

# Go club animation

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## Introduction

Go club managers often encounter difficulties to recruit and keep players in their clubs. If, as time goes by, regular players leave and no new players come to stay, the go clubs declines and disappears !

However, just a bit of organization and care can drastically improve the atmosphere and the functioning of a club.

So, the goal of this little guide is to provide ideas and advice to help club managers to organize activities and allow the club to grow.





## 1. Make your club known

To be able to exist, you must obviously **advertise for your club**.

Poster with **schedules**, **website** dedicated to the club, advertising in a local newspaper, forums and social networks... there are several ways to promote your activity.

Also consider organizing promotional activities: a "discover Go" day, holding a stand at a festival, giving lectures, etc.

## 2. Take care of everyone

### Welcoming the newcomers

Take special care to **welcome new players**: they are the future of your club !

Greet them in a friendly manner (even if that means to interrupt your game for an instant ...) and do not hesitate to introduce them to the other members so that they can integrate.

### Take care of beginners

Because they are not autonomous, **you especially have to take care of beginners !**

It takes a lot of time first to **initiate** them and then provide them tools to be able to get through the discovery of the universe of Go.

For board sizes, we recommend: **6x6** and **7x7** for **initiation** until the basics (catches and basic tsumegos) are well understood. Then go to **9x9**. From about 20 kyu, gradually increase to **13x13** and **19x19**.

### Facilitate exchanges

As responsible of the club, it's up to you to **know your players**, **evaluate their levels** and **facilitate pairing rotation**.

Advocate the use of **handicap** stones to balance the games and avoid the law of the jungle to rule.

## 3. Encourage game analysis

Encourage **analysis of games by the players together and/or with the help of a strong player** to create a culture of study and self-improvement within the club.

Games played may be stored either electronically or on a paper kifu (to be made available).

To comment, as a teacher / facilitator of Go, depending on the situation, you can:

- wait until the game is over
- interfere during the game : in this case limit yourself to a short intervention on already played moves rather than suggesting future moves – which would influence and spoil some of the fun.

For players who already have a strong foundation: **vulgarize games of Go professionals** is an interesting activity.

Choose instructive games, prepare comments that make the played moves understandable (do not



detail the complicated variants) and emphasise on interactivity by regularly asking to find the next move.

## 4. Prepare exercises

Many aspects of the game can be explored through **exercises**.

The life and death problems (**tsumego**) are - or should be - the "bread and butter" of every Go player.

But, other aspects of the game can be practiced and enjoyed through exercises: end of games (**yose**), good moves (**tesujis**), shapes, game beginnings (**fuseki**) ...

Put them on a goban or propose them via books to loan or in free access. You may also organize a problem solving contest.

In every case, choose wisely keeping in mind that many easy exercises are better than a difficult one.

## 5. Provide courses

Along with the exercises, real **Go courses** can be proposed.

Choose a theme that you master and enjoy. During the lesson, always stay interactive and prepare appropriate exercises.

## 6. Organize competition

Suggest your members to play occasionally "**serious**" **games with time control** – games whose results can be recorded for the national ranking.

More: organize from time to time a (small) official tournament on 19x19, or on 13x13 or 9x9, a match against another club, or a tournament of fast games just for the "fun"...

Playing in competition creates a special atmosphere in which players have the opportunity to give their best and measure their real strength.

## 7. Propose Go variants

### Go for more than 2 players

The strongest player can play **simultaneous games**.

It is also possible to practice Go as a team in two ways:

- **Go with consultation**: the players are grouped in a team with the possibility to discuss together to choose what to play.

- **Rengo**: the (two) players of each team play alternately and are not allowed to consult each other.

What's interesting with this variant is that players are directly confronted with different game styles than theirs.

### Go with different rules

There are many variants of Go with a pre-established game position, for example: to test the force of influence, the ability to survive or kill everything ...

To test one's memory, "Go unicolor" is a variant in which both players play stones of the same color and must remember which stones belong to whom.

"Fun" variants exist, such as: "Phantom Go" (players only see their own stones, but do not know where the opponent is playing - a referee makes sure they play only legal moves), "Pyjama Go"



(players change color when the game is lost), "Billiard Go", "Football Go", etc.

## Go for children

Children will enjoy playing with colorful materials: Lego-stones castles, pirate or rainbow gobans ... and receive attractive rewards (chocolate medals ...).

## 8. Transmit Go culture

Running a Go club is not just about playing Go and teaching the technique, but also about **transmitting Go culture**.

Go has a long history, with uses and countless fascinating anecdotes. Even at local level, your own club has a story to tell and you have experiences to share ...

Up to you to make this culture live. Introduce new and interested players to discover what we are passionate about.

## 9. Seek help

To be able to build something, it is better not to be alone.

Build your own network of friends, volunteers, service providers ... who have a link with Go, whenever it's the headmaster of a school, a board game salesman, the president of the Shogi association or a diplomat from Korean Embassy... Seize the good opportunities to develop your club.

**Continuity of services and a strong network of relationships** are key elements to ensure a successful and sustainable activity.

## 10. Create and maintain a club atmosphere

As a club responsible, **cultivate the human aspect** that connects players in your club.

Also from time to time, organize an activity outside the club: a friendly party in a restaurant or an outing to enjoy a sunny afternoon playing outdoors ...

It is the club good atmosphere and the friendly relationship you will develop that will make adherents come.