

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What happened to the booklet?**

There was a great deal of support for the use of the website and email as forms of communication to schools. This will continue each year as it has reduced our costs significantly. It has also enabled schools to get in touch with us more easily than before.

We aim to have the website information 100% up to date by the end of Term 1.

- **What is the Theme?**

The theme for 2008 (for the publicity motif) is: **Maths across cultures.**

The theme for 2009 is: **Maths past, present and future.**

- **How do I know my entry has been received?**

Some schools were not sure if they were in the preliminary heats or gained direct entry into the finals. We send out an email to the two email addresses supplied on the entry form confirming this. The lists of teams in the preliminary heats are also posted on the website at the same time.

To avoid confusion on the night, we will have the lists of teams in the preliminary rounds on display at the main entry door to the auditorium.

- **How is the Preliminary Heats list worked out?**

Each year we automatically allow into the Final all schools that have been in the Preliminary Heats in the last two years. Depending on how many entries there are and have been in the last two year, there are then a number of spaces (up to 75 schools at years 7 and 8) for Finals. This selection is simply done by numbering the remaining schools (not in the Finals) and using a random number generator to select the appropriate number of schools. All remaining schools not in the Finals therefore compete in the Preliminary Heats for the remaining 5 or more Finals spaces.

- **Who can enter the downstairs area in the auditorium?**

Some schools were concerned and frustrated with the difficulties getting in and out of the auditorium at the end of one competition and start of the next. Also, some teachers-in-charge had problems with leaving the Year 7 team and meeting the Year 8 team and not being allowed in again. We also have problems with the huge number of people sitting upstairs in the stairways posing a fire risk. (Note: a number of years ago the Town Hall security instructed us to let only a few people into the downstairs seating to avoid fire risk problems!). We appreciate that our systems need refining. We are considering the following for next year – and will keep you informed:

- Year 7 leave out different doors to the ones the Year 8 students come in.
- More “traffic management people” in the foyer, and more roped off areas through which Year 8 enter the auditorium and areas where Year 7 leave.

- All Year 7 and Year 8 teams that are complete and ready at the start of the Year 7 competition can sit in the downstairs seating area. However, we cannot allow the Year 8 teams to enter the downstairs area once the Year 7 competition has started for safety reasons. If a teacher needs to go and check on Year 8 students during the Year 7 competition they will be allowed back in (but no students will be allowed in).

- **We find the sound system unclear.**

A few schools mentioned that it was very difficult to hear and understand the compere. On the Year 7/8 night it is exceptionally noisy (which is great) which makes it difficult in the first instance. However, the students on the floor at the important time at the beginning of the competition can clearly hear the compere and follow directions.

We will check out the sound system with the sound technicians at the Town Hall and the compere thoroughly before the competition.

In 2007, there was a noticeable improvement in the sound quality as provided by the Town Hall.

- **We find the Scoreboards hard to see.**

We realise it can be difficult to see these boards from far away and we have considered an electronic alternative but the cost is far too prohibitive for us. We are considering a data projection screen and camera which could show different scoreboards on a big screen during the competition for those sitting upstairs that cannot read the boards.

- **Who are the Markers?**

Over the course of the Cantamath history we have found senior school students to be the most reliable (over teachers/trainees/other adults!), also we do not have to worry about bias (the markers do not mark teams from their own schools). There is always going to be an element of human error however we do have a number of excellent checking systems in place that allow us to track problems efficiently.

Some of the confusion in the past couple of years has been where a team has submitted more than one answer on their question slip (forgetting to cross out a previous incorrect answer). As the marker could only reply “yes” or “no”, in these cases, the marker had to say “no” even if one is correct. Next year we will allow markers to say “unclear” indicating to the team that they cannot clearly see only one answer.

- **Who judges the Display Categories and how is it kept consistent?**

There was a comment regarding inconsistency in judging completed mainly by Mathematic Teachers. This is difficult to avoid and there will always be an amount of subjectivity in this – the judges are assigned to categories in pairs in an attempt to offer some moderation. We extend an offer to any teachers willing to be part of the judging process on the Wednesday morning.

- **How can I arrange pick-up of our schools Display Entries on the final night?**

Some schools found the pick up of display entries on the final evening from 8pm onwards too restrictive. Also out of town schools struggle to get display entries to or from the Town Hall. We sympathise in both these situations. We feel it is important that the public and parents of the Year 9 and 10 students get an opportunity to view the excellent work that students have done, and it would be a shame to have many displays already removed. We **recommend** that schools buddy up and share this load (e.g. ask the local high school to pick up the intermediate/primary work).

Also if any local school was willing to act as a contact school for out-of-town schools where they could drop off and collect their display work before and after the event please let us know.

Please note in Cantamath 2008 collection will be on Thursday night from 8pm.

- **How can I get involved in Cantamath?**

Yes we are always looking for help and especially on the 3 busy days in August. Please email your details to the Cantamath Secretary; cantamath@gmail.com and state briefly who you are, what you do and how much time you have to offer.

- **How can I feedback my comments?**

Please feel free to email any comments to the Cantamath Secretary; cantamath@gmail.com

Thank you!

(File edited 29/01/08)