



ILYA SHIKSHIN 1 DAN PROFESSIONAL

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1990

RUSSIAN CHAMPION:

2005-2007, 2009, 2012, 2014-2016



Ilya Shikshin with his father, Valery Shikshin

PERSONAL MESSAGE

My name is Ilya Shikshin. I was born in 1990 in Kazan city, Russia. My father, Valery Shikshin, works as a go teacher. He has many students that showed good results in both the Russian and the European Championships. My elder sister Svetlana has played go for many years. She studied go in Korea and is 3 dan professional. One can say that go is my family game.

Go in Russia

Just as it is for chess, Russia is one of the most important countries for go in Europe. It is one of the few European countries with a constant growth of newcomers.

In 2016 alone, more than 250 tournaments were organised in Russia, which equates to an average of 5 tournaments per week. Today, Russia has 15 regional go federations with government accreditation, a number the country means to increase to 43 in total, and 60 go clubs in 60 different cities.

Russia is also one of the most dominating forces in Europe in terms of strong players and champions it produces. It has over 300 dan players alone, out of an astonishing total of 10.000 players that have ever participated in a tournament. There are many young and talented Russian players today, who will surely play an important role in the future of European go.

Personally, I mostly studied go at home. I also went to South Korea on several occasions. With the help of Mr. Chun Poong Jho 9p I trained in Korea for more than a year in total. Currently I live in Moscow and work as an executive director and sportsman of the Moscow Go Federation. I am looking forward to new achievements and great games of go.

RUSSIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

The Finals of the Russian Championship consist of sixteen players. The best three of the previous year are automatically seeded in the championship. The Russian Semi Finals function as a qualification, with the top eleven finishers gaining the right to take part in the Finals. The last two slots for the Finals are filled by decision of the Russian Go Federation.

This year the Semi Finals took place at the weekend of 17-18 September in go club China Town (клуб Китай-город) in Moscow. Twenty-two players participated and played five rounds of go. The favourites for the win were Timur Sankin 6d from Moscow and young talent Grigorij Fionin 7d (born 1999) from Saint Petersburg. The outcome of the tournament, however, surprised everyone: neither of the favourites ended up on the winner's podium and instead the top two players were from the city of Kazan, coached by Valery Shikshin 4d and Svetlana Shikshina 3p. The winner was determined by the match between Andrej Kulkov 6d and Stepan Popov 5d in the fourth round. Andrej Kulkov managed to decide the match in his favour and went on to win the fifth round as well, finishing at the top of the table with a clean slate. Stepan Popov 5d won his last round against Timur Sankin 6d and scored four victories in total, earning him second place. Third place was claimed by Alexej Lazarev 5d.



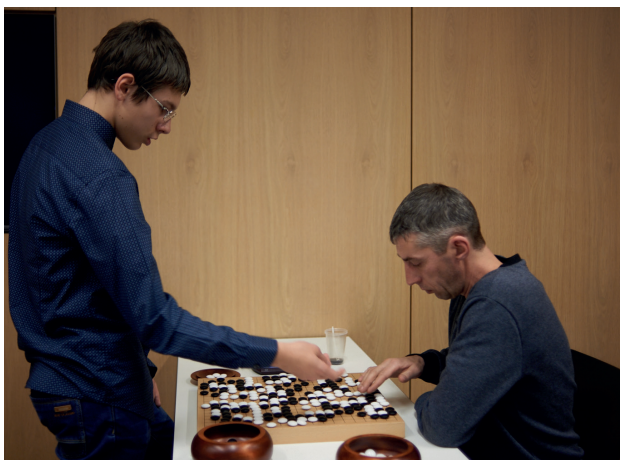
Top: Atmosphere of the Russian Semi Finals in go club China Town in Moscow

Middle: Grigorij Fionin 7d and Elvina Kalsberg 4d have scared off their opponents

Bottom: Former insei Anton Zatonskikh (left) versus the Russian champion of 2013, Timur Sankin 6d (right). In the background, the winner of the Semi Finals, Andrej Kulkov 6d (left), plays against third-place finisher Alexej Lazarev 5d (right)

FINAL STANDINGS OF THE SEMI FINALS OF THE RUSSIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Place	Player	Rank	Wins	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
1	Andrej Kulkov	6d	5	17+	8+	3+	2+	5+
2	Stepan Popov	5d	4	14+	19+	7+	1-	6+
3	Alexej Lazarev	5d	4	19+	12+	1-	16+	7+
4	Grigorij Fionin	7d	4	12-	14+	13+	9+	8+
5	Anton Zatonskikh	6d	3	16+	11+	6+	8-	1-
6	Timur Sankin	6d	3	13+	10+	5-	12+	2-
7	Igor Nemlij	6d	3	20+	9+	2-	15+	3-
8	Nikita Barykin	5d	3	22+	1-	17+	5+	4-
9	Stepan Trubicin	5d	3	15+	7-	16+	4-	18+
10	Anton Chernykh	5d	3	18+	6-	12-	19+	15+
11	Igor Popov	5d	3	21+	5-	15-	14+	13+
12	Andrej Cheburakhov	5d	2	4+	3-	10+	6-	14-
13	Elvina Kalsberg	4d	2	6-	18+	4-	17+	11-
14	Mikhail Svjatlovskij	3d	2	2-	4-	21+	11-	12+
15	Innokentij Dmitriev	3d	2	9-	20+	11+	7-	10-
16	Mikhail Korolkov	3d	2	5-	21+	9-	3-	20+
17	Vadim Khavin	4d	2	1-	22+	8-	13-	19+
18	Pavel Makarov	3d	2	10-	13-	20+	22+	9-
19	Dmitrij Kornev	3d	1	3-	2-	22+	10-	17-
20	Vadim Filippov	4d	1	7-	15-	18-	21+	16-
21	Ildar Almukhametov	2d	1	11-	16-	14-	20-	22+
22	Alexej Solovskij	3d	0	8-	17-	19-	18-	21-



The Finals of the Russian Championship consist of sixteen players that are divided into four separate groups of four players each. The division of the groups is based on the players' rating, where "1" corresponds to the highest rated player, as follows:

Group A: players 1, 8, 9, 16

Group B: players 2, 7, 10, 15

Group C: players 3, 6, 11, 14

Group D: players 4, 5, 12, 13

Each group plays a round-robin tournament of three rounds, after which the top two players of the group advance to a knock-out stage. The eight players that advance from the group stages fight to stay in the tournament in every subsequent game, narrowing down the field to the all-decisive match for the title. The second eight players go on to play each other for places nine to sixteen. The main idea of this system is to prevent the top players from meeting each other in the early stages of the championship.

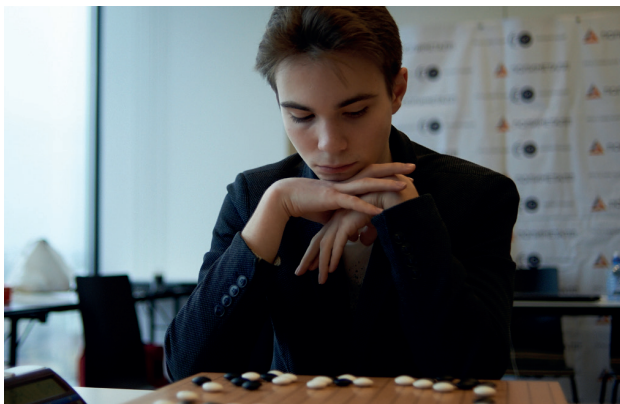
This year the *финал чемпионата России по Го* took place from 18-22 November in Saint Petersburg. It was refreshing to see that seven of the sixteen players were youngsters, some of them born when other participants had already been playing go at a high level. These up and coming young guns were: Grigorij Fionin 7d, Stepan Popov 5d, Igor Nemlij 6d, Anton Chernykh 5d, Kim Shakhov 5d, Andrej Kashaev 5d and Stepan Trubicin 5d.

The Russian Championship was transmitted live on the Kiseido Go Server by users *RGF1* to *RGF4*. After the group stage, eight players made it into the elimination rounds: Ilya Shikshin 1p, Alexej Lazarev 6d, Alexandre Dinerchtein 3p, Dmitriy Surin 6d, Grigorij Fionin 7d, Andrej Kulkov 6d, Timur Sankin 6d and Stepan Popov 5d.

Top: Anton Chernykh 5d (left) in discussion with Dmitriy Surin 6d (right)

Middle: Stepan Popov 5d

Bottom: Kim Shakhov 5d



In the first round of the knock-out stage, ten-time Russian champion Alexej Lazarev 6d applied a *manego* strategy in his game against Alexandre Dinerchtein 3p, that is to mirror the moves of the opponent. This approach saves time and energy, since the white player can simply repeat the moves played by the other, counting on komi for the win. The black player will have to cancel this strategy by creating ladders and counter-ladders, or increase the value of tengen to eventually play on the centre point to break the spell. Lazarev managed to puzzle Dinerchtein with his opening shenanigans, but at some point mistakenly placed a stone on a non-mirroring point and undid his own tactics. After that the quality of Dinerchtein's play took over and decided the game in his favour.

At the same time, Grigorij Fionin 7d had spent all of his regular time on the opening against Andrej Kulkov 6d. Grigorij Fionin had to play most of the middle game and endgame in byo-yomi. A difficult struggle to save a group cost Fionin a lot of points and Andrej Kulkov was leading the game. Finally, fatigue struck Kulkov in the endgame, who miscalculated a sequence in the corner and lost ten points in the exchange, which allowed Fionin to win the game by a margin of $1\frac{1}{2}$ points. After counting the territories, the bystanding crowd passionately started showing Kulkov where and how he had squandered the game. Fionin joked that he should have just played in byo-yomi mode from the start of the game, as the large amount of time he had spent on the opening only exhausted him and confused his play.

In the other matches, Dmitrij Surin 6d defeated Timur Sankin 6d and Ilya Shikshin 1p was victorious over Stepan Popov 5d. Four players were left in the field. In the Semi Finals, Dmitrij Surin faced Alexandre Dinerchtein, while Grigorij Fionin was up against Ilya Shikshin. The two players with professional status went through, making for a classic Final: Alexandre Dinerchtein 3p versus Ilya Shikshin 1p (game commentary by Alexandre Dinerchtein: game 32, page 167).

In the Final, Ilya Shikshin came out of the opening with a slight advantage. Alexandre Dinerchtein attempted to complicate matters on several occasions, but without success. Shikshin's lead only increased, leaving Dinerchtein to a final resort: he cut off a big group of Shikshin in the centre, which had to be captured to regain a chance for



Top: The Final of the Russian Championship.
Ilya Shikshin 1p (left) versus Alexandre Dinerchtein 3p (right)

Bottom: The match for third place between
Andrej Kulkov 6d (left) and Grigorij Fionin 7d (right)

victory. The group however showed more resilience than Dinerchtein hoped, resulting in a ko for the entire centre. Local ko threats saved the day for Shikshin, who defended his title for the second year in a row. He earned the title of Russian champion for the eighth time in his life.

Grigorij Fionin 7d and Andrej Kulkov 6d faced each other once again, in the game for third place. Kulkov failed to take revenge, leaving Fionin, the strongest non-professional player in the field, with the bronze. Fionin received the right to represent Russia in the World Amateur Go Championships in Asia.

FINAL STANDINGS OF THE RUSSIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Place	Player	Rank	Wins	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6	Round 7	Round 8
1	Ilya Shikshin	1p	6	16+	10+	7+	0=	8+	3+	0=	2+
2	Alexandre Dinerchtein	3p	5	15+	8+	9+	0=	7+	5+	0=	1-
3	Grigorij Fionin	7d	5	13+	11+	5-	0=	4+	1-	6+	4+
4	Andrej Kulkov	6d	4	12+	14-	6+	0=	3-	0+	5+	3-
5	Dmitrij Surin	6d	5	11+	13+	3+	0=	6+	2-	4-	6+
6	Timur Sankin	6d	3	14+	12+	4-	0=	5-	7+	3-	5-
7	Alexej Lazarev	6d	3	10+	16+	1-	0=	2-	6-	0=	8+
8	Stepan Popov	5d	2	9-	2-	15+	9+	1-	0=	0=	7-
9	Anton Zatonskikh	6d	4	8+	15-	2-	8-	16+	11+	0=	10+
10	Igor Nemlij	6d	3	7-	1-	16+	0=	15+	14+	0=	9-
11	Anton Chernykh	5d	4	5-	3-	13+	0=	12+	9-	13+	12+
12	Andrej Kashaev	5d	3	4-	6-	14+	0=	11-	16+	14+	11-
13	Kim Shakhov	5d	2	3-	5-	11-	0=	14-	15+	11-	14+
14	Stepan Trubicin	5d	2	6-	4+	12-	0=	13+	10-	12-	13-
15	Igor Popov	5d	2	2-	9+	8-	0=	10-	13-	0=	16+
16	Elvina Kalsberg	4d	0	1-	7-	10-	0=	9-	12-	0=	15-



The Final. Ilya Shikshin (right) watches how Alexandre Dinerchtein (left) secures his group with move 82