

Dear go friends,

as you probably already know, I am a new vice-president of EGF and my main responsibility lies on a field of youth projects.

New EGF board considers work with youth as one of crucial presumptions for European go development, and we want to support increasing and strengthening of our youth as much as possible. Even though our resources are limited at the moment, that group of players has our priority and we are going to do our best to find resources to support young prodigies. To work effectively, we need your help. A crucial starting-point is to have European database of young players and contacts. That is what I need your help for.

A) Summary of youth projects being currently run on EGF level.

1) European Youth Go Championship (EYGC)

History: That event was held up to the last year with a support of Ing Foundation and it has been served for a selection of European young players for World Youth Go Championship (WYGC). There used to be two groups, under 12 years and under 18 years old.

Current situation: Ing Foundation has withdrawn their sponsorship since this year due to financial crisis, but the Championship remains to be a qualification for WYGC. Nevertheless, there is one important change. **Under 18 group is to be replaced by under 16 group since next year 2010.** That is an imperative instruction from Ing Foundation. Actually, by this decision, Ing Foundation just unified rules for Asian and non-Asian players, because Asian players have always been limited by the age of 16.

Our aims: We have to respect a decision of Ing Foundation, of course, but to leave young players between 16 and 18 without a serious competition was considered to be unbearable. As a result, a decision was taken that young players over 16 can join Students Championship. The decision was announced at AGM in Groningen.

Although there is no direct support from the Ing Foundation at the moment, we are going to keep conditions for this tournament as much as possible and want to co-operate on that purpose very closely with tournament organizers.

2) European Students Go Championship (ESGC)

History: ESGC was established on purpose to fairly appoint European representatives for World Students Go Championship (WSGC). Conditions for ESGC were settled at AGM in Prague, 2005, before first ESGC was held. Age range was settled between 18 (those, who already cannot play EYGC because of the age limit) to under 30.

Current situation: Japanese organizer has changed a selection system for WSGC this year. It was officially announced shortly after this year's ESGC had finished. ESGC has no longer any consequences for WSGC. A qualification for WSGC is to be played on internet from now, and the whole event is open just for university students.

Our aims: We want to keep ESGC. The aim is not to restrict it just to university students, but to allow entering also students/pupils of pre-university types of schools. There are two main reasons for the decision. First of all, the age when a student enters University is very uncertain. Usually it is between 18 and 20 years, but there are exceptions. Secondly, having EYGC just up to 16 would leave quite a big group of young players, many of them very strong, without serious competitions. On that conditions, letting young players join university students seems to be very natural. They are close mentally and by strength as well. A gap between over 16 - 18 years old and university students is probably lesser than

between youth in their 17-18 and children of the age of 15 and younger.

We want to take an opportunity of this event and organize a special training program for participants. Our aim is to add a few days and invite strong players who would run a training. We want to co-operate with organizers of the Championships on that.

3) Japan-Europe Youth Exchange Project (JEYEP)

History: The project was started by Nihon Ki-in a few years ago. It is called 'Exchange' but in fact, it is a very generous invitation of young European players to Japan for one week. Three countries, each of them consisting of a team leader, one player under 12, one player under 15, and one player under 18 years old, are invited to visit Nihon Ki-in on the occasion of the Oza Final and meet Japanese go students/inseis and strong professional players as well. Up to this year, a decision who will be invited was fully in hands of a sponsor of the event.

Current situation: Catalin Taranu, who accompanied three selected countries as a team leader for Europe this year, managed to gain for EGF a participation in a selection process for the following years.

Our aims: Our aim is to participate on the selection process by providing information about candidates to our host and recommendation who should be invited and why as well. The selection process must be transparent and based on performance of the children on tournaments and ranks they have achieved according to the EGF rating list. Performance at international tournaments, especially at EYGC, will be taken into account first. A performance does not mean just achieved results but also an activity, e.g. number of active children and youth. With three countries invited every year, there is enough room for a rotation system in which more successful and more active countries will be invited more often, but still there will be a place for those, who are trying very hard but have not managed yet to reach a top.

4) EGF-AGA Transatlantic Match

History: The event has started this year. It is an internet tournament played on KGS by ten young players, up to 18 years old, on each side. European team selection for this year was based on results at EYGC 2009. Eight best players were chosen according to the EYGC results and two wild cards were given to players who were not able to participate at EYGC. EGF rating list was considered for bestowing wild cards. European young players were very keen to play this match. The match itself was very exciting and with a little bit bad luck for Europe was won by AGA players by a narrowest margin 6:4.

Current situation: A preparation for the second match is in a progress. The match is expected around early spring time.

Our aims: Our aims here are clear. We would like to continue as long as our young players are keen to play.

B) Our needs for youth projects improvements

1) Contact person

We need to have one responsible person in each country, whom we could contact in case of any youth project preparation and organization. The person should be familiar with youth players in his/her country. If necessary, more contact persons can be appointed, but only one can have a right to make a decision about possible nominations. We need to know at least: name, e-mail contact, phone number, Skype contact if available.

2) Overview of events for children and youth organized in your country

We would appreciate very much if you provide us with a list of events you organize in your country for children and youth players, and also with approximate number of participants at these events.

3) List of players

To improve a selection process for international events, it is necessary to have a list of young players for every country. International events are meant not only events where we have to nominate young players, but also events which we are going to organize. We need to know: name, date of birth, nationality. These information we need especially for players of the level at least 10 kyu, if they are under 12 years old, for players of at least 2 kyu level if they are below 16 and over 12 years old, and for players of dan level and stronger if they are above 16 years old and still students. Level of players will be checked against EGF rating list.

I do believe you understand our aims to improve work with children and youth around Europe and will help us to build a real European youth community of strong players. **Please, send all required information to my e-mail address hricova@upcmail.cz by the end of November 2009.**

Prague, 9 November, 2009

Jana Hricova

vice-president of EGF

hricova@upcmail.cz

phone: +420-608230463

Skype: Jana_Hric