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to all newwavers	

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a beginner's guide to Scrabble in Singapore comprising:

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#### NEWWAVER

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## editor's foreword

#### new-wav-er

- 1. A member of a new-wave movement
- 2. A film maker who follows New Wave ideas
- 3. A guide for **new** and **waver**ing Scrabble players in Singapore

The years 2005-2007 were some eventful years for the Scrabble Association. The three years marked the emergence of a new generation of young, enthusiastic and energetic players. These players were not only keen but also curious - they were eager to learn from the top players, taking defeats in their stride and improving from their mistakes. Unsurprisingly, by 2007, many of these players were winning major tournaments in Singapore and overseas.

This online booklet that you are now reading is the brainchild of some of the youth players from the 2005-2007 era. Through this effort, we want to inspire a new generation of Scrabble players and bring them to the fore. You, the reader, can play a part in this effort by reading through this publication and passing it on to your interested friends when you are ready.

In this publication, you will see a potpourri of resources, reports and recommendations on everybody's favourite wordgame. These come from our very own players, who have contributed based on their own capacity and goodwill. They deserve my full gratitude for their hard work.

We hope that every new player will aspire towards making a new wave in the tournament Scrabble scene after reading this guide.

Enjoy!

Toh Weibin

## the hitchhiker or guide to

## C<sub>2</sub> R<sub>1</sub> A<sub>1</sub> B<sub>3</sub> B<sub>3</sub> L<sub>2</sub>

## First of all, don't panic.

Many novices are usually intimidated by the unfamiliar words used in expert play. These range from uncommon two-letter words like KI and UT to seven and eight-letter bingos like LOWBOYS and TYRAMINE. To them, Scrabble is a game of pure memory - the more words one can remember, the better he is at the game.



A lowboy: a chest of drawers on short legs

The more persistent players, however, begin to see strategic depth in the game as they learn more and more words. Strategies like blocking and rack management become more important towards the intermediate levels of play, and can sometimes make or break a player's game.

Though Scrabble is a word game, a good English vocabulary is not a prerequisite. Many nonnative speakers are also some of the world's best players. Thailand has produced two World Champions in Scrabble and has the largest youth outreach in the world. So don't be afraid!

It would be impossible not to increase one's vocabulary and general knowledge while playing Scrabble. Words have been devised or evolved to cover every sphere of human endeavour - science, politics, arts, sports. What is unfamiliar to one may be common parlance to another; and as such these words may be gateways to unexplored cultures.

Scrabble can also be attractive to strategic thinkers and number crunchers as it involves a mathematical and positional element. Apart from basic score tabulation, players need to do quick probability estimations to predict their chances of securing an advantage in the game. Scrabble involves both decision making and risk management.

So what are you waiting for? Get started!

## ana-grammatic

It should be said at this point that success in any endeavour requires interest, effort and perseverance. To be able to play at a competitive level, one needs to internalise a number of words which are very commonly played at tournaments. This may sound like a painful process, but it is ultimately an rewarding journey that will bring you far in the game. Here's what we suggest you study:

etter Words are often seen as the foundation of Scrabble play - they are the most frequently played words in the entire game. Simple two letter plays using the J, Q, X and Z can net over 60 points!

Learn all of the 2-letter words, followed by their hooks. The hooks will give you some flexibility over your game.

suffixes in them, for instance -ING, RE-, UN- and -IER. Commonly studied bingos include stems (letter combinations which yield bingos with most letters) and high-probability bingos.

Study the 300 most probable 7 & 8 letter bingos and several 6-7 letter stems (read Scatterbrains!).

etter Words are versatile as two letter hooks and also as tile dumps. 3-letter words allow one to achieve better rack balance - while some can work as ■vowel dumps (e.g AUA), others (e.g. CWM) can get rid of awkward tiles.

It is usually better to learn the 3-letter words through experience.

Other lists that you can consider are vowel/consonant-heavy 4-letter words and short words containing J, Q, K, X or Z. If you've finished the necessary studying, or just need a break, it's time to go out and get some practice!

#### Facebook Scrabble

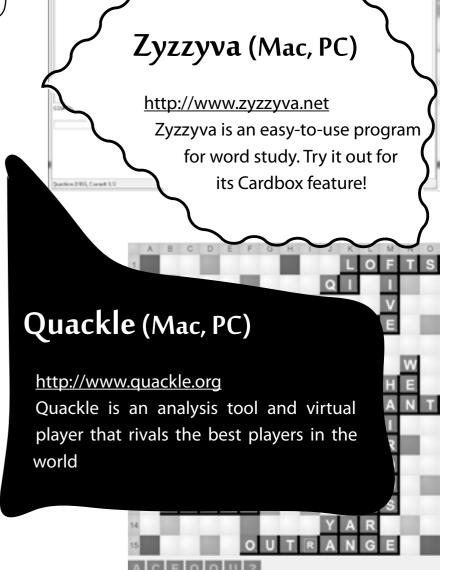
http://apps.facebook.com/livescrabble/ Play Scrabble with your friends and share your accomplishments on your profile! Make sure you're playing the version called SCRABBLE Worldwide (excluding U.S. and Canada)

## practick

visit these places for Scrabble beyond the couch!

#### Jumbletime

http://www.toucanet.com/jumble.html
If you love solving anagrams, Jumbletime is the right website for you! Featuring daily puzzles and multiplayer challenges, this quiz site is bound to improve your anagramming abilities



#### Jurong Green CC

http://www.toucanet.com/venue-649520.html Every Saturday (Except Public Holidays)

2 – 10pm 7.30 – 10pm For general practice
Mr Thong Liew Kee, National
Master, provides free coaching
to new players. All are welcome

Contact Kian Boon at vp.jgccscrabbleclub@gmail.com

## Internet Scrabble Club (ISC)

http://www.isc.ro

Train up for tournaments by signing up for an account at ISC! You can customise game settings such as time and challenge mode to mimic real tournament games. You can also observe and learn from top-rated players online

Zarf \ (iPhone, iPad, iPod

http://itunes.apple.com/
us/app/zarf/id353428453
Zarf is a free app that can act as a clock, word judge and anagram solver

touch)



#### Gearing up for your debut tournament? We invite eleven resident Grand Masters to spill the tiles beans on their tournament successes in no more than ten words!

Tony Sim:



Believe in yourself and just do it.

Cheah Siu Hean:



Play. You can't win unless you do.

#### Marcus Goh:



Have sufficient time for the endgame.

#### Benjamin Chow:



Enjoy yourself and stay positive.

#### Goh Jiang Pern:



Master your fundamentals; tall towers have strong foundations.

Toh Weibin:



Play calmly, but intensely. Be confident of your moves.

#### **Hubert Wee:**



Practice and know what you are playing for.

#### **Ricky Purnomo:**



You can win even with mistakes. Never give up.

#### Marlon Prudencio:



No one is invincible. Anyone can beat anybody anytime.

#### Andy Kurnia:

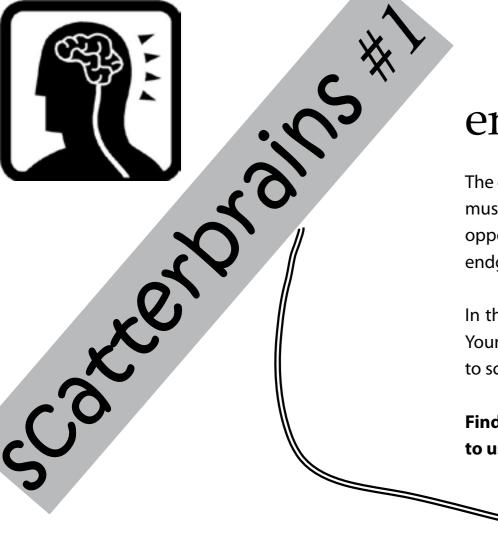


RETINA plus blank. Twice. Then RETINAS four times. ;-)

#### Liew Kian Boon:



The greatest challenge is yourself; forget the opponent.

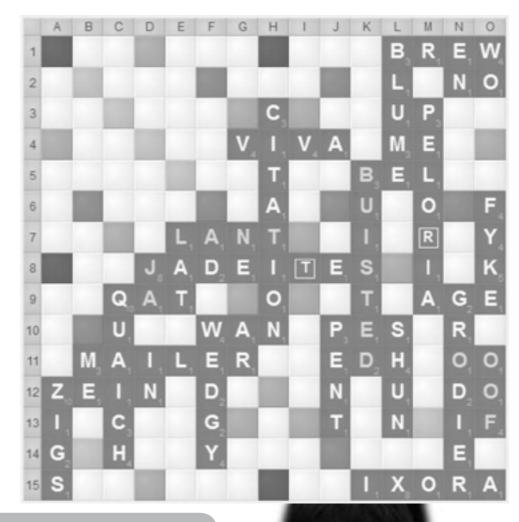


### en(d)vision

The endgame is usually the hardest part of the Scrabble game - one must maximise the score of the tiles that he has and prevent his opponent from doing the same with his tiles. In close games, the endgame determines whether the game is won or lost.

In this scenario (adapted from SA News), you have the tiles EORS. Your opponent will go out (finish his tiles) next move, so you need to score as much as you can now with your tiles.

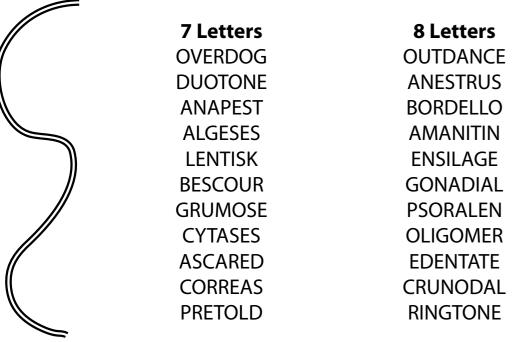
Find the highest scoring play using those tiles. You do not have to use up all the tiles. Answers at the back of the publication.



## Anagram this!

All the following words are valid bingos that have an anagram which is a more common English word. Can you find all of them?

Answers at the back of the publication. Puzzles adapted from SA News.



### STEMMINESS\*

Stems are letter combinations that will produce new word(s) with another letter. The most useful stems to learn are those that are probable and yield many solutions. Try some of them below! Answers at the back of the publication.

RAISED + P ASPIRED	OTARINE + H
	SARDINE + S ARIDNESS
RETINA + P PAINTER	REGINA + G



## youth QUAKE

Yes, youth players are causing tremors all over the Scrabble world! Since the inception of the World Youth Scrabble Championships (WYSC) in 2006, many "graduates" from the tournament have gone on to win major competitions around the world, from national championships to worldscale tournaments.

The situation is not very different in Singapore. Singapore has sent in strong contenders to the WYSCs each year and managed to clinch the title once in 2007. Four of Singapore's Grand Masters are former representatives in the competition and have consistently performed well in local minis and majors against Singapore's top adult players. Many of our youth players have surpassed expectations by qualifying for Singapore in international events, including the World Scrabble Championship (WSC) and Causeway.

While a player may grow wiser with age, experience counts for little in a one-on-one game of Scrabble.

This section is dedicated to the youth players out there - youths with passion, determination and energy; youths who aren't afraid to take on the adults; youths who are willing to emulate and learn from the very best. You will, in the following pages, uncover the journeys and experiences of our youths who have come of age in the local and international arenas.

As we move ahead in the Internet age, we expect more young talents to enter the Scrabble fraternity and prove themselves as worthy competitors. Contribute to this Youthquake and join a competition today!

The young players will certainly supplant the oldsters; whether it be now or later is the only question.

Cheah Siu Hean, SA News Q1 2007

# World Championships 2010

by wong zhi yuan

The 5th World Youth Scrabble Championship (WYSC) was held in Manila from 8 to 10 December 10. Although we were allotted 8 spots, Singapore was eventually represented by Victor Gwee, Ng Li Ki and me. Expectations were high for the Singapore team, as Victor and I were looking to improve on our placings from the previous WYSC (15th and 7th respectively) while Li Ki managed to obtain a Master title even as a freshman in SA!

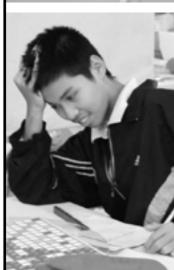
The traditional powerhouses of Thailand, Malaysia and Australia were still the main contenders with past WYSC winners hailing from these countries. We also had two newcomers participating, South Africa and Pakistan. There were 82 participants from 14 countries in total, as WYSC had gained prominence as THE ultimate challenge for all youth players.

We arrived in Manila a day before the competition to allow ourselves to quickly get used to the venue. The accommodation at the hotel venue was great but there's nothing quite as important as food... and so we wasted no time in exploring the vicinity to locate the most delicious and affordable dining places, most notably a pancake restaurant with a great variety of unique pancake flavours. Another local fast-food restaurant named "Jollibee" also caught our eyes with its distinctly Filipino fast-food menu, serving pineapple juice instead of Coca-Cola!

The competition began promptly the next day and I could immediately identify many familiar faces as we went around bantering and exchanging goodwill before the first game commenced. Oluwafemi Akinlosotu, a Nigerian who finished 31st last year, stunned the field by romping to the top and winning all his seven games with thumping margins! The only other unbeaten player was Li Ki and his perfect debut in the first day of WYSC naturally raised many eyebrows.









The day concluded with a gala dinner as we were treated to a sumptuous and musical feast from the host country, Philippines. We also enjoyed various traditional performances put up by several participating countries. It was particularly hilarious when each country was asked to send two representatives to perform a traditional Philippine dance - which involves stepping (to rhythm) over two wooden poles held up to knee-level with only one foot landing on the ground at any time. Singapore was proudly (if not abashedly) represented by Li Ki and me and we generated a lot of laughter and applause from the crowd for our brave attempt!

The second day was a particularly long day as we had 11 games to play in order to keep up with the schedule. The string of games took a toll on us, as all three of us crashed and hit our bottoms of 25th, 30th and 42nd positions. At the other end of the standings, Oluwafemi won only 1 of the 8 games that followed his 12-game winning streak and was eventually overtaken by Preedee Khongthanarat (Thailand), Ker Jen Ho and William Kang (Malaysia).

As the saying goes "the harder the fall, the harder the bounce!" On the final day, all three of us fought aggressively to move up the ranks and ended with 14 out of 24 wins each, the only difference being spread.

It was a nail-biting race for Preedee, Jen Ho and William as all three of them went into the last game with a shot at the championship. Both Jen Ho and Preedee won while William suffered a painful defeat to his compatriot Vinnith, as Jen Ho (19 wins) edged out Preedee (18.5 wins) and William (18 wins) to be crowned the World Youth Champion of 2010. He also earned a spot at the 2011 World Scrabble Championship for his efforts.

Congratulations to the Singapore team for the good results, as our average placing of 13.6 ranked second only to Malaysia. It was really an incredible experience for us to face off (and even win) against top Scrabble youth players from all over the world! Yet what we treasured more were the friendships we formed with our international friends who all share the same passion and love for the game of Scrabble. I certainly look forward to playing many of them again in future tournaments!

I really encourage all our youths out there who are keen in Scrabble to step up and represent Singapore in the upcoming WYSC 2011. Let's try our best to reclaim the WYSC title!



## a history of

Want to represent Singapore at the WYSC? Visit http://www.youthscrabble.org for more

2006

won by:

david eldar (aus)



won by: toh weibin (sin)



Venue: University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia

**Number of Players: 51** 

#### **Representatives:**

information!

Joshua Sng - 4th Lee Guan Hui - 10th Benjamin Chow - 5th Liew Kian Boon - 15th Toh Weibin - 6th Marcus Goh - 19th

Venue: Zon Regency Hotel, Johor Bahru, Malaysia

**Number of Players: 54** 

#### Representatives:

Lim Li Wei - 17th

Toh Weibin - 1st Chia Guo Cong - 18th Liew Kian Boon - 4th Ng Mingwei - 37th Benjamin Chow - 6th Alvin Seo Jia Han -Lee Guan Hui - 9th 40th Victor Gwee - 42nd Kum Zi Peng - 13th

won by:

charnrit khongthanarat (tha)



won by:

#### ong suanne (mal)



won by:

ker jen ho (mal)



Venue: City Bayview Hotel, Penang, Malaysia

**Number of Players: 59** 

#### **Representatives:**

Victor Gwee - 16th Dewin Goh - 27th Kum Zi Peng - 20th Wong Zhi Yuan - 31st

Eden Choo - 23rd Blias Tan - 33rd

Venue: Zon Regency Hotel, Johor Bahru,

Malaysia

**Number of Players: 81** 

#### **Representatives:**

Wong Zhi Yuan - 7th Dewin Goh - 38th Goutham Jayaraman Perry Lam - 42nd - 9th Peh Wei Chen - 46th

Victor Gwee - 15th Eden Choo - 21st

**Venue:** Great Eastern Hotel, Quezon,

**Philippines** 

**Number of Players: 82** 

#### **Representatives:**

Wong Zhi Yuan - 12th Victor Gwee - 13th Ng Li Ki - 16th

## ten twitter questions

## for victor gwee

Victor Gwee is our association's youngest Masters player. Since playing his first rated game in 2005, he has attained the title of Senior Master, won several titles in the Open Division and played in the World Youth Scrabble Championship a whopping five times, most recently coming in 2nd in the 2011 edition. In this Twitter interview, we present to you one of our most active youth players in a Twitter-ised format - that is to say all questions and answers fall within a 140-character limit!



#### thenewwaver The Newwaver

Hi <u>@vicgwee!</u> I'm sure our readers want to know more about you before we begin. Do introduce us to the "non-Scrabble" aspect of your life.



#### vicgwee Victor Gwee

I'm a Year 2 in Raffles Institution. I'm interested in plants, fish and electronics. Am in Boys' Brigade – a fun and nurturing CCA! (:



#### thenewwaver The Newwaver

You started playing Scrabble when you were 7, and will be 14 this year. What gives you the motivation to keep playing Scrabble?



#### vicawee Victor Gwee

I guess it's my father, who introduced me to Scrabble, and a determination to outdo myself. Mostly self-motivated, though.



#### thenewwaver The Newwaver

As a Senior Master in the Association, you are a force to be reckoned with. How do you feel playing against adults in the top division?



#### vicgwee Victor Gwee

It can be quite pressurizing at times, but I guess I'm used to it, having mostly played adults all this while.



#### thenewwaver The Newwaver

What do you see in international competitions that is different from local competitions, and do you feel it is a pull or a push factor?



#### vicgwee Victor Gwee

A wide variety of opponents. And the food :P. It's a pull factor for me, as I feel there's no lack in competitions locally.



#### thenewwaver The Newwaver

Your father, Winston, is also a member of the Scrabble Association. How has Scrabble developed the ties between you and your dad?



#### vicgwee Victor Gwee

It's brought us closer together, initially sparring as opponents at home and then later going for competitions together.





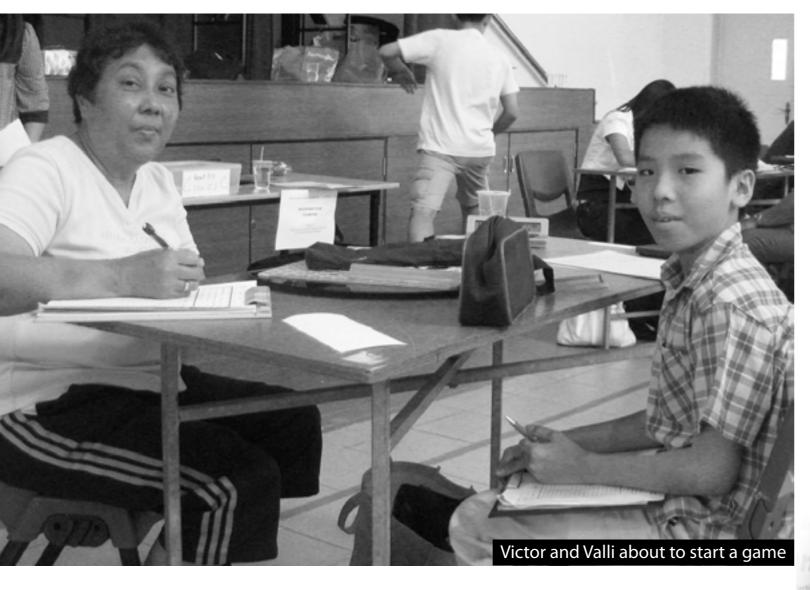
#### thenewwaver The Newwaver

Your father once opined that "playing Scrabble is better than being addicted to computer games". Do you agree with him? Why?



#### vicqwee Victor Gwee

Yep. Personally I don't feel much for computer games, having never been in a LAN centre before :X. But it's a break from mugging :D.





#### thenewwaver The Newwaver

Playing a game of Scrabble requires more than just word knowledge. What have you learnt from playing the game thus far?



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#### vicqwee Victor Gwee

It's mostly experience, because one can mug the dictionary and still play inferior moves. Practice makes perfect!



#### thenewwaver The Newwaver

Being a secondary school student requires you to juggle multiple commitments. In light of this, how do you find time for Scrabble?



#### vicgwee Victor Gwee

Finding time for Scrabble isn't sth I've been doing recently:X but I still try to squeeze in games during study breaks, mealtimes, etc.



#### thenewwaver The Newwaver

Many youths aim to make it big on the world stage, but only a few are successful. What are your aspirations with regard to Scrabble?



#### vicgwee Victor Gwee

I doubt I aspire much, but I hope to bring the WYSC trophy someday (: but I'll definitely have to work hard(er)!



*Mother tongue! Is Victor* eyeing the World Chinese Scrabble title next?



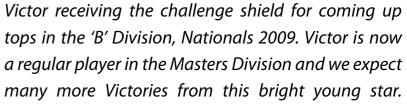
#### thenewwaver The Newwaver

On a final note @vicqwee, do you have anything to say to the young players out there? #comments

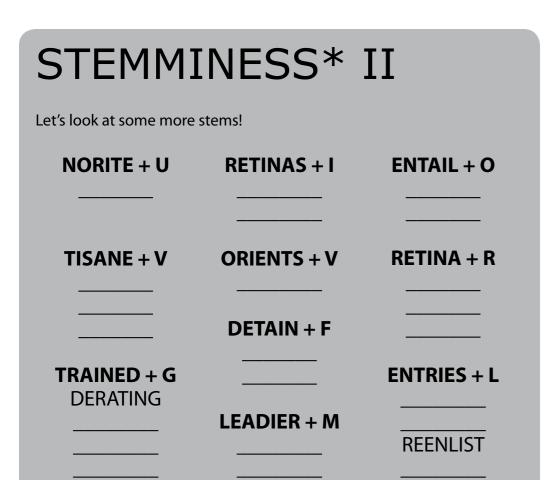


#### **vicgwee** Victor Gwee

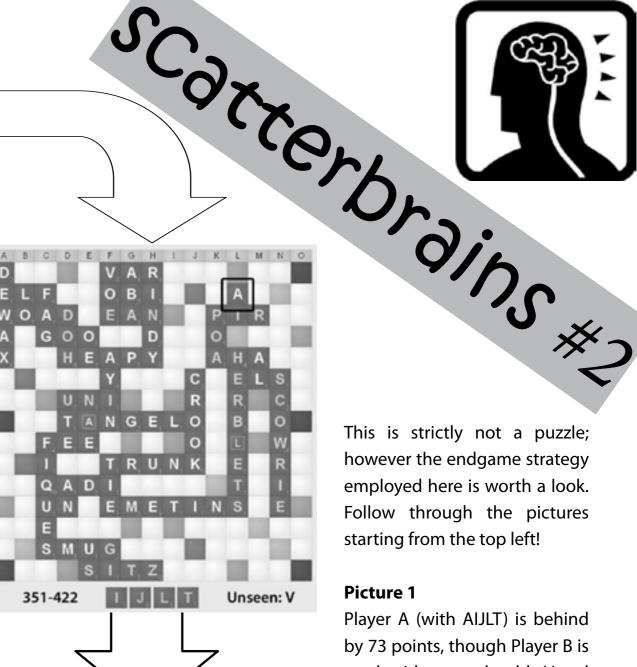
To quote my father, "Study hard, play harder!" Mug your 2s and 3s, keep studies your top priority and believe in yourself!











#### Player A (with AIJLT) is behind by 73 points, though Player B is stuck with an unplayable V and will have to pass the rest of his turns.

#### Picture 2

Player A plays off the A at L2 for 2 points! What could he be thinking?

#### Picture 3

Wow! Player A plays JILT L1 for 75 points, catching Player B's V for a total of 83 points to win the game 434-422. What a remarkable comeback!

#### A Puzzle for You...

"Board vision", or the ability some players have to see the possibilities on the board, is a skill that demands both effort and creativity. Board vision is extremely useful under difficult situations, for instance closed boards as the opportunities are limited and any major score may alter the balance of the game. A stunning example of board vision is Nigel Richards' bingo play of CHL(O)R(O)DyN(E), played with a rack of ?CDHLNR through two Os and an E.

Try your hand at this challenge to see if you can visualise the scoring opportunities on this board!

Find the highest scoring play available with the rack AGMQRS? shown at the bottom of the picture. Answers at the back of the publication.



## calendar

Dates and entry fees listed are for recreational divisions. Some tournaments include an unrated division for beginner players. Visit <a href="http://www.toucanet.com/upcoming.html">http://www.toucanet.com/upcoming.html</a> for full listings.

**Jurong Green Open Scrabble Championship (tentative title)** 

Dates: 18 Mar 2012 (Games start at 9.00 am sharp)

Venue: Jurong Green CC

Registration: \$5 for non-Passion Card Holder

\$3 for Passion Card Holder/Tertiary Level and below Students Cheques are to be made payable to "Jurong Green CCMC"

Register with Jurong Green CC

Enquiries: Mr. Liew Kian Boon, <a href="mailto:lkbinthezone@gmail.com">lkbinthezone@gmail.com</a>

**ASTAR Scrabble Challenge International (ASCI)** 

Dates: 28-29 Apr 2012 (check-in expected on 27 Apr)

Venue: Dewan Auditorium & Dewan Tunku Chancellor, University of Malaya,

Kuala Lumpur

Registration: RM 150 for International Players, inclusive of accommodation, meals, an

ASCIT-Shirt and a program book

Closing date 15 March 2012

Visit ASCI's website, <a href="http://asci-scrabble.com/">http://asci-scrabble.com/</a>

Divisions: Interschool (Novice), Interschool (Expert), Intervarsity

Enquiries: Email <u>asci.scrabble@gmail.com</u>

**Jurong Green CC Mini** 

Dates: 13 May, 12 Aug, 9 Dec 2012, 8.30am to 6.00pm (Games start at 9.00am)

Venue: Jurong Green CC

Registration: \$10 for non-Passion Card Holder

\$8 for Passion Card Holder

Cheques are to be made payable to "Jurong Green CCMC"

Register with Jurong Green CC

Enquiries: Mr Liew Kian Boon, <a href="mailto:lkbinthezone@gmail.com">lkbinthezone@gmail.com</a>

Bishan Heights RC Mini

Date: 27 May 2012, 8.30am to 6.00pm (Games start at 9.00am sharp)

Venue: Bishan Heights RC

Registration: \$10

Register with Bishan Heights RC

Enquiries: Ms Valli, 97367086

**Singapore National Scrabble Championship 2012** 

Dates: 22 Jul 2012 8.30am to 6.00pm (Games start at 9.00am sharp)

Venue: To be confirmed

Registration: \$20 for non-members, \$15 for members\*, \$10 for students\*\*

\* SA members \*\* up to JC level

Registration details to be confirmed

Enquiries: Mr Cheah Siu Hean, <u>president@toucanet.com</u>

6th Jurong Green CC School Championship 2012

Date: 1 Sep 2012 8.30am to 6.00pm (Games start at 9.00am sharp)

Venue: Jurong Green CC

Registration: Secondary school \$3/\$2\*

Primary school \$3/\$2\*

\* Passion Card holders are entitled to lower registration fees

Register with Jurong Green CC

Enquiries: Mr Liew Kian Boon, <a href="mailto:lkbinthezone@gmail.com">lkbinthezone@gmail.com</a>

15th Singapore Open

Dates: 25 Nov 2012 8.30am to 6.00pm (Games start at 9.00am sharp)

Venue: To be confirmed

Registration: \$20 for non-members, \$15 for members\*, \$10 for students\*\*

\* SA members \*\* up to JC level

Registration details to be confirmed

Enquiries: Mr Cheah Siu Hean, <u>president@toucanet.com</u>

2012 World Youth Scrabble Championship

Dates: 6 - 9 Dec 2012 (24 games)

Venue: Birmingham, UK

Registration: Free for players qualified to represent Singapore. See criteria at

http://www.toucanet.com/wyscqc11.html. Non-qualifiers pay US\$100.

Enquiries: Mr Cheah Siu Hean, <u>president@toucanet.com</u>

#### **Scatterbrains #1**

#### en(d)vision

The catch here is to notice the possible front extensions of CITATION. The four possible extensions are EXCITATION, INCITATION, OSCITATION and RECITATION. You can play the latter two with your tiles - but playing RECITATION allows you to add the S at the back for a total of 48 points - a huge score for an endgame play!

#### Anagram This!

7 Letters	OBSCURE	8 Letters	DIAGONAL
GROOVED	MORGUES	UNCOATED	PERSONAL
OUTDONE	ECSTASY	SAUNTERS	GLOOMIER
PEASANT	ARCADES	DOORBELL	ATTENDEE
AGELESS	COARSER	MAINTAIN	CAULDRON
TINKLES	DROPLET	LINEAGES	NITROGEN

#### Stemminess\*

RAISED + P = ASPIRED, DESPAIR, DIAPERS, OTARINE + H = ANTIHERO

PRAISED SARDINE + S = ARIDNESS, SARDINES

RETINA + P = PAINTER, PERTAIN, REPAINT REGINA + G = GEARING, NAGGIER

#### **Scatterbrains #2**

#### Stemminess\* II

NORITE + U = ROUTINE DETAIN + F = DEFIANT, FAINTED LEADIER + M = REMAILED, REMEDIAL TRAINED + G = DERATING, GRADIENT, ENTAIL + O = ELATION, TOENAIL

REDATING, TREADING RETINA + R = RETRAIN, TERRAIN, TRAINER

RETINAS + I = INERTIAS, RAINIEST ENTRIES + L = ENLISTER, LISTENER,

ORIENTS + V = INVESTOR REENLIST, SILENTER

#### A Puzzle for You...

The solution to this is H1 QuAGM(I)R(E)S for 120 points. Stunning, isn't it? MARQu(I)S(E) is another possibility which scores 84, but the bingo option is definitely preferred here.

# Scrabble Association

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