



OLYMPIAD NEWS

Issue 1

Sunday 22 August 1999

Play the Game

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The Olympiad is a great opportunity for children. When they play Mind Sports they enter a fantasy land. It becomes a huge story, that's what makes it exciting – Scorpio from Gladiators in The Evening Standard Hot Tickets magazine



Two years ago, the first Mind Sports Olympiad began with Sir Brian Tovey's cry of 'Let Battle Commence!' The start of this year's MSO, the third and largest ever, shared the military metaphor as a group of Roman legionnaires slowly marched onstage to a solitary drumbeat. The clarion call of an ancient horn signalled the start of a specially made film celebrating games. Clips from classics like *The Sting*, *The Thomas Crown Affair*, *Rain Man* and others jolt us back to the present to the far more modern soundtrack of Queen's *Play the Game*.

The influence of ancient tradition has been woven into the fabric of the this year's MSO. *Trompe l'oeil* Olympic flames flicker in high steel braziers around the exhibition hall. Living statues in Roman costume startle passers-by as they suddenly snap to life.

Opening speaker Tony Buzan approaches the favourite MSO emphasis of *mens sana in corpore sano* – a healthy mind in a healthy body – from a new angle, recalling the original Greek Olympic celebrations which honoured poetry, art and Mind Sports as well as physical competition. While we are still surrounded by a culture centred on the physical, there are signs that things are changing. The Internet enables millions around the globe to link up and play, and Tony relates that there are two billion Mind Sports players currently on the planet.

Quick question: What is the most popular pastime in the English pub? Surprisingly, the answer is a sort of question – the pub quiz. And who helped transport the quiz from

obscurity to popularity? Magnus Magnusson, host of the amazingly successful BBC TV program *Mastermind*, which kept millions of prime-time viewers glued to their screens for 25 years.

Magnusson began his day at the MSO in good humour, posing in a chariot with Tony Buzan, both with daggers drawn. Magnusson, too, evokes the ancient Greeks in his speech, paying tribute to their respect for opsimathy – which he playfully refuses (at first) to define, out of deference to the intellect of his audience (see page 2). After an engaging address peppered with witticisms, he then opens the games with an apt chess move – 1.c4, otherwise known as the English Opening, and we're off – MSO III has begun.

Entries for the event are already well over last year's Mind Sports Olympiad, and there is still plenty of time to establish an impressive record total as the number swells with each passing day. So far there have been 2600 entries by 1387 competitors, representing 57 countries. This number is expected to swell with latecomers joining up each day, but organisers have no fears that this will be a very short-lived record. Plans are already afoot to set world records in as many separate events as possible – MSO IV will after all be the Millennium edition.

Media interest is running high, and press from Holland, Germany, Canada, and China are already in place. Television coverage from CNN, CBS NBC and Sky is already booked, and crews from Brazil, China, Germany and Sweden are expected shortly.

Varsity Games

The Millennium edition of the MSO next year will embrace a new competition designed to stimulate Mind Sports participation at universities around the world. Former Brain of the Year winner Lana Israel heads the new MSO project, scheduled to begin in January 2000. A four-month season of Mind Sports – a blend of classics and more modern games – will produce eight teams that will win an expenses-paid trip to MSO 2000 for the Varsity Games final. Battle will take place via the Internet, with the globe divided into four separate zones.

One plan to guarantee excitement and maximum Mind Sport exposure is the Versatility Games, where contestants compete in a different game every round – without advance notice of what the game will be.

Lana, a Rhodes scholar doing research work for her doctorate in psychology at Oxford, is uniquely qualified to promote the combination of Mind Sports and education. Even at the tender age of 12 she attracted attention with a school science project on Mind Mapping for children that led to international lectures and a book contract. Since then she has continuously worked on projects involving learning.

MSO Coincidence #1

Magnus Magnusson's choice of the concept of opsimathy was both apt and entertaining, as he teased his audience at the open-

ing ceremony by withholding the definition of the word. The bulletin editor later presented Magnus Magnusson with a document of serendipitous coincidence. On the front page of the *Scrabble Club News*, on display at the Scrabble arbiters table, is a report from the 27th National Championship includes the news that the word OPSIMATH – someone who learns late in life – was voted the best played at the event.

Sword for Hire

Professional Roman legionnaires? The troops brought in for the opening ceremony of MSO III were careful to correct the suggestion that they are actors. 'Re-enactors,' said Dan Shadrake, head of *Britannia*, a group that specialises in historically accurate portrayals from the Arthurian era, when Roman rule ended and the Saxon kingdoms were founded. *Britannia* have worked on 24 film, video and television projects. They enlivened the MSO together with the like-minded *Milites*. These historical groups provide authentic combat, townspeople, horseriders and the intriguing commodity 'convincing warrior women' for those in need of historical atmosphere.

Falcon Freebie

All board games have their own particular attractions. One of the unusual features of the board game Stratego is that every game starts from a completely different position. UK players

interested in trying out this fascinating two-player war game will be pleased to know that they can participate in the Stratego World Championship on Thursday and Friday free of charge. Their entry fees will be paid by Falcon Games who market Stratego in the UK.

Play your Cards Right

Playing cards are being used in many diverse events at the Mind Sports Olympiad. They are fundamental to the Bridge, Poker and Cribbage events but also play an important part in the World Memory Championship. All cards at this year's MSO have been kindly provided by Carta Mundi UK Ltd.

Dates for your Diary

Alongside the competitive events at the Olympiad, there are also several lectures and demonstrations. Tony Buzan will be speaking for around half an hour from 1330 on Thursday 26th August, on the principles of memory, some memorisation techniques and using Mind Maps as an aid to memory.

The following day Philip Chambers will be giving a talk on Specific Memory Techniques. This will be followed by a memory demonstration by Creighton Carvello (the original 'Memory Man' and former World Record Holder) involving feats such as recalling Grand National winners, Middlesbrough Football Club results and team information, names and numbers from telephone books.

Mind Sports Olympiad – Entrants by Country

Antigua	1	Czech Rep.	18	Grenada	3	Japan	19	Norway	10	Sweden	22
Austria	14	Denmark	2	Holland	37	Korea	33	Peru	4	Switzerland	2
Bangladesh	4	England	1279	India	12	Kuwait	2	Philippines	6	Turkmenistan	1
Belgium	24	Finland	9	Iran	14	Latvia	3	Poland	4	Ukraine	3
Canada	15	France	5	Ireland	10	Malaysia	4	Russia	5	USA	35
China	15	Germany	39	Israel	20	Mongolia	21	Scotland	7	Wales	7
Croatia	5	Ghana	2	Italy	14	New Zealand	1	South Africa	1	Zambia	5
Cyprus	2	Greece	2	Jamaica	1	Nigeria	10	Spain	4		

I've Started, so I'll Finish...

Television quizmaster Magnus Magnusson was born in Iceland in 1929 but has lived in Britain nearly all his life. He was brought up in Edinburgh and gained an Open Scholarship to Oxford. From there he moved into journalism, starting out on the *Scottish Daily Express* before joining *The Scotsman* in Glasgow. Finally he moved into TV, becoming best known, of course, as the presenter of the BBC's long running and highly successful *Mastermind* programme. Having formally opened the third Mind Sports Olympiad yesterday, he is today acting as quizmaster in the British Quiz Championship.

How did you get started in journalism?

When I started my first job I was a DIY correspondent. Each week I would explain how to perform various household tasks. I had only a basic knowledge of this, but would rely on intensive research followed by a practical experiment, often on my mother's furniture (an activity to which she soon put a stop). Unfortunately, the sub-editor of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* – until that point one of my biggest fans – followed my instructions for rewiring his house. Just as he was about to go live, he realised that flicking the switch was likely to incinerate the premises. Not surprisingly, this led instead to the incineration of my DIY column.

How did you get into TV?

My first break in television was the *Tonight* programme, which I co-presented with Cliff Micholmore. Unfortunately the year that I joined the team turned out to be the final season.

What is the background to *Mastermind* and how did you become involved?

At that time ITV had a highly successful show with *University Challenge* and the BBC chiefs were looking for something to challenge it. *Mastermind* was the result of their deliberations. I was doing a lot of serious television at the time and I was appointed presenter as it was felt that I would bring gravitas to the show. The idea was to market the product as an intellectual quiz and not a game show.

How did the show become so successful?

We started out with a Monday night slot at the rather late time

of 11.20pm. Our big break came thanks to Mary Whitehouse, who was well known for her campaign to clean up TV. There was a programme called *Casanova 73* in which the lead character was a modern day libertine. Mrs Whitehouse objected strongly to this programme complaining, in particular, that it appeared before the 9.00pm watershed. At the time Mrs. Whitehouse had a great deal of influence and the BBC were keen to respond to her criticisms. Their solution was to switch the slots of *Casanova 73* and *Mastermind*. Consequently we ended up on Thursday evening primetime while *Casanova 73* was consigned to the Monday night graveyard slot. To everyone's astonishment, *Mastermind* actually increased on the viewing figures that had been achieved by its predecessor. Audiences of 14-15 million became commonplace and the show ran for 25 seasons until 1997.

Are you a keen Mind Sports fan?

I don't participate myself, although I was school chess champion. However, I regard reading and research as my own personal Mind Sports. I am constantly working to expand my knowledge of the world and am a very enthusiastic researcher on many topics. I am intensely curious about history, fascinated by the present and highly optimistic about the future.

I believe Mind Sports are very good for you. Many people enjoy jogging to exercise the body, but exercising the mind is an equal, if not more important, activity. Mind Sports are an excellent method of achieving this.

On *Mastermind*, how many answers did you know?

On the night I knew all of them, three days later – none! People often assumed that I must be very intelligent to be the presenter on *Mastermind*. What they would forget is that I was only asking the questions – the contestants were the ones with the real intellects.

Are you surprised by the growth in popularity of pub quizzes?

Surprised and delighted. It is wonderful to think that *Mastermind* may have had some influence on this development. It is encouraging to think of people in an environment such as a pub, normally associated with darts (incidentally also a fine game), exercising their minds. Pub quizzes do not require a university education or a PhD, they can be enjoyed by everybody. I would like to see quizzes taken more seriously – I think of them as a ramble for the mind.

What are the benefits of an event such as Mind Sports Olympiad?

It enables people to meet with like-minded Mind Sports fans and pit their wits against players both stronger and weaker than themselves. In the same way that, for example, Bjorn Borg and Stefan Edberg inspired a generation of Swedish tennis players, the appearance of all these Mind Sports stars in action together will encourage a new generation of Mind Sports participants and champions.

The British Quiz Championship will be taking place in Conference Room 1 starting at 10.00am today. Spectators are welcome.

Day One Medal Winners

Chess Sat 10-minute

1	J. Nunn (England)	gold
2	L. Psakhis (Israel)	silver
3	I. Smirin (Israel)	bronze

Chess Sat 10-minute Junior

1	J. Mont-Reynard (USA)	gold
2	S. Buckley (England)	silver
3	E. Leung (England)	bronze

Chess Sat 5-minute

1	J. Hodgson (England)	gold
2	J. Parker (England)	silver
3	M. Turner (England)	bronze

Chess Sat 5-minute Junior

1	R. Kaufman (USA)	gold
2	D. Tan (England)	silver
3	A. Ghazi (England)	bronze

Diplomacy

1	P. Hawkins (England)	gold
2	V. Hall (England)	silver
3	D. Hassabis (England)	bronze

Draughts 10x10 Blitz

1	D. Kotin (USA)	gold
2	T. Van Adrichem (Holland)	silver
3	M. Durdjev (Turkmenistan)	bronze

Go 13x13

1	S. Zhang (China)	gold
2	M. Macfadyen (England)	silver
3	V. Danek (Czech Republic)	bronze

Intelligence

1	K. Loveys (England)	gold
2	M. Isaac (England)	silver
3	S. Gardener (England)	bronze

Oware Junior Under-11

1	F. Cooper (Jamaica)	gold
2	A. Sobers (Grenada)	silver
3	N. Garnett-Lewis (Jamaica)	bronze

Poker 5-card draw

1	A. Adams (England)	gold
2	D. Staples (England)	silver
3	T. Niccoli (England)	bronze

Poker 5-card draw Junior

1	T. Niccoli (England)	gold
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Medal Table after Day 1

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
England	6	7	6	19
USA	3	0	0	3
Jamaica	1	0	1	2
China	1	0	0	1
Israel	0	1	1	2
Grenada	0	1	0	1
Holland	0	1	0	1
Czech Rep.	0	0	1	1
Turk'istan	0	0	1	1



To coincide with the Third Mind Sports Olympiad we are delighted to announce the launch of a very much upgraded web site. This website will have the URL:
<http://www.msoworld.com/>

When you visit the new site you will find, amongst other things, that you can play other users at approximately 50 different games from six different game categories. These games are from the 'Zillions of Games' collection and we are delighted to be working with Zillions Development Corporation on the creation of the site. Using the site is *absolutely free!*

Other features of the new site include a Mind Sports 'webzine' which will bring you news and feature articles, regularly updated. Our news editor is Jonathan Tisdall, an International Grandmaster at Chess and a professional Mind Sports journalist. (Please send him news and articles to: jtisdall@usa.net).

Today's Events

Backgammon.....	pm/eve
Chess MSO Masters ..	pm/eve
Chess Problem Solving	pm
Chess 10-minute	am
Chess 5-minute	pm
Chinese Chess	am/pm
Continuo World Ch	am
Creative Thinking	am
The Times Crossword	am
Decamentathlon	pm
Draughts 10x10 Rapid	pm
Entropy World Ch	pm
Go 9x9 Ch	am
Go 9x9 Beginners	pm
HexDame	am
Japanese Chess	pm
Mind Mapping	am/pm
Othello	am/pm
Oware U-18	am/pm/eve
Poker Hold'Em	am
Quiz British Ch	am
Scrabble	am/pm
Skat	am/pm

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First among Experts

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Anyone can join in Mind Sports. What matters is your grey matter. - The Times Mega magazine



The second day of the Mind Sports Olympiad featured a gruelling event of pure brain power. No boards, no pieces, no stones, no cards, just finely tuned grey matter and a dash of strong nerves. The British Quiz Championship is the first ever national title event for one of the country's fastest growing pastimes.

Trevor Montague, the arbiter and question setter, said that he had never seen so many quiz experts in one venue. He was hardly exaggerating; the favourite, Kevin Ashman, is the *Mastermind* record holder for the most points in a single programme, as well having held the Brain of Britain and Top Brain titles. About a dozen of the other contestants also held various titles from these events and other competitions, and among those eliminated in the tough preliminary heat was the current Brain of Mensa.

Despite the strong field, the four who emerged were what venerable compere Magnus Magnusson could call the expected finalists; Kevin Ashman, Daphne Fowler, Geoff Thomas and Jim Eccleston. This quartet faced off in classic format, with fingers on buzzers, Magnus quizzing, and Trevor passing judgement on close calls.

As so often, a cerebral contest makes fascinating viewing. When Geoff momentarily confuses *Austin Powers* and *Wayne's World*, his head sinks to the table in anguish. Daphne hits the target with a guess that is obviously slightly more wild than educated and manages to do a gleeful little victory dance with just her head. At the head of the table, the imperious Ashman forges slightly ahead, and manages to stay

there, despite sudden inspired bursts from Fowler and Thomas.

Magnus decides to guarantee smooth free-for-all rounds by penalising players if they interrupt a reading and get a question wrong. When Trevor points out that this is unusual, Magnus declares 'I'm changing the rules!' and everyone continues in good humour. And Kevin Ashman emerges victorious.

Afterwards, a satisfied Daphne Fowler (shared silver medal) confesses that she never dreamed of winning. 'Nobody ever beats Kevin!' This may seem a surprising confession from someone with her track record, but having come a good second to Ashman many times, she says, 'I just admire the man.'

Kevin Ashman is more modest about his achievements. Although it apparently isn't exactly easy for him to remember, he does come up with a *Winner Takes All* where he got nowhere, and was beaten by one of those eliminated in today's preliminary written test. His MSO victory didn't come easy, though he led from the start. 'I never expect to win. I suppose I know that the laws of probability mean I will do quite well, but it's best not to be too confident - that leads to disaster.'

Kevin, a civil servant, says that nowadays (he has been a serious quiz contestant for twelve years) he concentrates on mind training rather than preparing. 'A lot of the studying has stuck, and what doesn't stick tends to be in subjects where I don't have an intrinsic interest. A few days of glancing at reference books is enough, it gives me the psychological boost of feeling I have done something.'

Test your Wits

Have a crack at some of the questions from the British Quiz Championship:

Q: Leonora is being serenaded by Manrico, regarded as a rival by the Count who is in love with her. This is a synopsis of which opera?

A: Il Trovatore

Q: Which Austrian composer's last words were reported to have been 'Cheer up, children. I'm all right'?

A: Franz Joseph Haydn

Q: On what part of the body would one wear a billycock, biggin or a casque?

A: On the head (the first two are hats and a casque is a helmet).

Q: In the Morse Code system which letter of the alphabet is represented by two dashes and followed by two dots?

A: Z

Q: Author Jeffrey Archer, US President William Taft and US Military Commander Tasker Bliss all share what same middle name?

A: Howard

What's in a Name?

As you enter the MSO, on the second floor of the hall, you will see a large display devoted to the London Game Company's new product, Boku. Their marketing for this newcomer is rather clever, and you will find pamphlets all around the venue telling you that the game has

only two rules. But they never tell you these two simple rules – you must visit their stand to find out more.

Eric Johnson tells an amazing tale of how the game came to be, and be named. A minor league baseball player named Rob Nelson in the US came over to England to try and convert the Brits to America's national pastime. Not surprisingly, this resulted in him having a lot of free time on his hands, and he invented and refined this game. Satisfied with the end product, he began the process of marketing it, and applied for a global trademark for the game's name. When he applied in Britain, his application was rejected, since his choice – Bollox™ – was considered ... inappropriate.

Nelson regrouped and relaunched by attaching his first name and calling the game Robollox (silent x) but marketers, who liked the product, still refused to touch it. 'It's just Bollox™ with an R O in front, isn't it?' – they complained.

Finally, Boku was born, and the game has been quickly embraced. If curiosity about how one can have a fascinating game borne of two simple rules becomes too much for you, visit the Boku stand.

They just can't get Enough

Demis Hassabis has a fearsome reputation as a versatile games player, and won last year's gruelling Pentamind. Demis entered

so many events in 1998 that he had to play some of them simultaneously, and he is on the hunt again. So far he has two medals from two events, a silver in Diplomacy and a bronze in Continuo. 'I was counting on a gold and a silver,' said a slightly disappointed Hassabis. Demis' rival Paul Smith, another top Pentamind and Decamentathlon ace, is also competing in this year's event, and their battle for medals of all sorts will be something to watch.

Man vs. Machine

Spectators can watch an especially fascinating duel taking place today as the MSO Man vs. Machine exhibition starts. The first challenge will pit Tom Eckersley-Waites, reigning British under-12 champion, against the world's strongest Go program, Go4++, created by Mick Reiss. The match starts at 3:30 pm.

Crafty Competitor

Five-time world memory champion Dominic O'Brien walked a gauntlet of people demanding to know if he was going to compete in this year's Memory Skills event and try to wrest back the title from Andi Bell. There had been doubts, and rumours, that he was stepping down. Dominic, who is looking extremely determined, said he always knew he was going to participate, 'but I didn't want everyone else to know.'

Mind Sports Olympiad Prize Funds (Total over £100,000)

Abalone	£500	Draughts 8x8	£4,000	Mind Mapping	£500
Bridge	£10,000	Draughts 10x10	£8,000	Othello	£7,000
Bridge on the Internet	£1,000	Entropy	£500	Oware	£500
Chess	£20,000	GIPF	£500	Pentamind	£1,000
Chess Problem Solving	£500	Go	£8,500	Quiz	£500
Chinese Chess	£6,000	HexDame	£500	Scrabble	£6,000
Continuo	£500	Intelligence	£2,000	Speed Reading	£500
Creative Thinking	£500	Japanese Chess	£5,000	Stratego	£5,000
Cribbage	£2,000	Lines of Action	£500	Twixt	£500
Decamentathlon	£500	Mastermind	£500	Zatre	£500
Diplomacy	£500	Memory Skills	£5,000		
Dominoes	£2,000	Mental Calculations	£500		

Journey to the Century of the Brain

Mind Sports Olympiad Director Tony Buzan is the world's leading author, lecturer and advisor to governments, business and the professions on the brain, learning and thinking skills. His classic book *Use Your Head* catapulted him to the position of the BBC's number one selling international author. On Thursday he will be giving a free lecture on the principles of the brain, memory and learning at the Mind Sports Olympiad to which everyone is invited.

How did the Mind Sports Olympiad come about?

Back in the early 1990s, Raymond Keene, David Levy and myself were all running world championships in different Mind Sports (chess, computers and mental skills respectively). We looked around and saw that although physical sports were bringing everyone together at the Olympics, there was *nothing* equivalent in Mind Sports. Our research revealed that there are more than two billion Mind Sports players around the world and this seemed like a good audience for launching a fledgling project concept around an ideal that all of us loved. We therefore decided to work together to develop the concept of Mind Sports Olympiad, and brought it to fruition with the first event at the Royal Festival Hall in 1997.

This year's event has already surpassed the number of entries from last year. What are your plans for next year's Millennium edition of the Mind Sports Olympiad?

At the moment the possibilities are limitless – we may even take over the whole of Olympia. There will be more regional and national tournaments leading up to next year's event. Our website will also be cranked up to a capacity which will enable us soon to hold a million-player tournament that will revolutionise Mind Sports and take them to a new level in the 21st century – the century of the brain. Everybody involved in the Mind Sports Olympiad sees it as a global initiative to bring the family of Mind Sports players more closely together and increase possibilities for human communication and mutual enjoyment.

The inaugural full meeting of the Mind Sports Council is taking place on Saturday. Could you tell us about this new organisation?

The Mind Sports Council is a global body which has recently been set up to serve four functions:

- To act as the ultimate recommending authority with regard to the inclusion or exclusion of specific games within the scope of the MSO.
- To advise the Board on any matters of concern regarding ethical aspects of Mind Sports Olympiad activities.
- To act as a channel for any charitable donations or activities decided by the Board.
- To advise the Board on other matters relating to Mind Sports as and when requested.

In short, the Mind Sports Council is the agent of the Mind Sports Olympiad. It is dedicated to overseeing, guiding and supporting Mind Sports activities around the world.

The titles can be achieved at this year's Olympiad have generated a great deal of interest. Could you explain them to us?

The rules for gaining one of these titles are simple: the MSO Grandmaster title is awarded to a player who wins two gold medals or one gold and two silvers in a particular Mind Sport.

The structure for the MSO International Master title is similar but in this case it requires two silver medals, one silver and two bronze, or one gold and one bronze.

Likewise the MSO Candidate Master title requires two bronze medals or one bronze and one silver.

What is the Tinsley medal?

The late Dr Marion Tinsley was arguably the greatest Mind Sports player who ever lived. For 40 years he was overwhelmingly the world's number 1 draughts player – of the many hundreds of games that he played at grand-master level, he lost only five! He also defended the human race against the Chinook computer, which could calculate five million moves per second – and thrashed it.

The Tinsley medal is an award for exceptional services to Mind Sports which will be awarded here at final medal ceremony on Sunday. Three medals will be awarded this year – one for each year of the Olympiad – and from then on an annual award will be made each year.

Tell us about your latest book, *Brain Smart Leader*.

Published by Gower Press, *Brain Smart Leader* is for business individuals who wish to learn how to use the power of the brain to accelerate and improve business performance across the board. It looks at studies of projects that my colleagues and I have carried out for IBM, British Airways, Boeing etc. in which we have used Mind Maps and mental literacy techniques to generate savings in time and money and major reductions in stress. For example, Boeing saved \$12 million in nine months by adopting Mind Maps to help develop new aircraft. The book's thesis is that the leaders of business in the 21st century will only be those who have learned how to use their heads.

Day Two Medal Winners

Backgammon Beginners

1	J. Turner (England)	gold
2	C. Connick (England)	silver
3	W. Stephens (England)	bronze

Chess Problem Solving

1	J. Nunn (England)	gold
2	M. McDowell (England)	silver
3	D. Tan (England)	bronze

Chess Sun 10-minute

1	D. Norwood (England)	gold
2	D. Moskovic (England)	silver
3	J. Hodgson (England)	bronze

Chess Sun 10-minute Junior

1	E. Leung (England)	gold
2	A. Ghazi (England)	silver
3	D. Tan (England)	bronze

Chess Sun 5-minute

1	D. Norwood (England)	gold
2	A. Adelaja (Nigeria)	silver
3	N. Pert (England)	bronze

Chess Sun 5-minute Junior

1	S. Buckley (England)	gold
2	A. Ghazi (England)	silver
3	N. Frost (England)	bronze

Chinese Chess 10-minute

1	S.-T. Hua (France)	gold
2	W.-C. Woo (France)	silver
3	S.-L. Guo (England)	bronze

Continuo World Ch

1	T. Niccoli (England)	gold
2	D. Hassabis (England)	silver
3	H. Lee (England)	bronze

Continuo Junior Ch

1	T. Niccoli (England)	gold
2	V. Westnedge (England)	silver
3	J. Lutton (England)	bronze

Creative Thinking World Ch

1	D. Bodycombe (England)	gold
2	B. Birchall (England)	silver
3=	M. Higgs (England)	bronze
3=	L. Broomfield (England)	bronze

The Times Crossword Ch

1	M. Goodliffe (England)	gold
2	W. Pilkington (England)	silver
3	A. Sutherland (Scotland)	bronze

Go 9x9 Championship

1	S.-J. Kim (Korea)	gold
2	S. Zhang (China)	silver
3	G. Schneider (Austria)	bronze

Go 9x9 Beginners

1	F. Prager (Germany)	gold
2	T. Niccoli (England)	silver
3	N. Regan (England)	bronze

Hex Dame Olympiad Ch

1	G. Miller (England)	gold
2	L. Springer (Holland)	silver
3	R. Danilevich (Lithuania)	bronze

Othello European Ch

1	M. Suckuni (Japan)	gold
2	T. Miyaoka (Japan)	silver
3	I. Leader (England)	bronze

Poker Hold 'Em

1	C. Vaz (England)	gold
2	I. Adams (England)	silver
3	G. Lee (England)	bronze

Quiz British Championship

1	K. Ashman (England)	gold
2=	D. Fowler (England)	silver
2=	G. Thomas (England)	silver

Scrabble Ch (SOWPODS)

1	P. Nelkon (England)	gold
2	M. Nyman (England)	silver
3	F. Awowade (Nigeria)	bronze

Scrabble Ch (OSW)

1	S. Carter (England)	gold
2	S. Simonis (England)	silver
3	T. Kilbalea (England)	bronze

Skat Olympiad Ch

1	J. McLeod (England)	gold
2	A. Ghany (England)	silver
3	J. Shepherd (England)	bronze

Medal Table after Day Two

	G	S	B	Total
England	22	23	22	67
USA	3	0	0	3
China	1	1	0	2
France	1	1	0	2
Japan	1	1	0	2
Jamaica	1	0	1	2
Germany	1	0	0	1
Korea	1	0	0	1
Holland	0	2	0	2
Israel	0	1	1	2
Nigeria	0	1	1	2
Grenada	0	1	0	1
Austria	0	0	1	1
Czech Rep.	0	0	1	1
Lithuania	0	0	1	1
Scotland	0	0	1	1
Turk'istan	0	0	1	1

Today's Events

Abalone World Ch.....	am
Backgammon.....	pm/eve
Bridge Mixed Pairs.....	eve
Chess MSO Masters ..	pm/eve
Chess Olympiad Ch	am
Chess 25-minute	eve
Chinese Chess	am/pm
Countdown	pm
Draughts 10x10 Rapid	pm
Entropy World Ch.....	pm
Japanese Chess.....	am/pm
Mastermind.....	pm
Othello	pm
Oware	eve
Poker Razz	am
Scrabble Weekday.....	am
Scrabble Evening	eve
Speed Reading.....	am

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OLYMPIAD NEWS

Issue 3

Tuesday 24 August 1999

Ask a Silly Question...

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Taste is the enemy of creativity. - Pablo Picasso
1881-1973



How can you measure people's creativity in a competition? 'I just ask them silly questions and see who comes up with the silliest answers,' says MSO's resident Creativity question setter, Bill Hartston. Here is Bill's report on this year's event.

Measuring creativity is, of course, a little more scientific than just asking silly questions, and the first round provided a good example of how to separate the truly creatively gifted from the ordinarily creative. Under the heading of 'Biological Creativity', we asked the contestants to suggest specifications for a redesign of the human body and specify changes in laws that would follow their alterations. There were plenty of extra eyes, ears, limbs and some very curious relocations for genitals among the more common responses, and chameleon skin was another popular idea. David Bodycombe, the eventual gold medallist, went instead for a second anus to expel fatty products as a slimming aid, and a ball-point pen in place of the middle finger. His anally-connected law change took place in France where all hotels would have to install an extra bidet. Philip Bateman, who won the first ever Creativity event in 1997, relocated our heads inside our chests, thus dispensing with necks altogether. He pointed out, however, that it could lead to confusion between pairs of spectacles and brassieres.

Round two, Millennial Creativity, put the contestants in the position of archaeologists 100 years hence who have just dug up six chessmen. What were they for? Then, a year later, they dug up a chessboard. How did this change their view?

One contestant had the chessmen as a set of orifice cleaners for a baby, with the bishop used to de-wax ears. David Bodycombe saw them as a cocktail-making set, centred on the knight as a bottle-opener.

Round three, Administrative Creativity, asked for a government White Paper to regulate the spread of creativity. Lucy Broomfield insisted that her White Paper be printed on the sort of tape the police use to cordon off areas of the streets. They could thus use it to contain creative outbursts. David Bodycombe's White Paper was bureaucratically pre-folded into a paper aeroplane - for speedy delivery.

Round four, Creative Accountancy, began with government accounts and ended by asking the contestants to account for their failure to win the competition. The first part was suggested by a rather feeble sell-off of government assets earlier this year, when the only items listed as having been disposed of were a horse, a fork-lift truck (plus battery), a large number of lawn-mowers and a landrover. What on earth had they all been for? Maguy Higgs opted for a plan to turn the Channel Tunnel into a underground racetrack (the fork-lift trucks were needed to lift up and dispose of the rail tracks, the horse was a guinea pig, the landrover was needed to convey personnel, and the lawn-mowers were held in reserve until the grass grew).

And finally the excuses: The winner was a mason. I'm allergic to gold. It's more polite to come second. And the excuse David Bodycombe didn't need: My third finger wasn't writing properly.

Seoul Mates

A contingent of Korean Mind Sports players, led by Go legend Cho Hoon-hyun 9-dan, arrives at the MSO on Thursday. Cho studied in Japan where the professional game first blossomed, then returned home with the goal of lifting his countrymen to top level, a task he accomplished with resounding success. His disciple Lee Chang-ho is considered by many to be the strongest player in the world today, and Lee's success has ignited an unprecedented blaze of popularity for the game.

Cho will lecture on the 26th from 2:30 to 3:30 pm on level 2. On Friday the 27th he will give a ten-board simultaneous exhibition beginning at 2:30 pm, again on level 2. Spectators are urged to come along and watch a truly top-level player.

Man vs. Machine II

Today one of the strongest Shogi (Japanese Chess) players in the West, American Larry Kaufman, pits his wits against Jeff Rollason's Shotest, bronze medal winner in the prestigious World Computer Shogi Championship in 1998. The duel begins at 3:30 pm on level 2.

Yesterday, in the first Man vs.

Machine challenge, the silicon brain emerged triumphant after an eerily human performance. Tom Eckersley-Waites, the reigning British under-12 Go Champion, had the program on the ropes when the machine suddenly embarked upon a series of strange moves which programmer Mick Reiss described as 'designed to confuse'. The cyber-psychology worked - Go4++ turned the tables and won in devastating fashion.

Don't just stand there...

Beware - not all of the pseudo-Roman trappings adorning the venue are just show. You may suddenly find yourself jabbed by what appears to be a bronzed statue. The living sculptures on exhibit are actually Richard Yatkwan and Maurizio D'Apollonio. Richard, who is self-taught, has become quite well-known after several months posing in Covent Garden. Maurizio is a mime - known best for his Bubbleman character - and they often work together. For some reason, I am not surprised to discover that standing stock still is interesting work.

Richard concentrates on the physical aspect of his unusual calling. In particular, he informs me, you need to be especially

strong in the legs. Spectators quite often amuse themselves by trying to topple living statues with a sudden slap to the thigh from behind. Other hazards for the professional statue are people who get a laugh out of putting foreign objects in an outstretched hand or using a statue as an ashtray.

Maurizio makes voluntary paralysis sound like remarkably like a Mind Sport. 'It's really all in the head, all concentration. You have to believe you can do anything, and then you can. You can keep your eyes open an hour and a half without blinking - it's all in the mind.'

And don't feel safe from surprise now, either. Richard and Maurizio are planning to change their disguises later in the week.

Word Perfect

Mark Goodliffe, a finance director from West London making his first appearance in a championship final, won the annual Times Crossword Championship held at the MSO.

The winner's average time was an amazing 8½ minutes per puzzle. The conquered field of 21 included two former champions and 17 contestants who advanced from the semi-final without committing a single error.

MSO Title Awards

Congratulations are due to the following who have achieved MSO titles. (Please note that this list does not include those who have achieved titles, but still have the opportunity to upgrade them before the end of this year's Olympiad.)

Grandmaster Awards

Femi Awowade (Nigeria) Scrabble
Bruce Birchall (England) Creative Thinking
Anatoli Gantvarg (Belarus) Draughts 10x10 (10 min)
Zuan Guo (Holland) Go 19x19
Anne Jones (England) Speed Reading
Ron King (Barbados) Draughts 8x8
Ron King (Barbados) Draughts 8x8 (10 min)
Michael Sandeman (England) Shogi (15 min)
Guntis Valneris (Latvia) Draughts 10x10
Shutai Zhang (China) Go 13x13

Shutai Zhang (China) Go 19x19
Makota Suekuni (Japan) Othello

International Master Awards

Michael Adams (England) Chess (5 min)
David Bodycombe (England) Creative Thinking
Eric Cheymol (France) Shogi
David Howell (England) Crosswords
Michael McDowell (England) Chess Problems
George Miller (England) HexDame
Leo Springer (Holland) HexDame
Alastair Sutherland (Scotland) Crosswords
Guntis Valneris (Latvia) Draughts 10x10 (10 min)

Candidate Master Awards

Paul Smith (England) Intelligence

Game Boy

Demis Hassabis is one of the stars of the Mind Sports Olympiad, having won medals in numerous events in all three Olympiads to date. As well as being a games aficionado, Demis has recorded impressive academic achievements and runs Elixir Studios – a highly successful company that writes computer games.

Have you always liked games?

Yes. My first love was chess which I learnt when I was four years old, going on to become the world's highest rated 12-year-old player. However, during my early teens I started concentrating on my schoolwork – I took my A levels three years early – and also became interested in computer game programming. Chess therefore began to take a back seat and to be honest, my chess strength has not improved all that much since I was 12.

At the age of 16 I took a year out before going to university, during which I co-wrote a computer game, *Theme Park*, which went on to sell four million copies and became one of the top 20 selling games of all time. I then went to Cambridge where I graduated with a Double First and became interested in many other Mind Sports besides chess.

Overall, I represented Cambridge in seven different games, including Chess and Go. Cambridge actually has the strongest Go players in Europe as there is a large Japanese and Chinese student population. I learnt a great deal about Go there and managed to win a few events. **Are you interested in physical sports or do you concentrate exclusively on mental challenges?**

No, not at all. At Cambridge I represented my college at five physical sports: badminton, table tennis, football, squash and volleyball. However, my best event was probably table football – I was Cambridge champion three years in a row and finished fourth in the UK Championship. Table football is a great game, similar in technique and skill to table tennis in that it requires excellent hand-eye coordination. It is a huge game in the US and they even have professional players there.

Which, in your opinion, are the best Mind Sports?

I think there are five great games. First, Chess which I think is the best arbitrary game. It has evolved over a period of many centuries and is a beautifully balanced game. The interplay between the pieces is perfect and the complexity is at a level which is finely tuned to the capabilities of the human mind.

Go is the purest game. Despite its incredibly simple rules, it generates fantastic complexity. There is only one idea (to capture territory) and there is really only one artificial rule, 'ko'.

The third great game is Shogi, which is also the most fun to play. It is not as well balanced as Chess but makes up for it with the energy of the play. Chess can sometimes be a very static game due to the nature of the pawn structure, but Shogi is a tremendous fight, with vicious attacks and counterattacks; and draws are almost unknown. Also to become strong at Chess you need very good knowledge of the openings. In Shogi this is not the case – theory is less important as the two armies start some distance apart and do not collide for many moves.

Another favourite of mine is Diplomacy, which is very different from other Mind Sports, as it relies almost entirely on pure human interaction. You all start off completely equal and the object is to use your powers of persuasion to do deals to get what you want. It is almost a game version of capitalism.

Finally, I would choose Poker to complete my set of great games. There is obviously much luck in Poker but it also has a fine balance of psychology, reading your opponents and bluffing. **Do you think games are important?**

Yes. You often hear metaphors

used, with people saying things such as 'business is like war' or 'politics is like war'. However, I think everything can be related to games. Different Mind Sports encompass all of the methods of human interaction that occur in the real world.

How do you think the best Mind Sports computer programs match up against the best humans?

In fact, what I find really amazing in this context is the incredible power of the human mind. Computers can be programmed to do some clever things, but the achievements of the human brain are so much more impressive. Although Deep Blue famously beat Kasparov in a Chess match in 1997, Chess is almost the ideal game for the kind of brute force lookahead that computers do so well. However, with games that rely more on intuition, the standard of computer play markedly deteriorates.

For example, Shogi is much more difficult for computers as pieces can be 'dropped' onto any square on the board and the level of complexity vastly increases. Go is in a different dimension altogether and relies hugely on intuition. Not surprisingly, computers are currently hopeless at it.

Can you see how this might change?

Yes, it's possible – and I actually have some ideas myself about this with regard to Go, though I would like to get better at it first. The technology that made Deep Blue so strong is not portable to Go and is, in fact, not terribly useful in any other areas. I think that when a successful approach to the problem of Go is found, this will be of tremendous value as a new technology which could be used in many different environments.

Day Three Medal Winners

Mind Mapping World Ch

1	E. Collier (Scotland)	gold
2	J. Goldstein (USA)	silver
3	D. Holloway (England)	bronze

Poker Razz

1	M. Haytack (England)	gold
2	G. Lee (England)	silver
3	C. Harris (England)	bronze

Poker Razz Junior

1	C. Harris (England)	gold
2	T. Niccoli (England)	silver
3	G. Hassabis (England)	bronze

Speed Reading World Ch

1	A. Jones (England)	gold
2	A. Baron (England)	silver
3	K. Wilshire (Wales)	bronze

Speed Reading World Junior Ch

1	P. Rivera (Puerto Rico)	gold
2	R. Cordero (Puerto Rico)	silver
3	A. Kothari (England)	bronze

Medal Table after Day Three

	G	S	B	Total
England	25	26	26	77
USA	2	1	0	3
China	1	1	0	2
France	1	1	0	2
Holland	1	1	0	2
Japan	1	1	0	2
Puerto Rico	1	1	0	2
Jamaica	1	0	1	2
Scotland	1	0	1	2
Germany	1	0	0	1
Korea	1	0	0	1
Israel	0	2	1	3
Nigeria	0	1	1	2
Grenada	0	1	0	1
Austria	0	0	1	1
Czech Rep.	0	0	1	1
Latvia	0	0	1	1
Lithuania	0	0	1	1
Wales	0	0	1	1

MSO Records

The numbers at this record edition of the MSO continue to grow. There are now over 2850 entries from 1350 players, representing 53 nations.

www.msoworld.com

To coincide with the Third Mind Sports Olympiad we are delighted to announce the launch of a very much upgraded web site. The address is: <http://www.msoworld.com/>

When you visit the new site you will find, amongst other things, that you can play other users at approximately 50 different games from six different game categories. These games are from the 'Zillions of Games' collection and we are delighted to be working with Zillions Development Corporation on the creation of the site. Using the site is *absolutely free!*

Other features of the new site include a Mind Sports 'webzine' which will bring you news and feature articles, regularly updated. Our news editor is Jonathan Tisdall, an International Grandmaster at Chess and a professional Mind Sports journalist. (Please send him news and articles to: jtisdall@usa.net).

Today's Events

Abalone World Ch.....	am
Backgammon.....	pm/eve
Bridge for Beginners.....	am
Bridge Multi Teams.....	am/pm
Chess MSO Masters ..	pm/eve
Chess Olympiad Ch	am
Chess 25-minute	eve
Chinese Chess	am/pm
Countdown	pm
Draughts 10x10 Rapid	pm
Entropy World Ch	pm
Intelligence World Ch	am
Japanese Chess	am
Mastermind	pm
Mental Calculations	pm
Othello Olympiad Ch	pm
Oware	eve
Poker Canadian Stud	am
Scrabble Weekday	am
Scrabble Evening	eve

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OLYMPIAD NEWS

Issue 4

Wednesday 25 August 1999

Discovering Dama

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The difference between intelligence and education is this – intelligence will make you a good living. – Charles Kettering 1876-1958



Although it is often constitutes our introduction to Mind Sports, most of us from English-speaking countries know very little about the world of Draughts. This world is made up of a fascinating array of related games of which 8x8 Draughts (known as Checkers in the US) is just a basic version. The beauty of its more complicated relations is obscured by some slightly confusing names and the superficial impression of simplicity from the moves of the pieces.

Walter van Beek, President of the Federation Mondiale du Jeu de Dames (FMJD), is a congenial ambassador for his game(s), and helps clarify the differences.

International Draughts, more commonly known as Dames, is basically characterised by a 10x10 board, backward captures, and very powerful kings – like a hopping chess bishop. These aspects make for a quantum leap in complexity and enable some truly breathtaking tactical play and sacrificial combinations. The FMJD, a major world body, has asked the MSO to stage one of its official World Championship events, so this year's 10x10 Draughts 10-minute blitz will double up as the FMJD Championship.

The FMJD also embraces Russian Draughts (a variant of Dames on an 8x8 board), and the new HexDame, played on hexagons instead of squares, thus adding further dimensions. Strangely, the classic 8x8 game remains outside the fold.

During the MSO Van Beek, besides his busy playing schedule, also acts as diplomat, and has entered into enthusiastic discussions with the Dama delegation from Bahrain. Dama – which seems fated to add to

the names confusion, since it is also the Italian word for 10x10 – is a very old variant. It has an extremely long tradition in Bahrain, which has now organised an international Dama federation. Dama is 8x8, with orthogonal moves and captures, and kings – sheiks, actually – which move like hopping chess rooks. The rules appear to be shared with what has been called Turkish Draughts, but it is impossible to say whose game is older.

Van Beek regards the members of the Draughts/Dames/Dama family tree as 'folk games' due to their long traditions and regional variants. He has pledged full support for Bahraini Dama and was completely captivated by the stunning combinations demonstrated by the Arab delegation. 'This is the first historical variant that shares the richness of 10x10,' Van Beek enthuses, and this age-old game now seems on the verge of a full international renaissance – an exciting development for the Draughts world. The MSO has also recognised Dama, and will support its spread and the activities of the new federation.

Over the course of its 52-year history, the FMJD has grown from four nations to 47, and Van Beek is clearly proud that they manage to stage three regular and interlocking World Championship cycles.

Although 10x10 is not as complex as Chess, the relative strength of their respective computer programs is about the same, since less programming attention has been paid to the game. Computers are also segregated to their own events as the FMJD is not terribly interested in the man vs. machine debate.

Lost for Words

Two contestants in the Scrabble event, concentrating on their game to the exclusion of all else, managed to take tiles both from their own bag and that of the table next to them. They played several moves before realising their mistake and then decided to remove all tiles from the board in order to sort things out. When the tournament director arrived, half-way through the time allocated for the game, they had no words on the board, a pile of tiles on the table and two incomplete bags of tiles, one either side of the board. Undaunted, they started afresh with a third bag of tiles and limped home with the results some twenty minutes into the scheduled tea-break.

Words for Windows

Artist Barry Martin has strong ties to the Mind Sports Olympiad. This year he has honoured the event with a new exhibition which has pleased visitors of all ages. The show, entitled 'Look - Reflection on Structure and Meaning', provokes the eye and the mind, as well as pleasing them. The exhibit is a great favourite of children at the event and many have judged it 'cool', much to the artist's satisfaction.

A series of small reliefs, words hewn from Welsh slate, reflected in stainless steel, provide a counterpoint of ancient and modern materials while transforming and revealing meaning. Barry is excited by the possibilities of his theme, and is already working on a more complex version with sentences.

Barry was the official artist at the Chess world title match between Kasparov and Short and designed the Staunton Memorial in Kensal Green Cemetery. His works are in many prestigious collections, including the Tate, the National Portrait Gallery, and the British Museum. The Martin exhibition can be seen on level 3, and quite possibly you

may be able to get the man himself to reveal the nuances behind his work.

Medal Detector

One of the rising stars of the Mind Sports Olympiad is 16-year-old Londoner Tony Niccoli, who has made his mark in a wide range of events. To date at this year's Mind Sports Olympiad, which is not even at the halfway stage, Tony has pocketed no less than nine medals. As well as junior medals, his successes include gold for the Continuo World Championship, silver in Go for Beginners and bronze in Poker Razz. Tony is optimistic of adding to his tally and particularly has his eye on Mastermind and Draughts for Beginners. The Pentamind competitors have a new rival.

Man vs. Machine III

Today's third instalment of the tussle between the silicon and human brain is a heavyweight clash. Kenta Tominaga of Japan, reigning Meijin of Othello, will face the program Logistello, regarded by experts as the favourite. This takes place at 10:00 am on level 2.

The result of the second Man vs. Machine challenge between Larry Kaufman 5-dan (1998 MSO winner) and top program Shotest was an impressive victory for humanity. Handicap expert Kaufman gave Shotest huge 2-piece (rook and bishop) odds - and won. Steve Lamb 4-dan (2-time European Champion) also triumphed at rook odds.

Going, Going, Gone

The schedules for the afternoon events for Go on Thursday the 26th and Friday the 27th will be postponed to allow Go players to take full advantage of the special visit by Cho Hoon-hyun 9-dan of Korea. The Go legend will be lecturing on level 2 from 2:30 to 3:30 on Thursday, and giving a

ten-board simultaneous exhibition on Friday from 2:30 to 4:00.

Poker About-Face

Chief arbiter Dan Glimne informs *Olympiad News* that tomorrow's Poker competition will not be London lowball, but 5-card lowball by overwhelming popular demand.

Big Screen Shogi

The final of the Shogi (Japanese Chess) event will take place on level 2 in the Man vs. Machine area at 2:00 pm today, so that spectators can follow the action on an overhead screen.

The four finalists for the Pan-Atlantic Championship are Larry Kaufman (USA), Steve Lamb (England), George Fernandez (USA) and Hans Segers (Holland).

Note! All Shogi events will have their closing ceremony at 4:30 pm on level 2.

Well Read

One of the easiest events to understand and appreciate has to be the Speed Reading World Championship. Several journalists curious to see the competition went away disappointed when they found an empty room - the contestants were so quick that they finished the event ahead of schedule. Anne Jones of England finished 252 pages of text (98,658 words) - three short stories from *Hearts in Atlantis*, an unpublished work by Stephen King - in the half hour allotted and her answers on the comprehension test earned her a speed of 1233.2 words per minute.

The junior event produced a Latin American double, with Pablo Rivera and Ricardo Cordero, both from Puerto Rico, taking the gold and silver with 739.9 and 722.8 wpm respectively. Speed Reading ability is measured by the number of words read per minute, divided by the percentage of comprehension.

The Beachcomber

Bill Hartston is the resident creativity question setter at the Mind Sports Olympiad. He is known to a wider audience as Beachcomber in *The Express* and previously held the post of Creativity correspondent for *The Independent*. He is also an experienced Mind Sports player, having achieved the title of International Chess Master and won the British Chess Championship on two occasions.

How would you define creativity?

That is a difficult one. If it is to mean anything it must be separated from originality. Simply coming up with an original idea is not necessarily creative; it needs to have something more. Also it is not enough that a new idea simply works – some very good ideas don't work, while other bad ones do. What is required is a blend of originality and effectiveness. Arthur Koestler, in his book *Act of Creation*, identifies the essential component of creativity as 'dis-sociation' – thinking about something on two parallel levels and then drawing them together. Humour is a good example. The art of telling jokes is to set the mind on one train of thought and then to derail it with the punch-line.

Is it possible to teach creativity?

I don't think so. However, as Tony Buzan has shown, you can train uncreative people to come up with ideas that they would not otherwise have had by using techniques. However, creativity is a process and not a technique – it comes from somewhere deeper.

Is it an advantage to be creative?

For a while I had a job as a management consultant dealing mainly with management psychology and the project I worked on most was that of management teams. We discovered that for a team to be successful you need to have one creative person and no more. When you are actually trying to get things done creativity can be a disadvantage. If a project is divided into formulation and implementation then creativity is useful in the first

but a positive hindrance in the second.

Do you regard yourself as a creative person?

When I started out as an industrial psychologist I was set a personality test, the result of which informed me that I was indeed creative. This came as something of a surprise to me as I had never really regarded myself as creative. I think I am a product of a defect in the educational system which encourages too much thinking in terms of right and wrong. For example, at school I was hopeless with languages because I didn't appreciate that they were about communication, and in order to communicate, you have to make mistakes.

Is it possible to test objectively for creativity?

Well, of course this is what I attempt to do in the Creativity Championship and I think it is possible. For example, if you ask a group of people to identify unusual uses for a paper clip, there will be a hard core of about 10-12 commonplace answers that almost everyone will think of. This might be classified as mundane creativity. However, there will always be some people who will see beyond these and come up with ideas that no-one else has considered. Those who do this stand out as creative.

How good is the standard in the Mind Sports Olympiad Creativity Championship?

Exceptional. Some of the answers that are produced are quite astounding. Each round lasts just half an hour and to not only come up with highly original ideas, but also to formulate them into a coherent argument and occasionally even draw up designs in such a short time is

extraordinary. Most of the time creativity works by confronting a question and then going away and thinking about it. To be able to perform effectively under exam conditions is very impressive. A question that worked very well this year was to suggest a redesign for the human body. Common responses included such thing elements as incorporating an extra arm or an eye in the back of the head. However, the most impressive replies did not just tinker with the existing bodily structure, they gave it a complete and radical overhaul.

Can you identify people in the public eye who you regard as highly creative?

This is a very difficult question, as creativity in one field does not necessarily imply an all round creative approach to life. For example although Mozart was fantastically creative at music, you could argue that if he were truly creative in a broad sense, he might have regarded music as too limiting a career to pursue.

Is creativity stifled in contemporary society?

There is an element of this. We are born creative but growing up is essentially a limiting procedure. Children have the ability to entertain alternative realities (e.g. to believe in Santa Claus or the tooth fairy, while simultaneously 'knowing' that they don't exist) but society places pressures on them to conform. Life is also easier if you conform. Much of society is based on cultural scripts – society lays down rules that it expects others to live by. Everything becomes routine and life encourages people to fall into this mode which is, unfortunately, thoroughly stifling to creativity.

Day Four Medal Winners

Abalone

1	G. Schneider (Austria)	gold
2	M. Tastet (France)	silver
3	J. Stastna (Czech Rep.)	bronze

Bridge for Beginners

1	D. Pearce (England)	gold
2	P. Wood (England)	silver
3	D. de Toffoli (Italy)	bronze

Bridge Multiple Teams

1	A. Robson (England)	
	M. Courtney (Australia)	
	E. Erichsen (Norway)	
	D. Bakhshi (England)	gold
2	N. Sandquist (Sweden)	
	R. Cliffe (England)	
	S. Solbrand (Sweden)	
	L. Albertsson (Sweden)	silver
3	R. van Tol (Holland)	
	C. Muller (Holland)	
	T. Nnando (England)	
	Bharat (England)	bronze

Decamentathlon World Ch

1	P. Smith (England)	gold
2	K. Loveys (England)	silver
3	E. Cali (France)	bronze

Entropy World Ch

1	G. Hassabis (England)	gold
2	D. Hassabis (England)	silver
3	D. Pearce (England)	bronze

Entropy World Junior Ch

1	G. Hassabis (England)	gold
2	T. Hebbes (England)	silver
3	C. Harris (England)	bronze

Mastermind

1	K. Daelemans (Belgium)	gold
2	R. Coull (England)	silver
3	S. Rowe (England)	bronze

Mastermind Junior

1	T. Niccoli (England)	gold
2	R. Gholap (England)	silver

Poker Canadian Stud

1	J. Clark (England)	gold
2	C. Harris (England)	silver
3	G. Hassabis (England)	bronze

Poker Canadian Stud Junior

1	C. Harris (England)	gold
2	G. Hassabis (England)	silver
3	T. Niccoli (England)	bronze

Medal Table after Day Four

	G	S	B	Tot
England	34	35	33	102
USA	2	1	0	3
France	1	2	1	4
Holland	1	1	2	4
China	1	1	0	2
Japan	1	1	0	2
Puerto Rico	1	1	0	2
Austria	1	0	1	2
Jamaica	1	0	1	2
Scotland	1	0	1	2
Australia	1	0	0	1
Belgium	1	0	0	1
Germany	1	0	0	1
Korea	1	0	0	1
Norway	1	0	0	1
Sweden	0	3	0	3
Israel	0	2	1	3
Nigeria	0	1	1	2
Grenada	0	1	0	1
Czech Rep.	0	0	2	2
Italy	0	0	1	1
Latvia	0	0	1	1
Lithuania	0	0	1	1
Wales	0	0	1	1

www.msoworld.com

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When you visit the new site you will find, amongst other things, that you can play other users at approximately 50 different games from six different game categories. These games are from the 'Zillions of Games' collection and we are delighted to be working with Zillions Development Corporation on the creation of the site. Using the site is *absolutely free!*

Other features of the new site include a Mind Sports 'webzine' which will bring you news and feature articles, regularly updated. Our news editor is Jonathan Tisdall, an International Grandmaster at Chess and a professional Mind Sports journalist. (Please send him news and articles to: jtisdall@usa.net).

Today's Events

Backgammon.....	pm/eve
Bridge for Beginners.....	am
Bridge Pairs	am/pm
Chess MSO Masters ..	pm/eve
Chess Olympiad Ch	am
Chess 25-minute	eve
Chinese Chess	am/pm
Countdown	pm
Draughts 10x10 Rapid.....	pm
Intelligence World Ch.....	am
Japanese Chess.....	am
Lines of Action	pm
Othello Olympiad Ch	pm
Oware	eve
Oware Beginners	am/pm
Poker 5-Card Draw Lowball ..	am
Rummikub.....	am/pm
Scrabble Weekday.....	am
Scrabble Evening	eve
Twixt World Ch.....	am

Olympiad News Team

Editor: **Jon Tisdall**
 Production: **Byron Jacobs**
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OLYMPIAD NEWS

Issue 5

Thursday 26 August 1999

Our Man in Korea

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Memory is the treasury and guardian of all knowledge. - Cicero (BC 106-43)



Recently there have been some subtle changes in the workings of the Mind Sports Olympiad; but if the organisers of the event have their way, the tremors they create will be felt around the world. The MSO is now run by Mind Sports Organisation Worldwide Ltd., which should give an indication of increasing ambitions. *Olympiad News* spoke to Jae Young Kim, who headed the first regional MSO event in Seoul.

Kim hides abundant enthusiasm and a torrent of ideas behind a calm and soft-spoken exterior. His first event, the 'Pre-Olympiad' attracted 4,000 players and 17,000 spectators, amazing figures for what was in many respects a test run. If he manages to implement just a fraction of his ideas for the upcoming first Korean MSO and then the Asian Regional Mind Sports Olympiad, the sky is the limit.

One of the successful features of the Seoul event was the inclusion of computer games. For example, the popular Korean game *Windy City* attracted 3,000 entries within hours of its announced inclusion and Kim had to turn many enthusiasts away. The winners of the more classical events from Seoul will arrive to test their skills in London today.

Are computer games the secret to bigger and better MSOs, or is the Asian region particularly receptive to the whole idea of mental skills as a worthy and stimulating pastime? The impression so far is - both.

Computer games can qualify as MSO events if they meet the criteria of over 50% mental skill from players - they cannot rely on chance or quick reflexes. The MSO has not come to a conclusion on its policy as

yet, but it will be hard to resist the potential drawing power that suitable computer games could provide.

The East-West MSO connection springs from the successful union of Tony Buzan's teaching and Kim's cultural reinterpretation of Tony's books. He has translated the Buzan books *Mind Mapping* and *Use Your Head*, combined them, localised them with Korean examples, and then let them loose. The result: Over one million copies sold over five years, and about 10% of the population familiar with the theories. *Mind Mapping* has been adopted by the National Teachers Training agency and 40,000 teachers have learnt the technique. 'In Korea, and I suppose Japan and China as well, we are very eager for new educational methods - if they make good sense they are very easily accepted,' Kim says.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism have both sanctioned the MSO Korea initiatives, and a first prize at the closed Korean events awarded special points towards a university education, a tremendous enticement in a country where competition for university places is ferocious.

With this kind of background it is hardly surprising that the MSO concept has a fervent new disciple, and Kim hopes to sign on major software companies from China and Japan to finance future competitions in the region.

And this is just the start - the Bahraini Dama delegation is also on an international mission. Plans are already afoot to stage the first Arab regional MSO under the auspices of like-minded organisers in Bahrain.

Word Breaks

Nothing can distract a Mind Sports player in full flow. Earlier this week in the Scrabble tournament, one excited player wriggled so much during a tense game that the legs fell off his chair and he collapsed to the floor. Like true competitors, the players on adjacent tables continued their game as if nothing untoward had happened.

Marathon Men

Two Mind Sports stars at this year's Olympiad seem to be vying to see who can compete in the most events – and their dedication to the cause is starting to take its toll. Demis Hassabis, last year's Pentamind Champion and possibly the most versatile games player at the event, is competing virtually non-stop. On Tuesday, he was spotted asleep in the foyer and fears that his hectic schedule might be wearing him out were confirmed later that day in the Entropy event. Playing the deciding match against his brother George, Demis blundered in a winning position on the very last move of the game, and thus allowed a gold medal to slip through his fingers.

Meanwhile, the popular chess grandmaster Julian Hodgson, attending the MSO as the newly crowned British Chess Champion, is attempting to play in no less than ten chess events. This schedule means he will have to play a total of over 100 games.

Yesterday, in round eight of the Olympiad Championship, almost exactly halfway through his gruelling schedule, he reached the following position as Black against GM Keith Arkell.



Black to Play

Here Black, although a pawn up, has some difficulties associated with his stranded rook on h4. Julian confidently picked up his queen and was about to place it on e6, when he realised to his horror that White was threatening to take the pawn on f7 with check. Undaunted, he replaced the queen on b6 and took another look. He then picked up the queen again and tried his luck on g6. Just as he was about to remove his hand he realised that this move would also prove disastrous as White could meet 1 ... Qg6 with 2 Rxf7! Qxf7 3 Be6 winning the queen.

Julian, now firmly committed to adopting the trial and error method of making a move most often employed by complete beginners, yet again replaced the

queen on b6. However, by this time both he, his opponent and the onlookers were unable to contain their laughter any more. Julian finally gathered himself together and exchanged queens on b3. Not surprisingly, he was unable to recover his equilibrium and eventually lost the endgame.

Buzan on the Brain

Today Tony Buzan, best-selling author and inventor of Mind Mapping™, will be giving a lecture at 1:30 pm in the Auditorium. He will explore current thinking on the human brain and his talk will be accompanied by a mind-expanding video.

Man vs. Machine IV

In today's fourth round of the Man vs. Machine Challenge, John Broomfield, the 1998 British Backgammon Champion, is playing the leading artificial intelligence software program Jellyfish, developed by Fredrik Dahl of Norway. The duel takes place on level 2 at 10:00 am.

The power of the human brain was confirmed yet again yesterday in the Othello match between the super-program Logistello and the duo of Kenta Tomi-naga (current Meijin) and Makoto Suekuni, the 1997 World Champion. The program won the first game, but the team earned a draw in the rematch. This is the first time that the program has failed to overcome mortal opposition for several years.

MSO Title Awards

Congratulations are due to the following who have achieved MSO titles in the last few days.

Grandmaster Awards

Su Burn (England) Bridge Team Ch
Phil King (England) Bridge Team Ch
Tom Townsend (England) Bridge Team Ch
Nick Sandquist (Sweden) Bridge Team Ch
Woo Wei Cheung (China) Chinese Chess
Angus Walker (Scotland) Intelligence
Mark Tastet (France) Abalone

Paul Smith (England) Decamentathlon

International Master Awards

Keith Loveys (England) Decamentathlon
Robert Coull (England) Mastermind
Peter Horlock (England) Entropy

Candidate Master Awards

Demis Hassabis (England) Decamentathlon
David Pearce (England) Entropy

Dominic O'Brien, International Man of Memory

Last year's Mind Sports Olympiad was all the poorer for the absence of the five-times World Memory Champion Dominic O'Brien. This year he is back and determined to regain a title that, over the past few years, has come to be regarded by many as his private property.

What have you been working on recently?

Over the past few months I have been training for this year's Memory Skills event and have also become involved with the Alpha Learning Institute. In a way these two activities overlap as they are primarily concerned with brain training and this is obviously an area in which I have an interest.

One of the crucial qualities for a competitor in a World Memory Championship is concentration. We are all familiar with the techniques used for memorisation – journeys, visual representations etc. – but improving concentration is a less explored area as it is more difficult to practice. This is where Alpha Learning and their machine, Brainwave 1, come in. The equipment was developed by Sean Adam who, incidentally, holds the world record for Speed Reading.

The purpose of Brainwave 1 is to train the brain to work at the frequency, between seven and eight cycles a second, where concentration is at its best. The brain states that can be achieved using the equipment are typical of those which arise after prolonged periods of meditation. However, rather than taking 30 years of disciplined practice, Brainwave 1 allows you to achieve this quickly and easily. **How did you become interested in this?**

I was attracted to this idea because the equipment was originally designed to make people smarter. However, it was soon realised that it can also be used to repair forms of brain damage such as dyslexia. Having suffered from dyslexia as a child this naturally piqued my interest. Interestingly, some other memory champions have had problems with dyslexia and per-

haps overcoming dyslexia is what has sparked us to research how to improve our memories.

Two of the symptoms of dyslexia are poor concentration and a bad memory, both of which I suffered from at school. I have obviously managed to improve my memory greatly, and now I am focusing on concentration. **What else do you do to prepare for memory events?**

I take ginkgo biloba, a plant extract which greatly aids blood circulation. For any Mind Sport you need to channel as much blood, and thus oxygen, to the brain as possible. Ginkgo biloba helps to achieve this by dilating the blood vessels. I also keep fit by running and do my normal memory exercises – practising with packs of playing cards and a computer program I have developed.

Will we see memory records tumble this year?

I am optimistic that many of the current records can be broken. For example, the competition record for a pack of cards is 34 seconds and my personal best (not in competition) is 27.5 seconds. There are also other targets which I feel are achievable. **What do you know about the entry for this year's event?**

I believe that there is quite a cosmopolitan field with entrants from Turkey, South Africa, the Czech Republic and Malaysia. However, I suspect that the event may turn into a two-horse race between myself and Andi Bell, last year's winner. **Is your memory still improving?**

Yes. I have won the World Memory Championship on five occasions, and as I am now 42, it has been suggested that I might consider retirement. However, I am still improving every year and I see no reason to stop just yet.

What is your favourite event?

I like the spoken number. It is a double-edged event as you have to aim for a score of 200+, but it is possible to blow out with just three or four numbers. As it occurs towards the end of the competition, an element of strategy comes in as you have to decide whether to 'go for it' and try for a big score, or play safe.

What are your plans over the next few months?

I am writing a book, *Learn to Remember*, soon to be published by Duncan Baird. It is not particularly detailed on actual memory systems – I have covered these in depth in earlier books – but will concentrate on how to exploit an improved memory, e.g. how to relax. I am also working on a Blackjack video course and will be running Blackjack master classes in Las Vegas. It is a fascinating experiment. We will be taking 45 people out for a one-week course, and then seeing how they get on.

The schedule for the Memory Championship is as follows:

Day One (Thursday)

1. One hour numbers
2. Poem – 15 mins
3. Names and faces – 15 mins
4. Binary numbers – 30 mins
5. Random words – 15 mins

Day Two (Friday)

6. One hour cards
7. Speed numbers – five mins
8. Spoken number
9. Speed cards

Also at the MSO on Saturday afternoon the South African memory star Kevin Horsley will be making an attempt on Philip Bond's Pi matrix world record, which currently stands at 53 minutes to recall 50 groups of five numbers from the 10,000 possible sequences.

Day Five Medal Winners

Bridge for Beginners (Wed)

1	S. Moed (France)	gold
2	E. Cali (France)	silver
3	L. Broomfield (England)	bronze

Bridge for Beginners Junior (Wed)

1	S. Moed (France)	gold
2	R. Waddingham (Eng)	silver
3	I. Waddingham (Eng)	bronze

Chess Evenings (Mon/Tue)

1=	J. Hodgson (England)	gold
1=	J. Emms (England)	gold
3	M. Hebden (England)	bronze

Chess Evenings Junior (Mon/Tue)

1	D. Tan (England)	gold
2	M. Voracek (Czech Rep)	silver
3	M. Broomfield (Eng)	bronze

Japanese Chess Pan-Atlantic Ch

1	L. Kaufman (USA)	gold
2	S. Lamb (England)	silver
3	H. Segers (Holland)	bronze

Japanese Chess Pan-Atlantic Ch Jnr

1	R. Kaufman (USA)	gold
2	H. Tatsutomi (Japan)	silver

Mental Calculations World Ch

1	G. Lane (England)	gold
2	R. Fountain (England)	silver
3	T. Groves (England)	bronze

Oware Under-18

1	E. Davis (Grenada)	gold
2	K. Lemuel (Dom. Rep.)	silver
3	W. Bonti (Ghana)	bronze

Poker 5-Card Draw Lowball

1	G. Lee (England)	gold
2	M. Wellby (England)	silver
3	C. Vaz (England)	bronze

Poker 5-Card Draw Lowball Junior

1	G. Niccoli (England)	gold
2	T. Niccoli (England)	silver
3	C. Harris (England)	bronze

Rummikub

1	J. Heppell (England)	gold
2	D. Hassabis (England)	silver
3	A. Haghsheenas (Eng)	bronze

Twixt World Championship

1	K. Hussmanns (Ger)	gold
2	G. Schneider (Austria)	silver
3	H. Thordsen (Germany)	bronze

Medal Table after Day Five

	G	S	B	Tot
England	41	41	41	123
USA	4	1	0	5
France	3	3	1	7
Germany	2	0	1	3
Japan	1	2	0	3
Holland	1	1	3	5
China	1	1	0	2
Austria	1	1	1	3
Grenada	1	1	0	2
Puerto Rico	1	1	0	2
Jamaica	1	0	1	2
Scotland	1	0	1	2
Australia	1	0	0	1
Belgium	1	0	0	1
Korea	1	0	0	1
Norway	1	0	0	1
Sweden	0	3	0	3
Israel	0	2	1	3
Czech Rep.	0	1	2	3
Nigeria	0	1	1	2
Dom. Rep.	0	1	0	1
Ghana	0	0	1	1
Italy	0	0	1	1
Latvia	0	0	1	1
Lithuania	0	0	1	1
Wales	0	0	1	1

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Today's Events

Backgammon.....	pm/eve
Bridge for Beginners.....	am
Bridge Pairs	am/pm
Bridge Open Pairs.....	pm
Chess MSO Masters ..	pm/eve
Chess Olympiad Ch	am
Chess 25-minute	eve
Chinese Chess.....	am/pm
Draughts 10x10 Rapid	pm
Draughts 8x8 Beginners...	pm
Go 19x19 Olympiad Ch.	am/pm
Intelligence World Ch.....	am
Lines of Action	pm
Memory Skills	am/pm
Othello Olympiad Ch	pm
Oware	eve
Poker Omaha	am
Scrabble Weekday.....	am
Stratego World Ch	pm
Zatre Olympiad Ch	am/pm

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OLYMPIAD NEWS

Issue 6

Friday 27 August 1999

Generation Game

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The three things that enrich genius are contentment of mind, the cherishing of good thoughts, and exercising the memory. - Robert Southey 1774-1843



This year's World Memory Championship is certainly living up to expectations that it will be one of the most exciting events of the whole Mind Sports Olympiad. The contest was billed as a battle between five-times winner Dominic O'Brien and the reigning champion, Andi Bell. However, these two memory stars were eclipsed in the early exchanges by the relatively unknown young American, Zhang Yu, who had raced into a shock lead after four of the nine rounds.

Zhang took a silver medal at what insiders called a rather weak national championship. However, he has since been studying hard under the wing of Frank Felberbaum, one of the first memory legends in the USA, and this partnership is beginning to bear fruit.

As the first day reached its conclusion, championship experience began to tell. O'Brien never finished below third in any event, and when he took his first top placing, in the day's final event, random words, it was enough to edge him in front of Zhang. The young American had earlier achieved two first places and two seconds, including the shattering of a world record. In the binary digits round he recalled an amazing 2745 digits, beating the previous best by 360.

However, Zhang's indifferent result of a ninth place in the fifth and final event of the day allowed O'Brien to slip past. With O'Brien and Bell requesting far more decks in the one-hour cards tomorrow, they seem determined to put some distance between themselves and the upstart Zhang, who looks certain to take the junior gold if not a

senior medal.

The rivalry between Bell and O'Brien has produced some fantastic contests in the past. Their most recent duel, in 1997, was simply awesome, with world records falling in virtually every event, and several double world records were set. That year Bell finally crashed out when he lost concentration and actually left the room during an event. He had been trying to clear his head from his exertions in the previous discipline and suddenly realised that by wandering out he had forfeited his chances.

O'Brien, who was unable to compete last year, told *Olympiad News* that he was having trouble getting his old rhythm back, which would perhaps explain his slow start to the competition. A third place in the first event, the one-hour numbers, was well below his usual standard.

Meanwhile, Bell says his physical condition is better than ever, and he has been working on his consistency. He has had a reputation for being reckless, often taking an all-or-nothing approach in search of smashing a world record. Conversely O'Brien tends to be steady, trying to balance what he feels to be his own limitations while still pushing for ever better scores. Bell says that he will try to be more stable this year.

Elsewhere in the competition, another training partnership is also proving its worth. Twelve-year-old Christiane Stenger, one of several pupils of fellow competitor Gunter Karsten, performed very strongly on the first day and has left the Women's World Memory Champion, Sue Whiting, far behind.

Man vs. Machine V – The Sting

Today's fifth and final Man vs. Machine challenge pits Mark Nyman against a top Scrabble program. The match takes place at 3:00 pm on level 2. (See opposite for more details.)

Arbiter Michael Crane reports that the computer triumphed in the fourth Man vs. Machine duel. John Broomfield, the 1998 British Backgammon Champion, failed in his bid to beat the neural net program Jellyfish. In a best of three contest, John won the first match. However, Jellyfish stung back, narrowly winning the second match and then extending its tentacle-like grip on proceedings by taking the third and decisive match.

Friendly Seoul

The Korean ambassador to the UK, Mr Sung Hong Choi, arrived today with the competitors who qualified for a free trip to MSO III from the MSO Seoul Games. Gift-giving and goodwill were

the order of the day. Both the ambassador and the delegates received special gold medals in honour of the first regional MSO event.

Perhaps the most impressive champion was the Othello representative, who is blind. The Go legend Cho Hoon-hyun 9-dan showed his artistic versatility, presenting a special plate with hand painted calligraphy (which, along with Go, is one of the four great arts in Korea) to the ambassador and to Tony Buzan.

Abalone Rules

The top players of MSO discipline Abalone have taken 'drastic action' in order to protect and invigorate their game. A petition from top players and presented by the arbiter of the MSO World Championship has set forth a new starting position in order to avoid the possible problem of a forced draw. The group hope that their suggested amendments will become the standard rules for title tournaments.

Records Broken

On Thursday morning the MSO III attendance record was broken yet again. There are now over 3,400 entries from the 64 participating nations. Representatives from 78 countries have now taken part in the Mind Sports Olympiad since its inception in 1997.

Dama Drama

An observant Italian participant has informed *Olympiad News* that (perhaps not surprisingly) the issue of names in the Draughts world is even trickier than mentioned in the front page article in issue 4, *Discovering Dama*.

Dama is not just the existing Italian name for Draughts – it is also the name for both 8x8 (with special Italian rules, of course) and 10x10 (which they call 'international Draughts' to reduce confusion). The *Olympiad News* team anticipate more Dama drama in the days ahead ...

Scrabble Competition

The 24 words below were played and challenged during the Olympiad Scrabble tournaments. Some of them are allowed *only* by the English reference book (OSW), some are allowed *only* by the American reference book (OSPD), some are allowed by both reference books (SOWPODS) and some are not allowed at all (NIX). Guess which is which and enter the competition. Entries should be submitted to the Registration Desk by 10:00 am on Sunday 29 August. The first correct (or the most accurate) answer drawn by Lady Mary Tovey at 2:30 pm on Sunday 29 August will win a deluxe Scrabble set.

Word	OSW	OSPD	SOWPODS	NIX
Amateurly				
Antrorse				
Beleed				
Chet				
Dadoing				
Interrex				
Ither				
Justle				
Liplines				
Moirai				
Obulia				
Omenta				

Word	OSW	OSPD	SOWPODS	NIX
Oncomice				
Oneriest				
Oxgate				
Oxo				
Pirana				
Quonks				
Rawings				
Rawins				
Scimetar				
Sermion				
Sextate				
Voodoo				

Name.....

Countdown to the next Millennium

Today Mark Nyman continues the series of Man vs. Machine clashes when he takes on the strongest Scrabble program around – PC Scrabble UK. In previous battles between these two, Mark has won five times from nine games – so the result is too close to call. He is best known for his work as producer of the very popular Channel 4 programme *Countdown*, for which he has been holding auditions at the MSO.

How do the top computers compare with the best human players?

It's very close at the moment. The main advantage that computers have is that they will never miss any seven letter word that will generate a 50 point bonus. The top players are stronger at the strategy of the game, both in terms of preventing opportunities for their opponent and keeping a good balance of tiles on their rack. Although computers can do this to a certain extent, they tend to focus on making the best possible score on each turn.

There are two different versions of Scrabble, which rely on different dictionaries.

Does this not make life rather difficult?

Yes, it does. In the past all tournaments in England used the Chambers dictionary, from which the list of Official Scrabble Words (OSW) was defined. However, the World Championship uses Webster's dictionary and the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (OSPD).

To add to the confusion, international events combine the two dictionaries, and this list is known as SOWPODS – an amalgamation of the other two acronyms. It is very difficult to remember exactly which words are in which lists, and the variations between them are actually quite extensive.

How have you been preparing for the MSO Scrabble event?

I have been concentrating on learning more five letter words. Although the two and three letter words are crucial, all strong players have mastered these, while the seven and eight letter words are also well known as

they are obviously essential for making 50 point bonus scores.

Personally, I am good on four letter words, so I have been trying to make my game more solid by improving my knowledge of five letter words. It seems to have paid off as I have so far scored 27 wins from 33 matches, which is my best ever ratio.

How many two and three letter words are there?

There are probably about 40 two-letter words which are not generally known. In the case of three letter words, I think there are around 1,000, of which about 500 are in everyday use.

When is your next big event?

I am playing in the World Scrabble Championships in Melbourne in November. I will be one of 12 English representatives. Besides myself, David Webb, Phil Appleby and Femi Awowade are competing both in Melbourne and at the MSO. Our main competition will probably come from the American contingent. The top English and American players are probably about the same but America has slightly more strength in depth.

Is there a ranking list in Scrabble?

Yes, it is based upon the chess ranking list and works very well. I am currently rated around 4th or 5th in the country. It is a pity that this event is not rated as I am playing well here and it would boost my ranking.

Was there an uproar when Countdown was taken off air earlier this year to make way for the cricket coverage?

Yes, Channel 4 received quite a number of complaints, though fortunately it doesn't appear to have affected our viewing figures. We attract a solid audience of between three and four mil-

lion (with small seasonal variations) which we hope will hold out for the remainder of our contract, which runs until 2004. By then we will have put out over 3,800 shows. We also have plans for a Millennium night special featuring a big champions' final. **You did a celebrity version of Countdown last year. Was it a success?**

Yes it was. Viewing figures were reasonable, but it was not as well received as the afternoon show. Our audience is very loyal and they don't like to see contestants who are not so good at the game. We did a series of eight shows with two celebrities per programme. Most of them were good but they were not quite up to the standard of the afternoon show competitors, all of whom have to go through a rigorous qualification process.

Who were the best players amongst the celebrities?

The comedienne Jo Brand was the very good, while playwright Arthur Smith and journalist Alan Coren also performed well. However, the newly elected leader of the Liberal Democrats, Charles Kennedy, struggled a little with the numbers. All of the celebrities were good sports, although we were worried that one or two might sneak off after rehearsals when they realised how difficult the game can be!

Do you have celebrity fans?

Apparently Prince William is very keen. At a recent garden party he was overheard saying that he had to go inside as *Countdown* was about to start! We also once had Sir Anthony Hopkins ring up to complain about a word that he believed should not have been. Unfortunately, we couldn't persuade him to appear on the programme.

Day Six Medal Winners

Bridge for Beginners (Thur)

1	J. Goldsmith (England)	gold
2	J. Moed (France)	silver
3	S. Moed (France)	bronze

Bridge Mixed Pairs

1	A. Thompson (England)	
	S. Fenton (England)	gold
2	S. Gross (England)	
	B. Senior (England)	silver
3	R. Samani (England)	
	M. Samani (England)	bronze

Bridge Open Pairs

1	T. To (England)	
	R. Rowlands (England)	gold
2	J. Bochsler (England)	
	J. Durden (England)	silver
3	M. Gold (England)	
	D. Gold (England)	bronze

Bridge Pairs' Championship

1	U. Durmus (England)	
	E. Erichsen (Sweden)	gold
2	Z. Mahmoud (Pakistan)	
	P. Chemla (France)	silver
3	T. Townsend (England)	
	R. Sheehan (England)	bronze

Chinese Chess Olympiad Championship

1	W-C. Woo (France)	gold
2	S-T. Hua (France)	silver
3	C. Li (Scotland)	bronze

Draughts 8x8 Beginners

1	C. Bell (France)	gold
2	A. Goss (England)	silver
3	M. Durdyev (Turk'istan)	bronze

Draughts 10x10 Rapid

1	H. Wiersma (Holland)	gold
2	A. Georgiev (Russia)	silver
3	R. Clerc (Holland)	bronze

Lines of Action World Championship

1	F. Kok (Holland)	gold
2	E. Cali (France)	silver
3	G. Miller (England)	bronze

Othello Olympiad Championship

1	M. Suekuni (Japan)	gold
2	K. Tominaga (Japan)	silver
3	T. Miyaoka (Japan)	bronze

Othello Olympiad Junior Ch

1	T. Krzywonos (Canada)	gold
2	B. Shifman (Israel)	silver
3	J. Lutton (England)	bronze

Poker Omaha

1	G. Hassabis (England)	gold
2	J. Butler (Ireland)	silver
3	D. de Toffoli (Italy)	bronze

Poker Omaha Junior

1	G. Hassabis (England)	gold
2	C. Harris (England)	silver
3	G. Niccoli (England)	bronze

Scrabble Evening Beginners

1	D. White (England)	gold
2	D. Holloway (England)	silver
3	P. Kelly (Wales)	bronze

Scrabble Evening Junior Beginners

1	T. Hebbes (England)	gold
2	A. Dixon (England)	silver
3	R. Gholap (England)	bronze

Scrabble Evening (SOWPODS)

1	M. Nyman (England)	gold
2	F. Awowade (Nigeria)	silver
3	A. Saldanha (England)	bronze

Scrabble Evening (OSW)

1	A. Killilea (England)	gold
2	J. McLeod (England)	silver
3	P. Dean (England)	bronze

Medal Table after Day Six

	G	S	B	Tot
England	53	50	53	156
France	5	7	1	13
USA	4	1	0	5
Holland	3	1	4	8
Japan	2	3	1	6
Germany	2	0	1	3
Sweden	1	3	0	4
Austria	1	1	1	3
China	1	1	0	2
Grenada	1	1	0	2
Puerto Rico	1	1	0	2
Scotland	1	0	2	3
Jamaica	1	0	1	2
Australia	1	0	0	1
Belgium	1	0	0	1
Canada	1	0	0	1
Korea	1	0	0	1
Norway	1	0	0	1
Israel	0	3	1	4
Nigeria	0	2	1	3
Czech Rep.	0	1	2	3
Dom. Rep.	0	1	0	1
Ireland	0	1	0	1
Pakistan	0	1	0	1
Russia	0	1	0	1
Italy	0	0	2	2
Wales	0	0	2	2
Ghana	0	0	1	1
Latvia	0	0	1	1
Lithuania	0	0	1	1
Turk'istan	0	0	1	1

Today's Events

Backgammon.....	pm/eve
Bridge Ladies' Pairs.....	eve
Bridge Men's Pairs.....	eve
Bridge Seniors' Pairs.....	eve
Bridge Novices' Pairs.....	eve
Chess MSO Masters	pm/eve
Chess Olympiad Ch	am
Chinese Chess Euro Cham/pm	
Draughts 10x10 Blitz.....	pm
Draughts 8x8.....	am/pm
Go 19x19 Olympiad Ch.....	am/pm
Intelligence World Ch.....	am
Memory Skills	am/pm
Othello 5-minute	am
Oware	eve
Poker 7-Card Stud	am
Scrabble Weekday.....	am
Stratego World Ch	am/pm
Zatre Olympiad Ch	am/pm

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OLYMPIAD NEWS

Issue 7

Saturday 28 August 1999

Bob, Bobby and Che

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Life is like a game of cards. The hand that is dealt you represents determinism; the way you play it is free will. – Jawaharlal Nehru 1889-1964



Not only the players at the Mind Sports Olympiad are giants in their field. In fact, a small, soft-spoken and extremely modest arbiter with an impish smile packs one of the most impressive resumés of the whole event. Bob Wade, presiding over the Chinese and Japanese Chess tournaments, received an OBE in 1979 for services to Chess, fitting recognition for a long and fascinating career. Describing himself wryly as 'well past retirement age', he remains a full-time Chess professional.

Bob came to England from New Zealand in 1948 and has never returned home ('It's too far'). Amazingly, Chess has always been his livelihood. 'Somehow I managed to survive. Survive is the word. If I had to explain how I did it, I'd never be able to,' he smiles.

The life of a Chess pro has never been easy, and in many respects Bob had to invent work. In the 1950s he began publishing tournament bulletins ('I suppose you could say I started the information boom, but the Russians were already at it'), taught Chess to players of all ages and levels, and was named Chief Trainer for England, a post he still holds. He has served on world body FIDE's committees for 50 years. And he was a strong player of course – champion in his homeland three times, and British Champion twice.

As one of the first Chess information brokers, Bob built up a fabled library and his flat became a Mecca for players and writers. He helped the legendary Bobby Fischer prepare for all of his matches – the successful world title campaign in the

1970s, the unplayed defence against Karpov in 1975, even his comeback against Spassky in 1992. 'I think Fischer always trusted me. We got on very well, after all I have drawn with him,' he explains.

Another cultural icon whom Wade counts amongst his friends was Che Guevara. They met, played Chess and discussed politics in 1963-64 when Bob played in Havana. 'Che enjoyed watching the event and was genuinely interested in Chess. He used to work six days a week as the Minister of Industry, and on the seventh he would set an example by working in a factory,' Wade recalls.

Bob has adapted to the computer age, a useful development that must have saved his home from sinking beneath the weight of his collected literature. Now he is working on a book on thinking in Chess, and the effects of computers in this regard. 'A very difficult subject – computers have changed and probably developed Chess thinking. The game is harder today because of computers, not easier.'

Bob is still constantly on the move, and has travelled to Dubai, Bahrain, Bangladesh, India and throughout Africa in recent years, teaching Chess and training teachers as part of a British Council project.

'I'll probably be going back to South Africa again soon. They had a strong Chess tradition that was squashed by apartheid, and you can't do so much in a short visit. I'm just as busy as I ever was. It's a very interesting – and very demanding – life,' says Bob. 'Then he's off, back to work.'

Easy as π

This afternoon the South African memory star Kevin Horsley will be making an attempt on Philip Bond's Pi matrix world record, which currently stands at 53 minutes to recall 50 groups of five numbers from the 10,000 possible sequences.

Mind Sports for All

Chess arbiter Stewart Reuben points out one of the great and enjoyable differences between Mind and Physical Sports which is rarely mentioned.

It is difficult to imagine an amateur playing a reasonable game against one of the great sportsmen or sporting teams. You are up against Pete Sampras. Crash comes the ball over the net and that's the end of the rally. Play Stephen Hendry at snooker. You play one, perhaps two shots on a good day. He follows with a break of 30 or more. You have your turn and then he is off again. Can you imagine your Sunday football team playing against Manchester United?

It is different here at the Mind Sports Olympiad. There are world-class players competing in many events and rank amateurs are always in with a chance of having a shot at them. Michael Adams has just returned from Las Vegas where he advanced to the semi-final stage in the World Chess Championship. Yet every day you can see him battling it out in speed Chess tournaments. The Open Pairs in Bridge features possibly one of the strongest line-ups ever in Britain. Stratego is very popular in Belgium and the Netherlands and the event here has all the best players in the world competing. Meanwhile, the Draughts champion Ron King is putting his reputation on the line every day.

Yet the ordinary punter can pay a small entry fee, play side-by-side with great names and maybe even get a crack at them. Moreover, in many events, although winning the top prizes is

beyond the scope of many players, there are often medals and supplementary prizes even for relatively inexperienced players. Some of the stars are receiving appearance fees and some are playing to win the prizes. However, all are here mainly to enjoy themselves and to help popularise their sport.

Beginning Boku

Visitors to the MSO have been flocking to the Boku stand on level 2 where Rob Nelson, the inventor of this fascinating game, is taking on all-comers. Such is the elegance of Boku that it has only two rules – but two billion ways to win. It fits the classic description 'a minute to learn but a lifetime to master' almost perfectly, as the simplicity of the game is such that some people are able to become quite good players after only a handful or so games. However, as they play more and more they are continually making new discoveries.

Boku was invented when Rob was playing around with a few ideas based on 'tic-tac-toe' and gradually evolved by a process of trial and error into the refined form in which it is played today.

Rob is hoping to organise the first ever Boku World Championship for the year 2001. However, although he loves playing and demonstrating Boku, Rob does not claim to be a great player himself, admitting that 'someone will write the definitive guide to winning at Boku, but it won't be me.' He cannot conceal his delight and amusement when he hears Boku players using terms such as 'forced move' and 'atari' which they have brought into the game from other Mind Sports.

MSO needs You!

The MSO World Mindzine has opened on the organisation's new website www.msoworld.com and aims to provide weekly coverage of the latest developments in

games and mental skills. With so many disciplines and the entire globe to cover, help from enthusiasts around the world is desperately needed. If you can help with news, player profiles, links, anecdotes, lessons or ideas to promote your favourite Mind Sport, e-mail the Mindzine at jonathan@msoworld.com.

Man vs. Machine VI

The final instalment of the Man vs. Machine challenge pitted former Scrabble World Champion Mark Nyman against top software program PC Scrabble UK. Clever strategy came to Nyman's aid in the crucial first game, as he managed to wipe out a 100 point deficit by opening up the board and seizing his opportunities, finally winning 469-457. The PC then levelled the match convincingly by starting with two seven letter words, and was never in reach. Nyman struggled with duff tiles but did manage a nine-letter play. He then sealed the match with a crushing display in the deciding game, opening with the hammer blows ZAMAN and ENNEAGON and running out a 500-371 winner.

Dominic Dominates

Dominic O'Brien fully lived up to his reputation as the undisputed champion of memory. Although in some respects teenage sensation Yu Zhang stole the show with four firsts and two world records, he hasn't yet developed the key ingredient of consistency. Dominic never faltered, and notched up three firsts in a relentless march towards his sixth title. But a star was born at MSO III, and future events promise great battles.

Twelve-year-old Christiane Stenger earned the title of Grandmaster of Memory, awarded on performances in three specific events. She achieved her final norm with just *half a second* to spare in the single deck of cards.

Games People Play

Reiner Knizia is probably the greatest modern game inventor and is regarded as the natural successor to Alex Randolph. Reiner is now retired from his work in the financial world and concentrates full-time on his 'hobby' of game design. He moved from Germany to England around seven years ago and very much enjoys the lifestyle over here. Many serious games enthusiasts refer to Reiner as 'The Man'.

How many games have you designed over years?

My total of actual published games is more than 100 but I have also written several books with new, unpublished games.

Which of your games have been the most successful?

There is more than one way to judge the relative success of a game – is it the one that makes the most money, or sells the most copies, or wins the most awards? I would say that my most successful publications include *Modern Art*, which won the German game prize in 1993 and, modesty aside, is still regarded as a classic. The game *Euphrates and Tigris*, which reflects the origin of modern civilisation is probably my most complex game and has many followers. It is also the current holder of the German game prize. One of my simpler creations is the auction game *Medici*, but this has also proved very popular.

Out of all your games, do you have a personal favourite?

No, I don't, and I would like to explain why, as I believe the answer is important and reflects my philosophy about games. I do not regard a game as an absolute – instead it is a mechanism to have an enjoyable social experience with other people. Therefore different games can work well in different situations, for example a game that you enjoy playing with your children might not be the same one that you would play with your parents.

However, if I have to answer the question I would say that my favourite game is always the one that I am currently developing. I am usually working on as many as 12 games simultaneously and I often get stuck with them – I have many dead bodies strewn

around my house. However, the ones which do eventually come together appear to work well. Maybe this is an example of Darwinian evolution in action – the survival of the fittest.

What are the requirements for a good game?

First, there should not be too much administration. There must be clear rules which are simple enough to pick up quickly, while containing sufficient dynamism to create interesting possibilities for play. The game must also be intuitive enough that the flow of the play is not disrupted.

For me a game is all about interacting with other personalities and so a game cannot be really good if it doesn't allow this to happen. This is a very different dynamic from computer games – with computer games you mainly play with the computer; with board games you play with the other players.

Are you a good games player yourself?

Not especially. One of my personality traits is that if I do something, I want to be able to do it very well. Consequently, I do not do too many different things. However, it is important for me to explore many different games to familiarise myself with the mechanisms that are used.

When did you start designing games?

I have been inventing games for almost as long as I remember, perhaps since I was nine or ten. Initially I just constructed basic games using dice and simple pieces. None of these have ever been published – and not without justification! My desire to create games was sparked when I found that I wanted to play games but could not find ones

with themes that satisfied me. I therefore decided to design some games myself.

What are the actual mechanics of designing a game?

There are two main phases of game development. First, the core design, during which the main theme and game mechanics are decided. This may sound like a simple process, but it can take up to two months to arrive at a prototype. The second stage sees the development of the game from the prototype. Some games turn out well and make it to the market. Others simply don't work and are discarded.

A further important stage is the testing process. No game would ever be released until it had been played at least 100 times. A game can appear wonderful in the design stage and yet when you come to play it you may find that something is lacking – perhaps it is just not exciting. On average I play four times a week, mainly in groups dedicated to trying out my games.

What do you find so attractive about designing games?

When you design a game you are a creator – and this is a fascinating experience. You are in control of your universe and you make all the rules. Also it gives you the possibility to explore different times and/or cultures.

Is it still possible to develop a truly classic game like Chess or Go?

Nowadays it is very difficult to succeed with abstract games like these. If Chess or Go were invented today, there is almost no chance that they would flourish. The only recent example of an abstract game that has succeeded is Abalone – but much of this is based upon the brilliant design of the board and pieces.

Day Seven Medal Winners

Chess Evening (Wed/Thu)

1=	M. Adams (England)	gold
1=	J. Hodgson (England)	gold
3	S. Williams (England)	bronze

Chess Evening Junior (Wed/Thu)

1	D. Tan (England)	gold
2	A. Ghazi (England)	silver
3	S. Ghazi (England)	bronze

Chess Olympiad Championship

1	L. Psakhis (Israel)	gold
2	B. Lalic (England)	silver
3	V. Golod (Israel)	bronze

Chess Olympiad Junior Championship

1	M. Broomfield (England)	gold
2	J. Mont-Reynaud (USA)	silver
3	D. Tan (England)	bronze

Countdown

1	T. Pay (England)	gold
2	N. McHale (England)	silver
3	J. McLeod (England)	bronze

Dama

1	K. Essa (Bahrain)	gold
2	M. Abdulla (Bahrain)	silver
3	A. Mohd (Bahrain)	bronze

Intelligence Junior

1	J. Stastna (Czech Rep)	gold
2	S. Plebanek (Poland)	silver
3	N. Eskirazi (England)	bronze

Memory Skills World Championship

1	D. O'Brien (England)	gold
2	Y. Zhang (USA)	silver
3	A. Bell (England)	bronze

Memory Skills Junior World Championship

1	Y. Zhang (USA)	gold
2	C. Parmar (USA)	silver
3	C. Stonger (Germany)	bronze

Othello 5-Minute

1	T. Miyaoka (Japan)	gold
2	K. Tominaga (Japan)	silver
3	S. Nicolet (France)	bronze

Othello Junior 5-Minute

1	T. Krzywonos (Canada)	gold
2	B. Shifman (Israel)	silver
3	H. Tatsutomi (Japan)	bronze

Poker 7-Card Stud

1	P. Shapperson (England)	gold
2	A. Baron (England)	silver
3	M. Haytack (England)	bronze

Poker 7-Card Stud Junior

1	G. Niccoli (England)	gold
2	B. Haytack (England)	silver
3	A. Haghsheenas (Iran)	bronze

Poker World Amateur Championship

1	G. Lee (England)	gold
2	I. Adams (England)	silver
3	C. Vaz (England)	bronze

Poker World Junior Amateur Ch

1	C. Harris (England)	gold
2	G. Hassabis (England)	silver
3	T. Niccoli (England)	bronze

Scrabble Weekday (SOWPODS)

1	M. Nyman (England)	gold
2	F. Adowade (Nigeria)	silver
3	A. Ajose (Nigeria)	bronze

Scrabble Weekday Junior (SOWPODS)

1	S. Menon (India)	gold
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Scrabble Weekday (OSW)

1	S. Simonis (England)	gold
2	R. Dowse (England)	silver
3	B. Grossman (Scotland)	bronze

Stratego World Championship

1	J. van Geffen (Holland)	gold
2	R. Helmus (Holland)	silver
3	G. Franka (Holland)	bronze

Stratego World Junior Championship

1	F. Poppelaars (Holland)	gold
2	M. Jungbluth (Germany)	silver
3	T. Spierings (Holland)	bronze

Zatre Olympiad Championship

1	P. Basedow (Germany)	gold
2	B. Schick (Austria)	silver
3	F. Schmidt (Germany)	bronze

Zatre Olympiad Junior Championship

1	M. Voracek (Czech Rep)	gold
2	J. Stastna (Czech Rep)	silver
3	C. Haas (Austria)	bronze

Medal Table after Day Seven

	G	S	B	Tot
England	65	58	62	185
USA	5	4	0	9
Holland	5	2	6	13
France	4	7	2	13
Japan	3	4	2	9
Germany	3	1	3	7
Czech Rep.	2	2	2	6
Canada	2	0	0	2
Israel	1	4	2	7
Sweden	1	3	0	4
Austria	1	2	2	5
Bahrain	1	1	1	3
China	1	1	0	2
Grenada	1	1	0	2
Puerto Rico	1	1	0	2
Scotland	1	0	3	4
Jamaica	1	0	1	2
Australia	1	0	0	1
Belgium	1	0	0	1
Cameroon	1	0	0	1
India	1	0	0	1
Korea	1	0	0	1
Norway	1	0	0	1
Nigeria	0	3	2	5
Dom. Rep.	0	1	0	1
Ireland	0	1	0	1
Pakistan	0	1	0	1
Poland	0	1	0	1
Russia	0	1	0	1
Italy	0	0	2	2
Wales	0	0	2	2
Ghana	0	0	1	1
Iran	0	0	1	1
Latvia	0	0	1	1
Lithuania	0	0	1	1
Turkistan	0	0	1	1

Today's Events

Backgammon Weekend pm/eve
 Bridge Swiss Pairs.....am/pm
 Chess MSO Masters .. pm/eve
 Chess 10-Minute am
 Chess 5-Minute pm
 Chess Terafinal am/pm
 Chinese Chess Euro Ch. am/pm
 Cribbage Individual am
 Cribbage Pairs pm
 Draughts 10x10 Blitz..... pm
 Draughts 8x8..... am/pm
 GIPF Problem Solving pm
 Go 19x19 Olympiad Ch. am/pm
 Othello Beginners pm
 Poker Olympiad Hold'Em ... am
 Stratego World Team.. am/pm

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OLYMPIAD NEWS

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Sunday 29 August 1999

Out of Thin Air

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'Look at me - you can do better. Look at Nikki - you can do as well.' International Chess Master Michael Basman's inspirational words to young chessplayers wowed by awards presenter Gladiator Nikki 'Scorpio' Diamond.



The first thing Mark Lefler does upon his arrival at the Mind Sports Olympiad is to start producing coins out of thin air. Although prestidigitation is just a hobby, Mark has played a central role in conjuring up the new MSO website. Zillions Development Corporation President Lefler and his small team have accomplished the unlikely task of completely rebuilding the new MSO presence on the Internet in about two months.

The alliance between Zillions and the MSO is the proverbial match made in heaven. 'We had several other offers, but the MSO was the best since it is devoted to the mind. We weren't interested in companies who wanted to add Chess to their portfolio of shoot-em-up games,' says Lefler.

The Zillions universal games engine is the brainchild of games aficionado Jeff Mallett. Simple and elegant, the program is an artificial intelligence engine which acts upon a script - a very simple programming language. This enables it to quickly learn, and improve at, an almost infinite number of games. The simplicity of the input language means that avid users are increasing this number of possibilities every day by typing in new scripted rules. The current commercial version of the program can play over 600 variants and games, while Mallett categorised over 3,000 abstract games during the research stage.

'Zillions can never be as strong as, say, a dedicated Chess engine, but it plays anything and everything. This is not necessarily a weakness, as specialised programs are often much too strong for the

average games enthusiast. The ideal ratio is that the computer wins about two out of three, which gives players an incentive, and improves their game,' Lefler explains.

The team is currently refining a special version of the Zillions engine for the MSO website, which is designed for painless on-line play. 'Zillions gives MSO Worldwide a huge advantage as we can add new games overnight. Users can suggest games and we can give them what they want, fast,' says Lefler, who manages to give the impression of being totally relaxed, while simultaneously bursting with energy. 'The whole idea is to have fun, and to stretch people's minds.'

The web team also illustrates the benefits of the new virtual workplace. Some of the team is in California, one is in Canada, Lefler is based in Berlin, and MSO web manager Chris Dickson works from Middlesbrough. Chris, who has won two medals in previous MSOs, oversees the lists, archives and information on the site, as well as filling in wherever else he may be needed. He was discovered as a student volunteer at MSO II, who offered to put news from the event online, and then took on the huge task of maintaining the first website. Now it has become a full-time job.

A scattered global force has some advantages: 'It means that we can have a 16 to 24 hour development day. As one man knocks off work, another's day is starting. It's all possible because of the web,' says Lefler.

To get an idea of the potential of the future of game-playing at MSO, visit: www.zillions-of-games.com.

Young Gladiators

The biggest Chess tournament ever held came to a climax to day at the Mind Sports Olympiad. More than 35,000 youngsters entered Saitek's UK Chess Challenge 1999 and the finals make a fitting climax to this year's MSO.

The last 16 of the nation's most gifted Chess prodigies (many of them champions in their own right) included eight-year-old David Howell from Seaford, Sussex, who recently completed a spectacular double when he became British Under-9 and Under-10 Champion.

David is one of four finalists who are members of the England Junior Chess Squad. Another player hotly tipped for future stardom is nine-year-old Sarah Hegarty from Bisley in Surrey. Sarah also completed a recent double when she claimed both the British Girls' Under-10 and Under-11 titles.

However, on the day these two

young stars were eclipsed by Thomas Rendle who took the overall gold medal in a thrilling and close fought final.

Everest Conquered

Kevin Horsley of South Africa, Grandmaster of Memory, convincingly broke the world record in what has been called the 'Everest of memory tests' – recalling 100 randomly chosen 5-digit components of pi. The first 10,000 digits of pi – an infinite non-repeating number – are divided into 2,000 5-digit blocks. The testers call out one of these 5-digit sequences, and the candidate must reply with the 5-digit numbers on either side of the number chosen. This happens 50 times. Kevin completed the task on his second attempt in 39 minutes, 14 minutes ahead of Philip Bond's mark from 1994.

Horsley, 27, finished eighth in the World Memory Championship and confesses to a weakness in the card events. He says he is

determined to do his best to topple Dominic O'Brien from the throne, but admits it may well never happen – 'But everybody has that dream.'

Kevin was, like several other memory champions, dyslexic. A former policeman, he has recently finished studies in neuro-linguistic programming and now hopes to open a memory school in South Africa.

Brotherly Luck

'That was a bit lucky!' – all-rounder Demis Hassabis couldn't keep still as he watched younger brother George raking in the chips en route to a poker triumph. Demis, 23, who was denied the gold medal after a last move Entropy loss to George, is not having a good Olympiad. 'I've lost three crucial games to three juniors. I'm getting old! I'll be really worried when I lose three times to the same junior,' said Demis, hurrying off to yet another event.

Mind Sports Council

A major development for the Mind Sports Olympiad and games players worldwide has been the formation of the Mind Sports Council. Saturday witnessed the inaugural meeting of this body and featured many of the key players in the organisation of Mind Sports worldwide.

Dr Evan Harris gave an exposition of the steps he was taking to encourage the British Government to accord to Mind Sports a status equal to that of physical sports. Mr Walter van Beek then asked whether this initiative need be confined to the UK. Sir Brian Tovey warmly agreed, and suggested that,

in parallel with the approach to the British Government, the issue should be raised at a European level with the authorities in Brussels (Commission and European Parliament). This would be with a view to having a Directive put in place that would oblige all members of the European Union and, by force of example, other European states, to enact legislation putting Mind Sports on a par with physical sports. General agreement was reached and a sub-committee of the Mind Sports Council – Sir Brian Tovey, Walter van Beek, Philip Nelkon and Paul Smith – was set up to pursue the matter further.

Delegates to the Mind Sports Council Meeting

H. Alkhalifa (World Dama Federation Patron)
Seth Bonti (World Oware Federation Chairman)
Peter Boswell (British Mensa Director)
Tony Buzan (Mind Sports Council President)
Phil Chambers (Learning Technologies Ltd. Director)
Elaine Collier (Buzan Licensed Instructor)
Michael Crane (British Backgammon Assoc. Director)
Aubrey de Grey (British Othello Federation Chairman)
Dr Evan Harris (Member of Parliament)
Ray Keene (MSO Chief Executive Officer)
Jim McCarthy (London Draughts Assoc. Secretary)
Jae Young Kim (MSO Korea President)
Keith Masters (BNDC Ltd. {Dominoes and Crib})

Linda Masters (BNDC Ltd. {Dominoes and Crib})
Trevor Montague (British Quiz Assoc. President)
Kevin O'Connell (MSO Ranking and Titles Officer)
Philip Nelkon (Scrabble Clubs UK Manager)
Vanda North (Buzan Centres Managing Director)
David Pritchard (Mind Sports Council Vice-President)
Stewart Reuben (British Chess Federation Chairman)
Paul Smith (British Go Association Youth Co-ordinator)
Michael Tipper (World Memory Championship Director)
Lady Mary Tovey (MSO Organiser)
Sir Brian Tovey (MSO Council Member)
Walter van Beek (FMJD {Draughts} President)
Martin van der Beek (ISF {Stratego} Secretary)

Beating the Olympics

David Levy is the chief organiser of the MSO. *Olympiad News* spoke to him about the plans for next year.

How and when did you get the idea for the MSO?

The idea came to me in the mid-1980s. As a chessplayer I had always enjoyed the Chess Olympiads more than any other event in the Chess calendar. Chess Olympiads bring together national teams from all over the world (nowadays around 100 countries) and are played in a very festive atmosphere. We played for fun (there were no cash prizes) and in the evenings we relaxed with friends we had made at various Chess tournaments around the world. The whole thing was like a gigantic Chess party. So I thought of creating an Olympiad for all Mind Sports because games enthusiasts are very like-minded people – you often find chessplayers who enjoy Backgammon, Bridge or Othello for example. **And how did you get the idea off the ground?**

I asked Ray Keene what he thought and he was very enthusiastic. So we decided to go ahead and try to get sponsorship. We even printed some brochures announcing the 1st Mind Sports Olympiad in 1989. However, we had absolutely no success in raising any sponsorship interest. Then, in 1990, Ray introduced me to Tony Buzan, who is the guru of mental skills such as Mind Mapping and memory skills. Tony travels the world and lectures to major businesses and, as a result, he has a lot of high level contacts. So we felt that with Tony we had a better chance of attracting sponsorship and we invited him to join our venture. For a while all we had was near misses but finally, in 1997, we got lucky. Ray struck a great deal with the Royal Festival Hall, allowing us to hold the first Olympiad there on the condition that we would pay for the venue only if we attracted significant sponsorship. This encouraged us to make the decision to run the event using our own resources. But soon afterwards one of Tony's

contacts bore fruit – the Swedish insurance company Skandia gave us £350,000 in sponsorship.

What are your plans for next year's event?

Next year we are planning something really spectacular for the Millennium. It will be far and away the most enormous Mind Sports event ever conceived, with many more entries than at the Olympic Games. In fact, participating in Mind Sports is already more popular than taking part in physical sports, so in a sense we are already larger than the Olympic movement. At Mind Sports Olympiad IV we hope to have in the region of 12,000-15,000 entries. At the moment the Olympiad record is 10,744 – for the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. But we know we can beat that.

How can you be so sure?

We already have preliminary agreements with a number of games federations and organisers to create major events in their particular disciplines. In Bridge, for example, we are looking at tournaments with 2,000 players or more, and the numbers will be similar in Chess. Even in games such as Cribbage and Dominoes we are informed that 500-1,000 players per tournament can be achieved with the right planning, given that we will have an even bigger prize fund than this year.

When will MSO IV take place?

As yet we haven't decided definitely how long the MSO should be next year. If it is still nine days, the dates will almost certainly be August 19-27. But we may well extend the event to include the August Bank Holiday (the 28th) and we are even considering extending a few days beyond that.

What other goodies do you have in store for us next year?

We are resurrecting the Computer Olympiad, an event we ran from 1989-1992. So many people have asked for it to be revived that we have decided to accede to their requests. In the Computer Olym-

piads the participants are all computer programs, not people. The programs play against each other to determine the strongest program in each discipline. We used to have around 100 programs taking part, across some 15 disciplines. Next year I expect 200 or more programs, though the number of disciplines may go down because a few games have already been solved – Connect 4, for example, is known to be a win for the first player.

And what else?

There are a number of ideas being developed which we don't want to discuss at the moment because we don't want to give them away. But we are not the only ones who can have good ideas. We want anyone who has a suggestion for a new event at MSO IV to pass it on to us – the best new idea will win a bottle of champagne and free entry to MSO IV. And we aren't just looking for good ideas for new tournaments within MSO, we're also on the lookout for ways to improve what we do now.

How are you going to fund all this? Do you have sponsorship lined up already for next year?

We are not a sponsorship driven organisation. Of course, sponsorship would be very nice at the right level and with the right sponsors, by which I mean companies whose own corporate image would tie in well with our philosophy for the development of the Mind Sports movement. Right now our organisation is investment driven. Our aim is to build, very, very quickly, in just a couple of years or so, an organisation with a huge following amongst Mind Sports enthusiasts. Our investors are delighted with the way things are going – we have a great new website and the number of entries for MSO III looks like being significantly ahead of our forecasts. We believe that just about everyone in the world who is interested in Mind Sports will, sooner or later, come into our ambit.

Day Eight Medal Winners

Backgammon Olympiad Gold Ch

1	J. Clark (England)	gold
2	G. Brittain (England)	silver
3	C. Baker (England)	bronze

Backgammon Olympiad Silver Ch

1	P. Rastan (England)	silver
2	L. Powell (England)	bronze

Backgammon Olympiad Bronze Ch

1	J. Slattery (Scotland)	bronze
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Bridge Ladies' Pairs

1	S. Sepahbodi (England)	
	H. Shapiro (England)	gold
2	E. Caplan (England)	
	L. Phillips (England)	silver
3	P. Leslie (England)	
	S. Cohen (England)	bronze

Bridge Men's Pairs

1	D. Smerdon (England)	
	P. Tobias (England)	gold
2	N. Sandquist (Sweden)	
	P. King (England)	silver
3	T. To (England)	
	R. Rowlands (England)	bronze

Bridge Novices' Pairs

1	T. Glover (England)	
	M. Syed (England)	gold
2	S. Hands (England)	
	V. Crawford (England)	silver
3	N. Dent (England)	
	T. Manser (England)	bronze

Bridge Seniors' Pairs

1	T. Turnage (England)	
	J. Cruickshank (Eng)	gold
2	R. Samani (England)	
	M. Samani (England)	silver
3	D. Solomons (England)	
	E. Samuels (England)	bronze

Bridge Swiss Pairs

1	A. Priday (England)	
	V. Priday (England)	gold
2	R. Harper (England)	
	M. Hoffman (USA)	silver
3	I. Pagan (England)	
	H. Anoyrkatis (Eng)	bronze

Chess 10-Minute Saturday

1	B. Lalic (England)	gold
2	J. Hodgson (England)	silver
3	A. Summerscale (Eng)	bronze

Chess 10-Minute Saturday Junior

1	D. Ruter (England)	gold
2	C. Hanley (England)	silver
3	D. Tan (England)	bronze

Chess 5-Minute Saturday

1	J. Hodgson (England)	gold
2	A. Chernaiev (Russia)	silver
3	J. Emms (England)	bronze

Chess 5-Minute Saturday Junior

1	D. Tan (England)	gold
2	C. Harris (England)	silver
3	R. Keiran (England)	bronze

Chess Terafinal

1	T. Rendle (England)	gold
2	A. Hunt (England)	silver
3	T. Sharp (England)	bronze

Cribbage British Open Individual Ch

1	P. Hayden (England)	gold
2	M. Wakefield (England)	silver
3	D. Edwards (England)	bronze

Cribbage British Open Individual Junior Ch

1	J. Heppel (England)	gold
2	C. Heppel (England)	silver

Cribbage British Open Pairs Ch

1	K. Lloyd (England)	
	J. Collier (England)	gold
2	D. Wade (England)	
	J. Wade (England)	silver
3	D. Follows (England)	
	P. Hayden (England)	bronze

Intelligence World Championship

1	M. Isaac (England)	gold
2	A. Walker (Scotland)	silver
3	P. Smith (England)	bronze

Intelligence World Junior Championship

1	Z. Hussain (England)	gold
2	R. Bhatti (England)	silver

Oware Beginners

1	D. de Toffoli (Italy)	gold
2	R. Mazumder (Bangladesh)	silver
3	T. Lemuel (Dom Rep.)	bronze

Stratego World Team Championship

1	J. van Geffen (Holland)	
	R. Holmus (Holland)	
	G. Franka (Holland)	
	A. Pols (Holland)	gold
2	S. Meyer (Belgium)	
	D. Vekemans (Belgium)	
	K. Daelemans (Belgium)	
	K. de Jong (Belgium)	silver
3	J. Winkler (Germany)	
	D. Krapp (Germany)	
	M. Blockhaus (Germany)	
	M. Ruch (Germany)	bronze

Today's Events

Backgammon Weekendpm
 Bridge Swiss Teams.....am/pm
 Chess MSO Masterspm
 Chess 10-Minute am
 Chess 5-Minute pm
 Chinese Chess Euro Ch am/pm
 Dominoes Straight Pairs...am
 Dominoes 5s and 3s Pairs pm
 Draughts 10x10 Blitz.....pm
 Draughts 8x8 am
 GIPF Olympiad Cham/pm
 Go 19x19 Rapid Play..... am/pm
 Learn and Play New
 Games.....am/pm
 Poker Olympiad Hold 'Em am

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OLYMPIAD NEWS

Supplementary Issue

Sunday 29 August 1999

Mind Sports Olympiad Titles

The following is the list of Mind Sports titles to be awarded at the MSO III prizegiving.

Grandmaster Titles

Adams, Michael ENG (*Chess, Rapidplay and Blitz*)
Ashman, Kevin ENG (*Quiz*)
Awowade, Oluwafemi NIG (*Scrabble*)
Birchall, Bruce ENG (*Creative Thinking*)
Burn, Su ENG (*Bridge, Team*)
Clark, John ENG (*Backgammon*)
Colliar, Elaine SCO (*Mind Mapping*)
Fountain, Robert ENG (*Mental Calculations*)
Gantvarg, Anatoli BLA (*Draughts, 10x10 Blitz*)
Guo, Zuan NED (*Go, 19x19*)
Hebden, Mark ENG (*Chess, Blitz*)
Hodgson, Julian ENG (*Chess, Blitz*)
Husmanns, Klaus GER (*Twist*)
Isaac, Martin ENG (*Intelligence*)
Jones, Anne ENG (*Speed Reading*)
Kaufman, Larry USA (*Shogi*)
King, Phil ENG (*Bridge, Team*)
King, Ronald BAR (*Draughts, 8x8 and 8x8 Blitz*)
Kok, Fred NED (*Lines of Action*)
Lee, Gary ENG (*Poker*)
Nyman, Mark ENG (*Scrabble*)
O'Brien, Dominic ENG (*Memory Skills*)
Sandeman, Michael ENG (*Shogi, Rapidplay*)
Sandquist, Nick ENG (*Bridge, Team*)
Simon, Trevor ANT (*Oware*)
Smith, Paul ENG (*Decamentathlon*)
Suekuni, Makoto JAP (*Othello*)
Tastet, Marc FRA (*Abalone*)
Townsend, Tom ENG (*Bridge, Team*)
Valneris, Guntis LAT (*Draughts, 10x10 Blitz*)
Walker, Angus SCO (*Intelligence*)
Wiersma, Harm NED (*Draughts, 10x10*)
Woo, Wei Cheung FRA (*Chinese Chess*)
Zhang, Shutai CHN (*Go, 13x13 and Go, 19x19*)

International Master Titles

Bell, Andi ENG (*Memory Skills*)
Beyer, Mike NED (*Bridge, Pairs*)
Bodycombe, David ENG (*Creative Thinking*)

Chen, Fa Zuo ENG (*Chinese Chess*)
Cheymol, Eric FRA (*Shogi*)
Coull, Robert ENG (*Mastermind*)
Danek, Vladimir CZE (*Go, 13x13*)
Gold, Mike ENG (*Bridge, Pairs*)
Hassabis, Demis ENG (*Continuo*)
Illeginson, David ENG (*Bridge, Pairs*)
Horlock, Peter ENG (*Entropy*)
Howell, David ENG (*Crosswords*)
Hua, Say Ty FRA (*Chinese Chess*)
Killilea, Tony ENG (*Scrabble*)
Lane, George ENG (*Mental Calculations*)
Loveys, Keith ENG (*Decamentathlon*)
McCarrick, Con IRL (*Draughts, 8x8 Blitz*)
McDowell, Michael ENG (*Chess, Problem Solving*)
McLeod, John ENG (*Skat*)
Miller, George ENG (*Hexdame*)
Pay, Patricia ENG (*Countdown*)
Sakagi, Shoichi JAP (*Go, 19x19*)
Schaefer, Norbert GER (*Skat*)
Simonis, Sandie ENG (*Scrabble*)
Smith, Paul ENG (*Intelligence*)
Springer, Leo NED (*Hexdame*)
Sutherland, Alistair SCO (*Crosswords*)
Tesselaar, Jan NED (*Bridge, Pairs*)
Valneris, Guntis LAT (*Draughts, 10x10*)
Wikman, Ragnar FIN (*Lines of Action*)

Candidate Master Titles

Ajose, Adebawale NIG (*Scrabble*)
Baron, Alexander ENG (*Poker, 7-card stud*)
Bedinovs, Vladimir LAT (*Draughts, 10x10 Blitz*)
Berg, Erik van den NED (*Stratego*)
Cmiel, Thorsten GER (*Chess, 10-minute*)
Danek, Vladimir CZE (*Go 19x19*)
Franka, George NED (*Stratego*)
Hassabis, Demis ENG (*Decamentathlon*)
Jahanbani, Mahmoud IRN (*Backgammon*)
Kirzner, Igor UKR (*Draughts, 10x10 Blitz*)
Miyaoaka, Tamaki JAP (*Othello*)
Pearce, David ENG (*Entropy*)
Tastet, Marc FRA (*Othello*)
Thordsen, Hartmut GER (*Twist*)
Toffoli, Dario de ITA (*Mastermind and Twist*)