

# MATHCOUNTS®

## PRESS RELEASE

**Contact:** Lisa Blinkenberg  
Texas Society of Professional Engineers  
Office: (512) 472-9286 / Cell: (512) 626-1931 / Email: [lisa@tspe.org](mailto:lisa@tspe.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MAY 11, 2009

## TEXAS TAKES IT ALL AT NATIONAL MATH COMPETITION!



**Front:** Bobby Shen; Steven Chen; Yury Aglyamov; Lilly Shen. **Back:** Coach Jeff Boyd

On Friday, May 8, at the 2009 Raytheon MATHCOUNTS National Competition in Orlando Florida, much of the pre-competition speculation was focused on Texas. Texas had won three of the previous four years with teams trained by the indomitable Coach Jeff Boyd, a math teacher from First Colony and Fort Settlement middle schools in Sugar Land. As the coach of the winning team from this year's state competition in March, Boyd earned a spot as the official coach for the 2009 Texas State Team, comprised of eighth-graders Bobby Shen and Lilly Shen (no relation) from First Colony Middle School in Sugar Land, seventh-grader Steven Chen from Canyon Vista Middle School in Round Rock, and eighth-grader Yury Aglyamov from Kealing Middle School in Austin.

By approximately 1pm, the results were in and the emcee started announcing the runners-up. By the time he awarded the second-place honor to Missouri—with no mention of Texas—the crowd of proud and beaming Texas parents, as well as staff and members from the Texas Society of Professional

Engineers (who sponsor and organize the program in Texas) were whooping with joy, realizing that Texas had done it again, earning a third consecutive national title and fourth national win in five years!

But it wasn't over, at least not for two of the young Texas Mathletes™. Bobby Shen and Steven Chen had each scored in the top 12 during the individual round, thereby earning a chance to compete in the Countdown Round—the final, heads-up, sudden-death elimination round of the competition. Three-time Texas state champ Bobby was in third place going into the final round, with teammate Steven starting in 11<sup>th</sup> place.

In his first match-up, Steven quickly defeated Anya Katsevich from Florida 3-0. Then, midway through the round, the audience members from Texas groaned to see the two Texas Mathletes step to the stage to face off against each other. In the end, it was Bobby who eliminated his own teammate, buzzing in before the emcee could finish reading the questions on each of three questions to defeat Steven 3-0.

And then there were two. After eliminating the number two seed, Maximilian Schindler from Missouri, Bobby was now facing the top ranked David Yang of California, who had entered the round in first place after getting the highest score during the individual written round earlier that morning.

Bobby's supporters looked on in eager trepidation. As an eighth-grader, this was his last year to compete. Last year, he had lost the title—by just one question—to Darryl Wu of



**Front:** Steven Chen; Lilly Shen; Yury Aglyamov; Bobby Shen. **Back:** Coach Jeff Boyd

Bellevue, Washington. The three-time Texas state champ had come so close last year...would he be able to pull it off at last? It was now or never for young Bobby.

David drew first blood, taking a 1-0 lead, but Bobby bounced back quickly, tying it up 1-1. The two boys battled it out and soon the score was tied at 3-3. The next correct answer would determine the winner. The emcee started to read the following, final question:



Danica McKellar; Bobby Shen;  
Raytheon CEO William Swanson.

***“How many 2x2x2 cubes must be added to an 8x8x8 cube to make a 10x10x10 cube?”***

David buzzed in early, but was agonizingly unable to speak for a moment. Finally, he found his voice and answered, but it was too late. Time had expired and it was now up to Bobby. With a shy smile, Bobby gave the correct answer of “61” and became the 2009 National MATHCOUNTS Champion!

The winning Mathletes will each receive valuable scholarships, awards and trips to NASA Space Camp. But the prize that most excited the young Mathletes was the opportunity to design their own “virtual ride” on a rollercoaster, jet plane or bobsled using a new program called “Sum of

All Thrills!” from Raytheon, to be unveiled later this year.

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Full competition results and a webcast of the Countdown Round are available at [www.mathcounts.org](http://www.mathcounts.org).

*Over 39,000 students, called Mathletes™, from 6,000 schools participate in local competitions, but only 228 middle school students make it to the national competition. Qualifying in four-member teams from each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands and Department of Defense and State Department schools worldwide, they represent the cream of America’s math and science crop of future scientists and engineers. The Texas Society of Professional Engineers sponsors the program in Texas as part of their educational outreach efforts to foster development of the kinds of advanced critical-thinking and problem-solving skills that might encourage gifted young students to someday consider careers in engineering.*