

WHAT IS TOM?

Tournament of Minds (TOM) is a problem-solving program for multi-aged teams of students who work together to solve a demanding, open-ended Long-Term Challenge. The team must also participate in an unseen Spontaneous Challenge® on Tournament Day. The program has Primary and Secondary divisions.

Tournament of Minds aim is to enhance the potential of our youth by developing diverse skills, enterprise, time management, and the discipline to work collaboratively within a challenging and competitive environment.

Our objectives are:

- To promote the stimulation of real, open-ended challenges;
- To develop creative problem-solving approaches and techniques;
- To foster cooperative learning and teamwork;
- To promote knowledge and appreciation of self and others;
- To encourage experimentation and risk-taking;
- To expand and reward creative and divergent thinking;
- To stimulate a spirit of inquiry and a love of learning;
- To develop enterprise; and
- To celebrate excellence.



THE LONG TERM CHALLENGE

The Long Term Challenges will be made available through your facilitator. The team is made up of seven team members from multiple year levels. They will decide which of the four challenges offered they will attempt to solve. There are four Long Term Challenge disciplines:

- STEM
- The Arts
- Social Sciences
- Language Literature

The team has six weeks to formulate a solution to their one chosen challenge and ten minutes to present their solution to an audience and panel of judges on Tournament Day. There are many rules and requirements that teams must follow, which are outlined in the *Instruction Manual*.

THE SPONTANEOUS CHALLENGE

On Tournament Day the team will also be required to complete an unseen secret Spontaneous Challenge.

Unfortunately, you cannot watch the Spontaneous Challenge. There is no audience, but there is a panel of judges who score the team on its teamwork, creativity of responses and thinking skills.

The team is trusted to keep the Spontaneous Challenge a secret until the final day of the Regional Tournaments. Please don't ask your child about the Spontaneous Challenge until after 6pm the day of the competition weekend.

IF YOU NEED HELP...

Contact your school's TOM Coordinator or your child's Team Facilitator directly.

Further information about TOM can be found at www.tom.edu.au.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The best way you can help is to support the commitment of your child to the TOM program. This means assisting your child to attend training and preparation sessions and most importantly being available on Tournament Day.

Timetables for both the Long Term and Spontaneous presentations are issued about ten days before the Regional Tournament. Unfortunately timetables cannot be altered.

We suggest teams arrive 45 minutes prior to their first presentation as it is very easy to get lost in some of our university venues. Please allow plenty of time to find the registration desk and the presentation rooms.

Please be punctual as we keep to a strict timetable and the doors are shut during presentations to avoid distractions.

For this experience to be beneficial to the students, TOM requires that Challenge solutions and presentation be **entirely** the work

of team members. Therefore, any ideas, suggestions or recommendations made by teachers, parents or friends not only leave the team liable to severe penalties or disqualification, but also act as a disservice to the team members by demonstrating a lack of confidence in their own abilities. To this end, all team members and their facilitator are required to sign an *Outside Assistance Form*.

If you're interested you can contact your school about assisting as a team facilitator.

Or, if you are keen, you may wish to consider becoming a TOM Judge. A wonderful strength of TOM is our diversity of judges from all age groups, industries and backgrounds. We will supply training and an experienced judge to assist you. Of course, you would not be judging your own school. If interested, go to the Victorian page of the TOM website at www.tom.edu.au to download a registration form.

TOURNAMENT DAY

Encourage the team to focus on the things in which they have shown improvement or did well. Tell the team that you are proud of their conduct, team spirit, enthusiasm, etc. and encourage the team to discuss how they feel about their presentation.

The competitive element encourages students to be the best that they can be, but it's a friendly competition. They learn from and even cheer on their competitors.

You are welcome and encouraged to watch any team's Long Term Challenge solution.

Remember that the team must do everything for themselves, and this includes trouble-shooting, carry props around, setting up and dressing, doing hair and make-up etc.

THE SPIRIT OF TOURNAMENT

TOM uses a code of conduct that requires students to undertake the program fairly and respectfully. It is called "The Spirit of TOM". Under this code teams must:

- Show respect to the judges, audience and fellow competitors at all times. This includes using appropriate language, behaving safely and adhering to the rules.
- Be trusted not to get 'outside assistance' in generating, developing or presenting their Challenge solution ideas.
- Ensure the Spontaneous Challenge is kept a secret until the given deadline.