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**Introduction**

This guide provides information to help recruit judges and to train them to judge an Odyssey of the Mind competition with confidence and accuracy. It is intended for use in conjunction with the Judges Training Videotapes that Creative Competitions, Inc. (CCI) provides to each licensee of the Odyssey of the Mind program.

Properly trained judges are a key element to holding a successful tournament. If teams leave the tournament feeling that they have been judged fairly by caring and knowledgeable judges, then you can consider your tournament successful.

 Judges training should take place within six weeks before the judges’ first assignment. This gives teams who register late ample time to recruit judges who can attend the training session. Also, the closer the training is held to the first competition, the more likely judges are to retain the information presented at the workshop.

Your workshop will have several components. First, a general session of all in attendance will provide the basics of the program and the responsibilities of a judge. A director, judges’ trainer or coordinator can present this, or whoever is responsible for selecting judges. Oftentimes, State Problem Captains do this or train Regional Problem Captains to present this part of the session.

Once attendees are familiar with the problems and the judging positions within them, they choose the problem they would like to judge and their preferred judging position. Then, they break out into groups according to problem for a more specific session. These sessions are generally run by the Problem Captains for each problem, who assign the judges their judging positions. For smaller tournaments, judges may become certified for two problems. Cross-training is a good idea if you don’t have enough judges for every problem and division and you can afford to stagger competition times for individual problems and divisions. Spontaneous judges are trained by the Spontaneous Problem Captain separately from long-term training.

A third stage of the workshop could be where long-term judges meet according to their judging position. For example, all Style judges would get together to discuss how to score various Style elements, or Problem Judges can discuss things like “subjective” vs. “objective” scoring, the importance of consistency but not of comparing scores, the criteria for Ranatra Fusca nominations and how to write them up, how to deal with penalties, and how to talk with the kids after they compete. This stage may not be necessary for spontaneous judges, since their specific session usually lasts longer than long-term and covers all the positions. This could be optional.
for Primary judges, depending on how their judging team is organized.

On the morning of competition day, the Problem Captains should meet with their judges, make sure that everyone who was scheduled to judge is present (and, if not, reorganize the judging teams to cover all roles), then go over the rules, including up-to-date judges' and team clarifications, and answer any questions. Well-trained, interested judges, prepared Problem Captains, and a prepared Tournament Director make a competition run smoothly.
Recruiting & Retaining Judges

Establish early on how you will recruit judges and, more important, how you plan to retain them. It is important to keep records of judges and invite them back year after year. Evaluate judges and other volunteers to make sure they are doing their assigned job properly and to determine if they should be moved to another position. It’s a good idea to maintain a database and invite judges who judged for at least the two previous years to return. This should be done earlier in the year so the folks can plan by going to the Web site to view the synopses of the problems and the competition dates. This takes a bit of work in the beginning, but it is well worth the effort. If done well, within five years you should have a base of judges who are dedicated and responsible, and who return year after year. One of the downsides of this is that eventually you will have to make a deliberate effort to include new judges, so you always have new people coming up in the ranks. To maintain consistency and fairness for all, add a few new judges to your core of experienced judges each year.

Where do you find judges?

Many associations require participating teams to recruit one or two people who will be trained to judge at least one tournament. Some of these associations assess a small fee if a team fails to provide the required minimum number of judges. Great resources for volunteers are the team members’ parents and their coworkers and friends, as well as former Odyssey of the Mind team members.

Nearby college or university faculty, administrators and students are often willing to judge. Military personnel are often willing to take on the role of judging as a project. This is a great way for people to do something good for the kids in the community without a major time investment. They only need to give up one evening or part of a weekend day for training and usually one Saturday for the tournament.

You could also contact various service organizations and businesses in your area. Many of them encourage community service and may provide employee volunteers to judge. Some associations have recruited entire teams of judges from a single business in their area. Often this business is a sponsor of the tournament and provides the judging team, as well as a facility for the training and/or other items such as refreshments for judges’ breaks, or signs or programs for the tournament. If you get judges from a company/organization they will often report on what an enriching experience they’ve had and you will get even more help the following year. Eventually
you will develop a list of dedicated judges who are not affiliated with any specific teams. This removes even the perception of favoritism.

**Once you've got them, how do you keep them?**

Time and experience show that there are several key factors that keep good judges coming back year after year. An important factor is the camaraderie among the judging teams. One way to help judges build camaraderie is to have a time set aside for them to socialize before (and/or after) the event. Also, the Problem Captain or trainer at the session should encourage judges to work toward a spirit of camaraderie. If possible, make up the judging teams early on in the training. This will start the team-building process immediately.

When assigning judging teams, consider personality, experience and preferred judging positions. Highly outgoing individuals are likely candidates for positions with a great deal of team and audience interaction. Some people prefer looking for creativity and judging subjective areas that are based on opinion, while others prefer judging objective areas. The more experienced judges who perform well could have a more involved position with scoring.

The *Odyssey of the Mind Tournament Setup Guide* contains a Judges Application Form that can be used to evaluate a judge’s problem and division preference and other specifications. It provides the Problem Captain with the type of information needed to compose the best judging teams possible. Assign positions based on these factors to the best of your ability. Be certain from the outset that parents who volunteer to judge must understand that they may not judge their own child, and therefore will not see their own child perform. They must also understand that if they assume a judging position, they must commit to the position for the entire tournament and will not be able to get away to watch other teams perform.

The more comfortable the judges are with their individual responsibilities, the more productive they will be as a team. Making individuals feel that they are part of a team is important as well.

Communication with judges is vital. Reaching out to them will help develop a spirit of commitment. Make them understand the importance of their positions and how the kids rely on them to provide a well-organized and fair tournament. If your association has a newsletter or sends out regular mailings, add your judges to the database to make them feel part of the Odyssey of the Mind “family.”
Pre-Workshop Planning

The first step in planning a training session is to select a site. Try to find one that has an auditorium for a general session, as well as seven or eight additional rooms for smaller breakout sessions. Typically, the entire group will meet in the auditorium for an overview of the Odyssey of the Mind program, then break into smaller groups according to the area they will judge: spontaneous, scoring, or one of the long-term problems. Typically, the spontaneous judges will go into one room for their video and training. The auditorium and four other rooms will be used for long-term problem training. A separate room should be used to train Primary Division judges. Another room can be used to review scoring procedures and administer the test to scoreroom personnel. Before the workshop:

1. If possible, copy the specific problem-solution portion of the 2003-2004 Judges Training Video for each problem on a separate tape or CD. This will speed up the training process. If you are unable to copy the video, you must arrange the training schedule so each individual problem solution portion is shown to each respective problem group. Each individual problem segment is between 10-15 minutes in length.

2. Review the judging applications and create a roster for each judging team for each problem.

3. Appoint a Problem Captain for each of the long-term problems and for spontaneous, as well as a Scoring Captain. These individuals should be (or quickly become) experts in their assigned area. Problem Captains do not judge but are available throughout the competition to handle any concerns that arise in their problem. Their responsibilities include checking sites for proper setup and ensuring that problem clarifications and other judging information have been dispersed to all judging teams. They also hold meetings with the judges to answer questions and to issue last-minute instructions. Problem Captains are the best people to conduct the judges training sessions for their problems. The best place to find a Problem Captain is from your pool of experienced judges, preferably someone who has previously served as a Head Judge. A good Problem Captain will:

   • Thoroughly understand the problem and all of its clarifications.
   • Have a working knowledge of the Odyssey of the Mind program.
   • NOT have a competing team in the problem for which he/she is captain and NOT be associated with any team in any way that could imply favoritism and/or bias.
   • Have the ability to gather facts and reach a logical conclusion.
• Have the ability to organize, coordinate and interact with people in a positive manner.

During a tournament the Problem Captains should:

• Coordinate the problem in all divisions.

• Discuss problem appeals with Head Judges and coaches and make necessary rulings.

• Ask for a tribunal, if necessary, to resolve a problem appeal.

• Be responsible for site setup and cleanup. (Generally all judges on a team will assist in this.)
The Training Session Format

Once you have an idea of how many individuals will be attending the workshop, you need to set up the specifics for the training sessions. CCI produces this guide, as well as videos and other judging materials, to ensure consistency throughout the program. Judges trained in one location must receive the same information as those trained in every other location. Your Association Director and/or State Problem Captains may wish to meet with your Regional Problem Captains before training to discuss issues and clarifications that will help to ensure this consistency.

First, determine your training schedule and policies. How will you schedule individuals into specific training sessions? Will you train participants in all problems, assign problems, or permit them to choose the problem that interests them? How long will each session last? How will participants rotate from one session to another? Who will present the trainings?

If at all possible, have the Problem Captains, who will be in charge of the individual problems at the tournament, do the training for the breakout sessions. This will help them to become familiar with the judges they will work with, and it helps them get an even clearer idea of the problem.

Train as many judges as you can in a single session. We recommend cross-training judges in more than one problem, preferably the top two or three of their choice. Keep in mind the time constraints of the volunteers when scheduling training dates, times and sites.

Following is a suggested schedule for an evening Judges Training Workshop. You should allow a minimum of three hours. Adjust the schedule if you need to cross train judges or if you hold your workshop during the day.

6:30 – 7:00  Registration
7:00 – 7:15  General session/overview
7:20 – 8:15  Breakout sessions: general long-term, spontaneous, scoring
8:20 – 9:15  Individual long-term problems
9:20 – 10:00  Breakout sessions for individual judging positions
Presenting the General Session

There are several important points you should impress upon the judges during training.

1. Judges must know the importance of arriving at the competition prepared and **on time**. Emphasize that once competition begins, it is too late to place them in an active scoring role on a judging team. They also need to understand that they must be present for the entire tournament, including 30 minutes after the last team performs.

2. **You must have the same judges in the same roles for all teams within each division of each problem.** This way, if one judge scores particularly high or low, all teams will be scored consistently.

3. Most judges will feel more comfortable if they realize the following:
   - Judges do not rank teams; they evaluate problem solutions based on given criteria.
   - Judges record what they observe.
   - Judges are trained to encourage and praise team members.

   Explain the Odyssey of the Mind philosophy. Judges should understand that they are responsible for providing teams with a positive experience. They should compliment teams for performing, regardless of how well they did.

   Discuss judging creativity: What it is and what to look for in a team’s solution, whether it be long-term or spontaneous.

   Judges should not be too quick to penalize. When unsure, give the team the benefit of the doubt. Penalties, and the reasoning behind them, are explained in the *Program Guide*. Make sure the judges are familiar with them.

   Judges should never let teams compete under unsafe conditions. If, prior to a team’s competition time, a judge notices a situation that could be deemed a safety hazard, the judge should ask the team to correct the hazard rather than allow it to continue and receive a penalty. Only if the team is in a dangerous situation during the competition should a penalty be considered. Depending on the situation and its severity, how likely it is to occur again, and how immediate the danger is, a warning may be more appropriate than stopping the team. If it occurs again, the judges should stop the team and give a penalty. Do not disqualify a team unless there is a serious problem that is unresolved.
**Explain the Judging Positions**

A judge may be thoroughly knowledgeable in a particular problem but experience difficulties in judging because he/she is not sure of the particular duties of a position. Give the judges a comprehensive overview of the responsibilities of the positions and how to carry them out.

Explain that there are five key roles on a long-term judging team: (1) Head Judge, (2) Staging Area Judge, (3) Problem Judge, (4) Style Judge and (5) Timekeeper. There is also the optional position of Scorechecker. There are three key positions on a spontaneous judging team: (1) Head Judge, (2) Problem Judge, and (3) Timekeeper. A handout describing judging positions is included in the *Odyssey of the Mind Tournament Setup Guide*. It’s a good idea to send descriptions of the positions to your judges before the training session. If that’s not possible, make sure they receive a copy when they arrive at the training. Make your workshop as much about training for a specific judging role as it is about learning the rules for the problems.

The general section of the Judges’ Certification Test includes questions about the various judging roles. Providing the following information about key long-term judging positions should help individuals decide what position they would like to serve in, and it should help you determine how to assign judges.

**Head Judges**

Head Judges must know the rules of the problem, the program rules, and the competition procedures. They must be able to communicate well with the coaches and team members, and with other members of the judging team. They must be good problem-solvers and know how to remain calm in stressful situations. Head Judges work closely with the Problem Captain to make sure things are consistent from venue to venue for their problem.

**Staging Area Judges**

Staging Area Judges must first and foremost be friendly people who can make the kids and coaches feel at ease. They must be familiar with all the paperwork required for the problem, and they must know about any required items that must be checked in the Staging Area.

Staging Area Judges should be familiar with the competition venue and the problem in general so they can answer any questions the team asks while in the Staging Area. If they do not have the answer to a particular question, they may consult one of the other judges. The Staging Area Checklist, provided by CCI, gives the Staging Area Judges a way to ensure that they do not overlook any requirements. Staging Area Judges do not need to know the problem rules as thoroughly as the Problem Judges, so switching them on competition day could be difficult. A Staging Area Judge could be replaced if absolutely necessary, but the Problem Captain would
have to review the specific Staging Area duties of the problem with the replacement.

**Problem Judges**
Problem Judges must be completely familiar with the rules of the problem. They have to be comfortable scoring subjective categories (opinion) or objective categories (either something was or wasn’t done, or did or did not work, and so on). You should consider – if you have enough problem judges – to have some score only objective categories and others only subjective, especially when you have folks who are not comfortable scoring subjectively. You can get away with having only one or two people scoring objective categories, but it is best to have three people (never less than two) scoring subjective since this is based on opinion. Switching Problem Judges is not recommended unless the replacements have the opportunity to thoroughly review the problem they are to judge.

**Style Judges**
Style Judges need to know the overall idea of the problem and the specific items scored. They must determine if the “Free choice of team” categories selected for Style are not scored in the long-term problem, and if the Style is appropriate to the problem solution. Style Judges must be comfortable with subjective scoring, since this is the only way to score Style categories. With a brief overview from the Problem Captain or Head Judge, they can be switched from problem to problem on competition day.

**Timekeepers**
Timekeepers need to know only what is expected of them: whether the problem requires time to be called after the end of 8-minutes or whether the team should be allowed to continue but be penalized for going overtime. Timekeepers also announce the teams and ask the audience for its attention. They can easily be switched to any other problem on competition day.

**Scorecheckers**
If there are enough judges to go around at a tournament, each site could use a scorechecker. This person is responsible for transferring individual scores to Master Scoresheets, and for checking that the judges have scored correctly. Scorecheckers should make certain that judges have given scores in the correct range for each item and have scored objective points as either “0” or the amount specified. Scorecheckers should also make certain that all penalties have been noted and explained on the Master Scoresheet.

**Explain the Special Awards**

The **Ranatra Fusca Creativity Award** is the most prestigious award a team can receive at an
Odyssey of the Mind Tournament. It can be awarded to individual team members or to the entire team. It is **only** given for exhibiting exceptional creativity in either the long-term or spontaneous problem solution. Follow these procedures:

1. If a judge observes a team or team member that he/she wishes to nominate for a Ranatra Fusca Award, be sure to get the names of the competitors involved before the team leaves the competition site. Note what the team or individual did to warrant a nomination. A judge may nominate a team and/or an individual. A judge may make more than one nomination.

2. The judging team should review the possible candidates for a Ranatra Fusca Award at the end of the competition and make their official nominations at that time. They will discuss the merits of the various candidates and choose those it thinks warrant consideration for final recommendations to the Tournament Director. If a nomination is made, it should be submitted on a Ranatra Fusca Nomination Form. The judges should give this to the scorerroom personnel along with their other scoresheets. Before the tournament, the Tournament Director should establish a group of three individuals to review nominations and select winners. This removes pressure from the judging team. This group should consist of people who have experience in viewing and/or judging problem solutions and who understand what should be considered exceptional creativity.

3. The Tournament Director or his/her designees have the final say in who will receive a Ranatra Fusca Creativity Award. Therefore, do not tell coaches and team members that they are being nominated. This is a coveted award for exceptional creativity. While nominations may be made under relaxed or strict guidelines, the awards must be approved with careful scrutiny. Even at World Finals, where championship teams participate, judging teams do not always find a team or individual deserving of this award.

**OMER’s Award** is named after OMER, the Odyssey of the Mind raccoon mascot, and is given to coaches, team members, parents, officials or others who serve as extraordinary examples or role models through their deeds and words, or to team members who exhibit exceptional skill. It is not given for creativity. Judges and other tournament officials can nominate any individual who exemplifies the spirit and philosophy of the Odyssey of the Mind, or to teams or team members who are above and beyond even the exceptionally talented, or who best exemplify sportsmanship and teamwork in an amazing way. Although many teams nominate their coaches or parents, unless someone has done something exceptionally generous and good hearted, it is best to pass up these nominations. It’s a good idea to recognize all coaches and parents as a group at the Awards Ceremony.
Presenting the
General Long-Term Session

In the long-term room, show the first portion of the Judges Training Video. This provides a general description of how to judge all the long-term problems.

Responsibilities of Each Judging Role

The Judges Video describes each judging role, but make sure you emphasize the responsibilities of each position as follows.

Head Judge

Each judging team must have one Head Judge who is responsible for running the problem site. This person should remain well informed and have many of the same abilities as the Problem Captain. The responsibilities of the Head Judge are:

1. Make sure the site is set up properly. (Make an effort to keep all spectators away from the immediate area, perhaps by roping off the competition area.)

2. Assign specific tasks to the other members of the judging team if they are not pre-assigned.

3. Help the judging team establish its judging criteria and work with them to create a cohesive team.

4. Compile and record all long-term scores onto one Master Long-Term Scoresheet and all Style scores onto one Master Style Form (unless a Scorechecker is on-site).

5. Present the final raw long-term score, along with any positive, inoffensive, and constructive comments recorded on Post-It notes by the judges, to the team's coach. No comments, positive or otherwise, should directly involve or attempt to improve the team's solution or give any impression as to how a team rates against other teams in the competition.

6. Answer questions involving their division of the problem and help resolve any disputes.

7. Make sure no one on the judging team is scheduled to score a team that he/she has coached or that includes any team members who are related to the judge. If necessary, a non-scoring position such as Timekeeper may be filled by these folks. However, it is imperative that judging teams remain the same throughout the competition to ensure fairness.

8. Assist the other site judges.

9. Make sure the judges maintain the time schedule.
10. Make sure the final scoresheets get to the scoreroom in a timely manner.

**Problem Judge**

Problem Judges must know the Program Rules in the *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide* AND the rules for their long-term problem.

Problem judges award points in the various scoring categories in the problem. They also determine any penalty points a team may incur. If a problem does not specify a penalty for a rule infraction, penalize it as a **Spirit of the Problem** violation. If a team does not present anything for a specific long-term or Style scoring category, award zero points for that category.

Judges should check the team’s **membership sign** carefully to make sure it has the correct membership name and number. Teams may have more than one membership sign, but one must constantly be on display during the performance. If a sign falls over and a team member picks it up within a few seconds, this should NOT be penalized. Always err on the side of the kids! Membership signs must contain the name and number of the team as it appears on their membership card. However, if the school’s name is abbreviated on the membership card, it may be spelled out on the membership sign. Signs may include additional writing or graphics, as long as the membership name and number are visible from 25 feet away. The Tournament Director should check the registered teams against the official membership roster and list teams by their official name and number on the competition schedule. This is the name that should be on the sign and on the scoresheets.

All the team members should take a bow after their presentation. Judges should then approach the team members, comment positively about their presentation and ask questions about their solution. “Who created this,” and, “Why did you choose to do it this way” are types of questions that will encourage team members to elaborate on their solution. Tailor the questions specifically to each solution and its relativity to the problem. Judges must always assume that teams have created their solution without any **outside assistance**. If the team’s explanation suggests otherwise, well-trained judges will ask the proper questions to determine if there was any outside assistance.

Using Post-It notes for positive and constructive comments is a good way to communicate feedback to the team. Make sure each judge has an ample supply, and have judges write at least one positive comment and place it on the scoresheet turned in to the Head Judge. The Head Judge adds these to the Master Scoresheet and gives them to the coach when presenting the raw long-term score.
**Style Judge**

Review the Style information in the *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide*. Identify the mandatory Style areas. In the Style areas marked "Free choice of team," team members must list the category they wish to be scored. This cannot be something already scored in the long-term problem. If it is, the judge should ask the team members to choose something else. They may ask the Staging Area Judge to do this before the team performs. All teams must give the Staging Area Judge two copies of their Style Forms (copied from the *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide*), which lists all their Style categories, including both mandatory and free choice. The Staging Area Judge, in turn, gives the forms to the Timekeeper, who passes them along to the Style Judges. Every problem site should have at least two Style Judges.

Generally, Style Judges shouldn’t score too high or too low for the first few teams. Instead they should take note of what each team did and after watching three to five teams perform revise their scores up or down, based on the comparisons between the teams. Long-term judges who are judging subjective areas should also do this.

Many teams choose costumes as a “Free Choice of team” Style category. Unless the team has listed some particular aspect of the costume it wants judged, remind judges that the idea and creativity of the costumes, as in any other general area, should count for more scoring value than their construction. Teams must construct or assemble costumes. Assembling a costume means gathering different parts of ready-made pieces of clothing and/or items to put together a specific costume.

After the team’s performance, the Style judges will approach the team along with the Problem Judges and pay particular attention to the Style elements in the solution.

Style Judges are part of the long-term judging team. The Head Judge or a Scorechecker assigned to the judging team should average their scores and compile them on a Master Style Form.

**Staging Area Judge**

Each judging team should have at least one Staging Area Judge. Staging Areas should be set up near the competition site but away from spectators to avoid having team members become inhibited while preparing to compete. It should be close enough to the performance area, however, that teams do NOT need to go through doors or up steps after their time begins. Often, especially in performance problems where there is a theater and doors are closed during a performance, there is a Pre-Staging Area set up just outside the competition area. If this is used, it is here that the preliminary work is done. Every competitive problem has a Staging Area
Checklist and the Staging Area Judge should be sure to follow this closely. The tasks of the Staging Area Judge are to:

1. Greet each team as it arrives at the site. Be friendly and smile! Teams are nervous so part of this job is to try to make them feel relaxed.
2. Ask the team to gather all problem solution materials within the Staging Area.
3. Collect the teams’ Style Forms, Material Values Form, Outside Assistance Form, problem clarifications and any other documentation specifically required for the problem, then give the paperwork to the Timekeeper so he/she can pass it on to the appropriate judges for review while the Staging Area Judge finishes his/her duties.
4. Verify that everything visible that the team members wear, with the exception of personal prescription items, such as eyeglasses and hearing aids, required foot coverings and wristwatches, is counted in the value of the solution. If the cost is not listed on the Material Values Form, the Staging Area Judge should have the team add this cost.
5. Examine the team’s materials to determine if they meet problem specifications.
6. Perform a brief safety check and make sure all team members are wearing appropriate foot covering.
7. Examine the membership sign but do not point out any errors to the team or alert them to any penalties for having the incorrect information on the sign.
8. Ask how judges will know the team is finished and pass this information on to the Timekeeper.
9. Ask the team its policy for photography and videotaping and pass the information on to the Timekeeper.
10. Any other on-site conditions. Identify where a coach may be situated to view his/her team as well as the area and time that the Head Judge will present the team’s score. Some Tournament Directors may designate special seats where the coach and any non-performing team members sit while their team performs. Review the site with each team before competition. Identify:
   - The Head Judge and other site judges
   - Site boundaries
   - Timekeeper
11. Let the team know the Timekeeper will ask if they are ready, and that they should start their presentation when the Timekeeper says, “Begin.”
12. If necessary, give the team specific instructions for cleaning up the site upon completion of its performance.

13. Answer questions about the site.

**Timekeeper**

Long-term judging teams should have a designated Timekeeper. Timekeepers must keep accurate time according to the specifications in the problems. The Timekeeper should introduce each team to the judges and audience, and maintain consistency from team to team in how this is done. Judges should be careful to remain noncommittal and nonpartial in their introductions. No judge should make any comments such as, "We saved the best for last" or, "Last but not least." Timekeepers should request that cell phones and all other electronic devices are turned off during the presentation and advise the audience on the team’s policy regarding photographing or videotaping the performance.

The Timekeeper will time the team as it removes its props from the Staging Area (or Pre-Staging Area). It is allowed 3 minutes to do this. If there is no Pre-Staging Area, then this is part of the competition time. If there is a Pre-Staging Area, the 3 minutes are in addition to the team's competition time. The "3-minute rule" is designed to give the upcoming team the opportunity to be staged in a timely fashion without having to bother with the performing team's props left in the Staging Area (or Pre-Staging Area). Should items be left in the Staging/Pre-Staging Area after 3 minutes, the timekeeper will determine who will remove the team’s props if the team does not follow the 3-minute rule. Usually the Timekeeper or the Staging Area Judge will remove the remaining props. Remember that a team may have assistance moving its props from the Pre-Staging Area to the Staging Area and removing them from the site after their presentation.

**Scorechecker**

Not every problem site has a scorechecker, but if one is used, he/she must be thoroughly familiar with the scoring categories of the problem, as well as all penalties. Some responsibilities of the Scorechecker include:

1. Making sure each judge has completed the worksheet correctly.

2. Making sure scores are in the allowable range.

3. Tallying up the team’s scores and transferring the individual scores to the Master sheets.
4. Make sure all penalties are clearly marked and explained, including any given in the Staging Area.

**Pre-Tournament Preparation**

All judges should have a copy of the problem, a copy of the general rules from the *Program Guide*, the problem procedures, an up-to-date copy of general problem clarifications, team clarifications and any judges’ clarifications issued. Judges need to know that the team clarifications and judges’ clarifications are CONFIDENTIAL and should not be discussed outside of the judging team, as they might reveal a team’s “secret” solution.

**Site Setup**

Judges are often asked to assist in the setup of the competition site either the night before or the morning of the tournament. In the morning before the tournament begins, judges should review the problem site. They should:

1. Identify the materials listed in the problem under “Tournament Director Will Provide.”
2. Check the site to see that it is set up correctly.
3. Label the scoresheets with the name of each competing team scheduled to appear at the site.
4. Review the scoresheets carefully to see if any additions or corrections have been made.

**Competition Procedures**

Each team must present its copy of specific problem clarifications to the Staging Area Judge before competing. The judge should ask to see these, as well as the two Style Forms, the Material Values Form, the Outside Assistance Form and any other pertinent materials. CCI sends copies of answered problem clarification forms and/or e-mailed clarifications to the appropriate Association Director. They, in turn, should send these to the appropriate Tournament Director or Problem Captain for distribution to the judges. This system enables judges to review specific team clarifications before the competition begins to ensure that judging will be consistent. Should a Tournament Director or Problem Captain have a question regarding a problem clarification issued before the competition, he/she should contact the association Problem Captain, who should contact CCI immediately.

Most tournaments have a clarification cutoff date, which the Tournament Director has given to all teams. This date should be about two weeks before the tournament. Clarifications issued after this date do not have to be honored until the next level of competition. Team questions postmarked or e-mailed after March 1 will not be answered; however, questions from officials
will be answered after this date.

If a tournament official, such as a Scorekeeper or Problem Captain, discovers that a judge assessed a penalty incorrectly and, after discussion with the judges involved, decides it should be omitted or lowered, he/she should certainly do so, even if the coach cannot be informed at that time. However, no one should assess a penalty to a team after the coach receives the scoresheet unless he/she makes every attempt to inform the coach. The coach then has an additional 30 minutes to question or protest the penalty.

**Presenting Scores to Coaches**

Following are guidelines for presenting the raw long-term scores to the coach.

1. Before the team competes, the coach should be aware of the procedure to follow for obtaining the averaged raw long-term score. This information is often provided by the **Staging Area Judge** or via a notice posted in the competition area announcing when scores are ready. Identify the Head Judge, so when the team’s scores are ready the coach knows whom to go to receive them.

2. The **Head Judge** must remain steadfast in his/her refusal to discuss specifics such as whether a team member crossed a line or why a judge awarded a certain number of points for a subjective area. Only questions regarding a rule interpretation may be remanded to the tribunal for score adjustment.

3. The Head Judge should present only the final **raw** long-term scoresheet to the coach. The Head Judge should inform the coach or team captain that math errors found in the scoring room on either the master scoresheet or the individual scoresheets will be corrected. Do not present the Style score.

4. The Head Judge should never give away the original copies of the scoresheets except to the Scorekeeper immediately following the review with the coach.

5. Should a concern arise, the Head Judge should try to resolve the issue quickly. If this is not possible, the Head Judge should ask the Problem Captain to take over the discussion. The Problem Captain should handle all issues and refer to the tribunal only those that are eligible and that he/she cannot settle alone.

6. Head Judges presenting scores should keep in mind that this procedure should be done in a positive way. Give the coach a copy of the team’s final raw long-term scores with the Post-It notes attached. After this conference, the Head Judge notes the time on the scoresheet and asks that the coach initial it to verify the time scores are received. If the coaches have any
further comments or questions they have 30 minutes from the time marked on the scoresheet to discuss the scores. Concerns registered after that time are not entertained unless there is a valid reason why the coach or team captain could not discuss this with the Head Judge earlier. Of the remaining two parts of the scoresheet, the original is sent to the scoreroom; the Head Judge keeps the remaining sheet as a judging reference. Some benefits associated with this procedure are:

1. It increases communication between judges, coaches, team members and concerned parents.

2. It provides a means of immediate identification in case a score is misplaced or inaccurately recorded.

3. It serves as a source of constructive and positive criticism, and also as a guide to improving performance in future tournaments.

4. It reduces post-tournament scoring complications.

5. It informs the Head Judge of anything that needs changing or of anything that is missing.
Long-Term Breakout Sessions

Once you’ve finished the general long-term session, separate the group into five different rooms, one for each specific problem. You will need to decide whether you wish to train judges in more than one area. If you decide to cross train judges, you will need to hold more than one session for each long-term problem. If you want to train judges in long-term and spontaneous, have them go to spontaneous first, since this will take longer, then go to the second or third presentation of the long-term problem. If you have three long-term sessions, going to the third session would most likely allow the person to finish the spontaneous session. If you have only two sessions, the person being trained in both long-term and spontaneous will have to leave the spontaneous session early.

Reviewing each specific long-term problem will take a minimum of 30 minutes. Review the problem and the specific rules and try to put the rules in the context of each role on a judging team. Keep each session a predetermined length.

Testing

Administer the *Odyssey of the Mind Judges Certification Test* during the breakout sessions. These tests measure knowledge of the rules and help judges understand how to apply them. Judges are tested on general rules of the program and on how to judge their problem. All judges should be certified. Obtain Judges Certification Cards from your Association Director to give to judges who pass the test. This identifies them as certified and helps Tournament Directors make judging assignments. Certification also enables judges to “cross state lines.” That is, they can volunteer their services in another state and the Tournament Director can be assured that he/she is knowledgeable about the problem. All judges nominated for World Finals must be certified.

Use the test as a training tool as well as for certification. Please note that Scoring Guidelines for all long-term problem subjective areas are included in your judges’ materials. Adhering to these will provide consistency in judging throughout divisions and competitions. Review these with your judges and give them a copy of the guidelines for their problem.
The Spontaneous Breakout Session

In the spontaneous breakout session, show the *Spontaneous Judges Training Video* and review spontaneous judging procedures. Have the participants actually solve some spontaneous problems. Divide the group in two, then divide each of the subsequent groups into teams and let them have a playoff. Have one group judge the teams from the other group and vice versa.

It is good practice for your audience to actually judge some teams and also a good experience for those who are solving the problems, as it helps them understand the pressure the kids are under. Make sure you cover the three types of spontaneous problems: verbal, hands-on, and verbal/hands-on. You can have one group solve a verbal problem and another group a hands-on. Then have a play-off for the “winning” teams using a verbal/hands-on problem. Sample spontaneous problems can be found in the *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide*, at www.odysseyofthemind.com, and in books published by CCI.

**Spontaneous Problem Judges**

Although the *Spontaneous Judges Training Video* covers the following areas, be sure to stress these points:

- There should be at least two, but preferably three, judges on a spontaneous judging team. For verbal problems, it is better for teams if three people are scoring, since they are subjective. Do not assign anyone to judge their home teams or teams where they have some relationship with any of the members.

- Every team in the same problem and division must be judged by the same judging team, and those judges must serve the same role throughout the tournament. Every judge must commit to judge for the duration of the tournament.

- Most teams are nervous when entering the spontaneous room, especially if this is their first experience in a competition. Judges should smile and remain pleasant, and help the teams to relax.

- In verbal and verbal/hands-on, all judges scoring responses of a team should have the same total number of responses. That is, the number of common/creative responses may vary from judge to judge, but the total number of responses recorded by each judge should be the same. Have the judges practice this so they pick up speed and consistency. They should know that if they score a response as creative the first time they hear it, it must be scored as creative
every time thereafter.

• In hands-on spontaneous problems, team members may talk to each other during their practice or “think” time.

• Note the importance of accurate timing. A few seconds can significantly alter a score. If possible, use timing devices that count down with a buzzer or a bell, signaling when time is up. This is a necessity if you have only two judges and one is also serving as the Timekeeper.

• Make sure all spontaneous judges know the importance of keeping the problems secret and that coaches, spectators, parents, etc. are not allowed in the spontaneous room. If the Tournament Director gives permission for someone such as a press person to watch, the visitor should stay in the room for each team competing in that problem and division so each team gets the same experience under the same conditions.

• Unless the competition is very small, it is best to designate a large room or auditorium as a spontaneous holding room. Tell teams to report to the holding room 15 minutes before their scheduled spontaneous time. Have a judge or holding room official check them in. When the judging team is ready for them, one judge should go to the holding room and escort them to the spontaneous room. That judge should be responsible for making sure the correct team is escorted into the correct room. Especially in small tournaments, as many as 10-14 teams may be from the same school, and several may have the same membership number. Check and double-check the team’s membership name and number, and especially its problem and division.

• It’s a good idea to give teams a color-coded 3 x 5 card upon registering that includes the team’s membership information. Each problem and division will be assigned a color, and when the team arrives in the competition room, it hands the judge the card. If the team hands in the wrong-colored card, the judge will know the team should not be competing in that problem.

• Although only five members participate in a spontaneous problem, all seven team members may enter the spontaneous room. When the team members enter the spontaneous room, the Head Judge tells them the type of spontaneous problem they will have to solve, i.e. verbal, hands-on or verbal/hands-on. The team members have one minute to decide which five members will participate. The nonparticipating team members may stay in the room in chairs designated for them and watch silently, or, if they choose, they may leave the room before the judge reads the problem. Team members may not be changed once the team makes its
decision. If a team has more than five members, it is not mandatory that more than five go into the spontaneous room; however, five must compete. If a team has five members or less at a tournament, all must participate in the spontaneous problem.

- If the nonparticipating team members talk, make unnecessary noise, or are disruptive, judges should ask them to leave the room. The team should not be assessed a penalty, but they will lose the time it takes for those members to exit, since performance time will not be stopped.

**Preparation for Spontaneous Competition**

On the day of a tournament, before admitting the first competing team, the spontaneous judges assigned to each problem do the following:

1. Review the problem carefully and decide what role each judge will play if not already assigned. These roles must stay the same for all teams in any one division of a problem during the entire competition.

2. In verbal problems, review the examples given for common and creative responses. These are for judges only and are not to be given to team members unless specifically stated in the problem. If the problem is hands-on, practice solving it so you understand it thoroughly. If the judges have any questions, they should consult the Spontaneous Problem Captain.

3. As a judging team, identify times when it is permissible to interrupt a team in progress. For verbal problems, those times include:
   - If a team member speaks too fast or mumbles and the judges cannot understand, they will say, “UNCLEAR. Please say it again.”
   - If a response does not make sense to the judges or is not acceptable, they will say, “INAPPROPRIATE. Please clarify or give another response.”
   - If a response is a repeat of what another team member said, the judges will say, “DUPLICATE. Please give another response.”

   NOTE: This is the language published for teams in Spontaneous Problem Procedures in the fall issue of the *Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter*. The teams should expect to hear it. Use it!

4. For hands-on problems, judges should answer team questions and interrupt if the team is proceeding outside the limitations of the problem. For example, if a team tries to move a piece of tape that serves as a boundary line, it should be stopped. Spontaneous competition can be very stressful to the team; solving the problem is the challenge, understanding the problem should not be. Judges should discuss beforehand what situations they might
anticipate the team to require clarification, then determine those that they could clarify and those that they should not clarify because doing so would help the team to solve the problem. It’s always safe to answer a team’s question with, “Please refer to the problem,” since in most competitions a Team’s Copy of the problem is provided for the team’s reference.

5. After the judges have reviewed the problem, they should set up the room in accordance with problem specifications and check to make sure they have all the necessary materials. They must cover any windows where spectators could see in. Don’t forget windows in doors! Place a "Do Not Enter" sign on the door.

6. We recommend that judges use a sheet of paper with one red side and one side green side as a signal that competition is in progress. When a team enters the room, put the paper on the floor with the red side up so it sticks out the door. When the team leaves, put the paper sticking out the door with the green side up. This is helpful to anyone who needs to come into the room. They’ll know when they see the green side up that entering the room is a “go,” but if they see red, they should “stop” or they’ll interrupt the team.

7. Make sure all scoresheets are labeled before competition.

**At the Tournament**

Once judges have set up the room and reviewed and practiced solving the problem they are ready for the competitors. The spontaneous judging team should follow these procedures:

1. Allow the team to enter the room when all the judges are ready. A judge should greet the team at the entrance to the competition room. If the team is in a holding room, a judge should escort them from there into the competition room. Coaches are to remain outside the competition room in another specified area until the team is finished competing. Only judges and team members should be in the room. The only exception to this would be an interpreter (ASL signer, or foreign language).

2. Turn the signal paper to red. Then, the designated judge will tell the team members what type of problem they will have to solve. Once the team decides who will participate, the judge will ask the non-competing team members if they wish to leave the room or stay. If they stay, the judge should show them where to sit.

3. The judges should try to make the teams feel at ease. Often a team that feels uncomfortable will have trouble understanding instructions and the problem.

4. Before reading the problem to the team, the judge should explain the procedures being used and inform competitors when it is okay to ask questions.
5. After the preliminaries, the designated judge should read the problem, allowing no interruptions and following all instructions to point out certain items, repeat problem limitations as indicated, and so on. These instructions are given in parentheses in the problem.

6. If the problem provides for a thinking period, time it carefully. This is the time when the team may ask questions. Judges should be polite and thorough – but brief – in answering them.

7. After the thinking period has ended, the Timekeeper should start the team's response time. There are only three reasons to interrupt a team during a verbal problem: (1) a duplicated answer is given, (2) the judges cannot hear the answer, and (3) the answer is not appropriate to the problem. In a hands-on problem, if the team has obviously missed a point of instruction, judges should offer it. However, time is not stopped.

8. Stop the team at the end of the allotted time period. If a team member is in the process of giving a response or completing a task, allow him/her to finish unless the problem states otherwise.

9. Remind the competitors of the importance of keeping the problem secret.

10. When dismissing teams, be sure to thank them but make no indication of how well they may have done in relation to other teams. You may say something like, “Nice job” but never, “You’re the best we’ve seen.”

11. For hands-on problems, you may make measurements while the team is in the room, but do not compile the team’s score until it has left the room.

12. When the team leaves, if another team is waiting outside the door, say that you will call for it momentarily. Turn the signal paper to green.

13. The Head Judge should compile the team's score. Remember that the total number of recorded responses should be the same for each judge in a verbal problem, although the number of common and creative responses may differ.

14. Either give the scoresheets to an official tournament runner or deliver them to the scorerroom.

**Do not show spontaneous scores to the coach.**
Scoreroom Breakout Session

In a small competition, you will most likely have only three people in the scoreroom. However, all of the positions outlined in the *Odyssey of the Mind Scoreroom Manual* must be filled. It is up to the Scorekeeping Captain to assign judges to fill every required position in the scoreroom.

It is important that scoreroom personnel are familiar with the scoring system and how the scoreroom will be run. Use the *Odyssey of the Mind Scoreroom Manual* produced by CCI to make this presentation. CCI provides a teaching outline to help with scoreroom personnel training. Judges should also be familiar with the Odyssey of the Mind scoring program and know how to use it.

Sometimes, scoreroom judges are trained onsite the night before the competition, especially if they have a long distance to travel to the Judges Training. If this is the case, make sure they have the manual and scoring program to review beforehand.

Optional: Breakout Session for Long-Term Judging Positions

If time allows, you might ask that all long-term judges gather by position and discuss the responsibilities of each. That is, all Head Judges would meet as a group and discuss such topics as how to present scores to coaches and how to handle complaints; Style Judges would meet as another group to talk about how to score Style categories, what questions to ask the team after the presentation, and so on. The Problem Captains could be on-hand to answer any questions and to offer advice.

The Scoring Captain should meet with the Scorecheckers to discuss their responsibilities as well. This could even be done the evening before or the morning of the tournament instead.
Post-Workshop Follow-Up

Since you have invested considerable effort in the training of judges, it is important that you maintain communication with them before and after the tournament. Make sure you:

1. Maintain an accurate mailing list of all tournament judges, including addresses, phone numbers and e-mail, both for home and office. Usually, it’s better to use home addresses.

2. Contact judges at least a week or two before the tournament to remind them of the competition and their judging role.

3. Distribute clarifications to judges for the problem they are to judge and any pertinent information about the competition. Team-specific clarifications are to be discussed only with that particular team.

4. Identify a contact person, generally the Problem Captain for each area, whom a judge may call with specific procedural questions. The chain of command begins with the judge who would contact the Regional Problem Captain, who in turn would contact the State, Provincial or Country Problem Captain, who would finally contact CCI and/or the International Problem Captain with questions.

5. Notify judges of their specific assignments, including tournament particulars, names of problem captains and fellow judging team members. If possible, do this at the training session to start the “team-building” process right away. However, follow up in writing at a later date.

6. Instruct Problem Captains to hold a meeting with their judges the morning of competition (or, if possible, the night before) to review problems and any new clarifications, and to set up the sites and ensure that all is ready for the first competing team.

7. The Association Director or the Problem Captain should contact judges certified at the regional level to enlist them in judging the Association Finals.

8. Once the competition is over, send a thank-you letter and include an invitation to return to judge the following year. This way judges know that they can participate every year, whether or not a team asks them. Contact them early on in the following competition year so you’ll have an idea of whom you can count on to return.