ASIA SUDOKU CHAMPIONSHIP 2020

Introduction:

The Asia Sudoku Championship is held annually, and allows the Asians nations to meet and compete against each other. This is purely a Sudoku competition. This is currently the only international Sudoku competition where the Sudokus are different across different age categories. Under 10, Under 12, Under 15 and the general category each have independent competitions running simultaneously. This allows young children to take part and compete with their peers.

In 2020 we decided to host it in India, to spread awareness and reach more children across the country. Logic Masters India (LMI), which is the official representative of India at the World Puzzle Federation (WPF) was receptive of the idea and sent out notifications to individuals who would be interested to organize it. I volunteered and Hyderabad, India was chosen as the venue. A core team was formed and timelines were drawn.

Preparation:

The core of the LMI team resides in Bangalore and shared their experience from 2017 which helped us in organising this ASC. Their inputs were invaluable to us. The organising team was divided into 2 groups, namely, authors and logistics. Ashish Kumar led the team of authors whose responsibility was to get all puzzles ready. I (Rishi Puri) managed the other logistics, which included but was not limited to, identifying and negotiating with the resort, arranging transport, arranging and coordinating the sightseeing tour, assembling and printing of Instruction and Puzzle Booklets.

The first step was to finalize and block the venue. We identified Leonia Holistic Resorts as the venue. It is a 4 star destination resort, away from the hustle of a busy city providing world class amenities. The dates of the event were 20th Jan to 23rd Jan 2020.

In September 2019, we faced a few challenges and Ashish took up the challenge and almost single-handedly managed the authoring department. He was supported by Kumaresan, who created Round 5 for the general category and also by Swaroop Guggilam and Hemant Malani who contributed puzzles for the Under 10 age category. However, it is safe to say that 90% of the puzzles for the competition were created by Ashish Kumar.

The event:

The airport transfers were arranged to pick up the guests from the airport. We had participants coming in from China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Iran and India. Some of the important names attending the event were Tiit Vunk from Estonia(Former World

Champion), Sun Cheran from China, Takuya Sugimoto from Japan along with Rohan Rao(Multiple time Indian National Champion) and Prasanna Seshadri(Former Indian National Champion and WPF Director) of India who are some of the best solvers in the world.

SudokuMania (SM) conducted competitions at school level in Hyderabad to select participants who would represent India at the ASC. The general category team was selected by LMI based on the performances of India seniors at last year's Indian Sudoku Championship.

On 20th January, our guests started arriving. LMI conducted an impromptu competition for the Indian youngsters to finalise the India A teams in the age categories. Since there were no full teams from any country in the Under 12 age category, we decided to scrap the team rounds for the Under 12 category, as we didn't feel it right to award India alone in that age category. So participants in the U12 and U15 categories were clubbed together for the team competition.

Once the junior team selections were completed, we had a Q&A session for all age categories which was followed by the welcome dinner.

On 21st Jan 2020, the competition was supposed to start at 9 AM, but got delayed by 20 minutes. We had ensured there would be sufficient break time and coffee and cookies would be available for the participants between rounds. There were a total of 5 individual rounds and 2 team rounds. All seven rounds were completed on the same day.

On 22nd Jan, we arranged for a sightseeing tour for our guests. Hyderabad being a historical city, there was no better place to visit than the Golkonda Fort which is as old as the city itself. We received favourable reviews from our guests who thoroughly enjoyed the trip.

Results:

We had the award ceremony in the evening. However, like the movies, how can we not have twists and melodramatic moments? 10 minutes before the actual award ceremony began, Luo Siyuan (who was at this point in 3rd place in the general category) walked up to us with his booklet. He had incorrectly been awarded points for a puzzle which he had not solved. We informed him that he will lose his position. He was quite clear and wanted to do the right thing. It is so rare to see such honesty and integrity in the world. During the award ceremony we went ahead and still awarded him a bronze medal, purely for the honesty and integrity shown by him.

Here is a summary of the results:

General Category

Rank	Name	Country	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Score
Unoffical	Tiit Vunk	Estonia	500	640	640	395	562	2737
1	Sun Cheran	China	410	555	540	510	495	2510
2	Rohan Rao	India	420	500	410	520	350	2200
3	Prasanna Seshadri	India	270	475	470	385	500	2100

Under 15 Age Category

Rank	Name	Country	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Score
1	Hu Qianyu	China	560	405	700	800	475	2940
2	Geonwoo Yoon	Korea	150	240	385	633	155	1563
3	Sein Kim	Korea	190	260	180	390	165	1185

Under 12 Age Category

Rank	Name	Country	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Score
1	Yao Xiangwen	China	750	515	285	640	830	3020
2	Jia Mingyu	China	760	650	400	425	760	2995
3	Jeong bin Seo	Korea	650	125	325	255	750	2105

Under 10 Age Category

Rank	Name	Country	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Score
1	Hu Jingyu	China	800	960	890	970	850	4470
2	Puwar Dhruvarajsinh	India	810	790	510	920	599	3629
3	Liu Yuyang	China	800	740	530	632	540	3242

Team Events

Rank	Under 10 Age Category	Under 15 Age Category	General Category
1	China	China	India
2	India	Korea	China
3	Korea	India	Japan

Media Coverage and Sponsors: Though we would have loved to have media coverage for the promotion of the event, unfortunately we could not get this done. Also a few potential sponsors showed interest in being associated with WPF authorised events, but being the lone organiser managing everything, I was too hard pressed for time to finalise a deal or reach out to media outlets. This was a wonderful opportunity for the sudoku community in India to spread the awareness and I accept we failed. Hopefully next time, we will have more hands and legs helping us and we will be able to promote the event the way it is supposed to be.

Note of thanks:

In the end I would like to thank Ashish Kumar and the others who supported him, for the wonderful puzzles they created. Tiit Vunk, 2016 WSC Champion, who was an unofficial participant had only good words to say about the event, which is most satisfying to us as organisers. Special shout out for Anubhav Balodhi who designed the logo. The Volunteers (Anu Ganesh, Harsha, Neetu Chadda, Anup Singhania, Rahul Narayanan, Ravi Kumar, Sriram) were a great help during the event and we would not have been able to achieve the success that we did without them.