

ENDGAME

The Quarterly Magazine of the Scrabble® Association of India
Volume 1, Issue 3 – September 2021



SCRABBLE
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA



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- History of Scrabble in Goa
- Team India shines at WYC 2021
- Live Scrabble action resumes
- Tracking your path to success

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Picture on front cover: Participants at Wordaholix Scrabble League (WSL) VII

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Foreword

Dear SAI Members,

We hope you are continuing to indulge in your favourite mind sport, whether it be across the good old board accompanied by the melodious sound of rattling tiles or in an equally stimulating online tussle with a sparring partner miles away.

The last quarter has been quite eventful, highlighted by Team India's remarkable performance at the WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) 2021 and the resumption of in-person tournaments after another hiatus of four months.

India's young word whizzes made all of us proud at the online WYC, not only through their achievements on the board, but also by exhibiting exemplary integrity and respect for the sport and the opposition alike, which earned them the 'Spirit of Scrabble' accolade for being the team that best played in the true sporting spirit.

The return to live action was signalled by the Scrabble for Joy tournament in Delhi, followed by the seventh edition of the popular Wordaholix Scrabble League (WSL) in Vadodara. With the necessary guidelines – including mandatory prior testing and vaccination and masking during the games – in place, these events showed us that it is possible to enjoy Scrabble just as before while giving utmost priority to safety.

Meanwhile, the bandwagon of rated online tournaments rolled on for Scrabblers desiring a tournament experience from the comfort of their homes. There was a subcontinental touch too, with teams from India and Sri Lanka engaging in an exciting bilateral clash. Likewise, a steady diet of friendly tournaments and training sessions initiated by many of our members has kept our collective passion alive.

We wholeheartedly thank everyone who has contributed to this edition of Endgame.

Happy reading!

Best wishes,

Rustom Deboo
Editor

Down my Scrabble memory lane

by Cecil Fernandes

Back in the 1970s and 80s, Scrabble was not much heard of in the Gulf countries. My wife Marie, who until then used to play Scrabble with her mother in India, stumbled upon a newspaper advertisement by Seeb Novotel, Muscat that was sponsoring a tournament for various board games. Scrabble happened to be among them.

With our limited vocabulary, both of us took part in the games that featured about a dozen players, some of them British but most being Sri Lankans. The challenged words were checked in a Chambers dictionary. The dictionary did not contain even half the two-letter words that are accepted in a Scrabble dictionary today.

Most of the words played were in normal usage, and a game score of 250 was considered high. Not many had heard about Scrabble – there were a few curious hotel residents watching, and one of them whispered, “*They are playing cross words*”.

Since Marie had already played with her family before, she fared well. Meanwhile, we learnt that in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, players were conducting regular tournaments. The annual Gulf tournaments in Bahrain were organised by the late Roy Kietzman, who took immense interest in promoting Scrabble in the Gulf involving Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Qatar.

Although he himself did not take part in the games (a la our Ashok Bhandarkar), Roy officiated as a Tournament Director or adjudicator and was a true father figure for Scrabble players in the Gulf. He introduced a rating system for the Gulf Scrabble scene and made it more competitive. He attended every World Scrabble Championship to encourage his Scrabble flock.

Roy roped in local businessmen to sponsor the Gulf tournaments and used to call them “angels from heaven”. He officiated as Tournament Director in the first international tournaments held in Bangalore and Muscat.



THE CHAMP: Oman's Cecil Fernandes receiving the championship trophy.

From a newspaper clipping: Receiving the championship trophy at the 2001 Gulf Scrabble Tournament. With the mike is Tournament Director Roy Kietzman.

Late Ishtiaq Chishti of Pakistan was one of the prime movers of Scrabble tournaments in Saudi Arabia and was the doyen of Scrabble in the region. Incidentally, Ishtiaq also participated

in one of the first iGate tournaments in Bangalore.

In the 1990s, when we were travelling to Bahrain for the annually held Gulf Scrabble tournaments, we used to come across players who carried sheets of word lists with them. Since the Internet and word apps did not exist and printed word lists were scarcely available, participants used to carry painstakingly compiled hand-written sheets containing thousands of words.

My interest in Scrabble began when Roy circulated a list of two, three and four-letter words as well as the most common seven-letter words with their anagrams.

In one of my first games, I could have won on my last move only if I scored a bingo. There were a couple of openings on the board where a bingo could have been scored with an S hook. My rack had ABEORS and a blank. I could only think of AEROBeS, BOAtERS and BOAStER.

I was happy to win the game by going out with BOAtERS. Later I was intrigued to find out that there are 21 anagrams and I missed 18 of them!!! (EARBOBS, BORACES, BORAGES, ISOBARE, JERBOAS, LABROSE, BORANES, SAPROBE, ARBORES, BRASERO, REBATOS, SORBATE, BORATES, AEROBUS, BRAVOES, BORAXES, ROSEBAY and BEZOARS).

Moreover, had these words occurred to me, I would have had the choice of hooking the S at almost any position and also maximise the score if it was

a closely-fought game. This spurred me towards going through word lists more methodically.

Several Indian players went on to become top Scrabble players in the Gulf. To name a few, Norbert Saldanha, Dean Saldanha (son of Norbert), Akshay Bhandarkar, Selwyn Lobo, Ralph Lobo and Mohammed Irfan Siddiqui made Scrabble headlines in the 1990s. It was indeed a proud moment for all of us when Akshay Bhandarkar clinched the coveted WESPA Championship in 2017.

At the turn of the century, another star, a student from Indian School in Muscat, emerged on the horizon. Still in his preteens, Sherwin Rodrigues displayed a rare propensity for the game. He soon graduated into playing in the senior division and started winning against the veterans in the Gulf. The rest is history.



The Oman team at the Gulf Tournament held in Dubai in June 2011. I am fourth from left, with my wife Marie next to me

I qualified for the World Scrabble Championship at Las Vegas in 2001 (due to my winning the 2001 Gulf Championship), London in 2005 and Johor Bahru in 2009. It was at Las

Vegas that I got to know the prowess of the Indian Scrabble players Mohan Chunkath and Ranganathan Chakravarthy for the first time.

In 2003, we were highly excited to know that Dr. Varisht Hingorani was mobilising participants from abroad to conduct the first International Scrabble tournament in India that was held at the Juhu Vile Parle Gymkhana in Mumbai. The response was very encouraging.

Later, the iGate International Scrabble tournaments in Bangalore became a regular feature every January in the world Scrabble calendar, primarily through the efforts of Rex D'Souza, Lennie D'Souza, and Radhika Mahalingaiah. We made sure that we travelled to India every January to participate in this tournament.

Many of us were also regulars at the hugely popular Causeway Challenge Cup organised by Michael Tang in Johor Bahru, Malaysia for several years. Since Dubai is within five hours drive from Muscat, we used to have Inter-Gulf tournaments between Oman and UAE during weekends. We were also meeting at Sohar in Oman, which is midway between Muscat and Dubai.

Although many decades have elapsed, my love for Scrabble has not diminished. I do occasionally take part in tournaments when I have the opportunity and since this is a game in which one needs to constantly update oneself, I am happy to play at the intermediate level.

Presently living in Canada, I closely follow all the developments in Indian

Scrabble through the SAI emails, WhatsApp groups and newsletters.

It is indeed heartening to know that besides the top level, there are so many promising young players like Yash Potnis, Madhav Gopal Kamath, Suyash Manchali, Ekansh Arora, Ayush Bhatia, Shreyas Gupta and many other juniors who are striving to excel in this much loved, enticing, and popular mind sport.

Endgame Extra: EGILNOR?

Words that can be formed if you get a rack of EGILNOR and a floater:

+A
GERANIOL
REGIONAL

+B
IGNOBLER

+E
ELOIGNER

+F
FLORIGEN

+I
LIGROINE
RELIGION
REOILING

+S
RESOLING

+U
LOUNGIER

+W
LOWERING
ROWELING

Happiness, nervousness, heartbreak

by Hriday Samtani

Scrabble for Joy, held in New Delhi from 30th July to 1st August, witnessed 16 players from across India compete at a live tournament amid the pandemic after a long hiatus.

Life amid Covid-19 has been stressful, to say the least. It has been over a year and a half since the pandemic drastically transformed our definition of ‘normal’. The Indian Scrabble fraternity too, starved of face-to-face tournament action, took solace in online tournaments, which came to the rescue of passionate wordsmiths raring to get back on the scene.

So, when Scrabble for Joy, a three-day SAI-rated tournament, was announced to be held in New Delhi from 30th July to 1st August, I was beyond excited. However, given the Covid situation, I was a tad hesitant. After much deliberation, I took a leap of faith and signed up for the event.

The tournament was conducted with strict safety protocol – participants had to be vaccinated and present a negative RTPCR report on arrival. Boarding my first flight in almost two years felt surreal.

Inside the packed aircraft, I found myself surrounded by people in masks and face shields – a cruel reminder of what life had become in the new normal. Nevertheless, I was happy to meet my friends after a long hiatus, playing Scrabble over the weekend.



The participants at Scrabble for Joy

It was indeed a joyous occasion. Sixteen brave warriors entered the arena, armed with heavy lexical ammunition and a fiery passion for competitive Scrabble, their favourite mind sport. The soothing sound of rattling tiles filled the setting, a cozy barroom located within the Hilton Garden Inn.

I had a fantastic start on Day 1, achieving a personal best of 644 in the first game. Two 600+ scores within the first five games meant I had some luck going my way. Nonetheless, I was aware of how the fortunes could quickly fluctuate over a three-day event. After a hectic opening day, I spent the evening exploring the mall, followed by a nice dinner in the company of great friends.

On Day 2, it was vital to build on the momentum. Sleep eluded me (a common tournament occurrence), but thankfully the wins did not. Despite the absence of most of the top guns, the games were highly competitive, highlighting the massive improvement by players over the past few years. After shrugging off a few early

losses, I slowly found my feet and stayed within striking distance at the end of the day.

It was Day 3 – a crucial one in the context of the tournament. The King of the Hill (KOTH) format for the last seven rounds meant a face-off against the leader and top seed Sunny Bhatia.



Finishing runner-up to Sunny (left)

Both of us exchanged a few wins, with nerves playing their part in an intense, topsy-turvy contest. Although I was not playing perfect, error-free Scrabble required at this level, I was high on confidence.

Going into the last game, the equation was simple. I was in first place and had to ensure I did not lose by over 80 points to clinch the title. The trophy was within reach, but there was one final twist left in the tale.

The final game commenced, and the pressure was on. My opponent zoomed ahead with an early bingo, leaving me to contend with a few tricky opening racks. The luck of the draw seemed to have started to wane, with the thought of defeat briefly crossing my mind at the final hurdle. It was not the ideal fairytale ending. My opponent and dear friend Sunny stood first while I finished an agonising second, with merely an 85-point difference in spread.

Sport is a great leveller and can often be a cruel conspirator. My weekend had served all the ingredients of a delectable concoction – happiness, nervousness, and a tinge of heart-break. Despite narrowly missing out on my first tournament win, Scrabble for Joy was a real shot in the arm amid the pandemic – arguably the most challenging phase of our lives.

Endgame Extra: Know the 29 five-letter words valid in Scrabble that contain four vowels

- (1) AALII, (2) ADIEU, (3) AECIA,
 - (4) AERIE, (5) AIDOI, (6) AINEE,
 - (7) AIOLI, (8) AIYEE, (9) AQUAE,
 - (10) AREAE, (11) AUDIO,
 - (12) AULOI, (13) AURAE,
 - (14) AUREI, (15) BOOAI,
 - (16) COOEE, (17) EERIE,
 - (18) LOOIE, (19) LOUIE,
 - (20) MIAOU, (21) OIIDA,
 - (22) OORIE, (23) OUIJA,
 - (24) OURIE, (25) QUEUE,
 - (26) URAEI, (27) ZOAEA,
 - (28) ZOEAE, (29) ZOOEA
-

Club history: Goa (SAG)

with inputs from Rajiv Antao

When Simiao da Cunha of Agnel Ashram, Goa suggested conducting a Scrabble tournament as part of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the institute in 2004, a group of Scrabble enthusiasts got together to organise the first Scrabble tournament to be played in the state.

Thus, the first All-India Scrabble Tournament in Goa, hosted by Agnel Ashram, was conducted by these enthusiasts with grand success in April 2004. They decided to formalise the group soon after, and the Scrabble Association of Goa (SAG) was duly registered in 2004 itself, with the aim of taking forward the playing of Scrabble in Goa.



The SAG team in 2011: Joe Rodrigues, Anthony Gomes, Basil Pinto, Jacky Fernandes, Savio Pinto (standing L-R); Rajiv Antao, Douglas Lobo, Irineu Gonsalves and Mukesh Adhia (sitting L-R)

Since then, SAG has conducted the tournament for 16 consecutive years, until the lockdown unfortunately forced the cancellation of the 17th

edition in 2020. The Goa tournament has always been one of the most popular of the major Indian tournaments – regularly seeing over 50 participants from all over the country – and has been rated by WESPA since the 2017 edition.

Over the last 17 years, the founder members Irineu Gonsalves, Douglas Lobo, Jacky Fernandes, Savio Pinto, Joe Rodrigues, Mukesh Adhia and Rajiv Antao have kept the flag of Scrabble flying high in Goa, joined by Anthony Gomes, Savio Rebello, Erol Jorge, Sylvia Coelho, Ronilla Kataria, Darryl Correa and many others who have also played key roles in strengthening SAG.



Erol Jorge (right) playing at the 2019 Goa All-India Scrabble Tournament

SAG would like to pay tribute to the late Servulo Barros, who was the President of SAG when he passed away in 2010. He was a dynamic leader and contributed greatly towards growing the Association during the couple of years he was there.



The late Servulo Barros and Gurudatt Bhakta, Secretary of the Goa Olympic Association, at the prize-giving ceremony of the 2009 Goa All-India Tournament

SAG was proud to assist the Scrabble Association of India in hosting the 2019 edition of the WESPAC, the premier global championship in Scrabble conducted by the World English Language Scrabble Players Association (WESPA).



WESPAC 2019 – clockwise from top left: The playing field, New Zealand's Nigel Richards with the champion's trophy, Winners of the Schools Championships with Nigel Richards, Mapusa Mayor Ryan Braganza distributing the prizes

The week-long extravaganza, which also consisted of multiple side tournaments besides the flagship event, was held from 14th to 20th October 2019 at the Peddem Sports Complex in Mapusa and saw the participation of more than 250 players from 31 countries.

SAG member Rajiv Antao was part of the three-man Core Organising Committee for WESPAC 2019. Ryan Braganza, the Mayor of Mapusa, presided over the prize distribution ceremony and also received a special plaque from the Lord Provost of Aberdeen through the Aberdeen-based player Niyi Adebayo.



The top three at the 2017 Goa All-India Scrabble Tournament: Sherwin Rodrigues (centre), Udayan Grover (second from left) and Ranganathan Chakravarthy (second from right)

Along with the WESPAC and the various open tournaments such as the Last Chance Qualifier, the One-Day International, the two-divisional Indian Open and the Final Frenzy, the finals of the All-India Schools Championships were also played simultaneously, featuring several school teams from across the country.



Mukesh Adhia playing at the 2017 Goa All-India Tournament at PCCE, Verna

As part of its endeavours to promote Scrabble in Goa, SAG has conducted workshops in different schools across the state. An all-Goa school qualifying tournament for the All-India Schools Championships that formed part of the WESPAC Goa 2019 was run in collaboration with the Lions Club of Navelim. It has conducted other school tournaments and state-level tournaments as well.



Sylvia Coelho and Savio Rebello playing at the 2019 Goa All-India Scrabble Tournament

SAG today remains as a small association with regular Scrabble players as members but is looking forward to increase in size and extend its reach throughout Goa with promotions across schools and by encouraging regular Scrabble meets.



Winners of the 2006 Goa All-India Tournament with Chief Guest V. M. Prabhu Desai, Director of Sports Authority of Goa

Endgame Extra: Know the 50 seven-letter words with three Is that are valid in Scrabble

- (1) BIKINIS, (2) BILIMBI,
 - (3) BIMINIS, (4) BIRIANI,
 - (5) CRIMINI, (6) DIDICOI,
 - (7) DIVISIM, (8) FINIKIN,
 - (9) GINGILL, (10) HEITIKI,
 - (11) IDIOTIC, (12) ILEITIS,
 - (13) ILLICIT, (14) ILLITIC,
 - (15) INCIPIT, (16) INCIVIL,
 - (17) INDICIA, (18) INHIBIN,
 - (19) INHIBIT, (20) INITIAL,
 - (21) INSIPID, (22) IRIDIAL,
 - (23) IRIDIAN, (24) IRIDISE,
 - (25) IRIDIUM, (26) IRIDIZE,
 - (27) IRISING, (28) JINJILI,
 - (29) LIPIDIC, (30) LIXIVIA,
 - (31) MIHIING, (32) MILITIA,
 - (33) MINIKIN, (34) MINISKI,
 - (35) MIRIFIC, (36) MIRITIS,
 - (37) NIGIRIS, (38) OIDIOID,
 - (39) RIKISHI, (40) RILIEVI,
 - (41) RIPIENI, (42) RISORII,
 - (43) SAIMIRI, (44) SHIVITI,
 - (45) SILICIC, (46) SIMIOID,
 - (47) TIKIING, (48) TIRITIS,
 - (49) VIVIFIC, (50) WISTITI
-

Team India at the WESPA Youth Cup 2021

The eight-member Indian team at the online WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) 2021 comprised Madhav Gopal Kamath, Suyash Manchali, Shreyas Gupta, Ekansh Arora, Amogh Bhamerkar, Pramit Rao, Devansh Malpani and Aarush Jotwani.

The Indian team delivered an impressive performance, with two players (Madhav and Suyash) finishing in the top ten. Moreover, the team received the ‘Spirit of Scrabble’ award for being the team that best played in the true spirit of the game – truly a proud moment. A detailed report of the tournament can be found on page 31.

Through this feature, we meet India’s eight young word whizzes who battled it out along with 64 others from across the world at the WYC 2021.

Madhav Gopal Kamath (Delhi, 11 years old)



How were you introduced to Scrabble, and how old were you? Who have been your Scrabble mentors?

MGK: My first experience of Scrabble was watching my father play the game with a few friends of his, when I was 6 years old. I would like to thank my father and uncle for introducing me to Scrabble.

Which was the first tournament you played, and in which year?

MGK: The first tournament I played was a kids’ tournament in Pune in 2016, which was running along with the main event. I finished second and my brother Dhruv won it.

Which has been your most memorable Scrabble moment so far?

MGK: Coming second in this year’s WESPA Youth Cup tournament after beating Syed Imaad Ali (the eventual champion) in the last two games.

What do you like most about Scrabble? How has Scrabble helped you?

MGK: I like how it is very interesting, and how no two games are the same. Every time you play, something different happens. It has helped me improve my vocabulary and math skills.

Which was your most memorable game at WYC 2021, and why?

MGK: Probably tying with Imaad in

the group stage, especially because I made a stupid mistake and could easily have won the game. Looking back on the game, I should have spent a bit more time on it and blocked his high-scoring out.

What is your strategy to study and remember words?

MGK: Whenever I study, it is usually by reading word lists. I read them multiple times, and usually I manage to remember most of the words.

What do you like more, playing online or in person, and why?

MGK: I prefer playing in person, as it is usually more fun. Online, there are chances of things like losing your network connection happening, which obviously cannot happen in person. Also, at in-person tournaments, you usually get to travel to a variety of places, especially during the WYC.

Which are your dream words that you would like to play in a game some day?

MGK: MUZJIKS, CAZIKUES, QUIXOTRY, HRYVNYA and MBAQANGA.

Who is the highest rated player you have beaten? Who is on your wish list of players you would like to beat some day?

MGK: The highest rated player I have beaten is Akshay Bhandarkar. I would love to beat Sherwin Rodrigues or Nigel Richards.

If you had to popularise Scrabble in your school, what would

you do?

MGK: I would probably run a Scrabble workshop. I think the teachers would like the idea as Scrabble helps improve vocabulary and math skills.

Suyash Manchali (Bangalore, 12)



How were you introduced to Scrabble, and how old were you? Who have been your Scrabble mentors?

SM: When I was 7, I saw my mother playing Scrabble. I was curious to know how the tiny letters with numbers engraved on them fetched points when placed on the board. I asked my mother to teach me to play the game. My mother is my Scrabble mentor.

Which was the first tournament you played, and in which year?

SM: My first tournament was Shanta Viswanathan Memorial tournament (unrated) in Bangalore in May 2017, when I was 7 years old. My first rated

tournament was Capgemini International Scrabble tournament in Bangalore in January 2018, when I was 8.

Which has been your most memorable Scrabble moment so far?

SM: My most memorable Scrabble moment was making a ten-letter word – LITERA(TOR)S – for around 70-80 points.

What do you like most about Scrabble? How has Scrabble helped you?

SM: In Scrabble, I like to play bingos as they fetch extra 50 points. Scrabble has helped me in various subjects such as Maths and English. I know the spellings and meanings of certain words as I would have probably studied them for Scrabble, or at least would be able to guess the meaning when I come across a new word. That gives me an edge over others. My calculations in Maths are usually quicker than those of most of my classmates.

Which was your most memorable game at WYC 2021, and why?

SM: In a game against Ahmed Salman, I was on the verge of losing and needed 14 points for a tie, which was difficult. But I made a word that gave me 15 points, which won me the game by one point. The thrill and morale boost I got from that game made me immensely happy.

What is your strategy to study and remember words?

SM: I keep working on my Scrabble

skills every day by studying from books and online tools. The study for Scrabble intensifies when WYC or any other tournament approaches. KSSA keeps conducting daily quizzes and study lists for the month, which gives me a varied range of word exposure.

What do you like more, playing online or in person, and why?

SM: I used to prefer playing in physical tournaments over online games. Owing to the pandemic, I had to adapt as I missed playing Scrabble. Over time, I have gradually adjusted to playing online and have started enjoying it. I now prefer playing online, as I can analyse games immediately and play more games in a short span.

Which are your dream words that you would like to play in a game some day?

SM: I would like to play SQUASHY on a board some day because it is an anagram of (SUYASH+?), and also my handle on ISC as well as Woogles. I would also like to play some obscure words such as QUIDDITCH, RICK-SHAW, VELSKOEN, QINGHAOSU and KAMIKAZE.

Who is the highest rated player you have beaten? Who is on your wish list of players you would like to beat some day?

SM: I have beaten a few high-rated youth players like Syed Imaad Ali of Pakistan and Thomson Law Long Yin of Hong Kong. In the future, I would like to beat players such as Udayan Grover and Dr. Varisht Hingorani.

If you had to popularise Scrabble in your school, what would you do?

SM: I would introduce Scrabble through interesting word themes like peculiar animal names, currencies, and plant names. I believe that this would draw the children towards it. I would also like to conduct Scrabble tournaments. Even though I have not tried it out, it would certainly help popularise Scrabble in my school.

Shreyas Gupta (Delhi, 15)



How were you introduced to Scrabble, and how old were you? Who have been your Scrabble mentors?

SG: I started playing Scrabble when I was 8 with my parents and my elder sister. It was our favourite game on game night during the weekends. My Scrabble mentors have been Neeta Bhatia, Varisht Hingorani and Sudhir Kamath. They trained and guided me extensively for WYC 2021. Hema Shah, Archana Aggarwal and Ishika Shivalingaiah have also provided me with various resources. They have

encouraged and motivated me to keep learning and improve my game. I have been an avid chess player too, but it was my mother's support and motivation that encouraged me to pursue Scrabble as well.

Which was the first tournament you played, and in which year?

SG: The first Scrabble tournament that I played was the inter-school Mattel Scrabble Challenge in 2017. I secured first position in this tournament in Delhi and third position at the national level that was held in Mumbai. I was overjoyed to win my first state tournament and travel to Mumbai for the Nationals.

Which has been your most memorable Scrabble moment so far?

SG: My most memorable moment was when I had been selected for WYC 2020 as a standby player. It was the first time that I was going to be part of an international tournament. It was a blissful feeling, and I was elated to be among the best Indian youth players. Likewise, it was also an exhilarating moment when I qualified for WYC 2021.

What do you like most about Scrabble? How has Scrabble helped you?

SG: Scrabble is certainly based a lot on word knowledge and experience, but the uncertainty of the game is really appealing to me. One has to be patient and persistent during the game. Scrabble has helped me to increase my vocabulary and focus.

International exposure of a sport and to be able to interact with multiple and exceptional people from varied fields has been very enriching. Scrabble also helps me to unwind after long study hours.

Which was your most memorable game at WYC 2021, and why?

SG: My most memorable game at WYC 2021 was with Madhav Gopal Kamath. He is the youngest and one of the top Scrabble players in India, almost impossible to beat. The match between us was exciting and competitive. I could not believe that I had won by a few points. Another memorable game was with Ahmed Salman from Pakistan. It was special because even though I lost that game, I was able to spot the word IODINATES with IO on a concretely closed board in under ten seconds.

What is your strategy to study and remember words?

SG: Even though Scrabble matches are not won solely based on remembering words, it is one of the most important factors. For me specifically, consistency is key. I ensure that I take time out of my schedule of the week to go over word lists multiple times. I use stem study to learn the words; if I spot one in that set, then I am easily able to spot the others too. While practising, I make sure that I try to learn new words during matches. I also analyse specific matches to see if I could have played a better move.

What do you like more, playing online or in person, and why?

SG: Most of my competitive Scrabble journey has been through the years 2019-2021, which was online due to the pandemic. But I think that it is definitely more enjoyable playing in person, as one is able to sense the opponents' emotions over the board. Just picking tiles from the bag and placing them on the board gives pleasure that an online game cannot give. Also, discussing the games afterwards with other participants is fun.

Which are your dream words that you would like to play in a game some day?

SG: I hope to play PFENNIG, OUROBOROS, ATARAXIA and SEACUNNY someday.

Who is the highest rated player you have beaten? Who is on your wish list of players you would like to beat some day?

SG: The highest rated player I have ever beaten is Varisht Hingorani. He is also my mentor and though it was a close match, I was surprised that I won the game. It is next to impossible to defeat Udayan Grover, Sherwin Rodrigues, Akshay Bhandarkar, Irfan Siddiqui and Rahil Parkar, but I do wish that I can improve my game to that level to beat them one day.

If you had to popularise Scrabble in your school, what would you do?

SG: I would reach out to the English teachers in my school and talk about Scrabble and share my experiences with them. With their help, I would

then help organise inter-section Scrabble competitions so that students could familiarise themselves with the game and understand the competitiveness of it. Interested students could then be given word lists and other resources to help them prepare for tournaments. I believe this would certainly popularise Scrabble in my school. It was one such Scrabble workshop by Sunny Bhatia that gave me the information and the opportunity to participate in Scrabble tournaments. Also, my English teacher Rashmi Kohli was instrumental in starting my Scrabble journey.

Ekansh Arora (Delhi, 15)



How were you introduced to Scrabble, and how old were you? Who have been your Scrabble mentors?

EA: My brother Mehul Arora introduced me to Scrabble when I was in the fourth grade and 9 years old. My brother has been my mentor since I started playing this wonderful game.

Which was the first tournament you played, and in which year?

EA: Nationally, the first tournament I played was the GAIL Cup in 2017. Scrabble Association of Delhi (SADel) conducted a state tournament every year before the pandemic for kids under 18, so state wise my first tournament was the Delhi state championship in 2015.

Which has been your most memorable Scrabble moment so far?

EA: Well, certainly winning some of the tournaments and band prizes. But all the moments I have spent, all the games I have played, and all the experience I have gotten from everyone around me during my time in Scrabble have been memorable.

What do you like most about Scrabble? How has Scrabble helped you?

EA: The analysing part about Scrabble intrigues me the most. How much is missed in a game and how much you can improve every time you play, what could have been played and won you the game, what you played that lost you the game by a small margin; all of this is truly fun.

Which was your most memorable game at WYC 2021, and why?

EA: My game against Saim Waqar, where I binged a couple of times and won against a highly rated player.

What is your strategy to study and remember words?

EA: I use Zyzzyva and Anagram Quizzer. Studying a certain number of

words every day and maintaining the continuity is what helps me remember words.

What do you like more, playing online or in person, and why?

EA: Well, even though you can analyse your games online and it is easier to play from your home, the feeling of in-person events hits differently. In live tournaments, the environment in which the games are played as well as the pressure sometimes is insane, so I prefer playing in person.

Which are your dream words that you would like to play in a game some day?

EA: KANEHS, one of the anagrams of my name.

Who is the highest rated player you have beaten? Who is on your wish list of players you would like to beat some day?

EA: I remember beating Sunny Bhatia in my first game against him. I got quite lucky, but well, you need that to beat a higher rated player. I do not have a particular list of players I would like to win against. I just like to play the game and on a given day, anyone can be beaten.

If you had to popularise Scrabble in your school, what would you do?

EA: By conducting workshops, getting students to be interested in the game and then inviting them to play online or in-person tournaments with

us, which will help them gradually understand the game.

Amogh Bhamerkar (Vadodara, 15)



How were you introduced to Scrabble, and how old were you? Who have been your Scrabble mentors?

AB: There was an inter-school Scrabble tournament organised by Bal Bhavan, a local NGO, in the year 2017 (I was 11). In 2019, it was organised again in affiliation with Vadodara Scrabble Club. Vimisha Patel was the Tournament Director, and since then, she has been my main mentor in Scrabble. She introduced me to competitive Scrabble and has been encouraging me since.

Which was the first tournament you played, and in which year?

AB: My first unofficial tournament was in 2017 (as mentioned above). But my first official tournament was in 2019. It was the All-India School Finals in Goa, organised alongside the WESPA Championship.

Which has been your most memorable Scrabble moment so far?

AB: Definitely my first official tournament – WSL VII. Feeling both nervous and excited, I finished eighth in a pool of 28 players. To top it, my team Voragos emerged victorious. I got the chance to play and also managed to win against top-rated players. More than the wins, it was the thrill of the tournament that makes it my most memorable Scrabble moment.

What do you like most about Scrabble? How has Scrabble helped you?

AB: Managing endgames under high pressure with little time remaining is my favourite thing about Scrabble. The rush of adrenaline and the focus you have at such times is unparalleled. Scrabble has helped me in my colloquial language and analytical skills. Also, meeting so many new people and talking to them has made me more social and extroverted.

Which was your most memorable game at WYC 2021, and why?

AB: My most memorable game at WYC 2021 was the one I tied with Syed Imaad Ali of Pakistan. He later went on to win the tournament as well. At that time, I had no idea he was also the defending champion, and the fact that I could tie with him was a joyous moment for me.

What is your strategy to study and remember words?

AB: I like to remember the smaller

three-letter and four-letter words by hooks and rhyming words. For bin-gos, stems have helped me the most. Remembering words using stems like RETINA/TISANE/ARSINE is quite easy and helps to recall words.

What do you like more, playing online or in person, and why?

AB: I prefer playing in person, because of the people you meet, and the atmosphere created. Playing from home does not quite have the fun a real-life tournament has.

Which are your dream words that you would like to play in a game some day?

AB: The one word I have never seen played on a board is EUOUAES. I always hope I get such a rack and can place it on the board someday.

Who is the highest rated player you have beaten? Who is on your wish list of players you would like to beat some day?

AB: Two of my best wins came against high-rated players – Hriday Samtani and Sunny Bhatia. Some of my other scalps include Radhika Mahalingaiah and Sujana Somasekar in live games and Bhushan Pradhan and Ishika Shivalingaiah online. My wish list of players I want to beat is huge; some of them are Udayan Grover, Madhav, and Samrath Bhatia.

If you had to popularise Scrabble in your school, what would you do?

AB: I would try to make it a co-curricular subject. There are already many clubs like Debate Club and Maths Club, for instance. Making a Scrabble Club for those who are interested would not be a bad idea.

Pramit Rao (Mumbai, 15)



How were you introduced to Scrabble, and how old were you? Who have been your Scrabble mentors?

PR: I was 12 years old when I was first introduced to this lovely game, by my English teacher in seventh grade. It started with an anagram quiz in school, followed by a workshop, then a competition, all which made me fall in love with Scrabble. I must give credit to her. At the competition (2019 Mattel Nationals), I met Neeta Bhatia and Mimi Hingorani, and along with Dr. Varisht Hingorani, they are my mentors. Other members of SAI such as Vimisha Patel and Sudhir Kamath have also been very helpful, and the stress-relieving tournaments organised by Lloyd Pearse have helped improve my game.

Which was the first tournament you played, and in which year?

PR: The 2019 Mattel Scrabble Competition (city level and then national level), which I ended up winning. It was held in January 2019.

Which has been your most memorable Scrabble moment so far?

PR: Well, the moment I lifted the trophy at the Mattel Nationals was a pretty memorable moment. Other than that, the moment I realised that I was a confirmed qualifier for the WYC and would represent my country was also quite memorable – I was jumping with joy. It is a tie; both were far too memorable!

What do you like most about Scrabble? How has Scrabble helped you?

PR: The happiness that playing Scrabble brings me, and just how much fun it is to play it. It also ignores a lot of biases, as anyone can play Scrabble. Scrabble helps reduce my stress and keeps me relaxed during the hectic tenth grade. It has also helped me to think coolly, which can aid me in the exams.

Which was your most memorable game at WYC 2021, and why?

PR: My favourite game was the one I played against Divine Imode Omoye. I won by two points, 370-368, and it was a very tense encounter. I had to think very carefully before making a move, as one small mistake would have lost me the game. When I came out on top, I let out a sigh of relief. I really enjoyed this game.

What is your strategy to study and remember words?

PR: Aerolith, Aerolith, and more Aerolith. Both the flashcards and the Word Walls. Solving the daily quizzes boost word knowledge. Being associated with a few stems (e.g., RETINA?) and making mnemonics for words in a particular group also help to remember the words. You have to read lists multiple times, to drill all the words into your head.

What do you like more, playing online or in person, and why?

PR: I favour playing in person over playing online. The reason is that you can see your opponent's face and expressions, you get to talk in person to others, and the atmosphere around makes it even more exciting, competitive, and fun. Although I have not played a SAI-rated tourney offline yet, the Mattel and Collins competitions were great experiences.

Which are your dream words that you would like to play in a game some day?

PR: CONQUEST, JUNKYARD, BACKYARD, FREQUENT, QUIXOTRY. I would really like to play these words, especially as nine-timers. Other words that I really like are RHYOLITE, AEQUORIN, PYGIDIUM, ZOOECIUM. A few sevens too – PROTHYL, QUETZAL, MUZJIKS, JACKLEG, LOCKJAW. I have not played these words before and would love to play them in a future game.

Who is the highest rated player

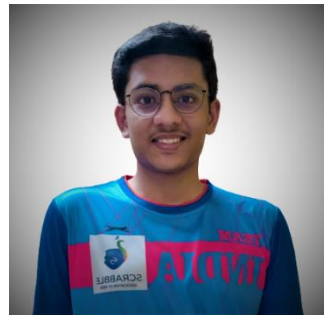
you have beaten? Who is on your wish list of players you would like to beat some day?

PR: I beat Adheesha Dissanayake of Sri Lanka in WYC 2021. Other than that, the highest rated WESPA player I have beaten is Nattapat Nak-in of Thailand, in a friendly. I would love to be a formidable title contender and challenge the likes of Syed Imaad Ali, Hasham Hadi Khan and Noah Slatkoff, and of course I would want to be a formidable opponent to Madhav and reach his level.

If you had to popularise Scrabble in your school, what would you do?

PR: I would start a Scrabble club, encourage people to join SAI, talk about the benefits of Scrabble (how it helps me) as well as ask the authorities to organise inter-school Scrabble tournaments. It would be nice if inter-school tournaments were organised frequently. I would also spread news about WYC, and about the progress India is making in Scrabble.

Devansh Malpani (Mumbai, 16)



How were you introduced to Scrabble, and how old were you? Who have been your Scrabble mentors?

DM: I was introduced to Scrabble through my school in 2016 when I was about 11 years old. I had taken Scrabble as my 'hobby period' at school, thinking that the game would improve my vocabulary and English in general. But little did I know that Scrabble was such a competitive game which had its own different dictionary. These weird words fascinated me and in 2017 I started my competitive Scrabble journey with Wordaholix. My mentors were Sherwin Rodrigues, Varisht Hingorani, Mimi Hingorani and Neeta Bhatia.

Which was the first tournament you played, and in which year?

DM: I played my first school-level tournament in 2017 – it was the Collins Scrabble for Schools Championship where I stood second. My first competitive tournament was the Mumbai Open in 2018 where I got to learn a lot.

Which has been your most memorable Scrabble moment so far?

DM: My most memorable Scrabble moment so far has been the Gladiators WESPA Youth Cup 2020 quarterfinals against Malaysia, where I won five out of my six games, giving my best to help advance Team India into the semi-finals against Thailand.

What do you like most about Scrabble? How has Scrabble helped you?

DM: One thing I like most about Scrabble is strategy. It is fascinating how each move we play is played keeping in mind our next few moves and how every move impacts the other. Scrabble has helped me a lot both academically and mentally. The process of learning so many words has improved my memory and rote learning power. Scrabble being a timed game has taught me time management and thinking on the spot.

Which was your most memorable game at WYC 2021, and why?

DM: My most memorable game was against Asher Chhabra of Australia where I won the game by a single point. I was 15 points behind with three tiles and I could only spot one opening, giving me 14 points. My opponent had one tile on the rack, which made my last move worth a total of 16 points, resulting in me winning that game. Such close games are the most unnerving ones which force you to give your best in stressful times and teach you the importance of a strategic endgame.

What is your strategy to study and remember words?

DM: My strategy to study is mostly anagramming. Anagramming a particular list multiple times helps me remember it better, and I personally find it more fun than reading the word lists.

What do you like more, playing online or in person, and why?

DM: I prefer playing in person. Though online is much more convenient in terms of tile tracking and counting the score, however well monitored the setup is, there are still chances of using unfair means, which is preventable to a great extent in in-person games.

Which are your dream words that you would like to play in a game some day?

DM: Some dream words are: QUIZZIFICATIONS, QUARTZY, TSKTSKS.

Who is the highest rated player you have beaten? Who is on your wish list of players you would like to beat some day?

DM: According to me the highest rated player I have beaten is Madhav. Some players to beat on my wish list in the future include Syed Imaad Ali, Tarin Pairor, Sherwin Rodrigues and Nigel Richards.

If you had to popularise Scrabble in your school, what would you do?

DM: Conducting various workshops and tournaments according to me is the best way to popularise Scrabble in a school. If in my school Scrabble would not have been familiar, I would have had started a Scrabble club where we could play games and learn new strategies and words.

Aarush Jotwani (Mumbai, 14)



How were you introduced to Scrabble, and how old were you? Who have been your Scrabble mentors?

AJ: I was introduced to Scrabble in my school. It was offered as a hobby, and I took it up when I was in Grade 6. I was 10 years old then. My mentors have been Varisht Hingorani, Neeta Bhatia and Mimi Hingorani.

Which was the first tournament you played, and in which year?

AJ: My first tournament was the inter-school Collins Scrabble for Schools Tournament in Mumbai in Grade 6. The tournament was held in November 2018. This also happened to be the first tournament that I won.

Which has been your most memorable Scrabble moment so far?

AJ: My most memorable moment in Scrabble has been the Collins Scrabble for Schools Tournament. I was the winner twice in a row, in Grade 6 and Grade 7, against many students of my grade from schools across Mumbai. I was looking forward to the tourney in

Grade 8, but sadly we were living amid the pandemic. My other most memorable moment was when I won the zonal qualifier for representing Mumbai at the All-India Schools Championships. We stood third at the tournament. This was a proud moment as we played in Goa, alongside WESPAC 2019. I also had my big fan moment by being awarded by the GOAT, Nigel Richards.

What do you like most about Scrabble? How has Scrabble helped you?

AJ: The quirky words are what I like most about Scrabble. It is always fun to learn an unusual word and get to play it in a game. Also, playing Scrabble makes me happy. It has boosted my personal confidence. Scrabble teaches you strategy as well.

Which was your most memorable game at WYC 2021, and why?

AJ: My most memorable game at WYC 2021 was my match against Affan Salman as I really wanted to beat him, and I did it.

What is your strategy to study and remember words?

AJ: I usually read up word lists on Zyzzyva and quiz myself on them.

What do you like more, playing online or in person, and why?

AJ: I personally like to play in person mainly because it is possible to read your opponent's expression, which can give you some idea of what they are planning to play.

Which are your dream words that you would like to play in a game some day?

AJ: I would simply love to get a 27-timer once. ANAGRAMMATIZING will score more than 1000 points if it touches all the triple word scores and if the Z is on the double letter score.

Who is the highest rated player you have beaten? Who is on your wish list of players you would like to beat some day?

AJ: The highest rated player I have beaten is Affan Salman. Nigel Richards is the player I want to beat the most someday.

If you had to popularise Scrabble in your school, what would you do?

AJ: I am grateful that I belong to a school that recognises Scrabble as a mind sport and offers it as a hobby for students. It is thanks to my coaches at Wordaholix who have coached a few good youth Scrabble players in my school. If I had to popularise Scrabble more in my school: i) I would like the school to conduct at least two intra-school Scrabble tournaments in a year. It could also be an inter-house tournament within the school; ii) Since everything is online now, a Scrabble Club could be created and interested students of all grades could enroll and just play as beginners on Woogles after basic training is given to them. The ones who start liking the game passionately can take it forward.

Tracking your path to success

by Rahil Parkar

Scrabble as a sport encompasses various skills such as vocabulary, recall, math, and probability. One of the most underrated skills is the simple crossing out of played tiles, or tile tracking for the regular players. This is a skill that is often discarded by Indian players, but one that can help most players jump into the upper level of the Scrabble circuit.

The probability factor in Scrabble can be properly leveraged if the tile tracking is done correctly. The benefits of perfect tile tracking are most fruitful in the endgame, as they allow you to not only plan your own moves but also predict the opponent's best moves, which can be critical in a close endgame.

But there are a lot of applications of tile tracking that can influence making the right choices midgame, such as knowing the unseen vowel to consonant ratio, thereby making an imbalanced leave more likely to yield in a balanced rack after drawing.

In situations where there are multiple duplicates on your rack, and the high scoring moves only allow one of the duplicates to be played, the tile tracking will assist in making the decision on which duplicate to prioritise. When certain words take unique hooks, knowing how many tiles of a particular letter are yet to come can help to make a strategic opening.

There are several tracking techniques that players across the world use. The most common method involves printed sheets with one square for each of the 100 tiles in a Scrabble bag. While most tournament organisers provide these scoring sheets, some players prefer to use their own customised scoring sheets as it helps to build their muscle memory.

Another common method is counting the played tiles, using numbers or tally marks. The primary goal should be to form a habit and consistently hone it, whether you are playing casually or competitively.

The WESPA rules stipulate that the order of play must be as follows: After a player makes their play, they must hit the clock. This must be followed by noting down the turn scores, updating the cumulative scores, and then drawing replacement tiles. Any other activity, including tile tracking, must be done after drawing replacement tiles.

A new rack can often get the brain juices flowing immediately and a player could be distracted into seeking out their next play. An effective practice to avoid hindrance in tile tracking would be to draw replacement tiles face down and complete tile tracking before turning over replacement tiles.

Tile tracking is a skill that can become second nature through

consistent practice and one that can deliver great insights to propel average players into the upper circuit. Find a technique that works for you and stick to it; the results will become apparent once you have perfected the habit.

Endgame Extra: The ‘GET a free copy’ contest

This contest, inviting SAI members to submit certain words (or their plurals) they might have played in a game (whether in-person or online), was initiated and sponsored by Vimisha Patel. The three words were GENISTA, ENDGAME and TRIVIUM (hence GET), with the first person to submit each word winning a free copy of this edition of Endgame.

The winners were as follows:

GENISTA – Prashanth Seetharam

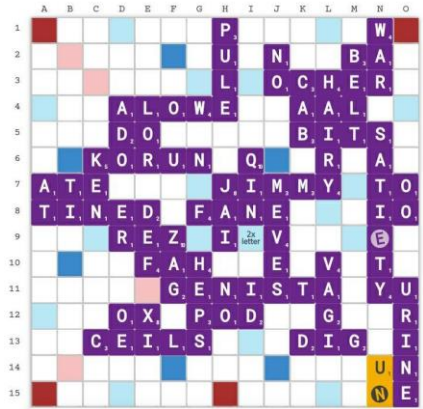
ENDGAME – Rustom Deboo

“I had a rack of AEEGMO? and was ahead by 57. When I was presented with a floating D, I could not resist the temptation to play ENDGAME for the contest, even though it meant wasting the blank for just 16 points.”

TRIVIUM – Hriday Samtani

“Funnily, the only reason I took a screenshot of this board was that I had a funny Hindi cuss word on my rack. Every time that happens, it becomes a unique memory. The contest-winning word TRIVIUM just happened to be there by chance.”

Following are the boards of the three games featuring the winning words:



Scrabble musings

Placement of a different kind

by K.T. Rajagopalan

I am worried about placement. At the ripe old age of 74? Yes.

So was Andre Agassi, going by what he is supposed to have said. “Placement is everything”, he said, talking about his winning strategy at Roland Garros.

And my son Gautam, when in the last trimester at the B-School, too was worried about placement.

Yes, gentle reader, we are talking about placements of different kinds.

The placement in question right now is in the game of Scrabble. The number of points you garner is everything and at each stage, it varies with placement. It could fetch just the sum of the face value of the tiles, or a lot more, depending on where you get to place the tiles. The overall image, the big picture, is what drives and dictates where to place which tiles.

To me, the points that the placement gives is all that the tiles mean. Smutty words are perfectly par for the course in Scrabble for me, as long as they fetch points and help me on my way to winning another game.

Like if I have K and F, I will pray for a C and U (rather than an O and L, or an O and R) so that I can put the F on the red square at the bottom left corner, the K on the light blue square three squares away to the right of F,

and fill the intervening squares with U and C. The F fetches four points, K five, C three and U, as a vowel, gives only one point. That makes it 13 points, but the placement gives you a whopping 54.

Moreover, the points for MENU or TIC formed in the process (as back hooks to MEN and TI) are the sweeteners. Get what I mean? But then, you should be quite lucky at times.



Endless possibilities: An artificially created (but theoretically possible) board position employing all 100 tiles and featuring 14 bingos

Sometimes I prefer tiles of lesser value like H, Y or V to the higher scoring Z or Q or even X or J. The last four fetch lots of points, yes, but you are stuck with them until you find the exact spot to place them to get a triple word score or a double letter score.

My personal strategy is to hold on to a tile of U until the queen of the lot, Q, has put in her appearance. Because the humble one-point U is a valuable tile. Without U — and there are only four of them — you cannot make many words using Q*. Until the Q is played, I do not let go of the first U that I get.

Of course, this requires some cerebration and calculation. If you stand to make some 30 points and also get the bonus of 50 points for using up all seven tiles, you should go for it. That sort of lead is hard to beat, unless your opponent chances upon a big one too.

As a rule, I try to hold on to at least one S, one D and a blank tile till near the end of a game, because that is when the going gets tough and your options get limited. I do not use up my blank tile quickly either. It is precious; I hold on to it and go on playing small simple words until I lay the killer word on board and slay 'em.

I am talking about leisurely Scrabble games with friends. We call them co-operative, rather than competitive games. We play a fairly open game, not minding giving the other player a chance to open a new area of the board. As a result of the cooperation, we once toted up a combined score of 932 points. We got someone to immortalise that moment through a photograph with the two of us flanking the board, much like the shikaris with the trophy — the carcass of a tiger or a wild bison that was the game of the day!

**This was written before I discovered to my utter delight that QI, FIQH, WAQF, QAT, SUQ, QANAT and a host of others are valid, and obviously long before I realised that I am a newbie taking baby steps in competitive Scrabble with the competent pair of Archana Aggarwal and Hema Shah hand-holding me.*

Wor(l)d love

by Madhulekha Barkakati

Each of us is a unique combination of genes, a handful of stardust...

Hence each of us think different, act different.

What is your normal may not be mine and we ought not to be judgemental...

In the game of Scrabble, we come across a wide variety of age groups, from teenagers to septuagenarians and the in-betweens.

So, what is the common binding force amidst all the differences? 🤔

To my mind, it is the innate need in all of us to form groups of like-minded people to succeed, take risks and gamble.

Yes, this bag of tiles is a gamble extraordinary across time and space, and yet here we are in a spirit of bonhomie and at a point of no return...

Workshops and tutorials

KSSA Scrabble Strategy Workshop

The Karnataka State Scrabble Association (KSSA) held its first Scrabble Strategy Workshop in July. The workshop was designed for Intermediate level players in the 700-1100 rating band and focussed only on the strategic aspect of the game.

The course curriculum and material was developed by Sanjoy Gupta, who also conducted the workshop along with Prashanth Seetharam. Sanjoy combined training material from Irfan Siddiqui and Manju Sood along with content from Scrabble strategy classics such as Everything Scrabble (Joe Edley) and Winning at Scrabble (Andrew Fisher and David Webb).

The workshop curriculum was spread out over four sessions of two hours' duration and covered the following topics:

- Session 1: Luck demystified and board vision
- Session 2: Word spotting and rack management
- Session 3: Opening move and endgame strategies
- Session 4: Exchanging and pre-endgame strategies

Each session consisted of an instructional presentation (with Q&A) followed by small group breakout sessions with hands-on exercises. While the content was very well received, participants reported that the

exercises really brought home the message.

In the post-workshop tournament, workshop participants reported a marked difference in their priorities and decision-making, especially during the endgame. The impact of improved endgame strategy was clearly visible in several dramatic surprises in the last few moves of the game.

While there was a lot of discovery for players in the 700-900 range, even higher rated players from the 1100 range found value in the workshop.

"Personally, there was not a lot that was new for me at the level of individual strategies, but it helped to sit through and see how multiple concepts/strategies that we discussed could be applied simultaneously and more effectively than my inconsistent approaches. The breakouts were also very helpful. Thanks!" – Player from 1100 rating band

"How many more games I could have won with smarter endgame tactics!" – Player from 700-900 band

KSSA will conduct a second edition of the Scrabble Strategy Workshop as well as the ever-popular Beginners Scrabble Workshop over the next three months. Dates for the same are yet to be finalised. You can sign up to be notified of the dates and details of these workshops here: <https://tinyurl.com/KSSAWKshpWaitList>

Jump-start your Scrabble journey

There are two new offerings from Archana Aggarwal and Hema Shah designed to assist people who want to come up to speed with tournament and online Scrabble. Both classes will be conducted online on Zoom.

Quick Introduction to Tournament Scrabble consists of two two-hour sessions which take you right from creating your Woogles ID, navigating the game board and initiating games online to an overview of tactics to improve your score and a roadmap for word study. It also introduces you to various resources for further self-study and to the various groups where you can find other Scrabble enthusiasts to pit your wits against.

The Scrabble Word Study Basics is a longer program with three 45-minute sessions each week and running across 12 weeks. The goal of this program is to help you get started with a structured approach to word study. The Group Study mode is designed to make learning interesting and productive and increase camaraderie.

Please contact Archana (9810194685 or Hema (9663312906) for details on timings and fees of the workshops and if you would like to participate in either of them.

Note: While Archana Aggarwal and Hema Shah are both very closely affiliated with SAI, KSSA and SAdel, these workshops are being offered by them individually.

Endgame Extra: Remember eight-letter words with a few stems of African country names

NIGERIA? (8)

AEGIRINE
ARGININE
DEAIRING
GAINLIER
GRAINIER
IMAGINER
MIGRAINE
REAGINIC

SENEGAL? (10)

ENLARGES
ENSILAGE
EUGLENAS
EVANGELS
FENAGLES
GASOLENE
GENERALS
GLEANERS
LINEAGES
MELANGES

LESOTHO? (10)

BOTHLES
HOOKLETS
HOOLIEST
LOTHSOME
POSTHOLE
POTHOLES
SHOTHOLE
THEOLOGS
TOEHOLDS
TOOLSHED

BURUNDI? (4)

FURIBUND
RUBICUND
UNBURIED
UNTURBID

Tournament round-up

WESPA Youth Cup 2021

with inputs from Neeta Bhatia

The 2021 edition of the WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) was held online on Woogles from 7th to 22nd August. India were allocated eight spots for the tournament, which was organised by the Pakistan Scrabble Association and featured 72 players aged under 18 from 14 countries.

The eight-member Indian team comprised Madhav Gopal Kamath, Suyash Manchali, Shreyas Gupta, Ekansh Arora, Amogh Bhamerkar, Pramit Rao, Devansh Malpani and Aarush Jotwani. Neeta Bhatia, India's representative on the WESPA Youth Committee, helped coordinate the entire process in the lead-up to the tournament in conjunction with Sudhir Kamath, SAI President.

The India v Sri Lanka under-18 one-day tournament held on 18th July was used as the primary basis for qualifying to represent India at WYC 2021. While Suyash, Madhav, Pramit, Amogh and Ekansh qualified based on their performance, Shreyas, Devansh and Aarush qualified through further playoffs (Ayush Bhatia was to be part of the playoffs too but had to withdraw due to personal reasons).

On 5th August, Team Wordaholix conducted a two-hour online training session spearheaded by Varisht Hingorani to finetune the preparation of all the eight WYC 2021 players.

The preliminary round of the WYC was played over two weekends from 7th to 15th August. Each of the 72 players played 36 games in this hard-fought round, with only the top ten qualifying for the final round. Madhav, aged 11, was placed eighth with 24.5 wins at the end of the preliminary round, while Suyash, aged 12, was placed tenth with 24 wins.



Madhav Gopal Kamath being awarded the runner-up trophy at the virtual prize ceremony of the WESPA Youth Cup 2021

Thus, this was the first time that two Indian players would finish in the top ten at the WYC. The final round was played on 21st and 22nd August, with each of the ten players playing a further 13 games.

Madhav fell agonisingly short of a historic WYC title, losing out to Pakistan's Syed Imaad Ali, the defending champion, only on the basis of spread. The prodigy from Delhi won both the penultimate and final games against Imaad, which left the two players with nine wins apiece. Madhav's second-place finish is the best performance by an Indian player in the history of the WYC.

Equally impressive was Suyash from Bangalore, who finished eighth with five wins in the final round. While Madhav was adjudged the tournament's best under-12 player (adding to his under-8 and under-10 titles in previous editions), Suyash was named the best under-14 player, having earlier won the under-12 title in the 2019 edition of the tournament.

Pakistan was adjudged the best team, decided by virtue of wins and spreads of the team's top three players. Significantly, the Indian team received the 'Spirit of Scrabble' award for being the team that best played in the true spirit of the game. It is indeed pleasing to know that India's youngsters have set an example on how to play Scrabble with true sporting spirit.

	Player and country	Wins	Spread
1	Syed Imaad Ali: PK	9	329
2	Madhav Kamath: IN	9	140
3	Napat V: TH	8	551
4	Hasham Hadi: PK	7	64
5	Sandali V: SL	7	51
6	Nattapat Nak-in: TH	7	-46
7	Thomson Long: HK	6	-123
8	Suyash Manchali: IN	5	-340
9	Noah Slatkoff: CA	4	-149
10	Ronnie Bennett: AU	3	-477

Final round standings – WYC 2021

Scrabble for Joy, Delhi

with inputs from Vimisha Patel

In-person Scrabble action returned after more than four months with the Scrabble for Joy tournament in Delhi. The three-day tourney, initiated by Archana Aggarwal and Vimisha Patel and directed by Marisha Sharma, was held at Hotel Hilton Garden Inn from 30th July to 1st August 2021.

Sixteen players from all over India participated. All the participants were required to be vaccinated and had to present a negative RTPCR report upon registration. Moreover, masks were mandatory during the games.

It was indeed a joyous occasion with many players returning to the tournament scene after 18 months. The much missed and soothing sound of rattling tiles filled the room.

Sunny Bhatia stood first at the end of 25 rounds, closely followed by Hriday Samtani with only a difference of 85 points in spread. Sujana Somasekar, Sumeet Sachdev and Ekansh Arora rounded off the top five.

As someone rightly said, we find our greatest bliss in moments of collective effervescence. When a group of people come together around a shared purpose, the energy and harmony felt by all is the driving force for more such events!

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Sunny Bhatia	18	1822
2	Hriday Samtani	18	1737
3	Sujana Somasekar	16	1301
4	Sumeet Sachdev	16	910
5	Ekansh Arora	15	218
6	Pramit Kamath	14	859
7	Sudhir Kamath	14	642
8	Danish Shahna	13	614
9	Archana Aggarwal	13	-146
10	Vimisha Patel	11	-293
11	Abhijit Shilotri	10	-621
12	Arvind Lath	10	-1202
13	Sushanto B	9	-580
14	Sneha Thadhani	9	-645
15	Neelanjana Bid	8	-1969
16	Vishesh Bhatia	6	-2647

High game: Hriday Samtani 644

Final standings – Scrabble for Joy

Wordaholix Scrabble League (WSL) VII

by Neeta Bhatia and Mimi Hingorani

The Wordaholix Scrabble League (WSL) VII was held at Krishna Riverside Resort, Vadodara from 24th to 26th September 2021. The 28 registered players were divided into four teams of seven each, such that the teams were completely balanced with the cumulative rating points of each team being within ten rating points of every other. A weekend of amazing games, camaraderie, and good-natured ribbing made this edition of the WSL very special.



Games in progress at WSL VII

Each of the team names were based on water bodies, in keeping with the picturesque surroundings of the Krishna Riverside resort. The four teams were as follows:

ARROYO (dry desert gully): Udayan Grover (captain), Madhav Gopal Kamath, V Ramachandran, Sujana Somasekar, Abhijit Shilotri, Viji Ramachandran, Ritu Chadha

VORAGO (gulf): Varisht Hingorani (captain), Bhushan Pradhan, Ishika S,

Nikheel Ruparel, Archana Aggarwal, Amogh Bhamerkar, Aruna Grover

SPRUIT (small stream): Samrath Bhatia (captain), Hriday Samtani, Sudhir Kamath, Danish Shahna, Siddharth Nithyanand, Vimisha Patel, Sneha Thadhani

NYANZA (lake): Rahil Parkar (captain), Sunny Bhatia, Kala Ganesh, Radhika Mahalingaiah, Neeta Bhatia, Harry Bhatia, Mimi Hingorani

At the onset, we paid our respects to our Scrabblers who have passed on – Vandana Grover, Mazhar Qureshi and Shafique Ahmed. Day 1 began with eight rounds played, followed by an after-party bringing in Radhika's birthday and some poker.



In memory of the ones we lost

Day 2 saw ten rounds played with a few upsets and some real beauties seen on the boards. The evening on the rooftop under the stars featured a stand-up act by Ritu, singing by Varisht, Vimisha and Sneha, and energetic dancing by Danish, Ishika, Archana, Abhijit, Hriday, Sneha and Sunny, thus making Saturday night a rocking one.

The last six rounds on Day 3 saw the teams put in their best to better their standings. Team Vorago outdid everyone and emerged victorious to lift the WSL VII trophy, finishing with 91.5 wins from 168 games. Team Spruit finished second, followed by Team Arroyo and Team Nyanza in third and fourth place respectively. The individual table was headed by Udayan, with 21 wins from 24 games.

Two of our WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) 2021 players – Madhav Gopal Kamath and Amogh Bhamerkar – participated in this WSL. Team Wordaholix felicitated them as well as the other six WYC 2021 players with trophies and goodie bags along with their certificates sent by WESPA. Our young Tournament Director was the vivacious Vedika Hingorani.

A special mention goes to Vimisha for all her efforts in helping put this WSL together in Vadodara – her energy and dedication is simply amazing.

The score booklets designed by Sunny and printed by Nikheel and the mandatory sweets at WSL, especially the Pune sweets by Udayan, further brought out the essence of the close-knit bond within the Wordaholix family. A special mention is also due to Avneet Kapoor Jotwani for sponsoring the WYC trophies, and to Black Panther for the superb T-shirts, masks, and wristbands.

To ensure safety protocol, masks were mandatory during the games, and all the participants were required to be vaccinated and had to present a negative RTPCR report upon registration.



Prizes, certificates, and goodies at WSL

	Team	Wins	Spread
1	VORAGO	91.5	719
2	SPRUIT	86	525
3	ARROYO	80.5	-33
4	NYANZA	78	-1211

Final team standings – WSL VII

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Udayan Grover	21	2293
2	Varisht Hingorani	18	1640
3	Samrath Bhatia	17	1759
4	Sunny Bhatia	17	1250
5	Rahil Parkar	15	1102
6	Ishika Shivalingaiah	15	724
7	Hriday Samtani	15	571
8	Amogh Bhamerkar	14.5	314
9	Sudhir Kamath	14	748
10	Nikheel Ruparel	14	-3
11	Madhav Kamath	13	1008
12	Sujana Somasekar	13	865
13	Bhushan Pradhan	13	505
14	Archana Aggarwal	12	-183
15	Danish Shahna	12	-544
16	Kala Ganesh	11	458
17	Neeta Bhatia	11	-183
18	Siddharth Nithyanand	10.5	-658
19	Radhika M	10	-806
20	Vimisha Patel	9	-959
21	V Ramachandran	9	-1155
22	Sneha Thadhani	8.5	-392
23	Abhijit Shiloti	8.5	-1024

24	Ritu Chadha	8	-947
25	Harry Bhatia	8	-955
26	Viji Ramachandran	8	-1073
27	Mimi Hingorani	6	-2077
28	Aruna Grover	5	-2278

Final individual standings – WSL VII

August Tryst

The August Tryst rated online tournament was played on Independence Day. The tournament was organised by Vimisha Patel and directed by Rahul Parkar. Udayan Grover clinched top spot with 11 wins from 12 games.

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Udayan Grover	11	1421
2	Samrath Bhatia	9	563
3	Ishika Shivalingaiah	8	634
4	Sumeet Sachdev	8	466
5	R Nalini	8	187
6	Radhika M	8	94
7	Bhushan Pradhan	7	366
8	Sridhar Paidikondala	7	75
9	Kala Ganesh	6	142
10	Shaila Amalean	6	133
11	Sanjoy Gupta	6	66
12	Parvathy R	6	50
13	Sudhir Kamath	6	40
14	Ela Ghose	6	-21
15	Siddharth Nithyanand	5	-68
16	Lloyd Pearse	5	-220
17	Ritu Chadha	5	-342
18	Jackson Thomas	5	-422
19	Jyoti Budhia	5	-679
20	Arindam Basu	4	-43
21	Shalini Sahdev	4	-401
22	Vihaan Singhvi	3	-363
23	Yuvraj Dighe	3	-639
24	Madhulekha B	3	-1039

Final standings – August Tryst

Sweet September

The Sweet September rated online tournament was played on 12th September. The tournament was directed

by Sudhir Kamath. Rahul Parkar prevailed in seven out of eight games to win top honours. The observers for both August Tryst and Sweet September were Abid Hussain, Anubhav Ranjan, Sudhir, and Vimisha Patel.

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Rahul Parkar	7	616
2	Madhav Kamath	6	727
3	Pankaj Bolaki	6	546
4	Amit Sood	6	432
5	Samrath Bhatia	6	118
6	R Nalini	5	279
7	Ela Ghose	5	87
8	Kala Ganesh	5	0
9	Sumeet Sachdev	5	-144
10	Arindam Basu	4	153
11	Rohaina Tanveer	4	23
12	Pramit Rao	4	14
13	Vignesh S	4	-280
14	Lloyd Pearse	3	145
15	Siddharth Nithyanand	3	119
16	Ritu Chadha	3	-142
17	Shaila Amalean	3	-171
18	Shalini Sahdev	3	-440
19	Yuvraj Dighe	2	-305
20	Madhulekha B	2	-360
21	Vihaan Singhvi	2	-617

High game: Amit Sood 570

Final standings – Sweet September

India v Sri Lanka

The India v Sri Lanka bilateral rated online tournament was played between under-18 teams on 18th July and senior teams on 25th July, with each match-up having 64 games. The senior Indian team comprised Udayan Grover, Sanjoy Gupta, Samrath Bhatia, Rahul Parkar, Manju Sood, Madhav Kamath (who also played the under-18), Pankaj Bolaki and Ishika S. Sri Lanka won the under-18 tournament 34-30, while India won the senior duel 37-27, with Rahul leading the way by winning all eight games.

Game annotation

by Udayan Grover

Sherwin Rodrigues (Whiners) v Varisht Hingorani (Var), Double Round Robin Tournament, 11th edition on Woogles, 27th August 2021



NAME, RACK, PLAY, SCORE/TOTAL

1. S: AEHILRS – HAILERS (8D) 78/78

The obvious choice of play, SHALIER being its anagram.

1. V: BILMRS? – REMBLAIS (E3) 72/72

Varisht looked hard to find a 4x through the A in column E but could not spot MISLABOR for 94. EM-BROILS (H8) is next best and it is funny how one tends to miss a commonplace word due to the presence of a blank on the rack.

2. S: ACDEINO – DIOCESAN (J3) 69/147

This rack yields three bingos through

the S, and Sherwin's choice seems best as the other two expose the triple file in row 1.

2. V: AEENQXSX – NIXE (4I) 22/94

A non-bingo rack after three consecutive bonuses. I would ideally like to play off the Q before the X as the latter has a much higher scoring potential. I do not mind QIN (4I) for 12. Two Ss are on the board while Varisht has the third on his rack, reducing the probability of his opponent holding another, and he can always pluralise QIN the next turn. If you want to play the X, EXINE (4H) may be better.

3. S: ABEILOU – ADOBE (3I) 34/181

That is a nice find although I prefer BLOOIE (5G) scoring four points more and turning over an extra tile. The rack leave in either case is poor, but the scores justify it.

3. V: AEEQSWZ – WAZ (D2) 52/146

WAREZ (3C) is slightly better in that it scores two points more and gets rid of a duplicate E. Varisht would keenly hope to draw a U from the bag to go with his Q. ZEA (D4) scores the same as WAZ, but it retains both the Q and W, which is highly avoidable.

4. S: HIIILUV – HUI (F10) 27/208

Best play from his dreadful rack. HILI at the same spot is another option which gets rid of two of his three Is and turns over an additional tile,

marginally improving his odds of drawing one of the two unseen Ss or the blank. There is very little to choose from the two and one may opt for either of them, although IILV seems a leave tad better than IUV.

4. V: ACEEQSU – QUASH (10B) 37/183

QUASH sets up SQUASH in column A. It may be a risk worth taking as Varisht trails by 25 after his move, although it is not really necessary as he is within striking distance of Sherwin. Yet, it is a perfectly reasonable play that could easily pay off. My vote though goes for QUEBEC (6B) for 41 which retains the S. CASQUE (N1) for 47 is another good play which turns over six tiles and keeps the E.

5. S: IIKLTTV – KILT (2F) 21/229

KILT is the best play which gets rid of duplicates.

5. V: CEEEEFS – FECES (A6) 48/231

Varisht takes a lead over Sherwin for the first time. His setup pays off and he plonks down the highest available score. It is a close call between FECES and FEESE (the latter scores six points less), and I reckon he would be equally happy holding on to CE instead of EE. The unseen pool in the bag looks quite bingo-friendly.

6. S: IINPTV? – PI (F4) 21/250

Tricky rack with no bingo and one cannot offload too many tiles. PI scores the most. INVAR (3A) for 16 also balances the rack quite well albeit for five points less.

6. V: DEEEMTU – QUEMED (B10) 36/267

Varisht puts down the best play, scoring well, cleaning up his rack, and holding on to the promising ET. QUEME scores four fewer points and the D, with another two unseen, is best played off.

7. S: GINOTV? – DEVOTING (15B) 98/348

That is easily the candidate play. There are other bingos playable but are unworthy of a mention.

7. V: EJOORST – JOT (C1) 31/298

I reckon JOW (2B) for 26 is better. Even though it scores five points fewer than JOT, the rack leave of STORE as a five-letter set merits the play and also reduces volatility.

8. S: AEIRRUY – OYER (5J) 45/393

Sherwin spots the highest scoring play and takes a decisive lead. I am sure he is eyeing playing RAJ (1A) if it stays available. MURRAY (13B) for 37 is another play for the taking but it is a tough find. It must be noted that both the plays have a poor rack leave, but it seems prudent at this stage to take the highest score and thereby create pressure on the opponent.

8. V: EORSTVY – VOTE (1E) 35/333

Varisht opts for the highest scoring play, but I prefer VERY at 12A (or YEVE too) for 28 as the leave of TOES is far more bingo-friendly than RSY, and he needs a bonus to stay alive.

9. S: AAIIRTU – RAJ (1A) 30/423

Sherwin's rack deteriorates, but he is

able to get a decent score on account of his leave on the previous turn. RUBAI/RUBATI (6C) for 16 does sort out his rack somewhat, but he rightly opts for score to maintain his lead.

9. V: ADNRSY – NY (B5) 29/362
INNYARDS (12F) for 76 is a tough spot, and Varisht attempts to play off his consonants in his quest for a bingo. There are a host of plays at C9 like DUNNY/UNDY/RUNNY, which achieve the same result but with a better score and tile turnover; it is likely he missed that spot completely.

10. S: AIINOTU – AITU (13F) 13/436

What Sherwin needs to do now is to either score enough to gain a cushion to absorb a bingo by his opponent or block the potential bingo spots. His play of AITU blocks the bingo lanes in row 13 and column K. The simulator suggests the play of MOUTAN (13B) for 25, which would give him an 86-point lead, but it is not an easy spot.

10. V: AADENRS – BAD (6E) 15/377

Playing off two tiles leaves him with the terrific SNARE. DA at C12 would score two more. There may also be merit in just playing off the A as ANDERS goes with most unseen tiles in the bag to bingo, but I like his play.

11. S: DINOOOR – DOOR (K9) 15/451

Sherwin rightly plays in the obvious bingo lane, and I would not mind playing DONOR/DOORN at K9 leaving one in the bag. In the event Varisht plays off a tile to fish, he empties the bag, and he knows his rack.

11. V: AENRSTW – WOW (2B) 28/405

Although Varisht can play STRAWEN (N5) for 72, it does not score enough, denying him a win as it gives Sherwin a turn. He rightly plays off the W hoping to bingo out for enough (he will bingo with five of the eight tiles unseen to him if N5 stays available).

12. S: EFILNOP – PELF (L11) 26/477

Since there are two bingo lanes for the taking, Sherwin cannot block both and goes for his best scoring play; although he is almost certain that it does not score enough to surpass a bingo by Varisht, which is quite imminent.

12. V: AEGNRST – REGRANTS (M5) 70/475 +10 (AEE) 485

Interestingly, Varisht opts for the lower scoring bonus, but it scores enough to win.

On countback, FOP (A12) is better for Sherwin by a point, and REGRANTS would only give Varisht 62 + 12 instead of 70 +10 which loses him by a point, in which case he would surely have attempted OYERS/STRANGE for 72 and won anyway.

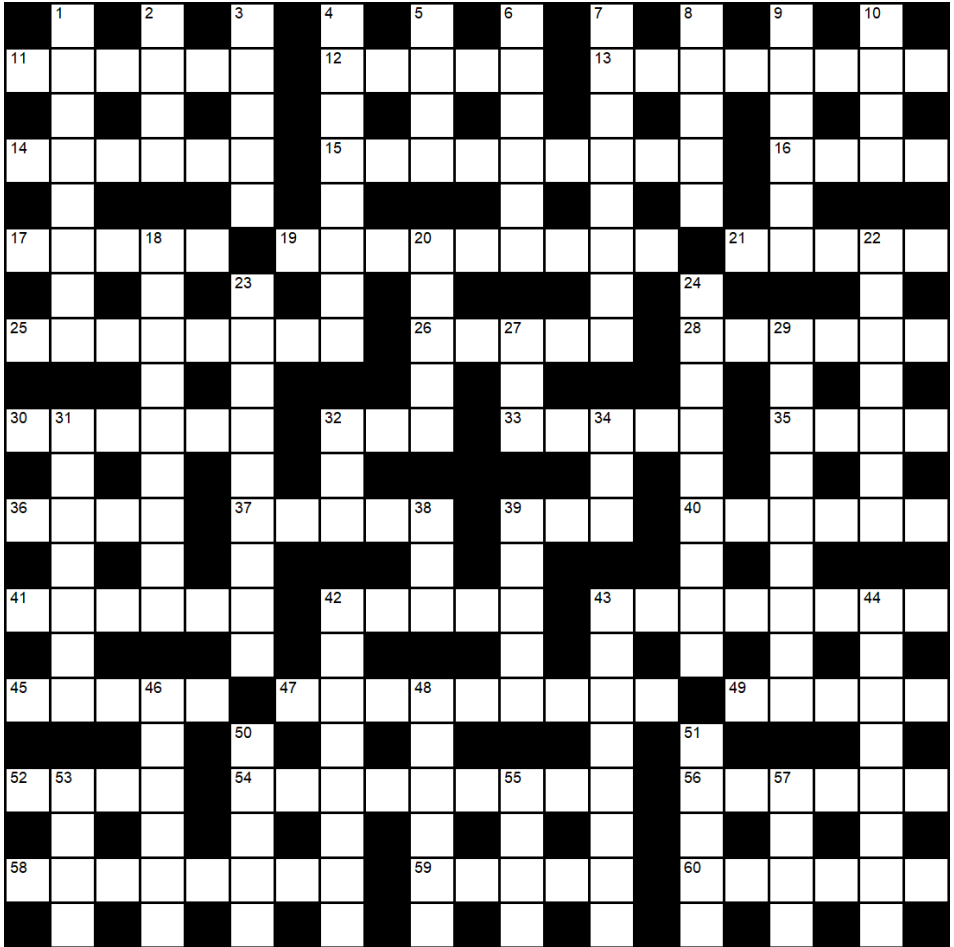
To sum it up, Varisht played catch-up the entire time but held his nerves to register a fine comeback. He was able to capitalise on his chances when Sherwin's racks disintegrated. Perhaps a play of DONOR/DOORN at K9 might have made a difference, but it is easier said in hindsight, and I think Sherwin would consider himself unlucky to lose this one. Overall, a fine show by both the players.

Puzzles and quizzes

SAI Crossword #003

by Mohan Chunkath

Solve the clues to complete the grid. The subsidiary puzzle is to find out what is common to all the answers.



Across

- 11** Poisoned with gas (6)
- 12** Not quite right (5)
- 13** Affirmed to be genuine (8)
- 14** An attack (6)
- 15** Traded favours in the legislature (9)
- 16** Not well (4)
- 17** Interjection expressing astonishment or admiration (5)
- 19** Something presented for approval or decision (9)
- 21** Snarl (5)
- 25** Strong feelings of excitement or fear (8)
- 26** Hard bonelike structure embedded in the jawbone (5)
- 28** One who is hanging or drooping loosely (6)
- 30** Scours or sends skimming (6)
- 32** Turn to the right (3)
- 33** Marked by joy (5)
- 35** To act in a disguise (4)
- 36** Behold! (4)
- 37** Grant a feudal estate (5)
- 39** Hymenopterous insect (3)
- 40** Points for clean throws in judo (6)
- 41** Kind of very thin pastry dough (6)
- 42** Bath sponge (5)
- 43** Type of coal used in Great Britain (8)

- 45** An alternative passage in music (5)
- 47** Persons guiding or piloting a ship or boat (9)
- 49** Put into circulation (5)
- 52** Catch a fish with a sharp hook (4)
- 54** Part of a bridle or halter (9)
- 56** Shelter where meals are eaten during Jewish festivals (6)
- 58** Pertaining to the biting surface of a tooth (8)
- 59** A long-playing record (5)
- 60** Register (6)

Down

- 1** Entrance to an establishment (8)
- 2** Bones (4)
- 3** Description in verse of country life (5)
- 4** Radioactive particles carried into the atmosphere after a nuclear explosion (8)
- 5** Four-rowed barley (4)
- 6** Infatuated (Spenser) (6)
- 7** An old woman (Gaelic) (8)
- 8** To help (Spenser) (5)
- 9** Set apart for a particular purpose (6)
- 10** Netherworld (4)
- 18** Enchant or fascinate (9)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 20 Artificial mound upon which a castle is built (5) | 39 Alloy of copper and zinc (5) |
| 22 Type of instrumental musician (7) | 42 In a deadly manner (8) |
| 23 Type of weed (9) | 43 More like a wheel (8) |
| 24 Posters (9) | 44 Affecting the nervous system (8) |
| 27 To express surprise (3) | 46 A falling inwards (6) |
| 29 Streetlights (9) | 48 Eastwards (6) |
| 31 Short trousers worn by Sikhs (7) | 50 To hiss or whistle (5) |
| 32 Sticky or viscous substance (3) | 51 Stupid persons (5) |
| 34 Urinate (3) | 53 Australian slang for an academician (4) |
| 38 Name for a temporary computer variable or file (3) | 55 Some computer programs (4) |
| | 57 Make a purring sound (4) |
-

Mixed anagrams – World capitals

by Rustom Deboo

Below are ten anagrams, each of which has the names of two world capital cities jumbled in it. The point value for each is mentioned in brackets, with the total value of the set being 20. You can send in your answers to indianscrabble@gmail.com by 31st October 2021. One entry scoring full points will win a prize of Rs. 500 in a lucky draw.

Congrats to Kala Ganesh for winning the lucky draw prize for the mixed anagrams quiz featured in the June 2021 edition.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) I PROLONG LITTLE WIN (2) | 7) A PAPER MASK IN GOAL (2) |
| 2) TOOK PINK BARRAGE (1) | 8) SLAM MOTORCADE MOB (1) |
| 3) SNAGS TUBED INKPOT (3) | 9) AIM BOTH LOCAL RISKS (3) |
| 4) A DRAB BEER GLANCER (2) | 10) SNUBS THE DUAL MARKS (2) |
| 5) ANCHOR PANE IN BOGIE (1) | |
| 6) SOAKING THIS ALIEN (3) | |
-

Find the best play

by Hriday Samtani

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

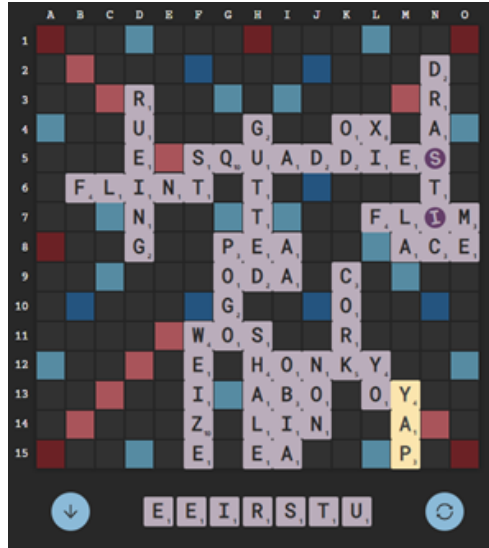
1)



2)



3)



Pyramid quiz

by Rustom Deboo

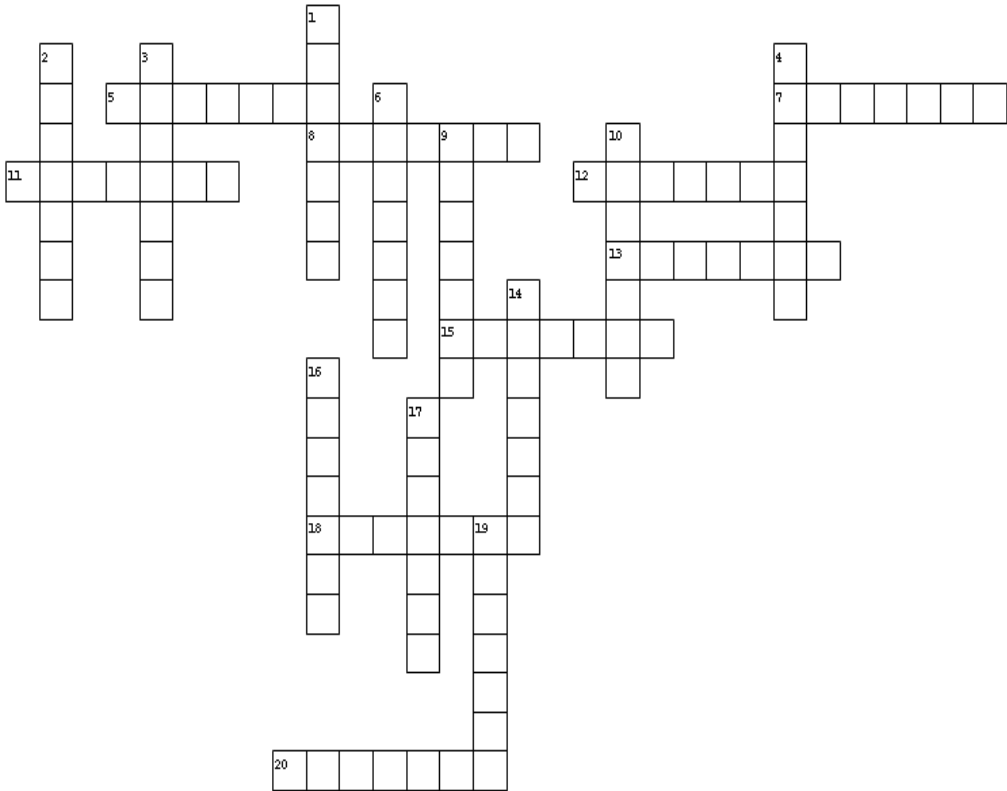
Starting with a two-letter word, can you name the seven valid Scrabble words from the given clues using the letters of the previous word plus one new letter?



Twin blank challenge

by Ruston Deboo

Given in the clues are combinations of letters that, when taken together with both the blanks, form words that are valid in Scrabble. Some of the combinations lead to more than one valid Scrabble word, which is indicated by the numbers in the brackets.



Across

- 5) GONJE
- 7) DREBX
- 8) BGHUN (2)
- 11) OAEOI (1)
- 12) PLTRD (2)
- 13) OZNRC (2)
- 15) VLNYR
- 18) WLCTD
- 20) OAEOI (2)

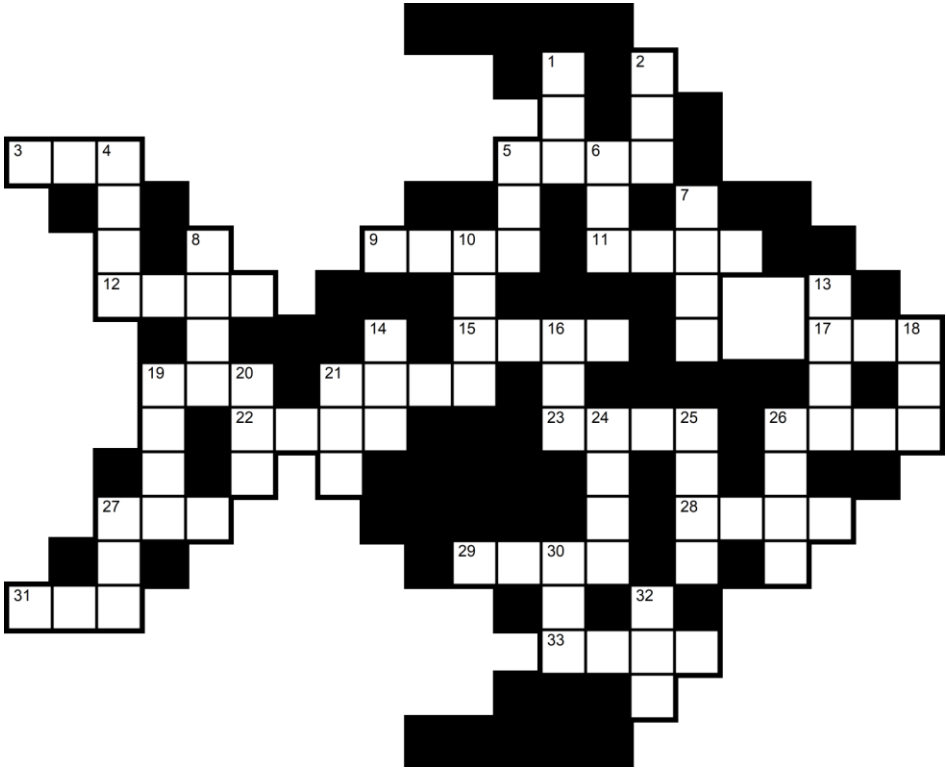
Down

- 1) BGHUN (1)
- 2) QMOIT
- 3) OZNRC (1)
- 4) DNDCL
- 6) PLTRD (1)
- 9) SSBNN
- 10) CFRYK
- 14) PLTRD (3)
- 16) NTPOW (1)
- 17) NTPOW (2)
- 19) AAAUI

CrossGram – Name that fish

by Hema Shah

A CrossGram is a crossword in which the clues are the alphagrams of the words. In this CrossGram, all the answers take FISH as a suffix to form valid Scrabble words.



Across

3. BTU 5. EIPP 9. LMPU 11. DGLO 12. AEKW 15. BMNU 17. AOR
19. DER 21. ACJK 22. EORV 23. DMRU 26. AFLT 27. ELS 28. ILNO
29. CKSU 31. INP 33. ADEL

Down

1. AIW 2. CEI 4. BLOW 5. PPU 6. GIP 7. BELU 8. AEGM 10. KMNO
13. ACLO 14. AGR 16. DMU 18. ART 19. EORS 20. DGO 21. EJW
24. CKOR 25. IKLM 26. FGOR 27. NSU 30. CDO 32. ASW

Bingos in the wild

by Radhika Mahalingaiah

The names of the animals below form seven-letter words in Scrabble. The answer could be either singular or plural. One letter is given for each word. In addition, a clue and the face value of the word is mentioned. How many can you get right?

(1) K _ _ _ _ _



Am I a black bear or white?

Face value: 14

(2) _ _ _ _ C _ _



My ears are very distinctive in the cat family

Face value: 11

(3) _ _ F _ _ _ _



We are skillful climbers and enjoy sunbathing

Face value: 14

(4) _ _ B _ _ _ _



We get our name from our tails

Face value: 13

SAI round-up

- **Update from WESPA on CSW 2021**

WESPA made the following announcement on 14th August with regard to the applicability of the newly updated Collins Scrabble Words (CSW) 2021 lexicon:

The new edition of Collins Scrabble Words (CSW21) will be effective for tournament play starting 1st January 2022. Any WESPA-organised events, in person or online, after that date will use the updated list. A CSW21 Initiation Kit is being prepared for distribution soon to assist players in the transition. All application developers who have licensed the Collins Scrabble Words list for use in their apps, websites, and tools have been contacted with the new list, and should complete updates before this date. Publication of a paper edition will follow at a later date. National associations should prepare implementation of the list for local events as soon as practicable after this date.

- **India's youngsters make it to primetime news**

As mentioned in the tournament report on page 31,

Team India recorded its best ever performance at the WESPA Youth Cup, with two players making it to the top ten for the first time. Madhav Gopal Kamath finished second, while Suyash Manchali finished eighth.

Their feats deservedly found a slot on primetime news on the India Today TV channel, as part of the News Today show hosted by Rajdeep Sardesai on 25th August. The news clip can be viewed at this link: <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/video/2-indian-boys-among-top-10-at-scrabble-youth-world-cup-1845357-2021-08-25>.

The news was also featured in newspapers like The Hindu and Deccan Herald and websites like Money Control.

- **Follow SAI on Twitter and Instagram**

You can now follow news from SAI on Twitter (@ScrabbleIndia) and Instagram (@indianscrabble).

- **A simplified OBS system**

Recent rated online tournaments have featured a simplified OBS system with a single link to sign in for screen share and side camera, thus making the experience more player-friendly.

New members

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

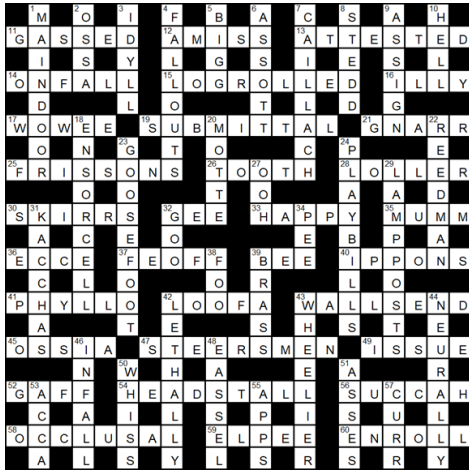
1. **Milan Bhatt** (Ghaziabad) is a final year student at Delhi University, pursuing Economics and Philosophy. He got hooked on to Scrabble during a house party. He has always loved learning new words, so taking a liking to Scrabble was natural. The thing he likes most about Scrabble is its healthy competitiveness, and feels it is a super fun way to improve one's vocabulary.
2. **Namisha Rajgarhia** (Gurgaon) is a working mother. She realised that she knew so less about Scrabble when she bought a Scrabble Junior set for her five-year-old daughter. Thus began her Scrabble journey, and now she, her daughter and her husband are all hooked on to it.
3. **Yuvraj Dighe** (Vadodara) is 14 years old and currently in the ninth grade. Three years ago, he was nominated by his school for a local inter-school Scrabble tournament at Bal Bhavan, Vadodara, where he finished fourth. During the event, he met Vimisha Patel,

who became his mentor and trainer. He initially thought that Scrabble is merely a word game but has now realised that it is much more than that. He considers Scrabble as an immense test of one's memory, logic, and strategy, which makes it his favourite board game.

4. **Sulagna Bhattacharyya** (Faridabad) is a research scholar in the field of life sciences. Playing Scrabble as a child with her parents and friends is one of her fondest memories. Though she feels that adulting often takes us away from things we love, she has decided to rekindle her bond with Scrabble. Playing Scrabble helps her unwind and gives her the joy of accomplishment. It also helps her sharpen her thinking skills and speed. Most importantly, it helps her cherish her childhood days.
5. **Niraj Chitlangia** (Ranchi) is a businessman dealing in medical equipment and is married with three children. He learnt about competitive Scrabble online, and the things he likes most about Scrabble are the new words, the learning opportunity it offers, and the enrichment it provides to one's vocabulary.

Solutions to puzzles and quizzes

SAI Crossword #003



Find the best play

1)



Three best moves:

- M7 – C(R)EOLIST – 91
- O3 – LOGIC(I)SE – 64
- O3 – ISOCL(I)nE – 63

2)



Pyramid quiz



Twin blank challenge

Across:

5) JINGOES, 7) AXEBIRD,
8) HORNBUG, 11) ZOOECIA,
12) PRETOLD/TRIPLED,
13) COZENER, 15) NERVILY,
18) WILDCAT, 20) IPOMOEA

Down:

1) BUSHING, 2) KAMOTIQ,
3) ZIRCONS, 4) CANDLED,
6) TRIPLED/PRETOLD,
9) BUNSENS, 10) FRECKLY,
14) DROPLET, 16) UPTOWNS,
17) PUTDOWN, 19) AQUARIA

CrossGram – Name that fish

Across:

3) TUB, 5) PIPE, 9) LUMP,
11) GOLD, 12) WEAK, 15) NUMB,
17) OAR, 19) RED, 21) JACK,
22) OVER, 23) DRUM, 26) FLAT,
27) SEL, 28) LION, 29) SUCK,
31) PIN, 33) DEAL

Down:

1) WAI, 2) ICE, 4) BLOW,
5) PUP, 6) PIG, 7) BLUE,
8) GAME, 10) MONK, 13) COAL,
14) GAR, 16) MUD, 18) RAT,
19) ROSE, 20) DOG, 21) JEW,
24) ROCK, 25) MILK, 26) FROG,
27) SUN, 30) COD, 32) SAW

Bingos in the wild

1) KERMODE, 2) CARACAL,
3) SIFAKAS, 4) BOBCATS

*Have an interesting puzzle in mind
for the next edition? Share it with
us at indianscrabble@gmail.com.*

Endgame Extra: Know the 20 five-letter words that contain two Vs

BEVY	LUVVY	VERVE	VIVES
BIVVY	NAVVY	VIVAS	VIVID
CIVVY	SAVVY	VIVAT	VOLVA
DIVVY	VALVE	VIVDA	VOLVE
LAVVY	VARVE	VIVER	VULVA

Ratings

Below are the SAI top 60 (official) and top 15 (online) as on 30th September 2021. To see the full rankings, please visit indianscrabble.com.

Official ratings

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
1	Sherwin Rodrigues	MUM	1869	1540
2	Eeshan Malhotra	MUM	1809	451
3	Akshay Bhandarkar	OSI	1806	540
	Irfan Siddiqui	OS	1743	314
4	Goutham Jayaraman	OSI	1732	461
5	Udayan Grover	PUN	1710	1902
6	Ralph Lobo	OSI	1695	218
7	Mohan Chunkath	CHN	1681	1086
8	Nakul Prabhu	MUM	1673	1526
9	Ranganathan Chakrav	CHN	1648	935
10	Aditya Iyengar	PUN	1637	522
11	Sanjoy Gupta	BLR	1597	1261
12	Varisht Hingorani	MUM	1588	1221
13	Charles Carneiro	OSI	1587	787
14	Rajveer Rawlin	BLR	1572	494
15	Samrath Singh Bhatia	MUM	1566	856
16	Nidhi Singhvi	OSI	1558	950
17	Prashanth Seetharam	OSI	1552	369
	Puneet Sharma	OS	1549	170
18	Mohsin Ahmed	BLR	1537	264
	Michael Tang	OS	1534	434
19	Douglas Lobo	GOA	1510	1397
20	Irineu Gonsalves	GOA	1495	998
21	Rahil Parkar	MUM	1472	585
22	Sunny Bhatia	DEL	1466	1033
23	A Krishnan	CHN	1464	513
24	Manju Sood	BLR	1428	829
25	Jose de Abreu	MUM	1426	931
26	Selwyn Lobo	OSI	1420	251
27	Mangala Bhandarkar	PUN	1419	1490
28	Vraj Jain	MUM	1411	568
29	Hriday Samtani	MUM	1390	552
30	Carolann Pais	MUM	1387	1592
31	Yash Potnis	BLR	1360	529
32	Anuj Shetty	BLR	1356	284
33	Shaik Ahmed	HYD	1350	1694
34	Mehul Arora	DEL	1332	264
35	Amit Sood	PUN	1328	368
36	Rajeev Menon	HYD	1324	701
37	Bhushan Pradhan	MUM	1319	1790
38	Sanjay Bijlani	MUM	1292	510
39	Madhav Gopal Kamath	DEL	1290	532
40	Pramit Kamath	DEL	1289	498
	Rohaina Tanveer	OS	1288	520

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
41	Ishika Shivalingaiah	BLR	1278	215
42	Sudhir Kamath	DEL	1277	940
43	Cecil Fernandes	OSI	1275	464
44	Dipankar Chatterjee	BLR	1268	509
45	Pankaj Bolaki	BLR	1256	223
46	Sridhar Paidikondala	HYD	1243	793
47	Lennie D'Souza	BLR	1236	1189
48	Vedika Hingorani	MUM	1229	589
49	Amogh Bharkerkar	GUJ	1214	24
50	Sumeet Sachdev	MUM	1212	494
51	Neelam Agrawal	BLR	1186	306
52	Rajiv Antao	GOA	1183	993
53	R Nalini	BLR	1172	876
54	Nupur Sood	BLR	1171	557
55	Rehet Singh Bhatia	MUM	1166	839
56	Sujana Somasekar	BLR	1155	325
57	Kala Ganesh	MUM	1153	1125
58	Brian D'Souza	MUM	1151	210
59	Meena Bakhru	PUN	1147	350
60	Suchindra Potnis	BLR	1136	328

Online ratings

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
1	Rahil Parkar	MUM	2613	27
2	Sanjoy Gupta	BLR	2489	26
3	Udayan Grover	PUN	2455	67
4	Samrath Singh Bhatia	MUM	2410	55
5	Pankaj Bolaki	BLR	2401	17
6	Madhav Gopal Kamath	DEL	2386	71
7	Sridhar Paidikondala	HYD	2306	32
	Shaila Amalean	OS	2235	39
8	Sumeet Sachdev	MUM	2212	84
9	Amit Sood	PUN	2181	36
10	R Nalini	BLR	2156	75
10	Ishika Shivalingaiah	BLR	2156	56
12	Bhushan Pradhan	MUM	2105	61
13	Suyash Manchali	BLR	2096	9
14	Ela Ghose	DEL	2094	19
15	Radhika Mahalingaiah	BLR	2087	12

Note that the online ratings are provisional and may not be indicative of true performance; ratings will stabilise only after several tournaments

BLR – Bangalore (KSSA)

CHN – Chennai

DEL – Delhi

GOA – Goa

GUJ – Gujarat (Vadodara)

HYD – Hyderabad

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.

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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