

International Physicists' Tournament Rules

The International Physicists' Tournament (IPT) is a competition between teams of university students from different countries. The teams solve challenging scientific problems and defend their solutions in scientific discussions during Physics Fights.

1 Organizational rules

1.1 General provisions

1. The main guiding body of the IPT is the International Organizing Committee (IOC). It is elected by representatives of the countries participating in the tournament.
2. The head of the IPT is the president. They are elected for 2 years in a simple majority vote by the members of the IOC. Every official IPT document should be signed by the IPT President or Secretary.
3. Each country that is participating in the current year's edition of the tournament or has participated in one of the past two editions of the tournament is represented by only one IOC representative in the IOC. Countries that do not fulfill the above-mentioned criterion are not represented within the IOC.
4. IOC members can be part of the Executive Committee (ExeCom), and take the role of president or secretary. The members of the ExeCom are in charge of executing the IOC tasks not related to specific countries, and have neither decisive power nor extended privileges over other IOC members that have not been approved by the IOC.
5. The IOC is responsible for the selection of a country hosting the IPT each year. The IOC cooperates with the LOC in deciding the dates of the IPT.
6. The official language of the tournament is English. This applies to all official documentation, to Physics Fights (PF) and tournament ceremonies. The official website of the tournament is www.iptnet.info.
7. The entry fee is by default 1100 Euro per team - 1000 for the LOC and 100 for the IOC. The IOC and LOC may provide a discount on the registration fees on a case to case basis (e.g. for the countries participating for the first time in the tournament). The LOC is responsible for covering the catering and accommodation expenses of a team consisting of four to six team members and no more than two team-leaders. The LOC can suggest a modification of the entry fees at the latest five months prior the tournament.
8. Any member of the IOC or ExeCom can suggest a modification to the rules. The executive committee is in charge of expressing the modification in a proper format. The whole IOC is asked to vote on each modification. The modification is accepted if more than 50% of the voters are in favor. In case of equal number of votes in favor and against the modification, the President has a decisive vote. The default voting period is 10 days since the IOC is called for voting.
9. The IPT president is in charge of public statements made by the IPT. Until the IOC meeting of 2025, the Secretary is in charge of public statements by the IPT regarding Ukraine and Russia.

1.2 IPT problems

1. Each edition of the IPT is composed of 17 problems selected by international vote (refer pp. 1.2.5-6) among the problems proposed by the interested people and, finally, edited by the IOC. The final problem list is publicly announced at the latest eight months before the next edition.

2. Anyone can propose problems to the IOC.
3. The IPT Secretary is in charge of collecting problems at any time during the year. The deadline for submitting problems for a given edition is one month after the end of the previous edition.
4. A special committee formed by the IPT secretary is in charge of building a shortlist of maximum 80 problems, to be ready two weeks after the deadline submission. The problems are selected following a weighting of four criteria:
 - (a) Problem originality;
 - (b) How challenging is the problem;
 - (c) Does the problem formulation allow a theoretical and experimental solution? (although occasionally, purely theoretical or experimental problems are accepted)
 - (d) Does the problem solving comply to basic safety regulations and is it reasonably easy and/or cheap to perform experiments on it?

The problems can be adapted from their original formulation to better fulfill the previous criteria.

5. Once ready, the shortlist is sent by default to every IOC representative, as well as specific institutions upon written and motivated request. The person receiving the problems distributes them to all people involved in their country, gathers scores for the problems and reports them back to the IOC. Each country with an IOC representative can split 100 points between the problems. Countries without an IOC representative and specific institutions can split 50 points between the problems. The votes are weighted based on how many people from each country contribute.
6. The IPT secretary sums up the scores from all countries and formulates the final list of 17 problems out of those with the highest score. They and the executive committee reserve the right to include the problems limiting themselves to the top part of the voting list to guarantee:
 - (a) the safety of the participants when performing experiments;
 - (b) the availability of the equipment for the potential participants;
 - (c) reasonable coverage of different fields of physics;
 - (d) the originality of the problems considering possible new referenced work or relevant comments from voting countries appear to be found.

1.3 Organization of the tournament

1. The LOC must announce the exact date, place and entry fee for the IPT no later than 5 months before its start. The LOC, with the support of the IOC, is responsible for sending the official invitation letters, signed by the president and stamped with the IPT seal, to all requesting countries.
2. All countries should confirm their participation no later than 3 months before the tournament.
3. The LOC must distribute the information necessary to pay the entry fee no later than 2 months before the tournament.
4. The participating countries must pay the entry fee no later than 60 days before the tournament. The deadline for paying the entry fee is fixed by the LOC, and participation of a team that fails to observe the deadline is at the discretion of the LOC.

1.4 National Selections

1. IOC members represent the IPT in their own country. Each IOC representative is responsible for the organization of a national selection and for the registration of a national team to the international tournament.
2. The IOC recognizes the result of a national selection under the following conditions:
 - (a) there is no discrimination of any sort regarding the participants nor the teams as a whole;

- (b) the national selection gathers at least two teams of minimum three students each and features at least two Physics Fights, each composed of at least one Presentation and one Opposition. The PFs timing can be freely adapted from the stage regulation (see Sec. 2.4);
- (c) each participating team has the option to participate in the national selection for free. The team can however be charged for catering, housing and transport services but this should remain optional;
- (d) the winning team is fully eligible to arrange the participation to the IPT with or without the help of their respective IOC member and is not responsible for any expenses except for those needed to participate by themselves.

1.5 Registration and preselection

1. Participation is open to any non-PhD student that does not have yet a second-cycle academic degree (Master's degree or equivalent) at the time the tournament takes place. Exceptions can be made at the discretion of the IOC.
2. Teams from countries with active IOC representative submit their applications directly to him or her. The IOC representative should do his or her best to ensure the equal judgment of all applying teams from his country and is encouraged to organize a national tournament. Any problem with an IOC representative should be reported to the president as soon as possible.
3. Registration from teams without an active IOC representative are submitted to the IOC secretary and LOC.
4. Only one team per country can register. An exception is made for the extra LOC team (see 1.5.11) and if the number of applying countries is less than available seats (see 1.5.10 and 1.5.11 respectively). The majority of the team's participants must be affiliated with the institutions within the country where they represent.
5. The maximum number of participating teams is determined by the LOC before the registration deadline.
6. When more than the maximum number of teams apply, the teams representing the countries that participated in the semifinals and final of the previous edition are automatically qualified, as well as the extra LOC team (see 1.5.11). All other teams, whether selected through a national selection or applying directly, must complete a written report outlining the solution to one of the problems from a subset of the official list, named "preselection list", which is selected by the IOC and announced when the registration opens. The problems in the preselection list can be reported by any team. Teams that participated in national selections will have two further problems.
7. The Execom decides a deadline for the teams to send their written report. The report must have a pdf format and cannot exceed 5 pages (except the title page). The team is free to enclose their own experimental material (videos, photos, computer programs - smaller than 10 mb in total) and to cite it properly in the report. All presented material should not hold any hints to the team name or affiliation. Upon submission, the President will anonymize submissions for further grading by a pre-selection grading panel.
8. Each report will be judged on the basis of three main criteria:
 - (a) it gives a plausible physical answer to the initial question;
 - (b) it has an innovative approach, supported by experiment and/or theory;
 - (c) the problem has been explored in sufficient depth, i.e. all the possible approaches have been considered. The form of the report (layout, phrasing, presentation) is also important. It should be written in a clear and concise manner.
9. The reports will be anonymized before being judged an appointed jury. The list of participating teams will be announced no more than two weeks after the report submission deadline.
10. If more than one team from a country (without an active IOC representative) wishes to participate, the selection of the team from that country will be performed by the IOC, prior to any international preselection process, but following the same criteria used for the preselection process. Only the best report from each country will be considered for the international preselection process.

11. The host country can register one additional team, the choice of which is left to the LOC, which is qualified by default. The other team from the same country won't be qualified by default, except if it meets the requirements of 1.5.6.
12. If the number of countries with teams registered for the tournament is lower than the number of available seats, runner-ups of national selections will be invited to fill the remaining seats. The additional team inclusion precedence is decided by President in coordination with LOC and ExeCom considering all the factors including the last year performance, this year performance on national selection, the ability of the team to find the funds at the moment, etc. The decision should be fair and transparent. A third team from the host country can be invited following the rules above only if all the runner-up declined the invitation.

2 Tournament procedure rules

2.1 General provisions

1. Every team consists of 4 to 6 students and up to 2 team-leaders. Additional participants may join the tournament, but are not allowed to actively participate in the competition.
2. The tournament is composed of selective Physics Fights (PFs), leading to optional semifinals PF and, ultimately, to the final PF.
3. Any situation that is not covered by the following rules is decided by President consulting with LOC and IOC.

2.2 The jury

1. The jury is nominated and organized by the LOC in cooperation with the IOC. The jury consists of at least five members per Physics Fight, preferably from different countries.
2. One member of the jury is nominated as president of the jury by the LOC. Their role is to moderate the discussions and conflicts about the jury decisions and performances.
3. Team leaders, at least one from each team, may be included in the jury providing the team has a team leader eligible for judging. Multiple jury members from the same country must be distributed uniformly across the fights. Team leaders must not be members of the juries judging their own country's team.
4. The LOC, in cooperation with the IOC, can decide at its own discretion to use or not the team leaders as jury members for any fight.

2.3 The PF regulations

1. Depending on the total number of teams, a PF involves preferably three or, optionally, four teams. In the course of a PF, team members are only allowed to communicate with participants of the same PF. Before the beginning of a PF, the jury and the teams are introduced.
2. The PF consists of three (or four) Rounds. In each Round, a team plays one of the three (four) roles: Reporter, Opponent, Moderator (Observer). In the subsequent rounds of the PF, the teams change their roles according to the following schemes:

Three teams PF				Four teams PF				
Team/Round	1	2	3	Team/Round	1	2	3	4
A	Rep.	Mod.	Opp.	A	Rep.	Obs.	Mod.	Opp.
B	Opp.	Rep.	Mod.	B	Opp.	Rep.	Obs.	Mod.
C	Mod.	Opp.	Rep.	C	Mod.	Opp.	Rep.	Obs.
				D	Obs.	Mod.	Opp.	Rep.

3. Team captains may choose any available position in the PF (i.e. A, B, C). The order in which the captains choose their positions is determined at the beginning of each PF via the captains' fight. The fight's winner chooses whether he wants to be the first, second or third to write down his team's position. The captain that arrived second in the fight chooses and finally the teams' positions are decided. The problems for the captains' fights are prepared by the LOC, with available help from IOC. The captain fights consist of a challenging little task or test in physics/math, and cannot exceed 3 minutes, except during the final where they can be extended to 30 minutes and multiple problems to solve.

2.4 The stage regulations

1. The PF is ruled by a chairperson, selected by the LOC in cooperation with the IOC. Each Stage schedule is regulated by the chair according to the following table:

The performance order in the Stage of a PF	Reserved time in minutes
1. The Opponent challenges the Reporter to present a problem	1
2. The Reporter accepts or rejects the challenge	1
3. Preparation of the Reporter	5
4. Presentation of the report, Selective PF (final)	10(12)
5. Clarifying questions from the Opponent to the Reporter and answers of the Reporter	2
6. Preparation of the Opponent	3
7. The Opponent's speech	5
8. Discussion between the Reporter and the Opponent	5
9. Clarifying questions from the Moderator to the Reporter and the Opponent and their answers	2
10. Preparation of the Moderator	1
11. The Moderator's Speech	3
12. Discussion between the Moderator, Reporter and the Opponent	4
13. General discussion between the teams (any member of any team except Observers)	5
14. Concluding remarks by the Reporter	1
15. Questions from the Jury	6
16. Jury decides marks	1
17. Jury remarks/comments	4
Total Time for a Physics Fight	59

2. Each team participating in a PF has the right to use one time-out during the whole PF (consisting of three or four rounds). The time-out lasts for one minute and during the time-out every participant of the round can consult with his team. The time-out cannot be taken during any team's presentation.
3. The chair of the fight is responsible for the introduction of the teams and jurors, the captain's fight, timing and fair play in general.

2.5 Security concerns

1. When working on the problems, participants and individual IOC representatives must abide by the laws and regulations of their country and university. The IOC as a whole cannot be held responsible for any damage caused when working on the experiments.
2. The participants can ask the LOC at the latest three weeks in advance for supplementary safety material (wooden box, safety walls, etc...) to be used during the tournament. Providing or not this material is at the discretion of the LOC.
3. The chairperson can forbid the participants to perform an experiment live if they think the safety of the public and/or of the jury is compromised. Prior to the tournament, the participants can ask the LOC if they are unsure about the possibility to perform an experiment.
4. During the competition, the participant(s) performing an experiment will not hold the organizers responsible for any damage or injury which may result thereof.

2.6 Team's performance in rounds

1. The Reporter presents the essence of the solution to the problem, attracting the attention of the audience to the main physical ideas and conclusions. It is strongly recommended that the Reporter presents some original ideas and compares his own theoretical results with those obtained by self-made experiments, when possible.
2. The Opponent puts questions to the Reporter and criticizes the report, pointing to qualities and/or possible inaccuracies and errors in the understanding of the problem and in the solution. The Opponent analyses the advantages and drawbacks of both the solution and the presentation of the Reporter. The discussion between the Opponent and Reporter should focus on how to correct or improve the Reporter solution. Some experimental results obtained by the Opponent that clearly exhibit the inconsistencies of the Reporter's model and/or short calculations that show the errors or inapplicability of Reporter's theory can be presented in a very brief way. The Jury should decide on the relevance of such elements for the discussion. At the end of the discussion, the participants should agree on what can be changed/improved on the Reporter solution.
3. The principal goal of the Moderator is to stimulate and moderate the discussion between the Reporter and the Opponent, and later between the Reporter team and the Opponent team, to help the Reporter and the Opponent stay focused on the problems and to help the audience and the jurors understand the problem and the proposed solution as well as possible, The Moderator starts with a monologue, in which they:
 - (a) Briefly summarize the discussion between the Reporter and the Opponent,
 - (b) Specify which discussion topics should be considered closed and why,
 - (c) Specify which discussion topics should be further explored and why,
 - (d) Lay out a framework for further discussion.

The Moderator moderates the ensuing discussion, in particular, they decide who participates in the discussion and how long the participants are allowed to speak - with the right to cut a speech if the Moderator decides that it does not adhere to the discussion framework. The Moderator also decides in which order participants are allowed to speak in the discussion. The Moderator should not introduce their own results unless it is absolutely necessary to highlight a crucial physical aspect of the problem that has not been mentioned before. The Moderator should be respectful to the Reporter and the Opponent and their teams, to appreciate the strengths of their arguments, and to make room for a constructive critique of the weak points. The Moderator should also make sure that there is a fair representation of the views expressed by the Reporter, the Opponent, and their teams.

4. The Observer does not participate in the PF.
5. During a PF only one member of a team takes the floor as an Opponent or a Moderator but there can be up to two Reporters during the Reporter's presentation. Other members of the teams are allowed to help with the presentations technically. There are no limitations on communication between team members during the preparation time. The team members are allowed to give their players brief remarks in written form at any time, except for the Reporter's, Opponent's and Moderator's presentations.
6. No member of a team is allowed to take the floor more than twice during a PF. Furthermore, during the Final PF any team member can take the floor only once.

2.7 The rules of the problem challenges and rejections

1. All problems presented during a PF must be different.
2. The Opponent may challenge the Reporter on any problem with the exception of a problem that:
 - a) was permanently rejected by the Reporter earlier;
 - b) was presented by the Reporter earlier;
 - c) was opposed by the Opponent earlier;
 - d) was presented by the Opponent earlier.If there are no problems left to challenge, the bans d), c), b), a) are successively removed, in that order.

3. The Reporter may tactically reject the challenge of three different problems in each PF without penalty. In addition to this, each team has one free permanent rejection which may be used at any moment, and without penalty.
4. During the first PF, teams can use one extra tactical rejection without incurring in any penalty.
5. Every rejection in addition to those defined above is considered as a permanent rejection and induces a penalty. For each incurred penalty the coefficient of the Reporter is decreased by 0.2. This reduction continues to apply during the following PFs.
6. Permanent rejections, once made, apply to current and all future PFs.

2.8 The grading

1. After each stage the jury grades the teams, taking into account the presentations, questions, answers to the questions and participation in the discussion.
2. Each jury member shows integer marks from 1 to 10. To reduce the impact of biased extreme grades for odd and even numbers of jurors in a similar manner, the following weighted average is applied. The lowest grade is discarded for 5 or more jurors. For nine or more jurors, the additional number of discarded grades on each side is $\lceil (\text{number of jurors}-1)/4 \rceil$, where $\lceil x \rceil$ - is the integer part of x. For the remaining list of the grades, the grades on the lowest and highest tails are accounted in the average with a weight equal to $1 - (\text{number of jurors}-1)/4$, where x is the fractional (decimal) part of x. For clarity, please refer to the table below.

	lowest	lowest after trim	2nd lowest after trim	central	2nd highest	highest
5	0	1	1	1	1	1
6	0	0,75	1	1	1	0,75
7	0	0,5	1	1	1	0,5
8	0	0,25	1	1	1	0,25
9	0	0	1	1	1	0
10	0	0	0,75	1	0,75	0
11	0	0	0,5	1	0,5	0
12	0	0	0,25	1	0,25	0
13	0	0	0	1	0	0

3. This sum is used to calculate the mean mark for the team. The mean marks are multiplied by different coefficients: 3.0 or less (see section 2.7 — “The rules of problem challenges and rejections”) for the Reporter, 2.0 for the Opponent, 1.0 for the Moderator and then transformed into points.

2.9 Extra points and total sum of points

1. For a team in a PF the Sum of Points (SP) is the sum of mean marks, multiplied by the corresponding coefficients and rounded to one hundredth. Additionally, the team which won the PF receives 2 additional points and the team which arrived second receives 1 extra point. In case of ex aequo, 3 points are divided between all teams that won the first place in the PF.
2. The Total Sum of Points (TSP) of a team is equal to the sum of SPs in all PFs. The number of Fights Won (FW) is the number of PFs, in which a team received the highest SP among the three or four teams participating in the same PF.

2.10 The semifinals

1. The semifinal’s inclusion in the IPT is decided by LOC. However the semifinals are strongly recommended to be organized if the number of the teams is more than 14.
2. At the end of the selective PFs, if there are 18 (or more) teams participating, the teams in position from 1 to 9 will take part in the semifinal. If the number of teams is (strictly) less than 18, the team with the highest TSP is automatically qualified for the final, whereas teams from position 2

to 7 will take part in the semifinals. In case of ex aequo, the team with the higher number of FW will be favored.

3. The semifinals consist PFs carried out simultaneously. In the case that there are 18 or more teams, one is held between the teams that ranked 1st, 6th and 7th, another one between the teams that ranked 2nd, 5th and 8th, and the third one between the teams that ranked 3rd, 4th and 9th. If there are less than 18 teams, one semifinal is held between teams that ranked 2nd, 5th and 6th, the other one between teams that ranked 3rd, 4th and 7th.
4. All challenge limitations, rejections and penalties from the selective PFs still apply during semifinals.
5. The TSP and the FW obtained during the semifinals add up to the TSP and the FW obtained during selective PFs. (see 2.9.2)
6. During semifinals the bonus points assigned (see rule 2.4.1) are doubled.

2.11 The final

1. Three teams are qualified in the finals. Depending on the semifinals inclusion, the order is:
 - (a) The team(s) qualified by default after the Selective PFs (if applicable).
 - (b) The team(s) with the highest TSP. In case of ex aequo, the team with the higher number of FW will be favoured.
2. The teams participating in the final choose the problems they will report themselves and proclaim them at a meeting of all the finalists. The teams choose the problems in the order described in 2.11.1. No team can choose a problem already chosen by another team.
3. The podium order is decided by the points awarded during the final only.

2.12 Research ethics requirements and Penalties

This document describes the penalties given to a team that does not follow the ethic requirements, as presented in Sec. 2.11 “Research ethics requirements and Penalties” of the official Rules.

1. All the equations, their derivations as well as simulation and experimental results must be documented properly, with clear links to all the sources used.
2. The participant’s original work and results must be documented either in the main part of the presentation or on additional slides that must be presented upon request. The documentation must be detailed enough to establish the authorship of the work:
 - (a) For a theoretical result, it is advised to have all the calculations leading to this result on additional slides.
 - (b) For numerical simulations, it is advised to prepare the program source as well as some tables or plots from its output.
 - (c) For the experimental work, it is requested to have a photo/video of the experimental setup in the main part of the presentation.

Questions can be asked during or after the fights by the jury members about a specific part of the setup or certain data points; it is thus advised to have enough supplementary material to answer any questions related to the steps of the experimental process.

3. The opposing and the reviewing teams are allowed to request the documentation listed above and to point out to the jury the acts of plagiarism if they are discovered. The jury members take into account the penalties listed below when grading the presentation. In case of serious fouls (described in 5.b) additional punishment measures are applied.
4. If an act of plagiarism is discovered after the PF, the jury reserves a right to apply punishment measures in the period between the selective PF and the final, if the foul happened during the selective PF, or within one year after the final, in which the act of plagiarism occurred.

5. Actions and behavior that may be considered as cheating or plagiarism triggers punishment measures upon the offending team. The possible measures are:
 - (a) Minor punishments are applied in case of light fouls. This implies actions that may lead the jury members to believe that the results are produced by the presenter team, while they are not:
 - not stating the source of the general-knowledge formula used for the further derivations results in a warning.
 - using the qualitative explanation of the phenomenon without citing the source results in a warning.
 - not citing the source of equation derivation results in a warning.
 - If more than two warnings are given in a single physics fight, the punishment can result in one or many of the punishment listed below.
 - using a graph, figure or video published previously without citing the source - up to 3 points penalty.
 - not citing the source of the theoretical models - up to 5 points penalty.
 - not citing the source of the computer simulations results - up to 5 points penalty.
 - not citing the source of the experimental results - up to 5 points penalty.
 These points are given in terms of the total score of a team in the PF.
 In case the foul is revealed by the opponent or the reviewer teams, each jury member applies approximately the corresponding penalty divided by 3, when grading the presentation.
 - (b) Severe penalties are applied to the conscious violations of rules. This includes a team claiming to have produced their presented results, which appear to have been previously published and claim to be their own work. The penalties that may apply are:
 - a figure, a graph or a video - up to 5 points penalty.
 - the theoretical model - up to 8 points penalty.
 - the computer simulations results - up to 8 points penalty.
 - the experimental results - up to 8 points penalty.
 - a large part of the presentation if the reporter nevertheless shows a good knowledge of the presented work - up to 10 points penalty.
 - entire presentation, not understanding the elements of the copied presentation or other severe cases of crude research ethics violation- up to total team disqualification and annulment of the PF results.
6. The severity of a case is decided by the jury members as soon as possible. Light foul measures are decided by jury members of the corresponding fight. In case of severe rules violation the penalty is decided by a council formed by the IPT President and ruled by the President of the Jury, in attendance of the offending team and team leaders during some parts of the hearing. The offending team may appeal against light foul penalties to a council decision. The jury council decision is irrevocable.
7. A penalty of 2-10 points is applied in case of:
 - data falsification or fabrication,
 - lack of documentation proving that the experiment took place.
 The severity of each case is decided by the jury members of the PF analogously to the cases of plagiarism.
8. Unethical, sarcastic, discriminatory and other disrespectful behaviour leads to penalties ranging from a warning to disqualification of the team.

2.13 Alternative presentations sessions

1. After deciding the problems for the final, and before the final, the LOC may opt to organise one or two alternative presentations sessions. The LOC determines the place, time and format of these events.
2. The teams are invited to present their solutions to the problems they haven't presented yet. These sessions are facultative, and have no impact on the final ranking. If the schedule is limited the time slots are distributed uniformly among the teams giving the priority to non-semifinalists, then semifinalists and, ultimately, finalists.

3. Problems to be presented in the Final cannot be reported during the alternative presentations session.

These rules have been accepted by IOC on April 6th 2024