



Math League News

■ **Our Calculator Rule** Our contests allow both TI-89s and HP-48s. Our printed rules have now been updated. The Math League now allows any calculator without a QWERTY keyboard.

■ **Comments About Calculator Usage** T. Rice wrote “The TI-89 gives some students an advantage in these contests that is unfair to the rest of the participants. I feel this is unacceptable and would like to hear more than one viewpoint on this. When I objected last year, I only got your response which disagreed. This gives all power of decision to one individual and leaves the rest of us with no voice in the process.” We neither censor nor selectively choose which letters we print. We print *all* comments we receive, so the lack of other responses means that no one else sent any. Our calculator rule is the standard rule used in widely taken math contests and College Board exams. All comments are welcome.

■ **Comments Re: Results On The Web & Not By Mail?**

Go to <http://www.mathleague.com> and look around! What do you think about our publishing results on the web (which can then be printed to get printed copy)? We’d like to mail results to only those schools requesting mail. This would prevent a raise in fees dues to postage increases. Please let us know your thoughts.

■ **Contest Dates** HS Contest dates are Dec. 12, Jan. 16, Feb. 13, and Mar. 20. A registration form for our April *Algebra Course I Contest* is enclosed. Do you have a schedule conflict with our contest dates? Our rules say that, in case of **vacations, special testing days, or other disruptions of the normal school day**, you may *give the contest on an earlier day*—but you must *still* mail scores by Friday of the official contest week. If scores are late for due cause, please attach a brief explanation. We reserve the right to consider as unofficial late scores lacking such an explanation.

■ **Regional Groupings** We sometimes receive requests about regional groupings. Within guidelines, we *try*, when possible, to honor such requests for the next school year.

■ **Student Cumulative Scores** Completion of the **Cumulative Column** is optional, but *we list (and consider official) only cumulative scores reported in this column*. A student whose cumulative scores are incorrect (or which don’t appear regularly in the **Cumulative Column**) may lose eligibility for recognition by the League.

■ **What Do We Print in the Newsletter?** Our policy is to print every solution and comment we receive, newsletter space permitting. But we prepare the newsletter before the score report, so slow mail (a big problem in December!) means we don’t print some comments. Finally, we may say “so-and-so sent an alternate solution” when tight space means we don’t have room to print it.

■ **Some Tips on Getting Students Involved** One advisor asked how to persuade more “always busy” students to take our half-hour contests. Would you like to share your tip? Here’s a start: **1)** Hold contests during lunch. Serve ice cream or fruit to those who eat while writing the contest. **2)** Use a bulletin board to name top students on each grade. Make a loudspeaker announcement too. **3)** Send a report to a local community newspaper. **4)** Serve cookies and drinks, with funds provided by the student government. **5)** Hold the contest jointly with a neighboring school. The kids will enjoy the occasional travel and meeting kids from another school. **6)** Post a colorful announcement the day before the contest so no one “forgets” about it on the day of the contest. **7)** At Awards Night, give our Certificate to the students on each grade level who score highest on the contests.

■ **General Comments About Contest #2** Gerald Lamb wrote “This contest was terrific with 2-5 and 2-6 forcing our kids to think. Thanks for continuing to write great problems.”

■ **Problem 2-2: Comment** Tim Baumgartner noted that the TI-86 could handle numbers of that size. Dave Farber used logarithms to determine the relative sizes.

■ **Problem 2-5: Comments** Ted Heavenrich wrote that “Problem 2-5 was superb! It got at so many key ideas and skills in mathematics (slopes, undetermined constants, area of a Δ , etc.). Kids who knew what they were doing took less than a minute to get the answer, while others struggled for 15 minutes to no avail.”

■ **Problem 2-6: All Students Given Credit** Numerous appeals were received. As Ted Heavenrich noted “Not only did you assume that we understood the use of the word “day” to mean “workday,” but you also assumed in your solution that Holmes workday was the same as Watson’s! This assumption is patently unwarranted since the two neither started nor finished together. I urge you to give credit to everyone.” This appeal was sent to Professor Brian Conrad, Math Dept., Univ. of Michigan who agreed with the appeal. *Hey! Prof. Conrad is my son. I paid for his education. Can’t he be a little appreciative and side with me? (joke).*

Statistics / Contest #2

Prob #, % Correct (top 5 each school)

2-1	92%	2-4	86%
2-2	95%	2-5	26%
2-3	89%	2-6	---