

April 2009

South African Go Association

President's report for the year 2008/2009:

The 2009 AGM is being held somewhat earlier than in recent years, in order to bring the timing of the AGM more in line with the constitution. Consequently, this report will only cover about half a year, since the last report in September 2008. At the last AGM, a new council was elected, with two new members, Steve Kroon and Andrew Davies, joining the existing members. Steve has taken on the mantle of secretary and has brought a pleasing structure and preparation to the role. Andrew has taken over the tournament portfolio with aplomb.

The global financial crisis is a shadow that looms even over the largely intellectual activity that is go. It has been reported that many sponsors are starting to pull out of tournaments, leading to their cancellation. In particular, the primary sponsor of annual World Amateur Championship has withdrawn, with the effect that the representatives now need to contribute to the costs of the flight tickets. We continue to watch this space with concern.

An additional pall that was cast over South African Go was the tragic death of one of its strongest players, Julius Paulu. Julius was shot and killed during a hijacking. The council is committed to establishing a suitable memorial for Julius.

Despite the short duration covered by this report, a number of significant events occurred. The 2008 SA Closed Championship was successfully concluded, and won by defending champion Victor Chow. The 2009 SA Open championships were also concluded. This tournament was held at a new venue, the Warfair club, in Kensington, Johannesburg. By all accounts, this was very successful, and the tournament was also won by Victor Chow.

One of the most notable events since the last AGM was the holding of the first ever World Mind Sports Games, in Beijing, China. South African Go sent a relatively substantial squad for this event, consisting of Victor Chow, Ben Gale, Chris Visser, Carle Joubert, Konrad Scheffler and Paul Edwards. Victor Chow did remarkably well, reaching the quarter finals of the Individual Open event, where he lost to the eventual champion.

Paul Edwards represented South Africa at the 2008 Korean Prime Ministers Cup, placing 52nd out of 68 entrants, with three wins out of eight.

In 2009 Andrew Davies will represent South African at the 2009 World Amateur Go championship in Japan, while Victor Chow will represent South African at the 2009 Korean Prime Ministers Cup.

The rest of the annual go calendar is also still going strong, including the quarterly Internet events, and the regional club tournaments.

In non-tournament news, the council was pleased to proceed with an initiative that was started by the previous council, namely the first stage of what we hope will eventually be a formal request to the World Oza organizing committee, in which we hope the rest of the African and Oceania Go playing countries will join us in requesting a better deal for our representatives to this tournament. We await further developments on this front with interest.

We have also attempted to improve and streamline the membership process, both in terms of making it easier to join and pay, and improving the visibility of membership information.

Referring to the treasurer's report briefly, I am pleased to see that our financial situation is healthy, and am encouraged by the reports of increased sales of books and equipment, indicating growing interest in the game. I'd particularly like to thank Sakkie Buys for preparing the financial statements and the treasurer's report on Andre Connell's behalf.

I'd like to thank the people who served with me on the 2008/2009 SAGA Council: Ben Gale, Andries Kruger, Andre Connell, Steve Kroon and Andrew Davies. Andries will be leaving the council after serving three years, and we say thank you very much to him.

Chris Welsh

SAGA president 2008/2009