Odyssey of the Mind®

Quick Tips for Coaches

Coaching Odyssey of the Mind teams is a fun and rewarding experience, although at first it may seem intimidating. Below are a few tips that will help new or experienced coaches get started for the program year. Your first step is complete —getting the Odyssey of the Mind membership materials for the current program year. Get ready for another exciting, creativity-filled program year!

- **Learn** about the Program and Prevent Penalties! Read the entire Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide, it's updated every year. Refer to it often–it has the answer to most questions. This could make a big difference for teams.
- **Seek** out teams! Ask students to sign up for the problem that interests them and form teams from the lists. Give each team a copy of its chosen problem and ask the team members to read it. Let them know they are making a commitment to a team activity.
- **Find** at least one coach for each team. Ask teachers and parents to help. A co-coach or assistant coach can help share responsibilities.
- **Set** basic team rules and decide on a practice schedule. Direct individuals or small groups to work on their own between practices. Copy and distribute materials to all teams within your membership.
- **Encourage teamwork**. All teams go through growing pains, but members will learn to work together in time. Everyone's idea is important to the group.
- **Avoid outside assistance**. A coach should help team members develop creative problem-solving skills, not help solve the problem. Before giving input, ask yourself if it would alter the team's solution (outside assistance), or if it would teach better problem-solving skills (good coaching).
- **Learn** about and practice Spontaneous at every team meeting. Books of practice problems are available at odysseyofthemind.com/shop/. This benefits teams greatly in competition.
- **Find** your local contact. This person will be able to provide information about local Coaches Training Workshops, tournament dates, locations, and costs. Information can be found by choosing the Contacts link at www.odysseyofthemind.com or in this packet.
- **Explore the Member Area** of the Odyssey web site. After logging in you can access copies of all the problems as well as many other helpful tools. You can also download copies of your membership status in the member area. You will need this at your local tournament.
- **Know clarifications**, which supersede the rules in the problems. You can do this by checking clarifications. If your team is unsure of an aspect of its solution, submit one of your own from the Members Area. Be sure to re-read the program guide to avoid unnecessary questions. Cut-off for submitting questions is February 15th.
- **Remind** the team to review the scoring for the problem it selected. Sometimes great presentations are scored lower than expected because the team did not emphasize the work on the scored element.