ENDGAME

The Quarterly Magazine of the Scrabble® Association of India
Volume 5, Issue 3 – September 2025

SCRABBLE
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Madhav Gopal Kamath created history by winning the World Youth Scrabble Championship in Malaysia, thus becoming India's first world champion

In this issue:

- **Madhav mania grips the Scrabble world**
- **The world champion on his WYSC moments**
- **A European Scrabble episode**
- **Scrabble Bitz**

Contents

Foreword 3

A few significant moments from the WYSC 4
by Madhav Gopal Kamath

Talking Scrabble with the WYSC champion 9
by Maria Fernandes

My time at the European tournaments 13
by Sunny Bhatia

Scrabble Bitz 17
by Ela Ghose

In memoriam 22

Tournament round-up 24

Scrabble around the world 35

Puzzles and quizzes 36

SAI round-up and new members 39

Solutions to puzzles and quizzes 42

Ratings 43

Foreword

Dear Members,

In what could be termed as a breakthrough moment for Scrabble in India, Madhav Gopal Kamath's World Youth Scrabble Championship victory put Scrabble in the media spotlight like possibly never before. Given his meteoric rise in the last couple of years towards becoming the world's foremost youth Scrabbler, there was a sense of inevitability about his win this time. And he did it in style, as he sealed the deal with a round to spare to become the first Indian player to win a world Scrabble title.

The 14-year-old's historic success and remarkable climb to the fifth position in the world rankings should undoubtedly inspire not just budding youth players, but also aspiring Scrabblers across all ages. In the pages to follow, Madhav gives an insight into his thought process during pivotal moments at the WYSC, as also his Scrabble journey so far. His sustained genius has vowed the Scrabble world and the press alike, and the Indian Scrabble community is immensely proud of him.

Suyash Manchali, a potential title contender in his own right, finished fifth to build on his recent consistency. As Scrabble continues to strive to gain momentum in India, the support from Essar Foundation to our 12-member contingent at the WYSC was a major boost for the sport's profile. The Scrabble Association of India is grateful to Essar for their encouragement, and going forward, we are optimistic of more of the same, especially for the growth of youth Scrabble. Moreover, the key tasks ahead of us are to widen our member base and take Scrabble to schools.

The WYSC in Kuala Lumpur was not the only tournament where Indian Scrabblers pitted their wits overseas. At the other end of the age spectrum, the World Senior Championship in Berlin saw a two-member Indian squad in the form of Sanjoy Gupta and Sunny Bhatia. While Sanjoy finished sixth at the Seniors, Sunny clinched fourth place at the ensuing Continental Championship in Budapest.

Closer home, the Pune Club and Vadodara tournaments produced top-quality performances and fierce tussles for top honours. In Pune, it all came down to a winner-takes-all in the final round, where Aditya Iyengar pipped Sujana Somasekar to claim the championship on spread. In Vadodara, veteran Varisht Hingorani displayed great nous to secure an impressive win with two rounds to spare.

As always, thanks to all the contributors to issue number 19 – every effort to keep Endgame going is deeply appreciated!

Best wishes,

Rustom Deboo
Editor

A few significant moments from the WYSC

by Madhav Gopal Kamath

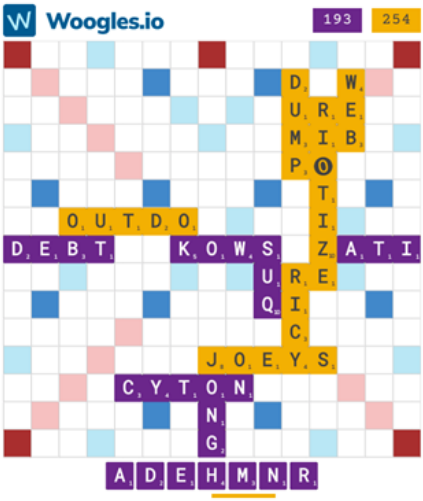
An Indian player won the World Youth Scrabble Championship (WYSC) for the first time in the history of the tournament, as 14-year-old wunderkind Madhav Gopal Kamath, India's highest ranked Scrabbler in the world – he is now placed fifth in the WESPA ratings – and the reigning national Scrabble champion, emerged victorious among 218 under-18 Scrabble players from 18 countries at the 20th edition of the annual tournament in Malaysia.

In this writeup, the newly crowned champion gives an insight into a few challenging situations encountered by him during his WYSC games, as well as some of his notable games.

The 2025 World Youth Scrabble Championship was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 30th August to 1st September 2025. I went there as part of the Indian team, and had an excellent tournament, winning 21 out of 24 games against the best youth players in the world.

This performance was enough to clinch the title with a game to spare, but it wasn't all smooth sailing. Here, I'll discuss some of the trickiest positions from my games at the WYSC.

The first position is from Round 18, against Abdulqudus Olawale of Nigeria.



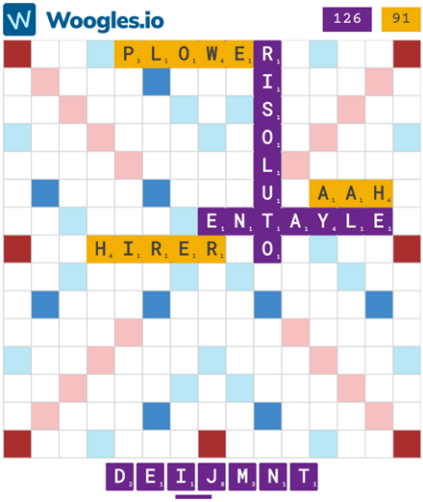
I was initially leading in this game, but he played RIoTIZE for 103 to take a lead. He currently leads 254-193. I have the rack ADEHMNR, and this is actually a very nuanced position. My main options are: HM at 6C for 19 points leaving ADENR, HEARD at 6D for 31 leaving MN, DRA(C)HM at E10 for 28 leaving EN, and HA(W)M at I6 for 25. My normal equity play here would be DRA(C)HM, but given that I'm trailing, I would rather not close the lane to the G. HM seems like the next best play, keeping the very strong ADENR with D, G, T and I all available as floaters. Most experts would probably immediately play this, discarding HEARD since it burns too many good tiles.

However, I see something a bit better. Although HA(W)M leaves DENR, which is slightly worse than ADENR,

it creates two additional threats for him to deal with: the obscure front hook of SHAWM and the obscure back hook of MUREX. SHAWM would be a high-scoring lane for a bingo ending in an S, and MUREX is an easy 40+ point play for the X, which is difficult to block.

These are the sort of plays that can make the difference between winning and losing tight games. In the actual game, I drew the bingo RE(G)AINED and then got RAILERS with SHAWM two turns later, but it wasn't enough to prevent a 17-point loss, as he drew the blank and played DIGERAtI, and then drew the X as well; while I drew seven vowels. Still, my setup worked both ways as he challenged SHAWM and also wasn't confident enough to try MUREX.

The final board:



This position is from the penultimate round of the tournament, also against Abdulqudus. All I need to win the championship is to win this game.

I took an early lead of 35 with ENTAYLE and RISOL(U)TO, and I can now think about playing defensively, even though I usually don't. My options here are DJIN at O7 for 48 and J(O)INTED at 4I for 34. DJIN is a clearly better play from an equity standpoint, but it opens the board drastically and allows for high-scoring bingos ending in an S, or even an N. JOINTED closes the board somewhat, and plays off two more tiles.

I choose JOINTED here, both to block the S of RISOLUTO and to play off more tiles in search of the blank. This isn't necessarily the right play here, but I felt more confident with a 70-point lead on a relatively closed board than with an 83-point lead on an open board. If I can draw a blank

here, it lets me play with insurance as well.

A few moves later, I have another dilemma. He has just taken a lead of 40 points with (E)VERTInG and VO(MI)CAE, but I have plenty of firepower with a rack of AINSXZ?. His play of VO(MI)CAE has blocked my only bingo, oXAZIN(E)S at A10. I still have a few excellent options: ZAX at 3C for 52, ZAX at D10 for 51, or keeping the Z with AX at N1 for 39. I didn't really want to keep the Z when INS? should almost always bingo, so I was deciding between 3C and D10. D10 gives back far less counterplay, so why would I play 3C here for just one more point?

3C is actually a better play in my opinion, for two reasons. It firstly blocks any sevens that would fit under LOOK, which could have been very high scoring, and it also creates a hotspot underneath ZAX. Normally, that wouldn't seem like a positive, but if my opponent floats a tile out into column A, I can get high-scoring bingos or even triple-triple with INS?.

Having played that, I get a horrible draw of NSS, leaving me with double Ns and triple Ss. I can't do anything about the hotspot that I created, and my best play to the bottom left triple is I(F)S, which leaves NNSS?. The best equity play here is SINS with DIGITS, burning two Ss for just 14 points, but the problem is that it makes the board far harder to bingo on, closing all the floaters as well as the DRABS lane.

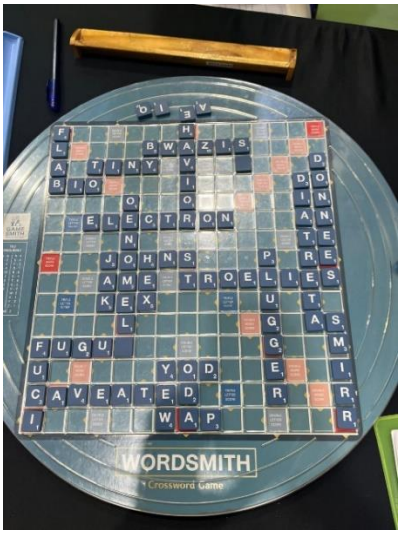
So, I go for (O)NS at 8J, scoring 14 and keeping INSS?, which isn't ideal but should still be enough to win most of the time. The key here is to leave bingo lanes open. After this, I'll be down 11 points, but as long as he doesn't bingo, I should be fine. I do still need to worry about plays underneath ZAX and with the F of FIQUE.

After that, the rest of the game unfolds smoothly. I draw NF, which seems like another horrible pull, but it allows me to play SNI(F)F for 36 after his play of POW underneath ZAX. I then finally draw a vowel, and get iNTENTS for 67, which secures a 423-400 victory and with it, the entire tournament.

The final board:

Further, I share the boards of three memorable games, each of which led to highly satisfying wins.

In Round 10, I was drawn against my compatriot Suyash Manchali. It produced a most enjoyable and exhilarating game that ended in just 11 moves, with the final scores being 539-401 in my favour. He got EL(E)CTRON, TROELIE, and (C)AVEATED, and I got OEN(O)MELS, DONNEES, and the five-overlap DIATR(E)TA.

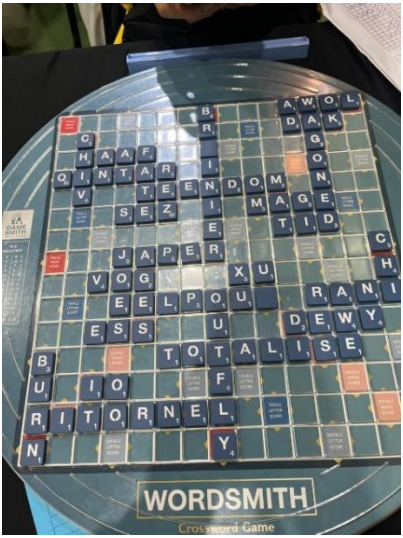


Round 10 – 539-401 vs Suyash Manchali

In Round 19 against Sri Lanka's Inam Irshad, I got PaGODITE, COWTREE, and the triple-triple sOME(G)ATE (for 140 points) en route to a 566-412 win. He got TURG(I)TES, AEONIAN, and the beautiful (T)ZURIS.

Round 19 – 566-412 vs Inam Irshad

Finally, a 511-465 win in my last game of the tournament, against Thailand's Natamon Sathianbut. I got the very obscure EELPOUt, WAGONED, and RITORNEL, as well as high scores for TEENDOM, QINTAR, and OUTFLY. It was indeed an apt way to cap what was a most special tournament.



Round 24 – 511-465 vs Natamon Sathianbut

Madhav in numbers at the 2025 WYSC	
Games played	24
Games won	21
Total spread	2354
Average game score	471.04
Highest game score	566
Highest word score	140
Biggest winning margin	313
Most consecutive wins	6
Average spread per game	98.08
500+ scores	9

Endgame Extra: Know the sevens and eights having the letters M, G, K

GAMMOCK, GEEKDOM, GEEKISM, GEMLIKE, GEMSBOK, GIMMICK, GOMOKUS, GUMLIKE, KAMPONG, KEMBING, KEMPING, KERYGMA, KINGDOM, MAKINGS, MARKING, MASKEGS, MASKING, MILKING, MOCKAGE, MOCKING, MUCKING, MURKING, MUSKEGS, MUSKING, PUGMARK, SMEKING, SMOKING

BLACKGUM, COMAKING, DEKAGRAM, GAMEBOOK, GAMECOCK, GAMELIKE, GAMMOCKS, GEEKDOMS, GEEKISMS, GEMSBOKS, GEMSBUCK, GERMLIKE, GIMCRACK, GIMMICKS, GIMMICKY, GRIMDARK, GUNMAKER, GYMKHANA, KAMPONGS, KEMBOING, KEMPINGS, KERYGMAS, KILOGRAM, KIMBOING, KINGDOMS, KIRIGAMI, KRUMPING, KYMOGRAM, MACKLING, MAGICKED, MARKINGS, MASKINGS, MEGABUCK, MILKINGS, MOCKAGES, MOCKINGS, PUGMARKS, PUMPKING, REGMAKER, REMAKING, SKIAGRAM, SKIMMING, SKIMPING, SMAAKING, SMACKING, SMEEKING, SMEIKING, SMERKING, SMIRKING, SMOCKING, SMOKINGS, UNMAKING, UPMAKING, WIGMAKER

Talking Scrabble with the WYSC champion

by Maria Fernandes

Shortly after his triumph at the World Youth Scrabble Championship (WYSC), ***Madhav Gopal Kamath*** *was interviewed in detail by Maria Fernandes, a journalist from Goa. Following is the entire interview.*

Could you briefly introduce yourself and share how you first got into Scrabble?

I'm fourteen years old and I live in Delhi. I have two brothers and I love to spend my time playing all kinds of games. I'm the current National Scrabble Champion of India (across all ages), and now the World Youth Scrabble Champion (under-18 only). I was first introduced to Scrabble through my father, who would play Scrabble with some friends of his and my uncle. When I was five, I would just sit and watch them play, and over time I picked up the basics of the game, and began playing at home with my brothers and my father.

When did you first discover your talent for word games?

I've been reading books from a very young age, so I always had a bit of an edge when it came to word games. I remember solving basic crosswords and puzzles with my grandparents before the age of five. The other factor that helped me start playing Scrabble is the fact that Scrabble is as much a math game as it is a word game. I was able to play because I could easily do the basic arithmetic involved in Scrabble, and quickly picked up the probabilistic aspects of the game too. In the beginning though, it wasn't as though I had any special talent, just that I started all these things at a younger age than most people would.

Madhav Gopal Kamath with the board from his title-winning game at the 2025 World Youth Scrabble Championship in Kuala Lumpur

Was there a person or moment that inspired you to start playing Scrabble competitively?

My father and my uncle both played competitively, so it was a pretty natural introduction for me into the competitive Scrabble scene. I definitely wanted to try playing tournaments after seeing them play,

so you could say they inspired me. I think I definitely liked the idea of a competition for a board game, since even at home I would play very, very competitively.

How has your Scrabble journey evolved over time – from your early days to where you are now?

In the beginning, I was playing merely for fun, and didn't seriously consider 'studying' for Scrabble. I would play tournaments just as a pastime, and I would enjoy the simpler achievements in Scrabble: playing nice words, and beating the occasional higher rated opponent. Around the time of Covid, I started studying in earnest, and it showed with back-to-back second places in the WYSC when it was held online. In 2022, after the lockdown ended, I began to place well in national competitions, finishing in the top five of major events, and my ranking entered the top ten in India.

I won my first ever national-level competition in Goa in 2024, and followed it up with winning my home tournament in Delhi. By this point, I had entered the top 50 worldwide, based on the global ratings. The year 2025 has been an excellent one for me – I won the Nationals in May, the June ka Junoon tournament in Bangalore in June, and the WYSC in August. This string of wins led to my rating rapidly increasing, my ranking now being fifth in the world.

Can you describe your first major Scrabble tournament?

My first ever tournament was the youth division of the Pune Club Scrabble Championship in August 2016. The youth division was a very small event, with maybe about ten players, held in the corner of the hall so that we kids wouldn't disturb the adults. At the time, I had very little idea of how competitive Scrabble functioned – I didn't know the challenge rule, and had never played with a timer. Despite this, I played quite well, and finished second. The worst part, though? My elder brother finished first. All that did was make me want to win more, though.

How do you go about training and expanding your vocabulary? What does your preparation look like before a major tournament?

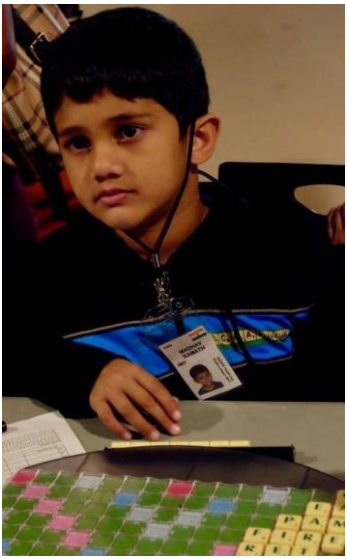
Whenever I tell anyone that I have to prepare for Scrabble tournaments, their response is invariably along the lines of 'Oh, you must be reading the dictionary a lot!', which is far from the truth. My preferred method of word study is using applications such as Zyzzyva, which is a software that quizzes you on specific word lists.

It's a much more methodical process than reading the dictionary, since these word lists are based off of the probability of words rather than any random order. It's very mechanical, and I would mostly learn words through sheer repetition using Zyzzyva. After a point, these cease to be words as such, and become more of useful strings of letters. However, I still try to pick up as many meanings

as I can, which I feel actually helps in recall.

What would you say is the biggest achievement of your Scrabble career so far?

I would say my recent triumph at the World Youth Scrabble Championship is the biggest achievement so far, narrowly ahead of winning the National Championship held in Mumbai earlier this year.



A seven-year-old Madhav at the 2017 WESPA Youth Cup (as the WYSC was then known) in Kuala Lumpur – eight years later in the same city, the prodigy has become India's first world champion

In your opinion, how do memory and strategy compare in importance at the top level of Scrabble?

The common perception among Scrabble players is that the person who knows more words will win on average. However, I feel the impact of strategy is drastically undervalued. Not just at the top level, strategy is worth more than word knowledge. I would say that strategy is one of my biggest strengths, and is how I'm able to beat players who know more words than me.

What challenges or setbacks have you faced on your journey, and how did you overcome them?

Before this year's WYSC, I had a string of second-place finishes at earlier editions (the virtual editions in 2021 and 2022) and disappointing finishes more recently, in 2023 and 2024, where I came in as the top seed and finished fourth. In the Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship in 2022 as well, I finished second.

Each of these tournaments was incredibly disheartening, especially the Asia Cup, where I was within a single move of winning, but threw it all away. After tournaments like that, I've definitely had to analyse my games and question my entire style of play, but I've used each of them to improve upon my game. I don't think I would have reached where I have without such experiences.

What key skills or personal qualities have contributed most to your success in Scrabble?

I'd say my calmness has actually helped me a lot. It definitely wasn't always a strength of mine, but over time I've become much better at keeping my cool when the stakes are high, and it's evident in my gameplay.

Another skill I pride myself on is my board vision, and my ability to make inferences based off of my opponent's plays, which is very important at the highest level.

Do you have a favourite word you've played during a match? What makes it special to you?

I'm generally not very sentimental about my plays, so I don't really have a favourite word.

Are there any specific word lists, books or online resources you would recommend to those looking to get better at Scrabble?

I'd suggest using two main tools to study: Zyzzyva (or a similar 'cardbox' system), and Aerolith. In Zyzzyva, you'll want to focus on doing the seven-letter and eight-letter words, in order of probability. In Aerolith, the daily challenges for the threes, fours and fives, the Word Builders, and the High Probability Toughies are the most important lists. Doing the standard lists of sevens and eights here would be inefficient, because most of the words here are very low-probability.

What advice would you give young or aspiring Scrabble players who want to improve their game?

The first step anyone looking to get into Scrabble in India should take is join their local Scrabble club and the Scrabble Association of India, which will help them enter the competitive scene and find other players to play with. I would say one of the best ways to improve your game, at any level, is play the game regularly, online if you're unable to play in person. Especially in the beginning, just playing the game for some time every few days will give you a feel for the game that studying cannot. Even when you start studying words, playing helps you improve and also lets you see your own progress. Usually, I would play games online for as much time as I spend learning words.

What goals or aspirations do you have for the next phase of your Scrabble journey?

It sounds quite far-fetched, but the long-term goal is to win the WESPAC (WESPA Championship, which is the adult world Scrabble championship). Considering that it's likely to be far away though, the immediate goal is to continue improving, and hopefully defend my titles at the National Championship and the WYSC.

If you could change one rule in Scrabble, what would it be and why?

I would change the time control from the current 25 minutes per side, I think. Scrabble should have a system similar to chess, where 25 minutes is the 'classic' time control, and then have a 'rapid' format, with 10-15 minutes per side. A 'blitz' format might not work offline, but online, five minutes is my favourite time control to play with.

My time at the European tournaments

by Sunny Bhatia

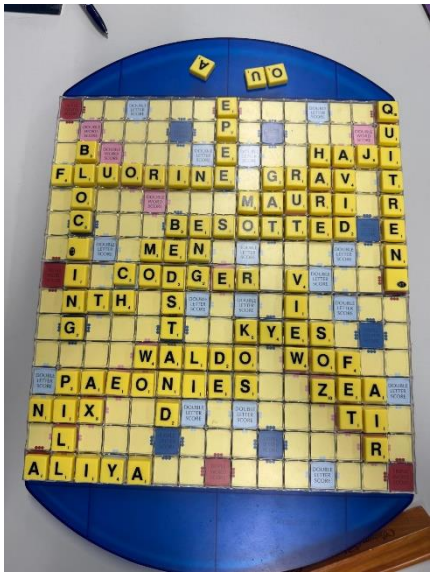
It has been just over a decade since I began playing competitive Scrabble, and my enthusiasm for the game remains as strong as ever. Every tournament — whether in India or overseas — has been a source of immense enjoyment, learning, and camaraderie. Over the years, my performances have spanned the full spectrum — from podium finishes to middling results, and a few disappointing ones as well. Truly, I've experienced it all with more in the offing!

Here is a bit on each of the two tournaments played in Europe in September; the World Seniors in Berlin, and the Continental Scrabble Championship in Budapest.

With fellow Indian Sanjoy Gupta (left)

World Senior Championship – Berlin, 12th to 15th September 2025

Along with my fellow Indian player Sanjoy Gupta, I had the privilege of representing India at the World Senior Scrabble Championship held in Berlin. The event comprised 34 games played over four intense days, drawing participants from more than 15 countries.



A 555-434 loss to Becky Dyer of the USA – she made the nine-timer QU(I)TRENt

The competition was fierce, and both of us had challenging starts. Sanjoy displayed great consistency to finish sixth overall, securing a prize. As for me, after languishing in 35th place at the end of Day 3, I managed to

recover well on the final day to finish a respectable 15th overall.

A thrilling 408-408 tie with Sanjoy

A 539-524 loss to England's Terry Kirk, thanks to his nine-timer WAGGO(N)Er

Charlottenburg Palace, Berlin

The U.S. Army Checkpoint in Berlin, referred to as Checkpoint Charlie, one of the most famous border crossings during the Cold War

Continental Scrabble Championship – Budapest, 19th to 21st September 2025

After a decent showing at the World Seniors in Berlin, Sanjoy flew to Budapest while I chose to take the train along with a few other players. I opted for the day journey, determined to enjoy the scenic beauty of Europe by rail — even if it meant enduring a ride of 11.5 hours!

Scrabbling with Marlon Prudencio during the scenic train journey from Berlin to Budapest

Somewhere along the way, I even managed to squeeze in a few friendly games with Marlon Prudencio of Singapore.

The Hungarian Parliament Building

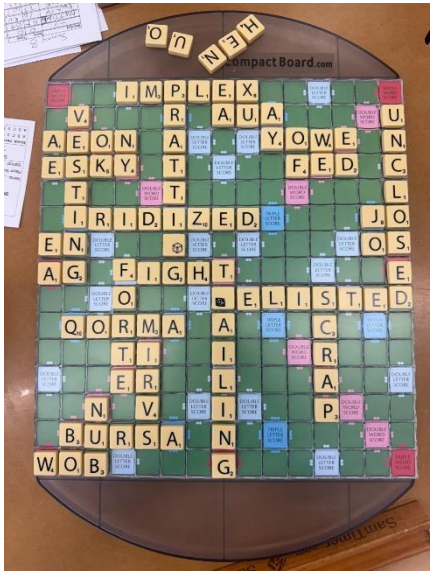
With two free days in Budapest before the tournament, I explored the city to my heart's content — and it truly lived up to its reputation. Compared to Berlin, Budapest easily takes the crown with its stunning architecture, vibrant vibe, and the magnificent River Danube gracefully cutting through the city.

Early Bird

The pre-event was a one-day mini tournament of five games, featuring 34 players. The venue — a bridge playroom inside a mall — was a bit uncomfortable with its poor cooling, but that didn't stop the fun.

The iconic Széchenyi Chain Bridge in Budapest

I finished with a 4–1 record, placing fourth overall, which was a satisfying start to the Budapest leg of my Scrabble journey.



A 443-412 win against Russell Honeybun of Australia

Main Event

The main championship featured 61 players from 18 countries, battling it out over 16 games in two days.

A come-from-behind play of LACONIS(M)

At the end of Day 1, I found myself at 24th place after nine games — not exactly encouraging. But Day 2 turned things around spectacularly!

I won six out of my last seven games, climbing steadily up the leaderboard to finish an incredible fourth overall, taking home a well-earned prize.

I couldn't have asked for a better turnaround — especially after almost resigning myself to what looked like a disastrous outing far from home.

It was one of those tournaments that remind you why you keep coming back to this game — the challenge, the grind, and the joy of every comeback!

Another come-from-behind moment – mANDIOC(A) – at the Continental Championship

Clinching fourth place after fighting back on the second day

Scrabble Bitz

by Ela Ghose

Scrabble Bitz, an initiative by Ela Ghose, features bite-sized content with a view to getting to know the person behind the Scrabble persona of Scrabble players.

Take a software professional, mix that with a wonderful cook who loves making biryani, add a dash of creativity with alcohol concoctions, a love of dogs, high energy, and a passion for Scrabble; and you have an outline of one of the country's top Scrabblers. **Sujana Somasekar** won the Deccan Cup in 2021, and continues to be among the top players in the country.

The mixologist at work

Sujana started playing in 2018 at a corporate event in Bangalore, and was immediately hooked to the game. Mentors like Radhika Mahalingaiah, Manju Sood and Sanjoy Gupta taught her a lot about the game, and with regular 'addas' hosted at Rads' house, her love for both Scrabble and the Scrabble community grew. Now, both the game and the community are her lifelines.

With baby Phantom

Last year, she was elected President of the most happening Scrabble club in India – the Karnataka State Scrabble Association (KSSA), and brought her energy and creativity into orchestrating the 2025 KSSA Indian Open (Mu Sigma). The 2025 Mu Sigma tournament (the largest tournament in the country featuring several international players) was handled impeccably by Sujana and her team.

They brought in several initiatives, such as training videos on rules, punctual games on all four days, and great arrangements during the tournament and after each long day. She was also responsible for the very successful 2025 June Ka Junoon (a

three-day mid-year tournament with an affordable entry fee), where the number of participants had to be capped at 60 due to the limitations of the venue!

With both babies – grown now!

With sparkling eyes, pretty nails, swirling tresses and rapid speech, her energy crackles and buzzes in little sparks around her. Though her games are intense and focussed, she has trained her mind (and is continuing to do so!) to be cool and pragmatic, so that neither victories nor defeats shift her energies. Quiet time and long walks help her get into the zone before settling into a tournament. Though her focus and drive can come across as intimidating in a game, outside of that, she has a ready laugh and is warm, kind, and empathetic.

Focussed during a game

Me-time in the morning and at the end of the day recharges her batteries enormously, and she tries to keep those times inviolate – except for her children who have 24X7 access: her daughter Gitika and her beloved Alsatian, Phantom.

With fellow Scrabblers at a get-together during Mu Sigma 2025

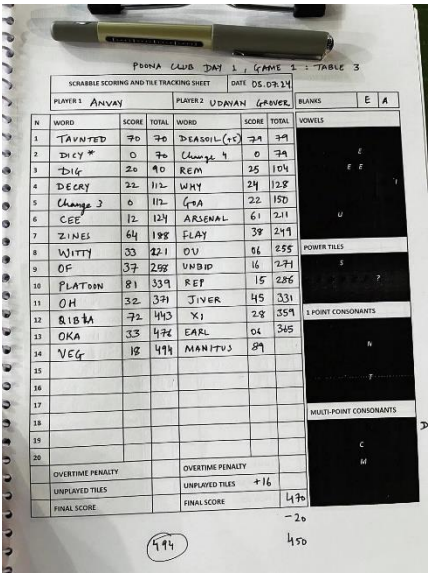
Music is also a key part of her life. While she has experimented with both Carnatic and Hindustani classical music, in her new work role, which requires a lot of travel, she restricts herself to Bollywood music and singing in the shower. Her love for classical music is only paused till her schedule clears enough for her to learn consistently.

Also during Mu Sigma 2025

She loves hosting parties, enjoying the preparation as much as the party itself. She gets completely immersed in the whole planning process, the cooking (which is usually creative and off-the-script), and being with people who are also enjoying their evening. So, now everyone knows where to go for a good post-tournament evening!

Pursuing a PhD in Computer Science at IIT Bombay (relating to designing the algorithms that go into making AIs for games like Scrabble or poker), **Anvay Shah** was introduced to tournament Scrabble three years ago at an IIT Scrabble tournament in Mumbai. Bespectacled, slightly built, and topped with a mass of unruly hair, he comes across as the quintessential academic – in the 80s (well before he was born), he would most likely have been wearing kurta-pyjamas and carrying a 'jhola'.

Anvay's first tournament was the 2022 IIT Bombay Open. Since then, he has played eight tournaments, performing consistently well in the last few. At the last tournament he played (Vadodara), he achieved a remarkable 100-point rating jump.



PUNA CLUB DAY 1, GAME 2 : TABLE 3

SCRABBLE SCORING AND TILE TRACKING SHEET				DATE	05.07.24
PLAYER 1 ANVAY			PLAYER 2 UDAYAN GRANER		BLANKS E A
N	WORD	SCORE	TOTAL	WORD	SCORE	TOTAL
1	TAUNTED	90	90	DEASOIL (+5)	79	79
2	DICY *	0	90	Change 4	0	79
3	DIG	20	90	REM	25	104
4	DECRY	22	112	WHY	24	128
5	Change 3	0	112	GOA	22	150
6	CEE	12	124	ARSENAL	61	211
7	ZINES	64	188	FLAY	38	249
8	WITTY	33	221	OU	06	255
9	OF	37	258	UNDID	16	271
10	PLATOON	81	339	REP	15	286
11	OH	32	371	JIVER	45	331
12	RIBBA	72	443	XI	28	359
13	OKA	33	476	EARL	06	365
14	VEG	18	494	MANITUS	89	
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
	OVERTIME PENALTY			OVERTIME PENALTY		
	UNPLAYED TILES			UNPLAYED TILES	+16	
	FINAL SCORE			FINAL SCORE		490
						−20
						450

494

VOWELS: E E E I U

POWER TILES: S ?

1 POINT CONSONANTS: N T

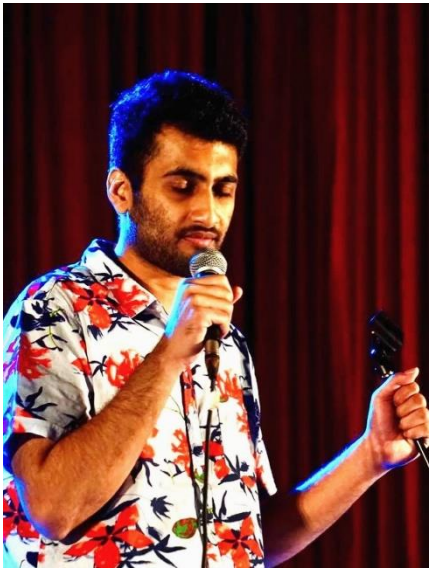
MULTI-POINT CONSONANTS: C H

One of Anvay's scoresheets from the 2025 Pune Club Championship

While he beat a few high-rated players at the tournament, his win against Ishika Shivalingaiah remains a bright memory: she started with MADOQUA (really!), soon made ENFILADE, and within five turns, had a lead of 140 points (320-180). Anvay had to call upon one of his superpowers (being the ability to double down and focus), and with a huge effort, he overcame the sinking feeling of imminent loss, stayed

focussed on the game, and eventually won by nine points (476–467).

The other superpower that is very much in evidence, is his ability to almost calligraph his scoresheet. His precise and tidy writing leave little room for error in either the math or the tracking – scoresheet (of a game he won against Udayan Grover) shown above for reference! With a clear understanding of what's been played and what's left, his endgame is more easily weaponised.

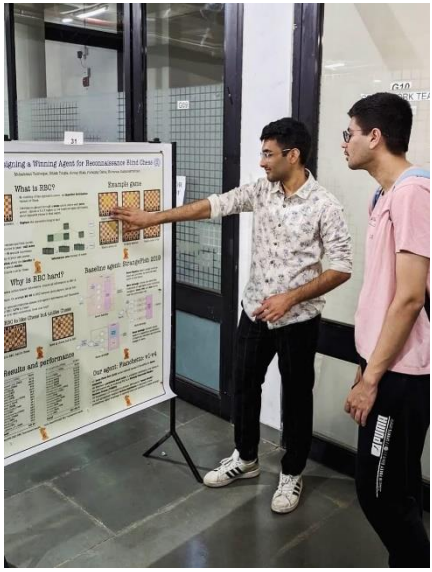


Performing as a stand-up comic

His nine- letter mA(MM)ALIAN through the MM on the board is also a play he's proud of: a tough find even for seasoned players.

Anvay started Scrabble study about a year ago; he has been consistently solving the Aerolith daily puzzles (3s, 4s and 7s), and hasn't missed his 7s for even a day since the start of this year. His steady performance at tournaments is testament to how study pays off. He believes in consistent work and puts in at least 30 minutes of study each day.

As a part of his online CV, he created an anagramming page which has 7774 of the most common seven-letter words on the internet (along with their anagrams, they number just over 10,000) and which are valid in CSW24. This is especially helpful for those who are starting anagramming, as the words are familiar rather than obscure.



The science buff at work

While he gets a huge kick out of spotting bingos, the strategy element of the game is what keeps him hooked. As a computer scientist, he believes that every move is an optimisation problem to optimise three critical elements – score, leave, and board. And then there is the

adrenaline surge that comes from competing (and winning…)

Although he loves the nerdy and competitive elements of Scrabble, he also enjoys the social side, as he gets to hang out with a diverse group of people. The Saturday meetups in Mumbai usually have six to eight players who play for five to six hours.

The pet enthusiast

He is a self-professed bibliophile and a stand-up comic. When he's not playing Scrabble, he swims, plays football and chess, and uses his interactions with people as content for comedy. He's an avid reader: he loves sci-fi, and is currently reading 'The Three-Body Problem'. Among his favourite books are The Elephant Whisperer, Acts of God (by Kanan Gill), and Animal Farm.

Endgame Extra: A few handy front and back hooks for select four-letter words

ACTA – FACTA, PACTA

AGER – CAGER, EAGER, GAGER, JAGER, LAGER, PAGER, RAGER, SAGER, WAGER, YAGER, AGERS

ALAN – ALAND, ALANE, ALANG, ALANS, ALANT

ALLY – BALLY, DALLY, GALLY, PALLY, RALLY, SALLY, TALLY, WALLY, ALLYL

EERY – BEERY, LEERY, PEERY, VEERY

EMES – DEMES, FEMES, HEMES, LEMES, MEMES, SEMES, TEMES

ETCH – FETCH, KETCH, LETCH, RETCH, VETCH

ILEA – PILEA, ILEAC, ILEAL

ILIA – CILIA, MILIA, ILIAC, ILIAD, ILIAL

IOTA – BIOTA, DIOTA

OARY – GOARY, HOARY, ROARY

ORDO – FORDO, SORDO, ORDOS

OWSE – BOWSE, DOWSE, LOWSE, SOWSE, TOWSE, OWSEN

UNDE – BUNDE, UNDEE, UNDER

UNDY – BUNDY, CUNDY, FUNDY, GUNDY, OUNDY

In memoriam

'A tribute to her warmth, grace, and unforgettable friendship'

by Kala Ganesh

Parvathy Raghunathan was a wonderful person. She was a constant source of comfort, laughter and strength. She was not only my best friend – she was the first person who opened the doors of Scrabble for me.

Her passion for Scrabble was something extraordinary, which inspired everyone around her. While working at New India Assurance in the capacity of Manager, she never allowed her busy schedule to come in the way of her love for the game. She made it a point to attend each and every Scrabble tourney that she could, no matter how packed her days were.

She guided me as a novice, and introduced me to the physical Collins dictionary. Till today, I have been regularly reading the book. And whenever I read it, I feel her presence guiding and motivating me.

While she was working, she used to get guest house accommodation from New India Assurance, and welcomed us to share those cozy spaces with her. Those evenings enjoying warm delicious dinners have become some of my most cherished memories.

Her dedication was unmatched. Every day during her car rides to and from work, she would study Scrabble words with unwavering focus. Such was her love for Scrabble.

She adopted her daughter at the age of four. She was very proud of her adopted daughter, and there was always a twinkle in her eye when she spoke about her culinary and dancing skills. She was constantly worried about her better half, and whenever she participated in tournaments outside Mumbai, she used to cook for three days for her beloved husband, as his health was fragile.

She was a melodious singer. Every year she would visit my house for Navratri Haldi Kumkum. She enraptured us with her soothing music.

The loss of Parvathy has left a quiet ache in my heart. Her passing has created a deep void, but it has also awakened a powerful truth – a life as quietly beautiful as hers leaves a lasting mark.

It just can't get away from my mind that Parvathy is no more. Just a day before she left us, she spoke to me about WSL and how terribly she will miss it due to her constraints.

Her presence is felt even in her absence.

'Started playing the game because of her'

by Viji Ramachandran

Parvathy was an ardent lover of Scrabble. In fact, I started playing the game because of her. She and her brother Ramakrishnan used to attend all the Scrabble sessions we used to have in Mumbai in the 90s. We also used to meet in one of our houses and play the whole day. We have travelled together, especially to Bangalore by train. It was real fun, as we used to play in the train, about eight or nine of us, like a mini tournament.

Despite all her personal difficulties and her job responsibilities, Parvathy used to manage to come to as many tournaments, especially in the pre-Covid days.

Her birthday was on 15th August, and many a time it would be during a tournament. We would celebrate her great day together. She was sportive and would be game for all the fun.

She was trained in Carnatic music and had given many solo concerts. We used to attend the Navratri celebrations at Kala's place, and she would sing spontaneously on all such occasions.

She loved the game so much that she named her daughter 'Pavitra', an anagram of a variant of her name.

Parvathy will be missed dearly.

Endgame Extra: Know the 97 fives starting with CL

CLACH, CLACK, CLADE, CLADS, CLAES, CLAGS, CLAIM, CLAME, CLAMP, CLAMS, CLANG, CLANK, CLANS, CLAPS, CLAPT, CLARO, CLART, CLARY, CLASH, CLASP, CLASS, CLAST, CLATS, CLAUT, CLAVE, CLAVI, CLAWS, CLAYS, CLEAN, CLEAR, CLEAT, CLECK, CLEEK, CLEEP, CLEFS, CLEFT, CLEGS, CLEIK, CLEMS, CLEPE, CLEPT, CLERK, CLEVE, CLEWS, CLICK, CLIED, CLIES, CLIFF, CLIFT, CLIMB, CLIME, CLINE, CLING, CLINK, CLINT, CLIPE, CLIPS, CLIPT, CLITS, CLOAK, CLOAM, CLOCK, CLODS, CLOFF, CLOGS, CLOKE, CLOMB, CLOMP, CLONE, CLONK, CLONS, CLOOP, CLOOT, CLOPS, CLOSE, CLOTE, CLOTH, CLOTS, CLOUD, CLOUR, CLOUS, CLOUT, CLOVE, CLOWN, CLOWS, CLOYE, CLOYS, CLOZE, CLUBS, CLUCK, CLUED, CLUES, CLUEY, CLUMP, CLUNG, CLUNK, CLYPE

Tournament round-up

World Youth Scrabble Championship 2025

with inputs from Neeta Bhatia, Essar Foundation, and SAI

In a historic moment for Indian Scrabble, 14-year-old Madhav Gopal Kamath won the 2025 World Youth Scrabble Championship (WYSC), becoming the first Indian player ever to claim a major global Scrabble title. Madhav, India's highest-ranked Scrabble player in the world and the reigning national champion, emerged victorious among 218 under-18 players from 18 countries at the 20th edition of the WYSC held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Delhi boy clinched the coveted championship in the penultimate round, finishing with 21 wins from 24 rounds.

Madhav Gopal Kamath, the World Youth Scrabble Champion, with his silverware

Like every year, India sent a strong contingent to the 2025 WYSC, which was held from 30th August to 1st September. Comprising 12 of the country's best youth Scrabble players, seven boys and five girls, the squad was mentored by Neeta Bhatia. Also in the top five was15-year-old Suyash Manchali from Bengaluru, runner-up at last year's edition in Sri Lanka, who secured fifth place with 17 wins.

Madhav victoriously points to a screen grab of his title-clinching game

Besides Madhav and Suyash, the Indian team comprised (positions in brackets): Samarth Manchali (39th), Ahana Goyal (55th), Vihaan Singhvi (60th), Anika Dalwani (63rd), Abel

George Mathew (69th), Ishika Poddar (99th), Suhaas Khandelwal (138th), Khanak Singhvi (183rd), Aria Kapadia (187th), and Shiv Talwar (189th).

Madhav's title-winning game was a tense 423-400 win against Nigeria's Abdulqudus Olawale, who finished as the runner-up. In the previous two games (Rounds 21 and 22), Madhav had likewise secured close wins – 434-424 against Pakistan's Aehzam Ahmed, and 388-374 against Abdulqudus – that made the difference in the final scenario.

Madhav receives the winner's trophy at the WYSC

The Indian contingent at the WYSC was strongly supported by the Essar Foundation, in partnership with the Scrabble Association of India (SAI) and Wordaholix.

Harvinderjit Bhatia, President, SAI, said: "Madhav's victory is a historic milestone for Indian Scrabble and a proud moment for the entire community. Over the years, our youngsters have shown immense promise, and this world title validates India's growing stature in global Scrabble. We thank Essar Foundation for supporting Team India at WYSC 2025 and helping create the platform for such achievements."

Madhav with Suyash Manchali, who finished fifth

An Essar Foundation spokesperson said: "We are immensely proud and thrilled by Team India's historic achievement at the WYSC 2025, especially Madhav Gopal Kamath's extraordinary victory. At Essar Foundation, we believe sports, whether physical or intellectual, have the power to inspire, educate, and unite. Supporting these young Scrabble champions is central to our mission of nurturing talent and creating opportunities for the next generation to excel."

Commenting on his victory, Madhav said: “To be the first Indian to win a world Scrabble title is a dream come true. I’m grateful for the support of my family, coaches and teammates, and I hope this inspires many more young players in India to take up the game and believe they can compete at the highest level.”

Madhav with his winning trophy, flanked by other prize winners

Earlier this year, Madhav became the youngest ever Indian national champion by winning the 25th National Scrabble Championship in Mumbai, and is currently ranked fifth in the world across all ages. Having come close at both the WYSC and the Asia Cup Youth Championship in recent years, this landmark triumph marks both his and India’s first global Scrabble crown.

Madhav started playing Scrabble when he was just six years old. His extraordinary aptitude and ingenuity on the board have propelled him into the ranks of the world’s top players. His WYSC victory is expected to give a major boost to youth Scrabble in India and inspire a new generation of players to pursue the sport competitively.

Madhav and Suyash, India's top two youth Scrabblers, face off at the WYSC

The Indian contingent at the 2025 WYSC

As Scrabble continues to gain recognition as a sport in India, these achievements highlight the immense potential of the country’s competitive youth Scrabble circuit. The Scrabble Association of India expresses gratitude to Essar Foundation for its partnership, as well as to Assembly Travel for providing backpacks and

Black Panther for designing the team jerseys.

Brothers Suyash and Samarth Manchali face off at the WYSC

Games in progress at the WYSC – having seen its 20th edition, the tournament continues to be a hotbed of emerging Scrabble talent from across the world

Final standings – Top 40

	Player and Country	Wins	Spread
1	Madhav Kamath (IN)	21	2354
2	Abdulqudus Olawale (NG)	19	1406
3	Aehzam Ahmed (PK)	17	1728
4	Adheesha D (SL)	17	1598
5	Suyash Manchali (IN)	17	883
6	Bilal Asher (PK)	17	850
7	Ho Xuan Lei (SG)	17	446
8	Affan Salman (PK)	16	1449
9	Udhev Prasath (SL)	16	1209
10	Samuel Crispin (EN)	16	1104
11	Oscar Ivanovski (AU)	16	906
12	Sophia Ekeruche (NG)	16	869
13	Tienrawit Pondeela (TH)	16	814
14	Wong Tsz Sen (HK)	16	575
15	Syed Maaz (PK)	16	364
16	Aghalya N (MY)	16	306
17	Alexis Koh (MY)	15.5	806
18	Krissanapong C (TH)	15	1169
19	Thulnith De Silva (SL)	15	991
20	Ahmed Salman (PK)	15	917
21	Wachirawit Jainim (TH)	15	867
22	Inam Irshad (SL)	15	759
23	Archana P (SL)	15	703
24	Weerapap Sukjai (TH)	15	661
25	Chayapol Inloi (TH)	15	652
26	Mohammed Usman (PK)	15	613
27	Kevan Croos (SL)	15	536
28	Grayson Ling Dao (MY)	15	499
29	Tharin Kariyawasam (SL)	15	465
30	Padipan Sangtow (TH)	15	440
31	Shanzay Fazil (PK)	15	418
32	Rachata S (TH)	15	295
33	Amelia Goh Hui Neo (MY)	15	80
34	Aayush H (SL)	15	-13
35	Tristen Tan (SG)	14.5	1062
36	Kyaan Perera (SL)	14.5	1009
37	Nathan Tan (MY)	14	1419
38	Thanik L (TH)	14	1174
39	Samarth Manchali	14	866
40	Dineth Fernando	14	823

Pune Club Championship

The 2025 Pune Club tournament, held from 18th to 20th July, saw the battle for top honours go into the last round, as Aditya Iyengar edged Sujana Somasekar out due to a higher spread by winning the last game.

Both Aditya and Sujana finished with 17 wins, while Suyash Manchali took third place with 16 wins. A total of 36 players competed across 24 rounds at the tourney, which was organised by the Pune Scrabble Club.

Aditya Iyengar receives the winner's trophy after his last-round victory

Aditya and Sujana Somasekar face off at the top table

Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Aditya Iyengar	17	2295
2	Sujana Somasekar	17	912
3	Suyash Manchali	16	1242
4	Sunny Bhatia	16	897
5	Udayan Grover	15	640
6	Danish Shahna	15	624
7	Siddharth Nithyanand	14	892
8	Bhushan Pradhan	14	273
9	Triambak Eashwar	14	-98
10	Nidhi Singhvi	13.5	320
11	Nakul Prabhu	13	951
12	Rajiv Antao	13	726
13	Priya Karkhanis	13	336
14	Suchindra Potnis	13	83
15	Vignesh S	13	-133
16	Harvinderjit Bhatia	12.5	-130
17	Kala Ganesh	12	430
18	Rajeev Menon	12	335
19	Abhijit Shilotri	12	134
20	Anika Dalwani	12	-138
21	Neeta Bhatia	12	-472
22	Viji Ramachandran	11	505
23	Meena Bakhru	11	452
24	Gajanan Patil	11	-56
25	Vimarsh Pandita	11	-244
26	Neena Shahani	11	-354
27	Aruna Grover	11	-572
28	Bhushan Sarmalkar	10.5	-472
29	Caroline Coelho	10	-207
30	Prashant V	10	-364
31	Teresa Joseph	10	-509
32	Caryl Gonsalvez	9.5	-470
33	Snehal Welde	9	290
34	Raksha Tanna	9	-245
35	Sylvia Coelho	9	-454
36	Aakash Vara	0	-7419

High game: Viji Ramachandran 647

Vadodara Open

by Vimisha Patel

The 2025 Vadodara Open kicked off on 15th August, our Independence Day. Players arrived dressed in saffron, white and green, with a few Ashok Chakras adding to the patriotic mood. After the national anthem, the first tiles hit the board...

Day 1 saw Udayan Grover leading the pack with eight wins, followed by Kala Ganesh and Ishika Shivalingaiah with seven wins each. On Day 2, Udayan continued on Table 1, but by lunchtime, Hriday Samtani, Sujana Somasekar and Varisht Hingorani had all reached nine wins. The

battle intensified in the second half of the tourney, with KOTH beginning from Round 17.

The final day began with Udayan and Varisht on Table 1, Sujana and Kala on Table 2, and Rahil Parkar, who had rocketed up the rankings, fighting hard against Hriday on Table 3. The last few games witnessed a good number of rises and falls.

But Varisht maintained his lead through the day, eventually being Gibsonised with two rounds to spare (Round 22). Udayan finished second with a round to spare, while Rahil rose to the third position. Sujana and Nidhi Singhvi finished fourth and fifth respectively.

Varisht Hingorani, winner of the 2025 Vadodara Open

Though the tourney was played in a single division, there were also podium prizes under Division B based on ratings – it was a Mumbai sweep, as Anika Dalwani, Anvay Shah and Sonal Merchant finished as the top three.

A newbie division featured six new players in five unrated games, with Mumbai's Ruju Kapadia, Okwaput Victor (from Uganda, but staying in Rajkot) and local newcomer Deepak Asher finishing as the top three.

Participants in various shades of the national flag colours

The prizes for the highest game score and highest word score were both clinched by emerging players – a whopping 659 by Vimarsh Pandita from Dehradun and 167 by Lucy

Thomas from Kottayam (for the word UPGRADES) respectively.

Of course, Gujarat means farsan and good food — and we had plenty! Every lunch was about sharing a little bit of the local flavour. And yes, the boards, tiles and bags were fussed over until they matched perfectly (I'm known for my OCD!)

The 2025 Vadodara Open was a celebration of words, food, and friendship

Seven years ago, Scrabble became more than just a game for me; it became an integral part of my life. Ever since I played my first tournament in March 2018, I wanted to organise a tourney in my city and that's how Vadodara found its place on India's Scrabble map. My aim has always been simple: to host a tournament people enjoy coming back to. From the boards and tiles to the food on the table, I want everything to feel just right.

Our first tournament in Vadodara was in March 2020. This year marked the sixth tournament here, and from 2026 to 2030, the Vadodara Scrabble Club will take the tournament on the road — to new locations such as Kottayam/Cochin, Pondicherry/ Chennai, Jaipur, Chandigarh, and Kolkata. The dream is to grow, connect, and carry the spirit of Vadodara with us!

Across three days and over 500 games, what really stood out wasn't just the high scores or clever words. It was the laughter between rounds, the familiar hugs, the teasing banter… the kind of camaraderie only Scrabble can create.

Every year I find myself smiling more, laughing louder, and feeling grateful for this community that has become my extended family. The Vadodara Open 2025 reminded me once again… we are not just playing a game; we are building a tribe.

It was indeed a celebration of words, food, and friendship – here's to many more boards, bingos, and bonds!

Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Varisht Hingorani	19 (+1)	1877
2	Udayan Grover	16	881
3	Rahil Parkar	15	985
4	Sujana Somasekar	15	557
5	Nidhi Singhvi	15	-195
6	Ekansh Arora	14.5	515
7	Ishika Shivalingaiah	14	1094
8	Sunny Bhatia	14	514
9	Bhushan Pradhan	14	438
10	Vimisha Patel	14	359
11	Kala Ganesh	14	190
12	Anika Dalwani	13	537
13	Sonal Merchant	13 (+0)	314

14	Anvay Shah	13	307
15	Rajiv Antao	13	304
16	Komal RG	13	175
17	Arvind Lath	13	-842
18	Ela Ghose	11.5(+1)	869
19	Hriday Samtani	12	478
20	Gajanan Patil	12	217
21	Archana Aggarwal	12	123
22	Neeta Bhatia	12	-142
23	Abhijit Shilotri	12	-230
24	Viral Kansara	12	-537
25	Ritu Chadha	11.5	217
26	Dhaval Rathod	11.5	-331
27	Ishika Poddar	11	194
28	Aruna Grover	11	-204
29	Nandini Sonthalia	11 (+0)	-343
30	Srushti Gandhi	11	-583
31	Harvinderjit Bhatia	10	117
32	Vimarsh Pandita	10	-332
33	Lucy Thannickal	10	-401
34	Mimi Hingorani	10	-479
35	Archna Lalwani	9 (+1)	-895
36	Dennis Balogun	9	-488
37	Bhushan Sarmalkar	8	-418
38	Aria Kapadia	8	-706
39	Ark Kansara	8	-1360
40	Remya Mohan	2	-2776

High game: Vimarsh Pandita 659
Bye treatment explained in brackets

Rated one-day tournaments

Delhi (13th July, eight rounds)

Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Madhav Kamath	7	1079
2	Sushanto B	6	162
3	Komal RG	5	629
4	Ela Ghose	5	277
5	Sudhir Kamath	5	255
6	Archana Aggarwal	4	504
7	Sunny Bhatia	4	455
8	Shalini Sahdev	4	195
9	Prakhar Astana	4	-481
10	Shreyas Gupta	3	-260
11	Madhulekha B	3	-280
12	Swapnil Dixit	3	-466
13	Akshay Hiremath	2	-832
14	Panya Goel	1	-1237

High game: Sunny Bhatia 616

Participants at the Delhi one-dayer in July

An August Affair, Delhi (10th August, eight rounds)

Participants at An August Affair

Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Ela Ghose	5 (+1)	641
2	Sudhir Kamath	6	573
3	Sunny Bhatia	6	569
4	Komal RG	5	171
5	Manit Arora	5	-73
6	Ekansh Arora	4 (+1)	-160
7	Mohit Arora	4	307
8	Ritu Chadha	4	276
9	Ahana Goyal	4	-273
10	Archana Aggarwal	2 (+1)	-4
11	Shiv Talwar	2 (+1)	-226
12	Akshay Hiremath	1 (+1)	-500
13	Andreia Mittra	0 (+1)	-1301

High game: Sudhir Kamath 611
Bye treatment explained in brackets

A Fistful of Words, Mumbai (21st September, eight rounds)

Participants at A Fistful of Words

Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Nidhi Singhvi	7	611
2	Carolann Pais	6	449
3	Samrath Bhatia	5.5	265
4	Udayan Grover	5	552
5	Bhushan Pradhan	5	423
6	Anvay Shah	5	283
7	Rehet Bhatia	5	-273
8	Ritu Chadha	5	-479
9	V Ramachandran	4	221
10	Neelanjana Bid	4	-1
11	Sanjay Bijlani	4	-40
12	Nikheel Ruparel	4	-93
13	Sonal Merchant	3.5	49
14	Kala Ganesh	3	247
15	Aria Kapadia	3	-6
16	Viji Ramachandran	3	-300
17	Archna Lalwani	3	-790
18	Srushti Gandhi	2	-195
19	Raksha Tanna	2	-358
20	Utkarsh Lal	1	-565

High game: Nidhi Singhvi 602

Nidhi Singhvi, winner of A Fistful of Words, the Mumbai one-dayer

---

Sept-embers, Delhi (21st September, eight rounds)

Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Sudhir Kamath	7	628
2	Sujana Somasekar	6	569
3	Komal RG	5	484
4	Archana Aggarwal	5	290
5	Shalini Sahdev	5	144
6	Ela Ghose	4	347
7	Swapnil Dixit	4	216
8	Akshay Hiremath	4	111
9	Prakhar Astana	3 (+1)	-182
10	Yekrittha Karthik	2 (+2)	-465
11	Aparajitha Sabesan	3 (+1)	-506
12	Kreday Agarwal	2 (+2)	-641
13	Panya Goel	2 (+1)	-229
14	Sharv Jain	3	-291
15	Shweta Raina	1 (+1)	-475

High game: Sudhir Kamath 619
Bye treatment explained in brackets

Participants at Sept-embers

Endgame Extra: Kottayam Scrabble Club felicitates world champion Madhav

by Teresa Joseph

The Kottayam Scrabble Club (KSC) organised a programme on 29th September to felicitate Madhav Gopal Kamath on his spectacular achievement of winning the World Youth Scrabble Championship 2025.

Madhav speaks at the Kottayam Public Library

Distinguished guests who spoke on the occasion included Chetan Kumar Meena, District Collector, Kottayam; K.C. Joseph, Former Minister for Rural Development, Planning and Culture, Govt. of Kerala; Roy Paul, IAS, former Secretary of Civil Aviation and Chairman, Air India; and Abraham Itticheria, President of the Kottayam Public Library. Sudhir Kamath also spoke a few words as former President of the Scrabble Association of India.

On behalf of the Kottayam Scrabble Club, Chetan Kumar Meena handed over a memento to Madhav, and Abraham Itticheria gifted him with a book. In his reply speech, Madhav expressed his hope that many more youths in India would be inspired to take up the game. He also gifted a Scrabble board to the Kottayam Scrabble Club.

Kottayam District Collector, Chetan Kumar Meena, hands over a memento to Madhav on behalf of the Kottayam Scrabble Club, in the presence of Abraham Itticheria, President of the Kottayam Public Library and KSC; Roy Paul IAS, former minister K.C. Joseph, and KSC Secretary Teresa Joseph

Madhav's Scrabble achievements as well as the programme and the media attention that it garnered created a ripple effect, with enquiries coming from parents and educators about the game, about buying boards, and introducing Scrabble in schools and colleges. More awareness about the game has been generated, and many more have been inspired to take it up.

Endgame Extra: My unforgettable WYSC experience

by Vihaan Singhvi

Participating at the World Youth Scrabble Championship 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia was an absolutely unforgettable experience for me. Around 220 youth from over 17 countries came together, creating a lively and truly international atmosphere where language and strategy united us.

The buzzing venue at Sri Kuala Lumpur International School filled me with both excitement and nerves, as I realised that I'd be facing passionate young minds from all over the world. Across three days, every player competed in 24 intense and highly competitive games, each match testing not just vocabulary, but also patience, quick thinking, and resilience.

Our team manager Neeta Bhatia, SAI, and our sponsors Essar Foundation supported the whole team throughout the tournament. Every round was a rollercoaster of emotions — celebrating big wins, learning from close defeats, and making new friends with teammates and competitors alike. Sharing meals, swapping stories, and teaching each other new words made the experience richer and more meaningful. The event wasn't just about Scrabble; it was about embracing diversity and building friendships that crossed nations and cultures.

Engrossed in a game during the WYSC

The icing on the cake was Madhav, our own team captain, winning the championship and making everyone proud. Taking part in this tourney certainly taught me the true spirit of competition and collaboration, and I left Malaysia with priceless memories, greater confidence, and the dream to return next year — letters in hand and heart full of hope!

Top 15 WESPA-rated scores in India in 2025 (as of 30th September)		
Score	**Player**	**Tourney**
716	Aditya Iyengar	Goa Open
710	Goutham J	JKJ, Bangalore
660	Selwyn Lobo	JKJ, Bangalore
659	Sherwin Rodrigues	Nationals (A)
659	Vimarsh Pandita	Vadodara
648	A. Krishnan	Nationals (A)
648	Suyash Manchali	JKJ, Bangalore
647	Viji Ramachandran	Pune Club
635	Amit Sood	Kaizen, Pune
635	Abhijit Shilotri	Pune Club
633	Aditya Iyengar	Goa Open
632	Udayan Grover	Vadodara
630	Komal RG	Nationals (B)
627	Gajanan Patil	Nationals (B)
626	Aditya Iyengar	Goa Open

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:

Malaysia

The 20th edition of the World Youth Scrabble Championship (WYSC), held in Kuala Lumpur from 30th August to 1st September, saw 218 players from 18 countries. India's Madhav Gopal Kamath won the tournament in the penultimate round, with Nigeria's Abdulqudus Olawale and Pakistan's Aehzam Ahmed finishing second and third respectively. A detailed report of the tourney can be found on page 24.

Germany

The 2025 edition of the World Senior Championship was held in Berlin from 12th to 15th September. There were 56 players in action across 34 rounds, after which England's Mark Nyman emerged victorious with 26 wins at a spread of 2386. The top five was rounded off by Mike Baron (USA), Kong Chock Heng (Malaysia), Becky Dyer (USA), and David Webb (England). India's Sanjoy Gupta took the sixth place, while Sunny Bhatia finished 15th.

Mark Nyman with the winner's prize after winning the World Senior Championship (picture: WESPA)

Hungary

A week after the World Seniors, the Continental Scrabble Championship was played in Budapest. Following a five-round Early Bird, the main event featured 61 players across 16 rounds. It was an Australian top two, as Esther Perrins won the championship due to a better spread, having tied at 13 games with Russell Honeybun. Euclid Hui (Hong Kong) finished in third place, while Sunny Bhatia (India) and Sam Kantimathi (USA) finished fourth and fifth respectively.

Puzzles and quizzes

Mixed anagrams – Musical instruments

by Rustom Deboo

Below are ten anagrams, each of which has two seven-letter Scrabble words that are musical instruments from around the world, which you might have come across during your word study or games. For instance, LONG TOPIC CITER would yield the words GITTERN and PICCOLO. Can you unscramble them all?

You can send in your answers to *indianscrabble@gmail.com* by 31st December 2025. One entry getting all ten answers right (i.e. both words in each question) will win a cash prize of Rs. 500 in a lucky draw.

1) OPEN STATUE NOTE
2) A STRAIN IN A GULF
3) LIT REMARK HABIT
4) VIA A HUMBLER AIM
5) FAST CABLE ALONE
6) HEAT ON MAIN SHIP
7) NOTICE LEAST RUM
8) MARK TAGLINE END
9) OR NATIONAL ARCH
10) NAB DIPLOMA PAGE

Guess the eight-letter word

by Rustom Deboo

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

8315 is an animal; 647 is a beverage; 62735 is a vehicle; 5738 is a body part

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

1) 7216 is a city
526 is a body part
87423 is a crime
7635 is a payment

2) 4125 is a currency
286 is an animal
83741 is a liquid
8643 is a music genre

3) 4387 is a bird
638 is a feeling
45821 is a foodstuff
5263 is a body part

4) 2645 is a currency
538 is an animal
78436 is a city
1862 is a feeling

Find the common word

by Shubha Shivashankar

The objective of this quiz is to find a common word that fits in the blanks of the following sets of words in the same sequence. For example:

T H _ _ G R _ S E _ _ R O _ Y

The common word for the above set is IN, making the words THING, RISEN, and IRONY.

1) Easy

B E _ _ _
_ _ _ J E
_ _ D I _

2) Medium

_ _ N O _ A
S _ _ T O _
_ L A _ I _

3) Hard

B _ D _ L _ S
_ _ _ L I K E
H A V _ R _ _

Can you GET them all?

by Rustom Deboo

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

Sevens			Eights		
1.	DY??	(5)	6.	HOP??	(5)
2.	UV??	(4)	7.	IKO??	(4)
3.	MP??	(5)	8.	ACM??	(3)
4.	BF??	(4)	9.	RTU??	(6)
5.	LM??	(5)	10.	BEL??	(4)

Endgame Extra: Know the sevens and eights ending with U

ANTIFLU, BABASSU, BANDEAU, BATTEAU, BEBEERU, BERCEAU, BUNRAKU, CAMAIEU, CANDIRU, CARDECU, CARIBOU, CATECHU, CATTABU, CHANOYU, CHAPEAU, CHATEAU, CORBEAU, COUTEAU, DAIMOKU, FABLIAU, INCONNU, JAMBEAU, JUJITSU, JUJUTSU, MAMAKAU, MANITOU, MANTEAU, MARABOU, MOINEAU, MORCEAU, MWALIMU, NILGHAU, NOUVEAU, NYLGHAU, PARVENU, PLATEAU, PONCEAU, PURLIEU, RAUPUTU, ROKKAKU, RONDEAU, ROULEAU, SANTIMU, SANTOKU, SAPAJOU, SEPPUKU, SHIATSU, SHIATZU, SUBMENU, TABLEAU, TAMANDU, TAMARAU, TAUHINU, TIMARAU, TINAMOU, TONNEAU, TRUMEAU, TURACOU, WAMEFOU, WAREHOU

ABOIDEAU, ABOITEAU, BACALHAU, BERIMBAU, CALLALOU, CARCAJOU, CARIACOU, CARJACOU, COUMAROU, FELDGRAU, FLAMBEAU, FROUFROU, HAPPOSHU, HAUSFRAU, JIUJITSU, JIUJUTSU, KABELJOU, KEIRETSU, KINKAJOU, MAIREHAU, MINSHUKU, NINJITSU, NINJUTSU, NUNCHAKU, PIRARUCU, PRIEDIEU, PYENGADU, ROUSSEAU, SUCURUJU, SURUCUCU, THANKYOU, TIRAMISU, TSUTSUMU, TUCUTUCU, VERMOULU, WILLIWAU, ZAIBATSU

SAI round-up

- **Prizes for WYSC players**

  The SAI Managing Committee announced the following prizes for the 12 youth players who formed the Indian contingent at the 2025 World Youth Scrabble Championship (WYSC), in recognition of their efforts at the global youth tournament:

  Madhav Gopal Kamath – Rs. 30,000
  Suyash Manchali – Rs. 15,000
  Samarth Manchali – Rs. 10,000
  Ahana Goyal – Rs. 5000
  Vihaan Singhvi – Rs. 5000
  Anika Dalwani – Rs. 5000
  Abel George Mathew – Rs. 5000
  Ishika Poddar – Rs. 5000
  Suhaas Khandelwal – Rs. 3000
  Khanak Singhvi – Rs. 3000
  Aria Kapadia – Rs. 3000
  Shiv Talwar – Rs. 3000

  In addition, SAI member Pradyot Anand graciously sponsored an award of Rs. 10,000 for Madhav, while other anonymous members similarly sponsored an award for Suyash. SAI thanks these members for supporting our young Scrabblers.

- **Support from the Essar Foundation at the WYSC**

  SAI is immensely thankful to the Essar Foundation for supporting Team India at the WYSC, and helping create the platform for our youth Scrabblers to showcase their best at the highest level. This support would go a long way in Scrabble's ambition for gaining recognition in India.

  Over the last 55-plus years, Essar has worked closely with the communities residing in the vicinity of its operations. The Essar Foundation has carried on philanthropic work in a cohesive, programmatic manner. Its activities are inspired by the concept of shared value whereby Essar strives to build an inclusive environment for the communities that it impacts through its business operations. The Foundation today reaches out to thousands of people across remote villages in India, serving in the areas of women's empowerment, livelihoods, education, environment conservation, sports, and healthcare and sanitation.

- **Media coverage of Madhav's historic WYSC high**

  Madhav Gopal Kamath's victory at the WYSC led to him and Indian Scrabble being featured in multiple print and electronic media across India. Backed further by the Essar Foundation, Indian Scrabble received a welcome boost through this media coverage.

  Within four weeks of the WYSC, the historic moment was covered in the form of articles, interviews, or videos by Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Hindu, India Today, New Indian Express, Mid-day, Times Now, NDTV, and several other national as well as regional media.

  The links to the various articles and interviews can be found on the SAI website at: *Madhav wins WYSC 2025 - News articles - Scrabble Association of India*

- **SAI titles in the offing**

  With a view to recognise and reward excellence and consistency of players in SAI-rated tournaments, the proposed SAI Title System has been finalised by the Managing Committee, with the three titles set to be National Grandmaster (NGM), National Master (NM), and National Expert (NE). The detailed title system along with the first list of title holders will be released by November.

- **Membership cards issued to all life members**

  All SAI life members received their certified member e-cards with unique membership numbers at their registered email IDs, with a view to streamline the member list. As of 30th September 2025, there are 308 life members in the SAI database.

New members

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

1. **Rishabh Srinet** (Delhi)

2. **Monica Chandorkar** (Thane) is a librarian in a school, and has loved to play Scrabble since childhood. Her childhood Scrabble memory is playing with her parents, with her mother giving her letter tablets with

a big spoon to make the maximum available words. As a school librarian, she has been training and making her students aware about Scrabble.

3. **Nandini Sonthalia** (Vadodara) loved Scrabble during her teens, and has rekindled her passion in the last decade. She has done a Masters in Social Work and a Diploma in Mass Communication, and was closely associated with 'What's the Good Word?', the first English game show on Doordarshan.

4. **Nisha Bordoloi** (Guwahati)

5. **Vanishree Walunj** (Mumbai)

6. **Jacob Koshy** (Noida) is a journalist and enjoys wordplay in all forms. Scrabble has been an integral part of his childhood. In the early 2000s, the Internet Scrabble Club introduced him to a whole new world of online Scrabble. Though he had lost touch, he was quite thrilled on knowing about the existence of SAI recently, and is looking forward to participating in his first tournament sometime soon.

7. **Bhanumathi Ganesh** (Bangalore) is a transition-cum-parenting coach and a vainika (veena player). She was introduced to Scrabble through her mother-in-law, who also trained her daughter. Her husband is also an avid Scrabbler. She started playing Scrabble seriously in 2021, and particularly enjoys the strategic aspect of the game.

8. **Kreday Agarwal** (Delhi)

9. **Tejas Karandikar** (Thane)

10. **Khanak Singhvi** (Jaipur) discovered her love for words on a Scrabble board at just ten. Watching her elder brother Vihaan and her aunt Nidhi battle over tricky tiles, she found herself drawn into their playful rivalry. Soon, triple-word scores became her favourite thrill. What started as family fun is now her habit of thinking in letters and possibilities.

Solutions to puzzles and quizzes

Guess the eight-letter word

1) MONSTERA, 2) EDACIOUS,
3) TARWHINE, 4) FRONDAGE

Find the common word

1) GAD, 2) ANN, 3) EEL

Can you GET them all?

1) DALGYTE, FIDGETY, GADGETY, GYRATED, TRAGEDY

2) OUTGAVE, OUTGIVE, VAGUEST, VULGATE

3) EMPIGHT, EMPTING, PIGMEAT, PIGMENT, TEMPING

4) BEGIFTS, BIGFEET, FATBERG, GABFEST

5) GAMETAL, GIMLETS, LEGITIM, MELTAGE, MELTING

6) APOTHEGM, GEOPHYTE, HEPTAGON, PATHOGEN, PHOTOGEN

7) EKLOGITE, GOATLIKE, GOOKIEST, TOKENING

8) MAGNETIC, MEGACITY, TAGMEMIC

9) GUTTERED, GUTTLERS, RETAUGHT, TURGITES, TUTORAGE, UTTERING

10) ABLEGATE, BEETLING, GETTABLE, GLEBIEST

Mixed anagrams – June 2025 edition

1) BURRITO – POLENTA
2) RENDANG – TARFUTO
3) CHOLENT – SPUMONE
4) CHORIZO – GARBURE
5) GNOCCHI – TEMPURA
6) BILTONG – KACHORI
7) LASAGNA – MOFONGO
8) GOUGERE – PARFAIT
9) BEIGNET – DOPIAZA
10) GOULASH – TIMPANA

Endgame Extra: Know the sevens and eights ending with EMIC

ANAEMIC, ECDEMIC, ENDEMIC, LEXEMIC, POLEMIC, PYAEMIC, RACEMIC, SEMEMIC, TAXEMIC, TONEMIC, TOTEMIC, TOXEMIC, URAEMIC, VIREMIC

ACADEMIC, ALCHEMIC, ANOXEMIC, ANTHEMIC, AZOTEMIC, CACHEMIC, CHOLEMIC, COPREMIC, EMPYEMIC, EPIDEMIC, GLYCEMIC, ISCHEMIC, LEUCEMIC, LEUKEMIC, LITHEMIC, OLIGEMIC, PANDEMIC, PHONEMIC, PROXEMIC, SACHEMIC, SAPREMIC, SPANEMIC, SYSTEMIC, TAGMEMIC, TOXAEMIC, TRISEMIC, URINEMIC, VIRAEMIC

Ratings

Below are the official SAI ratings (top 80) as on 30th September 2025. Please visit *indianscrabble.com* for the full rankings.

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
1	Akshay Bhandarkar	OSI	1766	670
2	Madhav Gopal Kamath	DEL	1754	1136
3	Sherwin Rodrigues	MUM	1700	1989
4	Varisht Hingorani	MUM	1630	1466
5	Aditya Iyengar	MUM	1623	992
	Irfan Siddiqui	OS	1617	469
6	Charles Carneiro	OSI	1554	919
	Puneet Sharma	OS	1553	202
7	Suyash Manchali	BLR	1540	463
8	Goutham Jayaraman	BLR	1511	682
9	Udayan Grover	PUN	1490	2756
10	Sanjoy Gupta	BLR	1483	1787
11	Samrath Singh Bhatia	MUM	1482	1166
12	Sujana Somasekar	BLR	1474	1121
13	Ishika Shivalingaiah	BLR	1468	959
14	Rahil Parkar	OSI	1448	804
15	Sunny Bhatia	DEL	1441	1940
	Michael Tang	OS	1440	466
16	Nakul Prabhu	MUM	1431	1599
17	Douglas Lobo	GOA	1426	1544
	Raghuram J	OS	1420	41
18	Mohan Chunkath	CHN	1411	1292
19	Carolann Pais	MUM	1404	1600
20	Nidhi Singhvi	PUN	1401	1239
21	Rajveer Rawlin	BLR	1400	646
22	Hriday Samtani	MUM	1399	797
23	Siddharth Nithyanand	BLR	1396	745
24	Amit Sood	PUN	1384	751
25	A Krishnan	CHN	1382	632
26	Rustom Deboo	MUM	1352	890
27	Bharath Balakrishnan	OSI	1352	133
28	Manju Sood	BLR	1343	984
	Sumeet Sachdev	OS	1339	905
29	Shaik Ahmed	HYD	1324	2143
30	Sudhir Kamath	DEL	1319	1508
31	Shaila Amalean	OSI	1299	396
32	Danish Shahna	BLR	1292	1064
33	Mangala Bhandarkar	PUN	1290	2146
34	Jacky Fernandes	GOA	1285	1295
35	Pramit Kamath	GOA	1284	602
36	Rajeev Menon	HYD	1282	1245
37	Pankaj Bolaki	BLR	1282	716
38	Samarth Manchali	BLR	1270	262
39	Triambak Eashwar	CHN	1257	217
40	Shubha S	BLR	1255	514
41	Rohaina Tanveer	OSI	1250	608
42	Ekansh Arora	DEL	1245	288
43	Selwyn Lobo	GOA	1241	658
44	Bhushan Pradhan	MUM	1231	2505
45	Suchindra Potnis	BLR	1227	783
46	Arindam Basu	KOL	1215	631
47	Sushanto B	BLR	1194	857
48	Kala Ganesh	MUM	1184	1862
49	Gajanan Patil	BLR	1179	319
50	Rajiv Antao	GOA	1177	1390
51	Anvay Shah	MUM	1175	194
52	Sanjay Bijlani	MUM	1172	785
53	Aaradhya Srivastava	MUM	1166	98
54	Prithwiraj Mukherjee	BLR	1165	409
55	R Nalini	BLR	1164	1157
56	Ela Ghose	DEL	1164	460
57	Komal RG	DEL	1160	466
58	Abel George Mathew	BLR	1144	48
59	Vignesh S	BLR	1141	911
60	V Ramachandran	MUM	1132	1605
61	Abid Hussain	BLR	1122	689
62	Venkataraman Sridev	KER	1120	209
63	Rajnikant Singh	KOL	1110	355
64	Shreyas Gupta	DEL	1102	105
65	Rehet Singh Bhatia	MUM	1099	1043
66	Dipankar Chatterjee	BLR	1095	810
67	Vimisha Patel	GUJ	1081	953
68	Priya Karkhanis	PUN	1079	621
69	Neeta Bhatia	MUM	1069	821
70	Harsh Sood	BLR	1060	240
71	Meena Bakhru	PUN	1054	477
72	Abhijit Shilotri	BLR	1027	1221
73	Raman Viswanathan	CHN	1025	271
74	Swagat Nukala	HYD	1015	684
75	Radhika Mahalingaiah	BLR	1009	1123
76	Ahana Goyal	DEL	995	330
77	Pradyot Anand	OSI	994	103
78	Aarush Jotwani	MUM	993	257
79	Archana Aggarwal	DEL	981	867
80	Nikheel Ruparel	MUM	980	1338

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)

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 Facebook page and Instagram handle (indianscrabble) to know about updates and happenings in Indian Scrabble.

Scrabble® is a registered trademark of JW Spear & Sons Ltd., England, under licence in India to Mattel India Pvt. Ltd.