



# Minnesota State High School Mathematics League

*proudly challenging Minnesota students since 1980*

## NEWSLETTER 54

November 10, 2025

### Executive Director Message

Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone for your patience and understanding as we navigated site access and server load issues during Meet 1. We have made some technical improvements and procedural changes on the League side that should make a significant positive difference for Meet 2. See the [Website Changes](#) section below for details, including very important information on how you will need to change your meet-day procedure with your students to accommodate.

We would like to perform a server-load test prior to Meet 2. This will occur next Monday, Nov. 17. The new scoring site ([www.mnmathleague.com](http://www.mnmathleague.com)) will have one of the Sample Meets open for you and your students to join. If you happen to be practicing that day, please log onto the site and follow the new meet-joining procedures with your students, then just fill out answers in events (right answers don't matter for the test) and submit them normally. You don't need to take the full 15 minutes for an event. This will help us test if our changes are sufficiently reducing the server load.

Despite the server issues, there were no challenges submitted on Meet 1 problems! See the [Problem Writers' Corner](#) below for more commentary and tips from Colin and his team.

Also, here's a reminder about the special [Meet 2 Policy](#) for schools that are not in session the entire week of Thanksgiving.

I'll leave you with a Lewis Carroll word ladder puzzle that has to do with something in this Newsletter. Can you figure out the puzzle, and the correspondence?

M A N O R

— — — — — (*"hands", in Spanish*)

— — — — — (*the rational ability of the mind*)

Mike Reiners  
Interim Executive Director  
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— — — — — (Arabic name meaning “success”)  
C A N A L

## Problem Writers’ Corner

Congratulations on a successful Meet 1!

Overall, I was pleased with the results and hope your students enjoyed the challenge.

The toughest problem on Meet 1 was A4, which was solved correctly by around 7% of students statewide:

The Dutch cargo ship *Heerengracht* slowly passes under the Duluth Lift Bridge, loaded with wheat bound for Naples, Italy. Taryn walks along the adjacent pier to measure the ship. Moving in the same direction as the ship, it takes her 360 steps to get from its back end to its front end. She immediately turns around and walks 120 steps back, returning to its back end. Given that Taryn’s steps are exactly 2.5 feet long, and both she and the ship move at constant speeds, what is the length of the *Heerengracht*?

Congratulations to those who correctly calculated the ship’s length, 450 feet! This was a rate problem, so here’s a hint: **be ready for another rate problem on Meet 2!**

In Meet 1, problems A2 and B1 were adapted directly from [Coyote Sample Meet 1](#). The success rates for these were 79% and 66% respectively; I’d hoped for somewhat better results since students should have already seen those two problems.

Please continue to emphasize with your team: **each meet this year will include at least one problem originating from the corresponding Coyote sample meet. Meet 2 actually features at least TWO problems from [Coyote Sample Meet 2](#)!** Time spent reviewing those problems will pay off.

Sample meets for the entire season (meets 1-5 with a Coyote, Dakota, Agate, and Black Bear sample for each) are now available in [the Google Drive folder](#), including full solutions. All are aligned to the current meet structure. Students should review the Coyote meets at a minimum, but I encourage you to share the other sample meets with your students as well.

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*Important: please refresh your Google Drive folder If you don't see the "complete" sample meets with solution writeups, to ensure that you aren't viewing a cached folder.*

As always, please contact me if you find typos or errors in any of these materials.

Best of luck preparing for Meet 2!

Colin Gardner-Springer

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## Website Changes

**We strongly encourage all coaches to participate in our server-load test on Monday, November 17. Your participation is essential to help us ensure a smooth experience for everyone during Meet 2.**

**Please take a moment to fill out this [short survey](#) to sign up and we will send you specific instructions on Monday morning (11/17). The test will only take about 15-20 minutes and requires minimal effort on your part — but your involvement will make a big difference.**

In order to handle the access issues faced by a number of schools, it was decided we needed to move our website operations to a new server with some new features and a new website address. Starting at some point Monday evening, you will need to start going to <https://www.mnmathleague.com> (note change from .org to .com). One of the biggest challenges is likely to be that you may have your browser remembering your password but it is a new site. If needed, you can always reset your account username and password by clicking "Initialize Account" on the login page. If students need their passwords, you can go to Team Admin \ Student Accounts to see and if necessary reset their passwords.

There is also one change being made to what students do on the site when competing online. Currently, students would click a button to have their browser "watch" for the event start. This triggered repeated checks to the server contributing to debilitating load on the server during the busier competition times. From now on, please direct students to not click that button until **after** you, the coach, have clicked yours to trigger the start of an event. As before, they should still not turn over their papers to start competing until the problems load on **their** computer. We will monitor Meet 2 to see what effect this has on operations and if necessary make additional adjustments.

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## Meet 2 Policy

The challenge window for Meet 2 will remain open until the Monday following Thanksgiving (Dec. 1).

### Alternate division scheduling option for Meet 2:

If schools in your division would be unable to participate in Meet 2 **because** they have No School days on **both** Monday Nov. 24 **and** Tuesday Nov. 25, then it is allowable to hold Meet 2 on the preceding Friday, Nov. 21. This is the *only* reason and option for a pre-approved date change. A change for any other reason, or to any other date, must still be requested and approved through the League office (parkshar@augzburg.edu)..

Also - and especially critical with this type of scheduling - **no student shall be given any physical or digital copy of solutions until at least the Wednesday following the meet (in this case, Nov. 26).** Students may review the solutions at/during the meet, but not take copies with them. Any access to the solutions for purpose of challenges must be arranged through and carefully guided by the coach.

## Regular Season Meet Reminders

- Time slot signups open at 9:00 AM on the Wednesday before each meet. These slots help prevent server overload and serve as general guidelines, not strict time assignments.
- Associate Director Sharin Park (parkshar@augzburg.edu) will email the meet problems and solutions that same day.
- Challenges to meet results are due by 12:00 PM on the Thursday after the meet. Please review the Math League Manual language below about challenges:

If the official solutions contain an error, and it is discovered prior to the meet, all efforts will be made to alert all coaches as to the correct solution. Coaches would then use the corrected solution to judge a response as acceptable or not.

During the meet, if the official solutions contain an error, the coach of the team that discovers the error should immediately notify the League office (parkshar@augzburg.edu). If students believe an answer has been graded incorrectly, or if the student had a unique interpretation of the question which resulted in a different answer, the students must submit a challenge to their coach no later than noon on the Thursday **following** the meet.

*Note: Most challenges submitted usually fall in one of these two categories – challenges of a grading mistake by the coach (the student actually got it right but the coach mistakenly marked*

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*it wrong) or challenges caused by a unique interpretation of the question resulting in a different answer.*

Challenges should be handled in this manner:

- Challenges of mistakes made by a coach or grader should be fixed locally.
- All other challenges should be sent to the League office.

Process for submitting a challenge to the League office:

A short explanation as to the rationale for the challenge should be emailed to [parkshar@augsborg.edu](mailto:parkshar@augsborg.edu) and to the Division's Coordinator by noon on the Thursday following the meet. Students may write explanations but may need a coach's assistance. The League will make every effort to rule on the challenge by the end of that week. Scores will be adjusted as necessary.

In general, only the students who challenge a solution can be awarded points for that challenge. If a student does not issue a challenge, yet that student's answer is correct in light of the challenge, that student who did not challenge will NOT be awarded the point(s) for a correct solution. Therefore, it is wiser to challenge than not.

***Given this challenge process, and to ensure the most uniformity, coaches should mark answers correct ONLY if the student answer matches the answer provided in the League answer key.***