

## *STYLE, STYLE ... Ya Gotta Have Style!*

New coaches are often confused by the Style component of Odyssey of the Mind. WHAT, exactly IS that? I mean, the team has solved the Long-Term problem, and their solution is pretty unique, so why have this style stuff?

Well, Style is the "Icing on the Cake", so to speak. It is the special things the team has made or done that fit together ("Overall Effect") to make their solution unlike anyone else's. It adds the component of artistic talent, or performance talent, or any other kind of talent to the basic skills needed to solve the Long-Term problem. It is the opportunity for your team to SHINE by displaying their special abilities! This is a great chance for the team to identify their own talents or develop new ones! It makes their solution not just unique, but memorable and exciting!

STYLE can be any of a large number of elements. Each problem identifies two that are mandatory for that problem. ("How well the membership sign enhances the presentation" or "creativity of use of materials in one costume"). Then, the team also gets to pick two other elements, according to their talents and desires. (Note that sometimes what YOU would choose to be scored may not be what THE TEAM wants to have scored ... and it is the TEAM'S decision, as in all things Odyssey!)

Pages 22 – 24 of the Program Guide have some information about Style.

Some elements teams have chosen in the past to have scored have been:

Membership Sign	Appearance of Character(s)	Dialogue
Narration	Props	Acting
Lighting	Original Poetry	Environment
Smell	Mime	Movements
Use of Color	Playbill	Artwork
Interaction between people	An <i>Original</i> Effect!	Surprise effect!
Humor	Creative use of materials	Choreography

One method for helping a team understand what Style is, would be to give each team member a bag with some materials (construction paper, scissors, glue, pipe cleaners, crayons... whatever, the crazier the better.) Ask each of them to find a place to work by himself/herself. They are then to create anything they wish, and present it in any way they wish (a poem, a song, a story, etc.) Let them work for 20 or 30 minutes and then ask each person to present his or her creation. After they have done this, explain that each team's Long-Term problem solution will be as different as each of their own creations. The special things that are unique or original elements of their team's Long-Term solution are the things they will want scored for style. Have the team brainstorm all the wonderful things they might have for their own amazing Style.

Some teams choose style elements (free choice) early and work on them throughout the months they work on Long-Term. Some simply allow things to develop and evolve, and choose the free choice elements after they see how everything turned out near the end. As with more creative problem solving, there is no one right or wrong method. But be sure the team knows which elements are MANDATORY style elements, and make sure they are included on the "must do", not the "maybe do" list!

**Two cardinal rules to remember:**

- ♦ Nothing scored in Section D of the Long-Term Problem may also be scored for Style.
- ♦ Style forms may not be altered (spacing changed, etc.)

**Two cardinal guidelines for Style Forms to remember:**

- ♦ Be VERY specific in listing Style elements. Don't write down "team sign" --- describe what, exactly is special. ("Team sign that changes into the Stay-Puf Marshmallow Man") Don't write down "costume" --- describe which one the judges should look at. ("Dog costume worn by boy with glasses.")
- ♦ The paragraph at the bottom should tell how the **Style** elements create an effect. Do not have the team write a summary of the long-term performance!

**Four items of information:**

- ♦ Only the Style judges see the Style form. Writing something for the long-term judges will not be helpful.
- ♦ A playbill, if counted as a Style element, will be given to the Staging Area Judge to give to the Style judges (remember how team members may not give anything to the judges?) And, if a playbill is intended for the audience, it must be given out by team members after time begins.
- ♦ Style judges have only a few minutes to read the Style Form. If the team uses a computer to print the form, do not use 2 point font or try to write a small novel in the bottom space! Write enough to give the general idea of what is wonderful about the team's style, and intrigue the judges, but don't expect the officials to be able to absorb too many details. Look on this as an advertisement for what they are about to see. And remember, only Style judges will read this.
- ♦ Style scores are 100% subjective. What one group of judges on one day really likes, another group of judges on another day might not like as much. Your team can only control how THEY feel about their style elements ... if they are proud of what they did, that is what counts, always! Style scores cannot be debated or argued ... the judges' decision is final. (And don't you hope to have enough officials at the tournament to have at least 2 or 3 style judges whose scores are averaged? Recruit judges for your tournament!!!)