

World Cup in one-minute gomoku games

(This is a draft, not the final version of the rules)

Online one-minute swap2 games are a highly involving kind of sport enjoyed by many gomoku players. To excel in it, one has to possess a whole bunch of various skills and abilities – the ability to think very fast and accurately, intuition, time management, emotion control, a lot of learned gomoku shapes, and fine motor skills. It is a highly intellectually demanding activity that causes strong adrenaline rushes.

While about a dozen of outstanding one-minute players have emerged – for example, Zoli, Attila, Gergo, Peking, Adifek, BBJ, Zukole, Bano, Gregi, and Kedlub - there is a big question mark about who is the very best.

To address this question, we organise a unique tournament - the first ever World Cup in online one-minute games. It will determine the best player in the world as well as help popularise gomoku and let many people fulfil their competitive instinct and experience strong emotions to spice up their lives.

Organising committee

We, the organising committee, are Usiek, Zoli, and Sandra, and believe that we together are ideally suited to organise such a tournament.

Usiek is the current champion of Poland and a current team world champion, and he has been successfully managing various online gomoku tournaments, including the Monday Blitz Evenings as well as the Black Meijin and White Meijin.

Zoli is an exceptionally skilful one-minute player and undoubtedly is the most successful player of the Monday Blitz Evenings, a popular series of tournaments in one-minute games.

Sandra is a well-known gomoku enthusiast who has been very successful in organising and promoting numerous online matches between top players and will bring her professional expertise to cover and promote the World Cup in a series of well-written articles, which will be published on various gomoku websites and forums.

Any arising issue will be discussed between all of us, and, in the very unlikely event that no consensus is reached, a decision will be made by the majority of our votes. If the issue is very important and may significantly impact the success of our tournament, we will consult with the gomoku community on the Polish and Russian gomoku discussion forums – forum.gomoku.pl and vk.com/gomoku, respectively.

Rest assured – we will organise the World Cup in a perfect way.

Tournament system

The World Cup will consist of matches. Each match will be played between two players and will normally consist of about twenty one-minute games, with the exact number of games depending on the tournament stage and the course of the match.

The tournament system closely resembles that of the FIFA World Cup – a brief group stage, in which everyone plays a few matches, followed by a play-off stage.

Our World Cup is expected to take a few months, with every participant having to play about 3-7 matches normally lasting a bit less than an hour.

Application

To participate in the World Cup, a player should send us email to usiek1992 at gmail.com and sandragomoku at gmail.com before Sat 31 Jan 23:59 Central European Time with the following information:

1. First name and surname.
2. Citizenship.
3. The nickname to be used in the World Cup. The nickname must start with wbc (World Blitz Cup), be created on playok.com before applying to us, have no games on it, and be used in the future exclusively to play in the World Cup.
4. Preferred contact details in Internet – for example, an email address or an account on facebook.com, vk.com, or playok.com.

Note that these data will be published.

Qualification

To qualify to play in the World Cup, a player must satisfy one of the two following requirements:

1. Be on the list of about 100 players whom we personally invite. The list is provided at the end of this document.
2. Finish in top 3 in one of our three qualification tournaments, which will be created on playok.com by using the nickname “wbc”. The first qualification tournament will be played on Sun 5 Feb at 19:00 Warsaw time, the second one on Sat 11 Feb at 12:00 Warsaw time, and third one the same day at 19:00 Warsaw time, with the parameters being 9 rounds, 1 min swap2.

In these qualification tournaments, only those can play who apply in advance for participation in the World Cup as described above and are not on the aforementioned list of invited players. In addition, those who finish within top 3 in one of these qualification tournaments cannot play in the remaining ones.

If someone unknown to us qualifies to play in the World Cup, we will take measures to ensure he is not a clone of another participant – for example, we may ask him to show us his accounts in social networks.

Group stage

The players will be divided into small groups consisting of a few players, say 3-5 players. In each group, everyone plays a match with everyone in turn (round robin).

From each group, two players will advance to the play-off stage. As the total number of players in the play-off stage has to be a power of two, e.g., 8, 16, 32, the number of groups has to be a power of two, as well.

The distribution of the players over the groups will be made by a random draw, but we will take care to avoid accumulation of very strong players in a single group. For this purpose, we will divide the players into the following three categories before the random draw:

1. Best (in our opinion) N players, where N is the number of groups.
2. Next best N players.
3. All other players.

Each player from category 1 will be placed in a separate group. Then the players from category 2 will be randomly distributed over the groups, each to a separate group. After that, the remaining players will be randomly put on the remaining places in the groups.

Who advances to the play-off stage is determined by the number of won matches. The tie-breaker criteria are as follows (arranged by the order of their application):

1. The number of won one-minute games.
2. The result of the match between the players concerned. If there are more than two players in the same tie, then the criteria are:
 - The number of won matches played between the players in the tie.
 - The number of won one-minute games in the matches played between the players in the tie.
3. Extra games as decided by us.

Play-off stage

The play-off stage is simply a single elimination tournament – also called an Olympic system tournament.

The play-off tree will be drawn before the group stage in such a way that

1. players who advance from the same group can meet only in the final and
2. the best (in our opinion) four players, chosen by us before the group stage, cannot meet each other before the semifinal stage if they win their groups.

Additionally, a match for the third place will be played between those who reach the semi-final stage but do not make it to the final.

Matches

1. All matches will be played on playok.com and consist of one-minute swap2 games.
2. Undoing moves is strictly prohibited, so the option “no undo” shall be checked.
3. Before a match, both participants arrange a suitable day and time and let us know them by email at least 72 hours in advance. If necessary, certain matches of the last round of the group stage will be arranged to be played in parallel. In case of a significant language barrier, a player may ask us to help arrange a match. The languages spoken by us are: English (Sandra, Usiek, Zoli), Russian (Sandra), Polish (Usiek), Hungarian (Zoli), and German (Sandra).
4. If any of the participants of a match does not appear, the other player is free to leave after 15 minutes of waiting. Decisions about such cases will be made by us on the case-by-case basis.
5. Who puts an opening in the first game of a match is decided by the server. Note that our statistics indicate that putting an opening in a one-minute game does not bring any noticeable advantage, at least for games played between strong players.
6. If a game ends as a draw, it does not count and has to be played again.
7. Number of games in a match:
 - In a match of the group stage, the players play 21 non-drawn games.
 - In a match of the play-off stage, with the exception of the final, the players initially play 20 non-drawn games and then, if the score is equal, play until the difference becomes two wins; however, the match stops if one of the players has secured a victory.
 - In the final, the players initially play 40 non-drawn games and then, if the difference is less than four wins, they play until it becomes four wins; again, the match stops if one of the players has secured a victory.
 - The number of games in the match for the third place is determined the same way as for an ordinary play-off match, not the final.
8. After each 10 games, the participants of a match take a five-minute break, which they may skip if they both want to, but there is no break before the last, 21st game of a match of the group stage. There shall be no additional breaks.

Fair play

Players are allowed to use only their brains, i.e., they are allowed only to look at the board shown on the screen and click. It is not allowed to use programs to get hints as to what moves to make.

As it is practically impossible to cheat by using a program in one-minute games without making it obvious to experienced players, we do not expect this kind of cheating.

In the unlikely event that a player suspects that he has been cheated against by means of a program, he has the right to complain to us about that. Generally, no action will be taken by us until we receive a complaint from the victim himself, although in exceptional cases we may open an investigation on our own.

A player shall lodge his complaint not later than 10 days after the match concerned, at least an incomplete complaint containing a promise to send us detailed evidence later or a request to investigate the match on our own.

All complains, if any, will be considered, investigated, and decided upon on the case-by-case basis. We may perform our own additional analysis to make a decision.

Note that all complaints will be made public, together with our decisions.

A similar procedure applies to complains about a secret substitution of a player. Again, we do not expect this kind of cheating, because the top one-minute players are highly reputable and have noticeable differences in their individual playing styles. They have been a part of the gomoku community for quite a long time and are extremely unlikely to risk their reputation and spoil their fun by trying to play dirty games.

In the unlikely event that we receive a complaint about a secret substitution of a player, one of the decisive factors will be the willingness of the suspect to cooperate (e.g., to give a permission to the admin of playok.com to tell us the IP address used during the match).

If we become convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that someone has cheated in our World Cup, be it using a program or a secret substitution, the cheater will be excluded from our tournament, and the match in which he was caught cheating will be considered a technical win of his opponent.

Coverage

The World Cup will be continuously covered on gomokuworld.com, facebook.com/gomokuworld as well the Russian and Polish gomoku discussion boards in a series of well-written articles.

All players who qualify to play in the World Cup are kindly asked, although not strictly required, to send us one or two photos to the email addresses indicated above, so that we can create match posters and effectively promote the World Cup.

We would prefer photos showing considerably more than just the face, and we need either one symmetric photo, in which the player looks in the direction of the observer, or two different photos in which the player looks to the right and to the left with respect to the observer, respectively.

Here is an example of good photos used to create a match poster:



Awards

The winner will be declared the world champion in one-minute gomoku games and will be shipped a nice cup with an appropriate text. The winner will also be asked to send us a photo of himself holding the cup, and the photo will be added to gomokuworld.com and other websites to forever imprint the outcome of the first ever World Cup in one-minutes games.

In addition, the top three players will be shipped medals, and also magnetic boards will be posted to all four participants who reach the semi-final stage.

However, the main award will be, of course, fun and excitement due to very interesting matches.

We wish everyone a lot of fun, and let the strongest win.

Invited players (i.e., exempt from the qualification requirement)

(sorted alphabetically by their first names)

Adam Harmasz (Henry)
Adam Horvath (Anakinn)
Adam Varga (Songokussj)
Adam Waclawik (Okcthunder)
Adrian Czychowski (Adiem)
Adrian Fitzermann (Adifek)
Aleš Rybka (Autickocz)
Alexandr Bogatirev (Bayc)
Alexandr Ezupov (Mordan)
Alexey Lebedev (Alleb)
Alexey Mikhaylov (Cantabile)
Anatoliy Smirnov (Barbos)
András Lőcsei (Ecoban)
Andrey Litvinenko (Popovich)
Andry Purk (Kuubik)

Andrzej Zakonnik (Zakon)
Ants Soosorv (Ants)
Arkadiusz Rygiel (Joyoman)
Arkadiusz Widera (Rybakov)
Artur Tamioła (Arczi)
Attila Demján (Attila)
Attila Hegedűs (Cynicalme)
Björn Lind (Bursan)
Bogdan Brachaczek (Bbj)
Csaba Kampós (Dibarius)
Daniil Kartashev (Dumay)
Daria Petrenko (Dacotta)
Dariusz Białkowski (Rakdar)
Dariusz Fitzermann (Fanner)
Denis Kachaev (Capellmaster)
Denis Osipov (Nirvana)
Edward Rizvanov (Loller)
Emma Jellve (Snuttan)
Evgeniy Sumarokov
Gergő Tóth (Vessago)
Igor Eged (Iec)
Ilya Katsev (Bromozel)
Ilya Muratov (Furla)
Jan Bielák (Olgoj)
Jan Kopecký (Deafbat)
Jan Purkrábek (Purkys)
Jan Sekułowicz (Johns)
Jan Strádal (Gadael)
Jari Udd (Idioticus)
Jarosław Lange (Vince)
Jiří Šálek (Parez)
Kamil Pawela (Protiz)
Karol Podwyszyński (Crosslet)
Kjetil Nossun (Kjetil)
Ko-Han Chen
Kristóf Ménesi (Peking)
Krzysztof Gawel (Spavacz)
Krzysztof Łapsa (Koston)
Lukáš Souček (Boneslash)
Łukasz Białkowski (lukasz20rts)
Łukasz Majksner (Usiek)
Maciej Nowakowski (Utratos)
Madli Mirme (Madli)
Magdalena Kniejska (Magdula)
Maksym Tomczak (Fokahontaz)
Marcin Bohdankiewicz (Roy)
Marcin Gruca (Casbah)
Marcin Majczyk (Muchaldinho)
Marcin Niedbalec (Ence)
Marcin Wojtasiński (Jas)

Marek Gorzecki (Alicecooper)
Marek Hanzl (Mazec)
Mark Heidmets (Hatemets)
Mark Horvath (Markhorvath)
Martin Höbemägi (Hobemagi)
Martin Kusák
Martin Muzika (Martez)
Mateusz Miśkiewicz (Morpheus)
Mateusz Rędzioch (Sawyer)
Matiss Riherts (Ok366)
Maxim Karasyov
Michał Kozimor (Devotion)
Michał Pietrusiak (Siweropoulos)
Michal Radimský (Semtexx)
Michał Wileczek (Vilumisiek)
Michał Zajk (Puholek)
Michał Żukowski (Zukole)
Mikhail Kozhin (Loiso)
Mikhail Lomakin (Mikle)
Milan Čapák (Pruda)
Miroslav Háša (Gregi)
Tomáš Němec (Teovan)
Monika Kolouchová (Olsava)
Nikolay Poltaratskiy (Nikolay)
Oleg Bulatovsky (Gelo0one)
Oleg Eremin (Monstr)
Ondřej Nykl (Ondik)
Pavel Laube (Kedlub)
Pavel Makarov (Mak)
Pavčina Brdková (Paja)
Paweł Kosek (S0uthiph0p)
Paweł Nowak (Peaceman)
Paweł Tarasiński (Maestro)
Peter Jonsson (Peterjo)
Peter Vrabel (Ouups)
Petr Janura (Budvarek)
Petr Žižka (Cerok)
Piotr Bieniek (Gacul)
Piotr Cych (Bombowy)
Piotr Kamieniak (Czamber)
Piotr Małowiejski (Angst)
Rafał Szeffler (Templar)
Renee Pajuste (Fastfive)
Richard Sandstrom (Ricks)
Roman Belyakov (Bappka)
Rudolf Dupszki (Dupsky)
Stanislav Samsonov (Avstars)
Štěpán Tesařík (Testif)
Szczepan Łukasik (Edzi0)
Tauri Purk (Eurogomoku)

Timo Ilu (Rentimo)
Tomáš Barták (Attacker)
Tomáš Sviták (Eskon)
Tunnet Taimla (Kuldne)
Valeriy Kondratiev (Valkon)
Valtteri Pulliainen (Fire2fire)
Vladimir Nipoti (Bano)
Vladimir Sinitsyn (Vladimirs)
Vladimir Sushkov
Vyacheslav Petrov (Krendel)
Wei-Yuan Lu (Ntcberman)
Yuriy Kraubner (Yurius)
Yuriy Taiblin
Yuriy Tarannikov (Odin)
Zoltán László (Zoli)