

**From: Sylle Arvidieu**

**1. What is your take on there being several memory associations presenting themselves as being global? Where does the IAM fit in?**

IAM will mercilessly crush all those who dare stand in its way! More seriously, I don't see this as a problem. Many other sports and/or communities have more than one international association representing them. I suspect that the WMSC isn't going anywhere because they seem to be firmly implanted in and around China. IAM however seems to have gained the respect and sympathies of most international competitors. Its last (and first) world championship was attended by people from all over the world, while the same can't really be said about its WMSC's counterpart. The association isn't about making money or about promoting its leaders. The path ahead isn't easy, but in the long run, with the help of many enthusiastic volunteers, I suspect that IAM could grow into an impressive success story somewhat akin to the World Cube Association (the WCA is a non-profit run by dedicated volunteers and it's holding friendly and well-attended competitions all over the globe pretty much every single week).

**2. What would be your top two ideas to help broaden the memory competitor base?**

Well I don't think my ideas should be implemented unless they receive the support of most board members and competitors, but here's what I would do if it were solely up to me. More locally I'm already working on making those proposals a reality for the Canadian Mind Sports Association.

1- Make a well-presented website that clearly and somewhat concisely explains step by step everything you need to know about memory techniques. The [artofmemory.com](http://artofmemory.com) website is an awesome resource and I'm glad it exists, but there's just so much info on it that for beginners it can be easy to get lost. The new site would include links to all the best currently existing resources, while also providing a decent not too long synthesis of all the most important concepts and strategies. While competition's strategies would indeed be explained on that new site, the main "hook" for most visitors would be articles and videos about memory techniques and about how they can be useful for studies, for learning a language, for remembering names, the main points of books, the content of a presentation and so on. From my experience convincing people to show up to a memory competition is very difficult. However when the presentation is well done, getting them interested in memory techniques (at least for a little while!) in a more general sense is much, much easier. So basically I'm proposing that we devote some energy promoting memory techniques for their own sake, while secretly hoping that they will serve as a gateway drug to competitions! I wouldn't mind spending a ton of time building such a website, and I wouldn't mind if my name didn't even appear on it. Once the instructional website is ready, I would appeal to crowdfunding (and invest some of my own money) in order to run some Facebook ads promoting it.

2- Absent for now the possibility of changing the school curriculum, our second best option is just to keep spreading the gospel (I don't mean that literally) however one can, locally and in person when possible, through direct or indirect online communications when it's not. Online education efforts and media appearances and so on are important because they can scale more easily, but more direct and local efforts can also be quite powerful. Nobody should be forced to take part in such efforts of course, even among the leadership, but those who want

to should be encouraged and helped as much as possible. Each one of us is a node at the center of a network, and although it's rarely easy or evident, we really have much more influence than we think. If we manage to get just a few people interested, and if a fraction of those people end up having the same effect on others, sooner or later we will reach a large enough mass of people so that the fact that it's possible and not that hard for anyone to perform seemingly amazing memory feats will become common knowledge. And for most people to fully realize that, it's not enough for them to just hear it on tv once, often they have to personally know someone who will show them. Think of how much of a direct and indirect difference was made by people like Khatanbaatar in Mongolia (<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/mongolia-using-mental-athletics-as-a-nation-building-exercise/article31297331/>), Gunther Karsten in Germany, Ed Cooke in the UK and Nelson Dellis in the US. Now imagine what might happen if such dedicated individuals weren't as rare as they currently are, if every school and every city and town had at least one person willing to teach what he or she knows about memory techniques and about learning how to learn. You don't have to be a memory champion to have a positive influence. For example my young friend Sami Rasheed in Toronto recently started a memory club at his school and they have 15-20 members showing up every week. It's possible that memory competitions will never become mainstream, however it's clear to me that so far they have only reached a tiny fraction of their full potential.

3- See my answer to Kelly Knight's question below.

**From: Lynne Kelly**

**3. Some motivation letters referred to the value of memory sports for education and implied a role for IAM extending beyond sports to promoting the broad benefits of memory training. Do you see this as a role for IAM? If so, to what extent?**

Yes I do, although of course it's not the main role of IAM and not every member or even every organizer has to agree with that goal or contribute to it. Many of us just want to have fun perform amazing feats and there's nothing wrong with that, but some of us also see memory training as something that can also enrich the lives of many people, especially students. I see no downsides to promoting both the useful and the just plain fun aspects of memory techniques.

**4. Some motivation letters talked about the high entry level into the sport. Can you point to some successful efforts in that field and / or ideas you have for making it more accessible?**

Last April in Alberta Darren Michalczyk managed to get most of his class of young students to purely voluntarily show up on a Saturday and spend the whole day memorizing meaningless data. At the Canadian Mind Sports Association we are hard at work trying to convince everyone that you don't have to be a super nerd to take part in a memory competition and enjoy it. We're a very new organization and time will tell whether or not we manage to convince a significant number of people. The main ways we will be trying to do that is to:

- Provide free and decent educational resources and promote them.
- Find local partners wherever we can, in educational institutions when possible.
- Have less harsh scoring rules and make it easy and simple for someone to show up with

little or no previous training (more details on this in my answer to the next question).

**From: Kelly Knight**

**5.What is your approach to bringing new members, especially young ones, into the sport?**

First please see my answer to Sylle Arvidieu second question. If he had asked for my “Top 3” ideas, here’s what I would have added. I know that making changes isn’t simple and I won’t insist on this point if it doesn’t receive enough support from other board members and competitors, but I think many of the scoring rules for many disciplines are needlessly harsh and borderline sadistic. Harsh rules are fine for those few people who can get extremely high scores with no mistake or just one or two, but for everyone else it means you’re always one centimetre away from disaster. In many disciplines any beginner who doesn’t recall everything perfectly is likely to get a score of 0 or close to that. I’ve seen more than one skilled competitors make a decent but imperfect performance, receive some ridiculously low score and then never show up again. I wish that people just wouldn’t care too much about their scores, but sadly that’s often not how human psychology works. I think the rules should be tweaked for some disciplines like numbers and cards and words. Another alternative would be to have different scoring rules for kids and to have adult competitors choose to sign up for either the “regular” or “advanced” section (or the “beginner” and “regular” section). The harsh rules would then only be kept for the “advanced” section. I also think non-frontrunners should have the option to keep their name and/or scores private if they choose to. Another idea that could be worth considering would be to have your lowest scoring discipline to not be counted at all, so it wouldn’t matter if you’re terrible at names for example. For the “regular” or “beginner” section (depending on how we choose to call it), we could even choose to only consider your say top 4 or top 5 scoring disciplines, so you wouldn’t have to train for hour numbers if you don’t want to.

**From: Florian Minges**

**6.What is your opinion on the ongoing digitalisation of memory sports? Yay or Nay? Why?**

I currently have no strong opinion on this subject. I kind of like using paper, but digitalization may very well be the way to go. If it helps and if members like it that way, I’m all for it. And if WMC 2024 could be held simultaneously in 3 or 4 or 5 different countries around the globe thanks to the magic of the Internet, that would be awesome.

**7.The IAM is currently looking for a host for the IAM World Memory Championship 2019. The DL for applications is the 7th of December (so before your answers to these questions will be published). What do you think about the feasibility of organising an IAM World Memory Championship in your country, either next year or sometime in the future? What are the biggest obstacles? Is there anything that could be done or changed to make it easier / more convenient in order for someone to host it in your country?**

While a WMC in Canada would be fun, I think there are better choices with more potential for attracting people and attention. At some point in the future I would like to see one happen in

the US. How about New York or San Francisco? Or if a large enough community can eventually develop in Latin America, how about Buenos Aires, Bogota, San Jose or a smaller city like Guanajuato or San Cristobal de las Casas? Of course that's all daydreaming for now, a WMC can and should only happen in places where there already is at least a small number of organizers and volunteers.

**8. The memory sports community has many dedicated volunteers who are contributing to it in many different ways, both internationally and nationally. If you could highlight one such person today (who is not also running for the IAM International Board right now), who would it be, and why?**

I'm really impressed with what Darren Michalczuk has managed to accomplish with all his very young students in Westlock Alberta. His classes (not just one, but pretty much all of the groups he has taught to over the years) are the living proof that the use of advanced memory techniques doesn't have to be limited to a tiny minority of super nerds. Same goes for this already mentioned inspiring example in Mongolia:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/mongolia-using-mental-athletics-as-a-nation-building-exercise/article31297331/> Internationally, I'm very grateful for everything that Florian Dellé of <http://memory-sports.com/> and <https://thinkniht.com/> has done. And I'm sure there are many other individuals that I've never heard about but who have managed to make a huge difference.

**From: Anonymous**

**9. How do you consider your own potential contribution to the board to be unique, compared to the other candidates?**

Me and Braden Adams have been working together for a few months. I think we make a great team and I hope we both get elected. We're both friendly, hardworking and reasonable. We can get along with everyone, respectfully debate and eventually either reach an acceptable compromise or agree to disagree. We can listen to people with an open mind and we have no problem changing our position when we realize we were mistaken about something.