



ASIAN CUP OUTCOME. Japan's Azusa Iwashimizu (#3) scores a goal during the AFC Women's Asian Cup final soccer match at Thong Nhat Stadium in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The goal gave Japan a 1-0 win over defending champion Australia. (AP Photo/Achmad Ibrahim)

Japan beats Australia in Women's Asian Cup final

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam (AP) — Azusa Iwashimizu's 27th-minute goal gave Japan a 1-0 win over defending champion Australia in the final of the Women's Asian Cup.

Third-ranked Japan won its maiden title after four previous final appearances, becoming the first country to hold both the Asian and World Cup titles at the same time.

Earlier, in the match for third place, striker Li Yang struck in the dying minutes to help eight-time champion China beat South Korea 2-1.

Park Eun-sun's own goal in the second minute put China ahead before Yoo Young-ah restored parity for South Korea.

All four semifinalists as well as fifth-place Thailand have qualified for next year's Women's World Cup in Canada.

Two boys share spelling bee title

OXON HILL, Md. (AP) — The dreaded bell that signals a misspelled word tolled for each of the last two spellers in the Scripps National Spelling Bee late last month. But in an exhilarating twist, it wasn't the end for either of them.

Sriram Hathwar of Painted Post, New York, and Ansun Sujoe of Fort Worth, Texas, got back-to-back words wrong, each giving a reprieve to the other. Neither stumbled again, and a dozen words later, they ended up as co-champions of the bee for the first time in 52 years.

"The competition was against the dictionary, not against each other," Sriram said after both were showered with confetti onstage. "I'm happy to share this trophy with him."

Ansun said afterward that he knew the word that Sriram got wrong: "corpsbruder," a close comrade. Ditto for 14-year-old Sriram, who said he was familiar with "antigropelos," which means waterproof leggings. That word dashed 13-year-old Ansun's chance for an upset victory.

After their misses, the boys staged a riveting duel, plowing through the toughest words the bee had to offer: Skandhas. Hyblaeon. Feijoada. Augenphilologie. Sdrucciola. Holluschick. Thyemelici. Paixtle. Encaenia. Terreplein.

Finally, only four of the 25 championship words remained. Two had to be kept in reserve so that the bee wouldn't end with an incorrect spelling.

Sriram's last word was stichomythia, a theatrical term for dialogue representing an altercation and



SENSATIONAL SPELLERS. Ansun Sujoe, 13, of Fort Worth, Texas, left, and Sriram Hathwar, 14, of Painted Post, New York, shake hands after being named co-champions of the National Spelling Bee in Oxon Hill, Maryland. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

delivered in alternating lines.

Sriram rarely appeared flustered, nodding confidently when he got a word he knew. Ansun was more nervous and demonstrative, no more so than on the word that gave him a share of the title: "feuilleton," the features section of a European newspaper or magazine.

Upon hearing the word, Ansun opened his mouth wide, grimaced, and rolled his eyes. As the stage lights turned red, signalling that he had 30 seconds left, he said, "Ah, whatever!" before beginning to spell.

They became the fourth co-champions in the bee's 89-year history and the first since 1962. Although they hoisted a single trophy together onstage, each will get one to take home, and each gets the champion's haul of more than \$33,000 in cash and prizes.

In addition to their shared love of spelling, both boys play double-reeded instruments: oboe for Sriram,

bassoon for Ansun, who also plays piano and guitar and has perfect pitch. Sriram's parents are both physicians, and he hopes to become an ophthalmologist.

Both champions are also Indian American. The past eight winners and 13 of the past 17 have been of Indian descent, a run that began in 1999 after Nupur Lala's victory, which was later featured in the documentary *Spellbound*.

Gokul Venkatachalam of Chesterfield, Missouri finished third, and Ashwin Veeramani of North Royalton, Ohio was fourth.

With only one previous appearance in the bee, Ansun said he looked up to Sriram.

"I'd seen him in the finals, and I wanted to be like that," he said.

Said Sriram: "I guess a veteran and, let's say a rookie, it's pretty cool."

Associated Press writer Joseph White contributed to this report.

Standup paddleboarding picks up steam

By John Marshall
AP Sports Writer

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. — Merrill Mann had always been intrigued when she saw people on standup paddleboards tooling around on area lakes, so when she found a coupon for a rental, she decided to give it a try.

Now she's hooked. "I loved it the first time I tried it," said Mann, who rides on lakes near her home in Avon. "Anything with the outdoors, being on the water, it's very serene yet you're getting a workout. You're exercising and out in the sun."

Standup paddleboarding has exploded in popularity the past few years. A sort of combination between surfing and kayaking, it has become a hit on oceans, lakes, and rivers across the United States and beyond.

According to a 2013 Outdoor Foundation recreation report, standup paddleboarding was the most popular outdoor activity for first-time participants, garnering 56 percent of the newbies among all outdoor activities last year.

The appeal is simple: It's relatively easy, available to a wide range of ages, and can be done just about anywhere there's a body of water.

"I think the reason it's blowing up so much is there's no limitations," said RJ Murray, co-owner of Three Brothers Boards in Daytona Beach, Florida. "As long as you have a body of water, it doesn't matter where you are. People who lived away from the ocean and wanted to be in that environment never really had that option before paddleboarding."

Standup paddleboarding is not new. The ancient Hawaiians were believed to use it as transportation between islands and for fishing, while fishermen from Asia to South America have used forms of standup paddleboarding while working



their catch.

The recent rise in popularity started with surfers and carried on with tourists in beach towns who then took the idea back to where they live.

Now, standup paddleboarders can be found cruising along the shore on just about every coast, across mountain lakes, racing down rivers, and even participating in group yoga classes atop their boards.

"When I first heard people wanted to do yoga classes on paddleboards, I was like, 'You've got to be kidding me,'" said Murray, who started Three Brothers with his brother Justin in 2009. (A third brother, Jason, died earlier that year.) "People are getting really creative with it. I can't imagine where it will be four years from now."

The equipment certainly has changed. Little more than modified surfboards just a few years ago, boards now are specifically designed for standup paddling, averaging 10 to 12 feet in length and contoured for easy balancing. Ocean boards are typically made of the same

materials as surfboards, while boards used on lakes and rivers can be made of inflatable material used for river rafts or injected plastic like kayaks.

The optimal size for the paddle is 8 to 10 inches longer than the paddler, to give them leverage.

"The boards have gotten more complex, the competition stiffer," Murray said. "In four years, the sport has done a 180."

The changes have added to the popularity.

Because the boards have become so sturdy, standup paddleboarding has become a sport nearly anyone can handle, not just surfers or swimmers.

Set up with the right size board and calm water conditions, most first-timers only

EASY EXERCISE. James Birney is seen on a family outing using a durable wood paddleboard during a paddling adventure in the Mobbly Bayou Preserve in Oldsmar, Florida. A sort of combination between surfing and kayaking, standup paddling has exploded in popularity the past few years. It's relatively easy and can be done just about anywhere there's water. (AP Photo/Three Brothers Boards, James Birney)

need about 10 minutes to feel comfortable and start paddling away. It gets a bit more difficult when there are waves or a current, but remains accessible to people from seven to 77, according to Murray.

"You pretty much get up at your own pace," said Mary Hoffius, who lives in Breckenridge and has been standup paddleboarding for three years. "You start off on your knees and you stand up. The boards are really sturdy now. It's actually hard to fall off on a still body of water. It took me no time."

Like any sport, standup paddleboarders have picked up the pace within the sport, pushing the boundaries to new, adrenaline-fuelling levels.

Races have cropped up across the country. Paddlers also have joined surfers in hanging 10, using their paddles for added speed while riding the waves into shore.

But most riders do it just for the enjoyment of being out on the water and in the sun, enjoying the scenery while getting a decent upper-body and core workout. "It's not like you're racing down the side of a mountain on a mountain bike and all the danger that goes along with that, so it's a more low-key activity," Mann said.

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