The Editorial

Dear Readers,

I hope that you enjoy this issue of the Newsletter. Once again Wei Wang offers us his insights on how we should be playing Go. Plus we have a round up of all the action that has taken place in the past 3 months. Please don't forget that this is your newsletter, and all your contributions are most welcome.

Ian Davis

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Online Interprovincial Tournament

Previously Connaught had put Ulster to the sword 2-1 in the final of the Interprovincials. However the excitement was not over, with Munster and Leinster still to play. In the end Munster's lack of preparation lost them the match. As their Board 2 forgot to appear, Rory Wales let himself be ripped off late in the game and Marcin fell victim to a wave of student philosophy.

Leinster 2 - 0 Munster
Board 1   Ed Wormington 1 - 0 Marcin Rutowski (w)
Board 2   Eoghan Barry ? - ? Justyna Kleczar
Board 3   Mark Webb (w) 1 - 0 Rory Wales

At some point later this year the next edition of the tournament will kick off. This time an all play all league is planned.
Online-Go Server (OGS) is a turn-based or corresponended Go server. It is quite different from the established player in this field - Dragon Go Server. Its main feature is probably the regular tournaments you can join. These are named after the big oriental tournaments, Mingren, Honinbo etc, and run throughout the year. The tournaments are generally divided into different classes to allow fairer competition. If these are not exciting enough for you, then you can create your own mini tournaments. OGS also, and perhaps crucially, contains a conditional move feature. This means you can offer to play out a forced sequence (atari, connect, atari, etc). This is helpful because it makes the games progress faster - especially during boring endgame phases.

You can also play games outside of tournaments, on either a 9x9, 13x13 or 19x19 board. As with the rest of the opposition, the server uses an ELO based rating system. OGS has been running since 2005. In my observation it has experienced a few more outages than Dragon, but is still reasonably stable. There is an option to be a supporter, which is basically the same as a regular user but you pay some money towards the upkeep of the OGS. The website also has some discussion forums and a chat channel for you to visit. Overall it must be considered as an impressive piece of work, and capable of overtaking Dragon in popularity.

**Tournament Diary - Belfast Open**

The Belfast Open will take place again at the excellent venue of Belfast Boat Club. It will be at least 4 round, Class B event, taking place over the weekend of the 25 & 26th of September. If we are lucky, we can arrange a 5th round, but we are still negotiating with the venue.

You can find details on the website - http://www.irish-go.org/2010-belfast-open/

Entry Fees: 12 pounds (8 pounds concession, 7 pounds for one day only)
Black: Bobby Morrison  White: Ken Savage

Every so often we record a game from our Belfast club nights to humiliate ourselves with. This issue's example is between two 9 kyu players from the club.

**Moves 1 to 50**

Move 6: White displays a desire to make the game more complicated
Move 10: This White formation is common in higher handicap games, but I would feel that it is questionable here. It's so easy to live inside.
Move 11: Black kindly illustrates one of the weak spots for us.
Move 17: Spoiling good work by pushing in the wrong direction, see Variation 1.
Move 20: Continuing at A was very natural, then Black has broken shape.
Move 23: Normally a bad exchange because it induces 29, which is helping White to make points on the side. Instead pressing down with A would use the two stones on the right hand side.

Move 28: Ending in gotte.
Move 31: Here double hane was better, see Variation 2.
Move 33: Although this move is useful, it allows White to hane at the head of two stones.
Move 35: This move has a high financial value.
Move 38: Locally White should hane at B. White did not notice the snapback on the right.
Move 42: An agressive way of playing, chasing Black out.
Move 44: Criminal. The result of too much thought. Simply extending to C was normal.
Move 50: White should not be happy

**Variation 1**

Black cannot be unhappy with this sequence.

**Variation 2**

White is wrapped up like a birthday present.
Moves 51 to 100

Move 58: A poor choice, better to tenuki than to play here.
Move 61: There is no need to connect so quickly.
Move 63: On balance I feel that this move helps White. I might prefer something around 85 to ask how White will manage his two stones underneath.
Move 71: It seems that Black feels he is in art class rather than playing Go.
Move 73: Feels submissive.
Move 82: Watching, it seem almost as if White wants to kill Tengen.
Move 91: The losing move, see sensible variations 3 and 4.

White eventually won the game.

Variation 3

To the left we see perhaps the most obvious continuation, but it is not clear that this is good for Black.

Variation 4

Using a squeeze play to eat White stones has a better feeling.
**Puzzle Corner**

This position is taken from a game between James Aitken and Bobby Morrison. Black's group in the corner doesn't seem to have two eyes, but there is some aji. Find the best move to play in this situation. You'll find the answer on the back page.

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**Irish Go Congress Results**

As always the Irish Open took place in its traditional home of the Teachers' Club in Parnell Square, Dublin. This year we had a total of 41 players in the Open and 24 in the Rapid. Slightly down on last year's figures, but still pretty respectable. Given that we were part of the Pandanet Go European Cup we could perhaps have hoped for a few more players in attendance. There was an especially strong contingent from the Netherlands who managed to take home many of the prizes. In first place in the Open was Ondrej Silt (6d) of the Czech Republic, finally winning after many attempts. He edged out Wei Wang (6d), who took second place, and had the misfortune of arriving that little bit late on Sunday for their game. Third place was shared between the Dutch players Willem Koen-Pomstra (5d) and Willem Mallon (4d). Noel Mitchell (2d) was the top placed Irishman in 9th place.

The Open tournament involved a huge sprawling tie for first place, with six players finishing on 4 points. Perhaps we should think about adjusting the format for next year? Coming out on top was Edwin Brady (2k), currently of Scotland. Next was Justyna Kleczar (2k) from Cork, with Willem Koen-Pomstra (5d) again taking third. It was nice to see a representative from the Japanese Embassy back again to help with the prizegiving.

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The top two players in action, photograph by Tiberiu Gociu
Review from the Interprovincials
Board 3: Rory Wales (B), Munster - Mark Webb, Leinster

Moves 1 to 50

Move 7: An old opening, but still effective.
Move 10: Interesting play. It works, but harder to control than one space jump.
Move 12: A bad move.
Move 13: After this move, Black has a strong corner shape - but the shape problem of White is obvious. A is a typical move to punish White.
Move 16: Too heavy to be good, see Variation 1 for a natural way.
Move 17: Black is happy to play here.
Move 25: Negative play - better at B.
Move 26: Big but not the best, see Variation 2.
Move 29: A common joseki, but the strategy is wrong. Black got a lot of territory so far, but White has influence. See Variation 3 for a better joseki choice.

Move 38: This plan doesn't make sense, see Variation 3.
Move 39: Bad, White is too strong around. Black should just play at C.
Move 41: Wrong direction - better at D.
Move 42: Bad, better hane at E.
Move 43: should be at F, the key point to destabilise White.
Move 46: A chance to sacrifice, see Variation 5.

Variation 1

A much lighter sequence for White

Variation 2

With 30 White puts the maximum possible pressure on Black's corner. White feels good to get the knight's move of 36.
With this joseki, Black obtains a global balance between territory and influence, with sente to boot.

With this variation, White strengthens his top group and creates good potential for a moyo.

With 46 White has a good chance to sacrifice stones to create a moyo. It's hard for Black to resist because of his shortage of liberties. Move 62 is important to try to separate the lone Black stone near the middle of the board.

For all those who missed it, here is how KGS looked on April the 1st this year. The new pink look didn't catch on...
**Variation 6** (above)
Losing the big point of 58, Black is in trouble.

**Variation 8** (right)
You shouldn't always look at the centre, there are other big areas available.

**Moves 51 to 100**

Move 52: Still should be at 90.
Move 53: A strange move.
Move 54: Poor, see Variation 6.
Move 57: See Variation 7 for a tesuji idea.
Move 60: More positive to play at 63.
Move 68: Bad, should continue with Variation 8.
Move 69: Better to cut at 70.
Move 81: A good move!
Move 86: Should be at 90.
Move 87: Play at A to punish White.
Move 99: Big.
Variation 9 (above)
White can reduce Black effectively this way.

Variation 10 (above, right)
The best endgame sequence for Black.

Variation 11 (right)
Black would love to cut at 41, then he can set up this ko to kill White on top.
Moves 151 to 200

Move 111: The correct endgame move should be at A.
Move 112: See Variation 9
Move 119: White loses too much this way
Move 125: See Variation 10.
Move 137: See Variation 11.

Puzzle Answer (right)
By playing 1 Black creates twin threats. If White doesn't block with 2 then he loses his 3 stones. The alternative shown is no better, White finishes up being unable to prevent both A and B.

And so, in the end, Mark Webb won by 3.5 points, sealing Munster's fate.

Wei Wang felt both players played a good game, Black did well in the beginning but lost too much in the endgame.
A Brief Interview with Wei Wang

Given that Wei Wang's studies at UCC will be coming to an end soon, I felt the time was right to get a little interview from the man. Hope you enjoy it! (Ed)

Q. Did you expect to find Go players in Ireland? I heard that some players are still surprised to find people playing their traditional game.
A. Definitely yes. There is a good Go environment with high potential for development in Ireland. Many new players who are interested in Go began learning this traditional board game over the past a few years. But, compared with some other European countries, our group still looks small. So all players in Ireland, including me, always look forward to introducing this interesting game to more people and even providing some lessons for them. If more players are found, our dream that Irish Open becomes the biggest and most important tournament.

Q. When did you start playing, who was your first teacher?
A. I started to learn Go from a high-dan amateur Mr. Zhang when I was 8 years old.

Q. Is it true you went to a Go School for a time?
A. Because of my study, I never went to a full-time Go school in China but some part-time (whole weekends) Go lessons provided by Chinese high-dan pros. I didn't stop learning until I finished my middle school at the age of 15.

Q. What do you think of the European Go Scene, do you hope to travel to more tournaments?
A. European Go Scene is very fantastic I think. Every time I check European Go calendar online I feel very excited. Actually I really hope to join each of the tournaments if I can, of course, that is impossible for a college student :) Anyway, whatever the tournaments are, I really want to make more Go friends from all over the Europe. Go is a happy family!

Q. Who is your favourite player?
A. Weiping Nie, one of the most famous Chinese top players from more than 30 years ago. His way of playing is powerful.

Q. How do you think we can improve the promotion/popularity of Go in Ireland?
A. The IGA is a very good team and more and more people are being found to join us. In my opinion, there are probably are many potential players in Dublin than other places because it is the biggest city in Ireland with much population. So maybe we can focus on there to promote.

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International News

This year the World Amateur Go Championship took place in China. Ireland was represented by John Gibson, whom the photographers from the Tom server seemed to take an instant shine to. John had a good start, putting himself in the lead by winning his first round game against Peru, then winning the third by default against Turkey. Unfortunately he let a young lady from Venezuela (see picture below) rip him off in the fourth round, missing out on a share of 5th place. After that he ran short of luck, finishing in 52nd place on 2 wins.

The latest Top 10 positions in both the International points tables, and the Ladder are shown below. * indicates final placing undecided for this year.

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<th>Japan Points</th>
<th>Korea Points</th>
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