

Comments from Former US Chemistry Olympiad Team Members

Olympiad Year Location Medal Earned	Name	Comments
24 th IChO - 1992 Pittsburgh, USA Gold	<u>Swaine Chen</u>	<p>The IChO was extremely important to my career development. It led me into Chemistry, which led to my first research lab experience, and this set me on the track that I've been following since.</p> <p>Personally, participating in the IChO was a key encouragement and positive experience when I was only 17 years old. Many things have happened since then, but the IChO was an important seed of confidence; there was very little in the way of real evaluation for me prior to that, as I'd been at the top of the class until that point and had no idea where I would really fall in the grand scheme of things. That experience was a key seed for my current desire to pursue a career as an academic, looking for global impact and recognition. This also affects how I try to train my staff, to not be content with just meeting requirements at a local level but instead to look for excellence in an objective way, something that will be recognized independent of their training and independent of their future career path.</p>
37 th IChO - 2005 Taipei, Taiwan Silver	<u>Nick Sofroniew</u>	<p>I had a lot of fun preparing for and participating in the 37th IChO in Taipei, Taiwan. After the Olympiad I obtained a Bachelors and Masters degree from the University of Cambridge in Mathematics, specializing in Analysis and Combinatorics.</p> <p>I am currently doing a PhD in Neuroscience in a joint program between the University of Cambridge and the Janelia Farm Research Campus of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute located in Ashburn, Virginia, investigating the relationship between neural activity in the mammalian cerebral cortex and behaviour.</p>
41 st IChO - 2009 Cambridge, England Silver	<u>Brian Seifried</u>	<p>I currently am a senior Chemical Engineering major at Georgia Tech. I am planning on pursuing a PhD upon graduation.</p> <p>The preparation for the IChO has given me a significant advantage in the classroom, allowing me to test out of several courses that are not typically exempted. The IChO has helped me forge friendships that I still maintain today. The IChO has given me the confidence to be more assertive with my professors in college.</p>

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<p>36th IChO – 2004 Kiel, Germany Silver</p>	<p><u>Emily Tsui</u></p>	<p>After the IChO in 2004, I majored in chemistry at MIT, and I am currently a graduate student in chemistry at Caltech.</p> <p>Participating in the IChO was a fantastic experience and taught me a lot about the breadth of applications that chemistry has. It helped me decide to do undergraduate research as a freshman, and I have been working in synthetic inorganic chemistry ever since.</p> <p>The IChO has also provided a connection to other chemists, even those who participated in different years. In my college classes, I met former Olympians from Thailand and Korea, and my current PhD advisor was on the Romanian team many years ago.</p>
<p>41st IChO - 2009 Cambridge, England Silver</p> <p>42nd IChO - 2010 Tokyo, Japan Silver</p>	<p><u>Colin Lu</u></p>	<p>I am a rising junior at Yale enrolled in the Chemistry and the joint Economics/Mathematics programs. I work in Professor Jonathan Ellman's research group at Yale, investigating C-H bond activation reactions and their applications to organic synthesis. I have worked in the lab for over a year and intend to continue for the remaining semesters. Later this summer, I will change my focus and begin an internship in financial consulting, situated in Stamford, CT, where I will validate and create models for fixed income security pricing.</p> <p>The Chemistry Olympiad is one of my deepest and fondest memories, and will permanently remain one of the landmarks of my adolescent life. From the first phone call from Washington DC in May of 2009 to the moment I stepped out of the JFK airport after the 2010 IChO, I met hundreds of new people from all over the US and the world, I was exposed to the profound principles of chemistry, I experienced the cultures of two wonderful nations, England and Japan, and I survived - twice - the intensity of an international competition. I am grateful to the ACS for providing an excellent, life-changing opportunity that endowed me an enduring appreciation for chemistry, an extensive network of great people, and a plethora of diverse memories to reflect upon.</p>
<p>39th IChO - 2008 Moscow, Russia Silver</p>	<p><u>Kenneth Brewer</u></p>	<p>I am a student at Harvard University majoring in chemistry. I plan on pursuing a PhD in the field when I graduate in 2013.</p> <p>IChO has been helpful in obtaining research positions here at Harvard.</p>

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24 th IChO - 1992 Pittsburgh, USA Silver	<u>Jeffrey Chuang</u>	<p>The 1992 Olympiad was a special moment for me. Some of the best friends I have today were people I met at the training camp while playing volleyball. I also really treasure the time I was given to meet the mentors, older US IChO team members, and international colleagues.</p> <p>Thinking about their choices has helped me make many decisions not only about research projects but also about how a scientist can contribute back to society.</p> <p>Currently I am a professor leading a research group in the fields of computational biology, genomics, and gene regulation. I will be moving this summer to the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, a new research institute in Connecticut dedicated to improving medicine through the study of human and comparative genomics.</p>
42 nd IChO - 2010 Tokyo, Japan Gold	<u>Alex Siegenfeld</u>	<p>I participated in the 42nd IChO held in Japan in 2010, the summer after my junior year of high school. I just finished my freshman year at MIT, where I am pursuing a double major in chemistry and physics. I have been working in Professor Nocera's lab (at MIT), where I have been synthesizing and studying electrochemical water oxidation catalysts. I participated in a few programs where I taught informal chemistry classes to high school students. This summer, I will continue to work in the Nocera lab, and I will also teach a short chemistry course to high school students over the course of 7 Sundays.</p> <p>The Chemistry Olympiad program was a great experience, both because of the way in which it encouraged me to further explore chemistry and because of the opportunities it gave me to meet other students, both in the U.S. and abroad. In large part because of the Chemistry Olympiad, I entered college with a strong background in and desire to further study chemistry, which has guided me both in my classes and in my research. The Chemistry Olympiad program also helped show me how much I enjoy obtaining a fundamental understanding of chemistry and sharing that understanding with others.</p>
22 nd IChO - 1990 Paris, France Silver	<u>Steven Gubser</u>	<p>I am a Professor of Physics and the Director of Graduate Studies in Physics at Princeton University. I learned a lot from the IChO and enjoyed every minute of it.</p>

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<p>38th IChO - 2006 Gyeongsan, Republic of Korea Silver</p>	<p><u>Alex Zozula</u></p>	<p>I'm currently a first year medical student at Washington University in St. Louis. Participating in the USNCO training camp and attending the IChO helped me throughout college for two main reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) I was given a preview of the various chemistry classes that I would be taking, and at times the material introduced in these classes was simply review for me.2) The written IChO test was, by far, the hardest and longest exam that I have ever taken. I found this very useful in helping to maintain perspective when trudging through somewhat difficult material; I knew that I had successfully taken an exam much more difficult than the exams I would face from any class, and this helped me to keep a positive attitude when studying and prevented me from ever getting super overwhelmed. <p>I was, of course, a chemistry major at Princeton, and throughout most of college, I had planned to attend chemistry graduate school. I had a change of heart my junior year, however, and realized that I would be happier working as a physician than working in an academic lab.</p>
<p>40th IChO – 2008 Budapest, Hungary Bronze</p>	<p><u>Andrew Liu</u></p>	<p>IChO and USNCO Camp have definitely challenged me both personally and academically. However, being able to go through camp and IChO also gave me the mindset to never back down from a challenge. During the actual IChO event, I met with kids from all over the world and organized an ultimate Frisbee game, although not everyone understood my explanations of the rules. What was important is that we all had fun together, reaching beyond any language or cultural differences.</p> <p>This year, I graduated from MIT with a degree in computer science and engineering and plan to study medicine at Columbia University School of Physicians and Surgeons.</p>

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<p>24th IChO - 1992 Pittsburgh, USA Silver</p>	<p><u>Logan McCarty</u></p>	<p>I was fortunate to have been on the 1992 team which had its Olympiad here in the US and it was a special experience--- we got lots more attention that year since the competition was held here.</p> <p>Since then, I received bachelors and PhD degrees in chemistry from Harvard, where I am now a lecturer in chemistry and physics and serve as Director of Physical Sciences Education. My experience at the Olympiad reinforced my love of chemistry, and showed me that there's an international community of talented young scientists who can all communicate their love of science. For instance, I became friends with two members of the team from Taiwan that year. Later, when I was in college, my college singing group went on a tour to Taiwan and I visited them at their university. After college, one of them ended up at Harvard in graduate school. So it was amazing how our paths crossed several times after meeting at the IChO.</p>
<p>28th IChO - 1996 Moscow, Russia Bronze</p> <p>29th IChO - 1997 Montreal, Canada, Gold</p>	<p><u>Jason Chen</u></p>	<p>I was on the 1996 and 1997 Chemistry Olympiad traveling teams. A brief timeline for my career afterwards is as follows:</p> <p>1997-2001: Harvard University, chemistry A.B. and A.M., research in Matthew D. Shair's group 2001-2003: Enanta Pharmaceuticals (Watertown, MA), medicinal chemist 2003-2008: The Scripps Research Institute (La Jolla, CA), organic chemistry Ph.D., research in K. C. Nicolaou's group 2008-2011: The Scripps Research Institute (La Jolla, CA), postdoctoral training, research in K. C. Nicolaou's group, co-authored Classics in Total Synthesis III 2011-present: Iowa State University, assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry</p> <p>Chemistry Olympiad is the reason that I am a chemist today. I had pre-med ambitions going into college, and decided to focus my undergrad studies on organic chemistry because of my Chemistry Olympiad experience. Halfway through college, I decided to pursue chemistry rather than medicine.</p>

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<p>33rd IChO - 2001 Mumbai, India Gold</p>	<p><u>Sean Kedrowski</u></p>	<p>It has now been over ten years since my participation in the IChO, but I am one of those who have remained in the field of chemistry since then. I completed by B.S. in Chemistry in 2005 at Duke University. At Duke, I had a full merit scholarship that I believe I would not have received if not for my involvement with the IChO program.</p> <p>I recently received my PhD in Chemistry at the California Institute of Technology, where I studied organic chemistry and neurochemistry under Professor Dennis Dougherty.</p> <p>I am now doing a postdoctoral fellowship in organic chemistry at Harvard University under Professor Eric Jacobsen. I hope to apply for a job as a chemistry professor in a couple years' time.</p> <p>I am living in Arlington, MA (a suburb of Boston) with my wife Meg of five years.</p>
<p>20th IChO - 1988 Helsinki, Finland Silver</p>	<p><u>David Cliffl</u></p>	<p>I am currently an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Vanderbilt University.</p> <p>I was part of the IChO team in 1988 in Helsinki Finland and received a silver medal. Of course, my current research group gets a kick out of the 1988 IChO picture in Chemistry Today, but it did help set me up for a future career in chemistry. I also was a guide for the New Zealand team in the last IChO in the US in 1992 in Pittsburgh/MD.</p>