

Administrative Timeline for Odyssey of the Mind Coordinators and Coaches 2015-2016 NCOME.ORG

This information has been gathered primarily with volunteer school coordinators in mind, but also should be helpful to other organization coordinators, school staff members, and any coaches who are responsible for membership and tournament registration for their teams. There is a lot of diversity in the organizational management, history, and schedules of the many OotM programs that participate in our region. There may be steps described in this timeline that do not apply to your program, and there may be other efforts that your program undertakes to support your coaches, communicate with families, and/or prepare your students for the tournament. This timeline is meant to provide only general suggestions.

The steps/deadlines that are mandatory for participation in the NC Eastern Region Tournament in March each year are indicated by bold. They include purchasing/renewing your OotM membership(s), registering for the tournament, and nominating your judge(s) and volunteer(s).

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE:

July-Sept - Purchase Membership
Oct - Coaches' Training
Nov - Skills Fair
Dec - Early Bird Tournament Registration
Jan - Nominate Judges & Volunteers,
Spontaneous Fair, and
Final Tournament Registration Deadline
Feb- Judges' Training and
Primary Division Tournament
Mar - Regional Tournament (Div I-Div III)
Apr - State Finals Tournament
May - World Finals Tournament

JULY - SEPTEMBER (varies by individual school schedules and program choices)

1. Plan Your Program.

- Form a small committee of parents and teachers to help if possible.
- Gather, or review previously gathered, feedback from last year's coaches and parents if your school or organization had a program last year.
- Communicate with your principal for his or her approval of your plans as they are developing.
- Think about finances. What financial support do you need from the PTA and/or team parents? Speak to your PTA president before school starts if you plan to request inclusion of OotM funds in the PTA budget. PTA budgets ordinarily are drafted and approved early in the school year and are cumbersome to modify.
- Other things to think about: How will you recruit coaches and students? How will you form teams? (See the NCOME document, "Odyssey of the Mind Team Formation, Common Considerations and Procedures.") How will you recruit tournament judges/volunteers? What volunteer obligations, if any, will you expect of parents? Which administrative tasks, described below or otherwise, will be handled by coordinators and which by coaches or team parents?

2. Promote Your Program.

- Identify your desired means of communication about OotM with your school community – newsletter, social media, morning news, letters home to parents in weekly folders, school website, posters, information tables at events, etc. – and be sure you know the deadlines, contact persons, and procedures for each option you choose.
- Plan and hold in-person information sessions for parents or students, if your group desires.

3. **Purchase or Renew School/Organization Membership(s).**

This can be done any time between July and December, but you cannot access the full long-term problems or any other Member Area resources on www.odysseyofthemind.com until your membership is purchased or renewed. Multiple memberships for schools/organizations are necessary only if more than one Div I, II, III, or IV team wants to compete in the same long-term problem. Multiple Primary teams may go to the tournament with the same membership. You can find all of the information you need on the OotM website, including instructions for mailing a check or paying online. Only one membership is required for multiple Primary Division (K-2) teams.

4. **Form and Announce Teams.**

Gather information about interested students, recruit coaches, and form/announce teams. See the NCOME document, “Odyssey of the Mind Team Formation, Common Considerations and Procedures” for more information.

OCTOBER

5. **Help Coaches, Especially New Coaches, Get Started.**

Share information and advice with new coaches. Help coaches locate resources for team building, spontaneous practice, long-term problems, and tournament procedures. Make sure each coach at least has a copy of their team’s problem and the Program Guide, and that they know how to access the member area of the OotM site. Continue to support coaches, as needed, throughout the season.

6. **Coaches’ Training.**

Encourage all coaches to attend the NCOME Coaches’ Training, which ordinarily is held around the third Saturday of October and includes workshops on each long-term problem, spontaneous problems, team building, brainstorming, and resources and forms, among others. Registration for Coaches’ Training is available through ncome.org and usually opens in late September.

7. **Communicate With Coaches/Teams About Skills Fair Registration.**

Registration for the NCOME Skills Fair is available through ncome.org and ordinarily opens in October. There is limited space, so only two team members from each team should plan to attend. Those students can share what they have learned with the team members who could not attend. You also may want to consider hosting a skills fair just for your school/organization.

NOVEMBER

8. **Skills Fair.**

The NCOME Skills Fair ordinarily is held in early November. Students can select up to four classes, which often include topics such as Performance Skills, Woodworking, Creative Use of Materials, Script Writing, Sewing and Costumes, Basics of Balsa, and Electricity.

9. **Communicate With Coaches/Teams About Spontaneous Fair Registration.**

Registration for the NCOME Spontaneous Fair is available through ncome.org and ordinarily opens in late November. Teams register together. The “name” for the registration should be that of the coach or other supervising adult who will stay with the team. Not all team members need to be available for their team to participate, but the more team members present, the more the team will benefit from the experience. There is a morning fair and an identical fair repeated in the afternoon. Teams can attend one or the other. This event is primarily designed for Div I and II teams, but Div III teams are welcome to participate as well. Primary teams do not participate.

DECEMBER

10. Communicate With Coaches.

If you are not in regular contact with coaches, this would be a good time to touch base with them about any questions or support needs they may have. You also may want to remind them about things they may need to think about for the rest of the season.

11. Eastern Regional Tournament Registration EARLY BIRD Deadline.

The early bird postmark deadline for regional tournament registration usually is around December 20, but check ncome.org to confirm. The early bird cost is \$85 for each Div I or higher team, and \$25 for each Primary team. Registrations postmarked after the early bird deadline will be charged \$105 for Div I or higher teams, but still only \$25 for Primary teams. To register, you will need to log into the Member Area of odysseyofthemind.com. When completed, you will receive an invoice by e-mail, which will include instructions for paying your registration fee(s) online or by mail.

JANUARY

12. Nominate Judge(s) and Volunteer(s) ASAP in January.

Each team participating in the Eastern Region Tournament must submit the name and e-mail address of one person willing to judge and one person willing to volunteer for the tournament. This should be done as soon as possible in January but no later than two weeks before Judges' Training for judges and no later than two weeks before the tournament for volunteers. Judge and volunteer registration is available on ncome.org. You will need only the name and e-mail address of the person nominated for either role. They will receive an invitation to register by e-mail and have an opportunity to express their preferences for judging roles or volunteer roles/timing later.

Judges must be at least eighteen years old by the tournament date, and available for training all day on a Saturday in February and all day during the tournament in March. Judges must stay with their judging teams all day during the tournament and will not be able to watch their children's teams perform. Parents who serve as a judge often choose to attend their children's dress rehearsals or to watch videos afterward. Volunteers help during the tournament for approximately three hours, which can be arranged around the timing of their children's long-term performances. Teams which do not provide a judge and a volunteer for the tournament may be assessed a poor sportsmanship penalty.

13. School/Organization OotM T-shirts.

Some programs choose to have t-shirts screen printed for their teams to wear at the tournament and other events. This could be done at any time during the season as long as you take into consideration the printer's schedule and any possible weather or other delays.

14. Spontaneous Fair.

Teams and their coach/supervising adult(s) will attend an introductory session and five practice sessions led by experienced volunteers. Teams will solve one spontaneous problem in each practice session and receive feedback/advice.

15. Eastern Regional Tournament Registration FINAL Deadline.

If not already done, your team registration(s) must be completed by late January to participate in the March tournament. The final deadline will be posted on ncome.org each year. See #11 above for information about the registration procedure.

FEBRUARY

16. Communicate With Coaches.

Early February is a good time to remind coaches about the upcoming clarification deadline, the forms to be prepared by the team and number of copies needed, and to offer any support or other information they may need as the tournament date approaches.

17. Judges' Training and Primary Division (K-2) Tournament.

The judges nominated by each team must attend this Saturday training date even if they have judged before. Judges training is scheduled for mid-February. The primary teams (kindergarten through grade 2) Tournament is at this event. K-2 teams will present their long-term problem solutions, participate in a spontaneous problem (optional), and have a brief awards ceremony during this time. Date, location, and times will be posted on ncome.org. Judges training lasts from early morning until mid-afternoon. The Primary Division Tournament will begin late-morning and end in the early afternoon.

18. Deadline For Submission of Long-Term Problem Clarifications (Div I – Div IV) – February 15.

Teams seeking a clarification can submit their question on the odysseyofthemind.com site any time between July and February 15. Teams which receive a private clarification are responsible for bringing a hard copy to the tournament and presenting it to the Staging Area Judge with their forms. Teams should continue to check the OotM site for new public clarifications through the tournament date.

19. Communicate with Coaches/Teams/Principal about Tournament.

Make sure coaches have all of the tournament information they need. Ncome.org will have necessary and helpful information posted in February. Print for families, or talk to coaches about printing, hard copies of the most relevant tournament information – site maps (including notation of team meeting place/time), schedule information, and a team phone list. Remind parents/coaches of the importance of supervising children throughout tournament. Share a copy of teams' schedules with your principal.

MARCH

20. Eastern Regional Tournament, First Saturday of March

Tournament schedules, maps, general information/procedures, and rules will be posted on ncome.org.

21. Communicate With Teams/Coaches/Community After Tournament.

You may wish to celebrate the work of your teams, thank your coaches, and share information about the teams' tournament participation in your school/organization's newsletter or social media accounts.

22. Help Any Advancing Teams.

If any of your teams advance to the State Finals Tournament in April, or from there to the World Finals in May, the coaches will receive information about registration and about those tournaments in general. They may need help with fundraising and travel arrangements.

APRIL

23. State Finals Tournament.

The top two teams in each problem/division from the Eastern Regional Tournament will be invited to compete. The date and location will be posted on ncome.org early in the season.

MAY

24. World Finals Tournament.

The top two teams in each problem/division from the State Finals Tournament will be invited to compete. The date and location will be posted on ncome.org early in the season.