

Selection of European players for WYGC2024

1, Explanation of tournament system changes after WYGC 2023, Singapore.

During the team leaders meeting in Singapore the representative of the WYGC sponsor, the Ing Chang Ki Foundation, came up with a request for a fundamental change in the approach towards WYGC.

This was motivated by a sense of long term mission failure . Mr. Ing's dream was that one day a player from the Western hemisphere could become world champion. After more than 30 years of WYGC this dream doesn't seem to come any closer to becoming a reality .

A vote for this change was requested and the result was an unanimous ' YES' .

Consequently the sponsor went ahead with the following changes :

- a) The U16 group was replaced with a senior group with a max limit of U21 (to be decided by countries/continental federations) . A minimum rank of 5 dan was requested in order to participate in this age group. Since ranks in the Go world are different from region to region, it was specified that this rank should be 5 dan in your country/continent.
- b) The U12 was renamed the junior group, will continue to be a promotional group and it will remain mostly same as before.
- c) The rule to skip 2 years after playing in a certain age group in order to be able to play again in the same group was modified by reducing the period to one year.
- d) Due to the fact that the change is radical, the '2 years rule' was reset starting with 2024, which means participants at the WYGC2023 could attend WYGC2024 as well if they qualified. From this point on the 'one year rule' will be enforced, meaning participants in 2024 cannot play in 2025 but are eligible again for 2026 unless they change group.
- e) Europe continues to have a total of six representatives, three for each age group. The sponsor specified that in case there are not enough eligible players in the senior group it is fine to send more players for the junior group instead.
- f) Generally speaking the message was that the sponsor understands that the new requirements could be quite hard to handle for country/continental federations and that it will remain flexible in future talks as long as 'the right direction of play' is chosen.

The change needed to be adapted to Europe so in the autumn of 2023 the EGF board decided that the senior group in Europe will be at U18.

A request of the EGF youth activities manager, Catalin Taranu, for the sponsor to approve the minimum rank requirement for European girls at U18 to be set at 3 dan was accepted by the sponsor.

A detailed document explaining new selection procedure was sent to EGF members and promoted in the youth managers discussion group.

The main points :

- a) For the U18 group the essential criteria is now rank requirement. Country diversity rule, which was a clear preference of a large majority of EGF countries in regard to the previous WYGC system, is only applicable if the number of players that meet the rank criteria is high enough. EYGC results is still the major criteria for qualifications but in the case this does not provide relevant info then other criteria as GOR, previous EYGC, general results in other EGF tournaments are considered. In order to preserve the importance of attending EYGC and earn the qualification right another rule was added: 'players who did not attend the current or previous EYGC cannot be selected'.
- b) For the U12 group the country diversity rule is still a major criteria, combined with participation at the current year's EYGC. The players selection is based on final standings in the EYGC, taking into account the 'one year rule' and country diversity criteria. In order to preserve the 'right direction of play' a minimum rank for the selection should also be discussed.
- c) For both groups the age of player needs to fit the age requirements after the end of the tournament

Another important new rule implemented by the EGF board is to set the rank of European Champion at U12 to 2dan (if not already 2 dan or higher) and for U18 at 5 dan (if not already 5 dan or higher) . This rule took into account current strength of players based on recent EYGC's.

It should be mentioned that the high rank requirement applies severe pressure and while 2024 is manageable, for the year 2025 there is a possibility that no player at the U18 will meet the requirements. This needs to be a task of the European team leader during WYGC 2024 talks and meetings.

2. Selection of EGF players for WYGC 2024

A committee of three professional players analyzed the data after EYGC2024 and produced the following selection

- a) For the U18 group only 2 players that participated at the EYGC2024 meet the rank requirements. They are Xing Yuze 5 dan (DE) , current European Champion , and Olesia Malko 3 dan (UA).
Other criteria need to be taken into account for the third seat and the 2023 U16 European Champion stands out. Vsevolod Ovsienko 5dan (UA) is actually the only other player in Europe that meets the rank requirements for qualification.
- b) Selection for the U12 group takes into account the final standings at the EYGC2024 which give a clear result : Bartik Dach(CZ), Bende Barcza(HU) and Ryan Zhang(UK) are the selected players.

All six players that are EGF's selection for WYGC2024 confirmed availability. The next steps are:

- A two weeks window time offered to the community to react in case there are any complaints/issues with the current selection. This is important especially considering the recent big changes but also difficulties caused by communication channels not working as intended. Contact mail: catalin@eurogofed.org
- After two weeks the EGF board will have maximum one week to handle the eventual inquiries.

2nd April 2024

Catalin Taranu 5p, EGF board member in charge with youth activities