

**MASSACHUSETTS MATHEMATICS LEAGUE  
CONTEST 6 - MARCH 2009 SOLUTION KEY**

**Team Round**

$$A) \begin{cases} x^2 + xy + y^2 = 8 \\ x + y = xy + 2 \end{cases} \rightarrow \begin{cases} (1) \ x^2 + 2xy + y^2 = (x + y)^2 = 8 + xy \\ (2) \ x + y = xy + 2 \end{cases}$$

Subtracting (2) from (1),  $(x + y)^2 - (x + y) - 6 = 0 \rightarrow ((x + y) - 3)((x + y) + 2) = 0$

$\rightarrow$  Case 1:  $(x + y) = 3$  (and  $xy = 1$ ) or Case 2:  $(x + y) = -2$  (and  $xy = -4$ )

Since it is given that  $x$  and  $y$  have the same sign, case 2 is eliminated.

[An aside: Case 2 generates solutions of  $(-1 + \sqrt{5}, -1 - \sqrt{5})$  and  $(-1 - \sqrt{5}, -1 + \sqrt{5})$  which satisfy the system of equations, but are rejected because the  $x$ -coordinate and  $y$ -coordinates have opposite signs.]

Substituting  $y = \frac{1}{x}$  in equation (2),  $x + \frac{1}{x} = 3 \rightarrow x^2 - 3x + 1 = 0 \rightarrow x = \frac{3 \pm \sqrt{5}}{2}$  and

$$y = \frac{2}{3 \pm \sqrt{5}} \cdot \frac{3 \mp \sqrt{5}}{3 \mp \sqrt{5}} = \frac{2(3 \mp \sqrt{5})}{9 - 5} = \frac{3 \mp \sqrt{5}}{2}$$

$$\rightarrow \text{two ordered pairs } \left( \frac{3 + \sqrt{5}}{2}, \frac{3 - \sqrt{5}}{2} \right), \left( \frac{3 - \sqrt{5}}{2}, \frac{3 + \sqrt{5}}{2} \right)$$

Alternate Solution (using the Method of Symmetric Equations):

Note: Replacing  $x$  by  $y$  and  $y$  by  $x$  does not change the system of equations.

This technique eliminates the  $xy$ - term.

Let  $x = u + v$  and  $y = u - v$ . Then:

$$\begin{cases} (u + v)^2 + (u + v)(u - v) + (u - v)^2 = 8 \\ u + v - (u + v)(u - v) + u - v = 2 \end{cases} \rightarrow \begin{cases} 3u^2 + v^2 = 8 \\ -u^2 + v^2 + 2u = 2 \end{cases}$$

Subtracting,  $4u^2 - 2u = 6 \rightarrow 2u^2 - u - 3 = (2u - 3)(u + 1) = 0 \rightarrow u = \frac{3}{2}, -1$

Substituting,  $3\left(\frac{3}{2}\right)^2 + v^2 = 8 \rightarrow v^2 = 8 - \frac{27}{4} = \frac{5}{4}$  and  $3(-1)^2 + v^2 = 8 \rightarrow v^2 = 5$

$$(u, v) = \left( \frac{3}{2}, +\frac{\sqrt{5}}{2} \right) \rightarrow (x, y) = \left( \frac{3 + \sqrt{5}}{2}, \frac{3 - \sqrt{5}}{2} \right)$$

$$(u, v) = \left( \frac{3}{2}, -\frac{\sqrt{5}}{2} \right) \rightarrow (x, y) = \left( \frac{3 - \sqrt{5}}{2}, \frac{3 + \sqrt{5}}{2} \right) \text{ (both are ok since } x \text{ and } y \text{ are each positive)}$$

$$(u, v) = (-1, +\sqrt{5}) \rightarrow (x, y) = (-1 + \sqrt{5}, -1 - \sqrt{5})$$

$$(u, v) = (-1, -\sqrt{5}) \rightarrow (x, y) = (-1 - \sqrt{5}, -1 + \sqrt{5}) \text{ (both rejected since } x \text{ and } y \text{ have opposite signs)}$$