

## **Rugby league's brain-safety bid; Aussie Pizza King cooks the competition; a ten-year-old chicken champ; and blue sunsets on Mars?**

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

I'm - Christie Kijurina

It's Thursday, April 23

In Squiz Kids Today ... Rugby league's brain-safety bid; Aussie Pizza King cooks the competition; a ten-year-old chicken champ; and blue sunsets on Mars?

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

### ***THE LOWDOWN***

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How much tackling is too much? That's the question being asked in one of Australia's biggest sports. The National Rugby League or NRL has announced new rules to make training safer for players, by limiting how much full-contact tackling teams can do each week. For the first time, clubs now have strict caps on contact training. During the season, men's teams will be limited to around 100 minutes a week, and women's teams to about 85 minutes.

Why? Because scientists are increasingly concerned about the impact of repeated knocks to the head, even smaller ones, on the brain over time. Researchers studying the brain, in a field called neuroscience, say these impacts can build up and lead to serious conditions like Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy or CTE. That's a disease linked to memory loss, mood changes, and other long-term health issues. Not good!

And this isn't just happening in rugby league. Organisations like World Rugby and the National Football League in the United States have already brought in similar limits on

contact training to reduce impacts to the brain. Back here in Australia, the Australian Football League or AFL hasn't introduced restrictions just yet — but is looking into it.

Experts say the NRL's move is a big step forward, but some believe it doesn't go far enough, especially when it comes to protecting junior players.

Because here's what we now know: a concussion isn't just a bump on the head, it's an actual brain injury. That's why leagues, coaches, and parents are all working out how to strike the right balance... keeping the game strong and competitive, while making it safer for everyone who plays it.

## ***SPIN THE GLOBE***

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Each day we give the world globe a spin and find a news story from wherever it stops... and today we've landed in Parma, in Italy, where things have been heating up... inside some very serious pizza ovens. The World Pizza Championships, basically the Pizza Olympics, have just wrapped up, bringing together the best pizza makers from all over the world.

And flying the flag for Australia? A Melbourne legend known as "Mr Pizza", Johnny Di Francesco. More than a decade after being crowned the best in the world, he's made a comeback... and landed fifth place globally for 2026.

Now, this isn't just about making a tasty pizza. Competitors go head-to-head in all kinds of events — from perfectly traditional Neapolitan pizzas, to gluten-free creations, to freestyle rounds where chefs spin and flip dough through the air. Johnny's secret? Sticking to his roots. His family comes from Naples — the birthplace of pizza — and he's been perfecting his craft since he was just 12 years old.

Turns out, pizza is not just dinner... it's a sport.

## ***SQUIZ KIDS SALUTES***

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Ever tried training a chicken? Now imagine training one so well... it helps you win at the biggest agricultural show in the country...

10-year-old Sophie Watson lives near Coonabarabran, out west of Tamworth in NSW... and she and her chickens have taken out Champion and Reserve Champion titles at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, beating some of Australia's top adult breeders.

It's already her third year showing chickens... but her first ever trip to the Royal Easter Show, and she made it count.

Sophie raises Large Australian Game chickens... big, impressive birds that can weigh more than five kilos or 11 pounds! She trains them after school, rewarding them with treats when they stand tall and proud, so when the judges walk past, they're ready to show off their best side.

The judges look closely at things like feather quality, colour, and presentation and Sophie's birds clearly stood out. Her top chicken? A bird named... KFC.

It just goes to show that with patience, practice, and a bit of fun, you can achieve big things, no matter your age.

Sophie Watson, Squiz Kids salutes you!

## **NEWSHOUNDS**

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Every Thursday, Squiz-E the Newshound sticks his snout into Squiz Kids HQ to report back on fishy things he's sniffed out on the internet... and today his nose is twitching because of a space photo that looks almost too cool to be true. A photo that claims to show a blue sunset on the Red Planet, Mars.

Now, Squiz-E has been geeking out over the Artemis missions lately... and when he saw this image, he thought, hang on a second... that looks pretty amazing... but is it real? So, Squiz-E did some digging... this time *not* in the flowerbed... he's still banned from that...

The image appeared online in early 2026 and spread quickly across social media, racking up thousands of views... with people saying we were looking at the first-ever sunset on another world. But was it? Squiz-E's first clue? The image didn't appear anywhere in NASA's official photo collections. His second clue? Experts found something called a digital watermark, a hidden tag often used in images created by artificial intelligence. And when asked, NASA confirmed it... the image had been edited or created as a fan-made piece, not a real photo.

So... busted?

Well, yes and no.

Because here's the twist: sunsets on Mars actually can look blue. That's because the fine dust in the Martian sky scatters light differently to Earth, letting more blue light shine through. So while the viral image isn't real... the idea behind it kind of is.

And that's why, when something looks amazing online, you know what to do... Stop, Think and Check to make sure what you're seeing is the real deal!

Teacher's if you want you're class to learn how to be excellent online fact checkers just like Squiz-E , do we have the resource for you!? Just search for Newshounds by Squiz Kids and be amazed. You can thank us later.

## **THE S'QUIZ**

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

1. What change has the NRL introduced to help protect players from head injuries?
  - a. shorter matches
  - b. smaller balls
  - c. limits on contact during training
  
2. What nickname is Aussie pizza champ Johnny Di Francesco known by?
  
3. What is the name of champion chicken breeder Sophie Watson's top chicken?

## **SHOUTOUTS**

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It's Thursday, April 23 ... On this day back in 2005, just 21 years ago, the very first video ever uploaded to YouTube went live. It was filmed at San Diego Zoo, ran for just 19 seconds, and was uploaded by one of the site's co-founders, a guy called Jawed Karim. The title? *Me at the zoo*. That's it. No special effects. No editing. Just Jawed, standing in front of the elephants, talking about their trunks.

Today, more than 500 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every single minute — but every single one of them traces back to that one 19-second clip at a zoo. You can still watch it, by the way. It's still up there. It has more than 385 million views.

I wonder... has anyone told the elephant?

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today...

Blayke from Albury, Archie from Kirwan and Nalini from Currumbin Valley.

Belated shoutouts go to... Ameliyah and Georgina from Arundal and Amariah from Newington

And Classroom shoutouts will resume next week.

### **The S'Quiz Answers:**

1. c) limits on contact during training
2. Mr Pizza
3. KFC

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](mailto: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 with the Kids vs Adults Weekly News S'Quiz

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