

## **Learning Report: East Asian Scrabble Championship 2019**

### **Lau Kwun Shing**

I participated in the East Asian Scrabble Championship 2019 in Osaka, Japan on 30 March 2019. The Championship is an annual international Scrabble competition between Team Hong Kong and Team Japan. The Championship was first organised in 2017 to facilitate exchange between Scrabble players in Hong Kong and Japan, the only regions with competitive Scrabble players in east Asia. 5 representatives from Hong Kong and 5 representatives from Japan play 10 games under a double round-robin format in the tournament.

The East Asian Scrabble Championship (“EASC”) is a prestigious annual team-based championship in East Asia, pitting the top players from Hong Kong against the top players from Japan each year. Team-based events have always been accorded with an important and special status in the international Scrabble scene. Besides EASC, there are 3 other team-based championships around the world: the Can-Am Scrabble Challenge (contested by US and Canada), the Trans Tasman (contested by Australia and New Zealand), and the Causeway Challenge (contested by Singapore and Malaysia).

When it comes to Scrabble, what comes to most people’s mind might be a game for families with young children to play on boring Sundays. This is untrue for the competitive scene. There is a global body regulating the rules of the game, with respective national associations organizing tons of competitions every year for thousands of players around the world. All of these systematic tourneys with rules just started in Hong Kong few years ago, but in many parts of the world, people treat the game seriously.

Our team played a total of 50 games of Scrabble in the tournament. We only won 18 of the games in the end and thus came second overall. Nonetheless, participating in this tournament is an amazing and fruitful experience. We got the chance to represent Hong Kong in an international tournament, which is rated by the World English-Language Scrabble Players Association, meaning that it follows the most recent international rules (WESPA Rules Version 3) and international word list (CSW15). We also got the chance to interact with Scrabble players from Japan and make new friends. After the tournament, all players had dinner together, and the next day some of us went sightseeing together. It is amazing to see how people are connected by Scrabble.

As a co-founder of the Hong Kong Scrabble Players Association, the governing body of competitive Scrabble in Hong Kong, I also talked to leaders of the Japan Scrabble Players Association. We talked about plans to continue the exchanges between Scrabble players of the two regions. It is important that we continue to offer opportunities to all Scrabble players to play with each other and learn from each other. I hope that Hong Kong’s Scrabble players will continue to have the chance to play overseas and interact with players from other countries.

To conclude, this meaningful and unforgettable experience of participating in the East Asian Scrabble Championship has not only made me a better player, but also a better Scrabble promoter. I will continue to use my experience to promote Scrabble in Hong Kong and around the World.