



# OLYMPIAD NEWS

Issue 1

Tuesday 19 August

## LET BATTLE COMMENCE!

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*'Mind Sports were in danger of being an enclave of those who were intellectually superior, but it's everyman. It is egalitarian. Everyone has a brain - so let's use it' - Tony Buzan, The Guardian*



Sir Brian Tovey launched the first ever Mind Sports Olympiad with this rousing cheer, setting in motion the first day of a record-setting 39 international mental events. The Chairman of the MSO mounted the stage of the Royal Festival Hall to the strains of Copeland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, with cameras from Britain to Japan immortalising the inaugural event.

Sir Brian touched on the history of the Royal Festival Hall, built in the context of the Festival of Britain and 'symbolising the recovery of this country after years of war'. The RFH has hosted events dedicated to music, opera, poetry, art festivals, and now this unique gathering of intellectual warriors from around the world. Sir Brian hoped that the Mind Sports Olympiad, the first of its kind anywhere in the world, would act as a symbol of 'new recovery, and a new source of inspiration'.

Chess Grandmaster Raymond Keene opened the event with a ceremonial first move that also demonstrated the desire to make the Olympiad an instant tradition. The winner of this year's chess competition will close the first MSO with a reply to Keene's move. The game will continue, a pair of moves per year, and all of us here look forward to a long, hard struggle in this particular duel.

The attention of the international press and media seems to justify the organisers' enthusiastic lobbying for the attractions of mental competition. Brain expert Tony Buzan and memory master Dominic O'Brien were besieged by interviewers surprisingly eager to direct their attention above

the neck, and convey the message that cerebral striving is something that everyone can - and should - do. A leader in *The Times* captured and carried the urgency of this message: 'Modern interest in sport and physical fitness borders on the obsessional. We worship at the temple of the body. But the exercise of the mind is as essential to our well-being as our morning score of sit-ups. Honing logic, increasing mental agility and expanding memory, it heightens adaptability and staves off premature senility. The ancient world knew this well. It was for *mens sana in corpore sano* that Juvenal prayed.'

### Maximum Result

The first day of the chess event featured the setting of an unbeatable record, though it is more likely to be recorded in Ripley's *Believe It or Not* than the *Guinness Book of Records*. The round one pairing between Nick Faulkes of Bermuda and Alec Aslett ended 1-1, with chief arbiter Stewart Reuben awarding both players a win.

A nervous finish resulted in Aslett convinced he had mated his opponent, while Faulks was equally certain he had won the game on time. Since this conflict was noticed too late to check the evidence at the scene, Reuben judged the most amicable solution would be to award both players the point. This result stands, though the computer pairing program protested vigorously, delaying the second round.



### Age Heresy 1

The English veteran Michael J. Franklin ended the first day of play with a perfect score of 3/3, his final victim being England's newest grandmaster, Aaron Summerscale.

### Early Climax?

Current British co-champions Matthew Sadler and Michael Adams clash tomorrow morning, giving the MSO the honour of acting as the unofficial final tie-break. Michael Adams moved on to 3/3 with a win against the teenage prodigy Luke McShane, currently the world's youngest international master.

A player who will be well worth keeping an eye on is the youngster Thiruchelvam Thirumurugan, the current British Under-8 Champion. In a busy last week at the British Chess Championships in Hove, Thiruchelvam also tied for fifth in the British Under-14, despite being handicapped by an early half-point bye. Leonard Barden, chess correspondent of *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times* and *The Evening Standard*, as well as an experienced observer of junior chess, considers Thiruchelvam to be the second biggest talent of his age, after McShane.

### Do You Want to be on TV?

Do you watch *Countdown*?

Mark Nyman, a former World Scrabble Champion, is competing in the Scrabble tournament at the Mind Sports Olympiad. Mark is also the producer of *Countdown*, the phenomenally successful TV quiz programme which involves a unique test of both numerical and verbal ability.

On Wednesday afternoon Mark is inviting 50 of the participants and spectators at the MSO to take a test which could result in an appearance on *Countdown*. The organisers of the MSO are also offering ten free places in the World Mental Calculations Championship (to be held on Sunday morning) to the highest

scorers in the numerical part of the *Countdown* test.

Anyone interested in entering the *Countdown* competition, which is free of charge, should fill in a form obtainable from the registration desk. The 50 available places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Entries will only be accepted from UK residents.

### Doing the Knowledge

Skandia, the Mind Sports Olympiad sponsors, are well known for their promotion of Intellectual Capital. If you would like to find out more about this revolutionary concept, visit their Knowledge Café on level 3. The café features an Internet link to international brains and games and offers a 'Mind Rest' area to recuperate from mental battle.

The Knowledge Café is open every day during the MSO from 10.00AM to 8.00PM.

### Press Gang

First day media coverage of the Mind Sports Olympiad proved to be a sensational success, with numerous TV crews and national newspaper journalists clamouring for copy. Amongst the many TV and radio stations covering the event are: BBC Breakfast News, Newsroom South East, ITN News, CNN, WTN, London Today, TV Tokyo, Nippon TV, British Satellite News, 7 Network Australia, Channel One, BBC Radio One and BBC World Service. An international team of journalists included reporters from: Reuters, Press Association, National News Agency, Rex Features, Ansa, *La Stampa*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Scotsman*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Times Magazine* and *The Times*.

### Out of this Word

The first day's Scrabble event featured a notable winning margin of 472. This impressive feat was achieved by Harshan

Lamabadusuriya in a game against Peter Horlock which resulted in a score of 574-102. Harshan clearly has an excellent grasp of English, but his mother tongue is Sinhalese!

### The Fibonacci Challenge

Thomas Naylor, the inventor of the two-player game Fibonacci, is marketing his brainchild on level 2. As well as taking on all-comers, Thomas is demonstrating and teaching this exciting new mental challenge to games enthusiasts young and old. Also on offer is the £1,000 Fibonacci Challenge which will be awarded to the first person to prove a forced win from the starting position for either the first player or the second player to move. (A forced win is one where no effective defence exists.)

Fibonacci has been described as 'an outstanding abstract game' (Angus Lavery in *Games & Puzzles Magazine*), and 'an intriguing blend of Chess, Backgammon and Go' (Bill Hartston in *The Independent*). If you would like to try your hand at this new Mind Sport, you are welcome to visit the Fibonacci stand on level 2. Thomas Naylor can also be contacted on 0171 352 2911, or the webpage <http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/town/street/xmx54/>

### Phantom of the Opera

The three-dimensional Sculpture puzzles from Really Useful Group consist of fine layers of die cut cardboard, built from the ground up in the form of Rodin's Kiss, Venus de Milo, the head, clock, globe, pharaoh and the new edition - Darth Vader's head. They are produced using the latest scanning technology.

Every day during the Olympiad a Sculpture challenge will be held. The person who completes the Sculpture challenge in the fastest time will win two tickets to *Phantom of the Opera*. Why not try your luck at The Really Useful Group stand on level 2?

## Interview with Dominic O'Brien

Dominic O'Brien, the current World Memory Champion, is hot favourite to retain his title this year. Here he talks to the *Olympiad News* production team.

### What is your impression of the Mind Sports Olympiad?

It's a big event! It's also rather worrying – I feel as if I am being fattened up for the kill. But I hope to do the killing myself! Of course the Mind Sports Olympiad is an excellent event.

### You're competing in the memory championship, any other events?

No. I am just concentrating on trying to retain the memory title (the competition is on Thursday and Friday) and am directing all my efforts in that direction.

### In the future do you fancy your chances in other events?

Maybe the IQ or perhaps the speed reading. I am not fast at the moment but when I have some spare time I will devote my attention to it.

### What other events interest you?

Mainly the chess and backgammon but I have spent most of my time doing interviews with for example CNN, *Daily Telegraph*, Newsbeat (Radio 1), *The Scotsman*, BBC 1, GMTV and Sky.

### How long have you been preparing for the memory championships?

Six weeks. I have been dealing out lots of cards and flashing lots of numbers up on my computer screen. I have devised my own program to do this.

### What other things have you been doing recently?

I have been writing a memory course, comprising four books and 12 audio tapes, which will be published in the autumn by Linguaphone, the language people. They want to get involved in memory and this should be a good vehicle for them. The series will be called Super Memory Power.

### How do you see the future for memory competitions?

It seems to me that they could become very popular as they are completely egalitarian – something everyone can do. Anyone can scribble numbers down and try to remember them. You don't need a chessboard, or Scrabble set, or backgammon board. If you know the right techniques anyone can do it. By getting involved in this publishing work I am, in a sense, digging my own grave. I eventually see myself perhaps devoting all my time to teaching, becoming the David Leadbetter of memory.

### What did you do before concentrating on memory?

I used to have a job extracting silver from photographic waste. Unfortunately the price of silver plummeted, so I had to do something else.

### And what got you started on memory?

About ten years ago I saw Creighton Carvello on *Record Breakers*, memorising a pack of cards in 2 minutes 59 seconds. I thought this was fascinating and looked into it. It took me three months to beat this time, and it was a further four years before it became a profession for me.

### What are the practical applications?

If anything is good for the mind, it is memory training. Memory training develops all cortical skills and trains the whole of the brain, using both hemispheres. The techniques of using association, imagination and location employ all elements of the brain.

### Are alternative techniques possible?

This is difficult, because the established methods are the most natural (the Greeks were using them 2,000 years ago). You can tinker with the details but the essence of the technique remains the same.

### How has your memory work helped you in other areas?

I am generally more switched on and more focused. My concentration is also much improved. I recently had an EEG

on my brain, taken while I was memorising cards, and it reported that my brain went into the alpha state (7hz), which is the perfect learning state. It is also the state achieved when you meditate. I suppose this is logical, because if you are concentrating hard for 38 seconds you can't afford to start wondering if you've left the cooker on.

The events in the 1997 World Memory Championship are as follows:

1. Memorisation of a 4,000 digit number with one hour allowed.
2. Memorisation of 100 names and faces in 15 minutes.
3. Memorisation of 500 random words in 15 minutes.
4. Memorisation of a 300 digit spoken number, one digit every two seconds. This is scored by sudden death. If you get the second digit wrong – you score 2.
5. Memorisation of as many packs of cards as possible in one hour.
6. Memorisation of a random number, five minutes allowed.
7. Memorisation of images on screen: 40 images are shown and memorised. 80 are then shown again and the previously seen ones then have to be identified.
8. Memorisation of a 1,000 digit binary number in half an hour.
9. Memorisation of a 500 word poem, with punctuation, in 15 minutes.
10. A surprise competition, 20 minutes.
11. Memorisation of one pack of cards, in the fastest time possible. The competition world record is held by Andy Bell (41.37 seconds). Dominic's world record (outside competition) is 38.29 seconds.

*This event takes place on Thursday and Friday – do you fancy your chances against Dominic O'Brien?*

**Day One Leaders and Medals**

**Magic - The Gathering (Final results and medals)**

- 1 S. Dannel (England) gold
- 2 C.J. Tongue (England) silver
- 3 K. Nicholson (Scotland) bronze

**Backgammon Beginners (Final results and medals)**

- 1 R. Biddle (USA) gold
- 2 A. Baron (England) silver
- 3 P. Martin (England) bronze

**Chess (30 minutes) (after three rounds)**

- 1-7 M. Adams (England) 3
- K. Arkell (England)
- M. Franklin (England)
- J. Hodgson (England)
- B. Lalic (Croatia)
- M. Sadler (England)
- G. Wall (England)
- 8-11 J. Emms (England) 2½
- S. Conquest (England)
- V. Hadraba (Czech.)
- S. Williams (England)

**Shogi (after three rounds)**

- 1-2 E. Cheymol (France) 3
- T. Hosking (England)
- 3-6 A. Van Osten (Holland) 2
- M Casters (Belgium)
- S. Lamb (England)
- M. Sandeman (England)
- 7-10 F. Pottier (France) 1
- D. Foster (England)
- D. Hassabis (England)
- L. Blackstock (England)

**Draughts 8x8 round-robin (after three rounds)**

- 1 R. King (Barbados) 5½
- 2 C. McCarrick (Ireland) 4
- 3 D. Kotin (USA) 3½
- 4 B. Long 2½
- 5 D. Harwood (England) 2
- 6 C. Shaffran (Australia) ½
- 7 D. Edwards 0

**Othello (after three rounds)**

- 1-2 Shaman 3
- Svekuni
- 3-10 Cali (France) 2
- Brightwell (England)
- Andriani (France)

- Kitajima (Japan)
- Nakajima (Japan)
- Tastet (France)
- Tucci (Italy)
- Turner (England)
- 11-12 Atkinson (England) 1½
- Parsons (England)

**Bridge Pairs (first session)**

- 1 P. Hasenson/D. Sherman 286.0
- 2 M. Gold/D. Higginson 282.3
- 3 M. Beyer/Tesselaar 251.8
- 4 S. Dannel/P. Shepperson 238.0
- 5 R. Eaton/A. Salam 237.8
- 6 D. Pearce/N. Anderson 230.6
- 7 N. Buxton/K. Manners 225.7
- 8 J. Scott/A. Sandberg 223.9
- 9 M. Courtenay/S. Mohandes 222.1
- 10 T. Townsend/N. Sandquist 213.7
- 11 P. Hecht-Johansen/K. Blakset 210.6
- 12 Bharat/T.J. Nnando 204.4

**Jigsaw Puzzles (after one round)**

- 1 R. Harwood (England) 200 (1hr. 44 mins)
- 2 A. Smith (England) 200 (2hrs. 12 mins)

**Skat (after 72 deals)**

- 1 Dr D. Beisle (Germany) 1654
- 2 H.J. Schindler (Germany) 1519
- 3 N. Schäfer (Germany) 1488
- 4 K. Poggenklas (Germany) 822

**Mind Sports Olympiad Medal Table after Day One**

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
England	1	2	1	4
USA	1	0	0	1
Scotland	0	0	1	1



'Nowadays companies are increasingly aware of the importance of their intellectual assets which - though they may not register on the balance sheet - enhance competitiveness.' - *The Times* editorial, 18 August 1997



**TODAY'S EVENTS**

- Abalone ..... am
- Backgammon..... pm
- Bridge ..... pm
- Chess ..... am
- Chinese Chess ..... pm
- Draughts (8x8)..... am
- Draughts (10x10)..... pm
- Entropy..... pm
- Fanorona ..... pm
- Go (13x13)..... pm
- Go (19x19)..... am
- Hare & Tortoise..... am
- IQ ..... pm
- Japanese Chess..... am
- Jigsaw Puzzles..... am
- Lines of Action ..... am
- Magic-The Gathering. am
- Othello..... pm
- Owari..... pm
- Rummikub..... am
- Scrabble ..... am
- Skat..... am
- Twixt..... pm

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