

IGF Director's Report 2015

This was landmark year for the International Go Federation. For the first time the World Amateur Go Championship was held outside the 3 core countries Japan China and Korea. Other countries, perhaps in Europe or the US, might now be thinking of hosting the event; they will have a hard act to follow however, as Thailand put on an excellently organised (and clearly very expensive) 36th WAGC. Raphael Shin was Australia's representative, Ju Qiang Chen played for New Zealand. Korea, represented by Changhun Kim, took first place, followed by China and Chinese Taipei.

The 10th Korean Prime Minister's Cup was rescheduled from its usual time to November 22 to 27 because of the outbreak in 'flu in Korea. Fortunately our representative Joseph Choi was able to reschedule his flight to Seoul. Sorry Kiwis, at the time of writing I don't have the name of the New Zealand player.

The 26th World Pair Go Championship is being held in Tokyo at the same time as the Australian Championship, ie December 5 and 6. It is New Zealand's turn to compete this year, represented by Emma Reynolds 6k and Edwin Phease 4d. Australia, New Zealand and Madagascar are put in a single zone (!) so in theory each country gets to play in Tokyo only once every three years. In practice Madagascar can not often put together a team, so Oz/NZ can be called on at very short notice to field a team; this happened last year when NZ was first approached, and then Australia was able to send a team (Amy Song and Wei Xu). We should be prepared for sudden requests for this.

The IGF organizes two other prestige team events, in association with SportAccord and the World Mind Sports Association. The SportAccord World Mind Games had been held in China in December for the last few years, though no host could be found in 2015; it is essentially by invitation for the very strongest players, including professionals, so Australia and New Zealand don't really get a look-in. It is expected this event will be held every second year, starting from 2016. The next World Mind Sports Games is probably going to be held in Macau in October 2016; teams from Australia and New Zealand should be readied!

There are other IGF related events which we can participate in, for example the Pandanet internet competition which form the preliminary rounds of the World Student Oza, the finals of which are held in Japan.

The IGF continues to push for recognition by the IOC as an Olympic sport. Membership of the SportAccord and WADA (which requires drug testing at the WAGC) have been preliminary steps. Recognition by National Olympic Committees would be a great help; some NOC's already do recognize Go – for example the Netherlands. Others (Australia in particular) remain implacably opposed to non-physical sports be recognized.

Neville Smythe

Director, International Go Federation