



Australian Go Association

GPO Box 65, Canberra ACT 2601

NEWSLETTER 56

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Iwaki Asian Pacific Goodwill Cup

In the first week of November I represented Australia in the inaugural Asian Pacific Goodwill cup. Also participating were players from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Canada, USA, and a special guest from West Germany. China was also invited, but their player unfortunately was unable to attend.

My first surprise was the strength of the Thai player, Ariya. Judging from their candidates at World Amateur Championships, I had expected Thailand to field a weak player, but Ariya was quite a respectable 5-dan. I was the lowest rated player at 3-dan, with Canada, USA West Germany and Thailand sending 5-dans, Korea sending a 6-dan, and Taiwan and Japan sending 7-dans.

Before the first round we played a friendship game with some local players. After my game, which I won, I was interviewed on television, the interview being broadcast that night and again the following morning (or so I was told by the other players; I didn't watch too much Japanese television). I am told I didn't appear too silly. Combined with the appearance of my picture in the Asahi Newspaper and the Go Weekly (the latter case admittedly very hard to pick me out) this must make me a megastar.

The first round of the tournament proper had me paired against the Canadian player Young Kim. Kim had drawn a stronger player than mine in the friendship game and had lost, which may have given me a psychological advantage. In any case after a shaky start I managed to win, which was all the honour I could achieve for Australia. In the most important game of the first round the Korean, Ko, won against Taiwan's Suh.

I faced Ko myself in the second round. This game we played in a tatami room seated Japanese style, though I can't blame my loss on that. In this game Ko's professional approach had me on the ropes pretty early, and after a desperate flourish I had to resign. Ko went through it with me afterwards and gave me many useful suggestions. Then World Amateur Champion Imamura also went through it with me, perhaps to gauge the play of his most dangerous opponent, and although he doesn't have much English, his comments were also very interesting. Imamura also beat Suh, which gave the Taiwanese the unlikely score of 0-2.

The third round was effectively the deciding one, with Imamura meeting Ko. Unfortunately for me, I was playing at the time, going down by 9 1/2 points to the American Jeff Knox in a game which showed up my poor endgame skill. On the main board, Ko and Imamura staged a complicated slugfest, with the Korean eventually coming out on top.

The last round was played under very relaxed conditions, and I played a terrible game against Ariya of Thailand. I started by making a mistake in direction, then a blunder in a joseki, followed by two tactical errors in quick succession. I played on because there were some swindling possibilities, and in an off hand game I had gathered the impression that Ariya was a greedy player. This time his greed went unpunished. Unfortunately for my ego, Miyazawa Goro 8-dan chose this game to go through with me.

The final standings Ko (Korea)4-0, Imamura (Japan) and Knox (USA)3-1, Suh (Taiwan) and Ariya (Thailand) 2-2, Reye (Australa) and Lenz (West Germany) 1-3 and Kim (Canada) 0-4.

Apart from the tournament, we were very well entertained. It was a very packed time, with ceremonies and parties and cultural events. My only complaint is that we didn't have time for sight seeing.

I had plenty of opportunity to talk to Ko, and I learned several things about Korean Go which I think might be of interest to the reader. Firstly, their system is very different from the Japanese one.

In Korea, professionals often play with amateurs, generally as gambling games. They do not have Go schools like Japan, but rather each year two amateur players have the chance to qualify as professionals. Ko himself was due to play his qualifying game in late November. The mystery of Korean amateur ratings was also revealed to me. If you are a dan player and wonder why you get destroyed by Korean 1-kyus, part of the reason is that traditionally amateurs don't get given ratings any higher than that. The result is that a Korean 1-kyu can be anywhere in strength from 1-dan to 7-dan. There are now clubs which use a dan rating system for amateurs, but it is not the general rule. The exception to this is the 6-dan rating. There a few tournaments a year, the winners of which get to be 6-dans for a year. Winning three of these gains one a permanent 6-dan ranking.

Stephen J. Reye

AGA Fees

The AGA financial year is the same as the calander year. That means that its time for your treasurer to start abusing you again. Personal members should forward their \$20 as soon as possible. Clubs are reminded that the new system is for them to pay a flat fee of \$75 and send lists of their financial members as frequently as possible. Remember that if we aren't told, then your members are not AGA members. If club fees are not forthcoming by the beginning of March, we may have to consider introducing a late fee. If you are a personal member and you know some people who might like to start a club, you might find that a cheaper option. The only requirement for a club is that it have five financial members. I would also remark that on last year's figures this system would make a loss; we are depending on a better response this year.

New Melbourne Go Club

Word has come from Melbourne that a new club is being considered there. Some strong Chinese players have moved there, as has David Mitchell, so there should be the basis of a strong club. They hope to find a reasonably central location, with Wednesday being the most likely day of the week for meetings. If you are going to Melbourne and would like to find a game, contact:

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ACT Championship

On the last weekend in November the Canberra Go Club staged the annual ACT Championship. The small open section was won by Stephen Reye ahead of Sydney's Clive Davies.

WAGC Official

It is Australia's turn to supply the Oceania Team Captain for the World Amateur Championships again. The Championship is to be held in Nagoya, Japan from the 28th to the 30th of May. Team captain is not an onerous position, and the captain gets a fully funded trip to Nagoya to attend the Championship. The person selected should be a member of the AGA of several years standing and have made a contribution to the development of Go in Australia. Preference is given to those who have not previously held the position. Playing strength is not an important consideration. If you are interested or would like to suggest someone, please contact us immediately. Nominations have been called for by early February.

International News (thanks to Shirakami)

China Japan Super Go

Nieh Wei Ping has finally lost a game in this competition, losing to Hane after 11 successive victories. This gives Japan the third series with a score of 9-2.

Kisei Challenger

The first major Go event of the year in Japan is the Kisei match. This year Kobayashi will try to defend his title against Takamiya, who beat Cho Chikun in the elimination round.

Another New Tournament

The popularity of international Go has been further evidenced by the creation of an annual match between the Chinese and Japanese Meijin title holders.