

## Report of the 29<sup>th</sup> IGF Directors' meetings – 5/25-6/1-2008

– By Thomas Hsiang

For the duration above, I attended the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the International Go Federation, held in parallel with the 29<sup>th</sup> World Amateur Go Championship at Nihon Kiin. In addition to a four-hour marathon session of the Directors' Meeting on 5/26 and the General Meeting on 5/27, there were a number of smaller gatherings for the working group responsible for WMSG planning, all of which I attended. I also met with the officials of the Japan Pair Go Association. These activities are summarized below.

### The People

At IGF, the attending Directors were *Hiromu Okabe*, CEO of Denso-Toyota and president of IGF; *Runan Wang*, VP of IGF and President of the Chinese Weiqi Association; *Eduardo Lopez*, VP of IGF; *Martin Stiassny*, VP of EGF; *Korsak Chairasmisak*, President of Thai Go Association and World Chinese Weiqi Association; *Ichiro Tanioka*, President of Osaka University of Commerce; *Neville Smythe* from Australia; *Chihyung Nam*, proxy for Korean Baduk Association; and *myself*. The staff members attending were *Ei Kanda*, IGF Office Manager and *Yuki Shigeno*, IGF Secretary.

In addition, KABA (the Korean Amateur Baduk Association) sent a contingent led by *Seong-june Kim*; as did the Thai Go Association; the Japan Pair Go Association sent Mr. *Nakatani* and Mr. *Noguchi*.

### WAGC and Other Tournaments

This year's WAGC, for the first time, is mostly funded by Nihon Kiin. The traditional biggest sponsor, Japan Airline, pulled out of WAGC due to its financial difficulties. Several hoped-for sponsors did not materialize. However, the next WAGC and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be held in Shizuoka and the sponsors have been signed up. The Directors' Meeting passed a resolution to set up procedures for opening up future WAGC's for bidding by other countries, starting in 2010.

The third KABA Prime Minister Cup will be held in November this year, delayed by the WMSG. I have previously reported on this event to AGA.

A new international event will be held in Korea, starting 9/2008. This team tournament, the Hi Seoul World Businessmen Baduk Fair, will inaugurate 9/21-27 2008 in Seoul. The idea is to get go-playing businessmen together to have some fun and maybe share business opportunities. Teams from US are welcomed but should organize themselves; players only need to buy airfare, all other expenditures will be provided by KABA.

The annual Hangzhou World City-Team tournament will be suspended for one year this year due to WMSG.

### **WMSG, IMSA, and IOC**

The largest amount of time was spent discussing and reviewing the details of WMSG.

Yuki Shigeno read reports from her attendance at three technical meetings of IMSA and the Beijing Organizational Committee (BOC). We now expect a steady Go attendance of 420 players and 80 workers/officials throughout the two-week event. Roughly, the distribution is: Men Individual, 227 players; Women Individual, 97; "Open", 93; Men Team, 40 countries, 231 players; Women Team, 24 countries, 89 players; Pair Go, 47 pairs including 8 all-professional pairs. All tournaments will have two stages, a variation of Swiss in the first stage, then knock-out in the medal rounds. In addition to medals for each tournament, there will also be a special medal for the overall winning country.

Yuki also detailed the planning for the venues, the Olympic apartments, and air transportation.

I read a report by the WMSG working group (consisting of Erik Puyt, Martin Stiassny, Yuki Shigeno, and myself) on our activities in the last year and another report on the Beijing Rules Meeting that I attended in April. Some of the important highlights include the completion of the WMSG Rules and Regulations and the IGF Anti-Doping Regulations, the negotiations of the technical details of WMSG, and the initial planning of IGF seeking IOC recognition. The various documents will soon be available

at the IGF website. We will begin the IOC recognition procedure in earnest immediately after the WMSG.

One important consideration is the anti-doping compliance. We sent out on 3/31/08 the IGF Anti-Doping Regulation draft and the Therapeutic Use Exemption to all IGF members and asked the association presidents to share these documents with their members for discussions and feedback. At the 29<sup>th</sup> IGF meetings, these documents were accepted as official IGF policies. A Medical Commission will be formed to explore possibly starting the testing programs in 2009.

A word about Go Rules. The China Qiyuan has developed a special set of rules for trial use in the 2008 WMSG. This rule set is based on the traditional Chinese rules, hence it has all the nice features of direct verification of life-and-death, superko, no special rulings, etc. But, at the same time a big change from the Chinese stone-counting was implemented that defines the game score as the point differential, thus eliminating the  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  point oddity in the Chinese rules. Further, the requirement of equal number of plays is affirmed, allowing for 6.5 komi to be used – a feature insisted on by the Koreans. I personally am quite fond of this rule set, not because it is problem-free, but rather because it points to a way of reasonable compromises in the rules discussions and hopefully may even shed light on the seemingly impossible issue of rule unification. Apparently I was not the only one who thought so; as the Nihon Kiin and KBA experts all agreed to give this rule set a try – something like a small miracle. I heard afterwards that the Ing Foundation also looks favorably on this development! Many years ago, the late Mr. Ing Changki told me that he felt that unification of rules would only be possible by external pressure such as the Olympic Movement. He was right on.

## **Change in IGF Statue**

In 2007, we decided to change the IGF statue to allow for “institutional members” to join. This new membership category potentially would include the World Pair Go Association, the Ing Foundation, EGF, Iberoamerican Go Association, World Chinese Weiqi Association, etc. Director Tanioka was asked to rework the IGF Statue to allow for this feature and also to study the participation rules and the voting rights for the new members. The new Statue was completed and was passed in the

29<sup>th</sup> IGF meetings, save for some minor wording changes. The new membership category is now called “Association Members” who may caucus their own national members in the General Meetings but will not be able to vote. They may also sit in on the Directors’ Meetings as Advisors.

### **Pair Go and the World Pair Go Association (WPGA)**

Eduardo Lopez, Martin Stiassny, and myself attended a meeting at Ginza Forum with the Japan Pair Go Association. From JPGA, its international director Nakatani, marketing manager Noguchi, and technical manager Hirai attended, led by Mrs. Hiroko Taki, the Vice President and founder of JPGA. During the past year, a major breakthrough took place that allowed JPGA and IGF to be working partners. For the several months prior to this meeting, the IGF and the JPGA teams had already worked out the draft WPGA By-Law, the Pair Go Regulations for WMSG, the tournament format to be used, and the technical specifications for pair go in WMSG. In the Ginza meeting, we then first focused on working out any last disagreements on these topics.

The formation of WPGA was then discussed. The official start date is now scheduled at the 20<sup>th</sup> International Pair Go Tournament in November 2009. Part of the reasons for the delay is to allow Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO, to be the first WPGA president after he retires from UNESCO next year.

Ideas for celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary were solicited and discussed.

### **Miscellaneous**

The D.P.R. Korea problem was revisited. Macao was admitted as the 70<sup>th</sup> member of IGF. A special request from the Russian Go Federation was reviewed; the general question of enhancing cooperation between IGF and RGF was discussed. Financial records and budgets of IGF and the IGF-IMSA Fund were reviewed. US and Australia were elected as the new auditors. A major change in the support of the WAGC players was discussed and will be explored further in the future. A special IGF Director’s Meeting was scheduled during WMSG and the representatives of the new Association Members will be invited to attend.