

# ENDGAME

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**SCRABBLE**  
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA



*Irfan Siddiqui and Hubert Wee face off at the 2026 KSSA Indian Open – their compelling final-day games were among those streamed live, marking a significant development in the coverage of competitive Scrabble in India*

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# Foreword

Dear Members,

As always is the case, the KSSA Indian Open in Bangalore during the Republic Day weekend showcased the best of Indian and international Scrabble, with a total of 164 players in action across four divisions. However, this time it went several notches higher because of the livestreaming of games, which added an altogether new dimension to the overall tournament experience.

It was only apt that the riveting denouement of the tournament was streamed live, enabling Scrabble enthusiasts across the globe to feel the vagaries of the sport in real time. Hubert Wee defended his title successfully, but it could easily have been a maiden title for Irfan Siddiqui, who went down fighting after having to contend with a freakish final rack in Round 32.

Driven by the steadfast efforts of Siddharth Nithyanand and featured on the LetsPlayScrabble YouTube channel, the livestreaming at the 2026 KSSA Indian Open was undoubtedly a landmark moment for the coverage of Scrabble in India, and could well be the catalyst for exposing the sport to a much wider audience going forward. This endeavour was deeply appreciated by all those who tuned in.

As the quarter drew to a close, the confirmation of government support – a first for a national-level Scrabble tournament in India – for the upcoming Chennai Open lent a further impetus to the rising profile of Scrabble in India and its quest for recognition. As the year proceeds, SAI's School Programme is expected to gain momentum as well, which has the potential to display the appeal of Scrabble to budding youngsters across the country.

The next three months will feature as many as four major tournaments in India – besides the traditional Goa and Mumbai fixtures, new additions in the form of Tirthan and Chennai are set to enhance the vibrancy of the Indian Scrabble circuit. In late May, the biggest international Scrabble fest will unfold in Bangkok, as the 2026 Causeway Challenge is expected to feature close to 500 players across five divisions, including at least 50 from India.

And finally, here's to Endgame completing five fulfilling years – half a decade and 21 editions later, SAI's quarterly magazine keeps going strong, and I have nothing but gratitude for all the contributions over the years. The editing odyssey rolls on!

Best wishes,

Rustom Deboo  
Editor

# Highlights from the 2026 KSSA Indian Open

by Hubert Wee

The 2026 KSSA Indian Open in Bangalore saw Singaporean Hubert Wee defend his title successfully on a riveting final day; the battle for the top spot went down to the final round, as it had in the 2025 edition. The top seed required wins in the last two games against Irfan Siddiqui, and he held on to win both to ensure back-to-back triumphs at India's biggest tournament. He shares with Endgame a few of his notable games and plays from his campaign:



*In action during the final day of the 2026 KSSA Indian Open*

Firstly, many thanks to the KSSA for yet another smoothly-run tournament, and to Mu Sigma for providing the venue and their sponsorship. Here are several of my highlights from the 2026 Indian Open.

## Round 2 vs Amit Sood:

Was fortunate to play five bingos – GALANTY, ECONUTS, INTRUDE(S), PROOFED and the only playable bingo of (P)AbOUCHE – to win comfortably by 614-363.



## Round 21 vs Adheesha Dissanayake:

Trailing by 119 points with only 12 tiles in the bag, can you find the best play in this situation, which I happened to find? [1]



**Round 30 vs Sherwin Rodrigues:**

Pleased to find the standout play here. Can you find it? [2]



**Round 32 vs Irfan Siddiqui:**

Going into the last two rounds, my title prospects hinged on nothing less than winning both the games. Trailing by 28 near the end of a tense game with EGHJNOQSTZ unseen, I chose to play 12E (LO)WE here to open another bingo lane. Macondo (the engine developed by César Del Solar) prefers N1 TREW, though this empties the bag with the clunky JQZ unseen.

You can see how the rest of this pivotal game unfolded, as well as a detailed and enjoyable analysis of the game by Will Anderson, here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZSVGzOBSaA>



**Round 33 vs Irfan Siddiqui:**

Was pleased to win the deciding game, 495-469. My inF(1)RMER (98+5), JIZ (39), CHAMPE(D) (50+5) and CUNEATE (74) were barely sufficient to neutralise his VERNIX (48), ADAPTIN(G) (95), OUTRIGS (76) and dYESTER (84). Commiserations to Irfan.



<b>Hubert at the 2026 KSSA Indian Open</b>	
Games played	33
Games won	23
Total spread	1699
Average game score	469.94
Highest game score	619
Highest word score	167+5 for GNATLIKE
Total number of bingos	83
Biggest winning margin	330
Most consecutive wins	5
500+ scores	9
600+ scores	2

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**Endgame Extra: Hubert's 83 bingos at the KSSA Open**

ORANGIER, SUNDERER,  
 GALANTY, ECONUTS,  
 INTRUDES, PROOFED,  
 PABOUCHE, HOISTMAN,  
 FILAREE, PARANOIA,  
 HEAVIEST, DECISORY,  
 SARNIES, INCHMEAL,  
 GUIDANCE, LEISTERS,  
 GUTSIER, MITCHES,  
 DABSTER, CATERAN,  
 DISPORTS, HUSWIFE,  
 ROOSTING, RONDELS,  
 ANTENATI, HOELIKE,  
 SLOPIER, SLENTER,  
 ROADWAY, AERATES,  
 DAINING, SOCIATE,  
 FOLATES, DARRING,  
 RATOONS, CHATTILY,  
 VELOUTE, MASTERS,  
 BITUMENS, CANDELAS,  
 HOMININ, LARCHES,  
 STEDDING, CARRIES,  
 PYRITISE, WEEPERS,  
 BANTERS, VIREMENT,  
 VISTAING, OCHERISH,  
 ENVIROS, INGOTED,  
 SALVAGED, TRITELY,  
 SPAIRGED, FINIALS,

THALLOID, LEARIEST,  
 ATRESIAS, LANGREL,  
 LICENSES, CHAPTER,  
 DORSALLY, DONARIES,  
 HUMANOID, INERTIA,  
 CONVERT, UPRATED,  
 RAISERS, AVENTRED,  
 AECIDIAL, GNATLIKE,  
 TRASHIER, GORDITAS,  
 EGESTING, DECENTRES,  
 DITTING, FLEISHIK,  
 HELIPORT, INFUSIVE,  
 ARENITE, INFIRMER,  
 CUNEATE

-----  
**Endgame Extra: Sevens and eights starting with WEE**

WEEDBED, WEEDERS, WEEDERY,  
 WEEDIER, WEEDILY, WEEDING,  
 WEEJUNS, WEEKDAY, WEEKEND,  
 WEENIER, WEENIES, WEENING,  
 WEEPERS, WEEPIER, WEEPIES,  
 WEEPILY, WEEPING, WEETEST,  
 WEETING, WEEVERS, WEEVILS,  
 WEEVILY, WEEWEED, WEEWEES,  
 WEEDBEDS, WEEDHEAD,  
 WEEDIEST, WEEDINGS,  
 WEEDLESS, WEEDLIKE,  
 WEEDLINE, WEEKDAYS,  
 WEEKENDS, WEEKLIES,  
 WEEKLONG, WEENIEST,  
 WEENSIER, WEEPHOLE,  
 WEEPIEST, WEEPINGS,  
 WEETLESS, WEEVILED, WEEVILLY

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 Solutions:

[1] 12I NI(T)ROS(O) (37) with four overlaps, which scores enough to give me a very small chance to win.

[2] B6 DECEN(T)R(E)S (90), the only playable bingo.

# The beauty and magic of the KSSA Mu Sigma International

*by Lukeman Owolabi*

*Among the top players at the 2026 KSSA Indian Open was WESPA Chairman Lukeman Owolabi, who was participating in India's biggest Scrabble tournament for the first time. He shares with Endgame about his memorable experience.*

By the time the curtains fell on the KSSA Mu Sigma International Scrabble Tournament in Bangalore, one question kept echoing in my mind: why did I wait so long before attending this beautiful tournament?

For a brief moment, I felt a twinge of regret, years lost, opportunities missed. But that feeling quickly dissolved, replaced by gratitude and joy as I soaked in every experience the tournament had to offer.

The journey itself set the tone. Flying from Dublin to Bangalore on Qatar Airways was seamless, with a short layover at the stunning Doha International Airport. I'm not one to take many photos while travelling, but Doha had other plans for me. Its elegance and calm charm compelled me to pull out my phone and capture a few memories during that brief stopover.

I arrived in Bengaluru at around 3:00 a.m. on Thursday and headed straight to the Taj Vivanta Hotel, a luxurious five-star haven that had been thoughtfully pre-booked for me at a

discounted rate. I remain deeply grateful to Siddharth Nithyanand and Rajiv Antao, who went above and beyond to ensure that my stay was comfortable from the very first moment.

By Thursday evening, the tournament spirit had fully taken hold. I took a relaxed stroll to a nearby shopping mall for a pre-tournament dinner at a Chinese restaurant in the food court, in the company of fellow African representatives, Rasheed Balogun from the United States and Millie Kikechi from Kenya. It was a simple meal, but one filled with laughter, camaraderie, and shared anticipation.

Then came the tournament itself... and what a spectacle it was. This year's Mu Sigma International Scrabble Tournament attracted over 160 players from 13 countries, marking the highest post-Covid participation. Players travelled from far and wide, including the United States, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Kuwait, Canada, and Kenya, underscoring the truly global appeal of the event.

Innovation was on full display. From paperless scoring to live streaming and the use of blank designation cards, the tournament embraced modernity while preserving the spirit of competitive Scrabble.

The KSSA Committee, ably led by the indefatigable Siddharth, deserves immense praise for delivering one of the best-organised international Scrabble tournaments I have ever attended.



*Accepting the fourth prize at the 2026 KSSA Indian Open, a tournament that felt special*

Beyond the games, the tourney was a celebration of human connection. It was wonderful reconnecting with old friends and making new ones. Meeting Irfan Siddiqui in person after four seasons of competing together in the Woogles League was a special moment... what a genuinely pleasant gentleman he is.

And then there's my old friend Akshay Bhandarkar, who continues his remarkable streak of avoiding a match with me. We didn't play when he won the WESPAC in Kenya nine years ago. It didn't happen at the WESPAC in Ghana last year. And somehow, once again, he escaped me in Bangalore. Whether he likes it or not, our paths will cross on the Scrabble board very soon.

This tournament also gave me the opportunity to personally meet and thank some of the Friends of WESPA from India. It was an

absolute pleasure meeting Shubha Shivashankar, Rustom Deboo, and Sudhir Kamath, who is the new WESPA Treasurer, in person for the very first time.

One of the standout social moments came on Saturday evening, when Sujana Somasekar of the WESPA Communications, Publicity, and Media Committee invited me to a house party. What followed was a magical evening... great company, Glenfiddich in hand, and dancing to Indian music. It felt surreal, almost cinematic, as though a childhood memory shaped by Indian movies had come alive in real time. That evening was undoubtedly a highlight of my Bangalore experience.

Equally inspiring was the strong presence of youth players from India, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia. Adheesha Dissanayake enhanced his reputation on the global stage with another brilliant performance in finishing third, following up on his runner-up finish at last year's edition.

I was particularly impressed by a young talent named Dineth Fernando. We played on Day 1, and from the opening moves, his composure and professionalism stood out. Late in the game, I played METRAZOL in the triple word lane, and he didn't even flinch. In that moment, I knew I was facing someone special. Dineth went on to finish in the top 15, confirming what was already clear: a future Scrabble champion in the making.

The Manchali brothers also caught my attention, and I found a good friend in Suyash, who convinced me to try an Indian dessert that turned out to be absolutely delightful.



*Until next year... with fellow African representative Rasheed Balogun after the conclusion of the tournament*

Nathan Tan Rui Ern from Malaysia was another impressive youngster, and I look forward to seeing these young stars take on the Scrabble world in the near future.

Interestingly, my overall experience in Bangalore was not defined solely by my game, even though I finished fourth in a very competitive field. I've played tournaments in many

countries around the world, but this one felt different. It felt special. The warmth, organisation, and sense of shared purpose elevated the entire experience beyond the board.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Hubert Wee of Singapore for completing a remarkable double at the KSSA Mu Sigma International Scrabble Tournament. Winning back-to-back titles is no small feat (and yes, yours truly managed something similar at the Cape Town International Scrabble Tournament!).

Congratulations also to the deserving champions of Division B, Millie Kikechi of Kenya, and Division C, Pranav Ramkumar. These guys are true Scrabble ambassadors.

Finally, I commend the Karnataka State Scrabble Association (KSSA), the Scrabble Association of India (SAI), and the Mu Sigma organisation for delivering an exceptional tournament and once again placing Scrabble firmly on the global map.

To every player who travelled from near and far to support this event, I say a heartfelt thank you on behalf of KSSA and WESPA, for being part of this shared journey to elevate competitive Scrabble worldwide.

God willing, I will be back in Bangalore next year; and this time, I won't be coming alone. I hope to bring a few Scrabble players along to experience firsthand the beauty and magic of the KSSA Mu Sigma International Scrabble Tournament.

Thank you, KSSA.

# From Kenya to Bangalore: My journey to the Division B title at the KSSA Indian Open

by Millie Kikechi

## A first ever trip to Asia

When I boarded my flight to Bangalore on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026, I carried more than just my luggage – I carried the excitement of my first trip to Asia, the pride of representing Kenya, and the hope of performing well at the KSSA Indian Open International Championship.

That day will always remain close to my heart, as I set about travelling to compete in a tournament of my favourite sport – Scrabble – and would be the only player representing Kenya in Division B. A few days later, the journey would culminate in one of the most memorable victories of my Scrabble career.

My journey via Etihad Airways was smooth, and I arrived safely in Bangalore in the evening. After checking in at the Days Suites Hotel downtown, I settled in to rest and acclimatise after a long day of travel. Having arrived after sunset, there wasn't much to see yet, and a good night's rest was exactly what I needed ahead of the big event.

The following day, I used the time to explore the city a little and familiarise myself with the tournament venue, the Mu Sigma campus. Bangalore was lively and bustling, and I was struck by how friendly and helpful everyone was. Whenever I needed directions or

assistance, people were more than willing to help, which made my first impressions of the city very positive.



*Playing my favourite sport during my first trip to Asia, on the way to a title win – the stuff of dreams!*

## Let the games begin

When 23<sup>rd</sup> January – the first day of the tournament – arrived, I woke up feeling excited and apprehensive in equal measure. I was competing in a new country against players I had never faced before, and I had little idea of what to expect. Armed with my experience from local tournaments in Kenya and regular online practice on ISC, I made my way to Mu Sigma, ready to battle it out.

Seeded 15<sup>th</sup> in a field of 52 players, I began my campaign against Gaurav Bhargava, whom I defeated by a spread of 70 points. Winning the opening game greatly boosted my confidence as I moved on to face Hyder Quraishi, securing another victory with a spread of 169. I kept my strong start going with four

consecutive wins, before my unbeaten streak was halted in Round 5 by Raman Viswanathan.



*Sharing a moment with fellow player Vimisha Patel during the tournament – we clashed five times*

One particularly challenging game was against Yvonne Lobo from Canada, who defeated me by a spread of 214 in Round 8 – a result that nearly shook my confidence. I finished Day 1 with three losses from nine games, but the overall performance left me energised and upbeat heading into the next rounds.

### **Crucial battles across the board**

The days to follow saw a similar pattern of timely wins sprinkled with a few tough losses. On the second day, I rode on a streak of seven wins on the bounce – from Rounds 11 to 17 – before it was halted by Anvay Shah, who was turning out to be a particularly formidable opponent. At the end of the second day, it felt great to see myself at the top of the table with 13 wins due to a superior spread.



*A decisive position during my Round 31 game with Anvay Shah – SCOWLeR(S) was the move that assured me of the title*

On Day 3, I notched another six wins to keep myself in the title race. Ahead of the last six games on Day 4, three of us sat with 19 wins – Vimisha Patel, myself, and Anvay, who beat me in each of our first three duels, thoroughly testing my resolve.

### **Champion of Division B!**



*With the Division B trophy at the KSSA Open – one of my sweetest Scrabble wins*

However, the fourth time we met proved to be the most crucial. In what turned out to be the decisive game for me to achieve a Gibson win, I managed to defeat Anvay by a spread of 41. This victory in Round 31 meant that I was Gibsonised – declared the

Division B winner regardless of the outcomes of the remaining two rounds. It was an unbelievable moment! I had also bettered my streak of seven by winning eight consecutive games from Round 24, in an exhilarating surge to the title.

Finishing with an impressive record of 24 wins and nine losses, securing the Division B title was a result that meant a great deal to me personally and also as a representative of Kenya in the global Scrabble community. Bangalore gave me wonderful memories, new friendships, and renewed motivation to keep competing.

### **The Scrabble community... beyond the board**



*With Malaysia's Muhammad Rasyad, who finished second in Division B*

Beyond the games themselves, one of the highlights of the tournament was

meeting players from around the world and experiencing the warm hospitality of the organisers and the Bangalore Scrabble community. The tournament was excellently run, with quality equipment (tiles, boards, and timers), convenient meal and drink service within the playing area, and competent tournament directors and their support teams. The spacious and well-lit playing hall comfortably accommodated all four divisions with minimal distraction.

Finally, I must acknowledge the incredible support from my Scrabble friends and teammates back in Kenya, who followed the tournament online and continually cheered me on throughout the event.



*With Neeta Bhatia after our game*

### **Three things I learned in Bangalore**

#### **1) Confidence grows with every game**

Playing against unfamiliar opponents in a new country was initially quite intimidating, but each passing round kept reminding me that preparation, experience, and belief in my abilities

can carry me through the toughest of matches.

## 2) Scrabble truly connects people across cultures

Despite coming from different countries and backgrounds, the love for the game created instant connections. The warmth and friendliness of players and organisers in Bangalore made the tournament feel like a global Scrabble family gathering.

## 3) Resilience matters as much as vocabulary

A tough setback, like the heavy defeat to Yvonne, can disrupt your confidence. But the ability to regroup and keep fighting is what ultimately shapes the outcome of a tournament.

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### Endgame Extra: Twists and turns at the KSSA Indian Open

*by Meena Kalyan*

Let's have a good game! Anyone who has played Neeta Bhatia will know her mantra for beginning the game. It was so prophetic! Our Round 28 game at the 2026 KSSA Indian Open was a thriller with the mandatory twists and turns. If there was betting going on, the odds would favour Neeta. I started with TALC, and she rode in with VAN. I balanced my rack by placing OO below C.

My first opportunity came when she placed JEE for 33 with VANE. At first glance, I had lined up QUAIN to be played along with AJEE, with a leave

of R. But a bit of thinking, and bingo! QUNITAR for 125 – a four-timer. I kept telling myself, *'Picture abhi baaki hai, the whole bag is there. This is only the fifth word. Whoa whoa!'*



I forced myself to look at one rack at a time, the way I had been trained. The game toddled on with a slow and steady rhythm of catching up. With the score 238-228 in my favour, I upped the ante with another bingo HEADIEST. No complacency, as I tracked a blank and S in the bag as potential game-changers. Looking at multiple lanes open for her to bingo, I closed one with TALCY/GUNNY. Keeping the game alive, she came back with POSTURAL for 80 with the score now at 389-384 in her favour. With the bag now out, I clinched the game with VEGO for 51, holding on for a 447-419 win.

We had a very good game, indeed!

# A streaming step forward

by Siddharth Nithyanand

On the final day of the 2026 KSSA Indian Open, I wasn't playing – but I felt every move as if I were.

Sitting inches away from Table 1, watching the game unfold live, hearing commentary in my ear, and knowing the best moves even before they were played – it was one of the most intense Scrabble experiences I've ever had.

And I couldn't react.

There are moments in a tournament that you remember as a player. And then there are moments that you remember because you were sitting right next to the board, trying very hard not to react. For me, Game 32 was one such moment.

I was seated right next to Table 1, running the stream, trying to keep everything steady. But inside? Heart pounding, hands sweating, and doing my best to maintain a poker face as Irfan Siddiqui went down fighting against Hubert Wee. There were scoring mismatches, tense exchanges, and at no point did I have the luxury of stepping in – I was just a silent observer, watching it all unfold inches away.

Many people asked me over the course of the tournament: *“Why are you sitting there all day? Isn't everything automated once the cameras are set?”*

The answer is – not quite.

While the cameras captured the visuals, I was manually feeding every move into Quackle, so that the stream could display scores, unseen tiles, and highlights in real time. That meant I was effectively playing along with every game – move by move – except I wasn't playing. I was watching, calculating, and absorbing everything at once.



*A screen grab from the livestream of the Round 32 game between Hubert Wee and Irfan Siddiqui*

And that's where things got intense.

Because with Quackle running, you often know the best move *before* the player makes it. You see the possibilities, the bingos, the traps – and then you watch a different move hit the board. When you're sitting that close, and especially when you're rooting for someone, the tension becomes very real.

And then you add commentary into the mix. Hearing world-class analysis and excitement in your ear while watching the move unfold live – it gives you goosebumps. You're not just

watching the game anymore. You're inside it.

There were so many moments like that during the tournament:

- Nathan Tan not challenging Adheesha Dissanayake's *AZURNS* for 80+ points
- Adheesha playing *MOTY* and Irfan taking a long pause before deciding to challenge
- Adheesha missing *EBIONISE* at a crucial point against Hubert
- Lukeman Owolabi mis-tracking tiles, challenging *ROWEN*, and losing by 3 instead of winning by 2
- Irfan's phoney *LLANOID\** coming off the board in Game 33

Each of these moments had a story. And sitting there, you felt every one of them.

I did feel for Irfan in those final rounds. But I also witnessed something equally powerful the round before – Adheesha, who had dominated the field till Round 30, suddenly finding himself out of contention after Game 31. Watching that shift, from control to heartbreak, was not easy.

And that, in many ways, is what this whole effort was about.

Because for the first time, we weren't just experiencing these moments

inside the room – **we were sharing them with the world in real time.**

### **A milestone for Indian Scrabble**

What made this tournament special wasn't just the games. It was what we managed to build around them.

From Day 2 onwards, the top table games were streamed live with:

- Clear board visibility
- Player reactions
- Real-time scores and insights
- Global commentary

For Indian Scrabble, this was a big step forward.

We've had streams before, but this felt different. The quality, the consistency, the engagement – it all came together in a way that made the game more accessible and more exciting for viewers across the world.

And the response reflected that.



*Sitting next to Table 1, overseeing the stream – in the game without playing it*

We heard from players, viewers, and commentators across countries – messages appreciating the clarity of the stream, the smoothness of the

experience, and the effort that went into making it work.

By Day 3, viewership had already doubled from where we started. That meant something.

### **It was never a solo effort**

While I was the one sitting next to Table 1, this was never a one-person job. This was built over months – through calls, experiments, trial and error, and a lot of patience from people across different countries.

From Malaysia to Sri Lanka to India, people contributed ideas, time, and feedback to make this work.

Commentators joined from across the world, bringing energy and expertise that elevated the experience for everyone watching.

And somewhere in between, my dining table at home turned into a testing lab for cables, cameras, and setups – something my family and friends tolerated far more graciously than I probably deserved.

### **Acknowledgments and credits**

#### 1) Livestreaming and technical setup:

- Nimuthu (Sri Lanka)
- Ilham Irshad (Sri Lanka)
- Denuwan (Sri Lanka)
- Muhammad Rasyad (Malaysia)
- Sonal Merchant (India)
- Suyash Manchali (India)
- Sanjoy Gupta (India)
- Ela Ghose (India)

#### 2) Commentary and broadcast:

- Josh Greenway (USA) (screening and promotion of games on the Let's Play Scrabble YouTube channel and for his excellent Discord channel)
- Josh Sokol (Canada)
- Nitya Chagti (USA)
- Toh Weibin (Singapore)
- Waseem Khatri (Pakistan)
- Kavindu M (Sri Lanka)
- Madhav Gopal Kamath (India)
- Rahil Parkar (India)
- Hriday Samtani (India)

### **Looking ahead**

If there's one takeaway from this experience, it's that we've shown what's possible.

This wasn't perfect – there were glitches, learning moments, and things we'd definitely do better next time. But it worked. And more importantly, it *connected* people to the game in a way we haven't seen before in India. That's the real win.

Because Scrabble deserves to be seen, followed, and celebrated – not just by the people in the room, but by the global community that loves the game.

And this feels like just the beginning.

*A detailed document on the streaming setup by Siddharth can be found here:*

<https://docs.google.com/document/u/1/d/1-CBYV7TApH4xNhiiVDRwauo4fBKuhiUA/mobilebasic>

# Bengaluru bytes: A few games revisited

by *Suyash Manchali*

Ah, finally!

The tournament I had been waiting eagerly for... the KSSA Indian Open, which is India's biggest tournament and one of the most sought-after globally. I have always relished playing here, not just because of the quality of the games, but also for the various new players who I get to meet every year. This year was no different, and moreover, I was thrilled to have been able to participate in the tourney after missing out on the 2025 edition, owing to my studies and exams.

Not surprisingly, the competition in the Premier Division was typically strong, with Singapore's Hubert Wee up there as the defending champion and top seed, followed closely by the likes of other genuine contenders such as fellow youth player Adheesha Dissanayake from Sri Lanka, among other established and rising talents from international Scrabble.

Here I'll be sharing some of my highlights from this tournament, including some of my mistakes that cost me games.

## Round 3 vs Lukeman Owolabi:

This game with Lukeman was fun, with him going ahead by 90 points at the start of the game. Through a fair dose of good fortune, I was happy to edge him with a few high-scoring moves like ZO (34), AKING (41), and

T(H)RIVINg (92); which helped me steal a 438-355 win.



## Round 11 vs Jayaska Baranage:



A tough game with the expert from Sri Lanka, where he started with BOUNDED.

Though Jayaska managed to secure the lead right till the end, I was pleased with my late find of

PSOATIC, which propelled me to a satisfying 446-416 win.

**Round 14 vs Adheesha  
Dissanayake:**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O		
1	V	I	M								B	E	A	R	D	P	A
2		T	I	G	R	I	N	E			G	E	E	K	Y		
3			Z	O					W		H	E	Y	E	H		
4			B	A	O		P	O		I						E	
5		N	O	I	L		V	O	X					N	S	I	F
6							U				G						
7			T	A	C	O		L		D	E	W					
8		N	E	A	T			E	N	T	R	E	S	O	L	S	
9																	O
10											Q						U
11																	
12																	
13																	
14																	
15																	

This game was an absolute thriller, with both of us trading blows in the first five turns. After Adheesha's TIGRINE, the only hope for me was to bingo or plonk down high-scoring moves. After my move of VIM, I set my Z for a 40-pointer, which I cashed in on in the next move.

Another important move was when I was stuck with ETESIAN on my rack with two tiles in the bag. Here, I wanted to score but also retain a bingo, since I was 30 points behind. I played off my E forming KYE, and drew an F. Adheesha did well to block both my bingo spots with TACO, thus sealing the game 437-428.

Among my mistakes was chickening out of INDARTS with SOURINGS, a risk I should have taken in hindsight. Another mistake was the sub-optimal move of BEARD for 38, which I could have replaced by playing IZARD in

the same spot for more than 50 points.

**Round 20 vs Jeremy Khoo:**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O												
1	F	I	L	K							N				G												
2				O											U												
3				R											Z	A											
4				E	W										R	E	P	P	I	N	G				C		
5																										S	O
6																											U
7																											D
8																											A
9																											T
10																											E
11																											S
12																											
13																											
14																											
15																											

This game with Jeremy is one that I would remember for a long time. Initially we were neck and neck, and as the game carried on, he placed SUDATES, which gave me the opportunity to play a parallel word with the letters DINOORZ.

Two options in my mind were OZONID\* and ZORINO, which would yield me 90-plus and even the game, since even a 30-point lead in this game would have been good enough. I ended up choosing the former, despite doubting its validity.

It was only after Jeremy challenged it off that I realised that my greed cost me the game, since ZORINO was the right play. This move lingered in my mind for a long time, since it was a slip-up that was avoidable, and it could well have been due to this that the momentum got ruined on the third day – I went on to lose six out of nine games to trim my ratio to 15-12.

### Round 31 vs Sanjoy Gupta:

Heading into the last day, the goal was obviously to win all of my six games to guarantee a top-ten finish. But my hopes were severely dented as I lost my 29<sup>th</sup> game to compatriot Sanjoy Gupta, having played an erroneous endgame move due to which I lost by merely three points. Because of this, I was determined to win this rematch with him leaving no stone unturned, since I didn't want to be handed my second loss of the day.

As the game proceeded, both of us found our scores rather evenly matched until Sanjoy's move of METRICS, which put me behind by 70 points. At this crucial stage, I held HIINQU and a blank. Normally, one would want to hold on to the blank for later stages, but I carefully noticed that only one S was on the board. I took the risk and played sUQ for 64, playing off my blank in the process.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	3WS			3LS				3WS				3LS			AA
2	3WS	B				3LS				3LS				TI	E
3			I	O			3LS		3LS				Z	A	R
4	3LS												O	P	I
5			E	S		3WS				F	O	N	E		A
6		3LS		T		3LS				R	Y	B	A	T	3LS
7		L	3LS	R				3LS	X	U			E	3LS	
8	M	I	R	I			V	U	G		3LS				3WS
9	U	N		N				3LS		3LS		O	R		3LS
10	G	I										W	E	E	P
11		S	L	O	J	D						F	E	N	T
12		H			3WS				3LS			K	I	N	A
13	V	E	N	T				3LS		3LS			A	A	H
14	D	O	W	I	E		S	U	Q				C	A	E
15	3WS		D	O		M	E	T	R	I	C	S			E

Though it seemed an improper move, I knew I had to take the score and catch up with him before it was too late. Immediately, I picked up E, L

and an S, which allowed me to play the only bingo of LINISHE(D). Fast forward to the pre-endgame, I held AAEIILR when Sanjoy daringly opened with AI/TI for 8. At this point, the tiles unseen to me were ABDELOST, and I had just played my bingo of OESTRIN to inch ahead.

As my time was running out, I took a quick decision of blocking his newly opened lane, deducing that nothing could be played through OESTRIN. As I played AERIAL and drew the last tile, I was relieved to see that it was a B, and after the endgame sequence, it ended 455-407 in my favour. This remains one of my most cherished games, not just because the win was much needed, but also because it held the element of surprise in the form of plays like AI, RYBAT, and SLOJD.



*It was a delight to finish seventh place in an immensely demanding field*

Despite not having performed up to my level best, I was delighted with my seventh-place finish, which was special since I managed to win five out of the last six crucial games.

Huge thanks to the KSSA for having organised this wonderful tournament, with the livestream being the cherry on the cake!

# Introducing Anki, the best flashcarding tool on the internet

by Nitya Chagti

Anki was my favourite study tool while I was learning French, Classical Latin and Ancient Greek vocab during my undergrad. It came in handy yet again when I had to memorise hundreds of artworks for my doctoral comprehensive exams. Eight months ago, I decided to mobilise it for Scrabble, and the results have been spectacular.

With my AnkiDeckBuilder, you can study alphagrams, definitions, and leave values!

Why Anki, you might ask? There are three major reasons: it has the best of our most commonly used study tools, its FSRS algorithm allows you to learn the greatest number of words in the least amount of time, and it's incredibly customisable. Also, did I mention that it's free\*\*?

## 1) All the best parts in one

### Zyzzzyva:

- Like Zyzzzyva, Anki lets you **study offline**, without an internet connection, on your desktop and phone, and lets you **sync your progress** across devices.
- As on Zyzzzyva desktop, Anki allows you to search for **hyper-specific queries**. So, if you wanted to study the

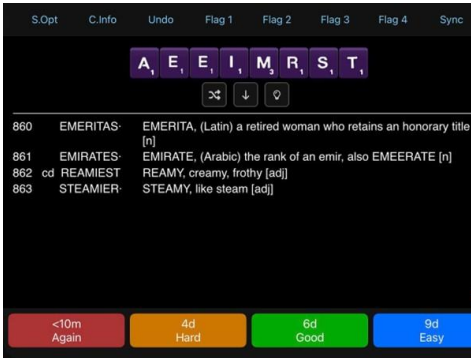
top 10,000 probable 7s that have two anagrams, are nouns, and only have two vowels, you could search for – and study – just that.

### Xerafin:

- Like Xerafin, the Anki decks automatically show you words in **exactly the order that you need to study them**. Once you import the decks into your Anki account, you can immediately start solving. You never have to think about when to upload the next set of words or what to study next.
- Anki also has a **web browser**, like Xerafin, that you can study on, if you don't want to download an app.

### WordVault:

- WordVault's FSRS algorithm was adopted from Anki
- Anki allows you to **store the entire lexicon on your account for free** and it doesn't require internet access.



*A screenshot of AnkiMobile showing the back of the flashcard*

## 2) The FSRS algorithm

- The Free Spaced Repetition Scheduler (FSRS) asks you to tell Anki how well you were able to remember a solution – ‘Again’ if you got it wrong or couldn't remember at all, and ‘Hard’, ‘Good’ or ‘Easy’ if you got it right.
- With FSRS, users have to do **20–30% fewer reviews** than with other cardbox systems to achieve the same retention level.
- FSRS adapts the card scheduling gracefully if you haven't been able to study in a while. You are **not penalised for a backlog**, and you no longer have to restart or reschedule your cardbox if you fall behind on reviews!
- Anki's FSRS optimiser uses machine learning to **learn your memory patterns**

and find parameters that **best fit your review history**. With Anki, you're only tasked with reviewing what is most useful for *your* brain at that moment.

## 3) The customisability

### What do YOU want to study?

- With Anki, you can choose to **study exactly what you want and in the order that you want**. On *any day*, you can tackle your due cards by studying all one-anagram words, all 5s, all vowel dumps, or all OUT- words first. You can even study in order of ease and get through all the easy words first.
- You have control over when you see new words. For example, you can study new words before or after you review due cards for the day, or even mix new cards with the reviews.
- Anki lets you control how many words you want to study today, every day, or by each deck, and it lets you set different review schedules for each day (e.g. fewer cards due on Mondays).

### Visual customisability

- Tiles can be consonant-first, vowel-first, or alphabetised.

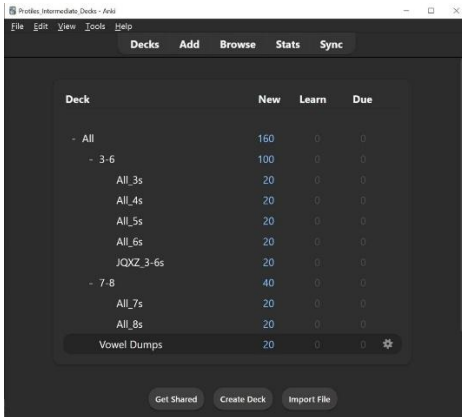
- The alphagrams look like **real-world tiles**, so the pattern recognition is even faster over the board
- Get optional lexicon symbols, even *within* definitions
- Get **Zyzyva-style formatting** for the answers by default
- Get **optional** colour-coding for answers by anagram count
- Use the Anki UI to customise fonts, colours, and highlights!

You can also download my AnkiDeckBuilder here: <https://github.com/nchagti/AnkiDeckBuilder/> to study definitions or leave values.

*\*\*AnkiMobile on iOS is a one-time payment, but AnkiWeb (the browser), Anki's desktop app, and AnkiDroid (for Android) are all free.*

### Endgame Extra: The 41 eights containing ANKI

BANKINGS, BLANKIES, BLANKING, BRANKIER, BRANKING, CLANKIER, CLANKING, CRANKIER, CRANKILY, CRANKING, CRANKISH, FLANKING, FRANKING, JANKIEST, LANKIEST, MANKIEST, MANKINDS, MANKINIS, PLANKING, PRANKIER, PRANKING, PRANKISH, RANKINGS, RANKISMS, RANKISTS, SHANKING, SKANKIER, SKANKING, SPANKING, STANKING, SWANKIER, SWANKIES, SWANKILY, SWANKING, TANKINGS, TANKINIS, THANKING, TRANKING, TWANKIES, TWANKING, WANKIEST



*A screenshot of Anki Desktop showing how subdecks can be organised*

If you want to try using Anki, grab yourself a Beginner/Intermediate or Expert deck here: [https://github.com/nchagti/AnkiDeckBuilder/tree/main/Sample\\_Anki\\_Decks/CSW24\\_Anagrams\\_decks](https://github.com/nchagti/AnkiDeckBuilder/tree/main/Sample_Anki_Decks/CSW24_Anagrams_decks) and start solving!

### The 13 eights ending with CARD

BANKCARD, BRANCARD, DATACARD, DRAWCARD, FILECARD, FILMCARD, FLANCARD, NOTECARD, POSTCARD, RACECARD, RAILCARD, TIMECARD, WILDCARD

# WESPA rules explained, anecdotal style

by Ritu Chadha

*In this new series, Ritu Chadha aims at enlightening players and enthusiasts about some of the lesser-known rules from the WESPA Game Rules through hypothetical game scenarios dashed with humour.*

## Story #1: The missing tile

Player A and Player B are almost at the end of their game. Player B plays 4 tiles, and picks the last 2 tiles from the bag. She now has 5 tiles on her rack, while Player A has 7 tiles. Player B is in the lead by just 15 points. Player A is next on turn. He plays off 4 tiles and is left with 3 tiles on his rack.

Both players tile-track and realise that there is one tile missing. They look around, and find that one tile has slipped under the board face down. Both look at each other very suspiciously.

They call Radhika Mahalingiah, who is the TD. As per the rules, Radhika shows the tile to both players, which in this case is the dreaded **Q**, and puts it back in the bag. The tile has to be drawn by Player B, as had the tile not been discovered out of the bag, it would have been drawn by her.

Player B has to re-strategise her endgame. She now starts getting flashbacks of all the men who had troubled her in her entire lifetime, and angrily thinks, “**What a**

**scheming, conniving Qonkey\*! He must have slipped the Q under the board because he was losing. Arrrgh, men!!!”**

The innocent Player A can sense the anger coming in waves from Player B, but is secretly relieved: “**Thank God the Q went to her. And this angry Quffoon\* can make whatever she wants with it...**”



Player A and Player B still don't talk to each other after five long years.

As per **WESPA Rule 4.3**, if any missing tiles are discovered even after one player has shown their tiles to the other player at the end of the game, the displayed tiles go back on the rack, and the said missing tiles go back in the bag.

The same pattern would follow as above, and the game would continue from there in its logical manner. However, **no move can be replayed under any circumstances.**

## Story #2: Challenging times

Player A has just played **DOGSHIT\*** with the word ending between **FOR** and **Y**, making **FORTY**.

Player B is not happy with this play as he is trailing, and immediately calls "HOLD". He thinks **DOGSHIT\*** should be good since his dog Jimmy gives him a bunch of it to clean every morning, but **FORTY** sounds like dogshit\*. How can anyone compare forts? **FORTY**, **FORTIER\*** and **FORTIEST\*** all sound invalid, as the Red Fort cannot be fortier\* than the Agra Fort or vice versa. Player B announces loudly that he would like to challenge **FORTY**, and pauses the timer.



Player A is relieved that **DOGSHIT\*** is not being challenged, as he is not sure of the word. Player A picks up his phone and opens the relevant app to check with B's consent, but Player B suddenly announces that he wants to challenge **DOGSHIT\*** also, as deep down inside he is fed up of picking up Jimmy's shit. Player A is not too happy with this change, and tells Player B that he cannot change the word to be challenged at this point. Player B disagrees. TD Ashok Bhandarkar is called.

Ashok adjudicates that as per **WESPA Rule 3.10.8**, any player can change their mind about which word(s) to challenge *before a single letter is typed onto the device*, if the challenge is being decided by the use of a device at the table. If they are not using a device on their table, any player can change the word/words challenged *before they leave the playing table to walk to the laptop*.

Player A's play is challenged off the board.

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### Endgame Extra: Hubert's exemplary sportsmanship at the KSSA Indian Open

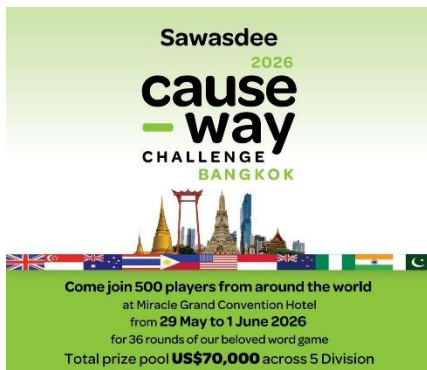
*by Irfan Siddiqui*

On the first day of the 2026 KSSA Indian Open, I came across an intriguing situation in a game between Hubert Wee and Jacky Fernandes. It seemed to be a close low-scorer with a tense endgame, going by what I could see from afar. When the game ended, Jacky had recorded a two-point loss for himself, and was not even thinking about a recount, having accepted that he had come so close to beating the top seed.

Meanwhile, Jacky had won according to Hubert's calculations. I'm quite certain that many players in Hubert's situation would have agreed to the scores and taken the win on offer. However, Hubert urged Jacky to do a recount, after which Jacky was confirmed as the winner by just one point – 360-359. This was indeed a fine example of sportsmanship from Hubert, and kudos to him for that!

# All about the 2026 Causeway Challenge

*Scrabble's biggest extravaganza, the 2026 Causeway Challenge, is set to be played in Bangkok from 29<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June. With this edition, the Causeway Challenge, spearheaded by Michael Tang, makes a comeback after nearly a decade. Here is a lowdown on the most awaited event on the Scrabble calendar.*



*(Picture courtesy:  
causeway-challenge.com)*

## The tournament in a nutshell

The 2026 Causeway Challenge will be played at the Miracle Grand Convention Hotel in Bangkok from 29<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June. Close to 500 players from over 30 countries are expected to battle it out across 36 rounds, with the final number of players to be equally divided into five divisions (Premier, Master, Advanced, Open, and Amateur) based on their WESPA ratings on the cutoff date of 10<sup>th</sup> May.

The tournament is being organised by Michael Tang of Singapore, who has been synonymous with the Causeway

and Alchemist Cup tournaments over the years. The official website of the tournament is:

<https://www.causeway-challenge.com/>

## Prize pool and streaming

The total prize pool across the five divisions is set to be USD 70,000. The Premier Division champion will take home USD 10,000. The top ten in each division will be among the prizes.

In a first, a mainstream OTT platform will livestream competitive Scrabble games, as exclusive worldwide OTT streaming rights have been secured with MeWatch (MediaCorp of Singapore OTT platform) for 108 hours of streams (36 rounds x 3 streams).

## The big three

The three players with a WESPA rating of above 2100 at the time of writing are set to be the legendary Nigel Richards from New Zealand, who has won the most number of world championship titles; David Eldar from Australia, and the current two-time KSSA Indian Open title holder Hubert Wee from Singapore.

## The Indian presence

More than 50 players from India will be playing across the five divisions, including three International Grandmasters in Akshay Bhandarkar, reigning world youth champion Madhav Gopal Kamath, and Sherwin

Rodrigues. Akshay and Madhav are set to be among the top ten seeds.

### The top female players

Malaysia's Vannitha Balasingam, who recently became the first woman to reach a WESPA rating of 2000, will be among the top 25 seeds at the Causeway Challenge. Following her will be India's highest-ranked female player Ishika Shivalingaiah, Odette Rio from the Philippines, Natalie Zolty from the United Kingdom, and Sujana Somasekar from India.

At the time of writing, following are the 52 Indian players expected to be in action at the Causeway Challenge, in order of rating:

Akshay Bhandarkar, Madhav Gopal Kamath, Sherwin Rodrigues, Suyash Manchali, Udayan Grover, Aditya Iyengar, Ishika Shivalingaiah, Siddharth Nithyanand, Sanjoy Gupta, Charles Carneiro, Sujana Somasekar, Samrath Singh Bhatia, Rahil Parkar, Mohan Chunkath, A Krishnan, Sunny Bhatia, Nidhi Singhvi, Pankaj Bolaki, Manju Sood, Rustom Deboo, Sudhir Kamath, Rajeev Menon, Abid Hussain, Kala Ganesh, Vignesh S, Neeta Bhatia, Mangala Bhandarkar, Danish Shahna, Vimisha Patel, Rajiv Antao, Gajanan Patil, Swagat Nukala, Komal RG, Shaik Ahmed, Sushanto Bhattacharya, Jyoti Budhia, Abhijit Shilotri, Radhika Mahalingaiah, Asha Kamath, Rehet Singh Bhatia, Archana Aggarwal, Pradyot Anand, Harvinderjit Bhatia, Monica Agarwala, Saraswathi Rammanohar, Gaurav Bhargava, Ritu

Chadha, Hyder Quraishi, Caryl Gonsalvez, Mehjabeen Peeradina, Suguna Dandi, Rajalakshmi Ponnuswamy

### Endgame Extra: Five fulfilling years of Endgame

by Rustom Deboo



Endgame completed five years on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026, and over half a decade, it has gone on to see 20 editions encompassing 900 pages – an ever-growing trove of Scrabble experiences, stories, reports, facts, figures, puzzles, quizzes, snippets, and abundant wordplay – catalysing an ever-engaging editing journey. May the words keep flowing!

# Tournament round-up

## KSSA Indian Open, Bangalore

by **Rustom Deboo**

The 21st edition of the KSSA Indian Open, India's grandest Scrabble tournament, was held as usual at the Mu Sigma campus in Whitefield, Bangalore from 23rd to 26th January.

Organised by the Karnataka State Scrabble Association, the four-day extravaganza saw as many as 164 participants from 12 countries across four divisions, who came together to indulge in their common passion of playing Scrabble.



*Hubert Wee of Singapore successfully defended his title, after a gripping duel with Irfan Siddiqui*

Division A, featuring 54 players in a demanding field, went down to the wire, with Singapore's Hubert Wee, who was defending his title, edging out Bahrain's Irfan Siddiqui to claim the title for the second time running.

With wins needed in each of the last two rounds, Hubert won these games by 2 (in dramatic fashion – you can view Will Anderson's video about the Round 32 game, aptly titled 'This Sticky Scrabble Endgame Decided an

Entire Tournament' here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZSVGzQBS0A&t=30s>) and 26 points respectively to finish with 23 wins, one clear of Irfan. Sri Lanka's Adheesha Dissanayake, last year's runner-up, finished third with 22 wins, after doing much of the early running.



*Irfan Siddiqui of Bahrain finished second, and was agonisingly close to the title in the penultimate round*

In Division B, which saw 52 players, Kenya's Millie Kikechi secured victory with 24 wins, two clear of Malaysia's Muhammad Rasyad. She bagged the title in dominant fashion, winning eight games in a row to be Gibsonised with two rounds to go. The two-day Division C, played over 15 rounds among 21 participants, produced Pranav Ramkumar as the unbeaten winner with 12 straight wins, while the one-day, unrated enthusiast division had another 37 players, most of whom were playing competitive Scrabble for the first time.



*Adheesha Disanayake of Sri Lanka, last year's runner-up, finished third*

Cash prizes totalling up to INR 12,00,000 were awarded to the winners across the four divisions and various other categories. The top 15 finishers in Divisions A and B and the top ten in Divisions C and D were given cash prizes. Besides these, there were spot prizes on offer in select rounds, as well as special prizes in all divisions for the best veteran, best female player, best youth player, and various rating bands; awarding players who finished outside the prize lists.



*Millie Kikechi of Kenya, winner of Division B, receives her trophy from WESPA Chairman Lukeman Owolabi*

In a significant step forward, the top table games of Division A were streamed live from the second day. This was a culmination of the efforts of Siddharth Nithyanand and Let's Play Scrabble, resulting in a quality

stream that added to the intensity of the games.



*The final top-table contest between Irfan and Hubert being livestreamed on YouTube*

The last day of the tournament coincided with India's Republic Day, with most of the players turning out in ethnic wear to mark the occasion.

As the biggest Scrabble tournament in India, the KSSA Indian Open continues to be one of the most coveted titles in the world of Scrabble, offering top-notch Scrabble across four days in a well-organised setting, and attractive prize money for players across divisions and skill levels.

Indeed, the 2026 edition of this much-loved tournament was a fittingly memorable event that captured the essence of our abiding enthusiasm towards Scrabble.



*Pranav Ramkumar, winner of Division C*

The complete standings and stats from all divisions can be seen here:

<https://indianscrabble.com/games/kssa/io26/>



*Taqseen Macchiwalla, winner of the Enthusiast Division, receives her trophy from Radhika Mahalingaiah*



*Prize winners from Division B*

The streamed action from the top tables can be viewed on the LetsPlayScrabble YouTube channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/@letsplayscrabledotcom/streams>



*Some of the many trophies on offer*



*Prize winners from Division A*

**Final standings – Division A**

	<b>Player</b>	<b>Wins</b>	<b>Spread</b>
1	Hubert Wee	23	1699
2	Irfan Siddiqui	22	1720
3	Adheesha D	22	955
4	Lukeman Owolabi	21	1692
5	Akshay Bhandarkar	20	2206
6	Marlon Prudencio	20	729
7	Suyash Manchali	20	458
8	Udayan Grover	20	292
9	Samrath Bhatia	19.5	-137
10	Jeremy Khoo	19	858
11	Rasheed Balogun	19	776
12	Sherwin Rodrigues	19	588
13	Jayaska Baranage	19	27
14	Aditya Iyengar	18	704
15	Dineth Fernando	18	655
16	Manop P	18	546
17	Ishika Shivalingaiah	18	367
18	Azmil Aziz	18	-46
19	A Krishnan	17.5	491
20	Sanjoy Gupta	17.5	459
21	Russell Honeybun	17	560
22	Selwyn Lobo	17	91
23	Tony Sim	17	26
24	Shaila Amalean	17	12
25	Nidhi Singhvi	17	-95
26	Tay Yi An	16.5	354
27	Samarth Manchali	16.5	-659
28	Sam Kantimathi	16.5	-904
29	Triambak Eashwar	16	283
30	Rajiv Antao	16	-23
31	Sudhir Kamath	16	-411
32	Vyasa Dheva N	16	-453

## ENDGAME – March 2026

33	Pankaj Bolaki	16	-653	2	Muhammad Rasyad	22	573
34	Rajeev Menon	15.5	-242	3	Anvay Shah	21	1250
35	Rustom Deboo	15	373	4	Vignesh S	21	68
36	Suthiraphan Assarat	15	-192	5	Vimisha Patel	20	1155
37	Sujana Somasekar	15	-197	6	Pasindu W	20	615
38	Mangala Bhandarkar	14 (+1)	-583	7	Yvonne Lobo	20	357
39	Raghuram J	15	-733	8	Kessen Budhoo	19	919
40	Anand Buddhdev	15	-796	9	Rishard Aathif	19	795
41	Bhushan Pradhan	14.5	-1241	10	Abid Hussain	19	696
42	Michael Tang	14	646	11	Abel George Mathew	19	470
43	Danish Shahna	14	-503	12	Meena Kalyan	19	400
44	Rehet Bhatia	14	-544	13	Jyoti Budhia	19	-159
45	Kala Ganesh	14	-795	14	Harsh Sood	18	568
46	Rohaina Tanveer	11 (+3)	-976	15	Neeta Bhatia	18	508
47	Nathan Tan Rui Ern	13	-426	16	Nirupama Sivaraman	18	419
48	Amit Sood	13	-620	17	Dipankar Chatterjee	18	79
49	Rood Ramlochun	11 (+2)	-1285	18	Komal RG	18	74
50	Sunny Bhatia	12	-500	19	Vimarsh Pandita	18	7
51	Gajanan Patil	12	-753	20	Priya Fernando	18	4
52	Shaik Ahmed	9 (+3)	-1418	21	Abhijit Shilotri	17	335
53	Suchindra Potnis	11	-1463	22	Ela Ghose	17	320
54	Jacky Fernandes	6	-919	23	Raman Viswanathan	17	315
				24	Kaveri Warriar	17	300
				25	Ganesh Ram	17	-136
				26	Gaurav Bhargava	17	-863
				27	Asha Kamath	16	357
				28	Lennie D'Souza	16	315
				29	Monica Agarwala	16	278
				30	Swagat Nukala	16	-120
				31	Nikheel Ruparel	16	-159
				32	Mayank Khandelwal	16	-175
				33	Joe Rodrigues	16	-446
				34	Ritu Chadha	15	5
				35	Saraswathi R	15	-132
				36	Rajnikant Singh	15	-177
				37	Doorgaduth Dina	15	-187
				38	Arvind Lath	15	-365
				39	Zeenath Ariff	15	-669
				40	Suhaas Khandelwal	14	296
				41	Harvinderjit Bhatia	14	-17
				42	Allage Sayun Senuka	14	-294
				43	Aruna Grover	14	-354
				44	Lucy Thannickal	14	-515
				45	Pallavi Praveen	14	-785
				46	Shalini Sahdev	13	-562
				47	Hyder Quraishi	13	-957
				48	Kalpna Sastry	13	-1011
				49	Dhaval Rathod	12	-692
				50	Madhulekha B	12	-1148
				51	Krieshna Parmar	11	-1093
				52	Aria Kapadia	8	-1748

High game: Michael Tang 708

Bye treatment explained in brackets



*A Singaporean clash between Jeremy Khoo (left) and Marlon Prudencio*

### Final standings – Division B

Player	Wins	Spread
1 Millie Kikechi	24	1286

High game: Asha Kamath 597



*Games in progress in Division B*

10	Aditya Choudhury	7 (+1)	-39
11	Sharv Jain	7	481
12	Azad Jowahir	7	280
13	Suguna Dandi	7	70
14	Percy Fernando	7	6
15	Rama B	7	-269
16	Jishnu KJ	5 (+2)	-658
17	Sherral Joseph	3 (+4)	-808
18	Jaykishore Satta	6	-401
19	Tashvi N	6	-724
20	Erriah Sooriadev	2 (+4)	-1977
21	Bhanumathi Ganesh	4	-330

High game: Azad Jowahir 675  
Bye treatment explained in brackets



*(L-R) Sudhir Kamath, A Krishnan and Sanjoy Gupta pose in the tricolour*



*Celebrating India's Republic Day*

**Final standings – Division C**

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Pranav Ramkumar	12 (+3)	1782
2	Mehjabeen P	10	227
3	Chandru Bolaki	9.5	753
4	Utkarsh Lal	9	667
5	Hema Shah	9	547
6	Archana Lalwani	9	11
7	Oliver John Mathew	8.5	-280
8	Arnab Choudhury	7 (+1)	464
9	Meena Chinnappa	8	198



*(L-R) Ishika Shivalingaiah, Asha Kamath and Shubha Shivashankar pose in the tricolour*

## Kaizen All-India Open, Pune

The fifth Kaizen All-India Open was held at Hotel Aurora Towers in Pune from 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> March, featuring 32 players and 24 rounds.



*Akshay Bhandarkar with the Kaizen All-India Open trophy*

The seasoned Akshay Bhandarkar delivered a sublime performance, as he was Gibsonised in Round 22 with 18 wins. Young Suyash Manchali was next on the podium with 17 wins, followed by Aditya Iyengar at 15 wins.



*Games in progress at the fifth Kaizen All-India Open in Pune*

### Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Akshay Bhandarkar	18 (+1)	1611
2	Suyash Manchali	17	1019
3	Aditya Iyengar	15	1413
4	Udayan Grover	15	1238

5	Sherwin Rodrigues	15	399
6	Madhav Kamath	14	958
7	Nakul Prabhu	14	702
8	Sunny Bhatia	14	547
9	Sujana Somasekar	14	173
10	Selwyn Lobo	13	1153
11	Shubha S	13	460
12	Bhushan Pradhan	13	447
13	Pankaj Bolaki	13	-169
14	Suthiraphan Assarat	12.5	30
15	Vignesh S	12.5	-580
16	Sudhir Kamath	12	151
17	Vimisha Patel	12	31
18	Kala Ganesh	12	-269
19	Virendra Braganza	12	-331
20	Nidhi Singhvi	11	259
21	Rehet Bhatia	11	175
22	Mangala Bhandarkar	11	-211
23	Arindam Basu	11	-450
24	Suchindra Potnis	11	-549
25	Triambak Eashwar	11	-655
26	Komal RG	10	-547
27	Neelanjana Bid	10	-622
28	Ritu Chadha	9	-386
29	Aruna Grover	9	-564
30	Kedarnath Awati	9	-640
31	Utkarsh Lal	8	-652
32	Sanchita Bid	1 (+1)	-4141

High game: Udayan Grover 655  
Bye treatment explained in brackets



*Participants at the Kaizen All-India Open*

## Rated one-day tournaments

**Jumpstart January, Vadodara**  
(4<sup>th</sup> January, seven rounds)

### Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Vimisha Patel	6	1189

2	Viral Kansara	5	79
3	Kalpna Sastry	4	238
4	Nandini Sonthalia	4	125
5	Deepak Ashar	4	94
6	Jayant Sastry	4	-42
7	Ark Kansara	4	-69
8	Dhaval Rathod	3	-21
9	Remya Mohan	3	-25
10	Minu Hirode	3	-612
11	Nandini Srikanta	2	-283
12	Apurva Barjatya	0	-673

High game: Vimisha Patel 614



*Participants at Jumpstart January*

### First Word of the Year, Delhi (10<sup>th</sup> January, eight rounds)

#### Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Sudhir Kamath	7	713
2	Sunny Bhatia	6	646
3	Archana Aggarwal	5	476
4	Manit Arora	5	189
5	Shalini Sahdev	5	8
6	Komal RG	4	248
7	Sharv Jain	4	54
8	Mohit Arora	3	159
9	Shiv Talwar	3	-12
10	Navika Singal	2	-800
11	Namisha Rajgarhia	2	-806
12	Anupriya Roy	2	-875

### Frisky February, Vadodara (15<sup>th</sup> February, seven rounds)

#### Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Vimisha Patel	5	527
2	Dhaval Rathod	4	357
3	Viral Kansara	4	183
4	Kalpna Sastry	4	32
5	Jayant Sastry	4	17
6	Nandini Sonthalia	3	-68
7	Dennis Balogun	3	-227
8	Remya Mohan	1	-821

High game: Vimisha Patel, Viral Kansara 525

### The Word Manager, Mumbai (15<sup>th</sup> February, nine rounds)



*Varisht Hingorani (right) receives the winner's prize at The Word Manager*

#### Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Varisht Hingorani	7	777
2	Siddharth Nithyanand	7	432
3	Rahil Parkar	6	471
4	Hriday Samtani	6	268
5	Nakul Prabhu	6	244
6	Anvay Shah	5	399
7	Samrath Bhatia	5	231
8	Neeta Bhatia	5	121
9	Alan De Mello	5	-31
10	Rehet Bhatia	5	-66

11	Neelanjana Bid	4.5	-259
12	Srushti Gandhi	4	182
13	Rekha Sanzgiri	4	-45
14	Raksha Tanna	4	-67
15	Harvinderjit Bhatia	4	-143
16	Ritu Chadha	3.5	-292
17	Aria Kapadia	3	-129
18	Mehjabeen P	2	-298
19	Sanchita Bid	2	-780
20	Fawaz Kutty	2	-1015

High game: Nakul Prabhu 571

**Fab Feb Fun Fest, Delhi**  
(22<sup>nd</sup> February, eight rounds)

**Final standings**

Player	Wins	Spread
1	Aditya Iyengar	6 602
2	Sunny Bhatia	6 512
3	Siddharth Nithyanand	5 532
4	Komal RG	5 185
5	Sudhir Kamath	4 303
6	Ela Ghose	4 138
7	Panya Goel	4 -271
8	Akshay Hiremath	4 -568
9	Shalini Sahdev	2 -633

High game: Ela Ghose 595

**The Words of a Woman, Mumbai** (8<sup>th</sup> March, eight rounds)

**Final standings**

Player	Wins	Spread
1	Neeta Bhatia	6 575
2	Kala Ganesh	6 404
3	Nidhi Singhvi	5 300
4	Ritu Chadha	4 (+1) 104
5	Yvonne Lobo	4 165
6	Neelanjana Bid	4 19
7	Carolann Pais	4 -31
8	Viji Ramachandran	3 (+1) -196
9	Mehjabeen P	1 (+3) -434
10	Rekha Sanzgiri	2 (+1) 22
11	Aria Kapadia	1 (+2) -323

Bye treatment explained in brackets



*Neeta Bhatia (left) receives the winner's prize at The Words of a Woman from Ritu Chadha, who hosted the tournament on Women's Day*

**March of Words, Delhi**  
(22<sup>nd</sup> March, eight rounds)

**Final standings**

Player	Wins	Spread
1	Sunny Bhatia	6.5 727
2	Ahana Goyal	5.5 497
3	Komal RG	5 -107
4	Manit Arora	4 239
5	Mohit Arora	4 33
6	Archana Aggarwal	4 28
7	Shalini Sahdev	4 -223
8	Gaurav Bhargava	4 -223
9	Akshay Hiremath	3 -371

High game: Ahana Goyal 511

**Endgame Extra: Upcoming Chennai Open attains support from the Sports Development Authority, Tamil Nadu**

Chennai is set to be the scene for a landmark Scrabble tournament on

the Indian calendar, as the 2026 Chennai Open, to be held from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June, has become the first national-level Scrabble tournament in India to receive support from a government body – the Sports Development Authority, Tamil Nadu (SDAT).



*The 2026 Chennai Open flyer*

The SDAT has extended a promising sponsorship of INR 5,00,000 towards the Chennai Open, thanks to the unwavering efforts of Mohan Chunkath in helping secure it.

“I’m delighted that we’ve finally managed to secure government support... it’s wonderful to see what energetic leadership can achieve. The next step is to seek support from the Government of India... here’s to

giving Scrabble the recognition it truly deserves!” , remarked Mohan.

Jointly organised by the Madras Scrabble Foundation (MSF) and the KSSA and to be held at the E-Hotel, Royapettah, the Chennai Open will have dedicated Beginners, School, and College divisions, alongside the main Open Division.

It will be India’s first three-day WESPA silver-tier tourney (with a top prize of USD 1000), and is expected to feature the first live stream of a school-level Scrabble tournament, enabling students, parents, and schools to follow the competition in real time.

The support from the SDAT is not just about one tournament – it represents an important milestone in the broader effort to position Scrabble as a mind sport in India.

The Chennai Open looks forward to welcoming seasoned players, beginners, and students to Chennai for what promises to be a truly special event.

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### **Endgame Extra: Scrabble workshop and one-dayer at Kottayam Scrabble Club**

A Scrabble workshop followed by a one-day tournament at the Kottayam Scrabble Club received a highly enthusiastic response from budding Scrabble lovers on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> January. Aply conducted by Teresa Joseph and Siddharth Nithyanand, the event showcased the game’s wide

appeal, with participants ranging from just 7 to an impressive 81 years of age.



*A healthy turnout at the workshop at Kottayam Scrabble Club*

The workshop featured an insightful presentation by Siddharth, which introduced the 48 participants to the basic rules, key aspects, and numerous benefits of Scrabble for both children and adults.



*Prize winners at the Kottayam one-dayer*



*Siddharth Nithyanand guides young Scrabble enthusiasts at the workshop*

The strong turnout of youngsters was particularly encouraging. This enthusiasm carried forward to the unrated one-day tournament, which saw 24 participants, including 14 children. The tournament was won by Annaphurni B, who won all five games. Among juniors, Alphonsa Antoney stood first.



*Budding juniors during the one-dayer*

The Kottayam Scrabble Club's passion for the sport was evident throughout the event. Kudos to Teresa and Siddharth for their commendable efforts in further popularising Scrabble in the 'Land of Letters'. We look forward to seeing many more Scrabblers from Kottayam making their mark on the tournament circuit soon!

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### **Endgame Extra: A story of heartbreak that only true Scrabblers would understand**

*by Vimisha Patel*

The quality of the live stream at the KSSA Indian Open was unbelievable. Crisp, seamless, addictive. People who couldn't come to play were glued to it... following games move by

move. It felt professional, flawless, and was at par with the best global tournament streams out there.

And then came that moment.

In Round 31, Irfan Siddiqui beat Adheesha Dissanayake and moved to the top of the standings. He needed to win just one of his last two games. His opponent was Hubert Wee from Singapore, the defending champ.



*Players throng to watch the thrilling Round 32 game on the screen at the KSSA Indian Open*

By the time I finished my game and started watching their Round 32 game, it was almost endgame and Irfan was leading by 22 points. By then, most other games in the hall had wrapped up. People started drifting towards the big screen where the live game was being displayed. Slowly... quietly... a crowd gathered. About 40 to 50 of us.

Watching... hoping... rooting...

Almost all of us wanted Irfan to win. It would have been a huge win, as the field was brutal and this would have been his biggest win ever!

Then came that crazy rack.

He had LOOSTTZ.

The bag had six tiles left. Changing was not an option anymore.

He thought for a long time – over four minutes. You could feel the tension. Eventually, he made his move. He didn't play the Z.

And then... it happened!

He picked up the J and the Q.

That final rack had J, Q, and Z; with the board getting tighter, closing up move by move. He played the best possible word at that point: JETON.

Hubert responded steadily. He had AEEHLRT on his rack, but the bingo was not playable. But he played in a way that completely shut Irfan out.

No place for the Q.

No place for the Z.



*Moments after the Round 32 game ended 414-412 in Hubert's favour*

Game over. Irfan lost by two points... because of a 40-point countback.

And in that instant, something remarkable happened. About 50 people felt the exact same heartbreak at the exact same time. You could see it, you could breathe it... the expressions, few holding their faces in their palms, few shaking their heads,

the murmur of disbelief, the pain which only a Scrabblor can feel for losing on countback!

A mass heartbreak...

And this moment, this shared emotion... was only possible because of that incredible live streaming. It connected everyone. It pulled us onto the same rack, the same bag, the same cruel sequence of tiles.

Scrabble can be brutal...

And beautiful...

And unforgettable...

**Endgame Extra: An incredible 507-538 loss at the Kaizen Open**

*by Aditya Iyengar*



*A 507-538 loss to Shubha Shivashankar at the Kaizen Open, featuring seven bingos and 50-plus Q, X, and Z plays*

**Endgame Extra: Know the sevens and eights starting with BOW**

BOWBENT, BOWELED, BOWERED, BOWFINS, BOWGETS, BOWHEAD, BOWHUNT, BOWINGS, BOWKNOT, BOWLDER, BOWLEGS, BOWLERS, BOWLESS, BOWLFUL, BOWLIKE, BOWLINE, BOWLING, BOWNING, BOWPOTS, BOWSAWS, BOWSERS, BOWSEYS, BOWSHOT, BOWSIES, BOWSING, BOWSMAN, BOWSMEN, BOWWOOD, BOWWOWS, BOWYANG, BOWYERS

BOWELING, BOWELLED, BOWERIES, BOWERING, BOWFRONT, BOWHEADS, BOWHUNTS, BOWINGLY, BOWKNOTS, BOWLDERS, BOWLFULS, BOWLINES, BOWLINGS, BOWLLIKE, BOWSHOTS, BOWSPRIT, BOWWOODS, BOWWOWED, BOWYANGS

Top 15 WESPA-rated scores in India in 2026 (as of 31 <sup>st</sup> March)		
Score	Player	Tourney
708	Michael Tang	KSSA Open (A)
675	Azad Jowahir	KSSA Open (C)
674	Aditya Iyengar	KSSA Open (A)
670	Akshay Bhandarkar	KSSA Open (A)
655	Udayan Grover	Kaizen, Pune
642	Suyash Manchali	Kaizen, Pune
641	Akshay Bhandarkar	Kaizen, Pune
636	Mangala Bhandarkar	KSSA Open (A)
619	Hubert Wee	KSSA Open (A)
614	Hubert Wee	KSSA Open (A)
614	Akshay Bhandarkar	KSSA Open (A)
614	Lukeman Owolabi	KSSA Open (A)
614	Udayan Grover	Kaizen, Pune
613	Selwyn Lobo	Kaizen, Pune
610	Gajanan Patil	KSSA Open (A)
610	Pranav Ramkumar	KSSA Open (C)

# 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:



## United States



*Wellington Jighere, winner of the New Year's Albany Main Event*

The New Year's Albany Main Event in early January produced Nigeria's Wellington Jighere as the champion with 20 wins from 26 rounds. Winter from the United States and Matthew Tunnicliffe from Canada joined him on the podium.

Later in January, the Crescent City Cup was won by Canada's Josh Sokol, who finished with 16 wins from 20 rounds, three clear of second-placed Eta Karo of Nigeria.

## United Kingdom



*Brian Po accepts the winner's prize at the 2026 UK Open*

The 2026 UK Open, played in Reading over the first weekend of the year, was clinched by Hong Kong's Brian Po in the penultimate round – seeded fifth, he finished with 19 wins from 23 rounds to be Gibsonised. In second place was

the defending champion Harshan Lamabadusuriya of England, while his compatriot Gary Oliver finished third.

In the two-day Grand Slam in Warrington on 28<sup>th</sup> February, Harshan won the title on spread in a remarkably tight finish – he won the last game against Andrew Goodwin by just six points, and ended up as one of four players with 11 wins from 16 rounds. Mark Nyman and Paul Thompson finished second and third respectively.

### Kenya

The Kenya Masters Series XVI was played over 28 rounds in Nairobi from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> March. The tourney was won by Allan Oyende with a round to spare, as he reached 20 wins from 27 rounds.

### Singapore

The SA Millenium Cup 2026 in March was won by top seed Ryan Wee, who finished with 13 wins from 17 rounds, staving off a spirited challenge from 17<sup>th</sup> seed Maverique Ong. Ricky Purnomo rounded off the top three.

### Australia

The City of Sydney Masters during the fourth weekend of January featured 44 players and 18 rounds. It was won by Andrew Fisher, who won 14 games to finish ahead of runner-up Edward Okulicz.

## Endgame Extra: The WESPA Summit Cup and YTD Rankings

In January, WESPA unveiled a ‘3-in-1 Scrabble Fest’ featuring the Summit Cup, the WESPA Open, and the Malta International Scrabble Open to be held in Malta later this year.

The WESPA Summit Cup, to be played from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> December, would feature the top 24 players in the new Year-To-Date (YTD) Rankings. These rankings are determined by the performances of players in WESPA tournaments in the Scrabble Calendar Year, which is set as 1<sup>st</sup> October of the previous year to 30<sup>th</sup> September of the current year.



Each WESPA-rated tournament from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 has been accorded a tier ranging from Platinum to Bronze (or ‘Others’). A detailed note on the WESPA Summit Cup YTD Points System can be found here:

<https://wespa.org/docs/WESPA-Summit-Cup-Point-system.pdf>

# Puzzles and quizzes

## Mixed anagrams – Mammal sevens

*by Rustom Deboo*

Below are ten anagrams, each of which has two seven-letter Scrabble words that are names of mammals, which you might have come across during your word study or games. For instance, IF FANGIRL HOPED would yield the words DOLPHIN and GIRAFFE. Can you unscramble them all?

You can send in your answers to [indianscrabble@gmail.com](mailto:indianscrabble@gmail.com) by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026. One entry getting all ten answers right (i.e. both words in each question) will win a cash prize of Rs. 500 in a lucky draw.

Congrats to Gajanan Patil for winning the lucky draw prize for the quiz featured in the December 2025 edition (answers are on page 46). The following also got all answers right: Pallavi Praveen and Rahil Parkar.

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1) HUMID SPACE SOON  | 6) MAIN GRAND TUNAS  |
| 2) NAB GREEN STRAIT  | 7) WANT RIGHT AROMA  |
| 3) LOCKER RAMP OATH  | 8) UNITE GANJA CAMP  |
| 4) ANCHOR CANAL ROW  | 9) CLOG A BAKER SCAM |
| 5) ABATE A MINOR CUE | 10) SINGER NAME TALK |



## Off the hook

by Rustom Deboo

The objective of this quiz is to identify all five-letter words formed by adding front and back hooks to each of the following four-letter words, with the number of hooks (front, back) given in brackets. Can you get all 50 words?

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1) RAVE (5, 6) | 5) ROSE (4, 3) |
| 2) OLLA (2,2)  | 6) HYLE (2, 2) |
| 3) ROKE (5, 3) | 7) RANG (4, 5) |
| 4) LEME (1, 3) | 8) LEIS (2, 1) |



## Guess the eight-letter word

by Rustom Deboo

The objective of this quiz is to identify four eight-letter words that are valid in Scrabble by using three shorter words to be derived from the given hints for each eight-letter word, in which the numbers would denote the respective positions of the letters in the said eight-letter word.

Here is an example of a question: 8315 is an animal; 62735 is a vehicle; 6478 is a colour.

In the above example, the answer would be **ORIENTAL**, with **LION**, **TRAIN**, and **TEAL** being the respective shorter words to be derived from the hints.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) 7245 is an animal<br>41632 is a compound<br>3482 is a food item | 3) 8215 is a food item<br>47153 is a material<br>7642 is an adverb |
| 2) 6312 is a city<br>68724 is a tool<br>8571 is a body part        | 4) 2714 is a beverage<br>47832 is a material<br>4586 is a currency |



## Flora anagrams

by Shubha Shivashankar

Find the plant/flower hidden in each of the anagrams; e.g.: RHODIC – ORCHID.

- |           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1) NAIL   | 6) SALAMI    |
| 2) CHAI   | 7) BITTORS   |
| 3) SAYID  | 8) BONDAGE   |
| 4) LABIS  | 9) PLAINANT  |
| 5) MARABI | 10) HEMATINS |




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## Can you AIM for them all?

by Rustom Deboo

In this quiz, each of the below combinations, when joined by the letters AIM, form seven-letter or eight-letter words that are valid in Scrabble. The number of words that could be formed from each combination is in the brackets. Can you AIM for them all?

- | Sevens      | Eights        |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. FT?? (5) | 6. ARZ?? (4)  |
| 2. DV?? (4) | 7. ALP?? (8)  |
| 3. LX?? (6) | 8. EGW?? (3)  |
| 4. HI?? (8) | 9. BCN?? (4)  |
| 5. BK?? (4) | 10. OPY?? (5) |



## SAI round-up

- **Initiation of school outreach**

SAI initiated the process for the proposed School Outreach Programme by inviting applications for the new School Outreach subcommittee as a first step. This subcommittee would focus on introducing and promoting Scrabble in schools across the country by reaching out to schools, with a view at paving the way for the All-India School Scrabble Championship going forward.

- **Streaming success**

The live streaming carried out by the KSSA at the KSSA Indian Open in January was a major success, and a key milestone in the coverage of Scrabble in India. A detailed writeup on the same can be found on page 14.

- **Government support for the Chennai Open**

In the first instance of government support for a national-level Scrabble tournament in India, the Sports Development Authority, Tamil Nadu (SDAT) has extended a

sponsorship of INR 5,00,000 towards the Chennai Open to be played from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2026, thanks to the efforts of Mohan Chunkath. A detailed writeup on the upcoming Chennai Open can be found on page 34.

- **Endgame completes five years**

Endgame, the quarterly magazine of SAI, completed five fulfilling years on 30<sup>th</sup> March. Having seen its first edition on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021, it has since gone on to have 20 editions across half a decade, with this being the 21<sup>st</sup> edition.

- **New SAI title holders**

In February, the first additions to the list of SAI title holders (launched in November 2025) were made, as Sujana Somasekar and Suyash Manchali earned the National Master title; and Danish Shahna, Shubha Shivashankar, and Vignesh S the National Expert title.

- **Dates for WYSC 2026 confirmed**

The 2026 edition of the World Youth Scrabble

Championship (WYSC) will be held in Nairobi, Kenya from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> August. India will have ten quota seats at the WYSC, plus an extra seat by virtue of Madhav Gopal Kamath's title win last year.

Further, it has been decided to grant an additional quota to one under-8 and under-10 player each, taking India's total quota to 13 players. The selection criteria to determine the 13 players representing India will be decided based upon the number of entries received.

## New members

The following members were welcomed into SAI in the last three months:

1. **Arnab Choudhury** (Mumbai)
2. **Aditya Choudhury** (Mumbai)
3. **Jishnu KJ** (Chennai)
4. **Fawaz Jaleel** (Mumbai)
5. **Tashvi N** (Bangalore)
6. **Mridula Pathak** (Pune)
7. **Sheeba Simon** (Vellore) is a lawyer who found her

true calling as an educator. Scrabble had been a childhood favourite for her, and she has always been in awe of words and their magic. She is excited to be part of SAI, and is looking forward to honing her skills and embracing the challenge of competitive Scrabble.

### 8. **Annaphurni B** (Kochi)

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#### **Endgame Extra: Know the sevens and eights ending with FLY**

ALOOFLY, BEETFLY,  
BLOWFLY, BLUFFLY,  
BRIEFLY, BUSHFLY,  
CHIEFLY, CORNFLY,  
DEERFLY, DROPFLY,  
FIREFLY, FRITFLY,  
GALLFLY, GLOWFLY,  
GOUTFLY, GRAYFLY,  
GRUFFLY, LADYFLY,  
OVERFLY, SANDFLY,  
SHADFLY, SHOOFLY,  
SNIFFLY, SNUFFLY,  
STIFFLY, TAILFLY,  
WORMFLY

ALDERFLY, BLACKFLY,  
CATCHFLY, CRANEFLY,  
GREENFLY, HORSEFLY,  
HOUSEFLY, HOVERFLY,  
STONEFLY, SUPERFLY,  
WHITEFLY

# Solutions to puzzles and quizzes

## Off the hook

- 1) BRAVE, CRAVE, DRAVE, GRAVE, TRAVE; RAVED, RAVEL, RAVEN, RAVER, RAVES, RAVEY
- 2) HOLLA, MOLLA; OLLAS, OLLAV
- 3) BROKE, DROKE, PROKE, TROKE, WROKE; ROKED, ROKER, ROKES
- 4) FLEME; LEMED, LEMEL, LEMES
- 5) AROSE, BROSE, EROSE, PROSE; ROSED, ROSES, ROSET
- 6) CHYLE, PHYLE; HYLEG, HYLES
- 7) KRANG, ORANG, PRANG, WRANG; RANGA, RANGE, RANGI, RANGS, RANGY
- 8) GLEIS, VLEIS; LEISH

## Guess the eight-letter word

- 1) MEDALIST, 2) NEUROPIL,
- 3) TONSILAR, 4) AMIDOGEN

## Flora anagrams

- 1) ANIL, 2) CHIA, 3) DAISY,
- 4) BASIL, 5) AMBARI, 6) ALISMA,
- 7) BISTORT, 8) DOGBANE,
- 9) PLANTAIN, 10) ANTHEMIS

## Can you AIM for them all?

- 1) FATTISM, LIFTMAN, MAFTIRS, MASTIFF, MATTIFY
- 2) IMPAVED, IMPAVID, MEDIVAC, VIDAMES

3) EXCLAIM, LAXISMS, MAILBOX, MAXILLA, MAXIMAL, MIXABLE

4) CHIASMI, HAIMISH, HIMATIA, KAMICHI, MAIDISH, SAMITHI, SASHIMI, THIAMIN

5) BARMKIN, IMBARKS, KALIMBA, LAMBKIN

6) MACARIZE, MARZIPAN, MAZARINE, ZAMINDAR

7) LIPAEMIA, LIPOMATA, PALAMINO, PANISLAM, PAPALISM, PLAIDMAN, PRIMATAL, TAILLAMP

8) WAGMOIRE, WEIGHMAN, WIGMAKER

9) AMBIANCE, AMBIENCE, EMBACING, MINICABS

10) MYRIAPOD, OLYMPIAD, PALIMONY, SYMPODIA, SYMPOSIA

## Mixed anagrams – December 2025 edition

- 1) LONGSPUR – WATERHEN
  - 2) HORNBILL – TRAGOPAN
  - 3) FLAMINGO – REDSTART
  - 4) MOREPORK – TAPACULO
  - 5) FALCONET – SUNGREBE
  - 6) GNATWREN – LYREBIRD
  - 7) NIGHTJAR – SITTELLA
  - 8) EUPHONIA – TOUCANET
  - 9) CURASSOW – OVENBIRD
  - 10) REEDLING – WHIMBREL
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# Ratings

Below are the official SAI ratings (top 80) as on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. Please visit [indianscrabble.com](http://indianscrabble.com) for the full rankings.

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
1	Akshay Bhandarkar	OSI	1762	726
	Irfan Siddiqui	OS	1726	552
2	Madhav Gopal Kamath	DEL	1681	1193
3	Varisht Hingorani	MUM	1677	1507
4	Sherwin Rodrigues	MUM	1635	2120
5	Suyash Manchali	BLR	1610	569
6	Udayan Grover	PUN	1608	2862
7	Charles Carneiro	OSI	1554	919
	Puneet Sharma	OS	1553	202
8	Aditya Iyengar	MUM	1542	1057
9	Ishika Shivalingaiah	BLR	1526	1066
10	Samrath Singh Bhatia	MUM	1523	1265
11	Goutham Jayaraman	BLR	1511	682
12	Sanjoy Gupta	BLR	1508	1844
13	A Krishnan	CHN	1472	665
14	Mohan Chunkath	CHN	1464	1366
15	Rahil Parkar	OSI	1463	813
16	Nakul Prabhu	MUM	1453	1632
17	Hriday Samtani	MUM	1432	814
	Michael Tang	OS	1427	493
18	Douglas Lobo	GOA	1426	1544
19	Rajveer Rawlin	BLR	1400	646
20	Pankaj Bolaki	BLR	1399	822
21	Carolann Pais	MUM	1391	1632
22	Sujana Somasekar	BLR	1389	1228
23	Sunny Bhatia	DEL	1385	2111
24	Siddharth Niethyanand	BLR	1379	836
	Raghuram J	OS	1366	74
25	Shaila Amalean	OSI	1362	429
26	Bharath Balakrishnan	OSI	1352	133
27	Manju Sood	BLR	1343	984
	Sumeet Sachdev	OS	1339	905
28	Sudhir Kamath	DEL	1337	1647
29	Rustom Deboo	MUM	1319	947
30	Rajiv Antao	GOA	1318	1472
31	Selwyn Lobo	GOA	1309	764
32	Samarth Manchali	BLR	1307	369
33	Shubha Shivashankar	BLR	1305	612
34	Amit Sood	PUN	1283	809
35	Vignesh S	BLR	1276	1042
36	Rajeev Menon	HYD	1265	1303
37	Jacky Fernandes	GOA	1260	1313
38	Bhushan Pradhan	MUM	1253	2594
39	Ekansh Arora	DEL	1245	288
40	Nidhi Singhvi	PUN	1240	1352
41	Triambak Eashwar	CHN	1234	274
42	Pramit Kamath	GOA	1232	635
	43 Mangala Bhandarkar	PUN	1226	2251
	44 Anvay Shah	MUM	1222	268
	45 Danish Shahna	BLR	1220	1171
	46 Kala Ganesh	MUM	1214	1984
	47 Rohaina Tanveer	OSI	1185	662
	48 Neeta Bhatia	MUM	1177	903
	49 Vimisha Patel	GUJ	1170	1095
	50 Gajanan Patil	BLR	1166	426
	51 Aaradhya Srivastava	MUM	1166	98
	52 Prithwiraj Mukherjee	BLR	1165	409
	53 Sanjay Bijlani	MUM	1160	817
	54 Ela Ghose	DEL	1150	541
	55 Suchindra Potnis	BLR	1141	865
	56 Arindam Basu	KOL	1139	655
	57 Alan De Mello	MUM	1139	212
	58 Shaik Ahmed	HYD	1128	2198
	59 Abid Hussain	BLR	1123	771
	60 Venkataraman Sridev	KER	1120	209
	61 Sushanto B	BLR	1119	906
	62 Abel George Mathew	BLR	1105	81
	Kessen Budhoo	OS	1104	66
63	Shreyas Gupta	DEL	1102	105
64	V Ramachandran	MUM	1090	1629
65	R Nalini	BLR	1089	1181
66	Priya Karkhanis	PUN	1079	621
67	Rehet Singh Bhatia	MUM	1069	1166
68	Ahana Goyal	DEL	1055	363
69	Meena Bakhru	PUN	1054	477
70	Sonal Merchant	MUM	1054	337
71	Harsh Sood	BLR	1052	273
72	Jyoti Budhia	CHN	1048	251
73	Dipankar Chatterjee	BLR	1043	886
74	Komal RG	DEL	1028	634
75	Swagat Nukala	HYD	1023	766
76	Raman Viswanathan	CHN	1018	329
77	Virendra Braganza	PUN	1015	630
78	Radhika Mahalingaiah	BLR	1009	1123
79	Rajnikant Singh	KOL	1002	388
80	Pradyot Anand	OSI	994	103

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

## **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](mailto: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/](http://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](http://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](mailto:indianscrabble@gmail.com).

You can also follow the Scrabble Association of India Facebook page and Instagram handle ([indianscrabble](https://www.instagram.com/indianscrabble)) to know about updates and happenings in Indian Scrabble.

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