

Top mathematics boffins honoured

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Aaron Naidu (Eden College) and Emmanuel Rassou (South African College High School) were honoured for their performance in the South African Mathematics Olympiad (SAMO). The two learners beat more than 91,000 learners nationwide to be crowned as the overall winners of the South African Mathematics Olympiad (SAMO).



Senior winner Aaron Naidu is with Tracey Unser-Divisional Executive, Corporate Citizenship: Liberty

Aaron Naidu, a grade 12 learner from Eden College in Durban won the prestigious Dirk van Rooy gold medal for the senior division of the SAMO. He has been taking part in the South African Mathematics Foundation (SAMF) Olympiad programmes since he was in grade 6. Aside from mathematics he enjoys playing chess, gaming and watching sci-fi and superhero movies and series. Aaron won the junior division of the South African Mathematics Olympiad in 2015 and 2016 and was a top 10 senior medallists in 2017 and 2018. He represented South Africa at the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) in 2017 and 2019. In 2017 he obtained an honourable mention and in 2019 he earned a bronze medal.

Emmanuel Rassou won a silver medal at the 2018 SAMO when he was still in primary school. This year he has walked away with the Dawie du Toit gold medal for winning the junior division for the second time in a row. He enjoys athletics and has represented Western Province at hurdles. He was also part of the 2019 South African Pan African Mathematics Olympiad (PAMO) team.

The South African Mathematics Foundation (SAMF) awarded these and other prizes at their annual awards function hosted over the weekend in Gordon's Bay. The first round of the SAMO took place in March with more than 91,000 learners from 1,320 schools participating. A total of 18,858 learners wrote the second round in May and the best 214 learners from the second round qualified for the final round in July.



Junior winner Emmanuel Rassou is with Willi Coates - Senior Executive Branding, Marketing and Communication and Karin Jacobsen - Project Manager: Marketing & Communication - Nation Building (SAICA)

Other winners were Kgaogelo Bopape, who won the award for best performing South African Black learner for the third time in a row. He was also part of the IMO and PAMO team this year. The grade 12 learner from Soweto received a gold medal at the PAMO and earned an honourable mention at the IMO.

Rondebosch Boys' High School in Cape Town came out tops with three awards namely, top performing school in Western Cape, top performing quintile five school and national top performing school.

The Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) grant is utilised by the provincial education departments to pay the entry fee for learners participating in the SAMO. Sibonokuhle High School in Nseleni, Kwazulu-Natal triumphed as top-performing MST school. Samuel Tucker (Pinelands High School in Cape Town) received the best senior MST learner award and Edwin Batsietseng (Vaal Reefs Technical High School in Orkney, North West) was honoured with the best junior MST learner award.

Liberty's Lead Specialist for Corporate Social Investment, Nomaxabiso Matjila, is very proud of all the learners. "As the main sponsor of SAMO, Liberty would like to extend its congratulations to the winners. You truly are an inspiration to all learners in the country and are setting a strong example for others to follow. Well done, these achievements are the result of hard work and dedication to your educational journey," she said.

The SAMF programmes such as the SAMO are used to select and train learners for international competitions. Some of the best young mathematicians in the country will be invited to an Olympiad camp in December 2019 hosted by the University of Stellenbosch. From this training squad the South African teams for the PAMO and the IMO will be selected.

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