

2020 IAM Board Election Answers - Anastasia Woolmer

Questions for all candidates from Sylvain Arvidieu:

What can be done and is it in your opinion necessary to make it possible for athletes from different continents to compete together? It happens too seldom at the moment, possibly because of travel costs and lack of incentives (financial or others). What do you think?

Having athletes from different continents compete together strengthens the sport and makes it global, and is definitely desirable. Additional financial incentives are one way to achieve attendance at events, as is increased media attention for the athletes involved (which would further increase financial backing).

As electronic competitions advance, and the IAM presence becomes established in more countries, a real possibility is simultaneous events across many countries. This would also keep costs low, improve transparency of results and international attendance high.

Is it the IAM's goal to help spread the memory techniques to the masses (i.e. making resources available for free, I guess) ? How is it then possible to coexist and collaborate with professional memory trainers?

Most memory athletes would like to spread memory techniques to the masses as they see it as a valuable skill for all, and the IAM certainly helps facilitate this.

In any sport or hobby where there is a skill to attain there will be professional coaches that assist enthusiasts to become better, and are paid for their time and expertise.

It all depends on **why** the memory trainer is training others.

If the underlying motivation of the coach/organisation is to spread memory techniques (while being compensated for their time and effort) a conflict does not exist and the coaching supports spreading the techniques.

However, there is a conflict of interest if the underlying reason for the professional trainer or group is principally monetary rather than to share the skill with others.

Should the current 10-event formats be kept? Why?

While the current format seems workable and fair, change or review of change is positive for any sport to keep it moving forward. With this in mind the current 10 discipline format has its

place, but possible change in consultation with athletes is positive. Regarding the method of delivery of disciplines, increased electronification seems a necessary and inevitable future requirement.

Because memory athletes train themselves with a long lead time, adequate preparation time is needed in the medium term prior to implementing any changes. Training software changes to support any discipline change may also be necessary.

Questions for all candidates from Boris Konrad:

How would you like to see the IAM interact with other memory sports organizations in the (near) future?

In an ideal world all memory sports organisations would support each other and the athletes to grow memory sports globally.

I would like to see closer unions between organizations and to see the IAM continue on its current objective of welcoming all memory athletes openly to their events, without restrictions.

I hope over time this would strengthen interactions between memory sports organisations that also promote the interests of memory athletes.

Is it a goal for you that memory sports gets an official sport?

Yes, as a long term objective. This goal is supported by open, rigorous and fair events and rules.

How will you help making memory sports more appealing for beginners and media?

I believe that electronic competitions make memory sports more modern and a better spectator sport, which I witnessed when I attended a Memory League competition in Japan. Realtime review and commentary makes a competition far more media accessible and shareable to a wide audience.

It is also more in line with how athletes train and therefore appealing to younger generations.

I would also like to see more free resources available through the IAM, such as comprehensive education blogs and video tutorials.

Question for Oceania candidates from Akash Rupela:

There was no IAM competition in Oceania in 2019. Do you have some ideas on how to bring this back in 2020?

There are several memory athletes that have expressed the desire to have a competition soon in Australia. In 2020 I hope to facilitate an IAM competition in Australia, with the support of other memory athletes and the IAM.

Questions for all candidates from Florian Minges:

In your opinion, what are the two most important things the IAM has to work on in the next two years (so basically during your mandate, if you should get elected)?

Increase the number of IAM national memory competitions across the world.

To support this, increase the IAM presence and representation into more countries.

Also to support this, increase / encourage the use of electronically conducted components of competitions.

What is something that the IAM could learn from AMSA/GAMA (ie what is something they are doing very well)?

I like the growth mindset that brings about the potential introduction of new disciplines.

There are many things and projects that volunteers within the IAM need to work on to operate, manage and develop the organisation. If you had to pick one thing among all of these that you were the most passionate about, which one would it be? (For example: maintaining the website/database, developing the competition software, working on an arbiting certification system, establishing national organisations, developing new competition formats etc)

My most passionate area is to promote memory sports through Public Relations for the IAM, and establishing free educational resources.

This is kind of an expansion on a question by Sylvain: AMSA/GAMA have developed and proposed some new potential memory disciplines (spoken flash numbers, fantasy map, flight plan). At the same time, we also have the Memory League format. How do you think the IAM should go about integrating new disciplines and competition formats into memory sports, or is that something that you think should be avoided?

The forward expansion and growth of memory sports is supported through discussion of potential new disciplines and formats. This should be in conjunction with open debate and feedback from the community, support for training for athletes. Any changes should be introduced in a measured fashion.

Electronic training tools for new disciplines are also a likely necessary support.

I believe that further moves towards increased electronic components in competitions is vital to keep the sport modern and relevant, both in the traditional disciplines and in any adaptations of them.

Same question as last year: The IAM is currently looking for a host for the next World Memory Championship (application deadline is 15th of January, 2020). What do you think about the feasibility of organising a 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 an exciting destination, it is probably not feasible in Australia due to the distance for many athletes.

Same question as last year: 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 will highlight with the same person I nominated last year, Simon Orton.

He is a committed Australian memory athlete and active advocate who is deeply involved in the development and use of memory software, including as a co-founder of Memory League and Art of Memory software developer.