



Mind Sports – *Current Status and Future Prospect*

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Outline

- What are Mind Sports?
- Major Mind Sport Events in Recent Years
- Mind Sports – the Educational Initiatives
- Mental Health Benefit of Mind Sports
- Future Prospects and Tasks
- Conclusion

What are Mind Sports? (1)

- The term “mind sport” is a modern term started in UK – the “Mind Sport Olympiad” has been held in UK since 1997. It includes many board and card games previously considered “leisure games”.
- The General Association of International Sport Federation (GAISF) evolved into SportAccord and includes mind sports.
- SportAccord defines SPORT as an activity that:
 - Includes the element of competition;
 - Does not include any element of “luck” built into the competition;
 - Does not pose undue risk to the health of safety of its participants;
 - Is not harmful to any living creature;
 - Does not rely on equipment provided by a single manufacturer.

What are Mind Sports? (2)

- SportAccord classifies sports into 5 categories:
 - Physical sports
 - Mind sports
 - Motorized sports
 - Synchronized sports
 - Animal-assisted sports
- A common theme of sports is “*play to win*” – *compete with high concentration, fighting spirit, quick reflection, and strong will*. It must contain elements of *fair play, discipline, rules, moral code, training, and performance*.
- Mind sports are then defined within these criteria.

The International Mind Sports Association (IMSA)



- Founded in 2005, IMSA exists in the setting of SportAccord.
- Founding members of IMSA include Bridge (WBF), Chess (FIDE), Draughts (FMJD), Go (IGF).
- There are two observers – Xiangqi (WXF) and Duplicate Poker (IFP). *(Post Hoc: WXF became a member in 2014)*
- IMSA was formed to promote Olympic-styled events for all mind sports.



Admission Criteria into IMSA



- The sport must be free from the element of luck.
- The sport must be universal – must not be dependent on a specific culture.
- The sport must be wide spread – played over several continents (>4) and in many countries (>70).
- The federation representing that sport must be admitted into SportAccord prior to IMSA.

– These are very restrictive and exclusive criteria!

IMSA-organized Events Since 2005



- *WMSG-I*: Beijing, 2008.
- *WMSG-II*: Lille, France, 2012.
- *SAWMG-1* through 4: Beijing, 2011 to 2014.
- Part of *Asian Games-2010*: Guangzhou, 2010.
- Part of *Asian Indoors and Martial Games-2013*: Incheon, South Korea, 2013.
- *Additionally, there are several regional and national mind sport events.*

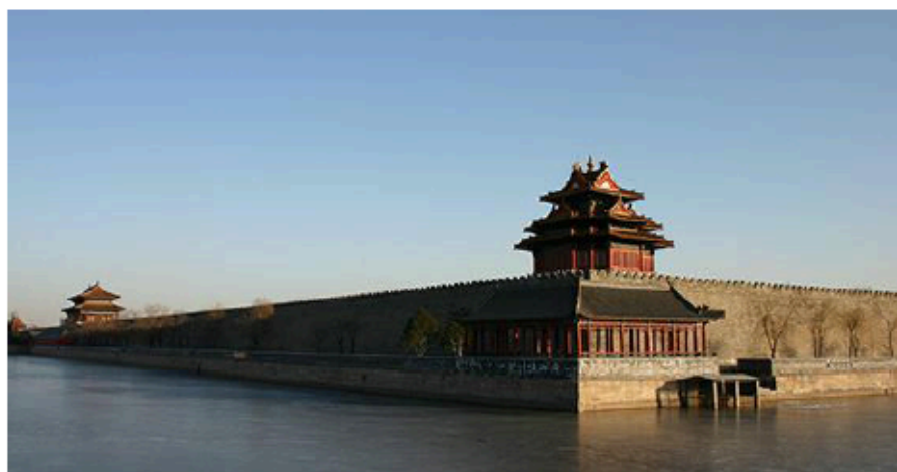
World Mind Sport Games, WMSG-I



- Held in Beijing, China in October 2008; sharing the infrastructures and organization of the Summer Olympics.
- Participated by >2,700 athletes from 140 countries, 800 staff, and >300 reporters from 109 countries.
- 105 medals were awarded in five sports – bridge, chess, draughts, go, and xiangqi.
- *This was the event that defined “mind sport games”.*



Civilization Varied, Wisdom Unbounded



October 3rd to 18th 2008
Beijing, China



WMSG-II



- Held at the Grand Palais of Lille, France, in August 2012, in close proximity to the London Summer Olympics.
- Participated by ~2,000 athletes from 120 countries and an additional ~500 support staff.
- 105 medals were awarded in five sports – bridge, chess, draughts, go, and xiangqi.
- *Established the quadrennial tradition of WMSG.*

2nd WORLD MIND SPORTS GAMES



Lille 2012





北京2013

世界智力精英运动会
Beijing 2013 SportAccord World Mind Games



SA World Mind Games: SAWMG-1 through -4



- Held at the Beijing International Convention Centre, this event is commercially sponsored.
- ~150 top athletes from five sports compete for substantial cash prizes.
- In parallel, worldwide online tournaments are held in three sports, participated by tens of thousands.
- *Represents a new commercial sponsorship format for mind sports; establishes a new precedent in bridge and draught of playing for prizes.*



The 2010 Asian Game

乐羊羊 Le Yangyang



- Three sports, Chess, Go, Xiangqi, were featured competition items in the Asian Games. Mind sport events were held at Guangzhou Qiyuan.
- 10 countries/regions participated in Go competitions, including three medal items. (Chess had 25 countries.)
- *First time mind sports joined regular Olympic sports.*

The 2013 Asian Indoors and Martial Arts Games



- Chess and Go were featured in the event held at Incheon, South Korea.
- It was the third time Chess was included in this event, but it was a debut for Go.
- *Long-term association is promised.*

Mind Sports Demonstrations

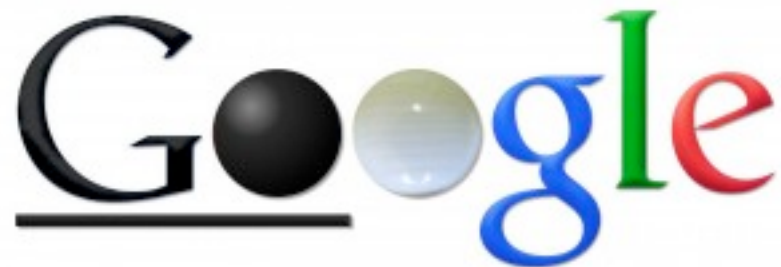
Mind Sport International Festivals: started in Prague and Las Vegas in 2012, now Marbella, Cardiff, LA, and Vienna, twelve festivals are planned in the near future.

Mind Sport Partners Festival: November 2011 at the *London Eye*, including the first *Nations' Cup* Duplicate Poker Championship.



The Educational Initiatives

- Just as competition events have blossomed, there have been many new educational initiatives aimed at popularizing mind sports and realizing their health and educational benefits.
- The focus has been diverse: university research, instructional courses, online education; school curricula and after-school programs; education pedagogy and technology, etc.



Examples of Educational Initiatives (1)

- A number of universities worldwide now offer courses on Go and the culture behind the game.
- Myongji University offers a degree in Go.
- The Thai University-Industry Coop Program for Go offers employment guarantees for strong Go players.
- Serious research is being engaged by many groups in artificial intelligence for Go.
- There is a large-scale program to explore using new technologies in mind sport education (the Mind Research Network – MRN, led by Berkman Center of Harvard University).

Examples of Educational Initiatives (2)

- The FIDE Latin-America program that includes large-scale equipment donation and teacher training.
- The FMJD Africa program for afterschool, including equipment donation and tournament sponsorship.
- The IGF South America program, including designing teaching materials in Spanish and training Spanish-speaking Go teachers.



Examples of Educational Initiatives (3)

- Implementing mind sports into school curricula – Beijing, China.
- “LA’s Best” – an afterschool program for the City of Los Angeles that aims at promoting intelligence development. Go and chess are included.
- Jamaica (NY) school program using iPad’s to train students in chess and draughts.
- “Cambridge initiative” – using MIT Media Lab experts and mind sport masters to design a program that implements mind sports in the Cambridge school district.
- Afterschool programs organized by the Confucius Institute.



Example (4) – the edX program



- Organized by 29 universities (including MIT, Harvard, Berkeley, Caltech, Tsinghua, Beida, Ecole, München, etc).
- Using technology provided by many tech labs, led by MIT Media Lab, to create new educational tools.
- “Create better solutions” for the campus and the world.
- Mind sports are included, starting with the chessX program created by Mind Research Network (MRN).

*RETHINK YOUR WORLD –
experience the BEST EDUCATION
whenever, wherever you want*

Health Benefit of Mind Sports

- Many anecdotal evidence points to the benefit of mind sports in the reduction of mind aging.
- First concrete evidence was in 2003: Swedish researchers linked leisure games with improvement in cognitive functions.
- More recent research using better methodology points to direct link of mind sports (game-play) with delaying the onset of dementia and with better cognition.
- Last month, a new research (published in *Nature*) showed just 12 hours of game-playing over a month markedly improved memory for driving and sign-recognition!
- *Promoting mind sports among the elderly is a social responsibility!*

Conclusion

- Since the start of organized mind sports, the competition aspect has enjoyed an auspicious start.
- The future key is on reaping the educational benefit for the young and the health benefit for the old.
- Topics to explore include:
 - Developing the commercial value of broadcasting
 - Setting standard rating system – a “reward system”
 - An International Mind Sport Day (or Go Day)?