

Nº 6

Friday, July 10



PHYSICS IN ACTION

WHAT WE TAKE HOME

Host City: Bucaramanga, Santander, Colombia.

GOOD MORNING, CHAMPIONS!

As you open this official IPhO 2026 bulletin, the atmosphere in the Andean mountains feels remarkably different. The written and experimental examinations are now behind you, and today's schedule has been designed to celebrate knowledge, achievement, and the experiences you have shared throughout this unforgettable week.

For the students, the morning begins at Neomundo Convention Center, where you will attend the Academic Lectures, followed by a well-deserved lunch as everyone finally enjoys the relief of having completed the competition.



In the afternoon, your analytical minds will turn to a different kind of challenge during the Afternoon Activity—the opening of our eagerly anticipated Football Tournament. Here in Colombia, you will experience the passion and excitement of the world's most beloved sport, before ending the day with a Game Night and a special dinner sponsored by Jane Street.

While you are playing, celebrating, and enjoying the evening, your Team Leaders will continue their intellectual marathon through intensive moderation and coordination sessions, followed by the International Board Meeting later that night, ensuring that every score is reviewed and confirmed with the highest standards of fairness and academic rigor. As you run, play, and celebrate beneath the skies of Santander today, you may begin to feel a quiet sense of nostalgia. It is the

realization that this extraordinary journey is drawing to a close and that, before long, it will be time to leave Colombia.

So today, we invite you to pause for just a moment. Close your eyes for one minute, set aside the noise around you, and preserve this moment in your memory. Open the time capsule and remember Day 1—that Sunday, July 5, when you arrived filled with anticipation and shy smiles. Now compare that moment with the lifelong friendships you have built, the companions you have met from every corner of the world, and the bonds you now share after overcoming this remarkable scientific challenge together.

Remember the intensity of the examinations that pushed your limits, the warmth and generosity of the Colombian people, and the unwavering dedication of your guides, who cared for you day and night as though you were part of their own families.



If you feel a lump in your throat or your eyes begin to fill with tears at the thought of leaving Colombia, know that this is perhaps the clearest proof of all: here, among the majestic mountains of Santander, you found a place that truly felt like home.

Thank you for your dedication, and until physics brings us together again!

IPhO 2026 Team – Colombia

EVENT SCHEDULE

DAY - 6

JULY 10TH: ACADEMIC PROGRAMME



STUDENTS

- 06:00 - 08:00:** Breakfast
- 08:00 - 09:00:** Transfer to Neomundo
- 09:00 - 12:30:** Academic Lectures
- 12:30 - 14:00:** Lunch
- 14:00 - 18:00:** Afternoon activities
- 19:00 - 20:00:** Dinner hosted by Jane Street
- 20:00 - 22:00:** Game night hosted by Jane Street
- 22:00 - 22:30:** Transfer to assigned hotels

LEADERS

- 07:00 - 09:00:** Breakfast
- 09:00 - 12:30:** Moderation
- 12:30 - 13:30:** Lunch
- 13:30 - 18:00:** Moderation
- 18:00 - 19:00:** Dinner
- 19:00 - 20:00:** International Board (IB) Meeting

OBSERVERS

- 06:00 - 08:00:** Breakfast
- 08:00 - 09:00:** Transfer to Neomundo
- 09:00 - 12:30:** Academic Lectures
- 12:30 - 14:00:** Lunch
- 14:00 - 18:00:** Afternoon activities
- 19:00 - 20:00:** Dinner hosted by Jane Street
- 20:00 - 22:00:** Game night hosted by Jane Street
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A DIFFERENT OUTCOME

After the exams, July 9 began with different plans. The hardest part was already over, the pressure began to ease, and the students finally had a day to look up from their exams and learn a little more about the region that had welcomed them with open arms.

The morning began early, with breakfast and a brief excursion to Girón. We ventured into the land of fritanga, goat with pepitoria, and carne oreada. Not to mention its crowning glory, the maracumango, which the students were able to enjoy in the central park area. A stroll through these cobblestone streets, bathed in the unique heat of the lowest-lying municipality in the metropolitan area, proved to be a great source of fun.

After the visit to Girón, lunch at the Club Campestre gave everyone time to rest before heading to El Santísimo Ecopark. In the late afternoon, the group arrived at one of the region's most breathtaking viewpoints. From there, Santander spread out like a sea of buildings and streets winding through the Río de Oro valley.

While the students explored Girón, the leaders and observers faced a very different task: grading exams. After lunch, they also joined the visit to El Santísimo, taking in the sunset over the **“beautiful city”** from a panoramic viewpoint.

At the end of the day, everyone returned to their hotels with more than just a completed program. The students, organizers, and observers had enjoyed a breather in the midst of a challenging Olympiad. There were still no medals or final results. Just a day to catch our breath, take a walk, laugh, look around, and remember that some of the best moments of the IPhO are also experienced away from the exam room.



ON THE GROUND

The day began with everyone boarding the buses, and it was already clear that friendships were starting to take shape. While these students are undoubtedly brilliant minds brought together by their passion for physics, there is also a remarkable sense of humanity surrounding this event.

The conversations go far beyond science and equations. We heard comments like, “We love the way you take care of your country. It shows how much you value the Earth,” after the tour through the mountains.

Several team leaders also shared that they would love to learn even more about Colombia. They have already enjoyed exploring during their free time, but they are looking forward to meeting more people, practicing their Spanish, and tasting even more Colombian dishes.

Perhaps the most meaningful message they shared was how beautiful, peaceful, and natural it feels to live in Colombia and simply walk through its streets.



When we asked whether they had enjoyed what they had seen in Colombia, the answers were unanimous: “Of course!”—often accompanied by a flying kiss—or, “It’s delicious. I have a new addiction.”

The bond between the guides and the students is already undeniable. They are joking with one another, saying they will miss each other, teasing about who is the sleepiest, or who might be a little flirty. Genuine friendships are already forming.

Everyone also had a great time during the karaoke session at Club Campestre. The room was filled with laughter, music, and unforgettable moments, bringing participants from around the world even closer together.

FORMER IPHO OLYMPIANS



Ph.D. HUGO CONTRERAS

Participating in the Physics Olympiad was an incredible opportunity that allowed me not only to make lifelong friends but also to discover a career I enjoy. The professors and administrators of the Physics Olympiad gave me the opportunity to teach, which I have truly enjoyed, even though I do it outside the classroom.

I participated in the Ibero-American Physics Olympiad in Jaca, Spain, where I won a silver medal, and in the International Physics Olympiad in Antalya, Turkey. Both experiences opened my eyes to possibilities I hadn't considered, especially experimental physics.

I enrolled at the University of the Andes to study Physics, where I completed my undergraduate and master's degrees. Later, I pursued a doctorate in experimental astrophysics at Columbia University in New York, where I was able to use the tools and ways of thinking I learned in the Olympiad. On numerous occasions, I encountered students and professors who had participated in the International Physics Olympiad, and we were able to share experiences.



IVÁN ZALAMEA ZAMORA

During my school years, I participated in the Colombian Physics Olympiad in 1998 and 1999. In 1999, I represented Colombia at the Ibero-American Physics Olympiad, held in Costa Rica, where I won the Silver Medal. The following year, I again represented Colombia at the International Physics Olympiad, held in Leicester, England. I then pursued my undergraduate studies in Physics at the University of the Andes, graduating in 2004. I won the Otto de Geiff Award for the second-best undergraduate science thesis nationwide. I continued my doctoral studies in Physics at Columbia University, NYC, where I obtained my Ph.D. in 2011 with a dissertation in astrophysics focused on accretion phenomena near black holes. After completing my doctorate, I undertook postdoctoral research stays at Jacobs University

Bremen (Germany) and Stockholm University (Sweden), developing research in computational astrophysics and numerical simulations of systems with compact objects, such as black holes and neutron stars. In 2014, I returned to New York to transition into data science, applying the analytical, mathematical, and computational tools I acquired during my physics training to business problems. Since then, I have worked as a data scientist at technology companies, developing solutions based on statistical analysis, machine learning, and big data processing. I currently work as a Staff Data Scientist at fuboTV, where I lead the development of data analytics models and strategies to support business decision-making. My career path is an example of how scientific training opens doors to a wide variety of professional paths, both in academia and in industry.

DID YOU KNOW...?

July 10, 1962 – The Launch of Telstar 1

On July 10, 1962, Telstar 1, the world's first active communications satellite capable of relaying television signals, telephone calls, and data across the Atlantic Ocean, was launched into orbit. This historic achievement marked a turning point in the application of physics to global communications.

The success of Telstar 1 was made possible by advances in **electromagnetic wave propagation, orbital mechanics, radio-frequency engineering, and space technology**. Just one day after its launch, the satellite transmitted the first live television images between North America and Europe, demonstrating that real-time global communication was possible.

The mission revolutionized telecommunications and paved the way for today's worldwide network of communication satellites, GPS systems, satellite internet, and space-based scientific research. It remains one of the most significant milestones in the history of applied physics and aerospace engineering.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

July 10

• **Samat Maxutov**
Kazakhstan – Leader

• **Egor Podolskiy**
Netherlands – Student



WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

The words can be hidden horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

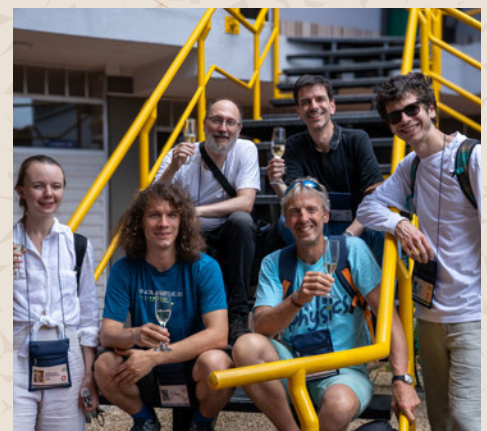
VOCABULARY AND CULTURE LEARNED IN COLOMBIA

PARCERO
CHARRITO
BACANO
MANO
PINGO
BUCARAMANGA
SANTANDER
COLOMBIA
AREPA
CHICHA
CAFÉ
HORMIGA
CHOCORAMO
GUABINA

G	A	W	O	N	A	C	A	B	D	Z	B	L	O
T	G	C	B	C	O	L	O	M	B	I	A	S	U
K	I	H	U	S	T	C	P	F	U	U	X	C	W
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A	L	L	N	X	X	V	R	Z	A	B	H	M	K
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W	G	F	A	P	G	U	A	B	I	N	A	V	R

PHOTO GALLERY

Look to the heart



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