

Winter Olympics kick off in Italy; the groundhog sees his shadow; SuperBowl for blind people; and helping your parents fight fake news.

Hello and welcome to Squiz Kids Today ... your fresh take on what's happening in the world around you.

I'm Bryce Corbett

It's Thursday, February 5 -

In Squiz Kids Today ... Winter Olympics kick off in Italy; the groundhog sees his shadow; SuperBowl for blind people; and helping your parents fight fake news.

That's what's making news, kids' style ...

THE LOWDOWN

Time to strap your skates on people - and wrap yourselves in your finest winter woolies - as the the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games kick off in Italy.

Over the next two weeks - some 3,000 athletes from an incredible 90 different countries will compete in sports as varied as ice hockey, curling, snowboarding and skeleton - battling it out for the 116 gold medals on offer.

And while only 116 of them will win a gold medal - every single one of the 3,000 taking part will have the privilege of being able to say they were good enough at their chosen sport to take part in an Olympic or Paralympic competition – which is an achievement in and of itself.

The opening ceremony takes place Friday night in Italy in the city of Milan .. so for any listeners in Australia - that means an early wake up Saturday morning if you want to see all the athletes marching under their flags - as well as pop star Mariah Carey performing. Events will takes place in both the city of Milan - and also up in the Dolomite mountains at a place called Cortina.

And who are the all-important mascots of these Winter Olympics? That would be Tina and Milo ... a pair of bouncy, teenage, brother-and-sister stoats - which is a kind of a weasel - native to Italy.

Tina is the Olympics mascot, and Milo is the Paralympics mascot - with part of his back story being that he was born without a paw but learned to walk with the help of his tail.

And because we like to make sure you're across everything big that's happening in the world - we've created a Squiz Kids Shortcut to the Winter Olympics which we published earlier this week ... go back in this podcast feed or dive onto our website if you missed it and are keen to wrap your ears around it.

SPIN THE GLOBE

Each day we give the world globe a spin and find a news story from wherever it stops. And today we've landed in Pennsylvania - in the United States - where a furry creature of another kind has predicted winter there will last six more weeks after he emerged from his burrow and saw his own shadow.

You might remember we talked on Monday about Punxsatawny Phil - the groundhog who each year makes a prediction on whether spring will come early - or whether the cold will persist. And it was disappointment for many when Phil decreed the already freezing temperatures in that part of the world were set to continue for a little while yet.

Decreed is a fancy word for making an announcement about something ..

Of course: I've watched video of the whole thing - and it honestly looks like Phil the groundhog would rather be anywhere else than in front of a huge crowd and TV cameras – so - you know - take Phil's prediction with a grain of salt, I'd say ...

SPORT TIME

If you're an NFL fan - you will already know that the Super Bowl - the grand finale of the NFL competition in the United States - happens this coming weekend.

This year, the Seattle Seahawks will battle it out against the New England Patriots.

And thanks to some clever science: for the first time in Super Bowl history - NFL fans who are blind will be able to closely follow all the action on the field.

A brand new device will be tested allowing blind people to ‘feel’ the action on the football field via a device like a laptop which is like a miniature version of the field and that vibrates to indicate where on the field the ball is - and what plays the teams are using.

Right now: for blind people to enjoy their favourite sport they rely on their ears - and that mean commentators talking through the action. Now they’ll be able to feel the action as well. How clever.

NEWSHOUNDS

Every Thursday, Squiz-E the Newshound pops his head into Squiz Kids HQ to report back on fishy things he’s sniffed out on the internet ... and today he’s stumbled upon a couple of Facebook posts which should remind all good Newshounds how important it is to help your parents and grandparents to stop falling victim to fake news stories ..

Hands up how many of you often here the adults in their life talk about something they’ve read on Facebook - and believe it as fact without checking.

Yep .. me too. My parents do it all the time.

In the past week alone, there have been AI-generated images of a landslide in New Zealand and fake stories about dingoes on Fraser Island ... and in both instances, the photos are either completely fake or the information in the posts is what’s known as engagement bait ... a form of click bait that gets the user to click on a link that takes them to a website from which the scammers make money.

It’s not real news, people. The information is made up. And luckily, if you’re a Newshound, you know how important it is for us all to STOP, THINK and CHECK before believing everything we see online.

That’s the main lesson we learn in the Newshounds program. And because our parents and grandparents haven’t learned those skills yet - there’s a really important role we can play to stop our parents or grandparents from falling victim to this fake news.

So consider yourselves on a mission .. next time you hear nan or pop or mum or dad start a sentence with “I saw on my Facebook feed” – tell them that Squiz-E always tells us to check if a story is real before believing it.

And teachers/parents - if your kids have not yet been exposed to Squiz Kids very own, totally free digital literacy classroom program, Newshounds - then hop to it ... you can easily sign up for a free account via our website - squizkids.com.au

I know - the generosity is just too much ...

THE S'QUIZ

This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening ...

1. Name one of the two teams competing in this year's Super Bowl?
2. Name one of the two Italian cities that will host the Winter Olympics?
3. What sort of animal are this year's 2026 Winter and Paralympic mascots?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Thursday, February 5 ... birthdays for soccer legend Cristiano Ronaldo and Queen Mary of Denmark ... plus ... drum roll please .. today is World Nutella Day ... this could possibly be my favourite day of the year ... excuse me while I go and eat a jar and disappear into a Nutella coma ...

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today ... Charlie from Rhodes, Kyan from Brisbane, Ishan from Sydney and Milly from Heidelberg West.

A belated shoutout goes to... Felix from Ringwood North.

Classroom shoutouts go to... Stage 2 Workers with Miss Woods and Mrs Wallace at Dubbo North Public School and 6CR with Mrs Crooks at Yarrabilba State School.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Seattle Seahawks or New England Patriots
2. Milan or Cortina
3. Stoats ... a kind of weasel

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or, if you're after a classroom shout out- drop us a line at squizkids@thesquiz.com.au or fill out the form on our website.

Well - that's all we have time for. Thanks for listening to Squiz Kids Today - we'll be back again tomorrow

In the meantime ... get out there and have a most excellent day ... over and out.