

Final Meeting of the International Board IPhO 2019

13/7/19

Agenda:

1. Website updating
2. Stefan - World Federation of Physics Competitions
3. Lithuania - IPhO 2020
4. Discussions of proposals
5. Election of IPhO Secretary
6. Approval of Results

10:10: Meeting started. Agenda presented. Recess for 10 minutes from 10:13 while all leaders check their final moderated results in the OlyExams system.

1. New IPhO website
The new website was discussed and content described. New alumni section was discussed and all of the leaders requested to support this project by reaching out to and encouraging alumni in their countries to register their details on the new website.
2. Dr Stefan Petersen presented to the International Board the invitation to the World Federation of Physics Competitions congress held in Ohrid, Macedonia, 20-24 September 2020. The congress brings together people who work on physics competitions and allows them to exchange ideas, best practice, and to promote physics competitions. All leaders have received an information leaflet and are warmly invited to attend the congress. The International Board thanked Stefan for his presentation.
3. Mr Thomas Daukantas, Chcancellor of Science, Education and Sports Ministry, Republic of Lithuania invited all members of the International Board to attend the 51st IPhO in 2020 to be held in Lithuania. Geographically Lithuania is the centre of Europe, and it is hoped that it will be easy for all nations to attend. A video presentation showed the landscape of Lithuania and some of its technological and scientific achievements. The International Board thanked the Chancellor for his invitation.
4. Discussions of the proposals. The Advisory Committee has deliberated over these proposals, according to the statutes. There were two proposals presented for consideration at the appropriate time and so will be decided today. A: Proposal from Portugal. (Note that all delegates have the photos from the 2018 IPhO on their desks in a USB pen.)
This proposal is to describe more completely the eligibility of students to represent countries at the IPhO. In 2018, there were delegations who were approached by students who wanted to attend the IPhO to fill unused places on their team. This proposal would require that a student be enrolled in a school of the country which the student would represent for at least 18 months prior to the competition. This is not designed to require policing by host nations, but to give the leaders a firm basis on which to reject such requests. The motivation is to ensure that all students are genuine representatives of their countries.
The comments from the advisory committee were presented. Comments included the difficulty of checking on this requirement by a host nation; the benefit of this rule to support a host in not succumbing to the temptation of payment for a place from an extraterritorial student; perhaps a requirement that students be citizens or permanent residents; that this restriction is perhaps best

given as a guideline rather than a strict rule; that there are sometimes citizens who are not resident and hence should be representing countries other than their citizenship.

Proposal opened to the floor.

Canada: no strong feelings one way or another, except that 'secondary school' has different meanings in different countries and hence would like the word 'secondary' removed from the proposal (and there is also no reason to exclude a brilliant primary school student).

Germany: query as to the precise meaning - for the 18 months prior to the IPhO, or at any time?

Clarification that the intent is not immediately before the IPhO - just 18 months at some time.

Concern raised that this could otherwise cause problems for students who go on exchange.

Poland: expresses happiness that there are students from all around the world who try to find loopholes to join the Olympiad. Seems reasonable to close loopholes. However, question of citizenship is difficult, as it can be very difficult to obtain. In Europe it is quite possible to live an entire life in one country whilst being a citizen of another country. So requiring citizenship might be too difficult. Note from Portugal – this is also true of eg. UAE with large expatriate population.

Agreed that the word secondary would be dropped from the phrasing in the proposal.

Vote: to change the statutes section 3 by inserting the relevant sentence.

For: 79

Against: 27

Abstain: 7

Members present: 135 (counted). $135 > 2 * 151/3$ so there exists a quorum.

Threshold is **90 votes** for changing the statutes.

Threshold is **67 votes** for changing the regulations.

Revote held to ensure all countries were able to vote:

For: 89

Against: 32

Abstain: 9

The proposal is rejected (by a margin of one vote).

B: Proposals from Japan. These proposals refer to the amendments made last year. First: section 2 of the regulations now requires the members of the Secretariat to be members of the Local Organising Committee. The proposal is simply to undo the amendment to section 2 of the regulations passed in 2018. Rationale is that the preparation of physics olympiads with the local organising committee is much about logistics and available funds which the host country is best placed to understand. Major changes cannot really be made and hence external members may not be effective. Would therefore like to remove or make very flexible this amendment. Proposal 2 depends on the vote of proposal 1. If proposal 1 is not adopted, Undo the requirement to invite the President. If this site visit remains in the regulations, then the request is to amend such that the cost is to be evenly borne by all participating countries.

Presentation of comments from Advisory Committee: consideration that IB last year made a mistake by making a decision based on one occasion; that the current wording carries only a moral imperative and hence does not actually need to do anything and could ignore this regulation – the second motion on the basis of cost burden should be removed; the host country usually invited the president some weeks before the IPhO in the past and that these amendments really just formalised an existing practice; note that cost of one visit vs cost of the IPhO is insignificant and a

poor reason to change practice, and that the members of the Secretariat should be experienced and hence trusted to provide constructive advice; note that the President has a counselling role but the that the power to demand action to ensure that the Olympiad works is important; note that the idea of perpetual debate by repealing proposals from the previous year is a dangerous precedent given that they have not been tested yet; note that some such site visits have been useful in the past; the Lisbon amendments were a reaction to an unfortunate event and are designed to help the cooperation between organisers and presidents and to ensure that there is not a repeat; support for relief of financial burden but not repeal of the formalisation of the preexisting relationship. Discussion opened to the floor.

Canada: want to point out that the president is elected with full trust and support of the International Board. Argument that a visit is useless is not valid – a month before, even in a perfectly organised Olympiad, the visit of the president can help to shorten the questions. In other cases, the president could give advice that there may not be enough printers or operators to ensure that the Olympiad will run. Many such details can be fixed a lot in this period of time and the outside view is very important. Many times it might not be necessary, but this is a safety valve - sometimes it may have immensely improved the situation. In favour of keeping this obligation.

Israel: last year, strongly opposed this proposal - was of the opinion that a country could organise all the details by itself. Now, can see some benefits - the President did come to see the organisation and it was helpful. First, someone coming from outside and giving the opinion made a difference to help convince some government officials that things needed to be done a certain way. Eli has a lot of experience in this Olympiad, and the President was asked to sign a non-disclosure, and was able to give an opinion about the question and that it would be okay. Helped to review every aspect. Now in favour of keeping the regulations as they are now.

Portugal: visit of the president gave two benefits. One was that there was a deadline that was extremely well set that meant many things needed to be organised. The second was to give confidence that things were being done correctly, gave experience and helped to unify the team. Hence thinks that it's a good idea to keep these phrases.

Japan: if the LOC has enough funding, will be more than happy to invite the president. The concern is that an expensive site visit might be a drain on scarce resources. Future host countries will understand the difficulty of fundraising. Seeking advice is a good thing and we would like to do that.

President: this is the first year of this presidency, did visit Israel from Singapore, and a few days' visit was planned. 12 hours work that was asked to do. One full day was for discussing and tailoring the questions; both theoretical and experimental questions discussed in detail. One day looking through every location, layout and logistics; all aspects were discussed in detail.

Vote: Proposal 1: Undo the regulation requiring the Secretariat to be part of the LOC. For: 19
Against: 89
Abstain: 12
The proposal is rejected.

Vote: Proposal 2: Amend the regulation requiring the President to be invited to visit the site, in order to relieve the burden of cost of the visit on the hosts.
For: 10
Against: 97
Abstain: 8
The proposal is rejected.

5. Election of the Secretary The two candidates were asked to speak about themselves.

Paul Stanley: long time leader of the USA physics Olympiad program. Many memories of involvement with many different leaders and shared memories. Goals for five years: access to past exams and solutions, detailed anonymised data, provide historical record, to know each leader, to create a welcome atmosphere where opinions are valued and respected, develop a way to discuss proposals, to make material available in a form that is localisable. To serve and work with the president.

Vitaly Shevchenko: would like to draw our attention to the people who are doing the Olympiads. Collaboration between the young people and the experienced ones; the young to bring the innovations and change and the experienced to keep the traditions of the IPhO. Candidate for the youth. Focus on statistics.

Vote:

Paul: 77

Vitaly: 59

Abstain: 3

Paul Stanley is elected the IPhO Secretary.

The IB thanks Matt for his service. Matt thanks the IB for the privilege of service and affirms a commitment to keep contributing to the IPhO in whichever way possible.

6. The Results Gold: 29 to 34 after moderation

Silver: 62 to 66 after moderation

Bronze: 92 to 101 after moderation

HM: 59 to 50 after moderation.

Statistics presented.

Handouts with results passed around to leaders to check, and shown on screen.

Vote to approve the results:

For: 123

Against:3

Abstain: 2

Special Prizes awarded:

Most Creative Solution: Will be announced later (approved by the Board) Best Female Student: Khanh Linh Nguyen (Vietnam)

Best Experimental Score: Yifan Sun (China)

Best Theoretical Score: Xiangkai Sun (China)

Best Overall Score: Xiangkai Sun (China)

Andrzej: thanks Eli Raz for his organisation of the Olympiad.

Meeting Closed at 1200 am.