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**Nolan Bushnell to Keynote First U.S. International Go Symposium**

The father of the computer gaming revolution, Nolan Bushnell, will be the keynote speaker at a symposium this summer for the world's oldest continuously played game of skill, Go. The first U.S. International Go Symposium will bring together Go scholars from around the world to explore educational, cultural, historical, literary, artistic, scientific, and technological aspects of the game.

Organized by Peter Shotwell, noted Go scholar and author, the symposium will take place on August 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> during the first weekend of the 28<sup>th</sup> US Go Congress in Black Mountain, North Carolina. The International Go Federation (IGF) is providing seed funding for the symposium. 400 participants and at least a dozen professionals from the U.S. and Asia are expected for a week of playing and learning about go with the Symposium as the opening event.

In 2004 the International Minds Sports Association (IMSA) was formed to promote an Olympic-style event for mind sports. Go was the pre-eminent item of the First World Mind Sports Games, an international mind sport event held at the Beijing Olympic venue after the Summer Olympics in 2008. The competitions also included chess, bridge, draughts and xiang qi (Chinese chess). Among these games, only in Go and Bridge are humans still superior to computers. The U.S. recently formed the US Mind Sports Association as part of the world-wide effort to further promote mind sports.

Nolan Bushnell calls Go his 'favorite game of all time'. Nolan founded a pioneering computer company in 1972 and selected a Go term, *atari*, for the company's name. Atari's game Pong became the first commercially successful computer game, opening the door to modern computer gaming. Go, considered the most elegant of games, is played with black and white stones on a grid of 19\*19 intersecting lines. A few simple rules generate more possible board positions than sub-atomic particles in the known universe. The depth of Go has resisted computer simulation (unlike chess, draughts, and xiang-qi) and its combination of left and right brain thinking makes it an ideal educational tool.

While millions play Go around the world it is not well known in the U.S. The American Go Association was founded in 1935 by chess master Edward Lasker and Harper's

Magazine Editor-in-Chief Lee Foster Hartman. It now has over 100 chapters across the U.S.

Like Sumo and other Asian arts Go has an extensive professional system based mainly in Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan. Until now only three Americans have become pros: Janice Kim, a 3 dan from New Mexico through the Korean system; Minnesota's James Kerwin, a 2 dan, through the Japanese system; and Michael Redmond, CA., a 9 dan, the highest possible rank, through the Japanese system. About a dozen Asian pros now live and teach in the US. Some have become US citizens.

Plans are underway to form an American Pro certification process. This effort is spearheaded by Myung Wan Kim, a Korean 9 dan living in California. Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Taiwanese pro associations are assisting in this effort with technical support, advice, training opportunities, and identifying potential sponsors.

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