Questions

To: All Candidates

From: Naoki Miwa

1. Do you have any specific idea to make memory sports more attractive?

Charifa Souissi: In my opinion, we have to communicate more about the events, the news, even sharing memorisations best practices for the new coming…

In meantime it is a good topic to work on with the whole team

Don Michael Vickers: To make memory sports more attractive we must do a few things:

1. Combat the myth of photographic memory.

   - This is absolute nonsense, however it is a belief held by some members of the public that we are merely gifted individuals. It is important to demonstrate that memory techniques can be used by anyone and we are not just gifted people. I also love fun demonstrations and believe this can only help.

Johannes Mallow: Enhancing Visibility and Engagement

Visibility of Events:

To enhance audience engagement, both online and offline competitions should be made more visible and accessible. I aim to explore ways to present offline events online effectively, considering options like screen shares and individual cameras for participants. Despite some competitors preferring privacy to maintain focus, my experience in France in 2022 showed that a balanced approach, testing innovations with willing participants, can enhance visibility without compromising competitor experience.

Presenting the Competitors:

Building a connection between the audience and competitors is crucial for engaging with the sport. Introducing formats such as interviews and detailed competitor profiles can facilitate this connection, making the sport more relatable and engaging for the audience.

Mohamed Ramadan: -

Naoki Miwa: I have some ideas to improve classical format as follows:

1. Make it a 'show' in the same way with memory league

It would become a fantastic show. Audiences would have fun watching many athletes at a time.
Actually, "Strong Mind software", developed by Mr. Mohamed Ramadan, has already implemented this feature.
I found it very interesting.

2. More 1day events

While current format (10 disciplines totally) is exciting for advanced players, it maybe a bit tough for beginners.
I think 5 or 7 discipline event (like regional open in Germany and discovery option in French) is adequate for beginners. We can hold more such shorter 1day events to attract much potential athletes.

3. Introduce seasonal rankings

In memory league, we have season rankings and I found it very attractive.

Aside of the current ranking system on stats, it would be nice if we can see the ranking ladders among all the competitions per year.

Simon Reinhard:

a) Promoting digital competitions even more. I feel competing on paper is a thing of the past: impractical, slow to mark, error-prone. Digital is the future.

b) Also, I feel that the traditional competition format has some inherent flaws that make it not very attractive to watch amd also potentially less attractive to compete in than modern formats like Memory League:

Spectator-wise, it is of course not attractive because not much is happening. That could be remedied by using our tournament software even more to allow spectators to watch in a more suitable way,

In my opinion, the very harsh penalty rules are something that takes away from the attractivenes of the traditional 10 event format. It is hard to communicate to newcomers why they should have 0 digits scored if they correctly remember 114 of 120 digits, just because those mistakes happened to be distributed evenly in pairs of two over the three rows of 40 digits. It seems random and does not really reflect the effort made. You see that effect in the numbers events in particular, but also in others.

The length of the whole event seems like another reason why the sport has problems to grow. While there are indeed tournaments with many hundred participants, the number of people who take part regularly is not growing to the same extent. The very long events present a hurdle to get into the sport quickly: you need many locations and few people have

the motivation to train such long events often in order to improve. Experimenting with shorter time controls, somewhere between the existing ones and the 1 minute Memory League events, might be interesting.

Taking all this into account, it is clear that the traditional format also has many fans. Therefore, it might make sense to have an open-ended discussion with the memory community on how to remedy potential problems with that format and then, if there are feasible ideas, to have some test event parallel to the traditional format tournament circuit to get feedback from athletes.

c) In general, there is no reason why in the digital age competitions should be fixed to the "everybody does their own thing and collects points" approach. On paper, it is hardly possible differently, but the digital age allows us to try out also duel-based formats even more. Memory League is a great step in that direction and I think we should continue to think about even more ways to have people compete directly against each other. In the past, many ideas have been presented and I think it is time to take a closer look.

d) I think an elephant in the room in the digital age is that people have still to travel to a specific location to take part. Of course, everybody is very reluctant to make changes here because of the fear of cheating, and that is very understandable. Also, the atmosphere of a live on-site event is undeniably great. On the other hand, one could easiyl argue that (if a viable solution to cheating concerns could be found) the sport is limiting itself very much by demanding that people travel all over the world for a tournament that often does not even have enough potential prize money to get back your travel costs - even if you place "in the money" (which usually is only true for a few anyway). It limits the sport to those who have the means and the time to travel and it is always a bit bitter-sweet that the decision to take part in an event involves a deliberate sacrifice on the side of the athlete. Memory League has done a fantastic job in that regard and we have done what we can to contribute there in order to make a world tour tournament circuit with everybody participating from home safe, viable and fun. I think that is something to be proud of and we aim to improve conditions there even more. The main hurdle to implement such a concept for traditional tournament would be to have enough supervisors to check everybody during such long tournament where even a single discipline can take hours. But I firmly believe that just because something looks hard to realize or even impossible, one should always keep an open mind and look for solutions. Things can be done, if necessary, in tiny steps, with tests of different approaches etc... If those solutions could be found and if all problems, in particular with regards to anti-cheating, could be solved, it might bring the sport really into the 21st century: imagine being able to take part from home in a classical tournament against the best in the world. Many more opportunities to take part, more improvement, more motivation.

e) Of course, that is just a slice of all possible options and ideas that we could think about. It is clear to me that no major innovations should happen without a detailed internal discussion and without closely consulting with the memory community. There are always ideas how to improve things, but it needs to be done right and with the proper respect for existing structures and preferences. So, everything described here is to be seen as an invitation to a larger discussion and I would be very happy if people gave their feedback to it.

Sven Wetzel: A physical sport is immediately understood why you should do it.

You get better in your movement, feel better and get acknowledged.

On the other side the remembering of many decks of cards is not understood as useful.

My suggestion would be some form of gamification.

Trough a playful process that also shows what you can achieve with your mind.

2. What is your goal as a board member in this year?

Charifa Souissi: As an arbiter, my goal is having a solid arbiting team with a presence in the different countries hosting memory championships.

Don Michael Vickers: My goal on the board is to promote memory sports throughout the world, specifically North America. As I mentioned previously, combatting the myth of photographic memory is huge. I believe this is especially true in North America where we idolize professional athletes, people see their natural ability but don't recognize their incredible efforts behind the scene.

Johannes Mallow: Streamlining Championship Processes

My objective is to continue our successful strategies while improving the process for announcing, following, and tracking both Online and Offline Championships. It's particularly important for the World Championship to be announced a year in advance, requiring a clear and efficient bidding process. Early announcement of the venue and date will enable better planning for organizers and participants, enhancing the overall championship experience.

Mohamed Ramadan: -

Naoki Miwa: First, I would like to help to organize competitions (both in ML and in classical format) this year.

I am able to contribute as a remote arbiter or a member for solving issues in competitions.

My goal is to help on-site organizers/arbiters and make the competition a success.

Secondly, I would like to conduct PR activities to let more people know memory sports.

As well as promoting it before competitions, we can hold a short event to instruct newcomers how to participate in memory championships.

My goal in this point is to increase the number of newcomers.

Simon Reinhard: My goal would be to see to it that the sport is and remains fun for the whole community: improving things on the Memory League side by supporting the ML team with even more supervisors, improving our software even more, in particular also regarding results collection (Katie Kermode has some great ideas in that regard) and seeing to it that the sport itself in all its aspects remains fair, open and attractive for veterans and newcomers alike. For the latter point, I have also noted some points (there are many more) in my answer to the first question.

Being a part of IAM has always been very motivating. We have been innovators regarding digital tournaments, we have established stable and solid democatic structures with regular elections, and we have a great memory community for whom we want to have many different options to compete. In the end, the sport has brought us all together and is at the core of all we do here.

Sven Wetzel: My goal is to look into the IT / digital aspects.

Reaching subjects from a reliable data input for the statistics homepage till a coordinated way of getting IT related problems solved.

From getting the message, solving it and the way of communicating the findings or instructions – if needed on how to avoid the problem in the future.