

NCOM STATE FINALS

MARCH 28, 2026

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Welcome

North Carolina Odyssey of the Mind extends a warm welcome to you to the campus of Appalachian State University for the NCOM State Tournament. We hope you enjoy the creativity of all these kids. The OM philosophy is based on problem solving by team effort, perseverance and sportsmanship. Divergent and original thinking is rewarded. Our judges are trained to look for unusual, creative ideas in the long-term problem, style element and the spontaneous portion of the competition. It is the creativity and risk-taking abilities of our students that we value.

Each Problem Captain is responsible for their respective judging teams. As you can imagine, judging each team's presentation is a difficult endeavor. We are proud to say that, although all of our judges are volunteers, over half of them have judged for us in the past. No matter what their past experience, all judges have attended an extensive judge training session in both the Odyssey of the Mind Program in general and in the problem they will be judging this year. The training includes long-term judges, style judges, spontaneous judges as well as score room personnel.

We'd like to offer a special thank you to the coaches who have dedicated hours to their team's OM experience. This is just one more way in which you touch and mold the lives of our youth. This program can only make a difference in our youth through your willingness to be a coach!

NCOM STATE TOURNAMENT
Appalachian State University
March 28, 2026

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Team Registration	7:30 am - 11:30am	Plemmons Lobby
Volunteer check-in	7:30 am - 4:00pm	Plemmons Lobby
Souvenir Sales	8:30 am - 4:00pm	Plemmons Lobby
Competition Times	8:20 am - 3:20pm	Various
Pre-Awards	4:15 pm – 5:00pm	Holmes Convocation
Awards Ceremony	5:00pm	Holmes Convocation

On Campus Dining Options

Central Dining Hall Menus: [Breakfast | Mar 28 26 | All Access - Rivers Street Cafe](#)
[Lunch | Mar 28 26 | All Access - Rivers Street Cafe](#)

Crossroads (Plemmons) Menu: [All Day | Mar 28 26 | Plemmons Student Union](#)



Special Appreciation

An Odyssey of the Mind tournament cannot be held without the backing of some very special people. We would like to thank the following individuals, corporations, and organizations who have lent their support to our student and officials:

**NCOM State Board of Directors
Appalachian State University -
Kristina Pugh and Sutton Bryan
Allen Ball - Tournament Director
Andy Cordes - Souvenir Sales
Anne Johnson – Volunteer Coordinator
Allen Ball – State Scheduler
Kristen McGinty and Mitzi Lynch – OMER's Friends
Mark Hindal – Awards Ceremony
All the volunteer coaches and judges**

Problem Captains

**Problem 1: Off the Rails: Randy Burton
Problem 2: Lost in OMerland: Glenn Baron and Alison Blake
Problem 3: Classics...The Epic Quest: Allen Ball and Vicki Reich
Problem 4: Life's A Ball: Glenn Sigmon
Problem 5: Taller Tales of John Jivery: Pam Norton and Scotty Vanhoozier
Primary:Clowning Around With Science: Tracy McIntyre
Spontaneous: Carolyn Braly and Elizabeth McAllister
Scoring: Debbie Lauria, Mino Smith, and Lisa Price**

Head Judges

**Problem 1: Dale McCallister
Problem 2: Bob Pecaut
Problem 3: Mickie Waltenburg and Marj Moe
Problem 4: Marc Blake
Problem 5: Scotty Vanhoozier and Pam Norton
Spontaneous: Donna Burroughs, Karrie Helt, Mark Hindal, Mitzi Lynch, Jeff Newell, Ann Ross, Tara Woodard, and Ethan Young.**



NCOM State Finals

Problem Locations



Problem 1: Varsity Gymnasium



Problem 2: Plemmons Parkway Ballroom



Problem 3 Division 1: Plemmons Linville Falls Ballroom

Problem 3 Divisions 2/3: Plemmons Blue Ridge Ballroom



Problem 4: Varsity Gymnasium



Problem 5 Division 1: Plemmons Grandfather Mountain Ballroom

Problem 5 Divisions 2/3: IG Greer Auditorium



Spontaneous: Anne Belk Hall



Souvenir Sales: Plemmons Lobby

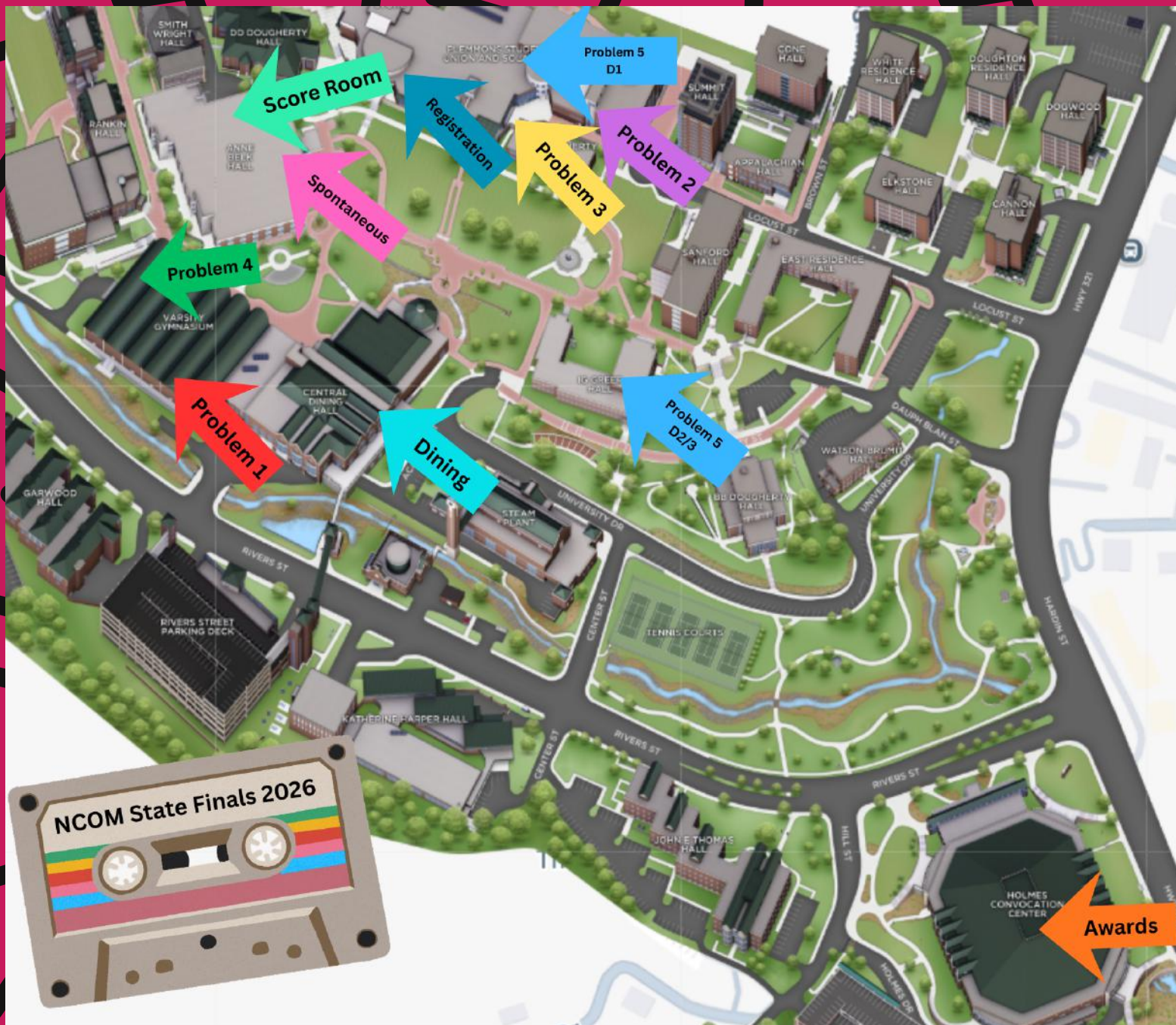


Dining: Central Dining Hall



Awards: Holmes Convocation Center







Odyssey of the Mind®

2025-2026 Long-Term Problem Synopses



Problem 1 Vehicle



Off the Rails

All aboard! OMers become conductors and engineers as they design, build, and operate a train vehicle. As the train travels the course it will have a new car attached at each stop. Along the route it will encounter challenges that make the train travel in different ways. After all of its cargo is picked up, the items will be unloaded and assembled into a work of art. The performance will also include a the use of ARM & HAMMER™ Baking Soda, a humorous conductor character, and a villain character that tries to prevent the train from getting to its destination. Sponsored by ARM & HAMMER™.



Problem 2 Technical

Lost in OMERland

Getting lost often leads to unexpected opportunities! In this problem OM™ teams will design, build, and operate a Technical Trip Assistant only to find their voice activated-device has a few malfunctions that result in hilarity. While they set out to explore a new place, the device gives a humorous answer to a question, wrong directions that take them to an unexpected location, and a silly translation. All props and backdrops must fit inside two suitcases.



Problem 3 Classics

Classics... The Epic Quest

OMers, are you ready to get EPIC? Quests from history have been passed from generation to generation through many art forms, including poetry. OMers will create an epic poem that details a team-created quest that is acted out in the performance. During the quest, the characters encounter an original beast, will rescue someone, and will overcome an epic challenge. The performance will use colors to help depict different settings.



Problem 4 Structure

Life's a Ball!

Party Time! In this problem, teams will create a performance about throwing a party or a ball. The team will design and build a balsa wood structure that is tested by balancing and supporting as much weight as possible. At intervals various balls will be rolled to collide with the structure. The performance will include a creative "ball" character and a party guest that explains the impact of the collisions using team-created terms.



Problem 5 Performance

Taller Tales of John Jivery

No one can tell a story like an OMer! In this problem, teams will create and present a humorous performance about an original tall tale. The tale will include a team-created hero or heroine that performs an incredible feat, a unique explanation of how something began or came to be, and a surprise for the audience. Each event will be accompanied by a visual weather effect that represents an emotion.



Primary

Clowning Around With Science

What kind of hair do oceans have? Wavy! In this problem, OM teams will create an original performance about a group of comedy performers that teach lessons about natural science. The lessons will also include a visual effect, a sound effect, and jokes.

PROBLEM 1: OFF THE RAILS

Off the Rails Div I

Long Term Location: Varsity Gym
Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall

Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
8:20am	Woodland Heights Elementary School TMA	3907	Meghann Fairchild	10:30am
8:40am	Washington Gifted and Talented Magnet Elementary School TMA	5958	Amy Wilkinson	10:50am
9:00am	Mills Park Elementary School TMA	4234	Vaibhav Sathe	11:30am
9:20am	--Break			
9:40am	Summersill Elementary School TMA	5080	Sarah Loud	3:00pm
10:00am	Davis Drive Elementary School TMA	5239	Madalyn Stumpe	2:00pm
10:20am	Lucy S Herring Elementary School TMA	4058	Cassandra Love	3:20pm

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Off the Rails Div II

Long Term Location: Varsity Gym
Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall

Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
10:40am	--Break			
11:00am	Carnage Magnet Middle School TMA	3928	Sarah Dugger	9:00am
11:20am	Bee School TMA	4540	Natalie Turner	9:20am
11:40am	Lincoln Heights Montessori School TMA	4119	Anke Hill	9:40am
12:00pm	--Lunch			
12:50pm	Carolina Day School TMA	6151	Keith Anderson	10:00am
1:10pm	Mills Park Middle School TMA	4814	Rama S. Thotakura	10:40am
1:30pm	Two Rivers Community School TMA	4917	Kelly Snider	11:20am
1:50pm	Martin County Innovation Campus TMA	4153	Christy Stevens	11:00am

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Off the Rails Div III

Long Term Location: Varsity Gym
Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall

Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
2:10pm	--Break			
2:30pm	FirstHealth of the Carolinas TMA	4327	Amita Gupta	12:30pm
2:50pm	East Mecklenburg High School TMA	3919	Shanmugam Sundaram	12:50pm
3:10pm	Milestone Therapy TMA	6282	Autumn Bell	1:10pm

PROBLEM 2: LOST IN OMERLAND

Lost in OMERland Div I

Long Term Location: Parkway Ballroom
Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall

Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
12:50pm	Martin County Innovation Campus TMA	4154	Christy Stevens	9:40am
1:10pm	Lucy S Herring Elementary School TMA	5434	Suzanne Hinesley	10:00am
1:30pm	Mills Park Elementary School TMA	4233	Felcy Pavithra Selwyn	10:20am
1:50pm	Davis Drive Elementary School TMA	5241	Rohini Mandge	11:00am
2:10pm	--Break			
2:30pm	Southwest Elementary School - Forsyth TMA	7237	Jessica Petree	11:20am
2:50pm	Nags Head Elementary School TMA	6336	Quinn Fisher	11:40am

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Lost in OMERland Div II

Long Term Location: Parkway Ballroom
Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall

Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
8:20am	Randolph Middle School TMA	4391	Sathiya Ranganathan	10:20am
8:40am	HOPE Academy NC TMA	4374	Crystal Mitchell	10:40am
9:00am	Mills Park Middle School TMA	4251	Pallavi S Pullabhatla	11:00am
9:20am	--Break			
9:40am	Mills Park Middle School TM C	4539	Charu Haberstroh	12:10pm
10:00am	Meadowlark Middle School TMA	4880	Yash Chandaka	12:30pm
10:20am	Westchester Country Day School TMA	5387	Elizabeth Caddy-Coach	12:50pm

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Lost in OMERland Div III

Long Term Location: Parkway Ballroom
Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall

Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
10:40am	--Break			
11:00am	East Mecklenburg High School TMA	3918	Shanmugam Sundaram	1:10pm
11:20am	Green Level High School TMA	6342	Ciana Paye	2:30pm
11:40am	Providence High School TMA	7014	Catherine King	2:10pm
12:00pm	--Lunch			
3:10pm	FirstHealth of the Carolinas TMA	4330	Kara Baynes-Coach	1:50pm

PROBLEM 3: CLASSICS...THE EPIC QUEST

The Epic Quest Div I Long Term Location: Linville Falls Ballroom Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall				
Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
9:30am	Forest View Elementary School TMA	4952	Katie Sukalski	11:50am
9:50am	Socrates Academy TMA	6893	Brooke Thompson-Coach	12:10pm
10:10am	Southwest Elementary School - Forsyth TMA	7238	Jessica Petree	1:20pm
10:30am	--Break			
10:50am	HOPE Academy NC TMA	7133	Natalie Sielaff	8:50am
11:10am	Lakeshore Elementary School TMA	3971	Bethany Hall	1:40pm
11:30am	Coastal Elementary School TMA	5057	Shana Cremer	8:30am
11:50am	--Lunch			
12:40pm	Washington Gifted and Talented Magnet Elementary School TMA	5960	Amy Wilkinson	2:40pm
1:00pm	Coopers Elementary School TMA	7468	Dana Pippen	9:10am
1:20pm	Lucy S Herring Elementary School TM B	5435	Cassandra Love	9:30am
1:40pm	Carolina Day School TMA	6148	Keith Anderson	10:10am

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The Epic Quest Div II Long Term Location: Blue Ridge Ballroom Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall				
Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
11:05am	--Break			
11:25am	Alexander Graham Middle School TMA	4179	Mustapha Mahmud	8:20am
11:45am	Triangle Day School TMA	6311	Ali Carnes	8:40am
12:05pm	Sherwood Githens Middle School TMA	4264	Jill Adelson	9:00am
12:25pm	--Lunch			
1:15pm	New Bridge Middle Magnet School TMA	7428	Justus Pinkey	9:40am
1:35pm	Dixon Middle School TMA	5509	Patricia (Patty) Browne	10:00am
1:55pm	Northwest Guilford Kiwanis TMA	4740	Julie Cottingham-Coach	10:20am
2:15pm	--Break			
2:35pm	Piedmont IB Middle School TMA	5690	Deyna Rogers	11:00am
2:55pm	Carolina Day School TMA	6153	Keith Anderson	11:20am
3:15pm	Two Rivers Community School	4916	Kelly Snider	11:40am

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The Epic Quest Div III Long Term Location: Blue Ridge Ballroom Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall				
Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
8:25am	Westchester Country Day School TMA	5386	Elizabeth Caddy-Coach	12:50pm
8:45am	Socrates Academy TMA	6891	Maya Madura Engle	1:10pm
9:05am	Northwest Guilford Kiwanis TMA	4378	Katherine Harding	1:30pm
9:25am	--Break			
9:45am	South Iredell High School	3979	Alissa Stramenga	2:10pm
10:05am	Myers Park High School TMA	5438	Wilson Moy	2:30pm
10:25am	Northside High School TMA	4853	Tiffany Komorowski	2:50pm
10:45am	FirstHealth of the Carolinas TMA	4328	Michelle Cuthrell	3:10pm

PROBLEM 4: LIFE'S A BALL

Life's a Ball! Div I Long Term Location: Varsity Gym Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall					
Long Term	Weigh In	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
10:36am	9:36am	Washington Gifted and Talented Magnet Elementary School TMA	5961	Amy Wilkinson	12:00pm
10:56am	9:56am	Mills Park Elementary School TMA	4237	Nina Mendoza	1:10pm
11:16am	10:16am	Lucy S Herring Elementary School TM B	5325	Kristen Webb-Coach	1:30pm
11:36am	10:36am	Meadowlark Elementary School TMA	4956	Christine Pereira	1:50pm
12:46pm	11:46am	Lucy S Herring Elementary School TMA	4121	Mitzi Levering-Coach	2:10pm
2:06pm	--Break				

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Life's a Ball! Div II Long Term Location: Varsity Gym Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall					
Long Term	Weigh In	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
9:20am	--Break				
10:18am	--Break				
1:06pm	12:06pm	One World Montessori TMA	5748	Kirk Kennedy	9:00am
1:26pm	12:26pm	Mills Park Middle School TM B	4321	Remuka Devunuri	9:20am
1:46pm	12:46pm	Ashe County Middle School	4702	Mary Job	9:40am
2:24pm	1:24pm	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School TMA	5976	Kelly Vitale	10:20am
2:44pm	1:44pm	Mills Park Middle School TMA	4253	Rajesh Gatti	10:40am
3:04pm	2:04pm	Martin County Innovation Campus TMA	4155	Christy Stevens	11:00am
3:24pm	2:24pm	Randolph Middle School TMA	4265	Leslie Hudson-Coach	11:20am

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Life's a Ball! Div III Long Term Location: Varsity Gym Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall					
Long Term	Weigh In	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
8:20am	7:20am	Myers Park High School TM A	5433	Linda Montgomery-MPHS	12:30pm
8:40am	7:40am	Northside High School TMA	4854	Tiffany Komorowski	12:50pm
9:00am	8:00am	Green Level High School TM A	6344	Ciana Paye	1:10pm
9:38am	8:38am	East Mecklenburg High School TMA	4390	Arun Prakash-Coach	1:50pm
9:58am	8:58am	Richlands High School TMA	5380	Gabriella Blanchong	2:10pm

Problem 5: Taller Tales of John Jivery

Taller Tales of John Jivery Div I

Long Term Location: Grandfather Mountain Ballroom

Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall

Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
9:30am	Carolina Day School TMA	6150	Keith Anderson	11:30am
9:50am	Blue Creek Elementary School TMA	6132	Heriberto Roman Vazquez	12:40pm
10:10am	Magellan Charter School TMA	6330	Brian Brimmage	1:00pm
10:30am	--Break			
10:50am	Lucy S Herring Elementary School TMA	5436	Utina Ward-Coach	1:20pm
11:10am	D.F. Walker Elementary School TMA	6053	Brooklyn Byrum	1:40pm
11:30am	Westchester Country Day School TMA	5389	Maria Ashburn-Coach	9:30am
11:50am	--Lunch			
12:40pm	Forest View Elementary School TMA	4953	Nathan Katzin-Coach	9:50am
1:00pm	Lake Norman Elementary School TMA	6141	Geoff Smiley	10:10am
1:20pm	Fairview Elementary School TMA	4760	Callie Schultz	10:50am
1:40pm	Lincoln Heights Montessori School TMA	5863	Rebecca Hamilton	11:10am

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Taller Tales of John Jivery Div II

Long Term Location: IG Greer Auditorium

Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall

Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
9:00am	Piedmont IB Middle School TMA	5691	Shawaka Chamberlain	12:30pm
9:20am	Martin County Innovation Campus TMA	4156	Christy Stevens	12:50pm
9:40am	Ashe County Middle School	4704	Jill Gambill	1:10pm
10:00am	--Break			
10:20am	Mills Park Middle School TMA	4323	Bhinesh Patel	1:50pm
10:40am	Swansboro Middle School TMA	4870	Courtney (Drew) Walker-Coach	2:10pm
11:00am	Mills Park Middle School TMA	4254	April Groff-Coach	2:30pm
11:20am	Carolina Day School TMA	6156	Keith Anderson	2:50pm
11:40am	--Lunch			
12:30pm	Westchester Country Day School TMA	5586	Amy Schenck	9:00am
12:50pm	Alexander Graham Middle School TMA	4180	Erin Illman	9:20am
1:10pm	Academic Learning POD TMA	5682	Lisa Smith	9:40am

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Taller Tales of John Jivery Div III

Long Term Location: IG Greer Auditorium

Spontaneous Location: Anne Belk Hall

Long Term	Membership Name	Number	Coach	Spont
1:30pm	--Break			
1:50pm	North Mecklenburg High School TMA	7341	Ty Padilla	10:20am
2:10pm	Onslow Early College High School TMA	4798	James (Jay) Strobe	10:40am
2:30pm	Myers Park High School TMA	5886	Shannon Privette-Coach	11:00am
2:50pm	One World Montessori TMA	5746	Kirk Kennedy	11:20am

Special Awards

Ranatra Fusca Creativity Award

Ranatra Fusca is the term for a classification of water insect. Although this may seem like a remote association to creative thinking, the name has a special meaning in Odyssey of the Mind.

The Odyssey of the Mind was born from a college class taught by our founder, Dr. Sam Micklus, in which students **were given an assignment to create a floatation device to transport them across a pond. One student designed a water strider-like contraption. The device did not solve the problem because of its inability to maintain proper balance; however, if given the time and the opportunity to “go back to the drawing board,” the student would have been able to correct this and cross the pond. Even though the device did not work properly, the idea was exceptionally creative.**

The Ranatra Fusca Creativity Award represents the essence of the Odyssey of the Mind program. It is presented to teams or individuals who exhibit exceptional creativity, either through some aspect of their problem solutions, their behavior, or an extraordinary idea beyond the problem solution. A successful problem solution is not a criterion for winning the award; rather, the award is a way to acknowledge and encourage creative-thinking and risk-taking. Team winners at the association (State) level will advance to World Finals.

OMER's Award

OMER's Award is not intended to reward creativity; instead, our mascot, OMER, wants to recognize individuals or teams who demonstrate outstanding sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, and exceptional talent. Recipients of this award may be coaches, team members, parents, officials or anyone else whom tournament officials or directors feel exhibit these traits.

Anyone may inform a judge or tournament official of a possible OMER's Award candidate. That judge or official will then determine if that person should be nominated. All nominees are reviewed by a panel that determines the final winner.

Scholarships

Lynda McGinty Scholarship

In recognition of bringing OM to North Carolina and over 40 years of service.

Susan C. Hultin Memorial Scholarship

Susan Hultin, was an educator in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System and a strong supporter of NCOM

Susan Lawson Memorial Scholarship

Susan was a long-time educator, Regional Director, State Board Member, coach, mentor, and guiding light for Odyssey of the Mind and NCOM.

A Special Note to Coaches and Teams

Please be aware that ONLY the coach may discuss problem-related issues with the tournament officials. Coaches, teams, and parents should follow all tournament guidelines and posted signs. If the need arises to resolve any issue with rule interpretation, please begin this process with the head judge of your problem.

Reminders

- Please report to the staging area for your problem and the spontaneous check-in area 20 minute before your schedule performance time.**
- Coaches or parents must be with teams and/or children at all times**
- Lost and Found: Please deliver found items and check for lost items at the Information Desk in the Plemmons Lobby. Items will also be brought to the awards ceremony to be claimed.**
- We are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged articles. Please leave valuables, props, and problem solutions locked in your vehicle. Because staging areas are small, plan to bring your props and equipment shortly before your competition time and remove them immediately thereafter. DO NOT leave your props unattended in the school.**
- Please represent your school or organization well by being respectful of the Wingate University campus. Dispose of trash properly and do not leave any personal or OM items behind. Please do not enter areas of the school that are not part of the OM competition.**

Emergency: In case of a serious emergency at competition call 911.



Secret Game

Open to Everyone

Will be Located in the Plemmons Lobby

Solve the Puzzle to win a Prize Pack



I ♥
80's



NCOM STATE FINALS AWARDS CEREMONY: 80S EDITION





80s Hat Parade!

Ready to show of your best 80s hats?



Think Neon, Hair Band Wigs, Rocker, Old School Hip Hop, Dynasty, Ladies of the 80s!

Anything that is fun and safe will be allowed! Show us creative materials and extravagant hats!

We will have six finalists all receiving prizes!





**2026 World Finals
Iowa State University in Ames, IA
from May 27th – 30th, 2026**

