

I attended the 25<sup>th</sup> IGF Board and General meetings in June, 2004, at Kurashiki, Japan. There were two items of particular interest to AGA.

The first item relates to the recognition of Go as an international sport. IGF has sought several years ago, following Bridge and Chess federations, to have Go recognized by IOC as a sport item. This effort failed for a variety of reasons.

A second effort, was started in 2002 to first seek entry of IGF into the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF), followed by IGF members seeking recognition by their individual NOC's, before a second try is attempted with the IOC.

The acceptance of IGF into GAISF was successfully done in May, 2004. IGF now asks the Go organization in each member country to seek NOC recognition. In about 25% of the member countries, this has already been done. IGF has produced a guide to its members, along with a support letter from the IGF president addressed to the NOC.

I suggest the new AGA leadership take up this as a priority action item. I believe, if AGA can successfully obtain recognition by the USOC, it will be a very important step to help other member countries in their efforts.

As an extra incentive, there is a proposal by the World Bridge Federation currently being circulated in GAISF to organize the first Intellympic Games following either the 2006 Turino or the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Bridge, Chess, Chinese Chess, Go, "Draughts", are the first group of games being called to participate in this Mind Olympic.

The second IGF item has to do with the establishment of a world rating system (WRS). Let me first give you some background information.

In 2003, it was decided by the Nihon Kiin to have its own Internet server. Instead of building one from scratch, they chose to piggyback on an existing Go server. (This model, by the way, is similar to what Roy Laird proposed for AGA). Earlier this year, Cyber Kiwon (a subsidiary of Hankuk Kiwon) won the bid to provide Nihon Kiin. The new-look Cyber Kiwon is planned to inaugurate in October, 2004.

How does this relate to rating? It turns out that Cyber Kiwon already has a very substantial user base in Korea and China. With the new Japanese clients, it would form a "pan-Asian Go server". (A side note: I personally do not like the "pan-Asian" term – there are, after all, many other countries and regions in Asia! But, at least as far as Go goes, the C-J-K ring certainly dominates.) The Nihon Kiin brass sees this as an opportunity to establish a unified rating system for "all Go players in the world" (again,

read “world” as C-J-K followed by everyone else). Cyber Kiwon, however, does not have a rigorous rating system. So they eyed the western rating systems (particularly the mature AGA and EGF systems) as a source for help. And IGF was the venue they chose to seek this help. This effort was strongly endorsed by the Hankuk Kiwon.

In response to the IGF call for assistance, Paul Mathews (AGA ratings coordinator) wrote a proposal that seeks to first establish a conversion algorithm among existing rating systems and to exchange player information and tournament data among them. This will then be followed by a study on how to integrate these rating systems into one.

At the IGF meeting, I presented Paul’s proposal, which was met with a great deal of enthusiasm. In a follow-up meeting, many angles of this effort were discussed, including whether to mesh pro and amateur ratings and the all-important question of resources.

At this time, IGF has established a working group on ratings. Representing AGA is Paul Mathews. I am also part of the group, although as an IGF Director. My sense of the outcome is that either the AGA or the EGF rating algorithm will be used, simply because an integration of different ratings will be very time-consuming and Nihon Kiin is in a hurry to get something off the ground.

Noteworthy in this discussion is that we have received an endorsement from KGS, along with promises to provide its rating algorithm and player data. There is a distinct possibility that we will take up parts of this offer.

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