

# ENDGAME

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



*Starting them young: A students' workshop at Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon*

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# Foreword

Dear Members,

The fascinating world of words never ceases to enthrall us, as we fervently keep fuelling our collective fixation with the 15x15 'field of play'. The jingling of tiles and the shuffling of racks were all the more conspicuous across our Scrabble centres in the last three months, what with four rated in-person tournaments and regular club meetups providing players with a good deal of fodder to further their word weight.

Mid-monsoon saw the return of the Pune Club Championship, before Mumbai welcomed a new addition in the form of the IIT Bombay Open. Bangalore played host to an Independence Day tourney, while the advent of September was marked by the comeback of the GAIL Cup in Delhi, which featured 70 players – seasoned campaigners, budding challengers and nascent newbies alike – across four divisions.

The focus in the weeks to come is set to be on the youth scene, as Indian Scrabble seeks for a significant push towards popularising the sport among school and college students. The National School Scrabble Championship is underway, with nearly 12000 children having taken part in the initial online qualifiers. The summit round of this tournament, featuring 32 finalists, will be held in Delhi on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

As was the case last year, the WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) will be played virtually this year, over three weekends from 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October. Given the strides made by India's youth Scrabblers in the past few years, the best might be yet to come. In what is set to be another boost to youth Scrabble in India, the last week of November will see the inaugural Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship take place in Gurgaon.

As we enter the last quarter of 2022, the Wordaholix Scrabble League (WSL), India's only team tournament, returns with its eighth edition in Lonavala from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October – and it promises to be a 'dogfight' between the six teams in action. There will be no dearth of live Scrabble in the last two months as well, with tournaments in Vadodara and Hyderabad scheduled for November and December respectively.

Thanks to our contributors, this edition of Endgame has shaped up to be as engaging as ever. Here's hoping it makes for happy reading.

Best wishes,

Rustom Deboo  
Editor

# All about youth Scrabble in India

*by Sudhir Kamath, with inputs from Marisha Sharma, Neeta Bhatia, Mimi Hingorani and Archana Aggarwal*

## What is youth Scrabble?

Youth Scrabble refers to competitive Scrabble played by under-18s, culminating in competitive tournaments at city, state, national or international levels.

## What makes Scrabble attractive to under-18s, their parents and schools?

Early on, the most critical decision makers for whether a child should pursue Scrabble are their parents, followed by their school principals and teachers. Many of them would have played Scrabble themselves as children, and have a positive connect with the game. In addition, they see these benefits for the children:

- Scrabble improves students' English as well as math skills, and enhances strategic thinking skills (for e.g., "what will happen in the next move if I do this in the present move?")
- When played physically over a board, Scrabble offers many hours of enjoyment in a screen-free environment
- 'Competitive' Scrabble played in age-group tournaments additionally offer an opportunity to test the child against peers and friends in a

competitive yet respectful setting

- As a child starts playing tournament games, they get a Scrabble rating that gets updated dynamically with each tournament played



*Team India at the 2015 World Youth Scrabble Championship (as the WESPA Youth Cup was then known) in Perth*

For children themselves, it is fun! Additionally, the combination of rating points and trophies achieved at age-group competitions makes them want to improve at the game.

## How competitive is India's youth Scrabble setup?

Systemically, youth Scrabble hasn't had much of an institutional push in India. India lags behind a few other countries in this regard, notably Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Thailand – in all these countries, Scrabble is

seen by children, their parents, and schools as a way of demonstrating mastery over the English language, which in turn is beneficial to those children in their future academic and professional careers.

In a few countries such as Nigeria, Thailand and Sri Lanka, there is official recognition of Scrabble by the sports ministry, and in some cases, it is part of the school curriculum. Whether or not Scrabble will be recognised as a sport in India is a question for another day, but for now we are assuming no change from the present status.

Despite this, in recent years, India has had increasingly better performances by youth Scrabblers at domestic as well as international tournaments.

The current top six youth Scrabblers from India are given in the table below. They all have SAI ratings of over 1000, and are in the national top 100.

Player	City	Class	India Rank	SAI Rating
Madhav Gopal Kamath	Delhi	VII	16	1530
Pramit Rao	Mumbai	XI	26	1432
Suyash Manchali	Bangalore	VIII	44	1258
Ekansh Arora	Delhi	XI	47	1234
Shreyas Gupta	Delhi	XI	58	1155
Amogh Bhamerkar	Vadodara	XI	71	1064

These current players owe a lot to those who excelled on the youth stage before them - “standing on the

shoulders of giants”, as Isaac Newton famously said.



*Team India at the 2017 WESPA Youth Cup in Subang Jaya, Malaysia*

The table below shows the notable performances by India’s youth Scrabblers at the WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) over the years:

Player	Position	Venue	Year
Samrath Singh Bhatia	10th	Perth	2015
Aditya Iyengar	5th	Lille	2016
Vraj Jain	8th	Dubai	2018
Yash Potnis	3rd	Kuala Lumpur	2019
Madhav Gopal Kamath*	2nd	Online	2021
Suyash Manchali*	8th	Online	2021

*\*Madhav was also the best under-8 player in 2017, best under-10 player in 2018 and 2019, and best under-12 player in 2021, while Suyash was the best under-12 player in 2019 and best under-14 player in 2021*

### **So, how can we expand youth Scrabble in India?**

Our premise is that private efforts (in partnership with Mattel, the owners of the Scrabble brand) can help build Scrabble’s profile in India. To attract more young players, we feel the following issues need to be addressed:

- a) A clear annual cycle of age-group tournaments and other competitive opportunities
- b) Access to information, coaching, and practice
- c) Outreach, publicity, and funding

We lay out our thinking on these points below:

**a) Annual cycle of age-group tournaments**

In the recent past, Delhi has been conducting an annual state-level championship for students (currently in its 15th edition). There have been sporadic age-group contests (or age-oriented divisions at other open tournaments) in Pune, Mumbai and Bangalore. However, we hope to institute the following pyramid going forward:



*Students in action at the 2016 Delhi State School Championship*

- **WESPA Youth Cup:** The top ten from India participate each year, usually held in November or December

- **Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship** to be held each year. This will give around 50 Indian students a chance to compete against the best youth Scrabblers from across Asia. The first edition will take place this November, in Delhi
- **National School Scrabble Championship** (in partnership with Collins and Mattel) – this is currently in its third edition. For the first time, an online qualifier was held across India, and nearly 12000 students took part. Around 1000 of these students will take part in the zonal rounds, where they will play a few rounds of Scrabble physically.
- **City/state level tournaments** at least once a year: In Delhi, around 150 youth Scrabblers participate in the state-level championship each year, and it is a one-day event hosted at a school. The Scrabble Association of Delhi (SADel) would like to help other cities/states conduct annual championships. The top students from each centre would get automatic entry to the Asia Cup and possibly to major national tournaments such as the GAIL Cup or the Mu Sigma Open.
- **District/zonal championships:** SADel will be kicking these off in Delhi-NCR in



2023. All participants will get a ‘youth’ rating to help motivate them to improve.

- **Intra-school contests** at least once a year
- **School-level hobby clubs**, with the target being 1,00,000+ enrolled students

**b) Access to information, coaching, and practice**

Information: As part of the National School Scrabble Championship, Collins and Mattel sponsored the development of a series of explainer videos (shot by Neeta Bhatia of Wordaholix). These are freely available in a dedicated playlist on the Collins Learning India YouTube page. SAI and any city/state clubs are free to share these links with new players. They have been added to the SAI website as well.



*The future is bright: Engrossed kids at the 2022 Delhi State School Championship*

In addition, we need to develop a set of downloadable resources on how to play Scrabble and how to get more skilled, and also lists of 2-letter words (with meanings), 3-letter words, high probability bingos, etc – which students, their parents or teachers can easily access in one place.

Coaching: We would like to propose the creation of a SAI certification for Scrabble coaching. Certified coaches can then offer their services to schools or private clubs, or run their own coaching classes. This will also become a source of secondary income for the Scrabble community.

As part of the certification, coaches would be trained on a basic curriculum (lesson plan) of how to teach Scrabble in a structured way to kids. This curriculum would need to be developed.

Practice: We need to utilise Woogles better to create time slots where new players can expect to meet others for practice games. In addition, each local club would need to create slots where kids can participate in practice games or fun tournaments.

**c) Outreach, publicity, and funding**

We’re leaving this section open for a future article...

**Conclusion**

Our belief is that the number of initiatives now underway can significantly expand Scrabble’s player base among under-18s – and with some luck, we will unearth a few new great players.

## How can YOU contribute?

The more ideas, the merrier. But a few thoughts to get you started:

- Help SAI develop a training curriculum
- Help SAI develop a coach certification programme
- Get certified as a coach and work with a school club or hobby group
- Offer your time to play with youth Scrabblers (online or offline) to help them improve
- Contribute financially (e.g., an anonymous Indian Scrabblers sponsored team clothing for the previous WESPA Youth Cup; Pradyot Anand sponsored 50% of the cost for youth Scrabblers participating at the GAIL Cup 2022; SAdel has sponsored entry fees and travel costs for youth Scrabblers to participate in major tournaments)
- Help us reach out to journalists, schools, and potential sponsors
- Connect us to your kids' school and help us pitch to them for setting up a Scrabble club for the kids there.
- Spread the word amongst kids!

If you'd like to discuss how you can help, reach out to any of the authors!



*Games during the Pune Zonal of the 2022 National School Scrabble Championship*

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### **Endgame Extra: A few youthful stems**

#### YOUTH?? (11)

DOUGHTY, DROUTHY,  
FOUGHTY, HAUTOY,  
OUTHYRE, TOUGHLY,  
TYPHOUS, YOGHURT,  
YOUNGTH, YOUTHEN, YOUTHLY

#### YOUNG?? (8)

BUOYING, LOUNGEY,  
UNGODLY, UNYOUNG,  
YOUKING, YOUNGER,  
YOUNGLY, YOUNGTH

#### SCHOOL?? (13)

ALCOHOLS, CHLOROUS,  
CHOOSILY, DESCHOOL,  
DOLICHOS, HOOLOCKS,  
KLOOCHES, RESCHOOL,  
SCHOLION, SCHOOLED,  
SCHOOLER, SCHOOLES,  
SCHOOLIE

#### JUNIOR?? (4)

JOINTURE, JOUNCIER,  
JUNIORED, OBJURING

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# Reflections and lessons from the GAIL Cup

by Siddharth Nithyanand

## Phoneys, not kismet, cost me my games...!

The 2019 GAIL Cup was my third Scrabble tournament, and I was still a newbie who had barely learnt his twos and threes. Prior to this tournament, I had finished at the bottom of Division C in the Mu Sigma tournament in Bangalore, and the result was not very different at the Pune Club Championship few months later.

For me, the 2019 GAIL Cup was just about getting more exposure, learning new words and meeting new people – there was absolutely no pressure about winning. Probably, that’s why I was able to do well – finishing 11<sup>th</sup> in Division B.

This year, as the GAIL Cup made its comeback, I was no longer a newb. I had learnt not just the twos and threes, but a good chunk of fours and power fives as well. I had practised the top 1000 sevens multiple times. My tile tracking had improved, and so had my board vision and ability to balance racks. I was confident of finishing in the top ten. Yet, I finished a dismal 14<sup>th</sup> out of 25 participants. In this article, I wish to share my reflections of why I performed so poorly.

**Reflection #1** – I started noting down my racks so that I could Quackle later. Big mistake! I was not fast enough with my game yet to be able to manage time along with noting down my racks and the

opponent’s moves. I lost points on overtime, and I could not focus on my endgame. It is very important to be self-aware of your speed. Below is how I progressed over the years:

**Step 1: Master the basics:** How to use the clock, calculate your score and the opponent’s score to cross-check, and tally the cumulative totals after every move. You have no choice but to do these things in any competitive Scrabble tournament.



*My best game – 553 against Madhav Gopal Kamath at a Delhi one-dayer in 2019*

**Step 2: Track the tiles:** Tile tracking just involves striking off letters that have been used by you and your opponent in every move. Tile tracking gives you an advantage in the

endgame, especially during games that are very close.

**Step 3: Record your rack:** Writing down your rack helps you check for any missed bingos. More importantly, you can analyse your entire game on Quackle to learn whether you played the best move or if your move was suboptimal.

You can pick up steps 2 and 3 gradually, as you master the game over time. It is okay to not record your racks initially if you are slow. While the benefits of Quackling are immense from a learning standpoint, it is important to focus on winning the game.

**Reflection #2** – Never judge your opponent! In the recent GAIL Cup, I won against a few difficult opponents but lost to many lower ranked players. I think I had taken some of those games lightly, which was a big folly. In the game of Scrabble, anything is possible. It should not matter what your opponent's rating is or what their performance in past tournaments was.

Every game is a new game, and you should play the game without any preconceived notions about your opponents. Just focus on the tiles and the board and play your best possible moves. Treat every opponent with the same seriousness, and don't assume that you will win a game even when you are 100-150 points ahead of your opponent. The tide can turn against you any time.

**Reflection #3** – Avoid phoneys! I lost quite a few games because of

phoneys, and not because of my luck with tiles. Here is a list of few phoneys that I played during the GAIL Cup and the correct words that I learned later (the phoneys are marked with asterisks):

Rack: ACEHIMR

I knew CHIMERA but there was no place, so tried CHIM(E)RAE\*. The plural is CHIMERAS. However, CHIMAERA is also valid. I could have just played CHIMERA on the triple word score to get 51 points, but I was greedy. At this point, I was leading by more than 60 points and with this lost turn, and a subsequent bingo from my opponent, I went on to lose this game.

Rack: DEINNRU

I played INNURED\* – the correct spelling is INURED. The bingo in this rack was INURNED. However, I was able to spot UNRIDDEN through a floating D in the next turn. I won this game by a small margin.

Rack: AABLRST

I played A(I)RBLAST\* through a floating I. However, ARBLAST and ARBALIST are good. This was a desperate move in the penultimate turn of the game, because I was trailing and this potential bingo was the only chance to win the game.

Rack: ?ADIHNS

I played BANDISH\*, but spotted a correct bingo in the next turn – SANDHIS. However, it was too late because my opponent had scored well in two turns to take the lead.

Rack: ?AIIRD

I was thinking of BIRDTAI(L)\* through L, but eventually played AIR-DRI(F)T\* through F, which was challenged off. Subsequently, I played ARCTIID by hooking the A to TAT on the board, just to find out that TATA\* is also invalid – TAATA is valid. Two lost chances and I had already handed the game to my opponent.

As I slipped ranks game after game and reached the last table, my Scrabble friends were shocked with my performance. They were being kind in assuming that luck or the so-called ‘tile fairy’ was not on my side. That’s when I decided to think deeply about what went wrong, as blaming luck isn’t going to help me win next time.



*Regular practice with your Scrabble buddies helps improve your game!*

At work I often find it useful to refer to the concept of Circle of Control vs Circle of Concern to analyse problems and to find appropriate solutions. Here’s my attempt to apply the same principles to the game of Scrabble.

The circle of control refers to things that are within our control and the

circle of concern refers to things that are outside our control.

Here are ways through which we can expand our circle of influence in Scrabble:

1. Learn your twos and threes. While they may seem to be low scoring, they come in handy in playing your bingos. Once I had TERRIFY on my rack with seemingly no place on the board, only to figure out later that YGO is a valid word. Knowing your twos and threes also help you with parallel play, which is one of the key strategies to consistently score more than 30 points per move.
2. ‘Stop fishing for bingos, try to score maximum points’ – this was a piece of advice that Madhav Gopal Kamath – India’s leading youth player – gave me in 2020, and I have immensely benefited from it. In my initial days, when I felt I had a bingo-friendly rack, I would fish, i.e., dump just one tile for a very low score with the hope that I would pick a specific letter (say, D, R, E, etc.) that would help me with a bingo. He explained two things to me:
  - If your opponent can score 30+ points consistently, your bingo after fishing for a couple of turns is most likely to be

futile, as by then your opponent's cumulative score is likely to be more than your cumulative score.

- Fishing makes sense ONLY if you have multiple possibilities and it is not hinged on one letter or even worse, one specific word. If you have a blank, you might still try for one turn, but it is not worth wasting multiple turns.



*With my first Scrabble opponent, Suyash Manchali – always a lot to learn from youngsters!*

3. Learn the vowel-heavy and consonant-heavy words (from twos to sixes). There are only 146 vowel-heavy words and 184 words with no vowels. The app called 'Word Expert' has these lists compiled for ready reference.

Often, a clunky rack may not indeed be a curse of the tile fairy. You may end up with CWM, PWN, TWP, KYND,

TYMP, BYRL, HYMN, CRWTH, CWTCH and many such words, which are high scoring and at the same time, help you with a good tile turnover.

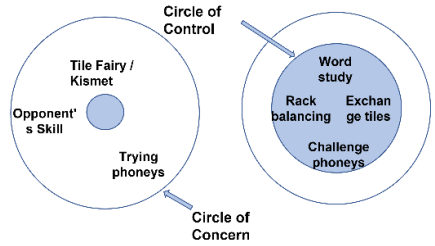
4. Know when to exchange! – This is a skill that took me a while to learn and I have not mastered it yet. But when done at the right time, I have seen its benefits. Some thumb rules that I apply to decide are:

- If the move scores less than ten points, scoring a zero won't make a lot of difference – better to exchange.
- If you have a bad rack and you have spotted a word to get rid of the bad tiles, also check your rack leave – is it any better or do you still have more clunky tiles?
- I feel comfortable going for an exchange early in the game, because I have time to catch up with my opponent. However, exchanging tiles in the later part of the game should be done carefully – tile tracking helps me in this decision. If you have a bad rack and the blanks are still out there (and so are the Es, As, Ts, Rs, Ss), then go for it!

5. Challenge words that you are unsure of and avoid phoneyes as much as possible. There have been games that I have won against some tough players because I challenged off their phoneyes, as their loss of a turn turned the tide in my favour. And as you read earlier, my GAIL Cup experience was an example of being on the receiving end. My strong recommendation is to avoid playing a word unless you feel 80-90% sure about its validity, and playing it right can indeed help you win the game.

6. When you have mastered all of the above, you should focus on learning the fours and fives. This is slightly more difficult than the other tips discussed above, but eventually you will get there. These words help in having a good tile turnover, thereby increasing your chance of picking good tiles in the subsequent turn.

In a nutshell, kismet or the tile fairy plays a very small role in the outcome of our game, no matter which division we play. There are quite a few things we can do to overcome a bad draw of tiles. Yes, there are games where we follow all of the above and yet get a bad run of tiles, turn after turn. But the probability of such an occurrence is very low, and in the overall tournament format, it gets nullified.



*Left circle – Actions of reactive people*

**How Reactive People Act**  
 Large Circle of Concern and a small Circle of Control. A lot of time and energy is wasted reacting to issues that they can't control.

*Right circle – Actions of proactive people*

**How Proactive People Act**  
 Small Circle of Concern and a large Circle of Control. A lot of time and energy is focused on issues that are within their control.

I have written this article especially for new and budding Scrabblers to emphasise on two things:

- a. Don't lose heart because of the initial losses. You will get better and compete with the best – it is not daunting and unimaginable; there is a clear path for you to succeed.
- b. Don't blame luck when you lose, because we end up fooling our brains by externalising the problem and will fail to put in the required efforts needed to script our own Scrabble fairy-tale.

Cheers!

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# A lowdown on the Wordaholix Scrabble League

The eighth edition of the Wordaholix Scrabble League (WSL) will be held at The Bark in Lonavala from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October. As we count down to the much-awaited team tournament, here is a look back at its past editions and a ready reckoner ahead of WSL VIII.

## About the WSL

We have all been competing in Scrabble in our individual capacities. But the WSL presents a new way of playing Scrabble... not just for yourself, but for your team as well. Yes, you read it right... YOUR TEAM...

Wordaholix, in association with SAI, introduced India's first Scrabble league in 2015 in the form of the WSL. This is a round-robin team championship, which pits India's Scrabble players across varying ratings against each other for the coveted Team Championship title.

The WSL aims to equalise the playing field and give each and every participant not only a chance to win the grand team prize, but also to contribute substantially towards their team's victory.

## Let us evaluate the concept further....

The first step in the build-up to the WSL is to get a pool of available players. From this pool, teams are

*by Neeta Bhatia and Mimi Hingorani*

created. The teams, named after valid Scrabble words according to a designated theme, are made as equal as possible using the SAI ratings as a starting point to avoid giving an unfair advantage to any particular team. The number of teams depend upon the number of players. Each player plays 24-25 games over three days against players from other teams, but not against their own team members.



*The Wordaholix team with sports writer Ayaz Memon (third from left) at the first edition of the WSL in May 2015*

The team with the highest number of points (one point for a win, 0.5 for a tie, and zero for a loss) is crowned as the 'WSL Team Champion'. In case of a tie between two or more teams, the team with the higher cumulative spread is the winner. In case of a further tie, the team with the higher number of bingos wins. If the deadlock persists, the prize money at stake is shared equally.



## Why should one join the WSL?

1) The teams are well balanced with players of various levels in each team. For instance, if a team is top heavy, then it will also have a couple of players from the bottom of the pool.

2) Since team members will not play their own team members, a higher-rated player will be more inclined to mentor and guide the lower-ranked players in their own team so as to increase their team's chances of winning the tournament.

3) In any other tournament, after a few rounds, one plays people at their own level, and therefore the weaker players rarely get a chance to play the higher-ranked players and cause upsets. At the WSL, a team member gets a chance to play all the members of the other teams, i.e., right from their best to their weakest player.



*Players at the fifth WSL edition in 2018*

4) Each and every point saved or earned is useful – even if one does not win as many games as the top players, each spread point gained is important for the team. So, each point, each game, and each player become important and contributes to the success of the team.

## WSL I – at Juhu Gymkhana, Mumbai in May 2015

- 4 teams of 7 players each
- Theme: Rulers
- Team positions and captains:
  - 1) ALTEZAS (Sherwin Rodrigues)
  - 2) DIADOCHI (Jose de Abreu)
  - 3) CAZIQUES (Varisht Hingorani)
  - 4) BASHAWS (Udayan Grover)

## WSL II – at Tunga International, Mumbai in November 2015

- 6 teams of 7 players each
- Theme: Chiefs
- Team positions and captains:
  - 1) SUZERAIN (Sherwin Rodrigues)
  - 2) ARDRIGH (Shaik Ahmed)
  - 3) VOZHD (Varisht Hingorani)
  - 4) ETHNARCH (Udayan Grover)
  - 5) INKHOSI (Sunny Bhatia)
  - 6) MIKADO (Nakul Prabhu)

## WSL III – at Tunga International in November 2016

- 4 teams of 10 players each
- Theme: Musical instruments
- Team positions and captains:
  - 1) BAZOUKI (Udayan Grover)
  - 2) CARNYX (Carolann Pais)
  - 3) DJEMBE (Prashanth Seetharam)
  - 4) ANKLUNG (Sherwin Rodrigues)

### WSL IV – at Tunga International in November 2017

- 6 teams of 8 players each
- Theme – Excellence
- Team positions and captains:
  - 1) DOOZER (Nakul Prabhu)
  - 2) EXIMIOUS (Varisht Hingorani)
  - 3) BONZER (Udayan Grover)
  - 4) FRABJOUS (Sherwin Rodrigues)
  - 5) OUTASITE (Carolann Pais)
  - 6) SCHMICK (Shaik Ahmed)

### WSL V – at Oriental Residency, Mumbai in November 2018

- 6 teams of 8 players each
- Theme – Colours
- Team positions and captains:
  - 1) ZAFFRE (Varisht Hingorani)
  - 2) CARMINE (Sunny Bhatia)
  - 3) SMARAGD (Aditya Iyengar)
  - 4) MAZARINE (Sherwin Rodrigues)
  - 5) JACINTHE (Udayan Grover)
  - 6) XANTHIC (Carolann Pais)

### WSL VI – at The Bark, Lonavala in November 2019

- 6 teams of 8 players each
- Theme – Art
- Team positions and captains:
  - 1) EBAUCHES (Rahil Parkar)
  - 2) MANDALAS (Udayan Grover)
  - 3) SFUMATOS (Samrath Bhatia)
  - 4) BAROQUES (Varisht Hingorani)
  - 5) NIHONGAS (Carolann Pais)
  - 6) CROQUIS (Sunny Bhatia)

### WSL VII – at Krishna Riverside Resort, Vadodara in September 2021

- 4 teams of 7 players each
- Theme – Water bodies
- Team positions and captains:
  - 1) VORAGO (Varisht Hingorani)
  - 2) SPRUIT (Samrath Bhatia)
  - 3) ARROYO (Udayan Grover)
  - 4) NYANZA (Rahil Parkar)

### Preview of WSL VIII



*The six teams of WSL VIII: (clockwise from top left) BORZOI, SEGUGIO, BASENJI, VIZSLA, KUVASZ and SALUKI*

- 6 teams of 8 players each
- Theme – Dogs
- Teams:
  - 1) **SEGUGIO:** Sunny Bhatia (captain), Mangala Bhandarkar, Bhushan Pradhan, Nikheel Ruparel, Hyder Quraishi, Vimisha Patel, Caryl Gonsalves, Jyoti Budhia
  - 2) **SALUKI:** Samrath Bhatia (captain), Sanjay Bijlani, Manju Sood, Danish Shahna, Siddharth Nithyanand, Asha

Kamath, Harry Bhatia, Parvathy Raghunathan

- 3) **VIZSLA:** Varisht Hingorani (captain), Shaik Ahmed, Amit Sood, Rehet Bhatia, Vignesh S, Swagat Nukala, Rekha Sanzgiri, Collin Pereira

- 4) **BORZOI:** Madhav Gopal Kamath (captain), Sudhir Kamath, Rajeev Menon, Abid Hussain, Alan DeMello, Patrick Pereira, Meena Kalyan, Sylvia Coelho



*Capturing the spirit of WSL: A theme board on WSL VIII created by Rustom Deboo*

- 5) **BASENJI:** Sanjoy Gupta (captain), Selwyn Lobo, Rustom Deboo, Kala Ganesh, Abhijit Shilotri, Zeba Sultan, Ritu Chadha, Aruna Grover
- 6) **KUVASZ:** Udayan Grover (captain), Prमित Rao\*, Sujana Somasekar, Dipankar Chatterjee, Archana

Aggarwal, Neeta Bhatia, Sonal Merchant, Aaradhya Srivastava (\*Radhika Mahalingaiah will replace Prमित for the final day of the tournament)

May the best team win!

**Endgame Extra: Alternate valid spellings of WSL team names over the years**

ALTEZAS – ALTEZZAS, ALTESSES

BASHAWS – PASHAS, PACHAS

CAZIQUES – CACIQUES

INKHOSI – INKOSI, AMAKOSI, AMAKHOSI

ARDRIGH – ARDRI

ANKLUNG – ANGKLUNG, ANKLONG

BAZOUKI – BOUSOUKI, BUZUKI

DOOZER – DOOZIE, DOOZY

BONZER – BONZA

OUTASITE – OUTASIGHT

SMARAGD – SMARAGDE, EMERAUDE

ZAFFRE – ZAFFER, ZAFFAR, ZAFFIR

BAROQUE – BAROCK, BAROCCO

# WSL reminiscences

## ‘Suhana Safar’ with WSL

*by Meena Kalyan*

WSL is an amazing mutation of our favourite game, and has raised our fascination with it by several notches. I first heard of it in a conversation at an adjacent table, where a fellow player was narrating her WSL experience at the Mumbai Nationals that followed the first edition of WSL.

The first few editions in which I participated were fun, but there was not much interaction among captains and team members, and no training sessions to speak of. Everyone played their games and that was that! I plodded on in mediocrity with flashes of inspiration attributed to good tile flow. When my team performed well, we posed for pictures and shared the prize pool.

The change in rhythm was the fifth edition, on a hotel terrace. I had been assigned to Team CARMINE whose captain was Sunny Bhatia. Sunny, as a born Sardar, was an inspiring leader. Setting an example for us with sincere study, he motivated us with tips. He bought us all red (our team colour) caps to wear for the games.

The camaraderie was incredible. Amit Sood, as the statistician, crunched numbers based on past history, set targets, and planned how to win the title. I did quite well, beating veterans like P.C. Jose and Bhushan Pradhan and getting two nine-timers. Our

team came second and it motivated me to study more.

The venue shifted to Lonavala for the next edition. I played for the Pune MANDALAS under the captaincy of Udayan Grover – all along the preceding years, I was playing marbles; he taught me billiards! This analogy can illuminate what happened to my game under his stewardship.

In numerous sessions, he taught rack balancing, gave exercises, discussed solutions, and encouraged us to learn. I have saved those posts and revisit them before tournaments. We posed a challenge to the winning team – we came second, but were euphoric about the whole process.

Personally, I think of WSL as not just another Scrabble tournament. It has become a festival to be celebrated, for which I begin preparations with shopping for clothes to wear, as per the team colour. The anticipation is just like a kid waiting for Christmas. The exchange of greetings and wishes, the food, and the gifts we carry home, have all the trappings of a much-loved festival.

Three cheers to the WSL team for adding this festival to the Indian Scrabble calendar.

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## WSL: Together we can!

*by Vimisha Patel*

I was new on the Scrabble scene in 2018 when I got to know about WSL. I loved the concept and decided to enroll for WSL V. That year the theme was colours. I was floored.... by the names, by the magnanimity of the captains, and the sheer excitement.

I fervently wished to be on Sherwin Rodrigues' team and for once, my prayers were answered. MAZARINE was my team; Sherwin, Hriday Samtani, R. Nalini, Phil Paes, P.C. Jose, Hyder Quraishi and Ritu Chadha were my teammates.

As Hellen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much". Armed with this, I arrived in Mumbai for my first WSL in November 2018. As people started coming in, the room became abuzz with greetings and good vibes. The games soon began, and I was pitted against all the higher-rated players.

I was anxious, but then Sherwin's words, "play the board, not the player", sprang to my head and I calmed down a bit. Hriday gave me pep talks after each game. I won only seven out of 24 games, but what I felt was that the Scrabble community is full of warm people who welcome you with open arms. The feeling of belonging to a team, playing for a goal, the motivation to study, and the joy you get along the way is unparalleled.

I was a bit more seasoned ahead of WSL VI in 2019, held at the picturesque The Bark in Lonavala. The

hotel is art themed and so were our teams. Cities with strong Scrabble culture also inspired the names. I was part of the Hyderabad EBAUCHES.

Rahil Parkar was our captain, and the other team members were Selwyn Lobo, Bhushan Pradhan, Saraswathi Rammanohar, Kala Ganesh, Ritu, and Rekha Sanzgiri. I urged all teams to have a team mantra, and ours was, "The Nawabs are here to rule". Rahil took me under his wing – he analysed our online games and patiently reasoned my moves, highlighting the concept of leaves, rack balancing, optimum plays and a lot more.

My game improved a lot, and I felt ready for WSL VI. I managed to win a few crucial games and so did my teammates, and to my delight, Team EBAUCHES emerged as the champions of WSL VI. It made for a memorable tourney, and Ritu's hospitality was like a cherry on top.

Post Covid, the WSL returned in 2021, this time at a quaint riverside resort in Vadodara. Going by the location, water bodies was the theme. I was in SPRUTS led by young Samrath Bhatia, and he charmed us all by holding his ground even in turbulent waters, leading us to second place. My teammates were Hriday, Danish Shahna, Sneha Thadhani, Sudhir Kamath and Siddharth Nithyanand. Our mantra was "We course our victory", and together we did just that.

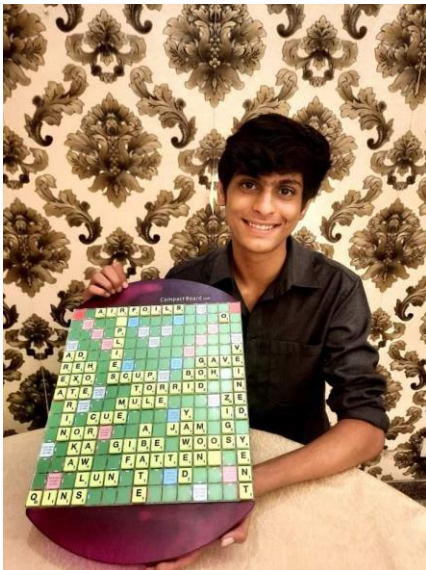
Eagerly awaiting the upcoming WSL VIII, as we return to The Bark. Keep Scrabbling and stay happy!

# Gains at the GAIL Cup: A triumph to cherish

by Shreyas Gupta

It was a surreal experience to win the Division B tournament at the 2022 GAIL Cup in Delhi. The venue Alpina Hotel brought back special memories of when I played the previous edition of the GAIL Cup there in 2019.

Prior to the 2019 GAIL Cup, I had only participated in tourneys held for school students. It has a special place for me as it was the very first time I participated in a competition where rated players from different age groups played across three divisions. It was a good learning experience for me, and I was elated to bag the third spot in the newbie Division C.



*With the winning board from the must-win final game – my bingos were FATTENs, DEXTRIN and RePLIES*

I distinctly remember wandering into the main hall, looking at some of the top boards of higher rated players. It was overwhelming seeing the extensiveness of the words being played. Along with my school studies, I've been trying to consistently build my vocabulary since then.

This year, participating in Division B of the GAIL Cup felt nostalgic, and I was apprehensive of my performance against the higher rated players. The first two days were challenging, but I managed to secure a lead of 2.5 wins. Thereafter, I lost a couple of rounds on the final day and barely managed to make it back to the top table.

The last few matches against Arindam Basu – I faced him in each of the last six rounds – were incredibly intense. I lost Round 23 and Round 24 by 359-523 and 358-413 respectively, which meant that the final round was a must-win for me.

As it happened, I won the decider 442-388 and was delighted to have clinched the title by a slender margin of 0.5 wins. My bingos in this game were FATTENs, DEXTRIN and RePLIES.

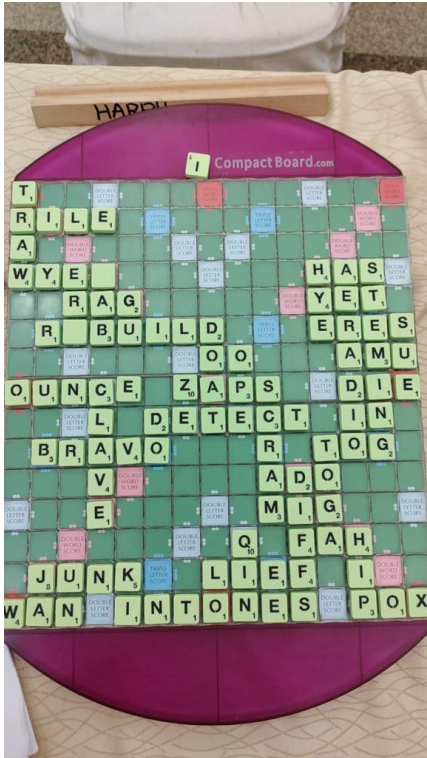
My best find of the tournament was a seven-letter parallel play of STEM-ING with AERADIO. Even though it wasn't on a double or triple word score, it fetched me 105 points, so that felt awesome. Some of the other high-scoring bingos I played were



BOMBARDS, SERRANO, FALCONS and LISENTE.

Overall, the tourney was very well organised and I had a lot of fun meeting my friends, playing Scrabble for hours on end, and just having a good time altogether.

Throughout the tournament, everyone was really supportive, wished me luck and hoped I'd win it. It was really enjoyable, and I look forward to participating in future GAIL Cup tournaments as well.



*My best find of the tournament: A memorable seven-letter parallel play of **STEMING** with **AERADIO***

**Endgame Extra: Know the 38 seven-letter words containing the letters D, E, L, H and I**

- CEILDH
- CHELOID
- CHIELDS
- CHILED
- CHILDER
- CHILDES
- CHILLED
- CHIRLED
- CLICHED
- DELIGHT
- DELPHIC
- DELPHIN
- DIETHYL
- DISHELM
- ELDRICH
- FILCHED
- HALIDES
- HEADILY
- HELCOID
- HELIPAD
- HIDABLE
- HIELAND
- HIGGLED
- HILCHED
- HILLOED
- HINDLEG
- HIRPLED
- HIRSLED
- INHALED
- LETHIED
- LICHTED
- LIGHTED
- LITHOED
- SHIELDS
- SHIELED
- SHILLED
- THIRLED
- WHIRLED

# Opening up the board: My first tournament

by Dirgha Sampat

“Newbie.”

That’s 11 points at least, though I must say my experience of my first Scrabble tournament is beyond quantifiable.

Combating the heavy rains, the Mumbai traffic and my nerves, I made it to the IIT Bombay Scrabble Open. While I’ve been playing living-room Scrabble with family and friends for quite some time, I had never thought of competing in a tournament someday. But eventually, my passion for words (since I’m a writer), reassurance from my friend Rustom, and my own curiosity led me to the venue.

As I entered the IIT Bombay (IITB) campus, I took a deep breath. I had little idea about what to expect from a Scrabble tournament. I hopped off my cab and walked in the drizzle, enjoying the greenery around. It felt like being in a tucked-away part of the city, and that was so refreshing.

Over tea and snacks, I interacted with a few players. Most of them asked me, “Is this your first tournament?” And when I nervously nodded, I was welcomed with smiles and kind words. I thought to myself – are these really my prospective opponents?

The pairings for the first round were put up, and I was glad to see that there were a few more ‘newbies’ (that’s a bingo now!) like me. A few minutes later, the action began. From

keeping pace with the timer and picking of tiles, to thinking up words and keeping track of scores – this felt unlike any other game I’d played over the years. Playing competitive Scrabble for the first time can seem daunting in its own way. So, the first game was more like a practice round for me to familiarise myself with the process.



*AUDIEnT – my first bingo!*

A couple of games later, my opponent was a seasoned Scrabble player – sharp, quick and on point! When I watched him play, something clicked inside my mind like a switch. I realised; this is different from the humble origins of the game I had known until now. I began to notice the strategic nuances, the dexterity it involves and also the commitment. The best part was that some of the more experienced opponents offered friendly advice through the game too.

It's incredible to see how a game of words cuts across age groups, backgrounds, and experience levels. The beauty of Scrabble is that it's a game of strategy and unpredictability, highs and lows, phonies and bingos – all rolled into one board!

I'd never thought I would end up playing 16 games back-to-back in a span of two days, and still be left feeling hungry for more. A big shout-out to Rustom for introducing me to tournament Scrabble, the organisers for their wholehearted efforts, and the wonderful spirit of the players for making my first tournament experience so memorable.

A few of my memorable words:

AUDIENT – first bingo!

TRUDGED – my highest scoring bingo!

VEX – won me a memento for being the highest scoring word with X!

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**Endgame Extra: Know the 50 seven-letter words containing the letters I, I, T and B**

ABIETIC  
 ABILITY  
 ABIOTIC  
 ADHIBIT  
 ALBITIC  
 BAINITE  
 BAITING  
 BHISHTI  
 BHISTIE  
 BHISTIS  
 BIBLIST

BIGGITY  
 BIGTIME  
 BIONTIC  
 BIOPTIC  
 BIOTICS  
 BIOTINS  
 BIOTITE  
 BISCUIT  
 BITCOIN  
 BITINGS  
 BITSIER  
 BITTIER  
 BITTIES  
 BITTILY  
 BITTING  
 BITWISE  
 BURITIS  
 COHIBIT  
 EXHIBIT  
 GIGABIT  
 IAMBIST  
 INBUILT  
 INHABIT  
 INHIBIT  
 KIBBITZ  
 KIBITKA  
 KILOBIT  
 NIOBITE  
 RIBBITS  
 RINGBIT  
 STIBIAL  
 STIBINE  
 STIBIUM  
 TIDBITS  
 TITBITS  
 TWIBILL  
 TWIBILS  
 VIBIEST  
 VIBISTS

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# My return to in-person Scrabble

by Prashanth Seetharam

The two-day KSSA Independence Day Tournament in Bangalore was my first in-person tourney in two and a half years. Hitting the clock after every move seemed something new, but old habits die hard, as they say.

My first game was a close one after having played PLuSHLY using both blanks. A phoney almost cost me the game, but I prevailed with my endgame. I was happy to get two bingos MATIEST and ENDIRON early in the next game, but opening the triple lane backfired as my opponent played a nine-timer SPINNeRs through the N. Again, it was the endgame that helped me win and I was up 2-0.

Things levelled soon as I lost my next two games. One was close – I managed to spot a bingo with my final rack, but my opponent found one too and went out. By the end of Round 4, I had a huge negative spread. I felt rusty having played only online for a long time.

The fifth game of the day didn't start well either, with my opponent drawing first blood with a RETAINS rack. I was happy to spot NONDaIRY and found REPAVING towards the end, making it 3-2 as we broke for lunch. I went on to win the last three games of the day to end up at 6-2 (+191).

Independence Day it was the next day, and we pinned the cute little tri-colours we were given. As I bid to build on the good finish of the first

day, it was 'bingo, bango, bongo' with HUTTInG, SOLANINS and ADAPTION from my first three moves that sealed the game. I found POINTES, SALVOED and BEAMIeST in the next game, and it was now 8-2. Round 11 was a repeat against the same opponent, and luck was on my side as I played SNICKEd, PIANINO and QUOTER for 70 to make it 9-2 and climb up to pole position in the standings with four rounds to play.



*Starting with three bingos in Round 9*

The 12th game, the third on the trot with the same opponent, was a gripping encounter. I played RESITING and DOORSTeP, and just when I thought I had a significant lead, my opponent made a big play. It boiled

down to a tight endgame, and I just scraped through, thanks to a scoring error. Next up, I had to play the gifted 12-year-old Suyash Manchali twice. The scores were 408-397 and 481-400, and I was Gibsonised at 12-2.

I was losing my last game, though insignificant, but a phoney bingo by my opponent on her last move let me play ZEBRANOS and win 391-379, taking my final tally to 13-2 (+477).

A few other bingos I played at the tourney were BOOTERS, AILERONS, KHANJAR, OOZIEST, PUNTIES, ROUGHENS and ITALICS. The likes of Sanjoy Gupta, Suyash, R Nalini and Sujana Somasekar made for tough opponents. I thank the KSSA for a well-conducted tournament.

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### Endgame Extra: T20 star stems

With the T20 World Cup coming up, here are a few cricketer stems that could help you in hitting a few sevens and eights in your next tournament:

#### ROHIT?? (37)

AIRSHOT, BOTHRIA,  
CHARIOT, CHORIST,  
GOTHIER, HARICOT,  
HERIOTS, HERITOR,  
HISTORY, HISTRIO,  
HOISTER, HOOTIER,  
HORNIST, HORNITO,  
MOITHER, MOTHIER,  
ORTHIAN, OSTRICH,  
OUTHIRE, OVERHIT,  
RIMSHOT, ROTCHIE,  
ROUTHIE, SHORTIA,  
SHORTIE, THEORIC,  
THEROID, THORIAS,

THORITE, THORIUM,  
THROMBI, THYROID,  
TINHORN, TOSHIER,  
TROCHIL, TROPIC,  
UROLITH

#### ASHWIN?? (18)

CHAINSAW, CHINWAGS,  
HAWKINGS, INSWATHE,  
PSHAWING, RAINWASH,  
SANDWICH, SHAWLING,  
SHERWANI, SWAINISH,  
SWASHING, SWATHING,  
TANIWHAS, THAWINGS,  
WASHINGS, WHALINGS,  
WHIPSAWN, WOMANISH

#### WARNER?? (18)

ANSWERER, BRAWNIER,  
CAREWORN, FOREWARN,  
INTERWAR, IRONWARE,  
NARROWED, NARROWER,  
PRAWNERS, PREWARNS,  
RAINWEAR, REANSWER,  
UNWARIER, WANDERER,  
WARDENRY, WARRANED,  
WARRENER, WRANGLER

#### STOKES?? (22)

BOSKIEST, DESKTOPS,  
DESTOCKS, KNOTLESS,  
KURTOSES, LOCKSETS,  
RESTOCKS, RESTOKES,  
SKATOLES, SKODIEST,  
SMOKIEST, SOOKIEST,  
STALKOES, STEMBOKS,  
STOCKERS, STOKESIA,  
STOKVELS, STONKERS,  
STOOKERS, STOOKIES,  
STROKERS, STROOKES

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# Scrabble: A lifelong passion

by Zeba Sultan

“Papa!! PERMUTE is not a word! I challenge!” I shouted. I took hold of the Oxford dictionary lying next to me and started scanning its pages for the word. Lo and behold!! There it stood with clear letters: *‘PERMUTE – change the order or arrangement of.* Sad-faced, I looked at my father. My father gave me a sly smile. He had gained 61 points for that word in the game of Scrabble we were playing.

For a 6-year-old, my father was a very tough player. But I took it in my stride and smiled back. That day, I had not lost a challenge; I had won a new word for my ever-increasing vocabulary. I used to learn new words and use it in my day-to-day conversations. At 7, I used to tease my friends with, ‘Hey, you are looking preposterous today!’ The response was equally amazing. They used to thank me for my obnoxious comment. I laugh when I think of it even today.

No doubt, people used to call me ‘Miss Oxford’ at school. I used to enjoy it when my essays were praised and I loved all the attention showered on me for my creative writing. My audiences were swayed by the way I wrote. The inception for all of this was my beloved game of Scrabble.

Scrabble was introduced to me by my father. When my father was in Saudi Arabia working for Aramco, he used to play with international players. He started playing nearly four decades ago, and when he came back to India,

he had no one to play with. Unfortunately, Scrabble is still not a recognised sport in India. But my father loved the game. He taught my mom how to play and started playing with her. I was around four years old when I saw them playing together, and soon developed an interest in the game.

Eventually, I started playing too. When I was 6, I could calculate the scores and play fairly well. This game not only increased my vocabulary, but also developed my mathematical skills. It made my brain sharp, as it is a strategic word game. This is how my journey for my passion commenced.



*Eyes on the board: At the 2015 National Championship, where I finished tenth in Division B*

I loved Scrabble and continued playing the game till I was in my high school. One day I told my dad, “I want to be a professional Scrabble player.” My father laughed at me. He said that apart from cricket, no sport is recognised in our country. Constant discouragement veered me away from



the game. I was lost. I wanted to represent my country at the international level someday. But I knew I could not earn my bread and butter from this!

Scrabble is a game of luck too – in my opinion, 30% depends upon the tiles you draw from the bag, on which you have no control. For four long years, I did not touch the game. I forgot all the intricacies of the game. It did not matter anymore. Although somewhere deep down, I still wanted to play Scrabble and also be the best at it. I just wanted an opportunity and a reason to start playing again. After four years, this wish finally became a reality...

One fine day in 2011, my college HR head called me to her cabin. She showed me a circular. It said, 'iGATE Global Solutions Inter-Collegiate Scrabble Competition'. I could not believe my eyes. She looked at me and said, "Zeba, since you are pretty good at English, do you think you could go and play this game?" I was staring at her incredulously. I could not speak. The feeling was overwhelming. I had finally got the chance I was waiting for.

I said I would give it a shot even though I knew I had no time to prepare. To top it, I had to arrange for a partner too, and this was a very challenging task, as people were seriously not aware about the world's most popular word game. Finally, I took an incognisant partner and went for the tournament.

I was surprised. The turnout was good and some of the players were

really proficient since they had participated in previous years too. Yet, we emerged among the top two teams there. But due to some ugly circumstances, I could not go to Bangalore for the finals. I knew if I had to participate next year, it had to be through corporate qualification.

I was not sure which company I would join or whether I would still get an opportunity to play competitively. I left the thoughts of Scrabble. But destiny had other plans. I joined Mastek and was spotted by the people who had represented Mastek in the inter-corporate Scrabble tourney. My exuberance started all over again. The Scrabble workshop initiated by the HR team was headed by me.

I conducted the session and enlightened the enthusiasts who had come to learn the game. I had won the intra-corporate Scrabble competition in the singles as well as doubles category, which automatically made me the representative of Mastek ahead of the inter-corporate tournament held by iGATE in Bangalore in 2013.



*At the prize distribution ceremony of the inter-corporate tournament in Bangalore in 2013*



# People of Scrabble: Neeta and Harry Bhatia

by Ela Ghose

When parents follow in the footsteps of their children....

## **Neeta Bhatia: From Scrabble mom to Scrabble player!**

Soft-spoken and warm, Neeta describes herself as a homebody, happiest within her four walls. Although trained as a merchandiser and designer, Neeta has mainly been a teacher. She initially taught Textiles and Clothing to college students, and then (and still does) Scrabble under the aegis of Wordaholix (<https://www.face-book.com/wordaholix/>).

To most people, Neeta, who exudes calm, poise and grace, seems the epitome of confidence. While she can party with the best and fit into whichever group she happens to be with, she describes herself as somewhat shy, preferring the company of family and close friends. She attributes her ability to put forth her views and confidently hold her own partly to the demands of being a 'corporate wife', but largely to actively working on this aspect.

A large inspiration for her love of words and also for how to wield the power behind a throne, is Neeta's mother. Her mother's diary, even now, has a daily entry where she writes down a word of at least seven letters and then meticulously puts down as many smaller words as she can from within the larger word.

Diminutive, docile, timid and a lady of few spoken words, she ensured that Neeta was allowed to spread her wings and make her own choices, such as her husband: Harry.

The story goes that a course-mate of Harry's had come to Bombay to get engaged to Neeta's cousin, and was so taken with Neeta that he prophesied she would marry his friend, a Delhi boy (enter Harry, stage right!). That casual prophecy materialised soon after she met Harry and within a short time, they realised they had a lot in common and decided to marry.



*All in the family: Harry and Neeta Bhatia face off across the board*

Neeta credits a large part of who she is to her family, who ensured a conservative upbringing with a modern outlook – be it insisting on a co-ed schooling and education, being encouraged to pursue her post-graduate master's degree, or support in going out and working in a garment export house (all things usually a no-no in a conservative business family). As a

mother, Neeta still worries over her kids (even though they are now in their 20s!) and does not sleep till they're home!

While her mother was instrumental in instilling a love of words and reading, her love of Scrabble was lit by Varisht Hingorani – a college friend since 1987 and a national Scrabble champion who was keen to promote the game amongst youth.

In 2003, they began training students at Jambhai Narsee School (JNS) in Juhu, Mumbai as an after-school activity. A couple of years later, Mimi (Varisht's wife) joined in, and with Harry's guidance and brainstorming, Wordaholix was conceptualised as a training academy for Scrabble.



***Team Wordaholix: (left to right) Mimi Hingorani, Varisht Hingorani, Harry and Neeta***

Neeta is a born teacher: she enjoys sharing her knowledge with others in a way that makes it easy for the listener to understand, and also puts in the work that is required to make it seem simple. She also keeps an eye out for the weaker and more

vulnerable ones: extra lectures or a kind word and a patient, empathetic hearing are available for youngsters who are struggling with the course or their own emotions (like handling a loss at a competition). As one of her trainees succinctly said: “Aunty Neeta is the *bestest* person.”

Neeta and Mimi train the beginner and intermediate batches of Scrabblers, and their children, Vedika (Mimi's daughter) and Rehet and Samrath (Neeta's sons), went on to excel in the game. While Harry started playing Scrabble tournaments quite early on, Neeta started later, preferring to remain behind the scenes: organising tournaments, volunteering at tournaments and escorting the children to the various youth Scrabble championships.

In 2015, Neeta became India's representative on the WESPA Youth Committee. Since the pandemic, the WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) has been conducted online, and she has been closely associated with conducting qualifying tournaments for selection of the participants for Team India.

Despite such a close association with Scrabble, Neeta played her first tournament only in 2018. After having played about ten tournaments over the last four years and always placing somewhere in the middle, she realised that though she has a good vocabulary and that her knowledge of bingo stems makes it easy to spot bingos, placing them on the board was far more difficult, as she didn't know where to hook them.



That was when she decided to practice what she had been preaching to her students – memorising the basic three-letter words along with some of their unusual hooks and all of a sudden, she saw her game improve. The tile fairies smiled on her, as she finished second in the Open Division at the National Championship held in Mumbai in April 2022.



*Neeta receiving the prize for second place in Open Division at the 2022 Nationals*

In her typically self-effacing manner, she says, “I am a long way off from being a great player, and I realise that no amount of strategy, skill or luck can be a substitute for word knowledge....one needs to work on all aspects of the game together.”

### **Harry Bhatia: A natural Scrabblor**

Harry describes himself as an inveterate multi-tasker and a serial entrepreneur, and presently runs three

companies; Radiowalla – a B2B audio services company, Sochcast – India's first immersive spoken work audio platform for women, and Frenzi – an OTT content search engine platform for cinema buffs.

Harry has always enjoyed working with start-ups and is passionate about training, building and mentoring. Today, he works with different companies and also mentors new start-ups as far away as Coimbatore while juggling Scrabble, family commitments and all his pro bono work such as being the Treasurer for his building society and also for the Scrabble Association of India (SAI).



*The Scrabbling Bhatias: Neeta and Harry flanked by sons Samrath (left) and Rehet*

He is also a key part of Wordaholix, and along with Neeta, Mimi and Varisht, enjoys conducting the annual Wordaholix Scrabble Leagues. Varisht and Sherwin Rodrigues were the ones who noticed his natural ability

to balance racks and play strategically, and suggested he take up the game along with Neeta and the boys.

One thing led to another, and Harry soon found himself being equipped (by his family) with word lists and Anagram Quizzer so as to familiarise him with the two-letter and three-letter words. Two years of being forced to stay at home – with a family even more passionate about Scrabble than he is – and his game improved remarkably. One of his most memorable Scrabble moments has been winning the Division B of the Vadodara All-India Open in 2020.

While Harry has a natural aptitude for the game, it remains an interstitial pastime: filling the gaps between conference calls and other assignments. His love of it is as much about the people as it is about the game. Over the years, they've made some of their best friends through the Scrabble community.

Harry's sense of humour and laid-back attitude (acquired more than instinctive) makes him fun to be around. That is reflected in his approach to the game as well – he enjoys participating in Scrabble tournaments but doesn't fret about his standings.

Both Neeta and Harry describe each other as 'responsible' and clearly are grounded by the deep affection and strong bonds with their families and friends. Now that the whole family plays Scrabble competitively, traveling for tournaments becomes both a family vacation and an event. And

with this family, every vacation also turns into a food festival, as all of them enjoy exploring the cuisine of the place they're visiting.

From 2017 onwards, they have attended most tournaments in India. As Neeta says, "from training the boys when they were younger to now getting tips from them, life surely has come a full circle."

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**Endgame Extra: Scrabblor  
Madhav Gopal Kamath wins Collins National Spelling Bee 2022**

Madhav Gopal Kamath, India's highest-ranked youth Scrabblor, gave further evidence of his word wizardry by winning the Collins National Spelling Bee 2022, the final of which was held in Mumbai on 17<sup>th</sup> September. The 11-year-old from Sanskriti School, Delhi came up trumps after 14 rounds.



*Madhav Gopal Kamath with the Collins National Spelling Bee trophy*



# A fishing expedition, Scrabble style

by *Rustom Deboo*

Here are 25 'fishy' bingos to help you stay afloat in your next tournament:

**ALBACORE** – large tuna of tropical to temperate seas

**ARAPAIMA** – large South American freshwater food fish

**BULLHEAD** – North American freshwater catfish

**CANDIRU** – small parasitic South American fish

**DRAGONET** – small, often brightly-coloured marine fish



*Gourami*

**EULACHON** – marine food fish of North America

**FINBACK** – large whale, also known as RORQUAL

**GOURAMI** – freshwater food fish of Southeast Asia

**GRUNION** – small food fish of Mexico and southern California

**HALIBUT** – large edible flatfish of Atlantic or Pacific waters

**INCONNU** – large salmonid food fish



*Kahawai*

**JEWFISH** – large serranoid fish of Florida

**KAHAWAI** – large salmon of Australia and New Zealand

**LUDERICK** – estuarine and rock fish of Australia

**MOONEYE** – silvery freshwater fish of North America

**MORWONG** – Australian perciform fish

**OLDWIFE** – tropical Atlantic fish

**PILCHARD** – small European food fish



*Morwong*

**POLLOCK** – marine food fish related to the cod

**RASBORA** – tropical cyprinid fish

SCULPIN – freshwater fish with large flattened head

STURGEON – large edible fish valued for their roe

TREVALLY – large Australian food fish

VENDACE – small European whitefish

WARMOUTH – freshwater sunfish native to America

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



Finally, here are the 99 sevens and eights ending with the letters FISH:

Sevens (37)

BATFISH, BOXFISH,  
 CATFISH, CODFISH,  
 COWFISH, DEAFISH,  
 DOGFISH, FINFISH,  
 FOXFISH, GARFISH,  
 GEMFISH, HAGFISH,  
 HOGFISH, HUFFISH,

ICEFISH, JEWFISH,  
 LUBFISH, MAYFISH,  
 MUDFISH, MUFFISH,  
 OARFISH, OUTFISH,  
 PANFISH, PIGFISH,  
 PINFISH, PUPFISH,  
 RAFFISH, RATFISH,  
 REDFISH, SAWFISH,  
 SELFISH, SERFISH,  
 SUNFISH, TOFFISH,  
 TUBFISH, WAIFISH, WOLFISH

Eights (62)

BAITFISH, BANDFISH,  
 BILLFISH, BLOWFISH,  
 BLUEFISH, BOARFISH,  
 BONEFISH, BURRFISH,  
 CAVEFISH, COALFISH,  
 CRAWFISH, CRAYFISH,  
 DEALFISH, DRAFFISH,  
 DRUMFISH, DWARFISH,  
 FALLFISH, FILEFISH,  
 FLATFISH, FOOLFISH,  
 FROGFISH, GAMEFISH,  
 GOATFISH, GOLDFISH,  
 GRAYFISH, GRUFFISH,  
 HEADFISH, HORNFISH,  
 JACKFISH, KELPFISH,  
 KINGFISH, LADYFISH,  
 LIONFISH, LUMPFISH,  
 LUNGFISH, MILKFISH,  
 MONKFISH, MOONFISH,  
 NUMBFISH, OVERFISH,  
 PIPEFISH, ROCKFISH,  
 ROSEFISH, SAILFISH,  
 SALTFISH, SANDFISH,  
 SCARFISH, SCOMFISH,  
 SCUMFISH, SNIFFISH,  
 SOAPFISH, SPOFFISH,  
 STARFISH, STIFFISH,  
 STUDFISH, SUCKFISH,  
 SURFFISH, TILEFISH, TOADFISH,  
 WALLFISH, WEAKFISH, WOLFFISH

# Tournament round-up

## Pune Club Scrabble Championship

*by Rustom Deboo*

The Pune Club Scrabble Championship, the traditional monsoon tournament of India's Scrabble calendar, returned after a three-year hiatus with its latest edition held at the Poona Club from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> July.



*Akshay Bhandarkar (centre) receiving the winner's prize from Tournament Director Ashok Bhandarkar (far right)*

A total of 27 players took part across 24 rounds, with 2017 WESPAC champion Akshay Bhandarkar coming up trumps after having secured 18 wins (plus two byes) at a comprehensive spread of +2732 – he was Gibsonised with two rounds to spare. He also achieved the highest score of 659.

### Final standings

Player	Wins	Spread
1 Akshay Bhandarkar	18 (+2)	2732
2 Aditya Iyengar	16.5(+1)	947
3 Sunny Bhatia	15	1372
4 Madhav Kamath	15	1093
5 Udayan Grover	14.5	114
6 Sujana Somasekar	14	375
7 Bhushan Pradhan	14	186

The second place was sealed with a round to spare by national champion Aditya Iyengar, who ended up with 16.5 wins (plus a bye) at +947. Sunny Bhatia and Madhav Gopal Kamath, each of whom logged 15 wins, finished third and fourth respectively, while Udayan Grover rounded off the top five with 14.5 wins.



*Games in progress at the 2022 Pune Club Scrabble Championship – players welcomed the return of the monsoon tourney*

There were four rating band prizes on offer, which were won by Neeta Bhatia, Meena Bakhru, Vimisha Patel and Hyder Quraishi.

8 Shaik Ahmed	13.5	309
9 Kala Ganesh	13	319
10 Vignesh S	13	-165
11 Neeta Bhatia	13	-467
12 Sudhir Kamath	12	736
13 Sumeet Sachdev	12	234
14 Rustom Deboo	12	-198
15 Vimisha Patel	11.5	-240
16 Meena Bakhru	10 (+1)	278
17 Amit Sood	10 (+1)	-188

18	Patrick Pereira	11	-632
19	Hyder Quraishi	11	-797
20	Caryl Gonsalvez	9 (+1)	-185
21	Ritu Chadha	9 (+1)	-675
22	Aruna Grover	9	-285
23	Parvathy R	9	-828
24	Harvinderjit Bhatia	9	-1201
25	Manju Pai	8.5	-935
26	Sylvia Coelho	6.5 (+1)	-1583
27	Priya Kshirsagar	0 (+0)	-316

High game: Akshay Bhandarkar 659  
 Bye treatment explained in brackets

## IIT Bombay Scrabble Open

*by Rustom Deboo*

The inaugural edition of the IIT Bombay Scrabble Open was conducted at the IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) Bombay campus in Powai, Mumbai from 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> August. The two-day tournament, initiated and directed by Aditya Iyengar, witnessed 38 players slug it out over 16 rounds.



**Winner Udayan Grover (centre) with runner-up Sumeet Sachdev (right) and third placer Samrath Singh Bhatia**

The roster included six IITB students, who made the cut through a qualifier held at the campus the previous week. This meant that a good number of Scrabble enthusiasts got the opportunity to make their tournament bow.

The WESPA-rated tourney went down to the wire, what with three players – Udayan Grover (12-3, +928 at the end of Round 15), Sumeet Sachdev (11-4, +762) and Hriday Samtani (11-4, +744) – in contention for the title going into the final round.



**The board from the dramatic final-round game between Udayan Grover and Sumeet Sachdev**

As it happened, Hriday lost his final game to Samrath Singh Bhatia, narrowing the list of probables to two. At the top table, Sumeet needed to beat Udayan by at least 84 points to emerge victorious. Udayan was holding a comfortable lead of 311-133 at one point, when Sumeet's nine-timer

NOTiC(E)RS for 158 changed the complexion of the game.

Sumeet soon inched into the lead, which grew to 82 points. However, Udayan went out with a bingo to seal the top spot, even though Sumeet won the game 462-442. Both players finished at 12-4, with their respective spreads being +908 and +782.



*The organising team at the IIT Bombay Scrabble Open*

The third place was taken by Samrath (11-5, +1070), followed by Bhushan Pradhan and Hriday (each of them finishing with 11 wins as well) in the fourth and fifth positions. The two rating band prizes were clinched by Neeta Bhatia (800-1000 band) and Harry Bhatia (0-800).

**Final standings**

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Udayan Grover	12	908
2	Sumeet Sachdev	12	782
3	Samrath Bhatia	11	1070
4	Bhushan Pradhan	11	651
5	Hriday Samtani	11	520
6	Sridhar Paidikondala	11	169
7	Rustom Deboo	10	330
8	Sanjay Bijlani	10	260
9	Harvinderjit Bhatia	10	-163
10	Sanjoy Gupta	9	1186
11	Kala Ganesh	9	874
12	Pramit Rao	9	839
13	Ritu Chadha	9	492

14	Neeta Bhatia	9	17
15	Shakir Reshamwala	9	-286
16	V Ramachandran	8.5	500
17	Shreyas Gupta	8	488
18	Ayaz Kazi	8	110
19	Srushti Gandhi	8	-73
20	Anvay Shah	8	-81
21	Sonal Merchant	8	-137
22	Aruna Grover	7.5	-520
23	Alan DeMello	7	364
24	Caryl Gonsalvez	7	-10
25	Viji Ramachandran	7	-60
26	Patrick Pereira	7	-107
27	Collin Pereira	7	-160
28	Aarush Jotwani	7	-310
29	Anand Narasimhan	7	-546
30	Karan Khanna	6.5	-368
31	Shabnam Sahay	6	8
32	Aaradhya Srivastava	6	-456
33	Parvathy R	6	-582
34	Nistha Agarwal	6	-1411
35	Dirgha Sampat	5.5	-1081
36	Anika Dalwani	5.5	-1177
37	Ananya Shankar	4.5	-601
38	Sahil Kumar	1	-1439

High game: Hriday Samtani 653

**KSSA Independence Day Tournament**

*with inputs from KSSA*

The Karnataka State Scrabble Association (KSSA) organised a two-day Independence Day tournament from 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> August. The tourney was marked by Independence Day fervour, with colours of the national flag prominent through its course.

Prashanth Seetharam won 13 out of 15 rounds to take the top spot among 22 participants, and was followed in the final standings by 12-year-old Suyash Manchali, Sanjoy Gupta and Siddharth Nithyanand, each of whom won ten games.





*Prashanth Seetharam (left), winner of the KSSA Independence Day tourney*



*A special tricoloured cake on the occasion of India's 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day*

### Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Prashanth S	13	477
2	Suyash Manchali	10	1015
3	Sanjoy Gupta	10	753
4	Siddharth Nithyanand	10	-183
5	Rajveer Rawlin	9	528
6	Sujana Somasekar	9	515
7	Sushanto B	9	256
8	R Nalini	8	537
9	Pankaj Bolaki	8	357
10	Shubha S	8	333
11	Saraswathi R	8	90
12	Samarth Manchali	8	-122
13	Abid Hussain	7	252
14	Monica Agarwala	7	151
15	Mayank Khandelwal	7	-209
16	Raman Viswanathan	7	-355
17	Abdul Waheed	6	436
18	Suguna Dandi	6	-469
19	Chandru Bolaki	6	-725
20	Anirudh Jayakishan	5	-747
21	Suhaas Khandelwal	5	-759
22	Madhulekha B	4	-937

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### GAIL Cup, Delhi

*by Rustom Deboo*

The seventh edition of the GAIL Cup was held from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> September at Alpina Hotels and Suites, the same venue that also hosted the previous edition in 2019. Organised by the Scrabble Association of Delhi (SADel) and directed by Ashok Bhandarkar, the tournament featured 70 players across four divisions – while Divisions A and B were three-day affairs, Divisions C and D were one-dayers.

A highly competitive Division A, having 22 players in action, was won by Aditya Iyengar, with the quest for top honours remaining alive into the final round, i.e. Round 25. Aditya rallied to prevail in each of his last eight games, culminating in a 491-387 win over



Sunny Bhatia, thereby finishing with 17 wins at a spread of +2053. Sunny finished second, with 16 wins at +319.



*Winner Aditya Iyengar with the board from his last-round win, which included a nine-timer FROWIE(S)t*

Joining Aditya and Sunny on the podium was Samrath Singh Bhatia, who notched 15.5 wins at +1167. The son-father duo of Madhav Gopal Kamath (15.5 wins at +260) and Sudhir Kamath (15, -14) completed the top five. The high score of the tournament was achieved by Hriday Samtani, who recorded a sensational 665-245 win over Shaik Ahmed in Round 13.

Division B – also having 25 rounds – was as intensely fought, and went down to the last game as well. In the end, 16-year-old Shreyas Gupta (17.5 wins at +760), the tenth seed, fended off stern challenges from Arindam Basu (17, +981) and Dipankar

Chatterjee (17, +615) to lead the final standings in the 25-player field.



*The Vandana Grover Memorial Trophy for the most improved player, which was won by Sudhir Kamath*

The seven-round Division C was won unbeaten by Neelanjana Bid, while the four-round Division D, consisting of kids and sponsored by Kantell Entertainment, was likewise won by Tavishi Bagga. The rating band prize winners in Division A were Sumeet Sachdev and Amit Sood, while those in Division B were and Hyder Quraishi and Abhav Sharma.

A special prize for the player with maximum improvement was awarded in the form of the rolling Vandana Grover Memorial Trophy, in memory of late Vandana Grover, a passionate Scrabbler who left us in May 2021. The trophy was won by Sudhir, who finished 11 places above his seeding.

**Final standings – Division A**

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Aditya Iyengar	17	2053
2	Sunny Bhatia	16	319

## ENDGAME – September 2022

3	Samrath Bhatia	15.5	1167	4	Danish Shahna	15	694
4	Madhav Kamath	15.5	260	5	Rajnikant Singh	15	-45
5	Sudhir Kamath	15	-14	6	Kala Ganesh	14.5	654
6	Mohan Chunkath	14	524	7	Abid Hussain	14	937
7	Sanjoy Gupta	14	502	8	Asha Kamath	14	485
8	Ishika Shivalingaiah	14	203	9	Archana Aggarwal	14	237
9	Hriday Samtani	13	380	10	Abhijit Shilotri	14	18
10	Charles Carneiro	13	-195	11	Sushanto B	13	626
11	Udayan Grover	12	222	12	Hyder Quraishi	13	319
12	Sumeet Sachdev	12	-200	13	Swagat Nukala	13	205
13	Amit Sood	12	-357	14	Siddharth Nithyanand	13	167
14	Shaik Ahmed	12	-403	15	Vimisha Patel	13	-127
15	Rustom Deboo	11	-156	16	Neeta Bhatia	12	327
16	Suchindra Potnis	11	-508	17	Abhay Sharma	12	-76
17	Mangala Bhandarkar	11	-571	18	Harry Bhatia	12	-126
18	Karthik Ganesan	11	-721	19	Sonal Merchant	12	-174
19	Sridhar Paidikondala	10	-304	20	Ritu Chadha	12	-383
20	Sujana Somasekar	9	-207	21	Ahana Goyal	11.5	-330
21	Pramit Kamath	9	-481	22	Shalini Sahdev	11	-24
22	Rehet Bhatia	8	-1513	23	Aruna Grover	10.5	-310
				24	Akshay Hiremath	9	-786
				25	Anu Chagti	5	-2696

High game: Hriday Samtani 665



*The high game at the GAIL Cup: 665 by  
Hriday Samtani*

### Final standings – Division B

Player	Wins	Spread
1 Shreyas Gupta	17.5	760
2 Arindam Basu	17	981
3 Dipankar Chatterjee	17	615

### Final standings – Division C

Player	Wins	Spread
1 Neelanjana Bid	7	855
2 Amrita Dasgupta	5	539
3 Calvin L	5	293
4 Dhruv Kamath	5	181
5 Vishesh Bhatia	4	363
6 Prameet Kamat	4	306
7 Jiya Bhojania	4	213
8 Sian Virani	4	34
9 Manit Arora	4	-154
10 Madhulekha B	3	-104
11 Mohit Arora	3	-167
12 Padmaja Singh	3	-377
13 Namrata Bhojania	2	-197
14 Sanchita Bid	2	-518
15 Suparna Pachouri	1	-742

### Final standings – Division D

Player	Wins	Spread
1 Tavishi Bagga	4	649
2 Amay Gupta	3	666
3 Kaashvi Mohan	3	414
4 Shiv Talwar	3	289
5 Medhansh Sighla	1	-426
6 Avika Goyal	1	-448
7 Imica Goel	1	-732
8 Rivan Kapoor	0	-412



*Participants from the kids' division of the GAIL Cup with prizes and certificates*

## WYC India Qualifier

A round-robin qualifier was held on Woogles on 25<sup>th</sup> September to determine the final two spots for the eight-member Indian team for the virtual WESPA Youth Cup 2022. Samarth Manchali and Yuvraj Dighe qualified, with Aarush Jotwani and Ahana Goyal being the reserves.

### Final standings

	Player	Wins	Spread
1	Samarth Manchali	6	559
2	Yuvraj Dighe	5	795
3	Aarush Jotwani	5	397
4	Ahana Goyal	5	373
5	Vihaan Singhvi	3	-307
6	Suhaas Khandelwal	2	82
7	Anika Dalwani	1.5	-540
8	Arhav Thakkar	0.5	-1359

## Delhi State Championship

The 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Delhi State School Championship was held at Apeejay School on 24<sup>th</sup> September. The winners were Dhruv Kamath (Class 9 and above), Ahana Goyal (Class 6 to 8) and Manit Arora (Class 5 and below).

## Pune Zonal of the National School Scrabble Championship

The first zonal qualifier of the National School Scrabble Championship, in collaboration with Collins and Mattel, took place in Pune on 24<sup>th</sup> September. Zyfn Kothavala of Bishop's School won the competition.

### Upcoming Tournaments

Wordaholix Scrabble League VIII from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October at The Bark, Lonavala

WESPA Youth Cup 2022 from 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October on Woogles

Polyset All-India Open from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November at Fern Ecotel, Vadodara (Vimisha – 9825164654)

Goa One-dayer on 19<sup>th</sup> November

Asia Cup Youth Championship from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November at Kunskapsskolan, Gurgaon (Neeta – 9821288502)

iCare Cup from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> December in Hyderabad (Danish – 9886900009)

## Endgame Extra: The lament of a rookie...

*by K.T. Rajagopalan*

I envy the skill of Scrabblers who come first,

For, more often than not, I bite the dust.

Wonder how I can get better...

Vocab is not the only fetter;

Strategy, board vision and derring-do are a must.

# Scrabble around the world

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



## Pakistan

The 34<sup>th</sup> Pakistan National Scrabble Championship was held in Karachi from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August, with Waseem Khatri winning 18 out of 27 rounds to clinch a record tenth title.

The 22nd Pakistan Inter-School Scrabble Championship was held in Karachi on 4<sup>th</sup> September. More than 1200 students from nearly 100 schools and colleges participated.

## United Kingdom

The British Matchplay Scrabble Championship (BMSC), one of the five major annual tournaments in the United Kingdom, was played in Milton Keynes from 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> August. Lewis Mackay emerged as the winner with 18 wins from 25 rounds.

## United States

A number of top international names featured in the 39-player Division 1 of the Word Cup in Chicago from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> July, conducted by the Word Game Players' Organisation (WGPO) and Collins Coalition (CoCo). David Wiegand of the United States took the top spot with 21.5 wins (plus two byes) from 31 games, with his compatriots Jesse Day and Will Anderson making up the top three. Another 32 players took part in Division 2.

An equally competitive Scrabble Players Championship was played in Baltimore a couple of weeks later. Following 31 rounds among 34 players, Austin Shin of the US and Waseem Khatri of Pakistan made it to the best-of-five finals, which Austin won 3-1.

Las Vegas has been announced as the venue for the 2023 WESPA Championship (WESPAC), to be held from 28<sup>th</sup> July to 2<sup>nd</sup> August next year.

## Nigeria

Wellington Jighere, the 2015 WESPAC champion, won a hard-fought Scrabble in the Jungle – a three-day, 36-round tournament featuring the top ten players in Nigeria – held from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> August.

## The Gambia

The Gambia Scrabble Federation Tournament from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> August was the first ever WESPA-rated tournament to be played in The Gambia.

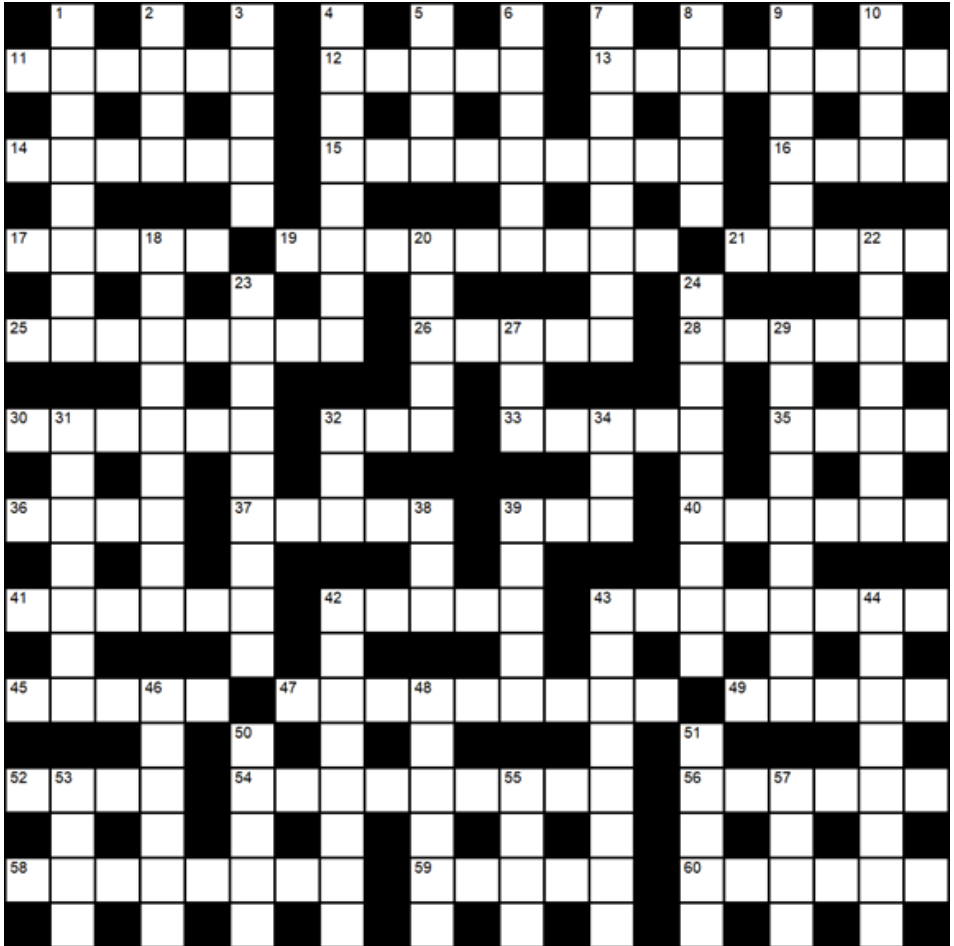
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# Puzzles and quizzes

## SAI Crossword #007

by Mohan Chunkath

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



**Across**

- 11 TODDES (6)
- 12 OUBIT (5)
- 13 AMENTIAS (8)
- 14 NOSTOI (6)
- 15 STAKEOUTS (9)
- 16 VEST (4)
- 17 BRAIL (5)
- 19 WHORESONS (9)
- 21 OASIS (5)
- 25 SHARPEERS (8)
- 26 PANGA (5)
- 28 ONESIE (6)
- 30 OUTPUT (6)
- 32 SUD (3)
- 33 PATEN (5)
- 35 BIAS (4)
- 36 INTO (4)
- 37 FUMER (5)
- 39 NET (3)
- 40 DEAVED (6)
- 41 FARCIE (6)
- 42 GNOWS (5)
- 43 REACTIVE (8)
- 45 HEVEA (5)
- 47 FANTASISE (9)
- 49 RAIRD (5)
- 52 AIDE (4)
- 54 CONFRERIE (9)
- 56 GRAALS (6)

58 SCHOOLER (8)

59 URAEI (5)

60 MANEGE (6)

**Down**

- 1 HISTIOID (8)
- 2 SYES (4)
- 3 AYONT (5)
- 4 BANJOIST (8)
- 5 TATS (4)
- 6 DUKKHA (6)
- 7 XANTHINE (8)
- 8 FEIST (5)
- 9 LAVASH (6)
- 10 PELT (4)
- 18 ANTHROPIC (9)
- 20 SWIPE (5)
- 22 INGLOBE (7)
- 23 CERTIFIES (9)
- 24 REAMENDED (9)
- 27 TUG (3)
- 29 SPARRIEST (9)
- 31 TUILZIE (7)
- 32 MUM (3)
- 34 NIP (3)
- 38 WAR (3)
- 39 SKATS (5)
- 42 GALLICAS (8)
- 43 CREEPIER (8)
- 44 GROOVILY (8)



46 VICARS (6)  
48 FATSIA (6)  
50 PRONE (5)  
51 LAMMY (5)

53 SEED (4)  
55 REAR (4)  
57 KING (4)

---

## Anagram quiz – Name the Indian city

*by Rustom Deboo*

In this quiz, each clue is the meaning of a word valid in Scrabble, and each of these words has the name of an Indian city as its anagram. The objective is to find the names of all ten cities. You can send in your answers to [indianscrabble@gmail.com](mailto:indianscrabble@gmail.com) by 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022. One entry getting all answers right will win a cash prize of Rs. 500 in a lucky draw.

Congrats to Virendra Braganza for winning the lucky draw prize for the quiz featured in the June 2022 edition.

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Faint illumination in the sky | 6) To graft by uniting          |
| 2) A sudden, violent incursion   | 7) A Spanish coin               |
| 3) A large reptile               | 8) Calls before a court of law  |
| 4) Hold in bondage               | 9) Mexican dish of green chilli |
| 5) A priest                      | 10) Fraught with danger         |



# Find the best play

by Hriday Samtani

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

1

Board 1: A 15x15 grid with letters L, U, H, N, O, M, E, M, O, E, R, A, L, Z, I, L, A, S, E, Q, U, E, E, R. The word QUEER is highlighted in yellow. Below the board is a rack of letters: I, O, S, T, T, Y.

2

Board 2: A 15x15 grid with letters C, U, Z, P, H, E, N, E, T, I, C, S, S, K, E, V, E, E, T, A, E, R, I, O, G, B, I, D, O, R, Y, O, G, A, L, L, A, N, D, O, R, Y, U, D, O, I, R, E, W, M, A, T, E, A, R, E, T, A, D, X, I, P, I, O, N, E, Y, S, I, N, G, T, U, I, N, A, G. Below the board is a rack of letters: A, J, L, M, O, S.



3

## Identify the eight-letter word

by *Shubha Shivashankar*

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

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) 1235 – discontinue<br>8567 – a celestial body<br>5246 – a fish<br>534 – an element | 4) 412 – a tool<br>321 – king<br>5782 – a tree<br>6432 – an animal                 |
| 2) 168 – a lively dance<br>674 – a liquid<br>325 – a unit<br>7265 – a body part       | 5) 64587 – an insect<br>4367 – stare<br>421 – a tree<br>3246 – jail                |
| 3) 3427 – an animal<br>184 – pimple<br>7284 – walking style<br>4567 – shallow basket  | 6) 234 – a body part<br>781 – a metallic object<br>6237 – a bird<br>45371 – gloomy |

## SAI round-up

- **National School Scrabble Championship**

The 2022 National School Scrabble Championship, an open tournament for all school students with free entry and jointly sponsored by Collins and Mattel under the aegis of SAI, kicked off with online qualifiers in the second week of September. The Wordaholix team and Scrabble Association of Delhi (SADel) have worked hard to make this tourney a reality.

As many as 12000 students from across the country took part in the online qualifiers, and around 1000 of them made it to eight zonal qualifiers, the first of which was held in Pune on 24<sup>th</sup> September. The Grand Finale featuring 32 finalists will be played in Delhi on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

- **Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship**

The inaugural edition of the Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championship, organised by SADel and Wordaholix under the aegis of SAI, will be held at Kunskapsskolan School in Gurgaon from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2022. Complete details about the tourney can be found at this link:

[Asia Cup Youth Scrabble Championships 2022 - Scrabble Association of India \(indianscrabble.com\)](https://www.indianscrabble.com/)

- **WESPA Youth Cup 2022**

The 2022 WESPA Youth Cup (WYC) will be played virtually on Woogles over three weekends from 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October. The Indian team for the tournament is: Madhav Gopal Kamath, Prमित Rao, Suyash Manchali, Ekansh Arora, Shreyas Gupta, Amogh Bhamerkar, Yuvraj Dighe and Samarth Manchali, with Aarush Jotwani and Ahana Goyal as reserves.

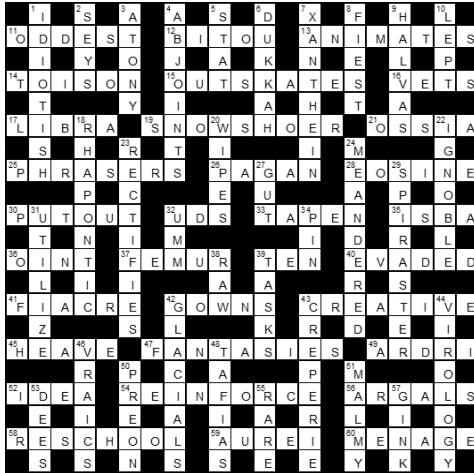
## New members

Members who were welcomed into SAI in the last quarter:

1. **Bhakti Shah** (Nagpur)
2. **Shobha Ramakrishna** (Bangalore) is a senior citizen who got hooked on to Scrabble in February 2020. Since then, it has been a roller-coaster ride for her, in trying to understand and learn the game at the same time. She has been fortunate to find a lot of good Samaritans who have helped her with her Scrabble study.

# Solutions to puzzles and quizzes

## SAI Crossword #007



2



### Three best moves:

B2 – LOGJAMS – 86

6A – LOGJAMS – 76

5C – JAM – 42 (LOS?)

## Find the best play

1



3



### Three best moves:

5A – pOST(ER)ITY – 66

9F – (E)YOT – 23 (IST?)

G7 – O(A)TS – 27 (ITY?)

### Three best moves:

H1 – BREVEt(ED) – 104

H1 – BREVEt(ED) – 104

O4 – BREVeTE – 96

**Identify the eight-letter word**

- 1) QUINTARS, 2) JACKLING,  
3) ZASTRUGI, 4) XERAPHIN,  
5) KAGOULES, 6) YARMULKE
- 

**Endgame Extra: With this being  
the seventh edition of Endgame,  
here are a few handy sevens**

SEVEN?? (52)

ADVENES, AVENGES,  
AVENSES, AVENUES,  
CHEVENS, DEVEINS,  
ELEVENS, ELEVONS,  
ENCAVES, ENDIVES,  
ENERVES, ENMOVES,  
ENSLAVE, ENVIERS,  
EVENERS, EVENEST,  
EVINCES, EVZONES,  
GENEVAS, HEAVENS,  
INVERSE, LEAVENS,  
NERVERS, PENSIVE,  
SENVIES, SEVENTH,  
SEVENTY, STEVENS,  
SUBVENE, SWEVENS,  
TENSIVE, VEINERS,  
VENDEES, VENDERS,  
VENDUES, VENEERS,  
VENENES, VENEWES,  
VENGERS, VENINES,  
VENIRES, VENITES,  
VENNELS, VENTERS,  
VENTOSE, VENTRES,  
VENULES, VENUSES,  
VERSINE, VERVENS,  
VESPINE, VOTEENS

SEPTET? (12)

PERTEST, PETITES,  
PETTERS, PETTIES,

PETTLES, PRETEST,  
PUTTEES, SEPTATE,  
SEPTETS, SPATTEE,  
TEMPEST, TYPESET

HEPTAD? (5)

HEPTADS, PATCHED,  
PITHEAD, POTHEAD,  
SPATHED

LIBRA?? (61)

AIRBALL, AWLBIRD,  
BAILERS, BAILORS,  
BAIRNLY, BALDIER,  
BALDRIC, BALKIER,  
BALLIER, BALMIER,  
BARILLA, BARMILY,  
BASILAR, BATGIRL,  
BEDRAIL, BIFILAR,  
BIJURAL, BILAYER,  
BILIARY, BILOBAR,  
BIPOLAR, BLADIER,  
BLARING, BOLIVAR,  
BRAILED, BRAILLE,  
BRASILS, BRAWLIE,  
BRAZILS, BRIDALS,  
BRINJAL, BURIALS,  
CALIBER, CALIBRE,  
FIBULAR, FRIABLE,  
GARBOIL, HIRABLE,  
KILOBAR, LABRIDS,  
LABROID, LAMBIER,  
LIBBARD, LIBERAL,  
LIBRARY, LIBRATE,  
MIRABLE, ORBITAL, PARBOIL,  
RABIDLY, RAILBED, RAILBUS,  
REBLAI, RIBALDS, RIDABLE,  
SCRIBAL, TABLIER, TIMBRAL,  
TRIBALE, TRIBALS, WIRABLE

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# Ratings

Below are the SAI top 60 (official) and top 15 (online) as on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2022. Please visit [indianscrabble.com](http://indianscrabble.com) for full rankings.

## Official ratings

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
1	Sherwin Rodrigues	MUM	1871	1622
2	Akshay Bhandarkar	OSI	1836	587
3	Eeshan Malhotra	MUM	1809	451
4	Goutham Jayaraman	OSI	1732	461
5	Ralph Lobo	OSI	1695	218
6	Nakul Prabhu	MUM	1673	1526
7	Aditya Iyengar	PUN	1666	628
8	Ranganathan Chakrav	CHN	1648	935
	Irfan Siddiqui	OS	1590	347
9	Prashanth Seetharam	OSI	1564	384
10	Sunny Bhatia	DEL	1558	1164
11	Nidhi Singhvi	OSI	1558	950
12	Mohan Chunkath	CHN	1554	1144
13	Samrath Singh Bhatia	MUM	1552	979
	Puneet Sharma	OS	1549	170
14	Mohsin Ahmed	BLR	1537	264
	Michael Tang	OS	1534	434
15	Varisht Hingorani	MUM	1530	1246
16	Madhav Gopal Kamath	DEL	1530	647
17	Charles Carneiro	OSI	1527	812
18	Douglas Lobo	GOA	1510	1397
19	Rahil Parkar	MUM	1509	618
20	Sanjoy Gupta	BLR	1481	1399
21	Hriday Samtani	MUM	1481	642
22	A Krishnan	CHN	1464	513
23	Udayan Grover	PUN	1451	2049
24	Rajveer Rawlin	BLR	1447	542
25	Ishika Shivalingaiah	BLR	1445	346
26	Pramit Rao	MUM	1432	74
27	Jose de Abreu	MUM	1426	931
28	Selwyn Lobo	OSI	1420	251
29	Vraj Jain	MUM	1391	593
30	Carolann Pais	MUM	1387	1592
31	Shaik Ahmed	HYD	1384	1825
32	Sudhir Kamath	DEL	1374	1054
33	Sanjay Bijlani	MUM	1339	575
34	Mehul Arora	DEL	1332	264
35	Anuj Shetty	BLR	1328	341
36	Sumeet Sachdev	MUM	1323	559
37	Mangala Bhandarkar	PUN	1311	1596
38	Bhushan Pradhan	MUM	1306	1911
39	Pankaj Bolaki	BLR	1304	320
40	Manju Sood	BLR	1292	887
41	Rajeev Menon	HYD	1290	783
	Rohaina Tanveer	OS	1288	520

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
42	Yash Potnis	BLR	1277	562
43	Cecil Fernandes	OSI	1275	464
44	Suyash Manchali	BLR	1258	246
	Supriya Devnani	OS	1242	106
45	Amit Sood	PUN	1241	440
46	Rustom Deboo	MUM	1238	527
47	Ekansh Arora	DEL	1234	193
48	Vedika Hingorani	MUM	1229	589
49	Pramit Kamath	DEL	1227	523
50	Sridhar Paidikondala	HYD	1217	940
51	Sujana Somasekar	BLR	1206	496
52	Dipankar Chatterjee	BLR	1200	583
53	Neelam Agrawal	BLR	1186	306
54	R Nalini	BLR	1184	923
55	Rajiv Antao	GOA	1183	993
56	Suchindra Potnis	BLR	1177	425
57	Arindam Basu	KOL	1165	375
58	Shreyas Gupta	DEL	1155	89
59	Karthik Ganesan	DEL	1154	210
60	Kala Ganesh	MUM	1151	1303

## Online ratings

	Name	Club	Rating	Games
1	Rahil Parkar	MUM	2613	27
2	Udayan Grover	PUN	2516	80
3	Sanjoy Gupta	BLR	2455	51
4	Samrath Singh Bhatia	MUM	2361	70
	Brian Po	OS	2345	10
5	Madhav Gopal Kamath	DEL	2344	96
6	Sumeet Sachdev	MUM	2254	109
7	Pankaj Bolaki	BLR	2246	41
8	Amit Sood	PUN	2223	51
	Shaila Amalean	OS	2202	48
9	Sudhir Kamath	DEL	2196	36
10	R Nalini	BLR	2169	100
11	Ishika Shivalingaiah	BLR	2142	71
12	Rajveer Rawlin	BLR	2110	14
13	Bhushan Pradhan	MUM	2102	70
14	Shubha Shivashankar	BLR	2099	25
15	Sridhar Paidikondala	HYD	2089	55

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

BLR – Bangalore (KSSA)  
 CHN – Chennai  
 DEL – Delhi  
 GOA – Goa  
 GUJ – Gujarat (Vadodara)  
 HYD – Hyderabad  
 KOL – Kolkata  
 MUM – Mumbai  
 PUN – Pune  
 OSI – Indian national residing overseas  
 OS – Overseas foreign player (no rank)



# ENDGAME

## **Let us know your feedback**

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