

OLYMPIAD NEWS

1986 IMO Preparation.

March 4/5 were the dates for the 1986 Australian Mathematics Olympiad. Traditionally this examination is held in early March as it is the basis for the selection of the Australian team to attend the International Olympiad. The examinations are held early in March to enable team members to attend a training school in the May holidays. This year, again, the Training School will be held at the University of Sydney. In fact this will be the last time for a while as for at least the next two years the School will be held in Melbourne.

Together with a number of younger students, the team will spend 8 days in training for the IMO. A typical day in the School will include:

- i) a four hour examination at International level
- ii) a two hour session with an in depth study of some aspect of mathematical problem solving
- iii) a two hour session on discussing the examination held in the morning with detailed criticism of written work
- iv) a one hour "think tank" with non-standard problems discussed in small groups
- v) two half hour presentations by team members on questions prepared prior to the School.

This year the candidates found the questions in the 1986 AMO very challenging although two candidates managed to find solutions to 5 out of 6 questions. All candidates had trouble with the three questions in Paper 1 for which, as usual, they had four hours. Difficulties were found in both questions 1 and 2 of this paper in particular though correct solutions were found to both, paper 2, also of four hours duration, presented less difficulties with many good solutions to questions 4 and 5 though not so many for question 6 (somewhat surprisingly). It is hoped that the difficulty of the questions will form a solid beginning to the preparation of those who will be selected to represent Australia in Warsaw, Poland later in the year.

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