - takes notes (remind them of their previous ideas)
  - leads brainstorming sessions (without injecting ideas)
  - explains scoring
  - brings in "experts" to discuss & teach skills
- ✓ Teacher (teaches basic skills)
- ✓ Asks **QUESTIONS** (to help team focus, open-ended)
- ✓ Assists team in developing a timeline for projects
- ✓ Spontaneous practice (practice often, variety, strategies)
- ✓ Forms (helps Primary and Division I teams fill out forms)
- ✓ Go-fer (takes team members to store for supplies)
- ✓ Snack Organizer (fuel for busy minds)
- ✓ Mentor

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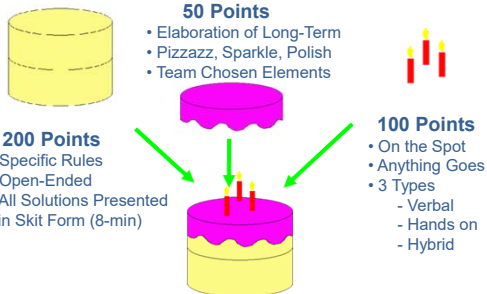
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## The Three Components of OOTM

Long-Term                      Style                      Spontaneous



Long-Term + Style + Spontaneous = Total Score

Raw Scores are "Adjusted" so the team with highest raw score (for each component) receives the full possible score (200, 100, or 50 pts for the three components). Other team scores adjusted proportionally

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## What is Needed to Solve the Problem

There are three major information sources that are required to coach an Odyssey of the Mind team

- **2016-2017 PROGRAM GUIDE** (1.6 MB download)  
(available at [www.OdysseyoftheMind.com](http://www.OdysseyoftheMind.com) main page at the bottom or from your school coordinator)
- The Team's chosen **LONG-TERM PROBLEM**  
(available from your school's membership coordinator)
- **CLARIFICATIONS** (General and team, available on the web, through your coordinator, or through your State Association, released throughout the season)
- **OTHER RESOURCES THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL**
  - Other Coaches                      Membership Coordinator
  - Printed Materials
  - [www.BucBay.com](http://www.BucBay.com) (AD, RD, State Coordinator, Problem Captains)
  - Odyssey of the Mind, Inc. ([www.OdysseyoftheMind.com](http://www.OdysseyoftheMind.com))
  - Problem Procedures (usually released in late-February in Newsletter)

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## The Long-Term Problems

Six new Long-Term problems are released each year (Sept)

The problem synopses briefly describe these

- Vehicle – Problem 1 "[Triathlon Travels](#)" (Division I, II, III & IV)
- Technical – Problem 2 "[Emoji. Speak for Yourself](#)" (Division I, II, & III)
- Classics – Problem 3 "[Mockumentary! Seriously?](#)" (Division I, II, III, & IV)
  
- Structure – Problem 4 "[Animal House](#)" (Division I, II, III, & IV)
- Theatrical – Problem 5 "[A Steller Hangout](#)" (Division I, II, III, & IV)
- Primary – "[We're Cooking Now](#)"

There is a cost limit to each problem (usually ~\$125-145)

- therefore solutions cannot be "bought"
- only the materials used in competition included in the cost
- duct tape & cardboard, lawn-sale value, scavenging
- some "standard" and safety items are exempt from cost, these are listed in Program Guide

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## The Long-Term Problems Continued ...

Participation requires a commitment by:

- Team members
- Coaches
- Membership Coordinators
- Volunteer Judges and Officials

Teams generally work on their Long-Term Problems from September – April. Presentations of teams solutions at Regional or State Tournaments.

If there is a question not answered in the Guide or Problem, teams may request a Clarification via a form or on the [web](#)

*In general... if it doesn't say you can't do it ... you CAN!*

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## The Parts of a Long-Term Problem

Need LT Problem + Program Guide + Clarifications



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## Spontaneous Problems

Spontaneous problems come in three types:

- Verbal – problems requiring verbal responses
- Hands on – problems requiring manipulation of materials
- Verbal/Hands On (Hybrid) – problems with both verbal and hands on components

PRACTICE... PRACTICE ... PRACTICE !

Do lots of different types.

Do at least two spontaneous problems each time the team meets.

Critique the teams performance (Coaches Hints are fine here)

Have each team member specialize in something.

Properties of materials ?

Fall back plans ....

Brainstorm ways to get "unstuck"

### Spontaneous Resources

- [Odyssey of the Mind](#)
- [Odyssey-World](#)
- [VOICES Weekly Problem](#)
- [Maine Practice Problems](#)
- [CTOM Spontaneous Zone](#)

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## Do it with Style !

Style is the elaboration of the Long-Term Problem. It is a place where the team can show the judges what they are particularly excited about or proud of? Style is presented during the Long-Term Problem Solution performance.

What makes this performance really shine?

Style is the place for the team to showcase their strengths and talents.

- artistic design, music, songs, choreography
- construction, creative use of materials
- humor, rhyme
- overall effect (theme)



BE SPECIFIC !

5 Categories (some mandatory, some team-choice, overall)

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## PENALTIES

Penalties are designed to prevent teams from bending or breaking the rules, creating a safety hazard, interfering with other teams, delaying competition, or misbehaving.

**Spirit of the Problem** - Aimed at preventing teams from circumventing the intention of the rules in either Long-Term or Spontaneous (-1 to -100 points).

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct** - For impairing another team's solution, disruptive behavior, inappropriate language. Intentional (or unintentional) damage to facilities (-1 to -100 points).

**Outside Assistance** – If team receives help from anyone. This applies to audience as well. Thus teams shouldn't encourage audience participation (-5 to -200 points).

**Incorrect/Missing Membership Sign** – -1 to -15 points.

**Over Cost Limit** – Materials over cost limit (-1 to -100 points)

**Over Time Limit** – For each 10 sec or fraction (-5 points)

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## Typical Odyssey of the Mind Calendar

Purchase Membership (One per school, \$135) by Jan. 16, 2018  
Establish Membership Coordinator (who the mail goes to)  
Form Teams, Recruit Coaches  
Attend Coaches Trainings (& Mandatory Feb. 10, 2018)  
Teams work on Solutions (September – May)  
Register Teams for Tournament: December 15, 2017 (avoid \$20 late fee)  
Register: 1 Judge and 1 Volunteer for Regional Tournament  
Regional Tournament: February 24, 2018 @ Strawberry Crest HS  
State Tournament: April 14, 2018 @ UCF, Orlando  
World Finals: May 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa



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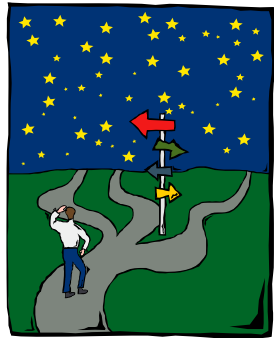
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## Creativity, Brainstorming, & Teamwork



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## HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

### Step 1. Read the Problem (First 2-3 meetings, As needed after)

- Go through each section of the problem carefully.
- Make sure each participant understands what is required
- General ideas are OK, but don't focus on Brainstorming solutions yet
- Understand how each of the parts interact
- Figure out the requirements of the problem (and the scoring elements)

### Step 2. Brain-Storm Possible Solutions (Meetings 2-5)

- Generate lots of ideas (keep track of them on paper, chalkboard, or whiteboard)
- Don't evaluate ideas yet... just list them (see p. ...)
- Break the problem down into manageable pieces
- Encourage wild, creative solutions

### Step 3. SCAMPER (Meetings 4-6)

- Use **SCAMPER** and other Brainstorming techniques to come up with more ideas
- Change the ideas, generate even more. **SCAMPER TECHNIQUES** can be found in *FLOMA Spontaneous Problem Solving* (see regional website or attend coach trainings)

### Step 4. Refine and Evaluate Ideas (Meetings 4-6)

- Which ideas does the team like best?
- Discuss and evaluate ideas, but don't criticize.
- Modify ideas to make them better.
- Select a preliminary solution.

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## HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

### Step 5. Determine Tasks & Timeline (Meetings 5-8)

- What types of tasks, skills, props, contraptions, needed to complete this solution?
- Who and how will they do these things?
- Determine a basic time-line for completing the solution.
- Continue to evaluate the solution and refine/revise as needed.
- Do the items decided upon fit the problem specifications?

### Step 6. Begin Construction (Meetings 6- )

- Start building things and writing a script. Evaluate new ideas as they arise.
- Test the solution. Does it work? Can it be made to work better?
- Revise/refine (continuously) and as necessary.

### Step 7. Put it Together (At least one month before Tournament)

- As props, tasks are near completion, or are completed, test them out.
- Continue to refine/revise. Does it work? Is there a better way?
- Does the proposed solution still fit the problem? What problems need to be fixed?

### Step 8. Finish it Up and Practice (2-3 Meetings Before Tournament)

- Celebrate major accomplishments as they happen.
- Test things out... do they work? Can they work better?
- Practice the whole skit. Timing. Explain how they did it? Look for problem spots.
- What happens if something goes wrong? Contingency plan.
- Revise/refine.

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## First Five Odyssey of the Mind Meetings (adjust to age and experience of students)

### First Meeting

- Meet with team (and parents) to explain program and set team goals
- Discuss the process, give dates for tournaments
- Go over the time commitment and responsibility of being on the team
- Stress regular attendance at meetings
- Explain outside assistance
- Review behavioral expectations
- Talk about difference between "winning" and "succeeding"
- Set a meeting schedule

### Second Meeting

- Incorporate team-building activity
- Discuss working as a group. All ideas are valid
- Review brainstorming rules (no put-downs)
- Explain Spontaneous. Practice several at every meeting
- Read the Long-term problem Synopses
- Talk about skills and interests of team members and group

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## First Five Meetings (continued)

### Third Meeting

- Incorporate team-building activity
- Brainstorm how group can be a successful team
- Practice Spontaneous
- Have team decide on Long-term problem (vote?)
- Brainstorm on possible solutions to LT problem

### Fourth Meeting

- Incorporate team-building activity
- Practice Spontaneous
- Read the Specific Long-term problem rules
- Brainstorm LT problem solutions and skills needed to solve problem

### Fifth Meeting

- Continue team-building
- Continue Spontaneous practice
- Brainstorm list of tasks to accomplish and timeline
- Assign tasks and discuss team member responsibility
- Ask for help if you need it

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## Team Building

It is important that this group of kids comes together and functions as a team. Important decisions should be made together.

Incorporate some [team-building games](#) into each practice session, especially early in the season. This will build team trust, and teach students to work together to solve problems that they can't manage alone.

Do not allow criticism of people or their ideas. It is OK to evaluate ideas on their merits, but it must be done constructively.

Celebrate milestones, a break through, and accomplishments.

Once an IDEA is generated and discussed, it is no longer owned by the originator....it is the TEAM'S idea.

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## COACHING TIPS

### READ THE PROBLEM, then RE-READ THE PROBLEM

When this is done, read it again!

#### If You Start Me Up

The Timekeeper will ask the team, "Team, are you ready?" Many (especially experienced) teams come up with a clever response



#### What Setup Time?

Don't make the mistake of neglecting to figure in set-up time.  
 What happens if something goes wrong during setup?  
 Who handles what tasks during setup?  
 Is it better to have a complicated setup, or a simple setup and more performance time?  
 Is there something someone can do during setup to start the performance?  
 Time does not stop if the team encounters a problem (except for medical emergencies).

#### Wrapping it Up

In some (not all) problems, the team needs to signal the Judges that the performance is over. Like the beginning, the end is important. Experienced teams find a "creative" way.

#### Tell it to the Judge!

After the performance ends, the Judges will talk to the team and ask them questions about their solution. This is a part of the solution. Let the team know to expect it and practice it with them.

**Don't forget the Membership Sign... Contingency Plan!**

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### Style Form

These numbers must complete the form. Adults may help fill it out for Division 1 team members only. A minimum of four copies is required for each competition. These must be presented to the Staging Area Judge. PLEASE PRINT. \*Note that an alternate record is the Long-Term problem may be selected.

Long-Term Problem \_\_\_\_\_ Division \_\_\_\_\_  
 Membership Name \_\_\_\_\_ Membership # \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 Judge(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Style Category (From 0 to 14)	Possible Points	Points Awarded (Circle 0 to 14)
1. _____	1 to 10	1. _____
2. _____	1 to 10	2. _____
3. _____	1 to 10	3. _____
4. _____	1 to 10	4. _____
5. Overall effect of the four Style elements in the performance	1 to 10	5. _____

Specify and score the four Style elements together to enhance the long-term problem solution. Please print or type and use only the space below.

TOTAL STYLE SCORE =   
(Maximum possible = 50 points)

NOTE: This form may be photocopied or scanned into a computer. The information may not be altered in any way.

## STYLE FORM

- two copies for Staging Judge
- adds to the Long-term problem
- relates to the theme of solution
- team can showcase strengths
- cannot be items already scored as part of Long-Term
- Categories
  - Specific Scoring Elements
  - Free Choice Elements
  - Overall Effect
- be very specific

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## Tournaments Continued ...

### EVERY TEAM PRESENTING A SOLUTION IS A WINNER!

However, because a sports-based competition model is used, teams are judged for how well and how *creatively* they satisfy the problem criteria, and only one team is awarded 1<sup>st</sup> Place overall for each LT Problem and Division



1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Teams and *Ranatra Fusca* team recipients at the state level are invited to attend the *Odyssey of the Mind* World Finals  
(the policies of your school and local association may vary)

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## What Happens at a Tournament?

Teams that wish to present their solution at a sanctioned Odyssey of the Mind tournament must register. Please check with your regional director for requirements, deadlines, instructions, and fees for participating.

Teams registering for the tournament are scheduled for their Long-Term and Spontaneous performance times.

### Typical Order of the Day

- Registration Desk Opens at 7am
- Competition (throughout day)
- Awards Ceremonies (early evening)

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## What Should Coaches Do on Tournament Day ?

Pick up Your Registration Package. Take 5 minutes to check through it.

Locate your long term and spontaneous performance areas. Familiarize yourself with entrances and exits. Ask questions...if you have them.

Get your Team to the Staging Area (for LT) at least 15 minutes before your scheduled LT competition time.

Bring your team to the Spontaneous Holding Area About 15 min prior to their scheduled Spontaneous competition time. While parents and other supporters may accompany the team to the check-in area, they may go no further.

Enjoy other performances  
Enjoy your team...  
Enjoy the day...

Start planning for next year... ☺



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## Odyssey of the Mind Recognition

### OMER's Award

*In recognition of teams or individuals who demonstrate outstanding sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, and exceptional talent*

### Ranatra Fusca

*Presented to teams or individuals who exhibit exceptional creativity, either through some aspect of their problem solution, or an extraordinary idea beyond the problem solution*

### Tournament Placement

*Determined by total score.*

*Ties are awarded if there is less than 1 point difference*

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## Contact Information

**For more information, or to register, contact:**

### International Headquarters:

Odyssey of the Mind  
Creative Competitions, Inc.  
406 Ganttown Road  
Sewell, NJ 08080  
(856) 256-2797  
email to: [info@odysseyofthemind.com](mailto:info@odysseyofthemind.com)

<http://www.OdysseyoftheMind.org>

### Local Contacts :

Laurie Filardo: Buccaneer Bay Co-Regional Director  
Hm: 813-681-6697, Wk: 813-228-4866  
Email: [Laurie.Filardo@BucBay.com](mailto:Laurie.Filardo@BucBay.com)

Stephen Shoe: Regional Problem Director & Training Coordinator  
Email: [Stephen.Shoe@GMail.com](mailto:Stephen.Shoe@GMail.com)



2009 Southeast HS heading into Spontaneous Inside Holding Room @ World Finals



Campo Family YMCA @ State Finals after receiving 1<sup>st</sup> Place

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## Odyssey of the Mind



Be Creative !

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