



## **NJ OotM Virtual Tournaments**

**December 2020**

NJ Odyssey of the Mind

This presentation walks through what NJ Odyssey of the Mind transitioning to Virtual Tournaments means for our coaches, teams, and judges. If you have any questions after reading the presentation, please reach out to your Regional Director or to our general questions email – [questions@njootm.org](mailto:questions@njootm.org).



As you may have seen, OMER swung by this week to let our Association Director, Nick Pankiewicz, know of a big announcement – NJ Odyssey is going all virtual this year. Please see the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/U4Yv5H0-OwA>.



**Our main concern is  
to keep our teams, coaches, officials, and  
spectators safe and healthy.**

**Therefore, the 2021 Regionals and State Finals  
will be virtual tournaments.**

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- **Teams in a problem/division will be judged by one state-wide judging team for one “Mega Regional”**
- **Advancement to State Finals – Traditional Memberships**
  - 5 teams advance per problem/division
  - Top placer in each region advances
  - Rest of the spots are filled by next highest placers
  - Ties & Ranatras still count same way
  - Advantages:
    - Preserves regionality & prevents 1 region from dominating regionals
    - Allows for extra teams to advance to states if a region doesn't have teams competing in that prob/div

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Teams from across the state will be judged together, utilizing one state-wide judging team. This judging team will score the teams against each other, coming up with one set of scores for each problem division.

Advancement **for Traditional Memberships** (we'll get to Virtual Memberships in a moment) is going to be a little different this year. We are planning on advancing 5 teams per problem/division to State Finals.


Out of those 5 teams, 3 of the spots will go to the top placer from each region, no matter where that team ended up against the rest of the list. The other 2 spots will go to the next 2 highest placers within the problem/division. Any ties and/or Ranatra Fusca awards will be handled as they always have – those teams will advance to State Finals as well.

In other words, if the top Gateway team came in first, the top Coastal team 3<sup>rd</sup> and the top Skylands team 4<sup>th</sup>, then those 3 teams advance to States. And then we'll also advance the 2<sup>nd</sup> place team and the 5<sup>th</sup> place team to round it out.

Finally, if there is not a team from a region competing in that problem division, we'll still advance 5 teams, rounding out the placers based on the top scores. Meaning if Gateway came in 1<sup>st</sup>, Coastal 3<sup>rd</sup>, and there was no Skylands team, we'd advance the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>

placers as well – still for a total of 5.

Given what we're seeing in distribution of memberships and teams, we felt this was the fairest way to preserve some degree of regionality and help forestall any one region from dominating the Regional scoring.

A photograph showing a large, light-colored elephant sculpture in the background. In the foreground, a mascot character wearing a hat and a dark shirt with "OMEP" on it is standing and waving. The scene is outdoors, likely at a stadium or arena.

**State Finals**

- **Teams in a problem/division will still be judged by one state-wide judging team**
- **Advancement to World Finals – Traditional Memberships**
  - Same as always
  - Top 2 places advance per problem/division
  - Ties & Ranatras still count same way
  - *Note: this is subject to change if OotM Int'l changes their WF advancement rules.*


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For State Finals, we will judge as we always have – with one state-wide judging team made up of judges who judged at Regionals.

Advancement to World Finals should be as it always is – top 2 places will advance, with Ties and Ranatra Fusca awards counting for advancement as always.

Note: if International Odyssey of the Mind changes the rules for advancement to World Finals based on conditions as World Finals approaches, this may be subject to change.



 <p><b>Virtual Memberships</b></p>	<p><b>Scoring at Regionals and States</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Virtual Memberships will be judged by the same judging teams – but they will be scored and ranked <i>separately</i> from the Traditional Memberships</li></ul> <p><b>Advancement from Regionals to State Finals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The top 2 Virtual Membership teams in each problem/division will advance to State Finals</li></ul> <p><b>Advancement from State Finals to World Finals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The top 2 Virtual Membership teams in each problem/division will advance to <b>Virtual</b> World Finals in June.</li></ul> <p>6</p>
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We will be scoring Virtual Memberships separately from the Traditional Memberships at both Regionals and States. They most likely will be judged by the same judging teams, but will be scored and ranked separately, and have different advancement rules.

For advancing to State Finals, we will take the top 2 Virtual Membership teams in each problem/division to advance to State Finals.

For advancing to World Finals, it should be the top 2 Virtual Membership teams in each problem/division to advance to Virtual World Finals in June.

If you're unsure about whether you are a Traditional or Virtual membership, please contact Odyssey of the Mind international at [www.odysseyofthemind.com](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com).



**Registration**

- **\$75 tournament fee for Regionals**
  - \$100 late registration fee
- **\$75 tournament fee for State Finals**
  - No late registration – you will be registered automatically
- **Must supply 1 trained judge for Virtual tournament**
  - Must be 18 years or older
  - Must not be in high school
  - Must be reliable
  - Must be fluent with technology
  - Must have access to a computer they can download a scoring program onto
  - Judge must be available to attend Virtual Judges Training on Jan 30
  - Judge must be available to judge Mar 1-10th (remotely)
  - Judge must be available to judge State Finals Apr 3-13th (remotely) if your team advances


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The “mega regional” this year will have a \$75 tournament fee, payable to CU in NJ by February 15<sup>th</sup>. State Finals, should your team advance will also have a \$75 tournament fee, however you will not need to actively registered – you will be registered for State Finals automatically.

Good news is that with us doing virtual tournaments, you will not need to register a volunteer! However, we still need a trained judge this year, and the requirements are a little more specific than previous years. As in previous years, the judge must be reliable, 18 or older, and no longer in high-school. This year, due to everything being remote and virtual, we’re asking that the registered judge be relatively fluent with technology and have access to a computer they can download a scoring program onto.

As always, the judge must be able to attend training – which this year will be held virtually on January 30<sup>th</sup>. But because we’ll be doing all of the scoring remotely, the judge is going to need to have access to a computer they can download a program on to. And they’re going to have to be available to judge on their own – in the evenings, after work or on the weekend – between March 1 and March 10<sup>th</sup> for Regionals, and between Apr 3<sup>rd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> if your team advances to State Finals. This doesn’t mean they’ll spend every night judging, but if someone is going to be on vacation those two weeks, they probably aren’t the right judge!





**Regionals**

**Timeline**

- January 8 – **Teams / Judges Regional registration deadline**
- January 30 – Judges Training (virtual)
  
- February 27 – **Team Long-Term submission deadline**
- March 13 – NJ Regionals Virtual Awards Ceremony

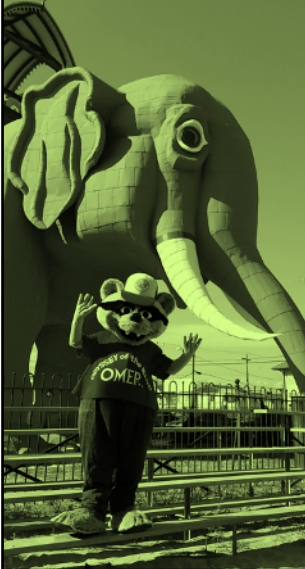
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Registration for the Mega Regional tournament and judges will be open soon and due by January 8<sup>th</sup>.

We highly, highly recommend you purchase your membership from Odyssey of the Mind International right away if you don't already have it, timing will be tight soon and the International office usually closes the last week or two of December.

Also keep the last two dates in mind – February 27<sup>th</sup> will be the deadline to submit your long-term solutions ... and two weeks later, on Saturday March 13<sup>th</sup> we'll have our big virtual awards ceremony!

## State Finals

A photograph showing a large, light-colored elephant sculpture in the background. In the foreground, a mascot character wearing a dark uniform with "OMEP" on it and a hat is waving. The scene is set in front of a stadium with seating visible.

**Timeline**

- April 2 – **Team Long-Term submission deadline**
- April 17 – NJ State Finals Virtual Awards Ceremony
- May 1 – World Finals registration deadline

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To reiterate, there is no separate registration for State Finals, your team – should you advance to State Finals- will be advanced automatically in the system. The deadline for Long-Term submission will be April 2<sup>nd</sup>, with the Awards Ceremony 2 weeks later on April 17<sup>th</sup>!

## Tools & Training



### Odyssey of the Mind International is releasing several training/information guides soon:

- Teams – guidelines for Virtual Tournament submission
  - What's required to be included in the video(s), what paperwork is needed, etc.
- Coaches & Teams – How to Submit to Virtual Tournament
  - Mechanics of navigating the *new* OotM online system to submit your solution
- Coaches– How to Admin Virtual Spontaneous
  - Mechanics of navigating the *new and improved* OotM online system to request and submit your team's Spontaneous

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Now all this has got to be a lot to take in. I'm sure you're already thinking "how do I get my team to do this?!" Well, good news - Odyssey of the Mind International has spent all summer upgrading their online submission system to make submitting to a Virtual Tournament easier for teams and associations!

They are in the process of finishing up several training and information guides that will be released soon, so please be on the look out!

These include guidelines for Virtual Tournament submissions, A "How To" walkthrough of how to actually submit your solution in the new system, and a "How To" walkthrough for Coaches to administer Spontaneous virtually to their teams. Since Spontaneous is a one-time, timed event, we highly recommend reading through this guide before doing Spontaneous!

## Virtual Tournament Tips



- Videos do not have to be *just 8 minutes* long, the limit is **15 minutes**, so the team can spend up to 7 minutes after to show the judges what the team wants them to see
- **Nothing's stopping you from taking multiple videos and picking the best one**
  - You just can't splice together videos – one "continuous take" videos only
- **For any video - make sure all the objective scoring elements are clearly visible in the recording so you get the points**
  - This was a mistake made a lot during VWF 2020, kept a lot of teams from getting points

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Finally, let's wrap up with a few tips that we shared during coaches training.

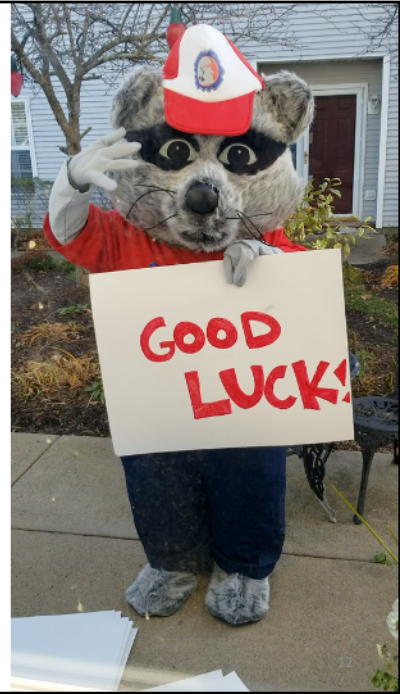
When your team is taping their solution, what they submit can be up to 15 minutes long. The actual "solution" part must be 1 continuous take, but the rest of those 15 minutes can be spent highlighting the different parts of your team's solution for the judges.

Keep in mind that nothing's stopping a team from doing multiple takes of their solution – as long as each is a continuous video – they can choose the best one.

And while choosing the best one, the team should make sure that all objective scoring elements are clearly visible in the video so they get all the points they're entitled to. This was a mistake a lot of teams made during VWF last year and cost a lot of teams a lot of points!



**Thank you, stay safe, and**



Thank you. Stay safe and healthy this year, and good luck!