**A COACHES BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES:**

**Find a time and place for the team to meet; supervise ALL meetings and ensure safety for all team members.**

While some teams do meet within the “regular” school day, most teams meet for 1-2 hours per week. Some teams meet in homes, some in schools or churches -- this is also entirely up to the coach and team. If a coach cannot be present at a meeting, make sure another responsible adult supervises the team. While a Division 3 team may have a team captain who is in charge of meetings, an adult must be responsible for the team.

Many times teams will add meetings the closer it gets to competition. This is normal since most of us seem to function better and be more productively under the pressure of a deadline.

**Help the team learn how to read and understand the long term problem**

The team should read the problem at least once at each meeting. Regardless how many times the problem is read, a team member may hear something new that will spark “the creative idea” when the team reads the problem out loud just one more time. Encourage the team to read the problem, read the problem, and then read the problem some more! Always read the problem aloud—and have different people read different parts each time!!!

**Teach the team how to solve spontaneous problems**

Practice spontaneous at every meeting. This will help team members focus and learn to solve the long term problem, as well as teach them the skills to do well in spontaneous at the tournament. **There is NO such thing as Outside Assistance in practicing Spontaneous**...you may help the team in any way to learn this process. Decide when you want to do spontaneous problems at your meetings. Many teams find doing this first thing and then at the end of the meeting provided a good structure. When you do it is not as important as doing this every meeting.

**Avoid giving “outside assistance” for Long Term & Style solutions**

When dealing with Long Term problems, ALL ideas and the implementation of those ideas MUST be the team’s own. The team will know if you have done something for them that you should not do, and will feel less pride as a result. This does not mean you should “wash your hands” of the whole process. It is the coach’s job to guide and direct. It is the coach’s job to keep the focus on task and to keep progress happening. It is the team’s responsibility to achieve their goal (whatever it may be). Coaches can lead with open ended – guiding questions, but cannot provide the answers to the questions. Likewise it is “outside assistance” if mom or dad (or anyone else) tells the team what they need to do to solve the problem.

**Keep the team on task**

Have a calendar - write interim goals and mark dates. Have the team make lists of what needs to be done and who will do it. Have each member of the team bring a notebook and calendar to every meeting. Early in the process encourage the team to schedule meetings taking into account school conflicts, church conflicts, etc. (and don’t let them forget to schedule in planned family vacations and activities). By going through this process, all team members and coaches should be able to be at most meetings. Only by having everyone fully invested will a “family team” grow and will the best results really bloom.

**Teach the team needed skills, or help find someone who can teach them; help them obtain materials**

Sewing, woodworking, welding, acting, writing music, dancing --- any skills the team requires, you, or someone else, may teach. **HOWEVER, in teaching the skill(s) you must not apply it directly to any problem solution!** The team must decide on the materials they wish to purchase, but you (or a parent) may take them to the store(s). Here again, you are there to guide and provide direction. You may ask open-ended questions, you may not make direct suggestions.

**Be certain that forms are filled out by the team, and that team registrations are sent in on time**

You must register for the State Tournament. You or your membership coordinator may be responsible for this registration. The cost to register your team for the State Tournament is $70.00. The team must have copies filled out of the Outside Assistance Form, Cost Form and Style Form. Division l and Primary coaches may fill out the forms, but only using the exact words dictated by the team. Division 2, 3 and 4 teams must fill out their own forms. A smart coach will always carry a separate copy of all the forms in a notebook—just in case. **All forms should be filled out before getting to the contest location.**

**8. Help find officials for the tournament**

Each team MUST supply at least one trained judge for the State Tournament and if possible one volunteer helper. This judge will not judge your team’s problem thus will probably not be able to watch your team compete at the tournament. Ask co-workers, neighbors, relatives. The key is to find an enthusiastic adult (**must be over 18 years of age**) who enjoys students to be your judge at the state tournament. We cannot have tournaments without officials!

*Your volunteer* does NOT require training, but will be assigned to jobs needed to make the tournament run smoothly. This will include things like being a door keeper, score runner, working in sales or registration, etc. Volunteers will only be required to commit 2 hours and we will attempt to make sure they can see your team’s long term competition.

If your team goes on to World Finals, you will not have to supply a judge. World Finals judges are selected through a nomination process by the State and National Associations.

**Encourage the team to work together; encourage them to meet their goals**

Team building activities — even just going bowling together, or going for ice cream -- can help the group earn to appreciate each other’s talents and to work better as a team. If you meet over or around the dinner hour, set up a rotating schedule for team members to bring food. Eating together is a great way to get to know each other better. Oh yes, if you do this, never talk directly about the problem when you are eating. Talk instead about the lives, the successes, and the problems of the individual team members. Do this and you will all grow as individuals and as a team.

**Help get the team to the tournament, with props, supporters, and self-confidence in their solution**

Guide your team to assign team members to be in charge of different aspects of the team’s life. Someone needs to be the accountant, someone needs to be the note taker, someone needs to be sure that snacks or real food is provided, someone needs to be in charge of clarifications, someone in charge of forms, etc. This is a great spontaneous problem early in the year. Give them one minute to think and as long to respond as needed. But remember, you, as the adult, should also double check lists to make sure everything is included.

**Guide 5-7 Individuals to become one team.**

It is important to always remember that an Odyssey of the Mind team does not have to be made up of friends and people who know each other. It does have to be made up of people who respect each other and each other’s opinions. Likewise, you as coach must respect each individual and in return expect that each team member will respect you and your property. As a team works on the problem each year, they will become friends and in many cases retain that friendship during and long after their school years.

**Your most valuable tools in accomplishing your task:**

An appreciation for creative young minds

A sense of humor (because Murphy’s Law prevails)

A copy of the rules in the Program Handbook (because these will be the teams ultimate authority)

Spontaneous problems to practice (foundin many books, and on many Odyssey of the Mind State Web Sites starting at www.odysseyofthemind.org )

Some guidelines (such as this handbook, because everyone needs a little reinforcement)

Your Coaches’ Training Experience (because we are all in this together… for the kids!)

Supportive parents (because the team needs help and encouragement)

Clarification procedures (because that is the only way to clarify ideas if your team isn’t sure)

Websites all over the county dealing with Odyssey of the Mind, starting with: [www.odysseyotthemind.org](http://www.odysseyotthemind.org). or www.ksodyssey.com

Food (because teams will be much happier and work much better when fuel tanks are full)