

Transcript

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 Compere: **ADAM SPENCER** Summary ID: **S00031283466**

Item: **MAX MENSIES, MATHEMATICS OLYMPICS, JOINS SPENCER TO DISCUSS HIS PREPARATION FOR THE CHALLENGE. HE DESCRIBES THE PRESSURE AND NERVES THAT HE EXPERIENCES, DETAILING THE ASHES BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN AND ENGLISH MATHS TEAMS.**

INTERVIEWEES: MAX MENZIES, MATHEMATICS OLYMPICS ATTENDEE

Demographics:	Male 16+	Female 16+	All people	ABs	GBs
	57000	75000	132000	59000	81000

ADAM SPENCER: Big day today - the Australian International Mathematics Olympiad team leave for Spain.

Last year we spoke to young Max Menzies. He was in Year 11. Went away to this international test of mathematical brilliance, and finished only one point off a gold medal performance.

Well Max is going back to try it all again.

He joins me on the line.

Good morning Max. How are you?

MAX MENZIES: I'm fine Adam. Bit tired.



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ADAM SPENCER: Yeah, now, since we last spoke, you've been swatting away preparing for the Olympiad. How's your preparation gone?

MAX MENZIES: It's gone really well I think actually. I've been doing lots and lots of problems, which is all I can really do.

ADAM SPENCER: Do you do that sort of stuff by yourself, locked away in a room? Do you do it in a group? Do you do it with other members of the team? How do you prepare for something like this?

MAX MENZIES: It varies. Generally you do problems by yourself, because the actual exam is individual. But you also meet together every, we also meet together every Sunday to present problems and to have a problem session. I meet with my mentor a couple of times - I mean lots of times.

ADAM SPENCER: Who's your mentor Max?

MAX MENZIES: He's a guy called Justin Coonan(*) from, from my school actually.

ADAM SPENCER: Okay. Did he, did he go to the Olympiad himself?

MAX MENZIES: Yeah, yeah, they all did.

ADAM SPENCER: Okay. Now, there's obviously; you know, you've got to know your mathematics. What are some of



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the other skills you need to be good at this sort of thing? Do you need mental strength? Do you need to be able to not panic? What other things outside of just doing maths separates people who are really good at these sort of competitions from those who can get by?

MAX MENZIES: Oh, maths is lot like tennis - you can't, you can't sort of break down in the exam. A lot of people have done that.

ADAM SPENCER: Really?

MAX MENZIES: Yeah, yeah. It's, because the exam is, IMO problems are very very unusual, as well as hard, and so you have to go in and sort of really focus on the problems instead of the results. And that's, that is hard.

ADAM SPENCER: Is it the sort of environment where you could get a little bit nervous? Just before you open the paper, you've been practising for months, you're ready to go, you're about to see your first three questions; are you a bit nervous before you flick that bit of paper over Max?

MAX MENZIES: yeah, of course. They're big problems.

ADAM SPENCER: [Laughs]. And is part of it managing those sort of nerves and not getting too freaked out by the situation?



MAX MENZIES: Yeah, definitely. That's very important.

ADAM SPENCER: Okay. So where to from now? You leave for Spain. When is the exam; and what are you doing between now and then?

MAX MENZIES: Well, first we go to Lisbon and there we'll train with the British, and we'll also have the Ashes there.

ADAM SPENCER: Now the Ashes is the competition between the British and the Australian teams to see who does best at this. There's been a little trophy set up to capture that rivalry.

MAX MENZIES: Yeah, we've got, we've got our own urn; and we're actually going to have our own ashes too.

ADAM SPENCER: Great stuff. Great stuff.

ADAM SPENCER: Okay, so a bit of, a few, a bit of practice there in Lisbon, and then when's the actual exam?

MAX MENZIES: Um, 15th and 16th I think, of July.

ADAM SPENCER: Okay. Well look...

MAX MENZIES: In Spain.

ADAM SPENCER: ...best of luck Max.



Are you happy with where your preparation is at?

MAX MENZIES: Yeah, I am.

ADAM SPENCER: Okay. You never know how these things will go. We can only hope that, as long as you get in there and do the best you can do on the day. As long as you're happy with your performance over the two days. We are very proud of you having made it this far.

MAX MENZIES: Yeah. Thanks.

ADAM SPENCER: Great to speak to you Max.

MAX MENZIES: Okay. Thanks Adam.

ADAM SPENCER: Max Menzies heads off to Lisbon, on his way to the International Mathematics Olympiad today. Best of luck to Max and the entire Australian team.

* * **END** * *

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ABs = Managers, administrators, professions. GBs = Grocery buyers.