## Packing!

Most of you have probably already started packing! For younger team members, consider preparing name badges on lanyards. You can find them in office supplies stores. Include all team adult contacts. Members should wear them at all times. The ones with a pocket or zipper allow them to also store important valuables and dorm or hotel keys. For teams staying in the dorms, attach a small tag or label to each team members' dorm key with the **coach name and cell phone** so that lost keys can find their way back (there is a $75 lost key fee for dorm key, $15 for bathroom keys, and $10 for conference cards). For security reasons, DO NOT list room number or team member’s name! Create a team luggage tag out of bright colored card stock. List the team, school and coach contact information on one side. Put one tag on EVERYTHING going: luggage, backpacks, pin towels, purses, cameras, guitars, hats. You can write with a permanent marker the owners first name (only) on the back of the tag. Parents can sweep a spot as you leave and quickly grab leftover items. Lost items will find you quicker. Laminate the tags if you have access to a laminator. Use a rubber band to attach them.

Not all dorms are air conditioned so pack accordingly.

Remember to pack cell phone chargers, contact lens cases and solution, swim suits/pool towel (your registration includes use of some campus facilities, including the pool), **comfortable walking shoes**, a light sweater, and plenty of clean clothes. You may decide to send your child with a little spending money. There will be World Finals Souvenir stations across campus, and Saturday afternoon is the International Festival, where international teams will be selling Odyssey merchandise and other regalia.

Of course, team members and families should pack all their pins and Odyssey t-shirts!

Pack tank tops for the kids to wear underneath their OM shirts. It’s common for teams to start trading the shirts off their back, especially once Closing Ceremonies are over. Please make sure that your kids do not trade away a shirt before the Ceremony or Parade for which it is needed!

Wifi is available across campus, but not in all residence halls. However, all dorms have hard-wired internet connection, so adults may want to bring an Ethernet cable if they plan to work from Michigan.

**The big question: how do I pack my child’s pins?** At most airports, TSA will allow pin towels in a carry-on bag, but they may ask that you remove them and send them through the x-ray machine separately. This varies by airport and ultimately TSA has the final say, but in the past they have been willing to let them through security. You may need to explain “I am going to an international conference; pin trading is a part of the culture there, etc.” When you are returning to Texas, the Michigan airports are well aware of Odyssey of the Mind World Finals, and you should have no trouble taking your pins in a carry-on. In fact, you should expect to see lots of last-minute pin trading at the airport gates!

## Team Registration

For those of you arriving on the Michigan Flyer, the shuttle will drop you off on the MSU campus in front of the Team Registration building. Team Registration is in the International Center. Only 1 coach will be allowed to check in. Coaches will receive your team’s housing assignment information, meal wristbands, program materials and directions to your residence hall/apartment check -in site where you will receive keys to your rooms. At registration, you will need your **Team Contract**, **Medical Releases**, and **Media Releases**. Any problem-specific documents will be turned in at Pre-Staging, before your long-term time.

Team Registration will be open from 2:00 pm until 11:59 pm on Tuesday, 12:00 pm to 11:59 pm on Wednesday, and 8:00 am to Noon on Thursday. If you arrive after registration closes on Tuesday or Wednesday, go to the International Center and MSU Staff will direct you to check in for your room assignment. You can register with Odyssey of the Mind in the morning.

## Coaches Binder

Go to <https://www.txodyssey.org/wf-coach-binder/>. Each box is the link to open or download a document that you will need. There are detailed descriptions with each box so you know what you are getting and what you will need it for. You should have a copy of the Competition Site Map; this will help you move from building to building for your long-term, spontaneous, Howdy teams, volunteer shifts, etc! You only need to download the “Site Maps within Each Building” for **your** problem/division. This will show you where the actual competition room is, along with the pre-staging area and prop storage room.

You should download the documents before printing them, and make sure to open them in Adobe Reader or other pdf viewer. If you open them in a browser, not all features will display!

## **Recording Your Performance**

A recording area containing a stationary tripod is being taped off at each performance site. Your team is allowed to designate one videographer who is allowed to enter the area and use the tripod to mount a recording device for your performance.

The tripod top will feature a standard screw-type camera mount (screw size is ¼ inch diameter, 20 threads per inch) with a removable clip that must be replaced at the end of each performance.

Please, follow these rules:

* Only one person (videographer) may enter the area.
* No one is allowed to move the tripod or the tape marking the area.
* The videographer must leave the area when the team finishes its performance
* The clip on the tripod used to mount a camera must be in place when finished.
* Please make sure the next team is able to use the tripod just as yours was able to use it.

### Creativity Festival

Think of a spontaneous workshop on steroids. This is a mini-conference where each represented country or state has a booth. Some have activities, others test your skill or exhibit displays. There is also a giant (We are not exaggerating) trophy with the names of all the World Finals Ranatra Fusca winners over the years.

Texas started the "Thank You Cards for Judges" booth in 2013 and it was endorsed by Sammy and received with great appreciation. Feel free to come and visit us ;) Wear a team T-shirt and take your team picture while you are at it! There will be a professional photographer and each school will receive one complimentary print, additional prints can be ordered.

After the creativity Festival Closes at 12 pm on Saturday, the International Festival takes its place. Teams from other countries are allowed to sell their pins, t-shirts, and other cool stuff. This is a great way to expand your collection of international items, and help support teams that have had to travel from abroad!

### **Pin Trading!!**

Pins are a **HUGE** of the World Finals experience. How many pins you purchase is really up to your team. You know best your kids and the financial situations of their families. Some teams want every child to have the same pins for trading; others let the individual families determine their budget/interest. Most kids really love pin trading and it becomes the activity of choice while at WF. There are a very few kids for whom it has little appeal but the great majority of them will be begging to go pin trade. A full pin towel is an amazing souvenir of the experience. As pins are traded one-for-one (generally set-for-set), ask what you'd like to have on your towel when you return to Texas. Generally about 30-50 pins (either from this year or previous) will net you pins from a fair number of other states and countries. One thing that may not trade well is non-Odyssey of the Mind pins. It is also considered wrong to try and pass off a non-Odyssey pin (like from a city or state) as an official Odyssey pin. That being said, many team do create individual pins for trading, however they have to be approved by Odyssey of the Mind in order to be traded.

Pin trading at World Finals resembles a giant marketplace, but without money. Everywhere you look, with the exception of competition venues, kids will be eagerly trading pins. Pins are supposed to be traded one-for-one. Most kids want to trade full sets though, so you may trade a set for a set. Generally, for example, you might consider trading a two-pin set for a two-pin set and a five-pin set for a five-pin set. The exception is mechanical or blinky pin (which are more expensive), they generally count for two pins each, or match up with another state's "special" pin (a blinky or other mechanical pin). People may ask you to break a set, or trade individual pins from your sets. If there's a pin you want, you might decide to break up your set and trade the pins individually. But then know it can be hard to trade the rest of the individual pins in the set. There is a marketplace for single pins, but it is less robust than the one for sets.

No one can predict in advance which pins will be popular and which will not be. Throughout WF, a "currency" is established and certain pins become the hot ones for that year. It is better to buy a wider range of pins than to put your entire budget into a single pin or pin set and have that one be the least desired pin set.

Remember that a good trade is one with which both parties are happy. Different kids like different pins. It is never a bad trade if you got what you want. The most important advice I would give you to share with your kids is that it is okay to say no to a trade. Some kids have a really hard time walking away. But if it's not what you want, there are hundreds of other kids just eager to trade with you. Don't ever feel pressured into a trade.

1. Opening Ceremonies  
    Opening Ceremony will take place in the Breslin Center at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, May 23. Everyone staying in the dorms will receive a ticket for the Texas section in their housing package when you check in. Anyone staying off campus may pick up a complimentary ticket from the Odyssey Information Desk; however these tickets are not always in the same section. Only one ticket will be handed out per person. If you want to be seated together, it is a good idea to go stand in line together for tickets. Your Association Director may be collecting unused tickets from teams that will not attend, so ask them if they have any extra tickets for the Texas section.
2. Float and Banner Parade  
   The Float and Banner Parade will also be held at the Breslin Center, at 7:30 pm on Thursday May 24. No ticket is needed for anyone who wants to come and watch the Parade, it is open seating in the arena.
3. Closing Ceremony  
   The Closing Ceremony will also be at the Breslin Center at 7:00 pm on Saturday May 26. There is no parade for Closing Ceremony. Everyone staying in the dorms will receive a ticket for the Texas section in their housing package when you check in. Anyone staying off campus may pick up a complimentary ticket from the Odyssey Information Desk; however, these tickets are not always in the Texas section. Only one ticket will be handed out per person. If you want to be seated together, it is a good idea to go stand in line together for tickets. Your Association Director may be collecting unused tickets from teams that will not attend, so ask them if they have any extra tickets for the Texas section.
4. At last –Recovery Parties!  
   Your team has performed, the awards ceremony is over, and you can finally take a break! There are planned parties for all age groups to have one last hurrah after the Closing Ceremonies have ended. The pre-teen and teen parties will both be held at Cherry Lane Park from 9:30 pm until 12:30 am. The Coaches/Officials Recovery Party (which is open to all adults) will be at the Kellogg Center, Big 10 A,B & C, from 9:30 pm until 1:00 am. The Coaches Recovery Party is a ticketed event, but complimentary tickets are included with your housing package, and extras may be picked up at the Odyssey Information Booth.

## **General Preparation Tips**

* For teams staying in the dorms: take a small **tag or label** to attach to each team members' **dorm key** with the coach name and cell phone so that lost keys can find their way back. You can get such key tags at dollar stores. Lost room keys will cost a $75 fine.
* For younger team members, consider preparing **name badges on lanyards**. You can find them in office supplies stores. Include all team adult contacts. Members should wear them at all times. The ones with a pocket or zipper allow them to also store important valuables and keys.
* Ask your dining hall on the first day whether they can provide packed lunches. They may require advance notice but it could save you lots of time spent racing back to the dining hall on busy days.
* Create a team luggage tag out of bright colored card stock. List the team, school and coach contact information on one side. Put one tag on EVERYTHING going: luggage, backpacks, pin towels, purses, cameras, guitars, hats. You can write with a permanent marker the owners first name (only) on the back of the tag. Parents can sweep a spot as you leave and quickly grab leftover items. Lost items will find you quicker. Laminate the tags if you have access to a laminator. Use a rubber band to attach them.
* For younger team members, consider down time each day. Whether it is a dip in the pool (pack swimsuits), a walk around town, of just games in a dorm room. A regular bed time is important, even if 10 pm is later than usual. Use your parental best judgment. You do not need to participate in every single event.
* Most teams do not bring their props home with them. Behind each venue are several large dumpsters. It has become OM tradition for teams to go straight to the "dumpster ceremony" where they discard all the props that they have carried around for 6+ months. This brings a closure and eliminates the temptation for younger ones to bring back bulky souvenirs. Of course, it is up to you if you wish to bring anything back.