

# S'pore ends gold drought at Maths Olympiad

BY LIN ZHAOWEI

IT TOOK him three tries, but Lim Jeck finally won a gold medal at the International Mathematical Olympiad this year.

The determined 16-year-old and his five teammates have not only succeeded in ending Singapore's 14-year gold drought, but also taken home four of the coveted prizes.

And they achieved the best-ever showing for the national team, coming in third out of 101 countries.

To top off his personal triumph, Jeck emerged as the second-highest scorer out of 564 competitors in the prestigious week-long competition in Amsterdam, which ended on Sunday.

Jeck - who won a silver in last year's competition and a bronze the year before - said he did not expect a gold as he found the questions "quite difficult".

"But my previous experience in the Olympiad has definitely helped, as I was

more mentally prepared this time," said the Year 4 student from the National University of Singapore (NUS) High School of Mathematics and Science.

The other three gold medallists were 17-year-old Raffles Institution students Joseph Kuan and Ding Yue, and 18-year-old Ang Jie Jun from Anglo-Chinese School (Independent). NUS High's Ang Yan Sheng, 17, took a silver, while Raffles Institution's Ryan Kor, 17, received a bronze.

During the competition - which is open to pre-university students aged under 20 - each competitor has nine hours to answer six questions covering advanced maths topics such as number theory, geometry and combinatorics.

Those whose scores are in the top 8 per cent receive gold medals. The teams' rankings are based on the number of medals each team wins.

China emerged first this year, followed by the United States. The top scorer was



NUS High student Lim Jeck (left), 16, won a gold medal and came in second overall, while schoolmate Ang Yan Sheng (far left), 17, won a silver medal and came in 83rd overall.

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performed to the best of their ability this year.

He said they had done a two-week residential stint at NUS High in the run-up to the contest, which probably helped to sharpen their focus.

Gold medallist Jie Jun, who also took part in last year's Olympiad, said that the stint allowed the team members to get to know one another better.

Jeck, who is young enough to take part in the next two Olympiads, said his performance has given him greater self-confidence.

Asked if he will take part again next year, he gave a firm "yes".

His target? Another gold, naturally.

Germany's Lisa Sauermann, 18.

The Singapore delegation was led by Associate Professor Wong Yan Loi from

the department of mathematics at NUS. Professor Wong, who has led the team for the past four years, said the students