Chapter I

Welcome to the Odyssey of the Mind

Welcome to the Odyssey of the Mind creative problem-solving program. Whether this is your first experience with OotM or if you’re a seasoned coach, it’s important that you read this guide thoroughly. This guide is updated annually so please pay close attention to all sections, especially the General Rules section since those rules pertain to every team.

What is Odyssey of the Mind?

Odyssey of the Mind is a creative problem-solving competition for students of all ages. Teams of students select a problem, create a solution, then present their solution in a competition against other teams in the same problem and division. There are many nuances of the program that are explained further in this guide, but here are some of the basics of participation:

1. Students work in teams of up to seven members under the guidance of an adult coach.
2. Teams spend weeks or months, at their own pace, creating solutions to long-term problems. This includes Style enhancements described later in this guide.
3. Team members come up with all the ideas for their solution and do all the work themselves. Coaches may help teach skills and educate the team on ways of approaching the problem and of evaluating their solution.
4. Teams work within the cost limit stated in the problem.
5. Teams have 8 minutes to present their long-term problem solution in competition.
6. Teams are scored for meeting the requirements of the problem and for creativity in categories specific to each problem.
7. At the competition teams are presented a spontaneous problem to solve on site.
8. A team’s standing in competition is determined by its combined Long-Term score, Style score, and Spontaneous score.
9. To solve a problem, teams must follow the general rules in this guide, limitations in the problem, and clarifications issued during the year.
10. The rules in this guide pertain to all the problems; any conflicting problem limitations supersede these rules, and clarifications issued throughout this program year supersede the rules and the problem limitations.