

Report of IGF 2006 activities

2006 was an exciting year for the International Go Federation, as the prospect of the first Intellympiad of mind sports develops closer and closer to reality. This was reported in detail at the 2006 IGF Board Meeting (BM) and General Meeting (GM) held on May 26, 2006, at the Utrecht Tower of Huis Ten Bosch, Sasebo City, Japan.

Showing up at the meetings were several new faces in the IGF leadership. Kudo Norio has settled into the IGF presidency, along with Fujisawa Kazunari as the office manager; Shigeno Yuki, 4-dan professional from Nagoya and Italy, has taken up the general secretary position; Umezawa Yukari, of *Hikaru-no-go* fame, is the new assistant office manager; and Neville Smythe (Australia) and Han Sang-yull (Korea) are newly appointed directors. Much of IGF's recent work has continued smoothly with the new personnel, while several new initiatives have been started.

IGF was accepted in 2004 as a provisional member of the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF). At the 2006 Sport Accord Convention, IGF further attained the status of full member. This new association has provided IGF a forum to work with other mind sports, including chess, bridge, and draughts (checkers), for common interest. A new organization, the International Mind Sports Association (IMSA), was formed in 2005 for the promotion of the Olympic movement of mind sports. IMSA has chosen as its first task to organize a large-scale international event, named the *Intellympiad*. Approved by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and sanctioned by GAISF and the Chinese Olympic Committee, this event will be held in 2008 at Beijing, China, following the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The first Intellympiad will have a limited scale, with greater emphasis placed on team games and pair games. IMSA is currently actively pursuing financial sponsorship for this event.

It should be noted that, for the Go part of the IMSA project, AGA has contributed to the initial seed funds, along with Nihon Kiin, Korean Baduk Association, Chinese Weiqi Association, and European Go Federation. This funding has allowed IGF to prepare a number of documents and audio/video materials promoting Go to the IOC general membership and to the potential sponsors.

At the IGF meeting, the three Asian members, China, Japan, and Korean, all promised full cooperation and active engagement in the Intellympiad. It is expected that the coming year will see a flurry of activities towards the realization of this event; they will be duly reported to the AGA membership.

Separately, the Kansai Kiin brought to IGF the exciting news of a new international amateur go event and sought IGF's support. The new event will inaugurate in 2007 as a youth team-go tournament, participated by six-player teams from China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, North America, and Europe. Adding to WAGC and International Pair-Go, this will become the third official IGF annual event.

IGF itself has evolved in the face of the growing responsibilities. Historically, the Nihon Kiin has been the principal patron of IGF. While this relationship has been very fruitful, it is clear that IGF must now seek broader sponsorship and must grow in its democratization process. The following statement, taken from IGF's application to GAISF, was recorded in the IGF meeting:

In addition to our application for full membership of GAISF, the International Go Federation wished to confirm that the IGF is willing and intending to change its statutes and take other necessary actions to ensure that our statutes, practice, and activities are in conformity with the requirements and responsibilities of a modern International Federation.

The question of international Go rules was brought up and extensively discussed outside the IGF formal meetings. A statement was produced by general consensus among the directors and read by president Kudo as the official IGF position:

Following the latest development in the process of becoming a member of the Mind Sport movement, the IGF needs to define its policy about the set of rules to be adopted in its international competitions.

As the outcome of contacts and meetings with authoritative members of GAISF and IMSA, we can confidently state that those organizations will not ask IGF to adopt a unique rule set.

With this information and considering the long history and the rich tradition of our game, IGF is oriented towards adopting different rule sets to be used in competitions like the WAGC and the Intellympiad.

The IGF Board is confident that the adoption of such a policy concerning the rules will have positive effects on the sponsorship process needed to realize those competitions.

The IGF is committed to selecting and defining the rule sets that will be available for its international competitions. To accomplish this task, the IGF is primarily seeking the cooperation of its member countries but will also consider support from external sources.

The 2006 IGF meeting concluded with the happy decision to admit Costa Rica as the newest and 69th member.

Reported by Thomas Hsiang