

Houston Area Region Odyssey (HARO)
Competition on February 24th, 2024

2024 Tournament Information Packet (“TIP”)

This document has all the details you need to help you and your team have a fun and successful experience at the Competition. It should answer most if not all the questions you may have.

Please review all the information carefully.

<i>Page</i>	<i>Topic</i>
2-3	Preparing for the Competition
4-9	Competition Day Instructions
10-12	General Information

Hosted at:

San Jacinto College, South Campus, 13735 Beamer Rd, Houston, TX 77089

Version updates:

v.1 First draft published.

v.2 Minor corrections. Parking lots. Wellness Room. Link to pin trading article.

Preparing for the Competition

Glossary

Terms used in this program:

OdysseyHQ: National website for Odyssey of the Mind: www.odysseyofthemind.com

TXOM: Texas website for our local Association: www.txodyssey.org.

Confirm with Your Judge, Volunteer, (and Tournament Staff where applicable) Representatives.

Thank your team volunteers for their service. Once they are registered, they will receive information directly and be taken care of by our Judge Coordinator, our Problem Captains, and our Volunteer Coordinator respectively.

Determine Your Team's Competition Times

Competition schedules are posted on the *HARO Competition* web page under Regionals, at TXOM.

For competitive teams **in problems 1, 2, 3 & 5**, your team will be assigned one time for the Long-term competition and another time for the Spontaneous competition – they can be in any order. For competitive teams **in problem 4** (balsa wood), your team will be assigned one time for weigh-in, one time for the Long-term Competition and another time for the Spontaneous Competition – they can be in any order.

Primary teams do not have the Spontaneous competition, only a long-term performance.

Parents are encouraged to watch the Long-Term competition. The Spontaneous competition is closed to all but team members.

Share information with family members, they are welcome to attend the team performance. We also encourage teams to go watch other problems during their down time.

Arrange for Your Team's Props and Team Members to be transported.

Whether you rent a U-Haul or bring the props in cars, figure out how your team will transport their props and costumes to the Competition, and how they will get there themselves. Remember, adults can help the team carry their items but only the TEAM must create, assemble, or repair the items. Please do not unload your props until 45 minutes before your performance and refer to the Unloading Instructions later in this document for important information about parking suggestions. Determine a time and place for all team members to meet up once they arrive.

Make Copies of Paperwork Needed for Competition

Every team must have all the required paperwork. Make all copies prior to arriving at the Competition. The hosting schools will NOT have copy facilities available for teams. Forms can be found online at OdysseyHQ, under the Member-Area. See the Program Guide and problem statement for directions on how to complete each required form. If you advance to State or World Finals, you will need ADDITIONAL copies each time. DO NOT TURN IN YOUR ORIGINALS.

Note: It is OK to change your forms if you advance to State. It is expected that you will update your cost form if you make modifications between Competitions levels.

Preparing for the Competition

Your team will need the following forms and copies at HARO:

All forms can be downloaded from TXOM, under Coaches, Team Forms. For some forms, you must provide your school membership number and zip code to access the member-area at OdysseyHQ.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Copies</i>	<i>Where to Find It; Notes</i>
Membership Card	0	Not needed for TX Competitions.
Medical Release Forms	1 set per chaperone	This is a Texas-specific form. Need 1 form for each team member present on-site. Each adult responsible for the children should have a set of copies. (Some schools/districts require that you have a copy of the child's insurance card and/or additional medical release forms. Contact your school for details.)
Cost Form*	1	Refer to the Program Guide for instructions how to fill this form. The form <u>must be itemized</u> and have a total per page, and an overall total.
Outside Assistance Form*	1	Refer to the Program Guide for instructions how to fill this form. All team members who have participated in ANY team meetings must be listed. <u>DO NOT include date of birth</u> (that is for international teams only).
Style Form*	3	Refer to your long-term problem (section F.) for the #1, #2 and #5 categories that are required by your specific problem. Teams MUST list their style elements in the order listed in the problem so that it is consistent for the judges. Where it says "free choice of team", the team needs to fill in that section with their element that they want to be judged on.
Team Required List Form*	3	Refer to your long-term problem for specifics on this form. It is handed to the judges so that they know what they are about to score.
Any Team-Specific Clarifications received	1	This is required only if your team submitted a problem clarification request and received a team-specific response.
<p><u>A note about forms and paperwork:</u> Primary Teams also go to paperwork check after Team check-in. Primary teams are strongly encouraged to have all their paperwork completed (just like competitive teams), but aside from Medical Release Forms, the other forms are OPTIONAL. Having the Team Required List Form and Style Form helps the judges understand what the kids are doing and helps the coach and team prepare for future Division I problems. The team may still present their solution without these forms. Remember, these are K-2 teams. The paperwork does NOT have to be in-depth or perfect!</p>		

Also feel free to print at home the **Competition site maps** and the **Competition program** (always subject to last minute change) and locate your venue by problem and division. Encourage your team families to do the same as there will not be any hard copies on-site. Share your problem # and Div # with parents as all signage is in that format.

Competition Day Instructions

PARKING

- There is plenty of parking for everyone. We ask that school buses park only in parking lots P17 (if possible), P21b and at the north end of P16. U-hauls and personal vehicles loaded with props can park in lots P13, P15 and overflow in south end of P16.
- All other vehicles may use parking lots P12b, P15, P16 and P13. Please avoid blocking multiple slots with your U-Haul or vehicle.
- Please heed any restricted and handicapped signs. All parking lots have handicapped access and are available for use as overflow.
- Download and print site maps for both buildings as well as the parking map. Keep your maps updated before the competition in case of last-minute changes.
- The streets between the Fine Arts building (#15) and the Jones Building (#13) will be closed for pedestrian traffic only.
- Do NOT move the barriers to bring a vehicle closer.



WAITING AREA

- Jones Building (#13) has large, designated waiting areas on Level 2 where your team can hang-out. Set-up camp with your team in a room marked Waiting Area and make this your base. The first floor is for competitions only.
- Concessions will be available for snacks and lunch on level 2. Check-fil-a service and snacks sold by a Girl Scout troop.
- If an adult in your team is expecting or nursing, there is a wellness room in Jones level 2 (room U234)



STEP 1 Team Check-In

- Teams can/should split up on arrival. Coach or co-coach and 1 member go check-in, the remaining team and adults can unload props, if they are within 45 minutes of long term. Also, another team member and an adult (for div 1) can go to weigh-in for the Problem 4 teams. It's called "divide and conquer"!
- WHO: one coach and ONE team member of **ALL Teams**. For divisions 2 and 3, coach is optional.
- WHERE: Team Check-in Tables (look for green balloons) inside the Jones Building #13, level 2.
- WHEN: once the entire team is on-site, as indicated in your team schedule. **DO NOT MISS THIS STEP EVEN IF YOU ARE RUNNING LATE.**
- At the check-in Table, the coach and ONE team member will:
 - ✓ Sign the team in.
 - ✓ Show the Medical Release forms but keep them. Each chaperone should carry a medical release for every team member.
 - ✓ Verify where the team's long-term venue will be, in case of change.



Competition Day Instructions

STEP 2 Paperwork Check Station

- WHO: **ALL Teams**. At least one team member must present the paperwork; coach and other team members may also come to help with potential corrections.
- WHERE: Next to Team Check-in
- WHEN: right after team check-in. **DO NOT MISS THIS STEP EVEN IF YOU ARE RUNNING LATE.**
- Prepare to present your forms in this order:
 - ✓ Outside Assistance Form (1 copy)
 - ✓ Cost Form (1 copy)
 - ✓ Style Form (3 copies)
 - ✓ Team Required List Form (3 copies)
 - ✓ Any national Team-Specific Clarifications your team received (3 copies) (only if your team submitted a problem clarification request and received a team-specific response). Be sure to include it whether you chose to adapt your solution or not.
- All problem paperwork is reviewed and certified; this helps the Competition run smoothly by ensuring that all required paperwork is filled out properly before the team's performance.
- The mission of the Paperwork check station is to assist the teams and offer them the opportunity to correct them in order to secure the highest score possible.
- Do NOT skip the paperwork check station and go straight to pre-staging.
- If any obvious corrections and/or additions are needed, they will be made at this time; a coach can assist Division I teams. For Division II & III, only team members can make changes to forms.
- NO copying facilities are available at the school; make copies ahead of time.



STEP 3 Unload Props

- WHO: **ALL teams**
- WHEN: 45 minutes or less before your performance time.
- WHERE: Props drop-off is in a designated area, on the East side of the Fine Arts Building (#15), or the North side of Jones Building.
- We use the term Props loosely to include sets, props etc.
- Props are allowed outdoors, if you anticipate extensive assembly, provided it is safe to do so.
- NO props are allowed in the Jones Building (#13) level 2 (Team Waiting Area and Check-in).
- Props are only allowed in the building where all the long-term performances are scheduled, 45 minutes ahead of performance.
- Do not use the props drop-off station if your vehicle does not carry props.
- It is OK to park in any specified lot and walk the props in, provided it is safe to do so. This facilitates the overall traffic in the area.
- Adults may help unload and carry items, but **ONLY** the team members can create, connect, repair, or position the props.
- Follow any additional instructions given by our Drop-Off Monitors or Security.
- If your props need some minor repairs, there is a designated area in each building for that purpose. Teams are given 15 minutes in the area. If your team experiences extensive damage during transportation, be sure to talk to the Check-in Team Supervisor OR the Staging Judge in your venue as soon as possible.

Competition Day Instructions



STEP 4

Long-Term & Spontaneous Competitions

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Note for Problems 1 to 5: Your team may have either Long-Term or Spontaneous first. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ LONG-TERM Teams for PRIMARY. Teams are assigned only one long-term schedule. They do not present spontaneous. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ LONG-TERM: Problem 4 (Balsa Wood Teams): In addition to the above, you must report to the weigh-in room to have your structure weighed before your performance. Refer to the weigh-in time listed in the schedule. Your structure will remain at the weigh-in station until you pick it up 5 minutes before long-term. You are welcome to report for weigh-in any time BEFORE your scheduled time if you wish, if they do not have a long line. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ LONG-TERM: All Teams. Be physically near the room where you will perform your long-term problem 20 minutes before you are scheduled – costumes on, props ready, team members ready to go, coach semi-conscious (optional). Inform the pre-staging judge at the door that your team has arrived; follow any instructions given to your team.○ Keep all your props tight against the wall to avoid blocking the hallways.○ Adults may help carry props onto the pre-staging and then inside to the staging area, but they must then leave the team and join the audience. This includes the coach. Please remember, your team has prepared for this for a long time. <i>No amount of last-minute instructions crammed in can change or even improve it. It is time to let them shine.</i>○ Make sure that the coach knows where to check for score availability. And where to go for scores pick-up. This information will be provided by the staging area judge before you leave the team.○ After your long-term performance is over, judges will interview the team to learn their problem-solving process for a chance to give maximum score. <i>Please do not crowd the team or take video, until judges give you the OK to approach.</i>○ Adults can help clear the stage and transport the props out of the venue. Please re-load all props and other materials into your vehicle(s) to help keep the hallways clear. Same loading and parking rules apply as in unloading. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ SPONTANEOUS: Problems 1 to 5: Spontaneous is on the East Side of the Fine Arts Building. Access is only allowed if accompanied by a judge.○ Only the team and one adult go to the Spontaneous check-in table. No visitors allowed. Please check-in 5 minutes before your scheduled time. The team will wait in a holding area until it is time to be escorted to their spontaneous venues by a judge. No cameras, pagers, phones, or props are allowed in the Spontaneous area. The entire team goes in.○ All team members (up to seven) should compete in Spontaneous. For Verbal and Verbal/Hands-On problems, team members may respond in any order, and individual team members may give as many or as few responses as they wish.○ The team will come back to the lobby when they are done. Please ask your supporters to keep their cheer to a reasonable volume to avoid disruption to |

Competition Day Instructions

others.

- Remember to keep the Spontaneous problem SECRET until after World Finals in May. Violation of this rule will result in team penalties. Other Competitions around the state, country, and world may be using the same problems.



STEP 5 Team Member Certificates

- WHO: **PRIMARY Teams ONLY**
- Individual Team Member Certificates will be provided after the team presentation. They will be escorted to an area where a special Primary banner has been set-up for photos.
- WHO: **PROBLEMS 1 to 5 ONLY.**
- Templates for Team Member Certificates will be available on our website for coaches or delegates to print personalized certificates.



STEP 6 Pick Up & Review Long- Term Scores

- WHERE: At your long-term performance venue
- WHO: **Problems 1 to 5.** For Division 1: one coach per team. For Division 2 or 3, either a coach or a team member. You can also delegate to another adult to pick-up, but the Head Judge may refuse to discuss more details.
- WHEN: check the list by your venue door to see if your team scores are ready; it generally takes about 45-60 min, but scores for the first teams of the day may not be ready until after 11 am.
- If your scores are marked as ready, the coach/adult should go stand under the sign that says, "Score pick-up" and just wait there. The Head Judge will come meet you at the first opportunity. You may send a delegate if you are coaching multiple teams.
- You will receive detailed score sheets for Long-term and Style only – Spontaneous scores are not given out at this time. In addition, these score sheets include post-it's with feedback from the judges (to the extent allowed).
- The Head judge will go over scores and any penalty deductions with the coach. The coach has 30 minutes to report back any corrections or grievances. The Head Judge will only discuss **objective** scores. **Subjective** scores are final and cannot be discussed.
- Video is not accepted as evidence against the decision of judges.
- The scores themselves are important feedback to the team, whether they advance to the State Competition or not. So are the hand-written post-it's from the judges.
- Score sheets not picked up at the venue 30 minutes after the last team will no longer be available for pick-up. If your team is performing after 4 pm in Jones Building, you can pick-up your scores just before the Awards Ceremony.



Competition Day Instructions

STEP 7 Attend the Awards Ceremony

- WHO: **PROBLEMS 1 to 5 ONLY**. Family and visitors are welcome.
- WHEN: There will be a single Awards session, at the end of the competition, scheduled at 6 pm.
- WHERE: San Jacinto College, South Campus. Building S-21 Gymnasium:
- Team members and coaches sit on the floor. Leave space as indicated for passage. Family members sit on the bleachers.
- Your team does not need to be present to win or advance.
- Any Special Awards are announced:
 - ✓ OMER's Award is named for the Odyssey of the Mind raccoon mascot, OMER, in recognition of individuals or teams who demonstrate outstanding sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, or exceptional talent.
 - ✓ The Ranatra Fusca Creativity Award represents the essence of the Odyssey of the Mind. It is presented to teams or individuals who exhibit exceptional creativity, either through some aspect of their problem solution, or an extraordinary idea beyond the problem solution.
- The top 6 ranking teams (and ties) from each problem and each division advance to the State competition (barring certain severe penalties).



STEP 8 Review Scores/ Rankings On- Line

- WHO: **Problems 1 to 5.**
- After the Awards Ceremony, all scores (total and normalized Long-term, Style, Spontaneous, and Penalties) are posted on the state website. Go to TXOM website, Regionals, click on Competition Scores, and then select Houston (HARO) Scores. Again, only the total scores will be published. Do not miss your opportunity during the Competition to pick up your detailed scores.
- Note: Scores will be listed by venue, like the schedule.



STEP 9 Advancing Teams

- WHO: **Problems 1 to 5.**
- Advancing teams: if your team advances to State, please review our website for instructions (www.txodyssey.org). Teams need to register for the State Competition within 7 days and because of Spring break, a lot of deadlines are compressed before the State Competition.
- Check the TXOM website for the State Competition in late February. We have designated hotels with Odyssey group rates. Teams may choose to spend Friday night, or Saturday night or both nights in Denton. We recommend that you discuss with team parents well ahead of time, in order to make your hotel reservations within 3 days of HARO awards. There is a National Dace and Drill Team Competition within a few miles from TWU, hotels are expected to be very full, and expensive.
- If the team is not available all day on March 23rd, you must specify your travel plans in the "Schedule" section of the State competition when you register.
- Judges representing advancing teams are required to advance as well. They must register as Judges for the State Competition within 3 days.

Competition Day Instructions



Don't Forget...



During the Competition, be sure to stop by the Pins & T-shirt booth Cafeteria to pick up your pre-ordered Region t-shirts. Our merchandise sales help us keep the Texas Competition fees low. There will also be a selection of great TXOM pins! See more details under "Merchandise" below.

Above all, CELEBRATE your team's success! Whatever score and ranking they achieved, remind them how much they have learned and enjoyed the process.

General Information

Parking

Please observe the specific drop-off and parking restrictions. Please heed directions from our Security Officers and Staff to facilitate the traffic. If you arrive by school bus, please communicate with us independently for specific instructions.

If your performance is later, we suggest you park and check for any changes to instructions on loading/ unloading props. **Please do not bring inside your props any sooner than 45 minutes before your long-term Competition.** Reload props in your vehicles after your performance to make room for others.

Odyssey of the Mind merchandise

Pre-Ordered Region T-Shirts. Please pick up your pre-ordered regional t-shirts by noon from the merchandise booth.

Please have the person picking up the T-shirts bring a copy of the order confirmation email, if available, to speed things up. You must provide the full name of the person who placed the order.

Very few Region t-shirts will be available for purchase since it is a pre-sale item.

Pins. Pins are a big hit with the kids (with coaches and officials, too!). There are pins for each of the problems, pins for our region, pins that blink, and pins that sparkle. Some are funny. Some are beautiful. Some are educational. Everyone LOVES pins. You can buy one or the whole set. Check out our merchandise booth. Payment by cash or check. Make checks payable to *Odyssey of the Mind - Texas*. When Wi-Fi is available, we also accept payment by credit card.

Pin trading is part of the Odyssey of the Mind culture. It is a small affordable souvenir, a good way to thank your team judge or supporting teachers. Mostly, pin trading is HUGE at World Finals. It is a great ice breaker and allows youth to talk to each other on a common topic. We have an extensive article about [pin trading here](#).

All proceeds from merchandise sales go to Odyssey of the Mind – Texas organization. This money is used for Competitions and scholarships. The Competitions have many hidden costs and the proceeds from these sales help to keep our Competition fees low. Please support our organization. We are a 501© organization, all donations for the general fund or the scholarship fund are tax-deductible.

Thank you for your continued support.

Food & Drink

We will have concession stands. There will be a Chick-fil-a booth and a snack/drinks booth inside the Jones Building, on level 2. There will also be small snack stations outside each building. You may want to bring small bills.

The Campus has many free water refill stations for those who bring their water bottle. We ask that all adults remain vigilant to prevent spillage. Do not let the students use the refill station unattended. Also count your canteens as you leave. We would like to avoid them ending up in the Lost & Found.

In general, we ask that you avoid bulky items inside (like coolers) and there will be room for everyone to enjoy fellowship.

What Else Can Teams Do?

Come by the large OMER stand to take a team picture. OMER the raccoon is the official Odyssey of the Mind mascot. We also have an Arm & Hammer photo stand (sponsor of problem 5 this year). Both banners are inside or outside the Jones Building (#13). Primary teams have a special banner to use after their performance.

General Information

We strongly encourage teams to spend the day watching other performances, we remind teams that the performing team family has right of way in seating, where you see that the audience space is more limited.

Many coaches bring games or practice spontaneous problems during down time or enjoy the outdoors, so the kids can release pent up energy playing on the grass outside. The entire area between the two buildings is blocked off to vehicle traffic and safe for students. Beware of fire ants. Climbing on trees is not allowed. Students must be supervised at all times. Shopping for merchandise is also fun.

Thank You Booth

Please stop in the morning by the Thank You Booth in the Jones Building (#13), level 2 where team members are invited to write a personal Thank You card for Judges and Officials.

Odyssey Kiosk

This year we are returning with our self-serve information kiosks. Our in-house programmer has generously put in time and effort to provide you with information at your fingertips. Looking for a team, a venue or a team member? You have it in two clicks, or better "finger taps". Looking for a location, you also have maps to direct you to each venue. There will be a kiosk in each building.

Safety & Campus Etiquette

Safety considerations always come first at a Competition. Please make sure your kids are safe at all times. Keep props and people pushed to the side walls so a clear pathway is left. Make the Competition a positive experience for everyone.

Be mindful of electricity usage. We ask that you refrain from plugging in anything except cell phones, pr computers, and tools. A special electric use area is designated in each building emergency prop repairs ONLY.

Please help us keep the site as clean as or cleaner than when we arrived. Check your area when leaving for any trash or personal items.

Teams are also asked to bring their own supplies to remove makeup, instead of using the paper towels or toilet paper from the hosting school. Please only use the restrooms for their intended use, so that everyone can take a turn.

Any negative conduct or poor sportsmanship can result in a penalty for the team, even if it is by the team's parents or friends.

You must have a Medical Form filled out for every team member present. If the coach leaves the campus, the Medical Forms must be left with the chaperone remaining with the children. If you need First Aid, go to the Volunteer check-in table for help (Jones, level 2). A First Aid Kit is available there. Please inform the Volunteer desk or a Senior Staff member in purple or blue Odyssey polo, if you must call 911 for any reason. We must call in the campus security as well to act as liaison.

Dressing Rooms

We do not have designated changing rooms this year. If students intend to change into a costume, they should wear a tank top under their day clothes to make the transition easier. This will allow people to use the restrooms without unnecessary delays.

Visitors

Spectators are welcome to come and see the Long-term performances, and there is no restriction to bringing visitors or other teams watching the performances. The kids have worked hard to get here and deserve all the support they can get. There are 2-3 venues that may have smaller audience space (2

General Information

teams max) so we will ask to give the performance team right of way on audience seating.

In some of the problem venues, performance room doors are closed while a team is performing. Please do not enter while the doors are closed! Please turn off all pagers, phones, beepers before entering the performance rooms, as well as anything else that would distract the team or judges.

Teams may ask that no pictures or video recording be taken. You must follow the team's wishes.

A reminder, anyone can nominate an individual or team for an OMER's award. Forms are available at the Team Check-In and Volunteer table.

Copy Services

There are no copy services on campus for the Competition. Bring extra copies of all your forms. Make copies to save for yourself too.

A Final Word About Volunteers

All the directors, board members, problem captains, and judges are non-paid volunteers. It takes hundreds of volunteer hours to run the Houston Region Competition. Many people have worked countless hours to make this program a success. We thank them for giving it their all. And we ask you to consider becoming one of those volunteers.

If you happen to come across a judge, Competition official, or volunteer, please be sure to thank them for their time and effort. We couldn't do this Competition without volunteers!

We often need volunteers to help during the day. We always need door guards, hallway safety, check-in and helpers, souvenir salespersons, and runners for judges' snacks. If you want to help, check your planned down time during the day and ask at the Volunteer desk!

We also will have more volunteer jobs available for teams advancing to State and World Finals.

If you would like to help after this Competition or help plan next year's Competition, contact the Houston Area Region Director at houston@txodyssey.org. We have so many small jobs!

Above all, we sincerely hope that your team will have a fun and enjoyable experience!