

Chestnut Go Bowls

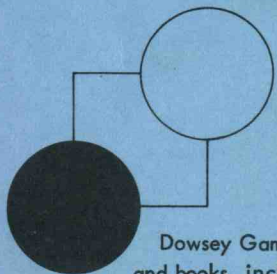


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IWAMOTO VISITS BRITAIN

L.G.C. CLOSES

European Congress

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features

games

news

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Editorial - The London Go Centre

Due to a sudden escalation of its financial problems the London Go Centre has been closed. It had been planned that the Go Centre should move to a central location in London, where it was hoped that a much larger membership would be attracted than its existing location permitted. This projected move required substantial financial aid and, although the initial prospects were very promising, it was finally learnt that this aid would not be forthcoming. The Go Centre therefore closed down at the end of October.

The Go Centre was conceived and put into operation by Stuart Dowsey, with the generous backing of Japanese support led by Mr. Iwamoto, who was most influential in getting the venture under way and who has continued to support the Go Centre ever since. In March 1975 the Go Centre opened and its membership rapidly swelled as the existing London go players eagerly took the opportunity to be able to play go whenever they wished. A grading 'ladder', devised by Jim Bates, was quickly instituted and both handicap and even game tournaments became a regular feature of the Centre. The annual London Open Go Congress had its venue at the Centre. Above all else, however, the importance of the Go Centre lay in providing premises for people to learn and play go 11 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For the first six months the Centre was managed entirely by Stuart, who then invited David Mitchell to assist in running it. David accepted and started work in October 1975. Since then he has become one of the foremost exponents of go in Britain. He is undoubtedly the best teacher of go in Britain and he has also devoted much time and energy to generating and spreading interest in go. His world record lightning marathon and his efforts at the 'teach-ins' spring to mind. He is currently a member of the BGA committee. The membership passed the 250 mark and Alison Cross joined the management in the beginning of 1977. She also has served on the BGA committee, as treasurer. She is currently working on a book of Iwamoto's 50 favourite games, which will be published shortly.

Once the membership had passed the 250 mark, however, it became static and even fell slightly. The reasons for this are not at all obvious. (The BGA has also undergone a period of static membership for the past three years.) It became clear that if the Go Centre was to survive it would have to seek larger premises in central London in order to attract new members. Accordingly, Stuart went to Japan to seek support. Initially the prospects looked bright and Stuart was able to return to London with the assurance that finance was available for new premises. Finding a suitable building proved a difficult problem, however, and when at last a building was found it was learnt that the aid from Japan would not now be forthcoming. After a careful scrutiny of the existing Go Centre's financial position, it was decided that the Centre would have to close.

A meeting of the membership was called and when the members learnt of the situation, their response was gratifyingly swift. One group, led by Bob Ochser, examined the possibility of opening a new 'British Go Centre'. They came to the conclusion that with financial support from as many go players as possible, such a project is feasible. A second group, led by Jon Diamond, made plans for the immediate future. Jon contacted David Vine, a member of the Inter-Varsity Club who is also a go player. They arranged with the IVC committee that a new club, to be named the Central London Go Club, should hold meetings at the IVC on Monday and Friday evenings from November 6th until at least the end of December. The IVC is also going to be the venue for the next London Open. (See item in News section) Heartfelt thanks are due to David Vine and the IVC.

Finally, on behalf of the BGA members, I would like to offer thanks to Stuart, David and Alison for the enormous effort they have invested in the Go Centre since its inception. Without their hard work, British go would have been much poorer. The Go Centre will be sorely missed.

For those players interested in learning more about Bob Ochser's ideas, please write to: Robert Ochser, 7 Woodlands Road, Harrow, Middlesex. Anyone interested in the new Central London Go Club should refer to the announcement in the News section.

