

Chapter V

Program Rules

Following are the general rules for official Odyssey of the Mind competitions. These apply to every problem in every division. Each problem has its own specific set of rules (limitations) that the team must follow as well. Problem limitations supersede the rules in this guide; however, problem clarifications supersede both of these. In addition to the rules listed below, teams must comply with local, state/provincial and federal regulations, including regulations for specific facilities. If you have a concern, contact the person qualified to provide the information you need.

Rules That Apply to All Problems

- (1) A team must be affiliated with a current member to compete in a tournament.
- (2) A team must present a long-term problem solution to receive score for Long-Term and Style at a competition. A team may participate in Spontaneous without participating in Long-Term but will not be ranked.
- (3) If a team omits a portion of the solution that is not scored under either Long-Term or Style, judges will assess a Spirit of the Problem penalty. If the omitted required portion is scored in Long-Term or Style, the team will receive a zero score for that scoring category even if it is scored on a sliding scale that begins at one. There is no additional penalty and scoring categories that rely on that portion taking place are eligible for score. For example, if a problem requires an outdoor scene that is scored for its appearance, creativity, and artistic quality, but the scene is portrayed as being indoors, the team will receive zero score for the appearance of the scene. However, it will receive score for creativity and artistic quality of the scene.
- (4) No real animals may be used in any solution. This does not include manufactured items of any kind.
- (5) Judges may not become part of the problem solution or Style presentation. During its Long-Term competition time the team may ask judges questions; however, the judges will answer only if they decide it is appropriate. The judges will only speak to the team members if they feel it is appropriate or it is required in the limitations of the problem. In Spontaneous, judges will always answer questions. The team may not involve the judges in its presentation in any

way and any reaction or participation from the judges or audience does not count for score. Judges will not use anything provided by the team to view special effects, such as 3-D glasses. Also, if playbills are listed as a Style category, the team must give it to the Staging Area judge with the rest of its paperwork. Nothing handed to the judges during the 8-minute competition time will be considered for score. Teams may not throw anything into the audience.

- (6) During their competition time, teams may ask the audience for a reaction, such as applause, boos or laughter. However, if a team involves the audience in more than a general way, for example, specific dialogue or interaction between the team and a member of the audience, judges will assess an Outside Assistance penalty.
- (7) Once competition time begins, team members may go into the audience and interact from there while the remaining team members are in the performance area.
- (8) Nudity, profanity, vulgarity, violent acts, and ethnic/racial slurs are not permitted. This includes the inappropriate use of potentially offensive words or actions. Teams may *simulate* violent acts during a performance only.
- (9) National anthems or official pledges may not be used in the problem solutions. These require actions by others, such as standing or saluting, which may disrupt another team's presentation.
- (10) Judges will not assess any penalty more than five times unless the problem states "each offense." However, the value of the penalty may increase with each offense if the penalty is listed in a range of points, for example, -1 to -100.
- (11) All parts of a problem solution and the containers they are shipped in **must** fit through a doorway that measures 28" x 78" (.71m x 1.98m), and they must be able to stand or be placed in an upright position in a standard room (ceilings 7.5-8 feet (2.28-2.43m) high). This applies to all containers holding parts of the team's solution. A penalty will not be assessed if a part exceeds these dimensions; however, some tournament sites may not be able to accommodate them. Tournament Directors are under no obligation to provide time to disassemble and reassemble these items to bring them into the room and the team must not alter the building in any way.
- (12) **Check-In/Staging:** The Staging Area Judge will meet with the team in the Check-In Area. Generally, if a competition site requires doors to be closed when teams are performing, the Check-In Area is outside of the competition room. This is where the Staging Area Judge will

meet the team to collect paperwork, check foot coverings, and so on. When ready, a judge directs the team to come into the competition room and wait in the Staging Area for its performance to begin. The team will move all of its materials from the Check-In Area into the Staging Area. Any materials remaining after approximately 3 minutes may be moved by the judge to allow the next competing team to enter the Check-In Area. When the team is in the Staging Area and the judges are ready, the 8-minute performance time will begin and the team may start its performance while setting up.

- (13) With the team's permission, others not on the team may help to move problem solution items into the Check-In Area and the Staging Area. Others may also help the team remove items from the competition site when directed by the judges. However, until the team is dismissed, no one may enter the competition site.
- (14) **Forms:** Required forms may not be altered. They may be photocopied or scanned into a computer, but lines may not be moved, spaces added, etc.
- (15) No one, including the announcer or any other judge, may read aloud to the audience any introduction or description of the team's problem solution prior to the team's performance. If the team wants something read, it may do so during its competition time.
- (16) Weapons are prohibited from the competition site and tournament venue. If an actual weapon is discovered it must be removed from the site immediately or it will be confiscated. There is no point deduction. Team-created replicas of weapons that are easily mistaken for real weapons are also prohibited. They must either be changed to look less realistic or be removed from the competition site or they will be confiscated. There is no point deduction. Props that appear and/or are used as a weapon in the performance are allowed provided they are obviously not real and pose no threat. These include team-made props and toys that do not look like real weapons, such as water pistols, plastic swords, etc. If a team uses a fake weapon in its performance it must confirm with the Staging Area Judge that it is allowed. It can only be used for practice and during the performance; it must be put away at all other times
- (17) All solutions must presented live (during the 8-minute performance time). The team's performance must be presented live and not prerecorded (unless the problem states otherwise). However, pre-recorded visual and audio may be a part of the problem solution.

Allowed pre-recorded audio/visual includes team-recorded and commercially-produced items. To be considered for score they must be visible to both the officials and audience. The following applies to both:

- (a) Completing required scoring must be done by the team members (their ideas and work) and be presented live (not prerecorded). A recording of the team presenting a problem or style requirement would not qualify for score for that requirement. Scored problem requirements must be presented live.
- (b) Commercially produced pre-recordings may include persons other than the team members, so long as it was not created to be part of the solution. Teams may use commercially produced and commonly available audio-visual materials if they alone are not fulfilling a required scoring category or, in the judges' opinion, they are not a major part of the problem solution or Style. They may be used in conjunction with team-created work to fulfill a scoring category.
- (c) If specifically allowed by the problem Items that appear in a pre-recorded video will only be eligible for objective scores, i.e. if they did or did not appear in the performance. However, these items can be scored for subjective scores if they also appear live during the 8 minute performance. For example, a backdrop that appears in a video will not receive score for creative use of materials, originality, etc. unless it is also presented as part of the performance. Subjective scores will be based on how the item appears and is used during the live performance.
- (d) Any non-commercial pre-recording must be completely performed and recorded by the team members. Rules for outside assistance are the same for these recordings as they are for the performance.

(18) **Safety and damage control:** No part of the problem solutions may cause damage to the facility or injury to anyone. If judges deem any act or item as potentially dangerous, they may make a team demonstrate that it will not cause injury or damage. If not satisfied by the team's demonstration, the judges will not allow the team to include that part of the solution.

If an unacceptable risk of personal injury or a hazardous situation occurs, judges will stop that portion of the team's presentation. They may also assess a penalty. Teams must use safe chemicals at all times. If attempting to create a specific effect with chemicals, the resulting

effect must be safe and clean. Unsafe chemicals and unsafe reactions are not allowed. For example: Combining Mentos candy with soda is not allowed. While they are safe ingredients they create an unsafe reaction and are not permitted.

The following items are not allowed to be used in the team's presentation of its solution:

- Lighter-than-air balloons (e.g., helium) that are not sufficiently tethered and/or weighed down. That is, those that will float uncontrollably upward are not allowed.
- Items that are excessively hot or cold (including dry ice)
- Items that leave a residue (some types of fire extinguishers, some types of fog machines, etc.)
- Internal combustion engines
- Flammable fuels
- Smoke bombs or similar items
- Fires in any form, including lighted candles and sparklers
- Liquids that can stain or cause other floor damage
- Emergency response alerts, i.e. fire/smoke alarm.

(19) Teams may use strobe lights in their performance, but they must first inform the Staging Area Judge and/or Timekeeper. The Timekeeper will announce this to the audience and give anyone who would have a problem with them an opportunity to leave the room.

(20) **Foot coverings:** Due to health and safety regulations at many competition facilities, the bottom of the feet must be covered by a material that is generally non-penetrable. That is, the covering should prevent splinters and small shards of glass from penetrating the foot. If the foot covering comes off during the presentation, the team will not be penalized, as long as it is replaced. The member who loses it must stop performing until then, or the judge will make that member stop. Judges may help the team member retrieve the foot covering. The other team members may continue performing as usual.

(21) **Damage to the floor:** Teams must be careful not to cause damage to a competition site at any time. Remember, floor damage can occur when moving props as well as during the performance. Judges will examine the condition of the floor before each performance. If a team damages the floor, whether intentional or non-intentional, the team is **financially responsible for any repairs necessary and** subject to penalty in the following degrees:

- Scuff that is removable with soap and water will not be penalized.
- Scuff that cannot be removed with soap and water, but there is no other damage: -15 points.

- Stain on a carpet: -25 points.
- Damage to the floor that requires new varnish: -25 points.
- Carpet tear or damaged tile: -50 points
- Damage to the floor that requires sanding and new varnish: -50 points.
- If, during the presentation, the team causes damage to the floor and does not stop after being warned by the judges: -100 points and the judge will call “time” and stop the presentation.
- If, prior to the presentation, judges determine that a solution or part of a solution will likely cause damage to the floor, they may prevent the team from presenting its solution or that part of its solution.
- If the team causes intentional damage to the floor: -200 points and the judge will call “time” and stop the presentation.

(22) **Use of batteries:** Unless a problem states otherwise, only unmodified, commercially produced sealed batteries may be used. The combined measurement of any commercially produced battery, battery pack or battery charger is limited to 15". That is the length, plus height, plus width, all measured at the widest point (excluding battery terminals) must not exceed 15".

All batteries used must be available for checking by Officials during the Check-in process. Batteries in items such as cell phones and computers are excluded from this requirement.

Since almost every battery-powered device does not use just one cell at a time, teams may group permitted cells together to form higher voltages or currents. Commercially produced battery packs that fall in the allowed battery types may be used. Teams must ensure that each battery system, including all inter-connections, is safely designed for all conditions encountered during use and otherwise completely appropriate for the desired application. An assembly of materials that is only arguably functioning in a manner similar to a battery is not considered a battery.

Battery charging

Be sure the charger used is the correct one for the battery being charged. Teams must use a commercially manufactured charger and follow the directions for its use. Adults should perform or supervise any battery charging. This is not considered outside assistance. Batteries may not be charged at the competition site.

A little common sense

- Wiring that conducts electricity and all connectors to batteries must be insulated.
- Regardless of what a battery is made of, keep it away from open flame and extreme temperature variations. Explosion is a real threat for batteries that reach their boiling point. Do not let a battery get hot to the touch.
- Do not short circuit batteries.
 - Batteries should be kept isolated from each other and metal objects to prevent external short circuits. Do not store batteries loosely, and do not place them on metal surfaces.
 - Before batteries are inserted into a circuit, the circuit should be tested to avoid short-circuiting or charging the battery.
- Be environmentally conscientious: Dispose of batteries according to manufacturers' recommendations; e.g, NiCad should be recycled, as the cadmium in NiCad batteries is a toxic metal.

(23) **Membership Sign:** All teams are required to have a membership sign visible throughout the presentation of its long-term problem solution. (See page 44 for Membership Sign requirements.) If the membership sign falls down or is obstructed there is no penalty provided the team fixes the situation in a timely fashion.

(24) **Copyrights:** Members may use current long-term problem titles and icons and may photocopy Odyssey of the Mind materials for distribution within the membership during the program year, but these materials are copyrighted and may not be distributed beyond the membership and without permission for future use. In all areas — music, visuals, written word, characters — it is the team's responsibility to avoid copyright violations. It is illegal to use and reproduce copyrighted material without the owner's permission. The team should find out if a work is copyrighted and obtain permission to use the work. Judges will not require teams to produce a letter of permission to use a copyrighted work, since they cannot ascertain who holds the copyright. Therefore, they will not penalize a team for not producing a letter of permission. However, teams must be aware that, in some cases, they could be prosecuted by copyright holders if they use copyrighted material without obtaining permission. It is up to the team to determine what, if any, copyright laws apply to any non-team-originated material it wishes to use. Neither CCI or its affiliates can assist teams seeking such information or permission.

(25) **Trademarks:** Current Odyssey of the Mind members are allowed to use the following copyrights and trademarks, which are federally registered to Creative Competitions, Inc., in their solution, for advertising or fund-raising purposes within their membership area, and for program awareness. Teams may produce tee-shirts and similar items bearing any of these marks for their own use. However, if they intend to offer any items for sale that bear the marks, they must first secure written permission from their Association Director or CCI and cannot sell the items online, i.e. ebay.

- Odyssey of the Mind®
 - Creative Competitions®
 - Current Long-Term Problem Icons
 - Current Long-Term Problem cover art
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- OotM™
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The team must assume responsibility for using any other registered trademarks such as the NIKE swoosh, McDonald's golden arches, etc. Teams must be aware that they could be prosecuted by trademark holders if they use registered marks without obtaining permission from the owner. No team is allowed to use *World Finals* or the WF logo. Teams and/or any other group must obtain permission from its local association or CCI for the use of any other OotM trademark or copyright to be used at World Finals.

(26) Lights will not be dimmed at any competition site. If necessary, contact your Tournament Director for site specifics such as the size of the performance area, type of floor surface, etc.

(27) Internet connectivity will not be provided at any tournament venue. Any media being used in a solution must be saved to a device.

(28) Don't share your solution until after World Finals. This includes posting it online. Also, don't trust ideas, solutions, suggestions, etc. that others provide.