

## **Report on the New Straits Times-ASTAR Scrabble Challenge International (NST-ASCI), 2009/2010 Session**

The New Straits Times-ASTAR Scrabble Challenge International (NST-ASCI), 2009/2010 Session was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2010 at the Dewan Tunku Canselor, University of Malaya. This is the fourth consecutive year that this event was being organized by the first residential college of University of Malaya. The theme of the event was "Towards Inspired Minds". A total of 119 participants took part in the competition. 40 participants took part in the Inter-Varsity category while 79 of them took part in the Inter-School category. As compared to last year, there was an increased in international participants. There were 12 international participants from countries like Thailand, Singapore, Philipines, Indonesia and India who took part. All together there were 12 games played during the competition. Out of these 12 games, 8 games were played on the first day and the remaining 4 games were played on the second day. The title sponsor of the competition for this session was the New Straits Times Press (NSTP) and the official advisor of the competition was the Malaysian Scrabble Association (MSA). A total of RM15,350 were given away as prize money.

### **30 January 2010 (Day 1)**

Registration took place starting from 7:30am and a registration counter was set up at the Foyer of the *Dewan Tunku Canselor*. Participants made their registration fee payment during the registration and were given an NST-ASCI t-shirt, event booklet, and some souvenirs. Most participants arrived at around 8:00am. Meanwhile, participants who required the accommodation provided were earlier informed to go straight to the 12 residential college for the checked-in process. After checked-in to their respective rooms, they were transported to the competition venue by bus for the registration process. The registration process took a longer time then expected. The long queue and waiting during the registration was due to the large number of participants and that only one counter was open for registration. Besides, the registration was extended as we waited for a few participants who arrived late.

Participants were lead to the dining area which is the *Bilik Anjung* for breakfast once they are done with registration.

Meanwhile, the organizing committee members set up, checked and made sure that the venue and all equipment were in good condition.

The title sponsor of the event, NSTP setup their booth at the side of the hall for promotion purposes.

Registration for all participants settled at around 9:30am. Shortly after that, the tournament director from the Malaysian Scrabble Association (MSA), Mr Martin Teo gave a short briefing regarding the rules and regulations of the competition. After that, players moved to their respective tables after their names were being called out. Once all players settled down and were at the table they are suppose to compete, the game started.



*During the game.*

The competition was supervised by Mr Martin Teo, the tournament director and assisted by Mr K. Sundraraj, the tournament coordinator. Both of them were from the MSA. There were around 15 runners from the organizing committee who duty at a time to help at the competition area. Word check laptops were set up at 4 strategic places.

The first game ended in around 50 minutes. Score, rankings and playing partner information were pinned up at a score board at the side of the hall after every game. The second game started shortly after the first game ended. At around 12:30pm when the players were finished with the second game, lunch was being served. The lunch break was from 12:30pm to 1:30pm.

There were 10 participants from the Inter-Varsity category withdrew after the first game due to some emergency. All 10 of them were from the Universiti Islam Teknolgi Mara (UiTM), Shah Alam.

After lunch break, the participants continued with the third and fourth game. There was a half-an-hour break after the fourth game before they continued with the fifth and sixth game.

It was around 6:00pm when the sixth game ended. The participants were then served with dinner. After their dinner, participants were allowed to hang around and rest inside the hall until 7:00pm. Then, players continued with the seventh game. The Muslim players were allowed to go for their daily prayers after that. When they returned, the competition was carried on with the final game of the day.

The players were dismissed after the final game at around 9:15pm. Participants who stayed at the 12<sup>th</sup> residential college were told to gather and wait at the Foyer. They were then transported back to their accommodation by bus.

## **31 January 2010 (Day 2)**

All participants arrived at the hall at around 8:30am and had their breakfast. All competition equipments were well setup before 9:00pm. On the second day of the competition, only half of the hall was used for game purposes. This was because rows of chairs were arranged at the front part of the hall as preparation for the closing and prize presentation ceremony.

At around 9:30am, the first game of the day, which was the ninth game started followed by the tenth game. Then, there was a half-an-hour break before they carried on with the eleventh and the last game. The final game ended at around 12:30pm. The players proceeded to the *Bilik Anjung* for lunch. At the mean time, the final results were processed and the hall was prepared for the closing and prize presentation ceremony.

At 2:30pm, participants and guests arrived at the hall for the closing and prize presentation ceremony. Upon entering the hall, participants and guests were being given door gifts and lucky draw numbers.

The VVIPs entered the hall at 3:10pm alongside with the other VIPs. The VVIPs of the event were Dr Woo Chaw Seng, the principal of the first residential college, Mr Wan Abdillah bin Wan Nawawi, the senior manager of corporate communication and event management of the New Straits Times Press and Mr K. Sundraraj, the secretary of the Malaysian Scrabble Association.

Then, the National Anthem, *Negaraku* was being played followed by the University of Malaya song. A short multimedia presentation was then presented. After that, 2 speeches were given by Ms Chong Hui Sze, the director of the organizing committee of NST-ASCI and Dr Woo Chaw Seng, the principal of the first residential college respectively. Immediately after the speech by Dr Woo Chaw Seng, he officiated the closing ceremony.

The event was continued with the prize presentation ceremony. Prizes from the 15<sup>th</sup> place to the 6<sup>th</sup> place of the interschool category were presented by Mr Mohd Zaki Mohd Yaacob, the supervisor of NST-ASCI. Then, Mr Wan Abdillah bin Wan Nawawi was invited to present the top 5 prizes of the Inter-School category. For the Inter-Varsity category, the 12<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> prize were presented by Mr K. Sundraraj followed by Dr Woo Chaw Seng presenting the top 5 prizes. Each of the top three winners of both categories received a trophy, mock cheque, and certificate while the other winners were presented with certificates and mock cheques. The winners of each category and the prize money won were as follows:

<b><u>Inter-School</u></b>		<b><u>Inter-Varsity</u></b>	
1st - Scott Chung	RM3,000	1st - Toh Wei Bin	RM3,500
2nd - Preedee Khongthanasarat	RM1,250	2nd - Thacha Koowirat	RM1,500
3rd - Ker Jen Ho	RM500	3rd - Chaiwat Wuthinitikornkit	RM1,000
4th - Looi Yih Feng	RM400	4th - Liew Kian Boon	RM500
5th - Irfan Murshidi	RM300	5th - Ramaraj Sundraraj	RM350
6th - Muhammad Nasrom	RM215	6th - Cedric Stewart Lewis	RM260
7th - Charnrit Khongthanasarat	RM210	7th - Goutham Jayaraman	RM255
8th - Charas Worapotpisut	RM205	8th - Khoo Beng Way	RM250
9th - Chang Ching Yet	RM200	9th - Sean Chung	RM165
10th - Mohd Aizuddin Sukeri	RM150	10th - Chang Ching Wei	RM160
11th - Mohd Syazwan Aidid	RM145	11th - Christian Oktavius	RM155
12th - Wan Mohd Azril	RM140	12th - Mohd Khairi Zulkarnain	RM150
13th - Muhammad Hazim	RM135		
14th - Cheong Yi Wei	RM130		
15th - William Kang	RM125		

The First Residential College Song, *Pertama* was played at the end of the ceremony. The VVIPs and VIP were invited to the *Bilik Anjung* for some light refreshment. Then, the lucky draw numbers were announced and the lucky ones were told to collect their gifts at the lucky draw counter at the side of the hall. All participants collected their certificate of participation before leaving. Besides, refreshment was distributed to the participants and guests. After the ceremony ended, transportation to the KL Sentral was provided for the participants.

On the whole, the 2 days event was being organized successfully. However, there are still areas that can be improved. We hope that this event was a memorable and beneficial event to all that has participated in different ways. We would also like to thank everyone that has contributed to the success of this event and hope that all of you could continue to support us in the future. Most of all, we hope that this competition can develop into a world famous annual scrabble competition which is much anticipated by scrabble players from around the world.

All the best and good luck to the ASTAR Scrabble Challenge International, 2010/2011 Session!

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2009/2010 Session.