

Republic of Belarus at IPhO

Republic of Belarus has participated in the International Physics Olympiad for School Students (IPhO) since 1995, when the first team of school students accompanied by their team leaders went to Australia to participate in the 26th IPhO (see Table 1).

It was a tough start. Lack of experience, proper equipment and preparation time affected our performance, and thus the initial results were quite modest: just two Honourable Mentions (I. Varaxa, A. Poliukh)... But a start was made!

After that, active work was carried out at the BSU Physics Faculty and BSU Lyceum with the support of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus to prepare our best school students for the International Olympiad. A new type of intellectual competition gained incredible popularity with the students, serving as a strong incentive for active self-study from early grades on. Best teachers with years of experience in training students for Republican and All-Soviet Physics Olympiads contributed to the process with their innovations.

At the next International Olympiad held in Norway in 1996, our national team won their first Bronze (J. Vanne, V. Makarenko) and Silver (I. Koznatchev) medals!

Regular systemic work with school students at all stages of preparation for IPhO was continued with renewed vigour and in 1999, at the 30th International Olympiad in Italy, our team won their first Gold medal (A. Malashevich)!

The Olympic principle of the multi-stage organization of Olympiads in various subjects which reads “Won - go on!” helps us identify the “best of the best” in our country quite objectively, with gifted students gradually making it through school, district, regional (city) and Republican levels of the Olympiads. Every year, top five young physicists of the country went to the International Olympiad to show their skill competing with other countries (Picture 1).

Throughout the history of Belarusian participation in the International Physics Olympiads for School Students (1995–2021), our teams have won 97 medals and received 25 Honourable Mentions from the international jury! Our country’s track record includes 13 Gold, 34 Silver and 50 Bronze medals.

All physicists of the country take special pride in the fact that **Alexander Mikhalychev** (Picture 2), a graduate of Minsk school №51 (currently gymnasium №29), became the **absolute winner** of the 35th International Physics Olympiad in Pohang, South Korea, in 2004 upon a close-run competition with the Chinese team, scoring 47.7 points out of 50! Moreover, that was the first time our team won two Gold medals (A. Mikhalychev and R. Sakovich, Picture 3)!



Picture 1. Belarusian national team at 46th IPhO in India.



Picture 2. A. Mikhalychev

In 2019, the 50th International Physics Olympiad for School Students took place in Tel-Aviv, Israel, and was held in the usual format. In 2020, however, the Olympiad was not held due to the COVID-19 pandemic, switching to online mode in 2021.

High results achieved by our teams are evidence of the high level of teaching physics in Belarus. After all, it is nearly impossible to “come, see and conquer” at the Olympiads without diligent preparation. To be effective there, you need more than just motivation – you need systematic preparation and a vast experience of solving multi-step tasks which can be quite bulky and involve

tough calculations (“tricky” tasks as we call them). Again, the level of Olympiad tasks and approaches to solving them is currently significantly superior to that of standard textbook problems.

Another reason for high performance is high level of competition among high school students for diplomas and medals. Victory at the final stage of the Republican Olympiad for school students allows one to enter university as early as in March and secure their place on the national team for the International Olympiad.

Let us wish our Olympians to keep up the good work!



Фото 3. Команда Республики Беларусь на 35 IPhO (Южная Корея)