

Chinese American Abacus Association

中美珠心算學會

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Press Release

Chinese American Abacus Association

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Teamwork makes the dream work.

The Chinese American Abacus Association successfully held the 2021 World City Cup Abacus, Mental Arithmetic, and Mathematics Online Competition.

Beginning at 6:30 pm Pacific Time on August 21, 2021, 423 students and teachers from ten regions and cities across three continents: Asia, Australia, and North America, participated in the grand event – the “World City Cup Competition.” The event was held completely digitally for the first time.

The Chinese American Abacus Association (CAAA) inaugurated the “World City Cup Abacus, Mental Arithmetic, and Mathematics Competition” in 2002, after which it took place in different host cities all over the world. The competition was interrupted twice before, by SARS in 2003 and COVID-19 in 2020. To minimize the learning setbacks and barrier students faced during the pandemic, the CAAA and its teachers accelerated the launch of online learning and trying various forms of online testing methods. CAAA launched the first “World City Cup **Online** Competition” this year with the support of all participating teams. Our goals were to provide a boost to motivate students and resume international cultural exchanges and peer learning (for students as well as teachers.)

The competition tied together three continents connected by the Pacific Ocean with competitors in varying time zones. While it was evening in the San Francisco, it was early morning in India, noon in Sydney, and just past breakfast time in Taiwan. The varying testing time might have had an effect on students’ performance - further study may be conducted. The competition emcee needed to be able to provide instruction and guidance in three languages: English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Indian accent English. We had Vietnamese and Indian accent English guidance delivered by their native-speaker teachers. The preparation of the competition many considerations – acquiring and testing competition software, tailoring problem sets for a digital platform, accommodating for Zoom meeting capacity, and more. To cut down the difficulty or issues we might face on the big day, we had an online mock test for all students on August 7th testing time the same as the event day. Experiencing this virtual event rehearsal, students got to know the process

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and learned how to manage the test on their side. We, the organizer, also found some problems and complications in the process and the dry run allowed us to troubleshoot those issues before the big day. The official competition ran successfully as a result of great planning and well-controlled process.

In normal times, all of our competitors gather together in a big hall for a live competition. A virtual one is a vastly different experience. Adapting to the use of technology was necessary and a challenge for all involved. The testing tool and Zoom meeting changes our interactions. An on-site competition, by its nature, imposes a more serious atmosphere than an online environment where everyone participates from home. Luckily, the precise time control imposed by the computerized testing tool ensures that participating students dare not take it too lightly.

At the closing ceremony, all leaders: Victor Yu from Sydney; K Sriram Shaarada from India, Li Lan Hsiao from Kaohsiung, Kok Leong Low from Malaysia, Huyen Thu Nguyen from Vietnam, and Shi-Jin Lee, Chairman of the Chinese Academy of Abacus, gave speeches in a short video broadcast. They congratulated and thanked the organizer for the magnificent 'WCC2021 virtual + live' event. Students from Taipei and New Taipei City also shared a song: "You at 105°C" to relax everyone's mood.

Sally Chou, President of CAAA, also shared the complication and obstacles of organizing this event. She believed in 'Teamwork makes the dream work.' She thanked all participating teams for their enthusiasm and patience for jointly constructing a platform for students to increase their enthusiasm for learning abacus during the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the CAAA gets the testing results and rankings settled, its medals and certificates will be delivered to each participating team.

In the end, President Sally Chou of CAAA handed over the World City Cup baton to the Gunma Prefecture team in Japan. The leader, Miyuki Tsuge, delivered her speech hoping that the pandemic would abate soon so that everyone can meet and get together – in person! – in Gunma Prefecture, Japan in 2022.

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