

The project: Go for Kids

By Stefan Budig.

Since three and a half years I teach Go in 3 elementary-schools in Hamburg/Germany, for children from 6 to 12 years old. The courses are during the regular schooltime. I teach either a whole class, or a smaller group of children who chose Go - among other possible courses - as a free course for half a year (we call it `Wahlpflichtkurs´). I teach about 10 hours per week. In these lessons the main goal is to teach the rules of the game and to give the children an idea how to have fun with the game. The subject of the lessons is a mixture between easy problems (using korean beginner-books for children) shown on a large 9x9 demonstration-board and playing (mostly with short and direct comments). Sometimes I give homework.

The groups have 12, the classes 18 pupils on an average. Every year I let them play an internal school-championship. I have also organised some courses for teachers who were interested in the game. In near future I´ll try it with parents.

Another (large) part of the project is the organization of a local children-tournament every six months, to bring all the school-pupils (current and former) together. They get one day free from school to participate in this contest and are guided by one of their teachers to the tournament place. This tournament, the "St. Georg-Cup" (named after the neighbourhood St. Georg in which the schools are located), was held the first time in summer 1998 with 76 participants from three schools. In summer 2000 we reached a climax with 130 participants, the largest number of referees and the maximum capacity of the tournament place.

It was the largest tournament in the year 2000 in Germany

(excluding the Congress in Berlin/Strausberg).

The idea is to make Go as interesting as possible for the children and make them eager to come to the tournament. We try to do this by giving nice prizes even to pure beginners. To find out, what is an interesting prize, we ask the children.

Another Hamburg Go-player and teacher, Thomas Nohr, started with Go-activities for children as well and so did a colleague of him in the north of Hamburg. Because of their activities the number of participants in the tournament reached over 100 Kids.

In February this year 118 pupils from 10 schools were starting in the St. Georg-Cup. This time we made a qualification-round in some of the schools, so that the final was played with 83 children (age 7-12 ; 95%). It was the first time, that we had a top-group of 8 players, playing on a 19x19 board (see 'german Go-journal' 5/6 2000 - page 14 and 1/2001 - page 43).

Especially because of the engagement of Thomas Nohr, we can look hopefully to the future and think of a great event in summer 2001 - the 7th St.Georg-Cup.

In January 2000 I also started with a children Go-group, consisting of former and present pupils. They are all members of the Hamburg-Go-Club and are sponsored by the Club and the Hamburg-Go-association. This group is small but active, with about 14 kids playing between 7 and 20 Kyu. They meet once a week for two hours in the afternoon. During the first 30 minutes I let them solve easy life and death problems and give some reward for the correct answer. After that, I let them play a kind of up and down-system (the winner on board one goes one strength up and the loser on the last board goes one strength down - this system works also well in school-lessons). They also

get a personal map with plenty of different problems to be solved on their own.

The stronger players should also learn to teach the weaker ones. With this group we visited several tournaments in the north of Germany, including the Congress in Strausberg and we held a Go-weekend-seminar with 20 Kids and 10 adults which was a great success, so that we decided to repeat it this year.

The wooden boards (9x9/13x13), used in the schools and in the children-Go-group were made by myself and many kids bought one for playing at home with their family or with their friends.

A new plan is a monthly lightning-tournament with a sponsorship of the Hamburg Go-Club and some other organisations. A point-system should give everybody the chance to win a nice price and to reward his efforts.

To reach more children to participate, we have to do some well prepared advertisement and intensify the contact with the parents to lower the scruple and to show the love to Go and all it's advantages (I have some pedagogic ideas about that). Because of our activities, we managed to integrate over 40 youth-Go-players in the german Go Federation (the complete number of youth-Go-players in Germany at the beginning of 2001 is 58). We are proud to have more than 70% of them in Hamburg. There are some people who help me during the events and activities, especially Marcel Kienappel, one of my former pupils. He was german youth-champion in 1998 and youth-representative in the Hamburg Go-Club 1999 - 2001.

An eventual award would be invested in the development of spreading Go under children in Hamburg immediatly. The young players are our future - in our opinion, no investigation can be

more effective.

If you need more informations, have questions, ore need any documents please let me know.

I also have plenty of pictures from different events and from my lessons in school. The most impressing advertisement is a short TV-documentation (about 5 minutes), made in 1998 by the north-german TV-station (N3) about my Go-work in school.

About me and my personal Go history:

My name is Stefan Budig. I am 44 years old (born 1956 in Hamburg, Germany) and work since 10 years as a kindergardener, since over 20 years as a private Go-teacher and since 3 1/2 years as a Go-teacher in school (see above).

I got in contact with Go, when I was 10 years old, but my first contact with a Go-Club was in 1974 when I was 18 years old. I changed from chess to Go. After 3 1/2 years I reached shodan level and after 7 years my present strength - 4 Dan. In the years 1982-1989 I was president of the Hamburg Go-Club and in 1999, after a long break, I continued with this job until now. In the years 1984 and 1989 I had the honour to represent Germany in the world amateur championship in Japan and in 1998 I had the even greater honour to be one of the two european representatives for the Go-teachers programm in Tokio.