

Knowledge is the new cool sport

EDITORIAL

By **JASMIN ZHOU, TIM ROCK**
and **MAX CRISAFULLI**

WHEN you hear the word sport, most people think of a physical activity with two teams or two people competing against each other in a game involving a lot of grunting, jumping and running.

But more and more sports are emerging that aren't physical.

Organised "Battles of the Mind" such as the Kids' Literature Quiz, the television show *It's Academic*, Maths Olympiads, spelling bees, debates, and public speaking competitions are happening and kids have a chance to represent their schools and countries.

Knowledge is fast becoming not only a sport but the new cool sport.

The world of knowledge is vast – there are so many things to explore and ways to gain this knowledge that are not limited to a gymnasium, swimming pool or sporting field.

To many students, learning new things is what school is all about. And having the opportunity to compete against others in knowledge sports is just as exciting and rewarding as playing cricket or hockey.

In the past smart kids were thought of as nerds or geeks and the TV and movie industry did little to dispel this myth.

Nearly all movies portrayed jocks and cheerleaders as cool, while the smart kids were wimpy

looking, wore glasses, had their heads in a book and were forever getting beaten up.

But now this has changed. Knowledge is cool.

Being smart and participating in knowledge-based extra-curricular activities, such as the *Newcastle Herald* School Newspaper Competition, opens more paths to children as they grow older and begin making decisions about their future.

But yes, physical sports are important too.

We all know the benefits of exercise and keeping our bodies fit.

Keeping our brains and minds fit and healthy and working to their full capacity is just as important.

Both knowledge sports and physical sports allow students to test their brain power, reasoning ability, skills and strengths.

They are both enjoyable, both beneficial, and both exciting to watch.

And for those who still believe that knowledge is not a sport, think about this: just as athletes prepare their bodies physically through strict exercise regimes, energy diets and training sessions, children involved in knowledge sports do the same.

They learn facts, eat the right foods and exercise before events to get blood pumping to their brains.

So kids, if mum and dad want you to sign up for soccer or netball and you'd rather spend your day reading, or studying, let them know knowledge really is the new sport.



BRAIN STRAIN: Harriet Brindley, Campbell Starrett and Charan Musuwadi prepare for *It's Academic*.
Picture: Arthy Mukunthan

TV challenge all academic

By **MAC GILLIGAN**

MANY people dream of starring on television. For 17 students of New Lambton Public School this dream is about to be fulfilled.

It's Academic is a quiz show for primary children, presented by Simon Reeve on Channel 7.

Simon leads the way through questions on English, mathematics, science, popular culture and general knowledge. Each game involves a team of three students from three schools. Teams who make the grand final are in the running for computers and valuable teaching equipment for their school.

Elizabeth Beck, a teacher at New Lambton, put together a team of

students for the show.

"After the excitement of seeing my Kids' Literature Quiz Team make it to the Australian final in Canberra earlier this year – the buzzers and flashing lights, the nail-biting finish as we played a tie break for second place – I wanted more," she said.

"I knew I had a very clever group of students who were up to these types of challenges. I simply sent an inquiry email to the *It's Academic* website, and the next thing I knew we were in!"

The team filmed their heats in the Sydney Channel 7 studios recently.

While they cannot reveal any details until the show airs, if you see more smiles than usual at the school, you'll know why.

Students to play hockey for country

By **TEYJAH ABELL**

NEW Lambton Public School year 6 student Teyjah Abell has taken her first step towards emulating the success of her club mate Mariah Williams, who has represented Australia in the Hockeyroos at age 17.

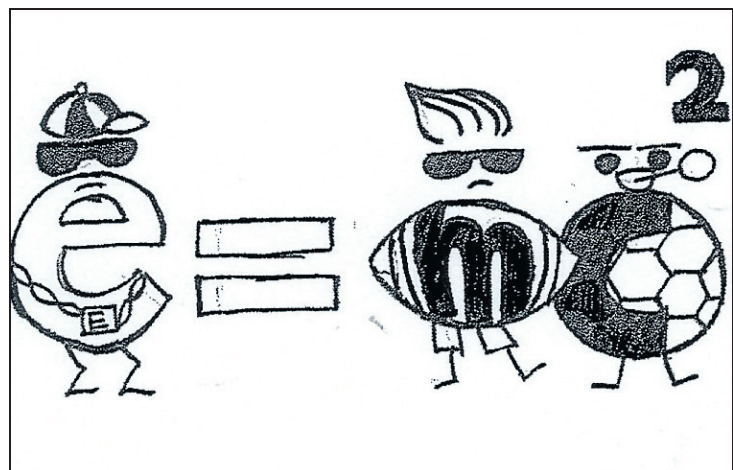
After attending the recent under-13s state hockey championships, Teyjah had her fingers crossed to be selected in the state squad of 45 players. Along with teammate Neve Dibley, she gained selection.

A week later, they both trialled for nine hours straight and were both selected in the NSW under-13s state Blues hockey team. "I was so thrilled for both myself and Neve that I think I nearly knocked her over," Teyjah said.

The team will travel to Sawtell to compete against development teams from Queensland and the ACT in a five-day carnival. Being one of the younger members, Teyjah hopes the experience will help her push for higher honours in the same age group next year.

Neve said: "I am excited to be playing with Teyjah because she is a great person on and off the hockey field, and I think she will add to the experience."

Teyjah has represented her school in many different sports. Newcastle rep coach Josh Skene has coached both girls and was ecstatic about their selection.



Cartoon: Amy Tan

Fig tree removal plans not to be conducted

By **AMY TAN** and
HARRIET BRINDLEY

THE removal of the Laman Street fig trees, and more recently those in Melville Road, Broadmeadow, has raised the question whether the Regent Park fig trees might be next.

Corey Andrews, Newcastle Council's greening co-ordinator, confirmed these rumours were false.

"Trees are not removed based on their species or because similar species have been removed else-

where," Mr Andrews said.

He said any removed tree was the subject of many stages of discussion and planning.

"Removal of any tree, regardless of the species, is based on assessment by an arborist in line with council policy and industry best practice."

Instead of more chopping, Mr Andrews hinted there will be more planting. He said that there were more than 100,000 street trees across the city with potential planting of 30,000 more over the next 20 years.



SAFE SHADE: Flynn Lanz and Abby Manning admire the Regent Park figs.
Picture: Kitty Bax

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