

ENDGAME

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SCRABBLE
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA



The podium at the inaugural Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship

In this issue:

- Checkmated by Scrabble
- Up your game with Quackle
- Asia's youth stars converge
- Tourney reminiscences

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Foreword

Dear Members,

The year gone by marked the full-fledged resumption of our Scrabble calendar as we knew it, what with the return of the regular tournaments as well as new additions. A dozen rated tournaments were played within a span of ten months in seven cities, and players across the country relished the prospect of coming back to live Scrabble.

The comeback of major events such as the KSSA Indian Open in Bangalore, the National Championship in Mumbai and the GAIL Cup in Delhi was heartening, as was the initiation of many of our newer members – who had hitherto played only online tournaments – onto the in-person tournament circuit. Almost every tournament in the year brought with it enthusiastic debutants, as more and more casual players sought to explore the captivating world of competitive Scrabble.

Significantly, the year saw youth Scrabble in India receive a major impetus, with the steadfast efforts of organisers coupled with the promise and passion of our young Scrabblers facilitating bustling development on this front, especially in the last quarter. While the ambitious National School Scrabble Championship was all about tapping into the unmistakable junior talent in the country, the inaugural Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship witnessed the best youth players from the Asian region – undoubtedly the hotbed of the global youth Scrabble scene – in action.

More of the same can be expected in the new year as a busy 2023 calendar awaits players of all levels and age groups, commencing with the premier Bangalore tournament – back in its traditional January slot – over the Republic Day weekend. Besides, there is great potential of new clubs and inventive initiatives on the horizon.

As always, thanks are in order to all the contributors who have helped make this edition of Endgame the most abundant so far. Here's looking forward to many more absorbing reads in the year ahead.

Wishing you all a happy and Scrabble-filled 2023!

Rustom Deboo
Editor



Checkmated by Scrabble

by Ishika Shivalingaiah

Chess and Scrabble are two games that have often spurred interesting debates on various grounds – ease of learning, difficulty in mastering, extent of strategy involved, and so on. Chess players often tend to bask in glory owing to the popularity their sport has achieved over the years, and the bandwagon following it has garnered globally till date.

A good number of parents (myself included) are scrambling around to have their children learn and play chess because of the benefits it is said to provide, even when not playing competitively. I totally love the game, and have been a former national chess player myself – but what is it about Scrabble that drew me to it?

Well, a bunch of things, some of which will come to the fore in the words to follow. But before I went there, I did introspect (actually Rustom egged me on to) on why the journey at all, and how chess and Scrabble are similar in some ways yet different from each other. I would like to believe that most of us Scrabblers would be intrigued to know how the two games match up, and to give some thought about what can be done to make Scrabble a sought-after mind sport in the foreseeable future.

SIMILARITIES

Game category – For starters, there's no debating that both chess and Scrabble are *intellectual*,

timed, two-player board games when played competitively in their native forms.



*Scrabble and chess – similar, yet different
(image source – wit-t-shirt.com)*

Variants – Both games have *fun variants* concocted by players. Chess players have often indulged in formats such as anti-chess and supply chess, as also different time variants like blitz and rapid chess. Likewise, Scrabble tournaments have at times seen variations, in the form of Duplicate Scrabble, paired games and team games – not to forget that tournaments are played in almost 40 languages with different dictionaries.

Strategy based – Both games require an implicit *understanding of probabilities, permutations and combinations* to predict outcomes and equity couple of moves out. Scrabble has often been thought of as a game to be played for the best word or the highest-scoring word,

and not many casual players are aware of the strategies involved in key aspects such as timely swapping of tiles, taking a score hit to balance the rack, closing the board in defence, and opening the board at the right time to boost chances of scoring a whopper in subsequent moves.

Although many players would argue that you should play your best move, regardless of the opponent, or ‘play the bag’, ***an understanding of the opponent’s style of playing*** (attacking/defensive, theoretical/experimental, closed-board/open-board, risk-taking/safe), as well as their ***weaknesses and strengths*** (strong openings/middle-game/end-game, stronger with certain combinations, better at short words/long words), will surely give you an edge in the game.



Receiving the trophy for the best women’s player at the 2009 NIIT Corporate Chess Championship from Viswanathan Anand

Memory powered – The ***need for a good memory*** is strikingly high in both games. It is way harder in Scrabble though, given that there’s an exhaustive set of words one needs to know to climb the competitive ladder, learning and mastering which could take anywhere between four months

to four years and even more, given the transient nature of rote learning.

In chess, one needs to remember common tactics, opening moves, and variants. Chess also requires a certain amount of memory power during the game itself in remembering the candidate moves evaluated, with consequences for each permutation and combination of the opponent’s move up to 3-5 moves ahead for an average player, and 10-11 or more moves ahead for ace players.

DIFFERENCES

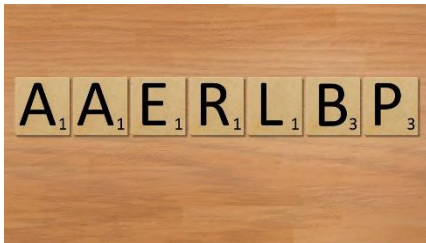
One ponders then, in what respects are the two games different from each other, besides the fact that one is primarily a word game (though having its own analytical angle) and the other purely an analytical game? Undoubtedly, there are a few key reasons why chess is a much more widespread game today. No prizes for guessing which of the following differences would be those reasons!

Literacy – A Scrabble player necessarily needs to be literate, whereas anyone with a good analytical mindset can pick up on chess without knowing how to read or write. Additionally, there is no language barrier for chess, which makes it more globally appealing, while Scrabble as of now is restricted to about 40 languages worldwide.

Ancientness – Chess is a ***way older*** game, having been played for centuries, and is believed to have been invented more than 1500 years ago! In comparison, Scrabble was created only in 1938, by American

architect Alfred Mosher Butts as a variation of Lexiko, an earlier word game he invented. The first official World Chess Championship was held back in 1886, while the first World Scrabble Championship was held more than a century later in 1991! Moreover, the latter was not an annual event until 2013. Will Scrabble grow to become as popular as chess in the years to come? I do hope so, but only time can tell.

Complexity – Chess is known to be a more **difficult game to learn** given the need to apply strategy from the word go, and the number of different types of pieces and moves (*en passant*, long castle, short castle, queening) and differences in pawn promotion for first versus subsequent moves. Scrabble on the other hand has known to be an **easy game to learn** from a rules' perspective, but it is much **harder to master** at a competitive level.



Racking the brains – effective rack management is key to mastering Scrabble (can you spot the bingo hidden here?)

To give an idea, there are **close to 3 lakh words in all**, half of which perhaps the topmost rated players learn to some degree, assuming one could play up to nine-lettered words. Yet, knowing all words or more words

never guarantees a win, unless the knowledge is backed up by applying strategies to play the right words in the right board positions and to maintain the right balance of letters left on the rack.

Chess has approximately **1330 listed common opening variants**, each of which need to be learnt up to 8-15 moves at best. The lesser popular openings are lesser learnt due to the lower benefits. However, since moves are logical and have a reasoning, deriving and thinking through these tactics on the spot in chess is doable, albeit more time consuming. I know friends who can remember a whole game of 30-40 moves each side.

Mathematically speaking, one could achieve 100% accuracy in predicting the opponent's moves in any game of chess, as there are just **16 pieces on an 8x8 board** to start with, and at any point during the game, each player is fully cognisant of the situation the opponent is in, and can think through all potential chess moves to be played.

Scrabble on the other hand is full of surprises – **100 tiles on a 15x15 board** and the ability to just about guess the set of tiles which the opponent has or are remaining in the bag, with a rising probability of predicting right as the game progresses and more tiles get used.

Giving up – There's no resigning in Scrabble! You may argue that you would want to mentally give up after your opponent has opened with three back-to-back bingos, but the best of

players have risen from the ashes. It teaches you to endure the misery, no matter how well you know there's no coming back, and to keep fighting back. But I could resign anytime in chess – sometimes this is just so essential to avoid the embarrassment of being watched upon!

Element of luck – There's almost zero or a very negligible luck element in chess. Few may argue that playing with white pieces often gives you an edge, or that being paired with the right people at the right time could lead to better chances of winning, but what is undeniable is the fact there is a much higher element of luck in Scrabble based on what tiles you pick.

On a good day, even ***an average player can prevail over the best Scrabble moves played by a computer*** if they pick all of the blanks, Ss and power tiles, and repeatedly draw bingo combinations, but the same average player would not be able to beat the strongest chess computer. Of course, time neutralises the element of luck, and over a course of about 20 games, the computers would eventually end up thrashing either player! It explains why the players at the top boards are almost always consistent, for there is no way these players would be 'lucky' all the time.

So, what should one play then? Is one better than the other? It all comes down to what a player aspires. I certainly love challenges, and I love the fact that Scrabble is so much more unpredictable and that mathematically, it requires a higher

application of strategy. There have rarely been games I haven't learnt a new lesson from. Most importantly, the level of camaraderie and the chances of meeting like-minded folks are uncannily higher in Scrabble.

There are days I wish that Scrabble would someday be a sought-after game by parents to have their children playing, and that maybe top-notch colleges would consider a sports quota seat for it. Then again, some days I feel it's a privileged game better off discovered slowly and steadily and limited to this family of brilliance! But what I do know is that Scrabble will remain my favourite for years to come, and I believe most of us will share the same sentiment!

Happy scrabbling everyone, and wish you all a 'scrabulous' 2023. Let's stay checkmated by Scrabble!

Endgame Extra: The 43 seven-letter words having C, H, E, S, S

CASHEWS, CHAISES, CHAOSSES,
 CHAPESS, CHASERS, CHASSED,
 CHASSES, CHEESES, CHESILS,
 CHESSEL, CHESSES, CHINSES,
 CHISELS, CHOOSES, CHOUSES,
 CHOWSES, CLASHES, COSECHS,
 COSHERS, CRASHES, CRUSHES,
 CUSHES, CUSHIES, DUCHESS,
 ESCHARS, ESCHEWS, HOCUSES,
 PSYCHES, SACHEMS, SACHETS,
 SAMECHS, SCATHES, SCHANSE,
 SCHELMs, SCHEMAS, SCHEMES,
 SCHLEPS, SCHMOES, SCYTHES,
 SEALCHS, SEICHES, SHEUCHS,
 TUSCHES

Sarhad paar (Beyond boundaries)

by Neelanjana Bid

The maiden Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship (ACYSC) was organised by Wordaholix and the Scrabble Association of Delhi (SADel) at Kunsapsskolan, Gurgaon from 25th to 27th November 2022.

Kudos to the organisers for pushing their boundaries and going beyond by organising two WESPA-rated side tournaments for adults along with the main event for under-18s. I had the privilege to be a part of this segment and play with representatives from the USA, Singapore, Nepal, Pakistan, and Thailand. What a rollercoaster ride of an experience it was!



Participants of the two-day side tourney for adults (From left, back): Taweesak Haojarern, Harry Bhatia, Sudhir Kamath, Archana Aggarwal, Shalini Sahdev, Sunny Bhatia, Ela Ghose, Neelanjana Bid, Akshay Hiremath, Mohit Arora; (From left, front): Tariq Pervez, Nidhi Singhvi, Shubha Shivashankar, Arjun Pandey

Playing the one-dayer on the first day, I met Taweesak Haojarern, a Scrabble

coach from Thailand. A taciturn individual with a soft voice, whose passion for the game had him return to the Scrabble circuit after quite some time off it, he taught me through his gameplay, without speaking, when to open and when to block. Throughout the course of three days, the games with him were interesting to the point where I almost defeated him had he not had a golden bingo.

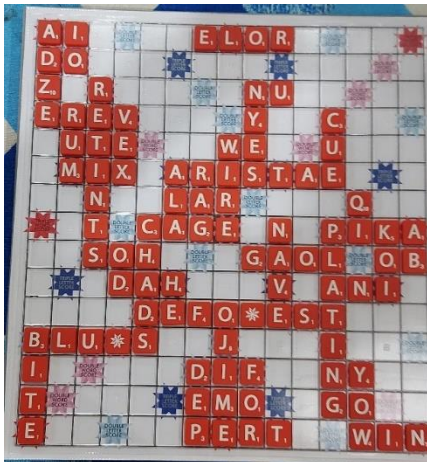


One of my games with the silent teacher Taweesak, with him winning 416-392

The next notable person on this list was Nidhi Singhvi, from Jaipur and Singapore and one of India's top players. Just not my cup of tea. When she bingoed in virtually every single turn mid-game, it left me wondering how she managed to score bingo after bingo after bingo every time she put her hand in the bag! Was the bag jinxed? Or was she someone who

could immediately manifest whatever was going through her brain? We finished the game with me realising that I needed much more luck the next day to even think about competing with her, just in case we got paired.

Day 1 also saw me play with Erin Rodrigues from the United States. A mother of four, this lady's enthusiasm to play after spending more than 48 hours travelling across the world to a new country with bare minimum rest, an achy back and swollen feet is certainly worth a mention.



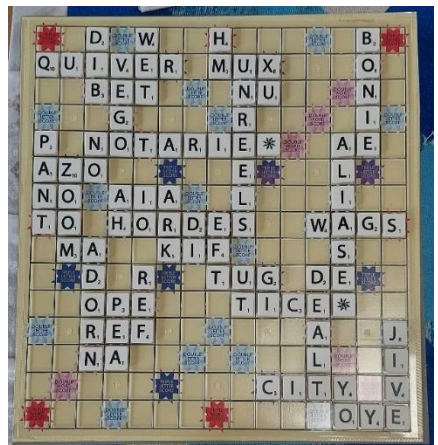
A memorable 456-401 win against Tariq

The second and third days witnessed the adult Scrabblers compete in a two-day tournament, and the most distinguished person I met was Tariq Pervez. The game started with a nervous me sitting opposite the confident and alert ace Pakistani Scrabblor whose opening move was CAGE. The air around me was charged with a sense of tangible

alertness that I rarely felt across a Scrabble board.

After a couple of moves, when our scores were breathing at each other's necks, Tariq said, "*India-Pakistan chal raha hai*". And, for reasons unknown, I felt an unusual calm settle over me instead of the usual fluster. Reining my nerves after every one of his bingos and him calling out on my phony, I battled this game with all the knowledge that I had gathered while playing Taweesak.

I was happy to spot multiple bingos on my rack which couldn't be played, courtesy me who blocked openings at the right time, preventing both of us from binging. The riskiest of my moves was playing ADZE at the top left TWS instead of the middle left or on a DWS, all of which scored almost equally. This was a gamble that paid off in mid-game.



An agonising 385-386 loss on the last day

Crucially, I realised that I could win a game with sheer skill if the tile fairy is unbiased, the bag unjinxed, and if my

nerves don't get the better of me. This was the first time I felt butterflies in my belly after winning a game and that too against a Pakistani player. Also, it was the first time I realised what happens inside the body and mind during an India-Pakistan match – a lot of boundaries get blurred.

At the close of Day 2, what caught my attention was the camaraderie between Samarth and Ahmed, two under-10s from across the borders, with such similarities in behaviour that it would be difficult for any outsider to separate them into different nationalities.

Day 2 ended with the Indian and the Pakistani contingents sharing the same dinner table over lots of food, experiences and friendly banter – and a Pakistani kid getting Shubha (Samarth's mother) and me a bowl of paan ice-cream that was, arguably, the dish of the evening. The innocence and joy in the eyes of the kid was a memory to behold.



A group picture with the Pakistani contingent

Day 3 saw my nerves leave me in a wreck – doom followed with just a couple of wins for the day, and yet

another game which I lost by a single point.

This tournament gave me a lot of memories to cherish for a lifetime, and reminded me that my physical weaknesses are merely a thorn that can be easily prevailed over by going beyond the barriers of my mind.

Sarhad paar...

Endgame Extra: Know the 31 bingos hidden in CHRISTMAS

CHARISM
CHIASMS
CHIMARS
CHRISMA
CHRISMS
HAIRSTS
MAHSIRS
MASTICH
MASTICS
MATRICS
MISACTS
MISCAST
RACISMS
RACISTS
SACRIST
SCAITHS
SCARTHIS
SCHISMA
SIMCHAS
TACHISM
THAIRMS
THIRAMS
THRIMSA
TSARISM
CHARISMS
CHARTISM
MASTICHS
SMARTISH
TACHISMS
THRIMSAS
CHARTISMS

The incredible journey of a 600-point jump (and then some)

by **Pramit Rao**

My Scrabble journey began in the seventh grade, when I was introduced to the game by my English teacher. After attending a Scrabble workshop conducted by Mattel, I was chosen to play in the Mattel School Scrabble Championship 2019 at the city level, which I ended up winning. To my surprise, I also went on to win at the national level, and I realised that I was actually pretty good at Scrabble.

Fast forward to the ninth grade – following a year's hiatus, I got a chance to rekindle my interest in Scrabble due to boredom during the lockdown in early 2021, just before my 15th birthday. I yearned to take the game more seriously, and got in touch with Dr. Varisht Hingorani of Wordaholix. I started training under him, which provided me with an altogether different view of Scrabble.

These lessons with Dr. Varisht were what really kickstarted my journey into the amazing world of competitive Scrabble. I started playing the rated online tournaments to get a taste of top-level Scrabble, before I achieved my goal of qualifying for the virtual WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) in August 2021. By this time, I had got a fair idea about the cognitive thinking abilities and the puzzle-solving techniques involved in Scrabble at the highest level.



Finishing 14th in Division A of the KSSA Indian Open 2022 was the stuff of dreams

Beyond the game skills, the most important lesson I learnt from Dr. Varisht was about maintaining composure during intense situations – he taught me how to improve my temperament and not get agitated while playing. He also showed me the significance of having presence of mind (what fellow Scrabbler Alan DeMello calls ‘equanimity’), which is displayed in how well you analyse the board and optimise your moves.

I played my first in-person tourney at Pune in March 2022, where it took me a few games to come to grips with the flow of a live game and keeping proper track of the tiles. I was quite devastated after finishing 31st out of 44 players. While that lowered my confidence a bit, I took it as a great learning experience and backed myself to train harder ahead of the grand KSSA Indian Open to be held in Bangalore a couple of months later.

One of the things my mentors told me before the KSSA Indian Open was to remain calm, and not bother about the result. “*Treat every move like a puzzle. Just think about the seven tiles in front of you, and nothing else*”, they would say. Before the games, I would take measures to calm myself down, especially against a higher rated opponent. I would never flinch at a bingo against me or get disappointed about a lost challenge.



Catching up with my fellow junior Scrabblers at the KSSA Indian Open

Despite having to deal with my board exams, I ensured that I was armed with enough practice in the lead-up to Bangalore. With nothing to lose and lots to gain, I registered myself for the top division, where I was the lowest seeded player. What followed was indeed the stuff dreams are made of!

I did not set any expectations from the tournament, yet at the same time, I knew I could be in for a decent rating boost if I gave my best shot. At the end of 33 games in four days, I found myself finishing 14th out of 30 players with 17 wins. I couldn't quite believe it – here was a random kid coming out of nowhere, playing against India's top players and ending

up in the top half of the standings. It was an insane feeling, to say the least.



A 381-472 loss to Aditya Iyengar at the KSSA Indian Open – an enriching game against a well-versed and composed player

I learnt so much from playing the top players, including in-game etiquette, and managing to beat some of them was just like an icing on the cake. On the first day itself, I had the thrill of winning against the top seed Marlon Prudencio of Singapore (an extremely satisfying 403-331 win) and third seed Irfan Siddiqui (by a nail-biting score of 407-402 – it was a shocker for me, it being just my sixth game!)

However, my most cherished game was a defeat – a crazy game against Rahil Parkar, with both of us trading punches before I eventually went down fighting by 405-450. This game had me on my feet throughout, and urged me to stretch my thinking limits for every move. In fact, given the level of play in this division, virtually every move in every game pushed me to come up with my best.

Another great thing about the KSSA Indian Open was that I finally met many of my online sparring partners, with whom I had only interacted virtually until then. Catching up with my WYC teammates and fellow junior players was a memorable experience.



Toppling top seed Marlon Prudencio 403-331 at the KSSA Indian Open – surreal!

The most incredible moment came a few days later. I was just coming out of a lecture, when I got the message that my SAI rating had skyrocketed by a whopping 602 points into the 1400s! I didn't know how to react. My initial feeling was disbelief – how on earth could this happen? But it had, and I was on cloud nine. I later learnt that this could well have been the highest swing in the SAI ratings ever.

Since experiencing this surreal high, I had the pleasure of playing in my first Wordaholic Scrabble League – it was great fun playing in a team format – and my second virtual WYC, where I

was glad to exceed my expectations by finishing sixth in a tough field.

In November 2022, I played for Team India in a major in-person event for the first time, it being the Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship. It was fascinating to meet fellow youth players from countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and to know about their training techniques and styles of play. I finished seventh out of 60 players, and was pleased to beat the WYC champion Ali Salman of Pakistan thrice in as many games. This has been my most memorable tournament experience so far.



In action at the Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship (I'm on the right)

One thing I can definitely vouch for from my Scrabble journey so far is that competing in the top divisions is always beneficial for a lower rated player, as it offers so much to learn while holding the promise of a good rating gain – it is like a win-win, and I would advise it to anyone looking to bring out the best in themselves.

Woman of words

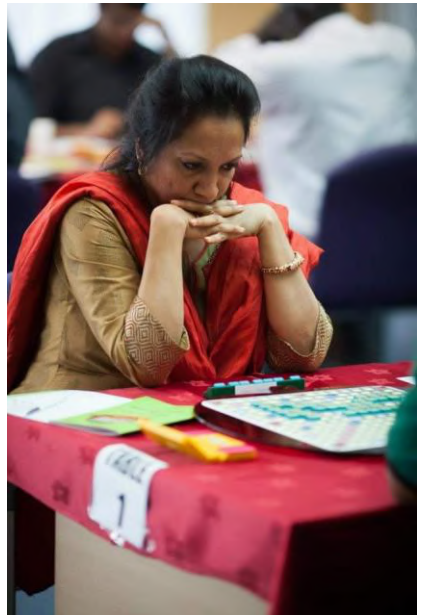
by Rohaina Tanveer

I was in Class 4 when the infectious chickenpox virally attacked me. Since I had 12-14 days' rest and my parents could not leave me 'home alone' (a la Kevin McCallister), my cousin sister, who was preparing for her exams, accompanied me and was pivotal in introducing me to the world of Play on Words and Scrabble. I always had a fetish for words, and this fuelled my thirst and hunger for more.

That year I got a treat of crossword and puzzle books from my mother (the bookworm in me crawling and eager), which not only increased my vocabulary, but also improved my logical thinking. Anagrams were always playing in my mind. I used to look at brand names, car models and signboards, and start making different words from them. A fun game my mother used to make us play as kids was making small words from a big word. Her favourite was 'Constantinople'.

A few months later when I was staying at my aunt's place, we sat to have a friendly family game, with my aunt, cousins and mom! Is that too many on one board? Well, that was how Scrabble was often played earlier. The game was won by yours truly, who hit her first nine-timer at the age of 9. Plonking GENeTICS was a huge find for me, but then there was no looking back. However, though I became hooked to Scrabble, I did not get much opportunity to pursue it

back then, except for a few friendly games once a month. When I was 14, there was a Scrabble competition organised as part of a community gathering.



In the thick of it: At the 2012 Gulf Scrabble Championship in the UAE, where I finished sixth

I won that competition and forgot about playing Scrabble till October 1994, when I returned to Kuwait and founded the Kuwait Scrabble Club. My father too loved this game and would take me there every Friday to play. In November 1994, a Scrabble competition was held at the Kuwait Safir Hotel (then Hilton), in which I finished second. This enabled me to

qualify for my first Gulf Scrabble Championship in 1995 and I was off to Bahrain.

Sadly, I stood no chance against the stalwarts who had better training and vocabulary. Here I met Mangala Bhandarkar, Madhu Soneja (Nikhil Soneja's mother), Lloyd Pearse, Selwyn Lobo, Marie and Cecil Fernandes, Sanath and Sonny Hemachandra, late Ishtiaq Chishti, late Shafique Ahmed and many more Scrabblers. My game with Selwyn ended up in a disaster for me as I was holding onto the Q (there was no QI back then) and he won just by taking scores by placing one tile at a time.

This was my first lesson on dumping and not retaining! Shafique noticed my constant losses and wanted to help me feel better. He handed me a floppy disk that had the two-letter and three-letter words, and told me to master those. Upon returning, I purchased my first Official Scrabble Words Dictionary and started studying word lists. I learnt a lot about anagramming, hooks, and stems.



With the GOAT Nigel Richards in 2009

In 2005, I topped the contingent in the Kuwait tournament and duly qualified for my first World Scrabble Championship, which took me to London. I had a memorable journey, along with the likes of Sherwin Rodrigues, Lakshan Wanniarachchi and Cecil Fernandes, among others. The tournament was of another scale altogether, and showed me that I still had a lot to catch my grip on in terms of strategy, maximising moves and finding optimal plays. But the highlight of the tournament was this story:

During our break between games, I was outside the main hall where some books were on sale, as well as other Scrabble paraphernalia. I was admiring a book titled *How to Win at Scrabble* written by Andrew Fisher. Suddenly I heard a gentleman's voice: "Do you like it?" I turned towards him and replied, "It seems to be well written". The gentleman was Andrew Fisher himself, and I ended up buying the book, asking him to sign it for me.

My next game was scheduled against Andrew. I already knew it was a loss for me, even before it started. Midway through the game, I felt I was doing pretty good, and was just at par with him – a score of 287-295 – when he plonked a bingo for 72 points. For me the word sounded new, so I plucked up courage to challenge the writer of the book I had just bought. And voila! It was a phoney. My heartbeats were jumping and singing their own sweet song, for I had a bingo up for grabs in the same spot – CHEMIST – that I put down immediately.

Yes, I eventually won the game, which took all of 25 minutes, by a hugely satisfying margin of 142 points. I walked – no, strutted – down the aisle with the score slip. I still remember Sherwin looking at my happiest smiley face and asking: “You won?” I nodded and submitted the slip. Poor Andrew was holding his head in his hands till the time the round got over. Though I did not fare too well at the WSC 2005, some games and people won my heart.



*Representing Kuwait at WESPAC 2019
in Goa*

To tell a story between Scrabble and me is quite complicated. There are so many twists and turns, so many ups and downs, and fun times with a fraternity I know now. I reserve the rest for other interesting moments and further Endgame issues.

**Endgame Extra: Know the 49
sevens and eights containing the
letters W, O, M, A and N**

Sevens (13)

ADWOMAN
ADWOMEN
BOWSMAN
GOWNMAN
PLOWMAN
SHOWMAN
SNOWMAN
UNWOMAN
WOMANED
WOMANLY
WOODMAN
WOOLMAN
WORKMAN

Eights (36)

AIRWOMAN, AIRWOMEN,
BATWOMAN, BATWOMEN,
CONWOMAN, GOWNSMAN,
LAYWOMAN, LAYWOMEN,
MADWOMAN, MADWOMEN,
MANPOWER, MANSWORN,
MARKDOWN, MAWBOUND,
MIAOWING, MOONWALK,
MOONWARD, PENWOMAN,
SANDWORM, SEAWOMAN,
SEAWOMEN, SPANWORM,
SWORDMAN, TOWNSMAN,
TOYWOMAN, UNWOMANS,
WIDOWMAN, WOMANING,
WOMANISE, WOMANISH,
WOMANISM, WOMANIST,
WOMANIZE, WOMANNED,
WOODSMAN, YAWNSOME

My experience at the Vadodara Open

by Yuvraj Dighe

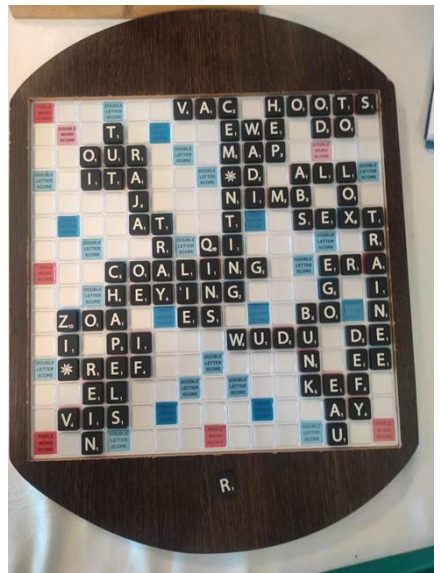
The Polyset All-India Open 2022, organised by the Vadodara Scrabble Club at Fern Ecotel in Vadodara, my home city, has made its way among the most memorable experiences of my life. The exhilarating atmosphere of the tournament has left me with cherished reminiscences of those three days.

It was truly amazing to meet the various Scrabblers with whom I had had played online innumerable times. It was only my second in-person tournament, so it still felt quite different to play competitive Scrabble on a real board with real tiles. Everyone was cheerful and always ready to help and give advice. To a young player like me having only a one-year experience of this game, these pieces of advice were worth their weight in gold.

The games were, well, incredible! Each of them was distinct in its own way. After all, these games were what made this tourney an unforgettable experience. I cannot describe how ecstatic I felt when I played the first ever nine-letter bingo of my life – CEMENTING, which went down for 76 points. Though the score was not special, the mere fact that it was a nine-letter word made me elated.

The second of my two matches against Rustom Deboo was surely my best game till date. It started as a close match, and the tension was retained throughout its course. It was

one of those few games in which the clock did support me. I cannot forget those eight minutes which I spent on my last couple of moves, thinking about the various ways to win the delicate game – which I eventually did by 409-392.



CEMENTING for 76 points – my first ever nine-letter play

The first day blessed me with another really crazy game, which at one point featured five consecutive plays scoring at least 40 points each, including three bingos. I played LAX for 40, ITERANTS* (a phoney) for 74, followed by FAYS for a neat 60. My opponent diligently replied with HEATERS for 84 points and STEARING for 77.

I lost a few games due to blunders that I made in the mid-game and the endgame – like opening up the board at the worst possible time, or making an invalid word at the end to lose a game that I should have won. Some of these were quite devastating, but in the end, it were the learnings taken from them that mattered.

I did make quite a lot of bingos, with VIOLATE, EXOCRINE, DUNDERS, REBITING, CRUMBLES, and OUTGIVEN among the notable ones. This was perhaps the highest number of bingos that I have achieved in any tournament.

It was equally fun to examine the games and words played by some of the top players of India. Getting to know words such as WAHINES and AMITROLE added to the excitement.

Overall, this tournament has fuelled my passion for Scrabble. It was an immensely enjoyable few days of meeting and making new friends and playing Scrabble to no end. I am already looking forward to future Scrabble tournaments in Vadodara.

Endgame Extra: Remember your eights with a few stems of six-letter European capital cities

BERLIN?? (30)

BARNLIKE, BEDLINER,
BERLINES, BERNICLE,
BERYLINE, BILANDER,
BILINEAR, BLEARING,
BLINDERS, BLINGIER,
BLINKERS, BRINDLED,
BRINDLES, BROMELIN,
BYLINERS, HIBERNAL,

IGNOBLER, INARABLE,
LINEBRED, NIBBLERS,
NUBBLIER, REMBLING,
RENDIBLE, RINSABLE,
RINSIBLE, RUINABLE,
RUNCIBLE, TREBLING,
UNBRIDLE, UNLIMBER

DUBLIN?? (16)

BLAUDING, BLINDGUT,
BLUDGING, BUDDLING,
BUILDING, BUNDLING,
DOUBLING, PURBLIND,
SUNBLIND, UNBILLED,
UNBLINDS, UNBOILED,
UNBRIDLE, UNBUILDS,
UNEDIBLE, UNILOBED

LISBON?? (25)

BILLIONS, BILTONGS,
BINOCLES, BLONDISH,
BLOUSING, BLOWINGS,
BOILINGS, BOLTINGS,
BONSPIEL, BOTULINS,
BOWLINES, BOWLINGS,
BULLIONS, COALBINS,
HOBNAILS, INGLOBES,
INKBLOTS, LINKBOYS,
LOBEFINS, NOMBRILS,
NUBILOSE, NUBILOUS,
SLOBBING, SNOBBILY, SNOBLING

PRAGUE?? (19)

EARPLUGS, GAZUMPER,
GRAUPELS, GROUPAGE,
GUNPAPER, PERIAGUA,
PLAGUERS, PLAGUIER,
PORTAGUE, PUGAREES,
PUGGAREE, RAMPAUGE,
SPEARGUN, UMPIRAGE,
UPGATHER, UPGRADED,
UPGRADER, UPGRADES,
UPSTAGER

Taking Scrabble to new frontiers

by Akshay Hiremath

On 1st December 2022, Swati Gupta and I conducted a Scrabble workshop at the Punjab Children Academy in Tarn Taran, a small town near Amritsar. It was organised by HarperCollins, the renowned book publishers. Collins publishes textbooks for schools, and they have to market their books to schools every year. They also publish the official Scrabble dictionary. There is hence a beautiful synergy that exists.

The Scrabble workshops that Collins conducts – working closely with Marisha Sharma from the Scrabble Association of Delhi – are a great way for Collins to network with schools and give them some real value addition. The game of Scrabble benefits because Scrabble goes to small towns that have had very limited prior exposure to the game.

Varun Nagpal – the local Collins sales representative – accompanied us to the Punjab Children Academy in Tarn Taran. We were met at the school by the principal, a lady from Delhi, who had been in her position for several years now. She was very cooperative, and was extremely enthusiastic about students from the school being exposed to Scrabble, which she viewed as a game that was fun, challenging, and great for improving the vocabulary of students (which was of key importance to her, as most students from the school were far

from being fluent in English, though it was an English medium school).

We conducted a series of four workshops in the school's gigantic hall – one workshop each for Grades 4, 5, 6, and 7. Each workshop was attended by around 200 students. We had 50 boards with us, and the kids sat around the boards in groups of four. We presented a few slides explaining the basics of Scrabble. The presentation took around 20 minutes, and we tried to make it as engaging as possible, by asking the kids to unjumble a set of letters that we presented – what fun they had doing the unjumbling activity!



We then gave the kids about 40 minutes' time to play a game. While the kids played, we walked around from board to board. It was a challenging task, because there were just the two of us, while there were 50 boards. However, our job got a little easier thanks to a few of the teachers, who got very involved and also helped in clarifying the students' doubts.

Most of the kids were playing Scrabble for the first time. Typically, in a batch of 200 kids, not more than five had played Scrabble before. They did struggle a bit – the game was new to them, they weren't yet too familiar with the rules though we had covered them at length, and English was hardly their language of comfort.

So, we had words being spelled backwards, words being made diagonally, more phoneys than actual words – but that was expected, given their lack of prior experience with the game and their lack of fluency in the language. We walked around extensively and guided the kids to the extent possible. I certainly got my week's quota of walking in those four hours!

What was really heartening was that despite all the constraints, the kids loved the game and got fully involved. Several of the kids came up to us at the end and said they really enjoyed the session; some of them even asked where the game set could be bought!

A smaller group size would have certainly made the session a lot easier to manage, and there would have been more one-on-one engagement with the kids. However, the session still went off pretty well, and the delight on the faces of the kids made it truly worthwhile! The initiative by Collins and Marisha and Co. is truly commendable, because it just goes towards further popularising the game that we all love so very much!

**Endgame Extra: Know the
sevens and eights starting and
ending with NEW**

NEWBIES
NEWBORN
NEWCOME
NEWELLS
NEWMOWN
NEWNESS
NEWSBOY
NEWSIER
NEWSIES
NEWSING
NEWSMAN
NEWSMEN
NEWTONS
INSINEW
MISKNEW
OVERNEW
UNSINEW

NEWBORNS
NEWCOMER
NEWELLED
NEWFOUND
NEWISHLY
NEWLYWED
NEWSBEAT
NEWSBOYS
NEWSCAST
NEWSCLIP
NEWSDESK
NEWSFEED
NEWSGIRL
NEWSHAWK
NEWSIEST
NEWSLESS
NEWSPEAK
NEWSREEL
NEWSROOM
NEWSWIRE
NEWWAVER
FOREKNEW

Quackling your way to Scrabble success

by Rahil Parkar

“What do you think Quackle would say in this position?” “I Quackled our game from yesterday, and it turns out I missed a better bingo in the second to last move.”

Newer entrants into tournament Scrabble must have heard statements like these being thrown with gay abandon around the top few tables. But I can assure you that taking Scrabble seriously does not turn you into a duck (although some of the players at the very top do seem to be a different species).

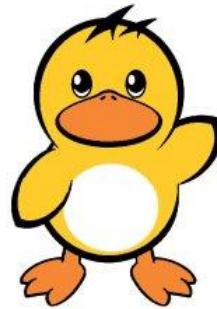
Quackle is a free and open-source computer program designed to simulate and analyse Scrabble games. It was developed by Jason Katz-Brown and John O’Laughlin, who released it to the public in 2006. Top players have since flocked to it in numbers, using the features it provides to take their Scrabble game to the next level.

Scrabble is a game of words, a game of numbers, a game of probabilities. But I think it can best be summed up as a game of choices. A Scrabble board, at any stage of the game, gives the player a wide array of options with the tiles on their rack.

These choices are rated as better or worse based on factors such as move score, rack leave, hotspots already available or made available, and the unseen tiles. The ability to make the right choice in most situations is

precisely what puts skilled players at the top of the rankings, tournament after tournament.

Quackle

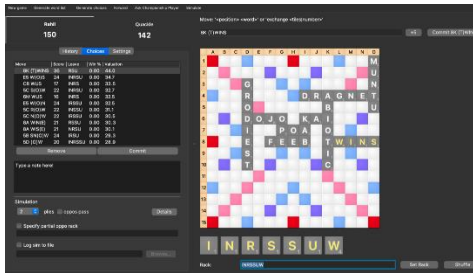


Quackle’s feature to evaluate these Scrabble positions is its most powerful feature, as it ranks potential options by assigning a score to each one based on Monte-Carlo simulations. This takes into account the score for the move, the leave valuation, and a win percentage, which defines how likely a move is to result in a probable victory.

Using Quackle consistently helps players spot the WINNINGEST (valid in Scrabble) move more often than not. It is a good source to come across uncommon words for players still building their Scrabble vocabulary.

Quackle also has a word list generator, which can be used to generate all possible words from a given set of tiles. This feature though

can also be found in many other programs and mobile apps.



A typical Quackle simulation in progress

Players can use Quackle as a sparring opponent. The computer always plays the best move, with settings available to increase the computations used to arrive at a play, thus making it the winningest. It can also be used to simulate live Scrabble games, where you can plug in your actual racks and the opponent's moves (some top players gladly share their racks with their opponents after games to help them get a more accurate simulation).

Setting up Quackle is fairly easy, with downloads available for Windows, Mac and Linux operating systems. After installation, the board needs to be set up to define the locations of hotspots as well as the dictionary to be used. This flexibility allows the program to also be used for variants like Words with Friends, which has a different board layout, as well as larger boards for Super Scrabble. Currently, Quackle does not support the CSW21 lexicon, with the latest release supporting up to CSW19.

The learning curve for Quackle is fairly easy, and can tremendously ramp up your Scrabble learning curve. Regular 'Quackling' is a

sure-shot strategy for climbing up the tournament leaderboards as well as national and international rankings at a steady pace.

Endgame Extra: Know the 34 sevens containing Q, U, A and C

ACEQUIA
ACQUEST
ACQUIRE
ACQUIST
ACQUITE
ACQUITS
AQUATIC
CACIQUE
CAIQUES
CALQUED
CALQUES
CASQUED
CASQUES
CAZIQUE
CHARQUI
CLAQUER
CLAQUES
COEQUAL
COQUINA
CUMQUAT
LACQUER
LACQUEY
MACAQUE
QUACKED
QUACKER
QUACKLE
QUADRIC
QUAICHS
QUANTIC
QUARTIC
QUEACHY
RACQUET
SACQUES
SQUACCO

Scrabble musings

My Scrabble journey

by Samarth Manchali

My name is Samarth. I am nine years old and I am from Bangalore.

I had been watching my elder brother and mother play Scrabble every evening. I came to know how to place words, check word validity and operate the timer. I had even seen them study words from books and online tools. I told my mother that I also wanted to study like them and play Scrabble. I pleaded with her to give me something to study, and that is where my Scrabble journey started.

I completed all the initial hurdles that my mother had set for me. Then I pestered her to play a game with me. I was in trouble as she gave me more to read! But I surprised her by finishing everything that she threw at me. After weeks and months of study, she finally agreed to play with me. But counting and writing the scores and cumulative scores was a hard thing for me to do as I was used to playing Scrabble online. I got better over time, though I am yet to become perfect in tracking the tiles. All of this happened during the lockdown phase.

In the beginning, as there was no chance for me to participate in physical tournaments, I eagerly waited for an online tournament. I did pretty well in my first online tournament and thereafter in my first in-person tournament – the KSSA Indian Open, in which I played the

Challenger Division – as well. I now looked forward to the most awaited WESPA Youth Cup 2022!

Since there were only eight seats available for India initially and six players had already qualified based on their ratings, there were only two seats left to play for through a qualifier. As it happened, I played in the qualifier and won it. I was very excited to play for India for the first time! I studied in a systematic way and practised games with my brother. I finished 35th and won the under-10 championship. I was overjoyed about it and cried a bit when my mum broke the news to me. I hadn't expected it.



In action during one of my games at the National School Championship – a great learning experience

The next international tournament I played was the Asia Cup Youth Championship, played in person in Gurgaon. Unlike the WYC, there was no qualifier, and I was wishing to

earn another trophy. I won against some tough opponents on the first two days. I beat the WYC champion, Ali Salman of Pakistan, by 57 points and my own brother by just one point. Though the last day was tough, I won a lovely diamond trophy for being the under-10 Asia champion.

Between the WYC and the Asia Cup, I also played in the finals of the National School Championship – I had won the junior category in the Bangalore Zonal and was also the runner up in the overall category. I won two trophies at the Bangalore Zonal, and now I can say that I have more trophies than my brother!

My first WSL experience

by Manju Sood

When Neeta Bhatia of Wordaholix reached out to me to participate in the Wordaholix Scrabble League, I was at first apprehensive if I would be let into the WSL ‘family’. However, right from my first moment at the charming and artsy The Bark hotel, I felt warmly welcomed by the entire WSL team, and I knew I was well and truly baptised into the WSL family!



*Post-game talk with young Madhav
Gopal Kamath at my first WSL*

It surely went on to be one of my best tournament experiences. The team format was lovely, the food was the amazing, and the setting was perfect. The team banter and bonhomie during and between the games and the vibe at the get-togethers after the games made for a unique experience.

A game that troubled my thoughts for a couple of days after the tournament was an agonising defeat to Rustom Deboo on the first day. I was up by 50 points going into the final move, and also held a blank. But the rest of my rack was an unfathomable DFQWXY. I somehow scored 42 points, only to see the opponent go out with a play of HOTLINER! Left with FWX on my rack, I went down by 11 points.

The weather added to the charm, and the entertainment provided at nights was simply too much fun. I made a few new friends, got to see the various talents of some of the Scrabblers, and got to experience Ritu Chadha – our gracious hostess – unplugged. *Aur kya chahiye!* I would be back at the WSL in a heartbeat.

Gamy vibes

by Bhakti Shah

I’m Bhakti Shah (both valid words in Scrabble!), a board games buff from Bangalore destined to be in Nagpur. I’m happy to introduce myself and be a part of the Scrabblers’ universe.

Having always been an avid board gamer, I started Smash & Splash in Nagpur, a game zone with an indoor

pool for parties and learning skills of swimming and indoor games.

Still, I needed more to feed and add to my cravings to get acquainted with a few likeminded buffs. Along came Scrabble – I came to know about the competitive scene and became hooked to the game!

I doubted myself – do I know the real gameplay? But I quickly realised that there is no perfect time to start. You do not need to know everything to get going. Just get into the game, and you will learn more by delving deeper!



Engrossed in a game at my first tournament, in Vadodara (I'm on the left)

I came across Wordaholix (the name says it all), my Scrabble bestie, and soon learnt that independence of thought is a most valuable quality in a Scrabble player, both at the board and while preparing for the games.

In November 2022, I made my debut in the newbie division at the Polyset All-India Tournament in Vadodara. It was akin to experiencing a mixed mocktail of magnanimity – as if all the emoticons in my phone were dancing together at a Garba nite! I came back home after having candid and flawless fun, and of course, with lessons from some of the best brains in Scrabble (age no bar).

I have now realised that to develop a long-term relationship with a board game is to tease out the intricacies of all the different ways by which it can nudge you and shape the way you approach a variety of situations and possible interactions with people.

Happy scrabbling!!

My experience at the National School Scrabble Championship

by Raeya D

I started playing Scrabble in 2019, when I was ten years old. The only thing I knew then was that it is a word game. Later on, I found out that it involves mathematical as well as word knowledge and that it is also a very relaxing activity. I always wondered how my coach Ms. Shubha Shivashankar and my school buddies, Suyash and Samarth, used to win in competitions and get majestic trophies. I hankered for getting a chance to participate in a Scrabble competition. After three years, I got that chance.

The National School Scrabble Championship was announced! I was excited to participate in it, and I registered my name with the concerned teacher immediately.

I did pretty well in the initial online qualifiers, finishing among the top five selected from my school! This qualified me for the Bangalore Zonal held on 29th October. When I was on my way to the venue, I was nervous. But it all went well – we had three games and I won each of them. I was really delighted by this. The next level, Duplicate Scrabble, was like writing an exam to me. I had a splitting headache. I didn't know all the best moves, but did the best I could.



Being part of the National School Scrabble Championship was a memorable experience for me

During the prize distribution ceremony, I was curious. The prizes were announced downwards from the fifth position onwards. My name wasn't called till the tenth place. So, I thought I wouldn't make it. Later, they called my name as the second runner-up. I was extremely shocked and happy too!! I was one among the

four children to qualify from the Bangalore Zonal for the finals! It was a dreamlike experience to me.

Now, the next level was tougher! I knew my chances were slim. The final was in Delhi. I won two games out of four. I made it to the final round of the grand finale, and though I didn't do too well, I really enjoyed it.

I thank my coach Ms. Shubha, my parents, my school teachers, my family and my friends for their support and encouragement to me. Thanks also to all the organisers and sponsors, not only for organising the event meticulously but also for showering us with a lot of goodies, personalised gifts and presents to make my first Scrabble tournament experience a memorable one!

Endgame Extra: Know the 15 seven-letter words formed with MUSING?

AMUSING
IMPUGNS
INGRUMS
LIGNUMS
MEUSING
MOUSING
MUGGINS
MUSHING
MUSINGS
MUSKING
MUSSING
MUSTING
SOUMING
SPUMING
SUMMING

When words have wings

by Rustom Deboo

Here are 30 avian bingos to help you soar high in your next tournament:

ANTPITTA – a South American bird related to the ant thrush

CORELLA – a small cockatoo

CROMBEC – a kind of African warbler

CURASSOW – a turkey-like bird

DOTTEREL – a shorebird

GOSHAWK – a large hawk

GRACKLE – a blackbird



Grosbeak

GROSBEAK – a finch

JACAMAR – a tropical bird

LAPWING – a shore bird

LONGSPUR – a long-clawed finch

MANAKIN – a tropical bird

MANUCODE – a bird of paradise

MEGAPODE – a large-footed bird



Manakin

MINIVET – a brightly coloured shrike-like bird

MOREPORK – an Australian bird

MURRELET – a small diving bird

OXPECKER – an African bird

PICULET – a small tropical American woodpecker

POCHARD – a sea duck



Tragopan

POORWILL – a small North American bird

REDSTART – a small songbird

SHELDUCK – a European duck

TAPACULO – a small South American bird, also TAPACOLO

TINAMOU – a South American game bird



Whimbrel

TRAGOPAN – an Asian pheasant

TROUPIAL – a tropical bird

WHEATEAR – a small bird of northern regions

WHIMBREL – a shore bird

WRYNECK – a European bird

Continuing with the theme... a fluttery board featuring all 100 tiles:



Finally, here are the 15 sevens and 24 eights ending with the letters BIRD:

ANTBIRD
AWLBIRD
AXEBIRD
BOOBIRD
CATBIRD
COWBIRD
FATBIRD
JAYBIRD
MAYBIRD
OILBIRD
REDBIRD
SEABIRD
SUNBIRD
WARBIRD
WOSBIRD

BELLBIRD
BLUEBIRD
COCKBIRD
FERNBIRD
FIREBIRD
GAOLBIRD
HANGBIRD
HOMEBIRD
JAILBIRD
KINGBIRD
LADYBIRD
LOVEBIRD
LYREBIRD
OVENBIRD
PUFFBIRD
RAILBIRD
RAINBIRD
REEDBIRD
RICEBIRD
SNOWBIRD
SONGBIRD
SURFBIRD
WHIPBIRD
YARDBIRD

ARFS completes a century

by Team ARFS

In November 2020, at the height of the pandemic, four eager Scrabble enthusiasts – Asha Kamath, Rekha Sanzgiri, Lloyd Pearse and late Collin Pereira, tired of being confined to the four walls of the house and missing the hallowed experience of in-person tournaments, decided to experiment with the concept of regular online practice games using the Internet Scrabble Club platform.

After playing a few sets of round robin games amongst themselves, they decided to involve the Scrabble community at large in the form of online practice tournaments. Coming as it did at the time of the lockdowns, the concept rapidly took off among the Scrabble-starved folk.

Starting with playing for top score, the first online practice tournament was held on 12th December 2020 with 16 participants playing a round robin format, giving an opportunity for newcomers to lock horns with experienced players in a relaxed format spread over four to six days. The enthusiasts rallied together under the banner Always Ready for Scrabble (ARFS) with Lloyd, Rekha, Kala Ganesh, Savio Rebello and recently Meena Kalyan as directors.

Since then, there has been a regular series of practice tournaments under the iron hand of the no-nonsense tournament director Lloyd, with many newcomers joining in and experiencing firsthand the simple

joys of playing Scrabble with like-minded individuals not only from around the country, but from many places around the world.



A thrilling T-99 game between ARFS directors Savio and Kala – Savio won 365-353 by going out with FISHneT

ARFS has now been conducting regular online practice tournaments to hone the skills of avid Scrabblers for the last two years and has a dedicated clubroom on Woogles, where games are played at any time of the day. The flexible and relaxed pace of the games and the easy-going camaraderie between the participants promotes and enhances the learning experience. ARFS tournaments have experimented with both individual as well as team-based formats, and are held without camera monitoring,

believing entirely in the integrity of the participants being true to themselves.

To commemorate its 100th practice tournament, which coincided with the completion of its two years, ARFS organised three themed tournaments – T-98 exclusively for ladies which had 14 participants, T-99 as a team tournament consisting of three well-matched teams of six players each, and T100, an open tournament in memory of Collin featuring 20 players. All three tournaments were well contested. The ladies' tourney was won by Rohaina Tanveer by one game with a spread of 326 points, with R Nalini and Kala in second and third place respectively with a spread of 183 points separating them.

The team tournament consisted of three teams, with Team A comprising captain Shaik Ahmed, Lloyd, Ela Ghose, Madhulekha Barkakati, Sarbani Rath and Nidhi Rana, Team B comprising captain Rohaina, Shalini Sahdev, Parvathy Raghunathan, Jyoti Budhia, Savio and Sukanya Baba, and Team C comprising captain Kala, Abid Hussain, Rekha, Monica Agarwala, Kaveri Warriar and Raman Viswanathan. T-99 was won by Team C, followed by Team B in second place and Team A in third place.

T-100, the open tournament, was won by Shaik by a clear margin of two games and a whopping spread of 1252 points over second-placed Nalini and third-placed Ela, who had an equal number of wins but were separated by 1203 points.

Endgame Extra: Know the 119 fours and fives starting or ending with X

Fours (34)

APEX, BRUX, CALX, COAX,
CRUX, DOUX, EAUX, FAIX,
FALX, FAUX, FLAX, FLEX,
FLIX, FLOX, FLUX, GREX,
HOAX, IBEX, ILEX, JEUX,
JINX, JYNX, LANX, LYNX,
MINX, ONYX, ORYX, PLEX, PREX,
ROUX, ULEX, XRAY, XYST, YUNX

Fives (85)

ADDAX, ADMIX, AFFIX,
ANNEX, BEAUX, BEMIX,
BOLIX, BORAX, CALIX,
CALYX, CAPEX, CAREX,
CHOUX, CIMEX, CODEX,
COMIX, CULEX, CYLIX,
DESEX, DETOX, DEWAX,
EMBOX, ENFIX, FEDEX,
FOREX, GALAX, HAPAX,
HELIX, HYRAX, IMMIX,
INBOX, INDEX, INFIX,
KYLIX, LATEX, LIMAX,
LINUX, LUREX, MALAX,
MIREX, MUREX, PANAX,
PHLOX, PODEX, PYREX,
RADIX, REDOX, REDUX,
REFIX, RELAX, REMEX,
REMIX, RETAX, RETOX,
REWAX, SALIX, SILEX,
SOREX, TELEX, THANX,
UNBOX, UNFIX, UNMIX,
UNSEX, UNTAX, URBEX,
VARIX, VIBEX, VITEX,
XEBEC, XENIA, XENIC,
XENON, XERIC, XEROX,
XERUS, XOANA, XRAYS,
XYLAN, XYLEM, XYLIC,
XYLOL, XYLYL, XYSTI, XYSTS

In memoriam

Collin Pereira was a long-time and enthusiastic Scrabbler who was a regular in tournaments in the Gulf from 1984 to 1995 and later in India from 2015 onwards.



‘A former Gulf champion’

Collin, a former Gulf Scrabble champion, was a very pleasant personality who could come up with the most amazing bingos and take a game away from you. He was very enthusiastic about Scrabble – he loved the game and was good at it.

Just a couple of weeks before he left us, he had called me saying that he was planning to be in Goa in mid-November and was looking forward to playing Scrabble in Goa during his visit. The Scrabble community will miss him.

(by Savio Rebello)

‘Inspiring zest for life’

Collins’s zest for life will be inspiring to all of us. No groaning whatsoever. He always wished me personally on all festivals, and often shared good write-ups on religion by his brother and nephew. His participation in social events was also admirable. I admired Collin as a person because though he knew that all things have to end, that did not deter him from enjoying life while it lasted.

(by Meena Kalyan)

‘Always energetic and active’

I knew Collin from the time he was playing in Kuwait. He was always quite energetic and active. He will surely be missed.

(by Rohaina Tanveer)

‘A really enthusiastic player’

Collin was a really enthusiastic player, battling physical and technical challenges to play. I am glad he was able to keep playing until the end.

(by Hema Shah)

‘His T-shirts were legendary’

We will all remember Collin dancing with so much enthusiasm and abandon during the recent WSL tournament in Lonavala. His T-shirts were legendary. He will be missed.

(by Ritu Chadha)

Tournament round-up

Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship

by Mimi Hingorani

Bringing together young Scrabblers from across the world annually is what the WESPA Youth Cup used to do, before the pandemic forced the event to be held virtually for its last two editions. Realising that many leading youth players had been longing for an in-person tournament experience, we readied ourselves to bring the same back to the global youth Scrabble scene and create new memories in the process.

The Scrabble Association of Delhi (SADel) and Wordaholix worked on this idea and got the ball rolling in May 2022. Feelers were sent out to the global Scrabble community, which led to a favourable response. With the majority of youth players being from the Asian region, the Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship was set for 25th to 27th November. Kunskapsskolan, Gurugram was confirmed as the venue, and soon the momentum started building.

From the venue to the invitations, from visa letters to finalising the accommodation, from sponsorship to the trophies and goodies, not to mention the multitude of areas that go into conducting a tournament, the organising team, especially Neeta Bhatia and Archana Aggarwal, put in countless hours to make the event flow seamlessly.

SAI and KSSA were generous with their encouragement and Scrabble equipment. The Indian contingent geared up after playing the virtual WESPA Youth Cup and the National School Scrabble Championship 2022 that was conducted by Collins, Mattel and SAI in association with SADel and Wordaholix.



The Indian contingent at the ACYSC



Games in progress at the ACYSC

Teams from Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan ensured their participation in good numbers. Besides, players from Malaysia, Qatar, Thailand and even the USA sent in confirmations. The visas proved to be a challenge, and we had our fingers crossed. Nevertheless, it was overcome and the youngsters were on their way!

The organising team received our 60 participants with generous goodie bags at the scenic Kunskapsskolan. With the registration done, the seven games of the opening day began post lunch with the beautiful sound of rattling tiles. Challenging words, counting of scores and handing over the result slips – the familiar sights and sounds of a physical Scrabble tournament delighted our hearts! Once the players got into the flow, it was smooth sailing and the prospect of 11 games on the following day did not seem too daunting.



An ACYSC theme board created by Rustom Deboo, which was presented to Kunskapsskolan as a memento

Day 2 dawned nice and early. The Australian Lag draw had begun from Round 3 previously, and the players were on their way to playing their best game all day through. Those who finished their games early would still find time to indulge in friendly games around the scoring table. Amazing banter was on display between games and the camaraderie between the players was a sight to see! The lunch was enjoyable and the afternoon saw the players soldiering on. By the day's end, they were able to assess where they stood and determine how they would need to perform the next day when the King of the Hill (KOTH) format would set in.

Tiring though the second day was, the excitement was palpable and the players couldn't wait to come back bright and early for the last day. But this was not before we celebrated two birthdays, of one participant from Sri Lanka and another from Pakistan – it's always a good time for cake!

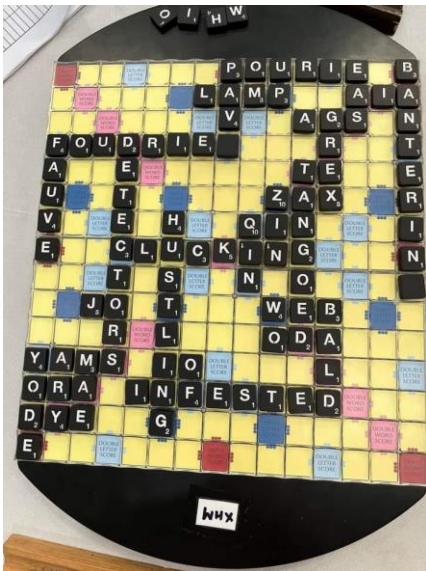


ACYSC champion Hasham Hadi Khan of Pakistan, flanked by runner-up Madhav Gopal Kamath (right) and third placer Affan Salman

A sea of blue was seen across the venue as all the players wore their

beautiful Asia Cup T-shirts for the final day. With KOTH playing a huge role, the final six games brought immense excitement, healthy ribbing and nail-biting results. The top tables were a virtual merry-go-round till the last game. Brilliant boards were seen and the final winning board was a masterpiece indeed, as can be seen in the picture below.

Before we knew it, the games were done, the winners known, and the beautiful trophies, prizes and gift hampers displayed – it was now time for the prizes! A beautiful dance performance by Team Nepal kick-started the prize distribution. They also brought T-shirts to be gifted as a gesture of goodwill. Mattel generously gave Scrabble boards which were gifted to Team Nepal, Kunskapsskolan and the winners.



The final board – Hasham Hadi Khan winning 490-433 over Madhav Kamath

Collins gave age-appropriate books, which the players received in their goodie bags as well as were gifted to Team Nepal, Team Malaysia and Kunskapsskolan. Cornitos chips were freely available on all days of play for all at the venue. In addition, hampers were given to the winners. Black Panther, our apparel sponsor, provided refillable water bottles to reduce our carbon footprint and sports accessories for the goodie bags.

Pakistan's Hasham Hadi Khan placed first, narrowly edging out our Madhav Gopal Kamath for the coveted title by just half a win – he went out with a nine-letter word BANTERING (an apt conclusion, considering there was a lot of it all through the tournament!) to beat Madhav 490-433 in the deciding final round. Pakistan's Affan Salman and Sri Lankans Adheesha Dissanayake and Hivin Dilmith rounded off the top five.

Of the top ten players, six were from Pakistan and two each from India and Sri Lanka. Age category prizes were given in the under-10, under-12, under-14 and under-16 groups with the top two players in each category outside the top ten winners receiving trophies and gift hampers. A special prize was given to the best placed female player of the tournament, which was won by Sandali Vithanage of Sri Lanka.

Alongside the main youth event, there were two side tournaments for adults which were also WESPA-rated – a one-dayer of five games followed by a two-dayer featuring 14 games. Both tournaments were won by Nidhi Singhvi.



The organising team for the ACYSC

As the tournament drew to a close, goodbyes were said with promises to return next year and stay in touch. New relationships were formed over a mutual passion – Scrabble surely brings us together and makes this world a better place! Tariq Pervez, the representative of the Pakistani team, captured the true essence of the tournament in the following words:

“Had a wonderful time leading the Pakistan team to the inaugural Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship in India. The games were of high quality and the hospitality of the hosts and local people was beyond imagination. They showered us with love and affection. The difficulties with visas and the police reporting had zero effect on our spirits. Will definitely be going there again.”

Team ACYSC is thankful for all the kind support, contributions and encouragement received from our fellow Scrabblers in making the inaugural Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship a success.



Scrabble transcends boundaries – The Pakistani contingent at the Wagah border

Final standings – top 20

	Player and country	Wins	Spread
1	Hasham Hadi K: PAK	17.5	1428
2	Madhav Kamath: IND	17	1770
3	Affan Salman: PAK	16.5	1965
4	Adheesha D: SRL	16	1621
5	Hivin Dilmith: SRL	16	1604
6	Azlan Qazi: PAK	16	629
7	Pramit Rao: IND	15	1187
8	Bilal Asher: PAK	15	1148
9	Ali Salman: PAK	15	885
10	Shane Abbas: PAK	15	874
11	Kavindu M: SRL	15	643
12	Sandali V: SRL	14	2469
13	Monis Khan: PAK	14	1297
14	Sehaan Owais: PAK	14	1023
15	Ahmed Salman: PAK	14	785
16	Ahana Goyal: IND	14	333
17	Vinith Owens: SRL	14	-353
18	Archana P: SRL	13.5	874
19	Ahmad Azhan: MAS	13	1297
20	Suyash M: IND	13	1118

High game: Monis Khan 760

WESPA Youth Cup 2022

by Rustom Deboo

As was the case in 2021, the 2022 edition of the WESPA Youth Cup (WYC, alternatively also the World Youth Scrabble Championship) was held virtually on Woogles over three weekends from 15th to 30th October. The tournament was organised by the Pakistan Scrabble Association and featured 86 players from 15 countries.

The ten-member Indian contingent comprised Madhav Gopal Kamath, Pramit Rao, Suyash Manchali, Shreyas Gupta, Ekansh Arora, Samarth Manchali, Amogh Bhamerkar, Aarush Jotwani, Ahana Goyal and Yuvraj Dighe. Neeta Bhatia, India's representative on the WESPA Youth Committee, helped coordinate the process in the lead-up to the tournament.

Each of the players played 36 games in the preliminary round, in which Madhav (25 wins) and Pramit (24) finished fifth and sixth respectively to progress to the final round made up of the top ten finishers.

The final round of 14 games saw 12-year-old Madhav replicate his second-place finish from 2021 with nine wins, while 16-year-old Pramit finished sixth with seven wins. Samarth Manchali, one of the youngest players in the fray at the age of 9, was the under-10 champion. The top spot was sealed by Pakistan's Ali Salman, who pipped his compatriot Hasham Hadi Khan by just six points in the last game to win the title.



(Clockwise from top): Madhav Gopal Kamath (second place), Samarth Manchali (under-10 champion) and Pramit Rao (sixth place)

Final round standings

	Player and country	Wins	Spread
1	Ali Salman: PAK	10	856
2	Madhav Kamath: IND	9	807
3	Hasham Hadi K: PAK	9	-17
4	Ronnie Bennett: AUS	7	50
5	Adheesha D: SRL	7	17
6	Pramit Rao: IND	7	-170
7	Affan Salman: PAK	6	-78
8	Sandali V: SRL	6	-193
9	Chaiyottha M: THA	6	-392
10	Eirfan Ramzan: MAS	3	-880

Wordaholix Scrabble League (WSL) VIII

by Mimi Hingorani

The eighth edition of the Wordaholix Scrabble League, the only team-based tournament on the Indian Scrabble calendar, was held from 7th to 9th October at the quaint and picturesque The Bark hotel in Lonavala.

The six teams this year were named after different breeds of man's best friend (the complete teams can be

found on page 16 of the September 2022 Endgame). The respective team captains used the time prior to the tournament to work with their team members on their games and skills, which pays off in Scrabblers bettering their strategy. The camaraderie and team spirit at the WSL motivates all to perform to their best strengths.



The stage set for WSL VIII to commence at The Bark – goodies galore!

The 48 players were divided into the following six teams under their esteemed captains:

BASENJI (African hunting dog) captained by Sanjoy Gupta

BORZOI (Russian hunting sighthound) captained by Madhav Gopal Kamath (the youngest WSL captain ever!)

KUVASZ (Hungarian sheepdog) captained by Udayan Grover

SALUKI (Arab greyhound) captained by Samrath Singh Bhatia

SEGUGIO (Italian scent hound) captained by Sunny Bhatia

VIZSLA (Hungarian hunting dog) captained by Varisht Hingorani

The beauty of the WSL concept is that each player gets to play opponents ranging from the captain to the lowest rated player of another team – an opportunity seldom seen in regular rated tournaments.

Action on the first day began after brunch. Eight games were played, following which it was time to party WSL style! Karaoke night saw our multi-talented Scrabblers belt out beautiful numbers whilst some enjoyed grooving alongside. Late Collin Pereira kickstarted the dancing and encouraged other Scrabblers to shake a leg, including a captain with an injured one! A delicious dinner spread and a night to remember best sums up Day 1.



Scrabblers battle it out in their team colours on the final day

There were also generous spot prizes for each round, including sportswear from Black Panther, beauty products from Uuwa, and stationery courtesy Vimisha Patel. A special mention for the refillable water bottles to avoid plastic consumption, provided by our fabulous and overindulgent hostess Ritu Chadha.

Day 2 dawned early with Lonavala enveloped in rain and mist and the

Scrabblers set to play ten games. With VIZSLA in the lead with 36 cumulative wins, the remaining teams were charged up to get ahead! Exciting games highlighted the day, which ended with KUVASZ in the lead having 78 cumulative wins and a spread of 810, followed by VIZSLA at 75 cumulative wins and a 536-point spread.

With 18 games done and seven more to go on the last day, it was time to party yet again! A dinner under the stars with a DJ ensured we put on our dancing shoes, but not before the surprise of the evening – Ritu, our hostess with the mostest, put up a stand-up act for her WSL family! Another lavish spread, amazing bonhomie, good music and some poker ensued before we called it a night.

Drumroll! It was now Day 3 and a fight to the finish beckoned! Dressed in their team colours, our Scrabblers were ready for battle! With strategy and team spirit in place, the games commenced with all to play for. Mid-morning also saw the team pictures taken in the WSL tees.



Team KUVASZ, winners of WSL VIII

Unlike previous editions of the WSL where teams would establish their lead by the second day, this time the teams were neck and neck! A few upsets and some fabulous outcomes lead to a nail-biting finish with KUVASZ winning the WSL VIII with 107 cumulative wins. VIZSLA placed second with 105 cumulative wins, while only a solitary win separated the teams placed third to fifth.

Everyone is a winner at WSL always! Each Scrabbler received cash prizes along with goodies thanks to our co-sponsor Adani, entertainment sponsor Mirchi Plus, Uuwa, and apparel sponsor Black Panther.

The WSL family lost Collin Pereira later that month. He was part of VIZSLA, and will be remembered fondly by all the Scrabblers.

Final team standings

	Team	Wins	Spread
1	KUVASZ	107	284
2	VIZSLA	105	897
3	SALUKI	98.5	333
4	SEGUGIO	98	238
5	BASENJI	97.5	-1331
6	BORZOI	94	-421

Final individual standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Udayan Grover	22	2056
2	Samrath Bhatia	19	2120
3	Varisht Hingorani	19	1349
4	Sunny Bhatia	18	1774
5	Shaik Ahmed	18	1675
6	Sanjoy Gupta	18	1287
7	Neeta Bhatia	18	644
8	Sudhir Kamath	16	1099
9	Alan DeMello	16	837
10	Rustom Deboo	16	529
11	Mangala Bhandarkar	15	921

12	Madhav Kamath	15	891
13	Selwyn Lobo	15	605
14	Abid Hussain	15	470
15	Vignesh S	15	120
16	Archana Aggarwal	15	-116
17	Amit Sood	14	649
18	Manju Sood	14	170
19	Rajeev Menon	14	-98
20	Kala Ganesh	14	-151
21	Siddharth Nithyanand	13	373
22	Vimisha Patel	13	-84
23	Rehet Bhatia	13	-270
24	Asha Kamath	13	-540
25	Sanjay Bijlani	11.5	-106
26	Bhushan Pradhan	11	195
27	Pramit R/Radhika M*	11	-77
28	Abhijit Shilotri	11	-110
29	Harry Bhatia	11	-187
30	Nikheel Ruparel	11	-261
31	Hyder Quraishi	11	-624
32	Dipankar Chatterjee	11	-974
33	Sujana Somasekar	10	557
34	Danish Shahna	10	-552
35	Meena Kalyan	10	-650
36	Sonal Merchant	10	-834
37	Rekha Sanzgiri	10	-835
38	Aaradhya Srivastava	10	-972
39	Caryl Gonsalvez	10	-1075
40	Swagat Nukala	9	-527
41	Jyoti Budhia	9	-608
42	Ritu Chadha	9	-803
43	Zeba Sultan	8.5	-915
44	Patrick Pereira	7	-569
45	Parvathy R	7	-945
46	Collin Pereira	7	-1264
47	Aruna Grover	6	-1773
48	Sylvia Coelho	1	-2401

*Radhika M replaced Pramit Rao on Day 2

Polyset All-India Open, Vadodara

by Rustom Deboo

The Vadodara Scrabble Club held the second Polyset All-India Open from 18th to 20th November at the Fern Ecotel Hotel. The WESPA-rated tournament featured 19 players battle it out over 24 rounds, and was won by

Udayan Grover (18 wins including a bye) with a round to spare. In second place was Ishika Shivalingaiah (16 wins including a bye), who also achieved the best spread of +1415.



*The top three from each division (L to R):
Shaik Ahmed (third place, main), Ishika
S (runner-up, main), Udayan Grover
(winner, main), Arjun Maheshwari
(winner, newbie), Viral Kansara
(runner-up, newbie) and Jayant Sastry
(third place, newbie)*

The three rating band prizes were clinched by yours truly (1100 and above), Vimisha Patel (800-1099), and Yuvraj Dighe (below 800). The final day also saw an unrated newbie division featuring ten players, which was won by promising nine-year-old Arjun Maheshwari.



Games in progress at the spacious venue

The main sponsor of the tournament was Polyset Plastics. Thanks to Vimisha for her efforts in organising it, Ashok Bhandarkar for genially directing it as always, and Sameen Parkar for her valuable assistance. Generous spot prizes added to the delight of the Scrabblers, not to mention the delectable local cuisine.

Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Udayan Grover	17 (+1)	555
2	Ishika Shivalingaiah	15 (+1)	1415
3	Shaik Ahmed	14 (+1)	1145
4	Rahil Parkar	15	960
5	Kala Ganesh	14 (+1)	-9
6	A Krishnan	13 (+1)	433
7	Amogh Bharker	13 (+1)	251
8	Rustom Deboo	13 (+1)	115
9	Mangala Bhandarkar	12 (+1)	1181
10	Vimisha Patel	12 (+1)	-189
11	Yuvraj Dighe	12 (+1)	-523
12	Bhushan Pradhan	11 (+1)	678
13	Rekha Sanzgiri	11 (+1)	-174
14	Neha Maheshwari	11 (+1)	-740
15	Hyder Quraishi	10 (+1)	28
16	Dhaval Rathod	8 (+1)	-876
17	Dev Rishi	7 (+2)	-1441
18	Kalpna Sastry	7 (+1)	-703
19	Krupa Viradiya	0 (+1)	-2106

High game: Bhushan Pradhan 585

Bye treatment explained in brackets

Deccan Cup, Hyderabad

with inputs from Arindam Basu

The Scrabble year culminated with the keenly contested Deccan Cup in Hyderabad, conducted at the Hotel Deccan Serai Grande from 16th to 18th December. The tournament featured 31 players and 25 rounds.

Top seed Udayan Grover emerged as the winner after a thrilling last day,

on which he won six out of seven games to claw back from the fourth position – he beat second seed and eventual runner-up Sunny Bhatia 434-324 in the deciding final game.



Winner Udayan Grover (centre) with runner-up Sunny Bhatia (left) and third placer Sanjoy Gupta

The Deccan Cup was a thoroughly enjoyable and busy experience for most of the Scrabblers involved, what with the fabulous after-parties thrown by the host Rajeev Menon as well as FIFA World Cup streaming in the night. The organising trio of Rajeev, Danish Shahna and Swagat Nukala pulled off the tournament with elan, while Ashok Bhandarkar once again played the role of the Tournament Director to the tee.

Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Udayan Grover	18	1269
2	Sunny Bhatia	17	1545
3	Sanjoy Gupta	16	1389
4	Shaik Ahmed	16	889
5	Selwyn Lobo	16	405
6	Mangala Bhandarkar	15	791
7	Suchindra Potnis	14	545
8	Rajeev Menon	14	535
9	Danish Shahna	14	531
10	Sujana Somasekar	14	468
11	Raman Viswanathan	14	-36

12	Abhijit Shilotri	14	-42
13	Hari Prasad	11 (+2)	170
14	Dipankar Chatterjee	12 (+1)	-117
15	Prithwiraj Mukherjee	13	-161
16	Asha Kamath	13	-166
17	Arindam Basu	13	-215
18	Pankaj Bolaki	12	960
19	Kala Ganesh	12	204
20	Mayank Khandelwal	12	-350
21	Caryl Gonsalvez	11 (+1)	-385
22	Hyder Quraishi	12	-574
23	Vignesh S	12	-731
24	Amanullah Khan	10 (+1)	-234
25	Swagat Nukala	10 (+1)	-508
26	Aruna Grover	9 (+1)	-549
27	Abid Hussain	10	-581
28	Mohd. Mohiuddin	8 (+1)	-1023
29	Sylvia Coelho	7 (+1)	-884
30	Sukanya Baba	3 (+2)	-2237
31	Saffa Samreen	1 (+1)	-908

High game: Rajeev Menon 625

Bye treatment explained in brackets

National School Scrabble Championship

by Neeta Bhatia

The year 2022 was a wonderful year for youth Scrabble in India. There had been sporadic school-level Scrabble tournaments in the past, but for the very first time this year, Collins Learning India, Mattel India and the Scrabble Association of India (SAI) partnered with the Scrabble Association of Delhi (SADel) and Wordaholix to bring to fruition the extensive National School Scrabble Championship 2022.

Sudhir Kamath and Harry Bhatia set the ball rolling by initiating talks to get Mattel and Collins to join hands together. This very ambitious project required months of planning and coordination. Each and every school and pre-university under-18 student

(up to Class XII) in India was eligible to participate. It was decided to conduct an online qualifier quiz followed by a zonal tournament in eight Indian cities – Delhi, Jaipur, Pune, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Guwahati, with the finale to be held in Delhi.



Games in progress at the Grand Finale of the National School Scrabble Championship

To create more awareness of Scrabble and to explain the basic rules of competitive Scrabble to the students, a series of video tutorials were recorded by yours truly and uploaded on the Collins Learning India YouTube page. This free resource is a wonderful learning tool for anyone looking to begin their journey into the world of competitive Scrabble. The link to the tutorial videos can be accessed through the SAI website.

Three online qualifier quizzes were conducted on the 9th, 10th and 15th of September, in which a total of around 12,000 students participated. The top 140 performers from each zone qualified for their respective Zonals. These Zonals were conducted by SADel and Wordaholix between 24th September and 29th October. The format followed was three games of Scrabble to select the top 25, followed

by a round of Duplicate Scrabble to decide the winners.

The top four winners at each of the Zonals were not only felicitated with trophies and certificates, but also got an all-expenses paid trip to Delhi to play in the Grand Finale.

Apart from these top four overall winners at the Zonals, three Junior Category participants (Class VII and below) also got trophies and certificates. This recognition of the Junior Category players was a very welcome gesture and served as a great encouragement for these younger players in their Scrabble journey.



The winner was decided via a tie-breaker in the Duplicate Scrabble round

The 32 well-deserving Zonal winners took part in the Grand Finale held on 5th November at the very grand and spacious venue of Shiv Nadar School, Gurugram, NCR. Four games of regular Scrabble were played, from which the top 22 players progressed to play the decider round of Duplicate Scrabble.

After seven rounds of Duplicate Scrabble, there was no clear winner in sight. In fact, there was a tie for the

top spot with Ekansh Arora from Delhi and Devansh Malpani from Mumbai both at the same number of points. An exciting tiebreaker was conducted with both boys on the stage looking at a board situation projected on the screen. Devansh's play of FEAZE for 34 points was not good enough to beat Ekansh's play of FEZ for 41 points. Ekansh lifted the winner's trophy, with Devansh finishing as the first runner-up and Anika Dalwani from Mumbai as the second runner-up.



The podium at the Grand Finale – winner Ekansh Arora (centre), first runner-up Devansh Malpani (left) and second runner-up Anika Dalwani

It's very heartening to see youth Scrabble get a fillip in 2022, what with the WESPA Youth Cup in October and the inaugural Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship which followed in November. India's youth players have been faring well at these tournaments, and we hope to see them do even better in coming years.

Scrabble around the world

Here is a round-up of some of the key WESPA-rated tournaments and Scrabble happenings from around the world in the past three months:



Pakistan

Pakistan's Ali Salman won the virtual WESPA Youth Cup 2022. A month later, his compatriot Hasham Hadi Khan completed a youth double for Pakistan by triumphing at the inaugural Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship held in Gurgaon.

The Punjab Open Championship, played over nine rounds on 2nd October, was the first WESPA-rated tournament to be played in Lahore. Similarly, Islamabad too held its first WESPA-rated tournament, in the form of the Islamabad Open Scrabble Tournament on 28th October.

Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka Scrabble League organised the All-Island Scrabble Championship from 19th to 20th

November, which was the first WESPA-rated tournament to be played in Sri Lanka in four years. The tournament was played in a single division, featuring a total of 100 players and 17 rounds, and was won by Lakshan Wanniarachchi.

Zambia

Lusaka played host to the 14th African Scrabble Championship from 21st to 24th October. Nigeria's Enoch Nawali emerged victorious out of 86 players, winning 25.5 out of 32 rounds.

Malaysia

Making a return to WESPA-rated Scrabble after 33 months, Nigel Richards won the KLIA 2 Gateway Masters held from 7th to 8th October. The legendary New Zealander won 14 out of 17 games with a spread of 1773.

Canada

The Niagara Falls Open 2022 was held in Ontario from 1st to 2nd October, with Canada's Matthew Tunncliffe winning 11 out of 14 games to clinch the title.

Malta

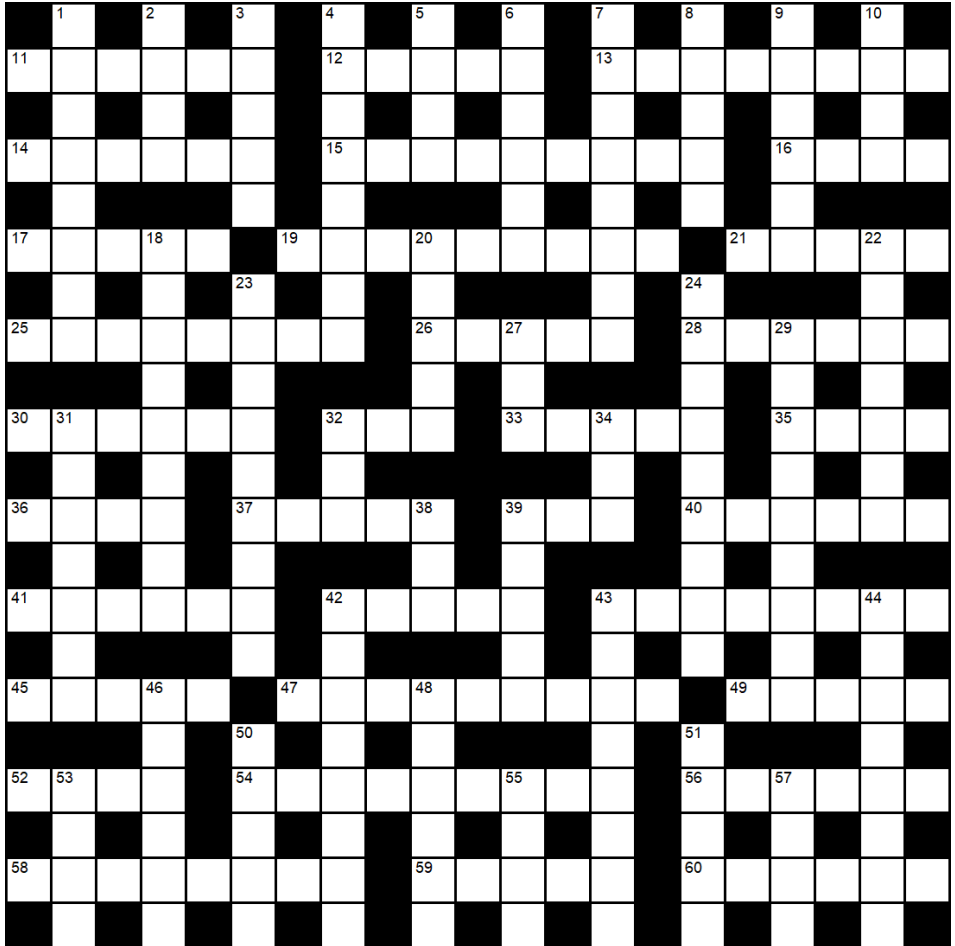
The 14th edition of the Malta International Scrabble Open (MISO) was held from 4th to 10th November. Rik Kennedy from Northern Ireland clinched the 25-round main event, while Chris Lipe from the USA, who won the Early Bird and Late Bird events, finished in second place.

Puzzles and quizzes

SAI Crossword #008

by Mohan Chunkath

Each clue has one anagram that has to be entered into the grid



Across

- 11** ONEYER (6)
- 12** TREND (5)
- 13** OVERMANS (8)
- 14** BETROD (6)
- 15** ABRAXASES (9)
- 16** UVAE (4)
- 17** UNSEE (5)
- 19** SILENCERS (9)
- 21** RODED (5)
- 25** AFFIRMER (8)
- 26** TRIST (5)
- 28** ORGONE (6)
- 30** PILULA (6)
- 32** TEG (3)
- 33** TIDED (5)
- 35** IDEE (4)
- 36** GEED (4)
- 37** POOED (5)
- 39** TOC (3)
- 40** YARNED (6)
- 41** COSIES (6)
- 42** PAGED (5)
- 43** INDRISES (8)
- 45** DOOBS (5)
- 47** FRUSTULES (9)
- 49** EYASS (5)
- 52** DOVE (4)
- 54** RENITENCE (9)
- 56** STEVEN (6)

58 POTASHED (8)

59 REHEM (5)

60 COCHES (6)

Down

- 1** RETINENE (8)
- 2** TYPO (4)
- 3** REEDE (5)
- 4** MILADIES (8)
- 5** WIRE (4)
- 6** SAUTES (6)
- 7** CORTEXES (8)
- 8** VERTS (5)
- 9** MOUNDS (6)
- 10** VAPE (4)
- 18** FLOUNDERS (9)
- 20** GREET (5)
- 22** REEDMEN (7)
- 23** SUBSOILER (9)
- 24** DROSTDIES (9)
- 27** DIT (3)
- 29** OCEANSIDE (9)
- 31** SORDINO (7)
- 32** PUG (3)
- 34** ATT (3)
- 38** PAD (3)
- 39** DECRY (5)
- 42** UGLINESS (8)
- 43** TRENDIER (8)
- 44** ATTACHER (8)

46 ATHROB (6)

53 VOES (4)

48 REFELS (6)

55 SICE (4)

50 CACAS (5)

57 HIES (4)

51 CREPS (5)

Anagram quiz – Name the capital city

by Rustom Deboo

In this quiz, each clue is the meaning of a word valid in Scrabble, and each of these words has the name of a world capital as its anagram. The objective is to find the names of all ten cities. You can send in your answers to indianscrabble@gmail.com by 1st March 2023. One entry getting all answers right will win a cash prize of Rs. 500 in a lucky draw.

Congrats to Shubha Shivashankar for winning the lucky draw prize for the quiz featured in the September 2022 edition.

1) To move swiftly

6) Bombarding with artillery fire

2) A water jar

7) One who stares stupidly

3) A stupid fellow

8) A North American tree

4) Gravels

9) The palm of the hand

5) An office in a monastery

10) An arrow poison



Find the best play

by Hriday Samtani

Find the best/highest-scoring play on offer in each of three board situations below:



1



2



3

Identify the eight-letter word

by Shubha Shivashankar

The objective of this quiz is to identify the eight-letter word (valid in Scrabble) by using the shorter words that are to be derived from the given hints. The numbers mentioned denote the position of the letters in the respective eight-letter word.

- 1) 678 – a celestial body
5123 – a transport
8463 – a dwelling
578 – an action
- 2) 8657 – a musical instrument
714 – an animal
2765 – wooden or metal pole
436 – name of a state
- 3) 3451 – a solid shape
621 – a tool
12638 – precise
715 – beak of a bird
- 4) 8123 – a currency
456 – a dwelling
736 – a tool
5312 – an outing
- 5) 3251 – misty
5287 – an animal
36248 – a body part
1687 – a fictitious creature
- 6) 234 – a pulse
67354 – a bird
3418 – a plant
154 – a liquid

SAI round-up

- **National School Scrabble Championship finals**

The grand final of the 2022 National School Scrabble Championship, an open tournament for all school students with free entry and jointly sponsored by Collins and Mattel under the aegis of SAI, was held in Gurgaon on 5th November. The Scrabble Association of Delhi (SADel) and the Wordaholix team worked hard to make this tournament a reality.

- **First Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship**

The inaugural edition of the Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship, organised by SADel and Wordaholix under the aegis of SAI, was held at Kunsapsskolan, Gurgaon from 25th to 27th November and featured Asia's top youth players in action.

- **Madhav and Pramit shine at the WYC 2022**

Madhav Gopal Kamath from Delhi and Pramit Rao from Mumbai, India's top two youth Scrabblers, finished second and sixth respectively at the virtual WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) held in October.

- **Tournament calendar for 2023**

Keeping in mind the need to have a semblance of stability in the SAI tournament calendar, it was decided that the tournament calendar for 2023 be shared in advance with members to enable them to plan around the dates better. Accordingly, the calendar was sent to all members on 7th November.

- **Ratings update**

The latest ratings update saw the removal from the ratings page of names of players who have not played in in-person SAI-rated tournaments after 1st January 2020, with a view to maintain the credibility of the ratings. The names will be automatically reinstated once the player plays in a rated tournament.

New members

Members who were welcomed into SAI in the last quarter:

1. **Aaradhya Srivastava** (Mumbai) works in the corporate development team at an analytics company, and started playing Scrabble with

- his flatmate in January 2022. Soon after, he joined the weekly Mumbai Scrabble Club sessions to hone his game. Scrabble drew him in with its intelligent use of math and vocabulary, potential for endless and measurable improvement, as well as a vibrant community of passionate players.
2. **Nandan Vishnu** (Delhi) is eight years old and loves to play chess and Scrabble. He started playing Scrabble with his grandmother during the lockdown when he was six years old. He enjoys learning new words that use the high scoring tiles as much as he hates maintaining the scoresheet.
 3. **Sanjeev Vijn** (Gurgaon)
 4. **Dirgha Sampat** (Mumbai) has been playing living-room Scrabble with her family and friends for as long as she can remember. She made her tournament debut at the IIT Bombay Open in August 2022, which got her more cued in to the game. What she loves about Scrabble is that it's a game of strategy and unpredictability, highs and lows, bingos and phonies all rolled into one board.
 5. **Kaashvi Mohan** (Delhi)
 6. **Manit Arora** (Panchkula)
 7. **Shreeya Garg** (Delhi)
 8. **Sukanya Baba** (Hyderabad) is a homemaker and was introduced to the game by her husband. She started playing seriously three years ago, and took part at the iCare Cup in Hyderabad in 2021. Scrabble keeps her mentally active, and she plays online games regularly in the ARFS club.
 9. **Mohammed Mohiuddin** (Hyderabad) is a civil engineer by profession. Scrabble was a lazy weekend pastime for him until Shaik Ahmed got him to play it more seriously. Though the kind of words at tournament level has been a revelation for him, he is enjoying meeting players and sharing experiences with them.
 10. **Monica Agarwala** (Bangalore) is an English language trainer by profession, and learning new words has always been her passion. Though she has played Scrabble at home for many years, she finds tournaments to be a whole new ball game. She loves being part of the Scrabble

community and the great camaraderie among players.

11. **Viral Kansara** (Vadodara)

12. **Raksha Tanna** (Mumbai) is a lawyer by profession. Her Scrabble journey started in childhood, when her mom got her a set. Years later, she discovered online Scrabble and reignited her interest. She considers Scrabble as her me time and relaxant.

13. **Kaveri Warriar** (Bangalore, based in the US)

14. **Prithwiraj Mukherjee** (Ahmedabad)

15. **Meghali Das** (Guwahati) started playing Scrabble with her sisters-in-law four decades ago. Thereafter, she formed a group with friends and started playing regularly. She is the chairperson of the FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) Northeast Chapter and runs her own weaving business in the handloom sector and a boutique called Handloom Hues. She works for women's empowerment, especially in the BPL sector.

16. **Rama Gomatam** (Bangalore) is a homemaker and has been interested in Scrabble since childhood. She got hooked onto it few

years ago by playing online, and has now rekindled her passion for it. She likes the way the words come to life every time she plays.

17. **Tavishi Bagga** (Delhi)

18. **Priyakshi Bhattacharyya** (Guwahati)

19. **Asma Baig** (Hyderabad)

20. **Krati Goyal** (Jaipur)

21. **Dhruv Rastogi** (Pune)

22. **Nehim Laskar** (Guwahati)

23. **Jhanak Kumawat** (Jaipur)

24. **Ishika Hazra** (Kolkata)

25. **Dhruv Agarwal** (Guwahati)

26. **Nikita Mohandas** (Pune)

27. **Saqsham Jauhari** (Kolkata)

28. **Zaahiya Husna** (Hyderabad)

29. **Jaswitha Bollu** (Pune)

30. **Raeya D** (Bangalore)

31. **Subhan Khan** (Jaipur)

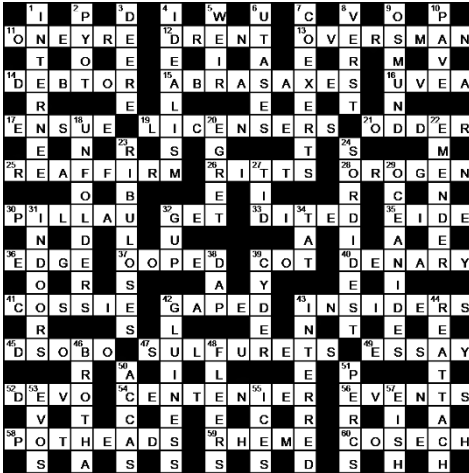
32. **Ishika Poddar** (Mumbai)

33. **Pushkar Kumar** (Guwahati)

Solutions to puzzles and quizzes

SAI Crossword #008

2



Identify the eight-letter word

- 1) AFTERSUN, 2) ISOGRAPH,
3) EXCUBANT, 4) UROSTYLE,
5) YAHRZEIT, 6) ODALIQUE
-

Endgame Extra: With this being the eighth edition of Endgame, here are a few handy eight-related sevens and eights

EIGHT?? (6o)

AHEIGHT, BEDIGHT,
BEHIGHT, BENIGHT,
BETIGHT, BIGHTED,
DELIGHT, DIGHTED,
EIGHTHS, EIGHTVO,
EMPIGHT, ENLIGHT,
ETCHING, FIGHTER,
FREIGHT, GAHNITE,
GIRTHED, GITCHES,
GOTHIER, GOTHITE,
GUICHET, HEATING,
HEFTING, HEIGHTH,
HEIGHTS, HENTING,
HIGHEST, HIGHTED,
HOGTIED, HOGTIES,
HYGEIST, LIGHTED,
LIGHTEN, LIGHTER,
MEGAHIT, NIGHST,
NIGHTED, NIGHTIE,
PIGHTED, PIGHTLE,
REFIGHT, RELIGHT,
RESIGHT, RIGHTED,
RIGHTEN, RIGHTER,
SIGHTED, SIGHTER,
SLEIGHT, THEEING,
THEMING, THIGGED,
THIGGER, THIGHED,
TIGHTEN, TIGHTER,
TOUGHIE, WEIGHTS,
WEIGHTY, WIGHTED

OCTET?? (3o)

ATTONCE, CALOTTE, CAVETTO,
CLOTTED, CLOTTER, COCOTTE,
CODETTA, COLETIT, CONTENT,
CONTEST, CONTEXT, CORNETT,
COSTATE, COTTAGE, COTTERS,
COTTIER, COTTISE, CROTTLE,
CULOTTE, CUTTOES, ENTOTIC,
KETOTIC, OCTETTE, OCTETTS,
PROTECT, SCOTTIE, TOCCATE,
TONETIC, TOTEMIC, TOYETIC

OCTAD?? (26)

ARCTOID, CACTOID, CANTDOG,
CAROTID, CATFOOD, CATHODE,
CATHOOD, COACTED, COADMIT,
COAPTED, COASTED, CODETTA,
CORDATE, COSTARD, COTIDAL,
COTLAND, DACOITS, DACOITY,
DOGCART, FACTOID, LOCATED,
OCTADIC, PODCAST, REDCOAT,
TACNODE, VODCAST

OCTAVE?? (19)

ADVOCATE, CAVEATOR,
CAVETTOS, CAVORTED,
CAVORTER, CENTAVOS,
COACTIVE, CONATIVE,
COVALENT, COVENANT,
EVOCATED, EVOCATES,
EVOCATOR, INVOCATE,
LOCATIVE, OVERACTS,
OVERCAST, OVERCOAT,
VOCATIVE

VIII??? (6)

DIVISIM, INCIVIL, LIXIVIA,
RILIEVI, SHIVITI, VIVIFIC

Ratings

Below are the SAI official ratings (top 80) as on 31st December 2022. Please visit indianscrabble.com for the full rankings.

Official ratings

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
1	Sherwin Rodrigues	MUM	1871	1622
2	Akshay Bhandarkar	OSI	1836	587
3	Goutham Jayaraman	OSI	1732	461
4	Nakul Prabhu	MUM	1673	1526
5	Aditya Iyengar	PUN	1666	628
	Irfan Siddiqui	OS	1590	347
6	Udayan Grover	PUN	1571	2122
7	Prashanth Seetharam	OSI	1564	384
8	Nidhi Singhvi	OSI	1558	950
9	Mohan Chunkath	CHN	1554	1144
10	Samrath Singh Bhatia	MUM	1553	1004
11	Sunny Bhatia	DEL	1545	1214
	Michael Tang	OS	1534	434
12	Varisht Hingorani	MUM	1527	1271
13	Charles Carneiro	OSI	1527	812
14	Douglas Lobo	GOA	1510	1397
15	Rahil Parkar	MUM	1499	642
16	Hriday Samtani	MUM	1481	642
17	Madhav Gopal Kamath	DEL	1451	672
18	Ishika Shivalingaiah	BLR	1451	369
19	Rajveer Rawlin	BLR	1447	542
20	A Krishnan	CHN	1443	536
21	Sanjoy Gupta	BLR	1441	1449
22	Selwyn Lobo	OSI	1432	301
23	Jose de Abreu	MUM	1426	931
24	Shaik Ahmed	HYD	1399	1898
25	Vraj Jain	MUM	1391	593
26	Carolann Pais	MUM	1387	1592
27	Pramit Rao	MUM	1382	89
28	Sudhir Kamath	DEL	1362	1079
29	Anuj Shetty	BLR	1328	341
30	Sumeet Sachdev	MUM	1323	559
31	Mangala Bhandarkar	PUN	1296	1669
32	Manju Sood	BLR	1280	912
33	Yash Potnis	BLR	1277	562
34	Prithwiraj Mukherjee	BLR	1276	266
35	Cecil Fernandes	OSI	1275	464
36	Rustom Deboo	MUM	1261	575
37	Suyash Manchali	BLR	1258	246
38	Sanjay Bijlani	MUM	1253	600
39	Amit Sood	PUN	1242	465
	Supriya Devnani	OS	1242	106
40	Rajeev Menon	HYD	1237	833
41	Ekansh Arora	DEL	1234	193
42	Vedika Hingorani	MUM	1229	589

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
43	Pramit Kamath	DEL	1227	523
44	Suchindra Potnis	BLR	1219	450
45	Sridhar Paidikondala	HYD	1217	940
46	Sujana Somasekar	BLR	1192	546
47	Danish Shahna	BLR	1189	602
48	Pankaj Bolaki	BLR	1187	345
49	Neelam Agrawal	BLR	1186	306
50	R Nalini	BLR	1184	923
51	Kala Ganesh	MUM	1169	1376
52	Bhushan Pradhan	MUM	1157	1959
53	Shreyas Gupta	DEL	1155	89
54	Karthik Ganesan	DEL	1154	210
55	Rehet Singh Bhatia	MUM	1153	965
56	V Ramachandran	MUM	1150	1370
57	Rajnikant Singh	KOL	1150	256
58	Arindam Basu	KOL	1144	400
59	Shubha Shivashankar	BLR	1141	299
60	Marie Fernandes	OSI	1132	512
61	Archana Aggarwal	DEL	1118	575
62	Neeta Bhatia	MUM	1111	379
63	Alan DeMello	MUM	1103	195
64	Vignesh S	BLR	1102	338
65	Nikheel Ruparel	MUM	1099	1061
66	Amogh Bhamekar	GUJ	1095	80
67	Dipankar Chatterjee	BLR	1086	632
68	Radhika Mahalingaiah	BLR	1081	934
69	Abid Hussain	BLR	1077	399
70	Abhijit Shilotri	BLR	1071	692
71	Lennie D'Souza	BLR	1058	1221
72	Brian D'Souza	MUM	1055	235
73	PC Jose	MUM	1030	1408
74	Meena Bakhru	PUN	1027	380
75	Asha Kamath	KER	1025	713
76	Sushanto B	DEL	1022	445
77	Siddharth Nithyanand	DEL	1022	309
78	Yuvraj Dighe	GUJ	1021	46
79	Jacky Fernandes	GOA	1013	989
80	Hemanth Achaya	BLR	1013	299

BLR – Bangalore (KSSA)

CHN – Chennai

DEL – Delhi

GOA – Goa

GUJ – Gujarat (Vadodara)

HYD – Hyderabad

KER – Kerala

KOL – Kolkata

MUM – Mumbai

PUN – Pune

OSI – Indian national residing overseas

OS – Overseas foreign player (no rank)

Endgame Errata (September 2022): 1) On page 16, 'Shaik Ahmed' to be read as 'Samrath Bhatia' as captain of SCHMICK; 2) On page 26, 'tenth' to be read as 'sixth' in the photo caption; 3) On page 41, 'iCare Cup' to be read as 'Deccan Cup'

SAI TOURNAMENT CALENDAR 2023

Month	Tournament	Organiser	Place	Dates	Days	Divisions	Confirmed
JAN	KSSA Indian Open	KSSA	Bangalore	26-29	4	4	Yes
MAR	Kaizen All-India Open	Udayan Grover	Pune	17-19	3	2	
MAR	Women's Day	The Bark	Lonavala	8	1	1	
APR	Delhi One-Day	SADel	Gurgaon	2	1	1	Yes
APR	Goa Open	Goa Club	Goa	14-16	3	TBD	Yes
MAY	National Scrabble Championship	Mumbai Scrabble Club	Mumbai	19-21	3	2	Yes
JUL	Pune Club Championship	Poona Club	Pune	7-9	3	1	
JUL	Delhi One-Day	SADel	Central NCR	9	1	1	Yes
AUG	Vadodara All-India Open	Vadodara Scrabble Club	Vadodara	11-13	3	TBD	
AUG	Independence Day	KSSA	Bangalore	12-13	2	1	
SEP	GAIL Cup	SADel	Delhi	1-3	3	3	Yes
OCT	Wordaholix Scrabble League	Wordaholix	Lonavala	27-29	3	League	Yes
NOV	Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship	SADel and Wordaholix	Delhi	6-8	3	1	
NOV	Delhi One-Day	SADel	Noida	9	1	1	Yes
DEC	IIT Bombay Open	IIT Bombay	Mumbai	8-10	3	2	Yes
DEC	Deccan Cup	Hyderabad	Hyderabad	15-17	3	TBD	

Highlighted dates are confirmed, the rest tentative. The calendar is subject to changes.



ENDGAME

Let us know your feedback

What did you like about this edition of Endgame? What would you like to see more of in future editions? Would you like to contribute content for the next edition? Do you have any suggestions for improvement? We await your valuable feedback and submissions, which you can send across to indianscrabble@gmail.com.

About SAI

The Scrabble Association of India (SAI) is the apex governing body for Scrabble players in India and oversees the organisation and conduct of several tournaments in the country. It maintains a tournament rating system for every SAI-rated tournament and accords a SAI rating to all its members. It is affiliated to the WESPA (World English-Language Scrabble Players Association), the global body that oversees the competitive English-language Scrabble scene throughout the world.

How to become a SAI member?

If you are a Scrabble enthusiast or know someone who is, we welcome you to join SAI. Becoming a SAI member is easy. All you need to do is visit the SAI website and apply for membership at indianscrabble.com/join-us/. You can either become a life member or an annual member. We invite Scrabble lovers of all ages to join us.

Contact us

For details about Indian Scrabble, you can visit our website at indianscrabble.com.

For general inquiries about anything related to Indian Scrabble and feedback and submissions for Endgame, you can reach out to us at indianscrabble@gmail.com.

You can also follow the Scrabble Association of India page on Facebook for updates.

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