

CIMB Junior Scrabble Circuit (Penang) 2011

State Library, Seberang Jaya, 19/03/2011

Commentary by Cheong Yi Wei



I was elated to be back at the State Library in Butterworth. This year many new enthusiastic faces emerged in the scrabble scene compared to previous years. The U-18 players were all raring to have a day of fun and excitement and, of course, to showcase their scrabble prowess!

Game 1 vs Zulfikri Amir

The first game is usually one of the most dramatic as better players will take the opportunity to accumulate huge spreads. Against Master Zulfikri, I had to patiently guide him step by step as he had no prior experience in the game. I swept through with 3 bingos: *SLEAVER*(realized too late that I could have played SEVERAL on the same spot, but was not challenged off), DELUGES, and SANTERA. On other tables, seasoned scrabblers were no less ruthless towards their unfortunate opponents. Hopefully the newcomers will not be demoralised but instead take a positive attitude towards their losses.

Game 2 vs Choo Zi Wei

At Table 2, I was drawn to play against this promising player from SMJK Jit Sin. On the second move he could have played (E)RUPTING all the way down to the TWS for a dangerously good score. Instead, he attempted *RUPTING* but got challenged off, thinking that erupting was spelt with two 'r's. I was left GAWKING at the missed opportunity, then we each collected solid scores before I laid down OUTBRED to seal the win. At Table 1 my

sister Cheong Yi Hua thrashed her opponent again, which meant that we would play each other in the next round.

Game 3 vs Cheong Yi Hua

We did not want this to happen so soon in the tournament, but it happened anyway. I drew first blood with a simple NEURINE, which she quickly retaliated with RAINOUTS, followed by my TOWAGES. In the middle of the game when we were neck-to-neck, I gambled with *ICKS* for 30 points from a rack of CKLLMS?. As she did not challenge the phony I proceeded with MILLETS for the win.

Game 4 vs Arvindran Rajendran

Arvindran came all the way from Perak and was doing well thus far. I played ORBITI(N)G through his starting move DJIN. After that I drew the blank but had no bingos until the 7th round where I finally made BEETLES. Luckily for me his racks were no better than mine, having combinations like AAEILWO, AAADOOW and BCFGHPT a couple of times. Though he managed SCANNER to reduce the margin, he still complained that he wanted to fire his tile-fairygodmother. He never seems to be satisfied with her....

Game 5 vs Lim Yu Chia

At this point there were 4 players with all wins. After a refreshing lunch we returned to battle. My game against Yu Chia was rather frustrating because the board was very tight and I had a couple of homeless bingos. When my rack showed GREASER there was nowhere to play that either, so I tried *GEARERS* which sounded better than REGARS but was unfortunately a phony. Yu Chia was equally surprised when I informed her about the unchallenged phony.

Game 6 vs Eunice Tang

The remaining two players with all wins. I was fairly lucky to play EQU(AT)ES through two DWS for 64 points which gave me the lead. Two more bingos, FETCHED and LONGERS assured me the crucial win with a rather big spread. At Table 2, Cheong Yi Hua and Choo Zi Wei battled it out and Choo Zi Wei pipped her with a shriek of triumph. With that I knew who my final opponent would be and he would have to beat me by 200 odd in order to snatch first place.



Figure 2- Yi Wei and Zi Wei (right)

Game 7 vs Choo Zi Wei (2nd time)

It was, again, a very closed board and it took awhile before I sneaked a PILSNER into the game. Towards the end I held a blank and the board was completely shut up. As I had a comfortable lead, I decided to create an opening but Zi Wei immediately ARRIVES at it. My final rack: EFOPT?? But neither of the many bingos fit anywhere so I scored 40 odd points and conceded my 7th win. Hooray!

I was overjoyed to be able to defend my title without dropping a game. Arvinran cursed his tile-fairygodmother all the way to 2nd place and Eunice Tang emerged 3rd place, the top-ranked female player in the tournament. Cheong Yi Hua repeated history indeed by achieving the same placing with the same number of wins. The top 10 players will be invited to the CIMB Nationals to be held on 28-29 May with the next 10 players as reserves. The complete list of winners is as follows:

Rank	Player	Wins	Mar
1	Cheong Yi Wei	7	1269
2	Arvinran Rajendran	6	781
3	Eunice Tang Chun Yi	6	293
4	Nicholas Choo	6	79
5	Yap Shan Wei	5.5	273
6	Cheong Yi Hua	5	1492
7	Choo Zi Wei	5	605
8	Ang Qi Xuan	5	439
9	Koay Mei Yuan	5	346
10	Jonson Lim Jia Sheng	5	292

11	Lee Wei Zhe	5	280
12	Lim Yu Chia	5	238
13	Ann-Marie Khor Wen L	5	208
14	Justin Looi Su Min	5	138
15	Sharman Ramesh	5	49
16	Manirethnam Ganesan	5	41
17	Teoh Poh Imm	5	37
18	Alvin Lean Jun Kou	5	10
19	Foong Chee Meng	4.5	665
20	Quah Fu Xiang	4.5	300

With CIMB no longer sponsoring the scrabble circuit, the State Library must be commended and thanked greatly for their generosity in providing the venue, as well as the necessary materials, all for free. Thanks to the State Library and the unwavering dedication of the organizing committee, the tournament has turned out to be yet another success.

We look forward to seeing many more enthusiastic new faces in the scrabble scene!

(As of April 4th, CIMB has agreed verbally to continue sponsorship)