



**Date:** 30 September 2024

## Media Release

### Learners Excel in Physics

**On Monday, 30 September 2024, 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 examination.**

A total of 270 learners from over 70 secondary schools were invited to write the SAPhO 2024 exam. The total number of participants was higher than the previous two years. The Olympiad was administered as a hybrid online and in-person 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 athletes, soccer players, etc.; why not for Mathematics 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".

Mr Tao Wang, a Grade 12 learner from Protea Heights Academy in the Western Cape, was the top achiever in this year's Olympiad. He will receive a Gold Certificate, R2 500 and the SAIP SAPhO Medal, which will be presented to him by the South African Institute of Physics. His teacher Mr J Dube said, "We are thrilled to say that Tao Wang, a student known for his exceptional talent and dedication, has excelled in the prestigious Physics Olympiad. Over the past three years, Tao has demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for physics, consistently standing out with his excellent mathematical skills and disciplined approach to learning. His grounded nature and hard work have been key to his success, and we are incredibly proud of his achievements. Tao's passion for the subject and his relentless pursuit of knowledge promise a bright future. Congratulations, Tao!" Tao said, "I am thrilled to have won the Olympiad. It was totally unexpected. At the same time, I am also deeply grateful for all the teachers who taught me physics and the continuous support and love from my parents."

This year's Silver Award was awarded to Mr Brett Jenman from Bishops Diocesan College, Western Cape, who received this year's Silver Certificate and R1 500. Brett said, "I would like to thank my physics teacher, Mr Mbuyazi, for being such a great teacher and giving me the skills required to do well in this Olympiad."

For the first time in the history of SAPhO, the Bronze Prize had a tie between Mr Arun Nayar from Bishops Diocesan College and Ms Mogau Mathothe from Maphokwane High School in Limpopo. Both pupils will receive the Bronze certificate and R1 000. Arun Nayar remarked, "Thank you for the opportunity to write. I really enjoy Physics and would like to continue to pursue it in the future." Mogau Mathothe's teacher, Mr Makhubele Zakhele, said, "Mogau is passionate about her schoolwork and achieves great results. We appreciate SAIP for the opportunity for learners to participate in the SAPhO."

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Mr. Tao Wang  
SAPHO Winner 2024



Mr Brett Jenman  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place



Ms. Mogau Mathothe  
Bronze Winner



Mr. Arun Nayar  
Bronze Winner

The South African Institute of Physics hosts SAPhO to identify talent and recognise excellence in physics in young South Africans. The hope is that these students will continue to study physics at tertiary institutions and universities within South Africa. SAPhO is the only Physics Olympiad registered with ASTEMI Olympiads and Competitions in the country. ASTEMI is the Association of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Innovation that registers STEMI Olympiads & Competitions.

The South African Institute of Physics (SAIP) was founded in 1955 and is a non-profit learned society and professional body for physics whose main role is to promote research, teaching and application of physics, developing and nurturing an inclusive next generation of physicists in South Africa. SAIP has several goals, one of which is raising awareness of Physics and its importance to our daily lives, much of which can be achieved through education. More details available on [www.saip.org.za](http://www.saip.org.za)

The President of the SAIP, Prof Rudolph Erasmus, congratulates all the winner and expresses his sincere gratitude to all the people and organisations who are enabling the annual running of the SAPhO event. The relevance of the basic sciences to address the intricate and complex challenges of our time continues to be recognised in the recent proclamation of the period 2024 to 2033 as the "International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (IDSSD)" by the United Nations General Assembly. The SAIP will continue to champion the fundamental contributions physics makes through its support of research and education.

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