

# 2017 GULF COAST ODYSSEY OF THE MIND TOURNAMENTS

1. **TOURNAMENT CHECK IN PROCEDURES** – On the day of either tournament, a **COACH** must “check-in” the team before the team competes. First the coach will pick up a **COLORED CONTACT CARD**. Each color represents a different problem (see below). The card will have the coach’s name, membership name and number, and team’s problem already printed on it. The coach will provide one or more cell phone numbers we can use to notify the team if a problem arises such as penalizing the team for a worker/judge not showing up, a score correction, etc. After completing the card, the coach will trade the card for the team’s registration packet and set of programs. The packet will contain information about awards seating, last minute site changes, etc. Please read the information and share it with your team and their families.

## **Color Code for the Tournament Signs:**

1 – Catch Us If You Can	RED
2 – Odd-A-Bot	YELLOW
3 – It’s Time, OMER	BLUE
4 – Ready, Set, Balsa, Build!	ORANGE
5 – To Be Continued – A Superhero Cliffhanger	PURPLE
6 - Primary: Movin’ Out!	GREEN
Spontaneous	MULTICOLOR
Bathrooms & Other Important Places	BEIGE/TAN

2. **MEETING THE TEAM** – Please make sure each family knows where and when to meet the coach. Use the page in this packet or one like it. It is available on the regional website at [www.gcodyssey.com](http://www.gcodyssey.com) on our Coach page. We spend a lot of time each year dealing with confused parents and kids who don’t know where to go. **If the parent is leaving, YOU, the coach, are responsible for the team member until you return him/her to the parent.**
3. **PARKING** – Consider this a real life spontaneous issue. It will take team work and creativity to solve. Please make sure the maps are given to all families and remind them frequently that parking will require extra time and effort.
  - a. **February 25:** Only judges and handicapped parking is in front of Rushe Middle School – the tournament site. All team and spectator parking is in the Sunlake HS parking lot. Park next to the high school stadium and walk along the sidewalk to the middle school. It’s less walking than state tournament, but more than our families may want to do. Prop drop off and pick up will be allowed in the lot in front of the cafeteria. Parking in that lot is allowed, but it is limited; otherwise, it is only for pick up and drop off. We will have people monitoring those who come in and out.
  - b. **March 4:** At Weightman (TEWMS), the front lot will be for judges, handicapped, and Prop Drop off. There are very few spaces in that lot. Please be careful when parking in the bus loop area. Those slots are bus-size and can hold three cars, but then someone is boxed in and ANGRY. Parking along the road is tolerated, but dangerous. Please encourage your families to be VERY CAREFUL. No one can park on the front grassy areas or back by the portables. We are reversing the normal in and out of the parking lot to avoid backing up traffic onto Wells Road. We are paying for off-duty Pasco County Sheriff officers to oversee traffic and asking the church if we can use their lot.

4. **TOURNAMENT DAY INFO:** - Food and souvenirs will be sold, but you can bring your own coolers, E-Z ups, chairs, etc. **TENTS/E-Z UPS CAN ONLY BE PITCHED IN CENTER OF TRACK AREA AT RUSHE MS OR AS MARKED ON THE TEWMS MAP.** Teams can come and go from the campus, but parking is a consideration – it may be difficult at times. The day is a **long** one, and the tournament will provide lots of activities, but you may want to bring cards, games, etc. Remember, we are at schools and with teams, props, visitors, etc., it will be crowded. Stake out some space and assign a parent to “watch the props.” Make it your headquarters for the day and designate some key check in times if you allow the team to divide and travel apart (division 2 and 3 mostly). **AT RUSHE, NO TEAM SHOULD BE ON ANY STAIRS EXCEPT THOSE GOING TO AND FROM THE CENTER ATRIUM. ANY TEAM MEMBER FOUND ON THE THIRD FLOOR EXCEPT WHEN COMPETING IN SPONTANEOUS WILL RECEIVE A BAD SPORTSMANSHIP PENALTY.** The elevator is only for the handicapped and elderly. **AT WEIGHTMAN, THE PENALTIES WILL APPLY FOR TEAMS CAUGHT IN ANY OFF LIMITS AREA AS MARKED ON THE MAP.**
  
5. The region sells food and drinks to help pay our costs. Teams can bring food and drinks if they wish, but remember to clean up after yourselves. The attached “Tent Guidelines” must be followed if you’re planning to grill anything. Any damage to the ground or sidewalk will have to be financially covered by the team at fault.
  
6. **BASIC SEQUENCE:** (j and k may be out of order for your team.)
  - a. Coach checks in the team. Turn in hospitality assignment.
  - b. Team meets and chooses a “base/headquarters” to store props, set up coolers, practice, etc.
  - c. Coach and team go over info in coach packet and make decisions necessary about expectations for the day.
  - d. Coach and team visit competition site to watch other teams, note team entrances, procedures, etc. **TEAM** makes adjustments in their presentation based on what they see.
  - e. Visit spontaneous check-in so all know where it is.
  - f. View other performances to support other teams from school and to gather ideas on creative solutions for future reference.
  - g. Change into costumes if necessary. Unload props if not already done.
  - h. Team practices long term presentation and double checks paperwork. **No feedback or tips from non-team members.**
  - i. Non-team members can carry props, but may not fix, straighten, or assemble them. Teams and audiences OFTEN have separate entrances. If adults help carry props to the staging area, they need to put them down and then go to the audience entrance. They will not be allowed to enter through the staging area. Only coaches and teams enter through the staging area.
  - j. Practice spontaneous. Show up at spontaneous check-in 15 minutes before scheduled time. Give spontaneous card with team member names on it. Coach collects and holds all cell phones from the team. Make sure all are on silent.
  - k. Show up at problem staging area 15 minutes before scheduled time. Team answers staging area judge’s questions, NOT THE COACH. Coach collects and holds all cell phones from the team. Make sure all are on silent.
  - l. Structure teams report to weigh-in one hour prior to scheduled competition time.

- m. Coach gives timekeeper the COACH LONGTERM SCORE PICK UP AND CHECKLIST card.
  - n. After the presentation, the judges will talk to the kids. Coaches and parents stay seated until the judges announce that they can help clear the site. All video and photography must stop while judges question the team members.
  - o. Clear the site quickly and completely. Adults may help clean up and should do so if it keeps the schedule moving.
  - p. Before leaving the site, make sure you know when to return to pick up scores. Also be sure the team received its participation pins.
  - q. Return to the site as instructed. Meet with the head judge who will go over the raw long-term and style scores with you. Make sure you've received the team's participation pins.
  - r. Take the scores to the team. Discuss them and stress they are just numbers. They may be the highest given all day or the lowest or a mixture. They mean nothing till combined with the spontaneous scores, which remain unknown until after the awards ceremony. If the team questions a specific score or penalty and wants clarification for it, YOU HAVE 30 MINUTES AFTER RECEIVING SCORES to bring the question to the head judge's attention. He/she will talk with you and possibly return to the judging team for more information. The Problem Captain may be brought into the discussion. If you and the team are not satisfied with the judging team's explanation or feel you were penalized unfairly, you may ask for a **TRIBUNAL**. Try to find Freda and talk to her before you take this step. Full tribunal directions are in this packet.
  - s. Make sure after spontaneous, the team NEVER mentions TO ANYONE any part of the problem. They should not even discuss it among themselves until two weeks after the tournament.
  - t. Several times throughout the day check the TEAM PENALTY/CONTACT BOARD. If your team's name is on it, find out why. If we have to change a score or penalize a team for a worker/judge no-show, you need to know it and fix the situation.
  - u. Repack your props and enjoy OMER'S Fest., play the games and win prizes (division 1 only), shop at sales, watch other teams, eat, and have fun.
  - v. Attend the awards ceremony to see the scholarship winners and to feel like a winner for solving the problem!
7. **TRASH AND RECYCLING** – Pasco County Schools insists that we reduce our trash footprint. Four years ago TEWMS was trashed because of lack of dumpster space, animals, and high winds, but mostly BECAUSE WE GENERATED A LOT OF TRASH. We've done much better since then. Props and backdrops should go home with the team for disposal. We are recycling bottles and cans, so those will have specialized containers. LOOK FOR THEM. Each "tent site" is expected to collect and bag its own trash. We will have bags for you if needed. Several of our volunteers will be assigned to trash monitoring. They will take your filled trash bags to the dumpsters. TEAMS ARE NOT ALLOWED AT THE DUMPSTERS. One will be by the main parking lot. If a trashcan is filled, do NOT stack trash next to it. Clean up after yourselves in the restrooms. If you make a mess putting on glitter, makeup, etc., clean it up. Bathrooms have hand dryers, not paper towels, so bring some or a towel to clean up.
8. **BANNERS** – Each SCHOOL (not team, not membership) should create/provide a banner for the Odyssey awards ceremony. THIS IS NOT THE MEMBERSHIP SIGN REQUIRED BY THE PROBLEM. It should be NO larger than four (4) feet wide by five (5) feet tall. It must have

straps that allow it to be tied or looped over a one inch PVC pipe. It must have the school's name in large letters that can be seen from a distance. It may have other decorations or information, and be any color, fabric, material, etc. that the school deems appropriate. We will provide the stand and T-shaped pole for displaying the banner during the awards. The stand holds the base of the pole. For those schools that don't make or forget to bring their banner, paper and markers will be provided to make one onsite the day of the tournament. Banners will be on display throughout the day on the stage in the cafeteria. For the Division 2/3, we will move the banners to the gym for the awards ceremony. Make sure the banners are retrieved at the end of the awards ceremony.

9. **PARADE OF CHAMPIONS** – At the Division 1 tournament, each school will designate ONE banner carrier to bring in the school's banner during the awards ceremony. An adult can retrieve the banner from the cafeteria and help the carrier get it to the line up outside the gym. We will transport the carriers inside the gym. The banner carrier will parade in front of the audience and then take the banner to where the stands are placed ready to hold it. Make sure the banners are retrieved at the end of the awards ceremony.
10. **Check the website weekly between now and tournament.** Any breaking news will be posted there. Email Freda with questions: [fabercro@pasco.k12.fl.us](mailto:fabercro@pasco.k12.fl.us). Need her day of tournament: 813-924-0850 (texting works well).

Awards Ceremony follows the tournament by a couple of hours. Please make sure the team attends. It's our best chance of helping them ALL feel like winners. **DO NOT LET ANYONE PREJUDGE THE TEAM AND ASSUME THEY WON'T BE GOING ON TO STATE.**



## T-MINUS FOUR WEEKS OR SO AND COUNTING

### WHAT TO DO BETWEEN NOW AND THEN in no particular order

1. Practice spontaneous.
2. Play the What If? game OFTEN.
3. Re-read the problem.
4. Start the paperwork: gather receipts, choose style categories, etc.
5. Schedule the after – tournament party.
6. Have a parent meeting to go over tournament day expectations and schedule.  
**MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND SCORING AND HOW TEAMS ARE CHOSEN TO GO ON TO STATE.**
7. Choose a banner carrier.
8. Make or locate banner (last year's?).
9. Check in with worker and judge. Thank them, and make sure they're going to be there as scheduled.
10. Assign hospitality contribution.
11. Practice spontaneous.
12. Re-read the problem.
13. Self score using scoring section of problem.
14. Practice spontaneous.
15. Prepare an emergency repair kit.
16. Make a list of what to bring; add to it at each meeting.
17. Update meeting schedule if necessary.
18. Re-read the problem.
19. Check for clarifications weekly, daily if possible.
20. Check the Gulf Coast website for updates.
21. Finish paperwork. Make copies. Create spare sets.
22. Play the What If? Game.
23. Practice, practice, practice.
24. Invite the principal, the neighbors, everyone to come and watch. Spread the word about Odyssey fun. Alert the media!

## What to Bring to the Tournament – advice from coaches

Well, there's no point in bringing your mind --- you'll just lose it before the day's over.  
J. Donna in Atlanta

Team members? and a bottle of aspirin, plus money for souvenirs and snacks.  
And then there's all that paperwork stuff too...  
Pat E

We post a large index card the last couple of weeks prior to competition with the heading "First Aid Kit". As the kids think of items they might need they list them on the card. About two days before the tournament a team member packs the items on the list into a small cosmetic suitcase purchased from Goodwill. This puts the responsibility on the team members. It also helps them think about what worst case scenarios may arise and how they will handle them. Our team always takes their first aid kit to the pre-staging area. Because they have packed the kit they know where to look for needed items and can get them out quickly. Their kit has saved them more than once!

I make my own coach's first aid kit: team member's emergency contact information, extra film, camera/flash battery, bottle of water, Advil, my good luck penny! :-), Kleenex (tears of pride or happiness that it's all over?)  
Mary Rutherford, North Carolina Odyssey of the Mind

Photocopy of forms the team intends to turn in plus a set of blank forms in case they need to modify what is on a form. For instance, if the prop they had listed on the style form gets run over in the parking lot and they need to substitute something else. Send the extra copy of completed forms in a separate car.

We usually had an extra power cord in the car. The problem captain is supposed to supply that, but it may not be as long as you want. (or may not be there). ALWAYS have a copy of the problem, current clarifications, and Program Guide. IMHO any coach at a tournament without these is a sloppy coach.

Spare batteries and chargers if appropriate. All the spare "fix it" stuff for last minute repairs; string, wire, tape, glue, glue gun. It was usually a team project to collect and pack their emergency repair kit. If something broke, they knew what was in the kit; coach was not even consulted. This helped them think immediately of how to fix the problem. -Tom

The first thing to have is a checklist of what you're bringing. Besides that, a couple of extra copies of all the forms... some filled out and some blank. My team would usually also bring photos and their working drawings or props, backdrops, etc. to share with

the judges after the performance. On a related note... the coach may want to let the kids and parents know that souvenirs will (generally) be available for sale.

#1 Has to be duct-tape. We always brought along a box of spares and tools, plus assorted tape. Snacks are always good too!

Tim Perkins

We never forget our "first aid" kit - duct tape, pipe cleaners, glue, string, scissors, anything you think you may even remotely need to fix up anything.

And those forms...I'm happy to see I'm not the only one to have several sets... AND I also send at least one set in a different car with another set of parents. And DO NOT forget ANY clarifications your team sent for. A couple days before the tournament, we make out a checklist of things we need to bring. It helps, because in the 24 hours before a competition, your brain stops working! And one last thing - which I'm sure all of you will remember - your enormous pride you have for your team....what a great feeling! Good luck to all of you!

Linda from PA

What To Bring:

Some years we have had "one last run through" in the driveway and then loaded all that material in the cars so we didn't forget a prop. With our technical teams, we bring a tool box that has the usual tools they might need and some spare parts in case something gets bumped (it always does) on the way. For Balsa, they try to have a spare structure, some spare wood and quick drying glue, and a hair dryer to warm it up before weigh in.

Most teams have team (or school) t-shirts, a banner for the opening, and snacks (unless the band is selling stuff at the tourney). If you don't, the kids might feel left out. In our state, each team must also bring a cake for the state sponsored cake walk (helps with costs and the kids "eat it up").

Paperwork - Several sets are needed. They will lose at least one set, they will turn one set in and it may get lost there, if there is a later dispute they want to see a set and then you want the last set so there is something to refer to in preparing a set for the next level. Also, bring some blank forms to help out the new teams you meet (happens at every tournament).

Chuck

SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR TEAM!

## **TOP TWENTY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR TEAM IN THE WEEK BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT**

20. Have you filled out a Cost Form and do we have photocopies of any receipts and at least one (plus one more “back-up”) copy of the form?
19. Have you filled out the Style Form and made 4-6 photocopies (4 copies + auxiliary back-ups)?
18. Have you two copies of the Outside Assistance form (1 copy + back-up)?
17. Do you have any other required lists (as specified in some problems) and extra copies?
16. Do you have any team clarifications you need to give the judges? Have you made copies?
  
15. Is the team membership sign “legal” and will it (they) be visible the entire performance?
14. Do all parents (and family members) know how to get to the tournament and what time to arrive?
13. Do we have a camera to take pictures? Would a team member like to be in charge of that?
12. How can you be sure you won’t go overtime?
11. What if the scenery (or props) fall down?
10. What if someone forgets his/her lines?
  
9. Who is going to do a verbal spontaneous problem?
8. Who is going to do a hands-on spontaneous problem? Verbal/hands-on?
7. Do we have a master packing/To Do list and a person in charge of making sure everything we need, including the fix-it kit, arrives at the tournament on time?
6. Does everyone (including family planning to attend) know our schedule?
5. Do you all have watches you can wear, if possible, that will not “beep” during spontaneous?
4. How can we show our Odyssey of the Mind spirit and good sportsmanship?
3. Do all parents understand the Outside Assistance rules (including on Tournament Day?)
2. Does everyone know that our team is a great team and you are all winners, because you have won knowledge, skills and abilities that you will keep all your lives?
  
1. And lastly, Coach, two questions for YOU: have you planned a party or reward one day soon for this group that has worked so hard all year? And have you planned a rest period for yourself the day after the Tournament?? Take a good look at how far this team has come and then remind yourself that it is the process, not the score on the day of the Meet, which they will remember FOREVER.



## Odyssey of the Mind Coaches & Judges Share “Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me”

“I wish someone had told me that team members always pull through the day of competition. They face any problem they encounter on that day, as a team and with a maturity that makes you forget all the stress and all the bad moments you had. The way they behave themselves on competition day makes you, as a coach, so proud that you figure: ‘All these months were not so bad after all, I can do this again next year!’”

“That there's nothing mysterious about Spontaneous. It seemed so secretive and scary to the kids. The judges are all volunteers and folks just like the coaches. A copy of the problem is placed on the table for the kids to read and use as reference and if a solution does not break the rules of conduct for Odyssey of the Mind and is not specifically prohibited by the problem, go for it.”

“I wish I knew how important practicing spontaneous is. The difference between places at competition can be very directly related to how well a team does in spontaneous!”

“I wish I knew most of the actual work gets done in the last couple of weeks. For years I gave up every Saturday until last year when I was coaching two teams. They each got every other weekend and both got done on time.”

“I am a Spontaneous Judge. It breaks my heart to see the kids so frightened to be in the presence of the "THE SPONTANEOUS JUDGES" As a Judge I always do everything I can to get the kids relaxed before we start. At worlds last year I had a pink flamingo finger puppet sitting on my clipboard. If there were kids who needed it Phyllis would give them a little peck on the cheek (she got a work out). Judges are there because we love kids; we don't get any pay except the joy of seeing so many creative kids doing such amazing things. For me that is payment in full!”

“If I could suggest something for all new coaches and especially coaches for Division 1 teams. Please don't let the fact that you can't be with them get you nervous and upset, the kids will pick up on that and go into the spontaneous area with all of your worries added to their own.”

“As so many people have said, you need to practice all types of spontaneous problems on a regular basis. Get your team comfortable with the idea of thinking on their feet, and don't forget that many Spontaneous problems have a score for teamwork. If they have never competed be sure to tell them what to expect once they are in the room with the judges. When you practice don't forget selecting their five participating team members. It would be outside assistance for the coach to make this decision in advance. Let them figure it out as part of your practice sessions. (a hint on practice: nothing

builds confidence like success. When they fail to solve a practice problem, let them try again.)”

“Assure them that while spontaneous is an adventure into the unknown, that is just part of what makes it spontaneous. Please remember that we as judges want every team to do their very best; we will do our best to be fair and consistent in our judgments. The best thing you can do is prepare them well, and smile when they go! ”

“I consider sportsmanlike conduct towards the other members of the team an essential part of teamwork. Spontaneous can be nerve-wracking for members who have to sit patiently while a team member is stuck (mind goes blank).”

“Don't forget there is an award for competitors/teams who exhibit extraordinary "Omership", to coin a word. Those who exhibit all (or a good portion) of the qualities OotM hopes to instill and/or draw out in a participant qualify to be nominated for OMER's Award.” Anyone can put in a nomination.

“It breaks my heart to see teams who obviously just don't "get it" and try to perform at each other's throats. A relaxed attitude and a pleasant, heartfelt smile of encouragement from a team member goes a lot farther towards breaking a brain cramp than glares and impatient sighs.”

“One thing I wish I had known as a first-year coach last year was that the coaches should pick up their team scores within a half hour after the scores are posted. I coached two teams last year. After the awards ceremony, I picked up our envelopes with the final scores and found a mistake on the first team's score sheet...a mistake I could have had corrected if I had known about doing that. At least I learned from my mistake and won't be making the same mistake this year!!”

“Knowledge of the scoring process (not only what's in the "rule book" but actually understanding HOW scoring happens) is one of the most critical things a coach and team can learn.”

## Interpreting your RAW Qualifying Tournament Scores:

You will receive long term, spontaneous and style RAW scores, meaning that they are not scored in relation to the other teams. What does a score of 5 out of 10 mean? Is that a bad score?

Five out of 10 does not necessarily mean that your team did poorly on the task. It is critical to view the score from the Judges point of view.

Scoring Scale: If a category is 1-10 **some judges** will mentally use a grid that looks like this-

- 1- totally missed the mark
- 3- needs a lot of work
- 5- is ok
- 7- is pretty good
- 10- outstanding

However, **some** judges will not award a 10 because if they see a better solution later in the days judging they have nowhere to go! They can't give an 11.

If your team receives a score of less than half the available score, then they should concentrate on those items if going on to the next level.

How do you help your team figure out where to spend their time?

1. Work backwards from the scoring grid for your problem. Take a look at each score and check it against your tournament raw score. Then ask these questions about each of those low scoring items:

- Was this item so unfinished that the judges were unable to score it properly?
- Did we completely misunderstand what we were supposed to have done?
- Did the judges understand what we were presenting?
- Were the forms clearly written so that the judges knew exactly what we wanted judged?
- Did we explain to the judges anything they may have missed?

2. READ the Program Guide for explanations

- Spirit of the Problem
- Over-time
- Copyright
- Membership sign
- Forms (what you need is listed in your problem and don't forget the form in B13 (required list) (even though it says you 'should' provide it – do it! It makes the judges job that much easier) Structure teams do NOT have a required list.
- Rules that Apply to all Problems: things you can and cannot do

Some of your low scores can be avoided if, when reading the scoring grid and problem you

ensure that you look up any words that are *italicized*. These words have specific Odyssey of the Mind definitions that will be found in the Glossary at the end of your problem and/or in the Program Guide Glossary.

*A reminder about Outside Assistance:* Watching other teams perform has hopefully helped your team understand how Odyssey looks and inspired everyone to improve their solution, but don't COPY anything you saw as that would be outside assistance. In any case just because you saw another team do something doesn't mean that it's 'right' - you never know - the team may have received a penalty for what they did.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL

- No manipulation of lights is allowed at regional or state tournament.
- All weapon-like props must look UNQUESTIONABLY FAKE.
- No roller skates (wheels) on humans; vehicles, yes; humans, no.
- "Hover Boards" are not allowed on campus.
- Weigh-in takes time; check in a half hour early.
- Designs for next year's state pins are being solicited from the kids. If you have an idea, submit it to the Regional Director by April 1.
- Team introductions must be done from the staging area and may not exceed 30 seconds. Keep it brief; impact on schedule is noticeable.
- CELL PHONES – COLLECT THEM AND TURN THEM OFF FROM THE TIME YOUR TEAM ENTERS STAGING UNTIL DONE PERFORMING.
- Relax, they'll get it together in time.