Gomokuworld's Online World Blitz Cup 2017

Official announcement date: 11 Feb 2017

1. Introduction

Online one-minute swap2 games are a highly involving kind of sport enjoyed by many gomoku players. To excel in it, one has to posses 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, a unique tournament is organised – the first ever World Cup in 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.

2. Organisers

The main organisers are Usiek, Zoli, and Sandra, further referred to as "we", and we are strongly supported by Attila, twice the world champion, who gives us his endorsement.

We believe that we 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 the most successful player of the Monday Blitz Evenings, a popular series of tournaments in one-minute games. He is Gomokuworld's Meijin 2016 and also won the 2nd place in the Hungarian Gomoku Meijin Open Championship 2016 in Budapest.

- 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 discussion boards.

Zoli and Usiek will primarily focus on technical and sport matters, while Sandra's main focus will be to promote the tournament and cover it in a series of articles.

In the extremely unlikely event that we cannot reach a consensus on a certain issue, a decision will be made by the majority of our votes.

Our contact details:

	facebook.com	Email at gmail.com	vk.com	playok.com	Languages spoken
Usiek	facebook.com/usiek	usiek1992	vk.com/id226026008	undothefuture	English, Polish
Zoli	facebook.com/MaeSTRO666	lzltn9	vk.com/id410025969	laszlozoltan	English, Hungarian
Sandra	facebook.com/profile.php?id=100011333320097	sandragomoku	vk.com/id372140299	sandra113	English, Russian, German

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

3. Tournament system

The World Cup will consist of matches. Each match will be played between two players on playok.com and normally consist of about twenty games with the time control 1 min. The exact number of games in a match depends on the tournament stage and the course of the match as described in Section 8.

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 less than an hour.

4. Where to get information about the tournament's progress

We provide two sources of official information in English, which mainly duplicate each other:

> (1)　http://gomokuworld.com/articles/gomokuworld__s_online_world_blitz_cup_2017

> (2)　https://sites.google.com/site/worldblitzcup2017

Additionally, there is a thread on the Russian gomoku discussion board for official information about the tournament both in Russian and English:

> (3)　https://vk.com/topic-19499145_34960558

In this thread, the administrators of the board will periodically remove all messages written not by us.

Some announcements and articles will also be posted on Gomokuworld's Facebook page:

> (4)   https://www.facebook.com/GomokuWorld

Open discussions about the World Cup:

> (5)   https://vk.com/topic-19499145_34803934
> This thread already contains 350+ messages, mostly in Russian, but feel free to post there in English, too – most Russian players understand it.

> (6)   http://forum.gomoku.pl/viewtopic.php?t=2445
> This discussion is in Polish and English.

Any of threads (5) and (6) is an excellent place to publicly ask or suggest us something.

5. How to become a participant

There are three stages to pass in order to become a participant, in the following order:

1. Registration stage,

2. qualification stage, and

3. name verification stage, but

there are about 100 players who are exempt from both the qualification and name verification requirements, i.e., these players only need to register in order to become participants. The list of these players is provided in Appendix A of this document.

5.1. Registration stage

To register, a player shall send an email to usiek1992 at gmail.com and sandragomoku at gmail.com before

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Fri 3 Mar 23:59 Warsaw Time

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with the following information:

1. First name and surname.

2. Citizenship.

3. The nickname he will use in the World Cup. The nickname shall 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. Contact details in Internet. The player shall provide at least one of the following: an email account, an account on facebook.com, an account on vk.com, or an account on playok.com. The player is expected to more or less regularly check messages on all accounts he provides, say, at least once per 3 days.

The list of registered players together with the data they provide in their applications will be posted on links (1), (2), and (3) above and will be updated more or less every day.

In the period between 32 and 72 hours after the application is made, but before Sun 5 Mar 15:00 Warsaw Time, each participant shall check whether his name is on the list of registered players. If it is not, he shall notify us immediately.

5.2. Qualification stage

If a player is not on the aforementioned list of players exempt from both the qualification and name verification requirements, he has to pass the qualification stage.

To pass the qualification stage, it is sufficient to play in at least one of our three qualification tournaments, which will be created on playok.com by using the nickname "wbc," and finish in top X in one of them, where the number X will be announced by us not later than Sat 4 Mar 23:59 Warsaw time on links (1), (2), and (3) provided above in Section 4. The number X will be no less than 3.

The dates and times of the qualification tournaments are:

- **Sun 5 Mar 19:00 Warsaw time**

- **Sat 11 Mar 12:00 Warsaw time**

- **Sat 11 Mar 19:00 Warsaw time**

The parameters of each of these tournaments: 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 in Section 5.1 above and are not on the aforementioned list of players exempt from both the qualification and name verification requirements.

In addition, those who finish in top X in one of these qualification tournaments cannot play in the remaining ones.

If someone finishes in top X in none of the qualification tournaments, he may still become a participant, provided that someone who successfully passes the qualification stage fails the name verification stage. The rules for such situations are provided in Section 5.4.

5.3. Name verification stage

If a player is not on the list of players exempt from both the qualification and name verification requirements and successfully passes the qualification stage, he will be contacted by us and told one of the following:

(1)   Either we say that we know him well enough and that he is considered passed the name verification stage,

(2)   or we say that the name needs to be verified.

Perhaps the easiest way to verify the name is to show us an own social network account that is convincing enough. We will look, in particular, at the registration date, number of friends, and who the friends are. We will also contact the owner of the account to verify that it is the same person. If we still have reasonable doubts, we may contact some of his friends, but no such contact will be made without the player's permission.

If the above method does not work for a particular player, we may consider other options. They include, but are not limited to:

1.   Finding a sufficiently reputable third person (not necessarily known to us) who will confirm that the name of the player is real.

2.   Providing convincing business contact details.

We will be open to hear suggestions of alternative name verification methods.

5.4. Situations where someone passes the qualification stage but fails the name verification stage

In the unlikely event that someone passes the qualification stage but fails the name verification stage, he will be disqualified, and the next best in the qualification tournament from which the disqualified player qualified will be considered qualified instead of him.

If the recalculation of the results of that qualification tournament by setting all games of the disqualified player to be technical losses results in a change of the next best player, both players in question will be considered qualified.

6. Group stage

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

Two players advance to the play-off stage from each group. 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 as described in Appendix B.

The criteria to determine who advances to the play-off stage are as follows (arranged by the order of their application):

1.   The number of won matches.

2. The number of won one-minute games in the matches.

3. 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.

4. Extra games as decided by us.

7. 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 four players, chosen by us before the group stage as described in Appendix B, cannot meet 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.

8. 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 **48 hours** in advance. In case of a significant language barrier, a player may ask any of us to help arrange the match. If necessary, certain matches of the last round of the group stage will be arranged to be played in parallel.

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 determined 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. Who puts an opening

is determined by the server.

7. Number of games in a match:

- In a match of the group stage, the players play **21 non-drawn games**, even if one of them secures a victory in the middle of the match. (This is because in the group stage the score is also important.)

- In a match of the play-off stage, with the exception of the final, the players initially play **30 non-drawn games** and then, if the score is equal, play until the difference becomes **two wins**; however, the match stops if the number of non-drawn games has reached **51** or 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**; however, the match stops if the number of non-drawn games has reached **71** or 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 non-drawn games**, the participants of a match take **a five-minute break** if at least one of them wants to. There are no additional breaks.

9. 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 **no 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.

Transparency:

1. We will publicly post all complaints received by us as well as our decisions on them, reasons for the decisions, analyses, etc.

2. We are going to ask reputable experts to give us their opinions and advice, but it is us who will make a decision on each case, because we want to bear the full responsibility for the success of the World Cup.

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 the World Cup, be it using a program or a secret substitution, the cheater will be excluded from the World Cup, and the match in which he was caught cheating will be considered a technical win of his opponent.

In the very unlikely event that we consider the probability of that a player has cheated in a certain match too high to let him play further but not high enough to confidently call him a cheater, we may make a compromise decision: The player will be denied further participation, but we will issue a public statement clearly stating that the decision is based on a risk assessment rather than our firm conviction that he has cheated.

10. Connection issues

If immediately before a match one of the players claims he is having connection issues (e.g., lags and frequent disconnections), the match has to be rescheduled, but we will take measures if someone uses this rule too often.

If a player starts experiencing significant connection issues during a match, he shall first talk to his opponent to try to reach a fair agreement, e.g., an agreement to finish the match later or to play the entire match again at a later date.

If the players cannot reach an agreement, the player having the connection issues has to choose between

1. continuing playing despite the issues,

2. simply quitting, which means a technical loss, and

3. quitting and appealing to us **no later than 24 hours** after the match.

If we receive such an appeal, we will choose between the following options:

1. technical loss,

2. finishing the match at a later date,

3. playing the entire match again at a later date, and

4. letting the other participant of the match choose between options 2 and 3.

We are likely to choose Option 1 if

1. there is an indication or a strong reason to suspect that the player may have simulated having his connection issues in order to finish the match at a later date or

2. the player already made a similar appeal in the World Cup before.

An analogous approach applies to any other kind of a force majeure that may happen during a match.

11. Coverage

The World Cup will be continuously covered on the websites indicated in Section 4 in a series of well-written articles.

All participants of the group stage are kindly asked, although not strictly required, to send us one or two photos so that we could create match posters and effectively promote the World Cup. Here is an example of good photos used to create a match poster:

We would prefer either a 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, respectively, so that we could make posters in which the players do not look away from each other.

12. Awards

The winner will be shipped a nice trophy cup with an appropriate text. If he agrees to send us a photo of himself holding the cup, 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.

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.

Appendix A: Players exempt from both the qualification and name verification requirements

(sorted alphabetically by their first names)

Adam Harmasz (Henry)
Adam Horvath (Anakinn)
Adam Varga (Songokussj)
Adam Wacławik (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)
Attila Szentpéteri (Blackcode)
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)
Dmitry Epifanov (Owen)
Edward Rizvanov (Loller)
Emma Jellve (Snuttan)
Evgeniy Sumarokov
Gábor Gyenes (Captain5)

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)
Juraj Ďuračka (Panzeriv)
Kamil Pawela (Protiz)
Karol Podwyszyński (Crosslet)
Kjetil Nossum (Kjetil)
Ko-Han Chen
Kristóf Ménesi (Peking)
Krzysztof Gaweł (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 (Morpheusz)
Mateusz Rędzioch (Sawyer)
Matiss Riherts (Connect555)
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)
Monika Kolouchová (Olsava)
Nikolay Poltaratskiy (Nikolay)
Oleg Bulatovsky (Gelo0one)
Oleg Eremin (Monstr)
Ondřej Nykl (Ondik)
Pavel Laube (Kedlub)
Pavel Makarov (Mak)
Pavlína Brdková (Paja)
Paweł Kosek (S0uthiph0p)
Paweł Nowak (Peaceman)
Paweł Tarasiński (Maestro)
Pei-Yung Sung
Peter Jonsson (Peterjo)
Péter Pórfy (Pinusnegra)
Peter Vrabel (Ouups)
Petr Janura (Budvarek)
Petr Žižka (Cerok)
Piotr Bieniek (Gacul)
Piotr Cych (Bombowy)
Piotr Małowiejski (Angst)
Rafał Szefler (Templar)
Renee Pajuste (Fastfive)
Richard Sandstrom (Ricks)
Roman Belyakov (Bappka)
Roman Berezin (Shpion)
Rudolf Dupszki (Dupsky)
Stanislav Samsonov (Avstars)
Štěpán Tesařík (Testif)
Szczepan Łukasik (Edzi0)
Tauri Purk (Eurogomoku)
Timo Ilu (Rentimo)
Tomáš Barták (Attacker)
Tomáš Němec (Teovan)
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 (Ntcbman)
Yi-Feng Chang
Yuriy Kraubner (Yurius)
Yuriy Taiblin
Yuriy Tarannikov (Odin)
Zoltán László (Zoli)

Appendix B: The random draw before the group stage

We will first choose a few experts representing different countries and ask each of them to subjectively sort the participants by their level of play in one-minute games. For transparency, we will post the names of these experts as well as the lists made by them, but we will not tell who made each list.

Based on these lists, we will divide the players to the following three categories:

1. Best Y players, where Y is the number of groups.

2. Next best Y players.

3. All other players.

The exact algorithm of dividing the players to the above categories by using the lists made by the experts will be announced by us before we ask experts to sort the participants.

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.

Additionally, the lists made by the experts will be used to determine the best four players for the purpose of drawing the play-off tree. As stated in Section 7, we will make sure that these four players cannot meet before the semifinal stage if they win their groups.