

NITheCS COLLOQUIUM: Mathematical Contests in South Africa, Africa and the World

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ABSTRACT

Mathematical contests feature in most developed countries, but only to a lesser extent in developing countries. In the recent paper '*Mathematical Competitions in Africa: Their Prevalence and Relevance to Students and Teachers*', the authors investigated how widespread these contests are in Africa, as well as how successful African countries' participation is in the Pan-African Mathematical Olympiad (PAMO) and the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO). Furthermore, findings about attitudes and experiences were discussed from both the perspective of students and teachers and the impact on the pursuit of a STEM career.

In this talk, the authors focus on the landscape of mathematical contests in South Africa and where it places South Africa in Africa and the World, as well as what the challenges are which impede improvement. These contests should also be seen as part of a larger investment in the sciences and STEM careers, since many strong South African and African scientists and engineers are developed through successful participation in the IMO.

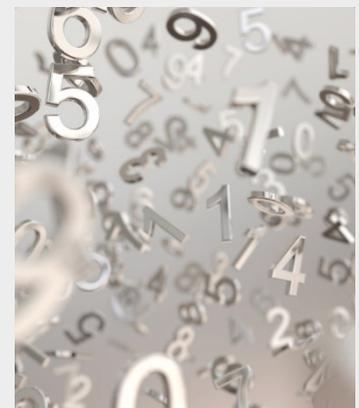
BIOGRAPHIES



Liam Baker started taking part in mathematics competitions in high school in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town. He continued his involvement there while completing his BSc and Honours at UCT, and his MSc and PhD at Stellenbosch University (SU). He now lectures at SU, forms part of the training programme for SA for mathematical competitions and is the Team Leader for SA for the International Mathematical Olympiad.



Phil Labuschagne started taking part in mathematics competitions while at primary school in Cape Town and attended the SA mathematics training camps in high school. He has been involved in training the SA teams since 2005 and has represented SA at the Pan-African Mathematical Olympiad as Leader and Deputy Leader, as well as at the IMO as Deputy Leader. He has been involved with the UCT Maths Competition, WITS Maths Competition, SA Maths Olympiad, Inter-Provincial Maths Olympiad and other contests. He is a director of the Junior International Mathematics Competition Organising Body of South Africa.



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