

## **Go clubs for kids sweep the nation!**

With Japanese cultural exports now topping auto sales, what parent hasn't heard of Yu-Gi-Oh or Dragon Ball. But the latest game craze from Japan is actually a 4,000 year old board game called Go. Thanks to the massive popularity of the Hikaru no Go manga (comic) in Shonen Jump, US kids are flocking to learn this timeless game. Children's Go clubs have formed across the nation. In April the Boulder Public Library, with the help of the Boulder Go Club, started a popular weekly club for kids.

The rules of Go are so simple they can be taught in a few minutes, but it can take a lifetime to master the game. Go is about five times more complex than Chess and is played professionally in China, Korea and Japan. Players compete for hundreds of thousands of dollars in prize money and big tournaments are televised to rapt international audiences.

Meet Zipei Feng, a 15 year old Go master from China. Zipei learned to play at the age of eight and by nine had become a Shodan, equivalent to a black belt in the martial arts. By comparison, the three masters at the local Boulder Go club took between 15 and 30 years to reach shodan - a level the average player will never attain. Zipei was trained professionally in China and has a bright career ahead of him in the Asian Go world if he chooses to pursue that path. In 2000, Feng's father moved to the US for professional reasons and the family came along. Since coming to this country, Feng has taken first place in a Colorado state tournament, and second place in the big San Francisco tournament. Zipei is so strong that he is easily able to defeat even masters who have been studying the game for 30 years.

On Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, Zipei will pit his talents against 20 of the best players in Colorado in a simultaneous game. Unlike Chess, Go has a built in handicap system that allows weaker players to stand a chance against stronger ones. Zipei will give handicaps to most of the players present, but is still likely to win all or almost all of the games. The event is free and open to the public. Anybody who is curious about Go and would like to learn the rules is welcome to attend and instruction will be provided in an adjacent room. The games will take place in the Boulder Creek Room at 2:00 pm. For more information, or if your paper or station would like to cover the event, please call Paul Barchilon at 303-440-7124.

A weekly Go club meets in the Teen Space of the Boulder Public Library each Sunday at 2 p.m., where competitors are coached by Boulder Go players Paul Barchilon and David Weiss.

The Boulder Go club meets weekly in UMC room 425 from 7:00 to 12:00. Beginners are welcome at both clubs.

Websites:

Kids club	<a href="http://www.boulder.lib.co.us/youth/events/go.html">http://www.boulder.lib.co.us/youth/events/go.html</a>
Boulder club	<a href="http://bcn.boulder.co.us/recreation/go/index.shtml">http://bcn.boulder.co.us/recreation/go/index.shtml</a>
American Go Association	<a href="http://usgo.org">http://usgo.org</a>