Top-Ranked Go Player Challenges Facebook USA's DarkForest in Vancouver on July 25

Chun-Hsun Chou is a professional, top-ranked Go player with over 50 title wins. In less than ten days, he joins five other ranked players taking on Facebook USA's DarkForest and other programs at the at the IEEE WCCI's Human-versus-Computer Go Competition. Chou has played DarkForest in the past, and is looking forward to the challenge. "DarkForest has an impressive mid-game, and a precise and subtle endgame" Chou says. "I would say it needs the most improvement in its opening. I am looking forward to seeing DarkForest's progress."

This has been an exciting year for Go players and programmers. In January, Google's AlphaGo program beat European champion Fan Hui in a surprising victory. Despite this win, many professional players believed that AlphaGo would not prevail against the world champion Lee Sedol in Seoul this March. Chou says that at the time, many professional players saw the competition as an advertising campaign by Google, who put up a million-dollar purse. Like most players, Chou says he was unprepared for AlphaGo's win in the first game. "Everyone was astonished" he says. "While I had expected Lee to take all matches, there was now the possibility he would win none."

Chun-Hsun Chou, winner of the
2010 Taiwan and Japan Championship.

In the end, Lee won the fourth of five games, playing white and turning the tables with a unique 78th hand under what Chou describes as "extremely disadvantageous conditions." Like many professional players, after the match Chou found himself analyzing the play and considering the lessons provided by AlphaGo. "What comes to mind especially," Chou says, "is that AlphaGo was able to show that certain bad moves, which we were taught to not consider or at least try our best to avoid playing, can in fact be used." Playing against programs, Chou concludes, "helps humans challenge pre-existing notions and re-consider deeply held beliefs."

Chou sees the merging of human and computer play as a possibility for the future. "Maybe one day" he says, "we will have an international competition where players from various countries will bring their computers and play alongside their programs, fighting for a world title where the champion would of course be a collaboration between human and machine."

In the meantime, Chou will meet DarkForest at the IEEE World Congress on Computational Intelligence's Human-versus-Computer Go Competition on July 25.

Competition Details

The finals of the Computer-vs-Human competition will take place at the Vancouver Convention Centre's West Level 1 on Monday, July 25 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm.

Tournament players include Chun-Hsun Chou and Ping-Chiang Chou of Taiwan, and female Japanese title holder Yimin Hsieh.

Following the tournament, Dr. David B. Fogel, creator of the checker-playing "Blondie24" program, will give a short TED-style talk on the history and relevance of human-versus-computer competitions.

Both evens are sponsored by the IEEE and the IEEE Computational Intelligence Society and are free and open to the public.

Event Link

http://oase.nutn.edu.tw/WCCI2016/poster.htm

Press Releases

Computers Challenge Humans
http://wcci2016.org/document/computers_challenge.pdf

Evolutionary Computing, or "What Would a Computer Do?"
http://wcci2016.org/document/computer_do.pdf