



The Odyssey of the Mind School Coordinator

Your Mission, should you choose to accept it, is to join our team of Odyssey organizers to help students at your school...

- find coaches,
- organize teams,
- provide judges,
- and receive pertinent information.

Should you, or any member of our team of school coordinators, be stuck, our entire team is stuck. You may not skip your turn, nor pass, but you may repeat and be the coordinator again next year.

Have fun, and good luck with your mission!

The following briefing will help you get started and will NOT self-destruct!

(taken from Virginia Opportunities In Creativity ExplorationS (VOICES) for Odyssey of the Mind by Lisa Love)

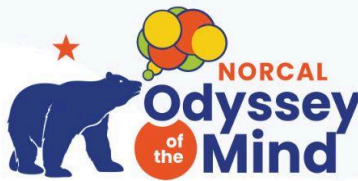
Getting Started

Talk with the principal. Explain the benefits and value of the program. Get approval. Explain what might be required regarding sending sign-up flyers home, having an informative meeting one evening at school, enlisting a faculty sponsor (mandatory at most secondary schools), and perhaps soliciting teachers to volunteer as judges or even coaches.

Discuss finances. Who will pay the school membership fee (\$290), the state fee (\$80), the qualifying tournament fees (\$85 per team), and team supplies? Depending on who coaches the team, the school may have a policy for all volunteers working with students (fingerprinting, TB test results, etc.)

If the Parent-Student-Faculty organization is paying for some or all of these, make a presentation at one of their meetings. Get the dates of the qualifying tournaments on the school calendar. Report back to the organization after the tournament and thank them for their support. You can also ask participants who are assigned to a team to pay a participation fee/donation to cover some or all of these costs.

Set up an information meeting. It can be parents only or students with their parents. Share an overview of the program, the problem synopses for this year, and the basics about the number of students per team, age divisions, and Outside Assistance. Provide one or two examples of



spontaneous problems to solve. Your main goal is to interest students and recruit coaches at this meeting. Explain that the students cannot participate without a coach. Coaches are supported with free online training, helpful documents, and experienced people (like myself) who are just an email or phone call away. Encourage teams to have two or three coaches to help share the load.

Once coaches are signed up you can work together to recruit interested students onto each team. Some deciding factors are:

- similar grade levels
- availability on the practice day of the week (decided by the coach) and tournament dates
- ability of parents to assist the team or coach in some manner (storage, transportation, volunteering at the tournament)
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All parents should be volunteering their time in some manner. Tournaments are all-day events that involve traveling. Families need to be willing to commit to this.

After Teams Are Formed

Disseminate information to coaches and teams. Keep them informed of trainings, webinars, and when signups BEGIN. Coaches should sign themselves up for the newsletter on the NorCal website and/or check social media for postings regularly.

Make sure coaches know This Email and the Password sent by Odyssey of the Mind to access the Member Area of the Odyssey of the Mind (Odyssey HQ) [website](#). This is where they can get full descriptions of the problems, the program guide, and the forms needed to be completed for the tournament. Suggest that coaches (and team members) keep a binder/folder with a paper copy of this year's Program Guide (general rules) and the full description of the Long-Term Problem (once the team has decided). Ask the school for help in making these copies for teams.

Coordinate the selection of long-term problems. If two teams in the same division group want to solve the same problem, your school will need to purchase a second membership or hold a tryout before the tournament to see which team will compete (not recommended).

This does not apply to the Primary division. Your school can have as many K-2 grade teams as they wish. Typically, if you have 3 teams in the same division, you can make it work with one membership and each team choosing a different problem of the 5 problem choices. If you have 4 or more teams in the same division, you may want to look into purchasing a second membership to allow 2 teams to solve the same problem.

Recruit tournament judges EARLY. Every team is required to provide a tournament judge at the Qualifying Tournament they attend. The judge should enjoy watching students' creativity in



action and should not expect to see their child's performance at the tournament. If they are the relative of a child performing on a team, they will be assigned a different problem to judge. All judges receive online training in January and are expected to attend the tournament the full day. If the team advances, the same trained judge is expected to represent the team at the NorCal state tournament. This is where a parent, unwilling to be the coach, can REALLY help the team. This linked document, [Volunteering as a Tournament Judge or Official](#), helps explain this important position.

Registering for the Tournament

This should be the head coach's responsibility. Remind the coach to register their team and include your email as the school email. Starting in 2023, coaches need the contact information of the people representing the team as the team's judge/official and the team's volunteer. The tournament volunteer works a 2-hour shift at the tournament. This can easily be one of the team's parents because they sign up AFTER the tournament schedule is posted. They CAN see the team's performance by selecting a volunteer time that does not conflict. If the team advances, a different parent can be chosen as the team's volunteer.

Registering for the tournament is completed by logging into the Odyssey HQ website. Under the Teams tab, there is a link titled Competition Home. The link to register will become active after it opens in November. Coaches can add comments to their registration if they or their team members have any special needs (limited mobility, hearing, etc.).

NOTE: If the date or location of the Qualifying Tournament is important, coaches should register the team on the day Tournament Registration opens (Check the NorCal newsletter and/or social media in November). Do not register BEFORE the opening date.

Signing up for one of the Spont Days should also be done as early as possible. See the NorCal newsletter for how and when to sign up as a team for a Spont Day.

Pay the tournament fees on time. After the team registers for the tournament, the coach (and you) should receive a confirmation email explaining paying the tournament fee (\$85 per team) by a certain date. There will be a late fee if payment is not received by that date.

Schedule a Dress Rehearsal. About a week before the first Qualifying Tournament, have a low key celebration of your school's teams and let them practice in front of family and friends. Encourage teams to share what they have so far. Many teams will still be finishing things. Do not make it a school-wide presentation; this will make them too nervous. This event works best on the Friday evening, a week before the tournament. Teams then have that weekend or a couple of days during the week to fix things that didn't work or weren't ready. This is also a good time to



confirm that each team has a parent (not the coach) signed up to be the team's tournament volunteer (working a 2-hour shift at the tournament).

The team's judge/official can also use this opportunity to see the team perform and should be thanked publicly for supporting the team with this important role. Be sure to thank the coaches too!

At the tournament. Enjoy watching your school teams perform!

Thank you for being the Odyssey of the Mind School Coordinator this season!