

Combined Report for Charity Letters and Numbers and Simultaneous Scrabble Events held on 12 and 13 July 2015

Report by Anand Bharadwaj

This year, in addition to the simultaneous Scrabble event which has been running for the last two years, I initiated a new event based on the popular SBS show: Letters and Numbers. I invited David Astle, the lexicographer on the TV show, to moderate the event and he generously offered his support. This was certainly a great catalyst in attracting participation, as well as a large number of audience members to attend on the day. We were fortunate to attract several Letters and Numbers and Scrabble champions to participate in this event and we thank them for generously giving up their time to support this cause. Barry Harridge, one of my Scrabble mentors, kindly agreed to oversee the administration of software for the event and Geoff Bailey, a former contestant on the show and the founder of the "Playing Letters and Numbers" blog, generously offered his software for use on the day. Anthony Kendall and Sam Gaffney, two of the former champions, also provided their software, which was helpful in designing our final version. Victorian Scrabble administrators Marj Miller, Carol Johnsen and Nick Ivanovski and Spellmasters Australia director Lili Hampell have also been instrumental in raising awareness about this event.

The event was held on 12 July at the splendid facilities provided by Melbourne Business School, and we are indebted to them for their generosity. They also kindly provided refreshments for both contestants and audience members on the day. We obtained sponsorship from several organisations that include: Scotts Print Shop, North Shore Coaching College, Dymocks, Creative Minds, Toscanos', Officeworks, Dan Murphy's, Bob Stewart's Uniform Shop, Café Saffron Indian Restaurant, Tim's Bookstore, Nash Orthodontics and Mattel.

The day was divided into three segments: a junior Letters and Numbers event, a wildcard adult event and the main event. In the junior game, children under 14 participated in a simplified version of the Letters and Numbers game and it was an enjoyable experience for all involved. The senior wildcard event was used to select the eighth competitor in the main draw and all of the participants acquitted themselves admirably, with Scrabbler Rob York ultimately clinching the spot. The main event, featuring Sam Gaffney (L&N Series 4 Champion), Naweena Fernando (L&N Series 1 Runner-Up), Jeremy Schiffan (L&N Series 3 Runner-Up), Tamara McMahon (L&N Series 2 Semi-Finalist), Anthony Kendall (L&N Series 3 Semi-Finalist), Trevor Halsall (1994 National Scrabble Champion), myself and Rob York (wildcard winner), was designed as a knockout tournament. The event was a great success and over eighty audience members thoroughly enjoyed the games. David Astle was at his inimitable best, captivating everyone with his skill and wit. We were also fortunate to have a dedicated photography team who have certainly preserved the memories of this memorable event for years to come. Firstly, I would like to thank my dad's colleague Dr Kwanghui Lim, his wife Seto and his RA Michelle for

generously giving up their time to photograph proceedings on the day. Khwanjai Thamapping, one of my Scrabble friends, also played an instrumental role in taking pictures and creating albums. Including sponsorship and donations, the event raised a highly pleasing \$2485. A number of people and organisations have made this event possible, not least my parents, who have guided and supported me in organising this event. Once again, I thank everyone who has made this event come to fruition.

On the following day (13 July 2015), we held the third annual simultaneous Scrabble UNICEF fundraising event at Balwyn Community Centre. I thank Balwyn Community Center and the Balwyn Scrabble Club, who waived the fee for the use of their facilities. Once again, the wholehearted support of the Victorian Scrabble community made this event a resounding success. We were able to raise \$510 and this, coupled with the \$2485 raised at the charity Letters and Numbers event, brings the grand total to \$2995!

Thanks to the generous support of Marj Miller, Barry Harridge, Carol Johnsen and Khwanjai Thamapping, the event ran smoothly and I played a total of 23 games, seven or eight at a time. All in all, it was a fun-filled afternoon and once again, my Scrabble friends made this event a grand success.