

# Minutes of the Final Meeting of the International Board IPhO 2017

1. Helmut Mayr presented an invitation to the next WFPPhC congress. The theme is competitions and their place in gifted education.
2. Prof. José António Paixão, Chairman of the IPhO 2018 from Portugal, presented the information about IPhO 2018. The Olympiad will be held from 21st – 29th July 2018 in Lisbon, Portugal. To aid planning, the opening ceremony will be held on the morning of the 22nd, and the closing ceremony on the afternoon of the 28th. Manuel Fiolhais will be the head of the Academic Committee.
3. The President presented on future IPhOs, including a graph showing the enormous growth in participating countries. Hope expressed that growth will continue. The President confirmed that an official letter recently received from the Ministry of Education of Lithuania confirms that they will host the Olympiad in 2020 in Vilnius. Thanks expressed to Lithuania. In 2021 there is a gap, due to Indonesia being scheduled for this originally, and Indonesia changed to host the 2017 Olympiad. There are two currently active options, Poland and Belarus. Other than 2021, the next five years look to have secure hosting for the IPhO.
4. Proposed statute change: a proposal was received from Israel about the awarding system for the IPhO. Presentation of current scheme according to the statutes. The President explained that the system is prone to inflation unless the host country marks generously. Otherwise the moderation effect is significant. The proposal of Eli Raz was distributed along with a statement of the negative effects of the current system; namely that it can lead to focusing only on threshold crossings when unjustified, to the detriment of other students' marks more accurately reflecting their relative performances in the competition. Gold becomes the watershed. Historically HM and bronze were down a little, silver up a little, gold up a lot to 12%.

The proposed scheme: first part is that moderation to take place first and then thresholds determined. Second part is that these thresholds are to be higher but are almost the same as the historical averages for the last decade. Gold would change from 8% to 12%. Silver would change from 17% to 18%. Bronze and HM would remain at their current percentages. A third part of the proposal would set the time for moderation at minimum 35 minutes per question.

The President explained the detailed function of the proposed scheme. Presentation of two options - rounding up and accepting a small increase, or rounding down to ensure that there cannot be inflation. 2A will be the proposal to round up. 2B will be strictly non-inflationary. Difference will probably be a few students a year.

First two parts of proposal should be voted upon together. Splitting these could lead to results contradictory to the intent of the proposal and so the changes to the statutes are packaged. Proposal 3 is independent.

International Board discussion:

- Portugal: Why can we not vote for the first part and not the second? Concerns around the value of a gold medal being reduced permanently by this sort of change.
- President; The purpose of proposals 1 and 2 is to kill the inflation. Consequently it is not possible to have these votes separately otherwise people can choose proposal 2 and not proposal 1, as well.
- Israel: reason this part was an integral part of the proposal was to make leaders more likely to vote for it, which he is not sure will happen. Could always be changed later anyway if people don't like the thresholds.
- Denmark: There is another way to force low inflation, which is simply to pick 5%. This is not a serious suggestion, but illustrates that although the point is valid it is not an issue worth worrying about too much. The whole idea of having a fair ranking of the students is illusory, and claiming that it will be fair if we change this system of moderation is not reasonable. Will be much more expensive as there will be more delegates from all countries who can afford it, and moderation will suffer from people wanting every 0.005 that they can get. Doesn't see that there is any genuine advantage. Currently it may not be fair but it may also never be fair.
- Saudi Arabia: Understands Eli's reasoning, but has three reasons to disagree. First, the proposal may not be more fair to the students than the current system, and the points are not really remembered in perpetuity. Ministry invites students to events based on medals, but not on points – the detail here is not really relevant. Current system can allow leaders to get most high medals rather than points that will not change medals. Considered that moderation will actually take longer in this case than the current system.

Second point - doesn't believe that the system is more fair to the students as the time will be spent

in different ways.

Third point - why do we have the current system? Based on historical system of average of the top three. Supposed to create a friendly atmosphere between leaders because they can't influence each other's results through moderation. Some leaders might be upset by people moderating for high students in case it lowers somehow their own results. Diligence of the leader becomes important. Key point of moderation is to make sure that no student goes down.

- Canada: Has been on both sides of this moderation system, both as a leader many times, and as part of an academic committee setting the problems. Also in the committee moderating between leaders and markers in cases of dispute. Often people are asking for points not because it is fair but because it is 'needed' to get over the threshold. Changes obtained by the leaders may move boundaries a little but one person will not cause that much difference. For ease of moderation, and to avoid asking for points that do not belong, the proposal should be supported.
- Australia: attends APhO, which already has a post-moderation system. Perception that at APhO the process is actually more harmonious than it is at the IPhO - shared view by at least a few other leaders from Asia.
- Georgia: purpose of this seems to be to control inflation of gold. Is inflation increasing or stable at the moment? If it is increasing, then it is crucial; otherwise it is less crucial.
- President: there is no real trend in this, it depends a lot on how they mark.
- Singapore: would like to support the proposal. A few reasons for that. First, eliminates fighting for grade boundaries, restores the system to dealing with points of physics. Increases in the gold have been spiky and has made life difficult for the organisers. Efficiency is less important than making the results correct and moderation time increase is important for this, so strong support for all elements of the proposal.
- Israel: additional issue to be raised. Many times as a leader, the markers have been asked for 2 points because of a huge lack of comprehension. Markers agree completely, but then offer 0.3, because there is pressure to control inflation of medals. If there is inflation, only the leaders with power get the points easier. In the APhO, this doesn't happen.- there is no incentive to restrict handing out points in moderation. Purpose of moderation is to arrive at correct marking - not 'beneficial' marking.

Vote: whether or not to A) vote on all proposals as a bloc or whether to vote B) in two tranches for 1&2 and then for 3.

Results: A: 74, B:59 +7 total. 140 total votes registered.

Two thirds of those present required.

Vote: In favour of all three proposals, or against?

Results: 89 for to 54 against. Proposal is rejected. (Not yet accepted). By 4 votes.

5. Presidential Election: In opening remarks, it was mentioned that the President will not be renominating after the end of the second term which is to be at the end of the IPhO 2018. The President explained that not only has it been half a lifetime's service, but 10 years is enough to sit in the same chair, and it is unimaginable that noone else will be willing and able to do the job of President. The President notes that a new President may bring a new approach to the role. The Secretary must be informed before March 31, 2018, of all nominations to be a candidate. A CV is also required to give some idea of background. If there is only a single candidate then election will be by default; otherwise continuing rounds of election will take place until someone has a majority.
6. Mark checking is no longer required due to the modified process for awards this year. There is still some discussion pending with the leaders. Adjournment to complete process: recess until 23:20.
7. Awards of medals and HM finalised by negotiations with leaders. Vote for approval of medals and HM. A few minor changes and then awards of medals and HM approved by acclamation at 23:30.
8. Jaan Kalda: EuPhO 2017 happened successfully. 20 countries, 91 students, will happen again in 2018 in Russia, hosted by Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. Will be held in either May, or late June/early July. Artem Voronov invites everyone to Moscow to come to the EuPhO.
9. Canada: mostly we come to all work together to fix problems, but this time we owe great thanks to Prof Wang Yi from Hong Kong for his work to repair problem 4 single handedly. Applause from the IB.
10. Apologies from the organisers for the inconvenience during the program, and good wishes for the remainder of the stay and the trip home.
11. Meeting closed at 23:36.