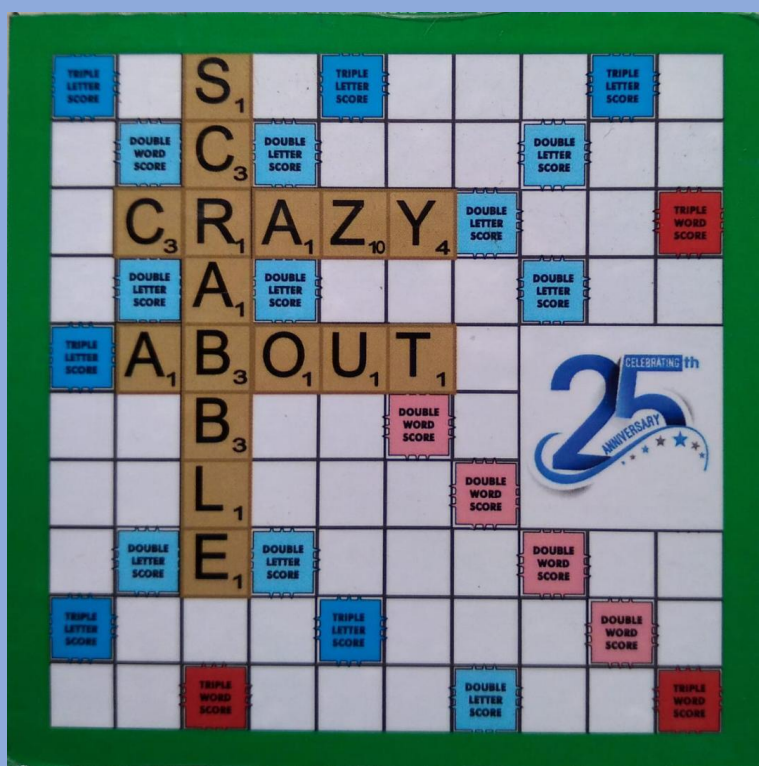


# ENDGAME

The Quarterly Magazine of the Scrabble® Association of India  
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SCRABBLE  
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA



*This year's Pune Scrabble Championship marked 25 years of Pune Scrabble*

**In this issue:**

- A WESPAC experience
- Musings on Scrabble
- Pune's milestone tourney
- Sherwin's triple triumph

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*Picture on front cover: A magnet given as a souvenir to each of the the participants at the 2023 Pune Scrabble Silver Jubilee Championship*

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# Foreword

Dear Members,

The Scrabble season went on as thick and fast as the peak monsoon rains, with four rated tournaments within the space of three months providing quite the word platter to players and followers alike.

The Poona Club played host to a special tournament, as this year's Pune Scrabble Championship in early July marked the completion of 25 years since Scrabble was kickstarted in the city. This was followed by equally well-attended tournaments in Vadodara and Delhi.

The premier division in each of these three tournaments was won by Sherwin Rodrigues, who once again showed that he is second to none when it comes to consistently securing titles, as he repeatedly kept his competitors at bay to complete an impressive hat-trick of top honours.

At the two-day IIT Bombay Open thereafter, it was Sunny Bhatia who came up trumps. Meanwhile in Bangalore, the KSSA held a unique team tournament featuring a wide spectrum of variations as part of their own silver jubilee celebrations. Speaking of team tourneys, the last leg of the year commences with the colourful Wordaholix Scrabble League, set to hold its ninth edition in late October.

On the global scene, WESPAC 2023 produced a number of enthralling exchanges – the compilation of streamed games, especially the finals, is highly recommended viewing for every Scrabble enthusiast. Its youth equivalent, the WESPA Youth Cup (WYC), will be the event to watch out for in early December, as a strong 12-member contingent of Indian youngsters makes its way to Thailand to take on their fellow youth Scrabblers from the world over.

The WYC is set to be played in person for the first time in over three years, which will make Team India all the more determined to give their best shot. With a steady rise in the number of young players at recent tournaments, there is optimism that the recent successes of Indian youth players and the upcoming opportunities that await will continue to be stepping stones in the quest towards making competitive Scrabble appealing and accessible to budding juniors across the country.

Happy reading!

Best wishes,

Rustom Deboo  
Editor

# What happens in Vegas: WESPAC 2023

*by Anuj Shetty*

When the WESPA Championship (WESPAC) was held in Goa in 2019, I thought it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me to attend it and play Scrabble amongst the best of the best, albeit not in the main event. Fast forward to earlier this year, just after I'd shifted to the US, when I learnt that WESPAC 2023 was to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Unfortunately, this made it pretty inaccessible for Indian players, so none of the top guns were able to make it. However, despite being way out of my depth, I couldn't resist the allure of representing my country on the world stage. It was an opportunity that felt a lot more once-in-a-lifetime than the last time!

So that's how on 22<sup>nd</sup> July I found myself in Sin City, frantically cramming words on Xerafin, as the sole representative of India in the Main Event of WESPAC 2023. I would be lying if I said I didn't feel the weight of responsibility from the Indian Scrabble family, along with all their wishes. It was a daunting task, but I was determined to give it my all in the following four days, and make the most of the privilege I'd been given. Sridhar Paidikondala was also flying the Indian flag in Division 2 of Diamonds, a parallel three-day tournament.



*Funny location mix-up!*



*A 471-380 win vs Australia's Jane Taylor*

When you look at the statistics, it becomes clear that WESPAC 2023 was a standout tournament with a

significant turnout of highly rated players. The 135 players in the Main Event boasted 37 of the top 100 players in the world, and 51 rated above 1800, both the highest number since WESPAC 2015 in Perth.



*With fellow Indian player Sridhar Paidikondala (left)*

The event was quite an extravaganza, held in the ballroom of the Westgate hotel, which also housed a lot of glitzy slot machines, card tables, and any other avenue that you could ever desire to gamble your money. NASPA also conducted the Scrabble Players Championship (both TWL and CSW divisions) in the same room over the previous week, providing a full two weeks of Scrabble to some players.

On the first day of the Main Event, there was a Parade of Nations (photos of the teams from all 28 countries represented) and a welcome dinner, along with a lot of old friends reconnecting, and new acquaintances being made. Of course, along with the camaraderie came a lot of cut-throat competition.

I started off with a win against Marten Bjorkman from Sweden, but

then lost against a host of tough US players, including national champion Dave Wiegand, who trounced me by 175. With some luck, I managed to beat Waseem Khatri from Pakistan, the highest rated player I beat at the tournament (1880, to my 1280).



*Remembering Chris May, a top Australian player, who passed away from cancer shortly after*

Some of the other highlights in my games were opening with ZEsTFUL against Jane Taylor from Australia, and scraping out a five-point win against South Africa's Ike Obidike by hooking VAUNT to make AVAUNT, giving me a spot for AEONIAN. I mention the opponents and their countries to highlight how much fun it was to play 32 players from 19 different countries and very different backgrounds, connecting with them over Scrabble, and discovering other shared interests.



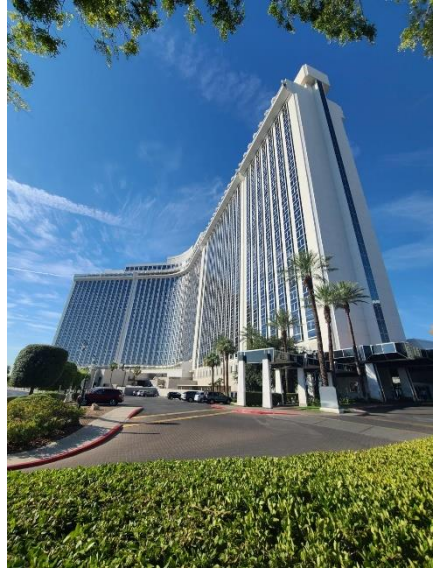
I continued to struggle over the next few days, making basic mistakes like playing phonies, not opening up the board enough, and messing up a few winnable endgames. The onslaught of top-rated players got to me, as I ended with 14 wins and 18 losses, leaving me at the subterranean rank of 116, just a smidgeon above my initial seeding of 121. Just like every other tournament, I vowed to study words more regularly and not just in a last-ditch effort – however, it's been two months since WESPAC, and I'm still to make a dent in my cardbox.



*Start of Day 1 – an electric atmosphere*

We all know what happened next, with Harshan Lamabadusuriya from England facing David Eldar from Australia in the best-of-seven finals, giving us some top-notch games of Scrabble and leaving everyone on the edge of their seat till the last game. If you don't already know the result of

that, then I won't spoil it for you – do go and watch the brilliantly commentated and insightful games on NASPA's YouTube channel!



*The Westgate hotel from the outside*

Amidst all the excitement, there was one undeniable sentiment that hung in the air – the absence of Indian Scrabblers. I was asked by many players about the rest of the Indian contingent and told how they were missed. In the words of Jesse Day, a WESPAC 2019 finalist, “Indian Scrabblers are the most fun!” – he was probably remembering the night we all had a blast at a club in Goa. All of my fun tournament memories have been because of the Indian Scrabble community, and it's understandable that the rest of the world was feeling the same FOMO that I was. I'm sure some of you might have felt the same for WESPAC 2023, and I hope this missive helps alleviate some of that!

# Wordsmithing in Bangkok

*by Pradyot Anand*

When I first heard in 2018 that Thailand had a big competitive Scrabble (known there as the Crossword Game) scene, I was intrigued. I had been to Thailand multiple times on holiday and for work, but would never have guessed that English Scrabble was popular there given that a) Thailand has never been colonised and b) Thai is the first language and used as the medium of instruction in both, public and private schools (unlike say, India, where English tends to be the medium of instruction in private schools).

When I read about the large attendances and the festive atmosphere associated with the prestigious King's Cup in Thailand, I became eager to attend the tourney and was all set to do so in 2020. Unfortunately, Covid had other plans.

One late night in July 2023, I saw a Facebook post about an upcoming tourney in Bangkok and casually mentioned to my wife that it would be nice to play in that. In the same breath, I also mumbled that as a middling Division B player on a good day, travelling from Singapore to Bangkok to play Scrabble over a weekend seemed a bit presumptuous, although it was on my bucket list of things to do. She said I should stop overthinking and just go, reminding me that I often say that in the 40s, it's equally important to start ticking

items off the bucket list than merely adding them!

A few days later she messaged me saying she'd booked my tickets, and I panicked as she had not checked with me first on convenient flight times. Fortunately, she was only just nudging me (and hadn't really booked the tickets) but I'm glad she did, because it did get me to consider the prospect seriously. Everything fell into place – I found reasonably priced flights, and as it was not peak tourist season, got a four-star hotel for S\$70 per night (approx. INR4200 per night), including breakfast!

The Jooze Crossword Game Grand Prix Leg 1 was held from 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> August at MBK Center in Bangkok, and the open 'Wordsmith' division I was competing in ran concurrently with a 'Mathsmith' competition. Mathsmith uses a Scrabble-like board but the tiles have numbers and math symbols on them; the goal is to earn points by using the tiles to make valid equations.

As I walked around watching school and college kids play Mathsmith at dizzying speeds, I was amazed at how quickly they could see equations from random numbers. In many ways, it's analogous to finding words from a random set of letters, but having never played the game (though I'm not math-phobic) I could now better relate to the average person who is

conversant in English but finds tournament Scrabble a strange beast.



*The WordSmith rotating board used at the tournament – a great design and a cost-effective option*

This was my second ever tournament outside Singapore (the first being the Indian Open at WESPAC Goa in 2019) and there were quite a few things that stood out for me.

Firstly, even though this was not considered a major tournament in the league of the King's Cup, there were more than 40 players in the open division, and because the venue was a large hall in a mall, the atmosphere was kind of festive and buzzing.

Secondly, the pairings for the opening games were announced a day before by email; this allowed for a timely start to the tournament as everyone knew who they had to play with first up and at which table.

Thirdly, each table had a QR code that would take players to the page which had round-wise results and pairings. No more running to see pairings on any large or small screen.

Finally, the custom rotating Scrabble boards (WordSmith boards) that were made in Thailand and perhaps can be 'made for Asia and Africa'.

I have always felt that mass-market Scrabble boards, which do not have grids to prevent tile slippage and cannot rotate actually detract from the Scrabble experience for the casual player, but very few casual players would ever want to spend \$100 or more on a rotating board from Compact Board or a similar brand – at least not till the tournament Scrabble bug bites them hard.

The Jooze tournament featured custom rotating boards that were made of three parts: a circular plastic rotating base on which was placed a similar shaped Scrabble board printed on thick cardboard, finally topped off with a moulded cover that had a grid as well as indentations to 'snap' into place so that the board was sturdy enough for use.

Although it is not foldable, I think this is a great design especially for clubs in developing countries who want to have boards that are reasonably priced – for use at club practice, tournaments, and for sale to members. A casual conversation with one of the organisers revealed that when manufactured in bulk, each board cost about THB700 (INR1500 or so).





*In action during the Jooze Crossword Game Grand Prix Leg 1 (I'm on the left)*

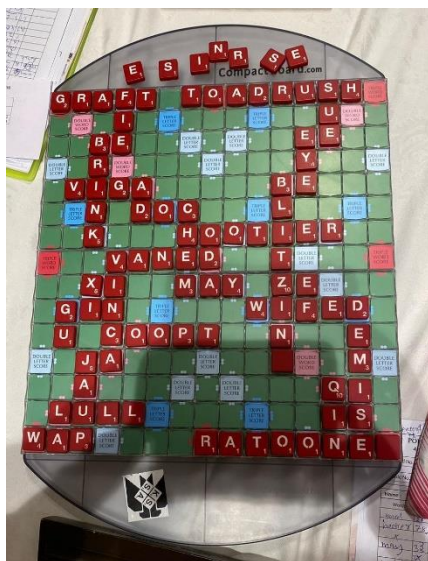
In terms of the tournament itself, it went all over the place for me. I had my first ever draw, and during a repeat pairing, lost by a single point to the same player. In one game, I snatched defeat from the jaws of victory by going two seconds overtime to lose by six points whereas in another, not only did I see almost all words instantaneously, but also correctly challenged a number of phonies to win by a spread of 300+ with over 12 minutes to spare.

Overall, I ended with 6W, 1D, 7L and -187 spread to finish 33<sup>rd</sup> out of 42. While I will soon forget these statistics, what I will remember is the intensely charged and competitive atmosphere, and the interesting conversations with other players such as Alex Tan from Malaysia, Yasiru Fernando from Sri Lanka; Gerry Carter, Thacha Koowirat, and Dr. Darin Jaturapatporn from Thailand.

But most importantly, I came back energised and motivated to improve further at Scrabble and attend more tournaments – although I cannot attend the other three legs of the Jooze Grand Prix (there's one every

month in September, October, and November 2023). I'm now eagerly looking forward to attending the KSSA Indian Open international tournament in early 2024. After all, I don't want that participating in the largest Scrabble tournament in my home city of Bangalore is a box left unchecked!

### Endgame Extra: Ishika enters the exclusive 700 club



Round 12 in Division A of the Polyset All-India Open in Vadodara in August witnessed Ishika Shivalingaiah blitz (indeed, BLITZING as a four-timer for 122 was one of her four bingos in the game) past the rare 700 mark en route to a thumping 706-217 win against Pankaj Bolaki. She also hit a nine-timer RATOONED (127), and went into the 700s by going out with TOADRUSH (94). Her 706 now sits among the top 60 scores recorded in WESPA-rated tournament history.

# Scrabble and life lessons... my first rated tournament

*by Sankhini Mehta*

As I arrived at my first rated Scrabble tournament, it being the All-India Open in Vadodara, I carried a lot of things with me along with my suitcase, with nervousness and anticipation at the top of the pile. Being the social butterfly that I am (not!), it was like nosediving into the deep trenches of socialising, but I was surprised how effortless talking to people and holding conversations became from the get-go. As the tournament went on, here are some of the lessons I picked up:

## **Lesson #1) An honest smile is the best icebreaker...**

Go to any of the tables and start helping people to arrange the tiles. It's the best place to introduce yourself and get to know someone. I ended up talking to beautiful people and marvelled at their experiences in both Scrabble and life. You never know, you might even surprise yourself! I enjoyed the conversations on diverse topics with people from diverse walks of life!

So, I was ready for the first game! It was with Monica Agarwala, and she really eased me into the game. With all the tips and techniques fresh in my mind, I started playing with every intention to track my tiles and bingo at least twice each game. After all, for what were the top 1000 seven-letter words learnt! But after tracking the

first word of the game, none of the intended actions came true. And, funnily enough, most of the bingos I managed in the tournament were not a part of that list!

## **Lesson #2) Expectation and reality are two different things...**

What you intend for is not what you get. Expectations take time to convert into reality. Give it some time. In my second game against Anika Dalwani, I unintentionally phonied four times in a row in the beginning, and they were all challenged. That was extremely unsettling and had me flustered in the game. The outcome was a defeat by 511-239 (go Anika!). In one of the games against Viral Kansara, I changed my tiles four times, which gave me an irreversible setback.

In many of my games I played on the first day, I found myself reluctant to challenge words, and at the same time, found myself to be equally cautious and doubtful about my own plays. All of my opponents were kind enough to encourage me to take a chance and question plays. They also gave me tips and observed my game play, and identified where I remained fixated during the games and how that could be improved. In one of my games with Bhushan Sarmalkar, I made a bingo SHALOTS, but was unsure about it because I just knew that SHALLOTS was a word. It was



# My original Scrabble guru

**by Leena Abraham**

It was just very recently that I started playing competitive Scrabble in the ARFS clubroom on Woogles. Every time I play, I can't help but think how different it is when we play the game at home with family. Memories of the ghosts of Scrabble past glide in and out.

“Hurry up, Lee”, says Lal.

“Yes, yes”, I say, and I get some more time, maybe about a minute more, by turning the little hourglass again.

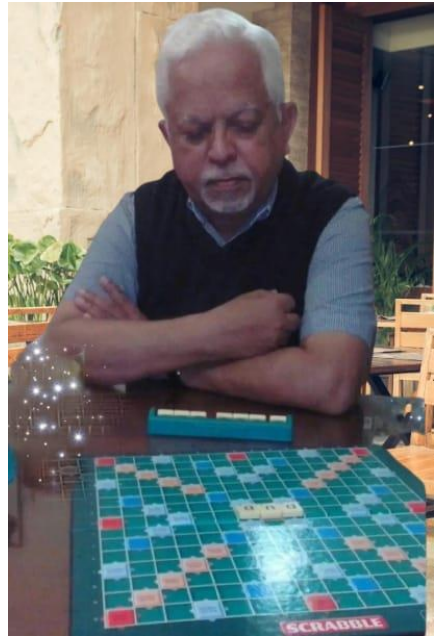
“Can I check if I can use this word?”, asks Ami.

“Yes, okay, but don't look for other words.”

Ami takes her own cool time looking to validate her word in the Scrabble dictionary, sneakily checking other words too. Hey! That's all a part of our family game scene.

What a contrast to the superfast games I play now, where time and tide wait for no one. I never imagined I would play so many Scrabble games back-to-back every day. Now I get to play with top Scrabble players, and it appears I have improved a wee bit. Though I am still trailing behind, I am too addicted to the game to ever give it up, thanks to the Scrabble players who introduced me to this online platform. However, I am yet to muster up the courage to take part in an actual tournament.

When I was invited as a chief guest for a chess rating tournament in the far-away outskirts of the city, I noticed that many of the chess players were from rural areas. The thought crossed my mind as to how wonderful it would be if they could play Scrabble too, but then language is often a barrier. Scrabble is mostly a game for the English language enthusiasts – bingos and triple-letter words, phonies, and more; involving strategy, patience, and holding on till the very end.



*My first Scrabble guru – my brother –  
engrossed in the game he loved*

Rambling on so much, let me tell you that my main idea in writing this

piece is to etch in stone some of my memories of my original Scrabble guru – my brother – all of fifteen years older. Whenever I play, thoughts of him fade in and out like clouds, some bright, some grey, some cheery.

Kuru, as his friends called him, was a true Scrabble pro for us. He belonged to the old-school, home Scrabble players' gang, who detested two-letter words like XI and literally salivated over bingos. When I first began playing, I usually made simple words like CAT and MAT – this would make him furious.

“Can't you think of anything else, with all the books that you read?”, he would remark hotly.

When I played a good word, “Oh, so you knew that word... hmmm,” he would be pleased.

In his school days, I have heard that he spent hours during the weekend, and when he was in quarantine after an illness, writing down words from the dictionary that he could use for Scrabble (there was no readily available Scrabble dictionary then, and no PDF docs to refer to).

I also remember the beautiful Scrabble board and tiles that he handcrafted from thick cardboard. He painted the board colourfully, and the tiles were made with such precision. This happened when our old Scrabble board was worn out, and a new one was not so easily available in those times, compared to today, when we have Amazon to the rescue.



These are two pictures of him. The second one with the winning paper crown (which was made for him) is from his last game of Scrabble here on planet Earth.

Maybe he is still playing the game wherever he is, or looking down at me playing competitive Scrabble, pleased but yet not so!

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**Endgame Extra: Know the 31 seven-letter words having the letters G, U, R, and U**

ARGULUS, ARUGULA, AUGURAL, AUGURED, AUGERER, BULGHUR, BULGURS, BURGHUL, BURGOUT, COUGUAR, FULGOUR, GRUGRUS, GRUMOUS, GUIPURE, GURJUNS, GURUDOM, GURUISM, JUGULAR, MUGGURS, OUTRUNG, REGULUS, SOURGUM, UNGROUP, UNGUARD, UNGULAR, UNROUGH, UNURGED, UNWRUNG, UPSURGE, USURING, VUGULAR

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# Musings from Pune

## More than a silver lining...

*by Meena Kalyan*

The dark clouds in the Pune skies are natural for the month of July, but the silver lining was the Pune Scrabble silver jubilee event hosted by the Poona Club. Vaulting over all the hurdles, accompanied with kits for the rain and Scrabble, enthusiasts arrived from all over the country.

The 'RoMaN (ti)C committee' was there to welcome the players with a complimentary goodie bag. The bag contained Shrewsbury biscuits for which Pune is famous, a sweet little bite, and a keepsake. It was symbolic of what brings people of diverse regions, professions, and ages together – the love for Scrabble. A magnet with a Scrabble board was an inspirational memento to keep us all hooked to the game for years to come!

The hearty exchange of greetings was interrupted by the familiar voice of Ashok Bhandarkar herding all the exuberant and truant players. Urging them to the tables with the cries of 'start the timer', Ashok inaugurated the tournament.

Each player received a scorebook inscribed with an image of a champagne bottle bubbling out Scrabble tiles. This uncorked all the bingos from racks. The curtains for the first day went down with a 'surprise'... Sherwin Rodrigues made 25 bingos to claim the silver jubilee spot prize!

Confectionery provided in small boxes on each table provided food for thought during the intense games. People who saw the mosquitoes, the noise, and the damp weather saw the glass half empty, whereas the others saw the glass half full, overflowing with enthusiasm, energy and cheer. The 'fruit funny' for dessert left the participants reaching for more.

Games ended early on the second day, for the Clark Kents to cast off their Scrabble costumes and don their party wear. The conference hall was the venue where spirits, both tangible and intangible, synergised. In direct proportion to the one imbibed, the other rose. There was a karaoke of English and Hindi songs. The party rocked with a few singers and many dancers. 'Monica, O My Darling' was the anthem of the evening. The RoMaN(ti)C group cut the jubilee cake to the strains of congratulations and cheers... the icing on the cake was one of the oldest members of the club, John Kurien, cutting his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday cake with all his buddies.

The coup de grace on the smash hit of the Pune tournament was engineered by Mahesh Ramanathan with super embroidery by the knotty merchant, Sonal Merchant. They pulled off the live streaming of at least ten matches – a giant leap for Scrabble. Thanks to Sonal and her coordination with the players, top-notch real-time inputs

and commentary reached the homes of 350 people. A stupendous feat! Let's hope this becomes a norm and helps upcoming Scrabblers learn from the best by watching games live!

The hangover of the celebrations inspired great performances during the KOTH – Amit Sood won all his games on the last day to finish in the top ten. Towards the end, another lovely 'surprise' awaited... hold your breath... Sherwin was Gibsonised in Division A! In Division B, it was R Nalini who took top honours. As the tournament reached its end, lots of bonhomie, clicks, and cutlets were part of the farewell! Three cheers to the Pune Scrabble Club!

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## **The pigeon among the cats: Upheaval in Division A**

*by Virendra Braganza*

The pigeon's among the cats, I fear  
She's in a lot of trouble  
Oh no, says she, I love it here  
I'm out to burst their bubble.

The purists all stand up aghast  
"You can't mix oil and water"  
But she cares not if she comes out last  
She doesn't expect any quarter.

You can pluck my feathers, the pigeon said,  
I've plenty of those to spare  
But what's the use of these words in my head,  
If I can't play them when I'm there?

The danger recedes, the cats are at ease  
They all retract their claws  
And play the games in a spirit of

peace  
That the Scrabble God applauds.

As the winners are called, cups held aloft,  
The Pidge thinks she's had her reward  
But a tear appears in those eyes so soft  
When she's called for her Bravery Award.

*Footnote: This poem is a humorous rendition of one person's attempt to buck the odds in order to learn and gain experience. It is not a reflection on the totality of the tournament, which was a wonderful experience with some fascinating games and great camaraderie!*

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There was a memorable moment in my game with Sudhir Kamath (left in the picture below). Towards the end, I picked an extra tile from the bag. The three tiles turned over by Sudhir turned out to be J, Q, and X – he was quick to take a picture of it! He put the X back in the bag and himself drew it soon after, which helped him win the game by 16 points!

*by Virendra Braganza*



*An 'X'-tra tile picked by me during a game at the Pune Scrabble Championship*

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# Words in the wilderness

*by Rustom Deboo*

Here are 30 ‘wild’ bingos to help you roar towards success in your next tournament:

**AARDVARK** – a burrowing African mammal

**AARDWOLF** – an African mammal similar to a hyena

**AVIFAUNA** – the bird life of a particular region

**AXOLOTL** – a salamander of Mexico and western United States

**BABIRUSA** – a wild Indonesian pig



***Babirusa***

**BANTENG** – a wild ox of Southeast Asia

**BIGHORN** – a wild North American sheep

**CAPYBARA** – a large rodent of tropical South American forests

**CHINKARA** – a type of antelope largely found in India

**DOTTEREL** – a shorebird, also DOTTREL



***Chinkara***

**ECHIDNA** – a spiny anteater found in Australia

**GERENUK** – a slender East African antelope

**GOSHAWK** – a large hawk

**GUANACO** – a South American mammal related to the llama

**MANATEE** – an aquatic mammal



***Echidna***

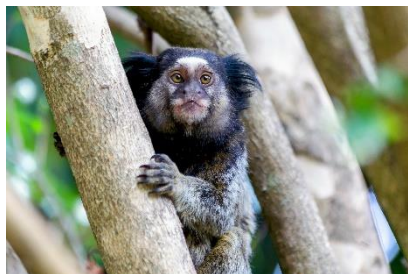
**MARKHOR** – a large Himalayan goat

**MARMOSET** – a small monkey

**MEERKAT** – an African mongoose

**MUNTJAC** – a small Asian deer, also MUNTJAK

**MUSTANG** – a wild horse of North American plains



*Marmoset*

NARWHAL – an arctic aquatic mammal

OPOSSUM – an arboreal marsupial

OUAKARI – a South American monkey

PANGOLIN – a toothless anteater

REEDBUCK – an African antelope



*Wildcat*

RINGHALS – a venomous snake, also RINKHALS

WALLABY – a small kangaroo

WARTHOG – a wild African hog

WILDCAT – a small wild feline

ZEBRULE – an offspring of a male zebra and a female horse, also ZEBRULA

Continuing with the theme... here's a board from the wild featuring all 100 tiles:



Finally, here are the 53 seven-letter words having the letters W, I, L, D:

AWLBIRD, BAWDILY, DOWDILY, DOWLIER, DOWNILY, DWINDLE, INDWELL, INDWELT, MILDEWS, MILDEWY, OLDWIFE, REWILDS, ROWDILY, SWILLED, SWINDLE, SWIRLED, TWIDDLE, TWIDDLY, TWIFOLD, TWILLED, TWILTED, TWIRLED, WAYLAID, WEEDILY, WEIRDLY, WELDING, WERGILD, WHIRLED, WIBBLED, WIDDLED, WIDDLES, WIELDED, WIELDER, WIGGLED, WILDCAT, WILDERS, WILDEST, WILDING, WILDISH, WILDMAN, WILDMEN, WILLIED, WIMBLED, WIMPLED, WINDILY, WINDLED, WINDLES, WINKLED, WINTLED, WIRILDA, WORDILY, WORLDIE, WRIZLED

# Tournament round-up

## Pune Scrabble Silver Jubilee Championship

*by Rustom Deboo*

The Pune Scrabble Club celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> year at this special edition of the annual Pune Scrabble Championship, which saw 44 players pit their wits across two divisions – 18 in Division A and 26 in Division B – at the Poona Club from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> July. The silver jubilee milestone was appropriately marked with hard-fought Scrabble over 24 rounds, a joyous celebration, and camaraderie among the players.



*A special moment... the Poona Club welcomes players for the Pune Scrabble Silver Jubilee Championship*

Sherwin Rodrigues laid down the marker in Division A by winning all nine games on the first day, with his spread already reading an imposing +1257. As the second day went on, he extended his winning streak to 17 rounds straight – a highly remarkable run, even by his own lofty standards. He was yet to be beaten at the end of Day 2, having gone five wins clear.

Sherwin had to wait until Round 21 to secure the title, what with three losses

in four games against Udayan Grover seemingly delaying the inevitable. He collected 19 wins from the 21 rounds he played, at a towering spread of +2534 – indeed, a dominant display.



*Sherwin Rodrigues cruised to victory in Division A with three rounds to spare*

The second place was confirmed by Udayan (17 wins at +1210), while Ishika Shivalingaiah (15, +759) held on to finish third, narrowly edging out young gun Madhav Gopal Kamath (15, +386). There was a silver jubilee spot prize for the first player to reach 25 bingos, which was unsurprisingly won by Sherwin.



*The top three finishers in Division A*



In contrast, the battle for the top spot in Division B was alive right until the final round. R Nalini and Vignesh S, each having 16 wins, faced off in the decider, and it was indeed a fight to the finish, as Nalini won the game 388-385 to end up with 17 wins. Vignesh finished third, with Danish Shahna rising to take second place.

The tournament was ably directed by Ashok Bhandarkar, and thanks to the tireless efforts of Sonal Merchant and Mahesh Ramanathan, some of the top-table games were streamed live on camera with commentary from seasoned players. As always, the Poona Club made for a welcoming venue for the monsoon tournament.



*R Nalini, winner of Division B*

The second evening saw the players get together to celebrate the club's silver jubilee with pomp. The special cake was cut by Manju Pai, Romilla Thakur and Neena Shahani, who were instrumental in forming the Pune Scrabble Club 25 years back. Scrabble players, patrons, and enthusiasts across age groups mingled over conversations, singing, dancing, food, and drinks, even as fond memories of Scrabble at the Poona Club over the years were revisited.



*(L to R) Romilla Thakur, Manju Pai and Neena Shahani cut the celebratory cake*

### Final standings – Division A

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Sherwin Rodrigues	19 (+2)	2534
2	Udayan Grover	17	1210
3	Ishika Shivalingaiah	15	759
4	Madhav Kamath	15	386
5	Selwyn Lobo	14	-73
6	Amit Sood	13	654
7	Sunny Bhatia	13	364
8	Mangala Bhandarkar	13	-306
9	Prithwiraj Mukherjee	12	60
10	Kala Ganesh	12	-118
11	Rajeev Menon	12	-321
12	Bhushan Pradhan	11	-305
13	Rustom Deboo	10	-11
14	Meena Bakhru	10	-185
15	Sudhir Kamath	10	-215
16	Virendra Braganza	10	-341
17	V Ramachandran	7 (+1)	-753
18	Laura Braganza	1 (+1)	-3339

Bye treatment explained in brackets

High game: Sherwin Rodrigues 675

### Final standings – Division B

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	R Nalini	17	898
2	Danish Shahna	16	939
3	Vignesh S	16	522
4	Siddharth Nithyanand	15	760
5	Patrick Pereira	15	331
6	Viji Ramachandran	14	587
7	Aarush Jotwani	14	468
8	Neeta Bhatia	14	44
9	Archana Aggarwal	13	764
10	Vimisha Patel	13	448

11	Nikheel Ruparel	13	14
12	Harvinderjit Bhatia	13	-21
13	Meena Kalyan	12.5	123
14	Ishika Poddar	12	856
15	Asha Kamath	12	581
16	Abhijit Shilotri	12	-137
17	Mahesh Ramanathan	12	-559
18	Neena Shahani	11.5	834
19	Caryl Gonsalvez	11	620
20	Monica Agarwala	11	160
21	Romilla Thakur	11	-1116
22	Aruna Grover	8	-827
23	Bhushan Sarmalkar	8	-886
24	Kamna Karam	8	-1221
25	Sylvia Coelho	8	-1478
26	Caroline Coelho	2	-2704

Bye treatment explained in brackets

High game: Ishika Poddar 654

## Polyset All-India Open, Vadodara

*with inputs from Vimisha Patel*

The third edition of the Polyset All-India Open was held from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> August at the Fern Ecotel Hotel in Vadodara. There were 46 players in action – 14 in Division A, 26 in Division B, and six in an unrated, one-day newbie division.



*The prize winners from Division A*

After the end of 24 rounds, Sherwin Rodrigues won Division A, while Neeta Bhatia produced a convincing performance to win Division B with three rounds to spare. The newbie division was won by 11-year-old Ark Kansara. The tourney was organised by the Vadodara Scrabble Club, with A Krishnan being the designated Tournament Director.



*Some of the prize winners from Division B*



*Young Ark Kansara, winner of the newbie division*

## Final standings – Division A

Player	Wins	Spread
1 Sherwin Rodrigues	17.5(+1)	1880
2 Bharath Balakrishnan	16	900
3 Sunny Bhatia	16	620
4 Udayan Grover	15.5	445
5 Ishika Shivalingaiah	13	693
6 Rustom Deboo	12.5	37
7 Pankaj Bolaki	12	-479
8 Aarush Jotwani	12	-832
9 Sumeet Sachdev	10	-240
10 Kala Ganesh	10	-518
11 Bhushan Pradhan	9.5	-528
12 Arindam Basu	8.5	-314
13 Prithviraj Mukherjee	8	-619
14 Suchindra Potnis	6.5 (+1)	-1045

Bye treatment explained in brackets  
High game: Ishika Shivalingaiah 706

## Final standings – Division B

Player	Wins	Spread
1 Neeta Bhatia	17.5(+3)	1020
2 Harvinderjit Bhatia	15 (+1)	659
3 Neena Shahani	15	303
4 Ritu Chadha	15	-27
5 Viji Ramachandran	14	1049
6 Monica Agarwala	14	874
7 Vimisha Patel	13 (+1)	437
8 Kalpana Sastry	13	449
9 Rekha Sanzgiri	13	382
10 Mayank Khandelwal	12 (+1)	-137
11 Dhaval Rathod	12 (+1)	-629
12 Ishika Poddar	12	563
13 Jayamary Philip	12	306
14 Jayant Sastry	12	156
15 Yuvraj Dighe	12	-54
16 Caryl Gonsalvez	11.5	417
17 Neha Maheshwari	11 (+0)	402
18 Arockia Philip Raj	11	140
19 Aruna Grover	11	-94
20 Arjun Maheshwari	10.5	226
21 Vikas Maheshwari	10.5	-132
22 Anika Dalwani	9.5 (+1)	-341
23 Viral Kansara	10	-338
24 Bhushan Sarmalkar	9 (+1)	-632
25 Joanna Moss	9.5	-406
26 Sankhini Mehta	0 (+1)	-4593

Bye treatment explained in brackets  
High game: Neeta Bhatia, Viral Kansara 587

## GAIL Cup, Delhi

*by Akshay Hiremath*

The 8th GAIL Cup was held in the capital's Hotel Saket 27 from 1st to 3rd September. The tournament was held in the hotel's basement, but the venue was spacious – it had proper lighting, and was ideal for a Scrabble tournament! The hotel's services were impressive – the participants enjoyed the lunch meals, beverages, and snacks served. The availability of ample parking spots was another big plus! A very good selection indeed by the Scrabble Association of Delhi!



*The Division A podium: winner Sherwin Rodrigues (centre), Madhav Gopal Kamath (right) and Sunny Bhatia*

There were four divisions in all. Divisions A (SAI rating of 1200 and above) and B (SAI rating of 1199 and below) were held over three days, and had a total of 25 rounds. Division C

was a one-dayer with seven rounds, and was also a SAI-rated tournament. Division D was an unrated one-dayer for newbie kids below the age of 12, having six rounds. Across the four divisions, there were 57 players.



*The Division B podium: winner Vignesh S (centre), Abid Hussain, and Ela Ghose*

The Tournament Director was Ashok Bhandarkar, who did a great job as always. Sunny Bhatia, Sudhir Kamath, Archana Aggarwal and Marisha Sharma did the work behind the scenes, and full credit to them for having organised such a memorable tournament! Inderbir Thussu, Head of School at Kunskapsskolan, where Scrabble Association of Delhi has done work on setting up a Scrabble club, was the chief guest at the prize distribution ceremony.

Besides the trophies, certificates, and cash prizes that were given in each division, there was also the Vandana Grover Memorial Award that was given to the most improved player, who happened to be V Sridev from Kochi. The rotating trophy is given out each year at the GAIL Cup in memory of Vandana Grover, a keen

Scrabble player from Gurgaon whom we tragically lost to Covid in 2021! In every round, there were also spot prizes that were given out, and we saw a lot of interesting books being distributed as spot prizes.



*The Division C podium: Shiv Talwar (centre), Aparna Todi, and Dev Garg*

In Division A, the top ten were: 1) Sherwin Rodrigues, 2) Madhav Kamath, 3) Sunny Bhatia, 4) Ishika S, 5) Sumeet Sachdev, 6) Udayan Grover, 7) Sujana S, 8) Mangala Bhandarkar, 9) Selwyn Lobo, 10) Arindam Basu.

It was no surprise seeing Sherwin at the top yet again, as his amazing skills and rich experience have seen him win numerous Scrabble tournaments across India over the years. He was Gibsonised with two rounds to spare, and finished with 22 wins, a good four wins ahead of his nearest competitor!

Madhav Kamath's second-place finish was quite remarkable. The young



man is just 12, but he's already one of India's top players and has achieved numerous accolades in the game, both at the national and international level. By the time he was ten, Madhav was already one of Delhi's top players in the adult category, and he has gone from strength to strength since then. He's also the National Spelling Bee champion.

In Division B, the top ten were: 1) Vignesh S, 2) Abid Hussain 3) Ela Ghose, 4) Vimisha Patel, 5) Sushanto Bhattacharya, 6) Siddharth N, 7) V Sridev, 8) Neelanjana Bid, 9) Neeta Bhatia, 10) Gaurav Bhargava.

Division B saw a photo finish at the top, with Vignesh and Abid both finishing with 17 wins, but Vignesh winning the title on account of a higher spread.



*V Sridev, winner of the Vandana Grover Memorial Award, given for the most improved player at the tourney*

In Division C, the top three were: 1) Shiv Talwar, 2) Aparna Todi, 3) Dev Garg. Both Shiv, who is aged just ten, and Aparna finished with six wins. In Division D, the top three were: 1) Mayank Malik, 2) Rohan Kamath, 3) Kaashvi Mohan. Mayank is just seven years old, and he was the youngest participant in the tournament. These youngsters' victories make us wonder whether we have more prodigies in the making – the future of Indian Scrabble seems quite secure with such bright kids taking a keen interest in the game!

### Final standings – Division A

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Sherwin Rodrigues	22	2890
2	Madhav Kamath	18	831
3	Sunny Bhatia	16	340
4	Ishika Shivalingaiah	15	653
5	Sumeet Sachdev	15	34
6	Udayan Grover	14	336
7	Sujana Somasekar	13	220
8	Mangala Bhandarkar	12	104
9	Selwyn Lobo	12	-352
10	Arindam Basu	12	-818
11	Rajeev Menon	11	-232
12	Sudhir Kamath	11	-467
13	Bhushan Pradhan	9	-683
14	Archana Aggarwal	8	-990
15	Pramit Kamath	7	-1001
16	Aarush Jotwani	5	-865

High game: Sunny Bhatia 698

### Final standings – Division B

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Vignesh S	17	644
2	Abid Hussain	17	474
3	Ela Ghose	16	408
4	Vimisha Patel	15	1052
5	Sushanto B	15	684
6	Siddharth Nithyanand	15	328
7	V Sridev	14.5	262
8	Neelanjana Bid	14	218
9	Neeta Bhatia	13	217



10	Gaurav Bhargava	13	210
11	Asha Kamath	13	200
12	Harvinderjit Bhatia	13	27
13	Jyoti Budhia	12	453
14	Ritu Chadha	12	144
15	Abhijit Shilotri	12	-545
16	Tanvi Binani	11	197
17	Ahana Goyal	11	-327
18	Manit Arora	11	-743
19	Aruna Grover	10.5	56
20	Vasudha Mohanka	10	-311
21	Mohit Arora	10	-641
22	Suhaas Khandelwal	10	-896
23	Mayank Khandelwal	9	-900
24	Akshay Hiremath	6	-1211

High game: Ritu Chadha 660

### Final standings – Division C

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Shiv Talwar	5 (+1)	530
2	Aparna Todi	5 (+1)	395
3	Dev Garg	5	329
4	Anjana Naira Dev	4	220
5	Anuradha Chagti	3 (+1)	-325
6	Amay Gupta	2 (+1)	43
7	Tavishi Bagga	2 (+1)	-88
8	Sanchita Bid	2 (+1)	-216
9	Shagun Jain	0 (+1)	-888

High game: Shiv Talwar 574

### Final standings – Division D

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Mayank Malik	5	296
2	Rohan Kamath	4	415
3	Kaashvi Mohan	4	379
4	Shubham Sharma	4	199
5	Shreeya Garg	3	183
6	Yekkritha Karthik	2	15
7	Param Sen	2	-486
8	Adhrit Aggarwal	0	-1001

## IIT Bombay Open

The second edition of the IIT Bombay Open, conducted by the Literati club at IIT Bombay, was played from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October. There was a mix of seasoned names, upcoming

challengers as well as newbies from the institute among the 38 players on the roster. After 16 rounds, Sunny Bhatia emerged as the winner, with Aditya Iyengar and Sumeet Sachdev joining him on the podium.



*Sunny Bhatia, winner of the 2023 IIT Bombay Open*

### Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Sunny Bhatia	13 (+1)	1568
2	Aditya Iyengar	12	762
3	Sumeet Sachdev	11	799
4	Nidhi Singhvi	11	193
5	Hriday Samtani	10	848
6	Udayan Grover	10	630
7	Samrath Bhatia	10	475
8	Varisht Hingorani	10	70
9	Shaik Ahmed	9	1370
10	Sanjay Bijlani	9	690
11	Amit Sood	9	656
12	Nikheel Ruparel	9	592
13	Ritu Chadha	9	199
14	Abid Hussain	9	162
15	Raghuram J	9	104
16	Kala Ganesh	8	655
17	Danish Shahna	8	535

18	Viji Ramachandran	8	314
19	Neena Shahani	8	249
20	Rustom Deboo	8	163
21	Vihaan Singhvi	8	-316
22	Parvathy R	8	-586
23	Anika Dalwani	8	-677
24	V Ramachandran	7	346
25	Harvinderjit Bhatia	7	103
26	Anvay Shah	7	15
27	Shabnam Sahay	7	-310
28	Patrick Pereira	7	-428
29	Abbas Jaffari	5 (+2)	-1049
30	Arnab Choudhary	6 (+1)	-1130
31	Mimi Hingorani	6	242
32	Aditya Choudhary	5 (+1)	-199
33	Aruna Grover	6	-372
34	Sneh Desai	5 (+1)	-876
35	Nistha Agarwal	6	-1055
36	Anand Narasimhan	5	-1010
37	Darshil Mashru	2 (+0)	-1686
38	Hussain Jaffari	0 (+0)	-2046

High game: Amit Sood 652

## KSSA Silver Jubilee

*by Radhika Mahalingaiah*

The opponent was lucky. They picked all the goodies. I had horrible racks. I had no choice but to change, change and change...

How many times do we come across Scrabblers bemoaning luck, or rather the lack of it? How often do we blame the 'tile fairy' for deserting us? Even the top guns admit that luck does play a role in games, though they peg it at less than 20% in any game.

The Karnataka State Scrabble Association (KSSA) decided to do away with the 'luck factor' in some of the games at an unrated tourney held in Bangalore from 12<sup>th</sup> to 13th August. As part of the KSSA's Silver Jubilee celebrations, this unique 14-game

team tournament was organised with variations in each game.

A total of 20 players were divided into four teams. Though most of the games were individual, contributing to the overall team score, three games were played as teams of two and three versus the opposing teams of two or three players. The teams, named after popular dishes of the region, were:



*A Scrabble-themed cake at the KSSA Silver Jubilee tournament in Bangalore*

Team Akki Roti: Ishika Shivalingaiah (captain), Suchindra Potnis, Samarth Manchali, Abdul Waheed, Manisha Mohite

Team Bisi Bele Bath: Suyash Manchali (captain), R Nalini, Radhika Mahalingaiah, Suguna Dandi, Chandru Bolaki

Team Chiroti: Shubha Shivashankar (captain), Dipankar Chatterjee, Abid

Hussain, Mayank Khandelwal, Rama Gomatam

Team Dosa: Sujana Somasekar (captain), Sushanto Bhattacharya, Lennie D'Souza, Monica Agarwala, Suhaas Khandelwal

Round 1: Each player had their own bag of tiles, with the even numbered tiles divided equally and the odd numbered tiles split as AGJZ in one bag and IKXQ in the other. Players picked tiles from their own bags, and on exhausting their bag, picked from the opponent's bag. Everyone enjoyed the game, and there was not even whisper of 'luck'!

Round 2: Only words of three, four or five letters were allowed, but words of two, six, seven or eight letters were allowed as hooks while forming the words.

Round 3: Any one tile turned upside down was used as a blank to play a word scoring 50 points or above. This variation proved a little difficult for beginners.



*The winners, Team Chiroti*

Round 4: Players got ten bonus points for every hook (except an S

back hook) to form words of three or more letters.

Round 5: This round was a blitz game with 15 minutes to each player.

Round 6: This was a lifeline game, where a player could ask any of their teammates for help with a word once.

Round 7: Each player had to play words in their half of the board, whether vertical or horizontal. The central line could be used by both players. Some smart players set up scoring plays on triple lanes without worrying about the spot being stolen!

Round 8: This was another fun game played with two tile bags. One bag had only vowels while the other had only consonants. Players could choose to pick from either bag to make up decent racks. There were some high-scoring games in this one.

Round 9: This was a normal game, but with handicaps. Every 100-point difference in rating between the players gave an additional ten points to the lower rated player's score. So, an 800-rated player playing against a 1500-rated player started the game with a cushion of +70.

Rounds 10, 11, 12: Normal games but with two or three players to a side.

The last two rounds were individual games with KOTH pairing.

Team Chiroti, headed by Shubha, were the winners of the overall championship. KSSA founders Rex and Lennie D'Souza, along with Syed Rehman, were honoured with trophies and gift vouchers.

# Scrabble around the world

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



## United States

The 2023 edition of the WESPA Championship (WESPAC), organised by the North American Scrabble Players Association (NASPA), was held in Las Vegas from 22<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> July. As many as 135 players from around the world competed over 32 rounds, at the end of which the top two, Harshan Lamabadusuriya of England (23 wins at a spread of 1283) and David Eldar of Australia (22.5 wins at a spread of 2094), faced off in a best-of-seven final. The top five in the standings were rounded off by England's Lewis Mackay, Nigeria's Wellington Jighere, and Australia's Andrew Fisher, with 22 wins apiece.

The final went down to the wire, and made for compelling viewing (all the seven matches from the final, as well as other key games from the tourney,

can be viewed on the NASPA Scrabble YouTube channel).

The final commenced with a 462-377 win for Harshan, before David came back with a 542-364 equaliser. Round 3 saw Harshan inch ahead with a 458-444 win, but David was up to the task in the fourth clash, winning by 510-409 to make it 2-2. The trend went on – Harshan won Round 5 by 480-382, only to see David claw back yet again with a tense 477-464 win in Round 6 to stretch it to a decider. With the title on the line, it was David who prevailed, winning 480-439 to make it 4-3 in his favour and win his second world title after the 2017 World Scrabble Championship, which incidentally had also seen him win against Harshan in the final.

Besides the WESPAC, several side tournaments were played during the Scrabble extravaganza (the NASPA Double Down) at the Westgate Las Vegas Resorts and Casino, which celebrated 75 years of Scrabble. The NASPA Championship (Collins) was also played prior to the WESPAC, with Wellington recovering from a 0-2 deficit to seal a 3-2 win over David in the best-of-five final.

## Pakistan

The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of the Pakistan Scrabble Championship, played in Karachi from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> August, saw Hassan Hadi Khan clinch the title with 24 wins from 27 games. Wasim Khatri and Ali Salman finished second and third respectively.

# Puzzles and quizzes

## Anagram quiz – Name the capital city

*by Rustom Deboo*

In this anagram quiz, the clue in each question is the meaning of a seven-letter word valid in Scrabble, with the corresponding letter in brackets denoting a letter in the said seven-letter word, which, when removed from the said word, results in the six remaining letters being the jumbled letters of a six-letter capital city name (hint: none of these ten six-letter capital city names have an anagram that is valid in Scrabble).

For instance, if the seven-letter word is found to be ADMIRE<sup>D</sup> and the corresponding letter is E, then the name of the capital city in this case would be Madrid. You can send in your answers to [indianscrabble@gmail.com](mailto:indianscrabble@gmail.com) by 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023. One entry getting all ten capital cities right will win a cash prize of Rs. 500 in a lucky draw.

Congrats to Suyash Manchali for winning the lucky draw prize for the quiz featured in the June 2023 edition.

- |                                                    |                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1) Foolish; thoughtless (T)                        | 6) A relish made of salted roes (R)          |
| 2) A Japanese woman in a position of authority (S) | 7) Something that contributes to comfort (T) |
| 3) To dismantle (U)                                | 8) An upholder of rights (N)                 |
| 4) A perfumed hair dressing (M)                    | 9) Colourless proteins (G)                   |
| 5) A Maori chant of welcome (G)                    | 10) The reception room of a spa (R)          |





## Find the best play

*by Hriday Samtani*

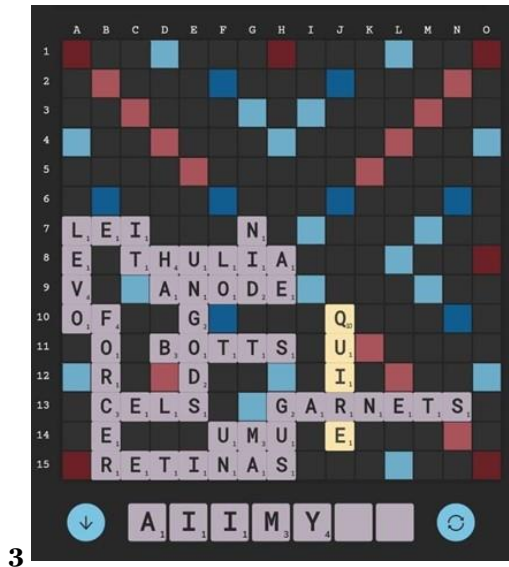
Find the best/highest-scoring play on offer in each of three board situations below:



**1**



2

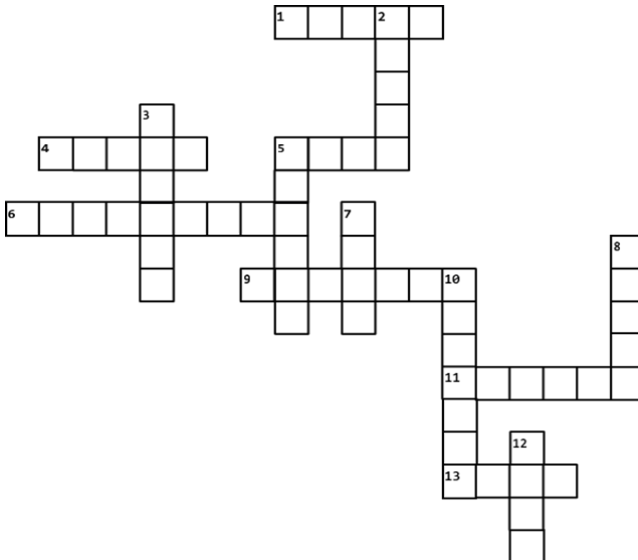


3

## Identify the baby animal

by Shubha Shivashankar

The objective of this quiz is to replace the numbers with letters corresponding to their point value in Scrabble in order to get a valid word, and fill them in the grid. For example, 3-1-1-4 would correspond to CALF. Each of the words mean a baby animal or a younger form of an animal, with the hint given in brackets.



## Across

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) 4-4-1-1-3 (mammal)        | 9) 1-1-4-1-1-1-1 (mammal) |
| 4) 1-10-1-1-3 (avian)        | 11) 3-1-2-1-1-1 (mammal)  |
| 5) 3-1-1-1 (mammal)          | 13) 1-4-1-1 (avian)       |
| 6) 4-1-1-2-2-1-1-1-2 (avian) |                           |

## Down

- |                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2) 1-1-1-4-1 (insect)   | 8) 1-4-1-1-1 (avian)          |
| 3) 3-1-2-2-1-1 (insect) | 10) 1-1-2-3-1-1-1 (amphibian) |
| 5) 3-4-2-1-1-1 (avian)  | 12) 4-1-4-1 (mammal)          |
| 7) 8-1-1-4 (mammal)     |                               |

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## Alphagram quiz – Eight-letter words

*by Rustom Deboo*

Given below are 14 ‘alphagrams’ (the letters of a word arranged into alphabetical order – note that ALPHAGRAM\* by itself is a phoney!) of eight-letter words valid in Scrabble. Test yourself on how many you can get right, and within how much time.

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1) AEGLOPRY | 8) ADLNOSTY  |
| 2) CDEKLMOR | 9) AEPRTUVY  |
| 3) AABDEERT | 10) ACINORTT |
| 4) EILMNSTU | 11) ABGNORSU |
| 5) FHILORSU | 12) AAEHMNRT |
| 6) EEIMNPRS | 13) EINOOPRT |
| 7) EILMOSUV | 14) AEIKNRTW |

# SAI round-up

- **WESPA Youth Cup 2023 to be held in December**

The 2023 WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) is set to be held in Trang, Thailand from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Team India will be looking to replicate their recent strong showings at this tournament.

The Indian contingent for WYC 2023 consists of 12 players, namely Madhav Gopal Kamath, Suyash Manchali, Ekansh Arora, Aarush Jotwani, Samarth Manchali, Vihaan Singhvi, Ishika Poddar, Ahana Goyal, Anika Dalwani, Triambak Eashwar, Shiv Talwar, and Suhaas Khandelwal.

The WYC was held virtually in 2021 and 2022, and this marks a return to in-person Scrabble for the premier youth tournament after a gap of three years. SAI wishes Team India all the very best ahead of WYC 2023!

## New members

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

1. **Sankhini Mehta** (Anand) is a freshly graduated lawyer from the milk city of Anand

in Gujarat. She is searching for her path of passion and employment, and in between those things, enjoys playing table-top games and reading. After lots of casual games with family and to take forward her love for words, she decided to go on this new adventure of competitive ‘scrabbling’.

2. **Sarla Chahal** (Gurgaon)

3. **Har Sarup Chahal** (Gurgaon)

4. **Monika Singh** (Delhi) is a spirited explorer of words, the English language and psychology. By profession, she is a teacher, but in her heart, she is a perpetual learner. She revels in sharing her understandings and experiences with her students, and absorbing their wisdom in return. It was in 2020 that she discovered the enchanting and exciting world of Scrabble, during the pandemic. Scrabble has not only built up her vocabulary, but has also nurtured her confidence and patience. She has a deep compassion and love for animals and plants, and is an avid fan of Keanu

Reeves' John Wick and Mads Mikkelsen's Hannibal Lecter.

5. **Aria Kapadia** (Mumbai)

6. **Mahesh Akarapu**

(Hyderabad) is a software engineer by profession. He has always been interested in solving crosswords, and English words in general. When he played Scrabble in office competitions, he didn't pursue it further as he felt that most words weren't meaningful in daily use. But since joining SAI, he is eager to understand and learn more about the game and become more active in competitive Scrabble.

7. **Arjun Maheshwari**

(Vadodara)

8. **Vikas Maheshwari**

(Vadodara)

9. **Bharath Balakrishnan**

(Bangalore, based in the US) is a software engineer by profession, currently with Google. He started playing Scrabble in 2011, when it was mostly an escape from a gruelling graduate student schedule at IIT Bombay. He progressed to playing in tournaments two years later. The thing he loves about Scrabble is the beautiful mix of randomness with skill, and

the fact that unlike chess, it gives a lower-rated player a faint chance to equalise – which always leaves him optimistic when playing against higher-rated players.

10. **Akham Romilla** (Delhi) is originally from Imphal and currently working as a lawyer in New Delhi. She has been fascinated with words since she was in school – she remembers winning a school spelling bee competition. She considers her introduction to Scrabble as an extension of her love for words, and feels fortunate to be a part of a like-minded community.

11. **Aparna Todi** (Delhi)

12. **Vanaja Iyer** (Mumbai)

13. **Mayank Malik** (Delhi)

14. **Amay Gupta** (Noida)

15. **V Sridev** (Kochi) stumbled upon Scrabble at the age of 7, and has been in love with the game ever since. The thing he admires most about Scrabble is that it involves both mathematical and linguistic skills, as well as a bit of luck. Though he has been away from the game for a while, he hopes to continue playing Scrabble and make new friends in the process.



# Solutions to puzzles and quizzes

## Find the best play



### 1) Three best moves:

- 15H – Se(E)DBE(D)S /  
SE(E)DBE(D)S – 126 (N)
- 9C – BaDNESS – 79
- 9B – SuNBEDS – 76



### 2) Three best moves:

- O1 – UNR(I)PEN(E)D – 86
- 3A – NEP – 31 (DNRU)
- 3A – NUDE – 32 (NPR)



### 3) Three best moves:

- K5 – MYIASIs – 103
- N8 – epIMY(S)IA – 76
- I2 – MYIASIs – 74

## Identify the baby animal

Across: 1) Whelp, 4) Squab,  
5) Cria, 6) Fledgling, 9) Leveret,  
11) Piglet, 13) Eyas

Down: 2) Larva, 3) Maggot,  
5) Cygnet, 7) Joey, 8) Owlet,  
10) Tadpole, 12) Fawn

## Alphagram quiz

- 1) PLAYGOER, 2) CLERKDOM,
- 3) TEABREAD, 4) MUSLINET,
- 5) FLOURISH, 6) SPERMINE,
- 7) VOLUMISE, 8) TOYLANDS,
- 9) PYRUVATE, 10) TRACTION,
- 11) OSNABURG, 12) EARTHMAN,
- 13) INOTROPE, 14) KNITWEAR

# Ratings

Below are the SAI official ratings (top 80) as on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023. Please visit [indianscrabble.com](http://indianscrabble.com) for the full rankings.

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
1	Sherwin Rodrigues	MUM	1838	1747
2	Akshay Bhandarkar	OSI	1757	612
3	Aditya Iyengar	PUN	1733	751
4	Rahil Parkar	MUM	1670	699
5	Madhav Gopal Kamath	DEL	1638	828
6	Sunny Bhatia	DEL	1591	1409
7	Prashanth Seetharam	OSI	1564	384
8	Samrath Singh Bhatia	MUM	1556	1077
9	Mohan Chunkath	CHN	1554	1144
	Puneet Sharma	OS	1553	202
	Irfan Siddiqui	OS	1535	380
10	Charles Carneiro	OSI	1533	870
11	Udayan Grover	PUN	1524	2318
12	Suyash Manchali	BLR	1517	294
13	Sanjoy Gupta	BLR	1498	1513
14	Ishika Shivalingaiah	BLR	1498	568
15	Varisht Hingorani	MUM	1491	1312
16	Nidhi Singhvi	OSI	1483	998
17	Rajveer Rawlin	BLR	1477	574
18	A Krishnan	CHN	1476	568
19	Douglas Lobo	GOA	1460	1470
20	Hriday Samtani	MUM	1443	683
	Shaila Amalean	OS	1443	307
21	Sumeet Sachdev	MUM	1408	649
22	Vraj Jain	MUM	1391	593
23	Pramit Rao	MUM	1382	89
24	Selwyn Lobo	OSI	1377	374
25	Sujana Somasekar	BLR	1368	660
26	Amit Sood	PUN	1352	587
27	Bharath Balakrishnan	BLR	1352	133
	Rohaina Tanveer	OS	1343	552
28	Anuj Shetty	BLR	1328	341
29	Mangala Bhandarkar	PUN	1306	1805
30	Rajeev Menon	HYD	1301	939
31	Pankaj Bolaki	BLR	1285	463
32	Sudhir Kamath	DEL	1284	1202
33	Manju Sood	BLR	1279	936
34	Yash Potnis	BLR	1277	562
35	Sanjay Bijlani	MUM	1271	648
36	Rajiv Antao	GOA	1248	1099
	Supriya Devnani	OS	1242	106
37	Rustom Deboo	MUM	1236	720
38	Ekansh Arora	DEL	1234	193
39	Arindam Basu	KOL	1229	527
40	Sridhar Paidikondala	HYD	1217	940
41	Kala Ganesh	MUM	1199	1522
42	Shaik Ahmed	HYD	1191	1995

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
43	Shubha Shivashankar	BLR	1183	346
44	R Nalini	BLR	1181	1004
45	Bhushan Pradhan	MUM	1166	2137
46	Aaradhya Srivastava	MUM	1166	98
47	Rehet Singh Bhatia	MUM	1158	990
48	Shreyas Gupta	DEL	1155	89
49	Karthik Ganesan	DEL	1154	210
50	Pramit Kamath	DEL	1143	548
51	Vignesh S	BLR	1142	508
52	Prithwiraj Mukherjee	BLR	1135	385
53	Suchindra Potnis	BLR	1131	538
54	Abid Hussain	BLR	1124	512
55	Sushanto B	DEL	1118	543
56	Joe Rodrigues	GOA	1114	1058
57	Danish Shahna	BLR	1112	724
58	Siddharth Nithyanand	BLR	1103	440
59	Alan DeMello	MUM	1103	195
60	Rajnikant Singh	KOL	1101	289
61	Radhika Mahalingaiah	BLR	1095	982
62	Amogh Bhamekar	GUJ	1095	80
63	Meena Bakhru	PUN	1083	404
64	Srikrishnan TK	BLR	1074	65
65	Archana Aggarwal	DEL	1072	657
66	Neeta Bhatia	MUM	1071	531
67	V Ramachandran	MUM	1070	1434
68	Harsh Sood	BLR	1068	183
69	Dipankar Chatterjee	BLR	1058	680
70	Brian D'Souza	MUM	1055	235
71	Ela Ghose	DEL	1050	209
72	PC Jose	MUM	1030	1408
73	Aarush Jotwani	MUM	1025	217
74	Jyothi Budhia	CHN	1019	106
75	Hemanth Achaya	BLR	1013	299
76	Sneha Thadhani	GUJ	1005	152
77	Nikheel Ruparel	MUM	1002	1159
78	Jacky Fernandes	GOA	999	1046
79	Lennie D'Souza	BLR	998	1293
80	Savio Rebello	GOA	994	241

BLR – Bangalore (KSSA)

CHN – Chennai

DEL – Delhi

GOA – Goa

GUJ – Gujarat (Vadodara)

HYD – Hyderabad

KER – Kerala

KOL – Kolkata

MUM – Mumbai

PUN – Pune

OSI – Indian national residing overseas

OS – Overseas foreign player (no rank)



# ENDGAME

## **Let us know your feedback**

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

## **About SAI**

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

## **How to become a SAI member?**

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

## **Contact us**

For details about Indian Scrabble, you can visit our website at [indianscrabble.com](http://indianscrabble.com).

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

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

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