

South African Institute of Physics



NPO Registration Number: 130-172 NPO

SAQA Professional Body ID: 777

<http://www.saip.org.za/>

Postnet Suite 165, Private Bag X025, LYNNWOOD RIDGE, 0040, South Africa

Prof. P. A Woudt (President)

University of Cape Town - **Tel:** +27 (0)21 650 2392 **Email:** pwoudt@ast.uct.ac.za

Prof. R. R Maphanga (Honorary Secretary)

Council for Scientific and Industrial Research **Tel:** +27 (0)12 841 4931 **Email:** rmaphanga@csir.co.za

Mr. B. Masara (Executive Officer)

Tel: +27 (0) 12 8412627 **Fax:** +27 86 605 0871 **Email:** brian.masara@saip.org.za

Media Release

Embargo – Thursday, 7 September 24h00 SAST

Learners excel in Physics

On Friday, 8 September, 2017 the South African Institute of Physics (SAIP) will announce the South African Physics Olympiad (SAPhO) results to the media, the schools involved and the learners who excelled in the SAPhO exam.

Over 200 learners from 69 schools were selected from almost 30 000 learners who wrote the SA National Youth Science Olympiad (SANYSO) to write SAPhO 2017 exam.

“South Africa, like every other country in the world, has amongst its youth, a latent talent that needs to be identified, nurtured and monitored, to allow them to reach their full potential”, says Case Rijdsdijk, SAPhO Convener. “There are talent scouts for potential sports men and women, why not for maths and sciences? After all our future lies in education and a technologically based economy. Identifying future scientists and engineers is essential and SAPhO is one pathway to success.”

These results were most satisfactory with an average mark of 41% for SAPhO. The range of marks was from 86% to 14%. Learners, who do well in any other recognized science competition or Olympiad, can be invited to take part in SAPhO 2018 which will be held on Monday, 6 August, 2018. The organisers hope to increase the SAPhO footprint by attracting closer to over 300 learners to participate in the Olympiad next year; it might become an on-line Olympiad, in which case, more learners will get the opportunity to write SAPhO.

Angus Thring, a grade 12 learner from Bishops in Rondebosch, Cape Town, Western Cape, was the top scoring learner in this year’s Olympiad with a score of 86%. He will receive a Gold Certificate, R1 500 and the SAIP Medal, which will be presented to him at the Annual SAIP Conference dinner in Bloemfontein in July 2018.

His teacher, Mr Kevin Kruger said that “Angus has a very enquiring and challenging mind. He grasps concepts quickly and will then delve into the details thoroughly. He takes nothing for granted.”

Angus added that “Physics avoids the subjectivism of the humanities, the arbitrariness of the life sciences and the immaterial abstraction of pure Maths. I love it because it is the discipline which most exemplifies the ruthless absoluteness of reality”

In second place was Thomas Hettasch, a grade 12 learner from the Deutsche Schule, Pretoria, Gauteng, with a score of 78%. He will receive a silver Certificate and cash prize of R1 000. Graham Mitchel from, Pretoria Boys High School, who with 76% scooped third place, he will receive R500 cash and Bronze Certificate.

SAPhO will also award those who scored between 75% and 60% Merit Certificates for their achievements and those who scored between 59% and 50% will receive Honourable Mention Certificates. The remaining learners will receive Participation Certificates to acknowledge their participation in the Olympiad.

Other Council Members

Prof. A. Venter (Treasurer – NMMU), Prof. D Naidoo (President- Elect -WITS), Prof M. Ntwaeaborwa (WITS),
Prof A. Muronga (NMMU) , Prof M. Chithambo (Rhodes) Dr R. Nemetudi (iThemba Labs),
Dr.J. B. Habarulema (SANS) Dr B Sondezi (UJ), Dr H. Chuma (Johnson Matthey)
Dr I. T Usman (WITS)

Physical Address

Building 42a, CSIR South Gate Entrance, Meiring Naude Road, Brummeria, PRETORIA, 0001, South Africa

The SAPHO Convener, Case Rijdsdijk, has said that he is grateful to the Department of Science and Technology, DST, and the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement, SAASTA, for their support and funding. In addition he also voiced his thanks to the SAIP Executive Officer, Mr Brian Masara, and the Project manager, Ms Ndanganeni Mahani for all their efforts in making SAPHO a success.

SAPHO is hosted by the South African Institute of Physics (SAIP) with the aim of identifying young southern Africans with ability in Physics, in the hope that these students will continue to study Physics at tertiary institutions and Universities within South Africa.

SAIP is the voice for Physics in South Africa. It is a professional body for practising physicists in a variety of disciplines ranging from Cosmology to Medical Physics. It has several goals, one of which is raising the awareness of Physics and its importance to our daily lives; much of which can be achieved through education.

Ends

Photo: Angus Thring

For further enquiries contact:

Case Rijdsdijk
SAPHO Convener
particles@mweb.co.za
case@sao.ac.za
044 877 1180
083 444 2494