



## 3<sup>RD</sup> EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT, BADEN-BADEN

In 2014 the European Go Federation created the European Professional System (EPS) to develop a professional league in Europe, inspired by the professional leagues in Asia. The two main aims of the system being:

*1. To support the top European players in improving, by enabling them to dedicate themselves mainly to go. This especially includes helping the players with participation in high quality studying programs and the arrangement of high quality tournaments.*

*2. To establish a professional background for the European Professional System. This not only concerns direct management of the EPS, but also includes go promotional, educational and marketing activities throughout Europe.*

As a rule, the European Professional Qualification Tournament, organised by the direction of the EGF in cooperation with CEGO, is the only way in Europe for top players to obtain the status of professional. Depending

on the edition, either one or two players per Professional Qualification are promoted to 1 dan professional. Candidates for participation must hold a valid passport from an EGF member country and must be a citizen of an EGF member country for at least ten years. There are no age restrictions.

The first edition of the European Professional Qualification Tournament took place in 2014. It was spread over a time period of a month and held in three different cities: the first two rounds were played in Strasbourg, rounds three and four occurred in Amstelveen and the last two rounds took place in Vienna. The first two professionals that came forth from the European system were Pavol Lisý 1p (Slovakia) and Ali Jabarin 1p (Israel). Since then, the Professional Qualification has taken place yearly.

The second edition took place in the city of Pisa in 2015, and once again enabled two players to gain the status of European professional. Mateusz Surma 1p (Poland) became the third EGF professional, followed by the fourth promotion of Ilya Shikshin 1p (Russia).

The 3rd European Professional Qualification Tournament took place from 4-6 March 2016 in the Heliopark Bad Hotel zum Hirsch in the German city of Baden-Baden. The tournament was sponsored and supported by CEGO and the Ge Yuhong Go Academy, Hotel Heliopark and the Karlsregion Go Club. Based on rating, 16 of the strongest European players were selected to participate. This year the competition was fierce, as only one player would be promoted to professional. Each round, three games were recorded and live broadcast on KGS by *EGFPro1* to *EGFPro3*. Li Yue 5d was present as the official referee for counting, Harry van der Krogt was present as photographer and Pavol Lisý 1p provided transmission on KGS with professional commentary. EGF president Martin Stiassny and EGF secretary Lorenz Trippel were also on site, and together with Wilhelm Bühler took care of the organisation and the official closing ceremony.

As is custom, a side tournament was also organised, in which anyone could take part. This made for a good excuse for interested go players to visit Baden-Baden and experience the 3rd European Professional Qualification from up close.

## THE RULES

Each edition of the European Professional Qualification Tournament, 16 players are chosen to compete. The selection is first and foremost based on rating; the 30 players with the highest EGD ratings are approached and offered to take part in the championship. Players that wish to take part, agree to strive for the title of EGF go professional and consent to the rights and duties that come with that title. Of the players that want to compete, a final selection is then made. When applicable, three wildcards can be offered – one by CEGO and two by the EGF – to candidates that stand out but do not necessarily have the required rating points.

The European Go Federation reimburses 200 euros per participant to cover travel costs and an additional total of 500 euros for the organisers and game recorders.

For the first round of the tournament, the invited players are classified from 1 to 16, depending on their EGF ranking from the end of February of the running year. The Professional Qualification is played as a “double elimination” modified Swiss tournament, meaning that the 16 players play two rounds on the first day, in which players that lose twice – four in total – will be eliminated. In the following four rounds, players that lose are eliminated directly. The last man standing will be crowned the new European professional.

All matches are played with 90 minutes basic thinking time and a Canadian overtime of either 25 stones per 10 minutes or – if electronic clocks are used – three periods of 30 seconds. The komi is 7½ points and Chinese rules are applied.

THE CONTENDERS AND PAIRING SYSTEM  
OF THE 3RD EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION

	Round 1			Round 2			Round 3	
#			#			#		
1	Seeded 1 vs 16	0-1	9	Win 1 vs Win 2	1-0	17	Loss 9 – Win 15	0-1
2	Seeded 8 vs 9	0-1	10	Win 3 vs Win 4	1-0	18	Loss 11 - Win 13	0-1
3	Seeded 4 vs 13	1-0	11	Win 5 vs Win 6	1-0	19	Loss 10 - Win 16	0-1
4	Seeded 5 vs 12	0-1	12	Win 7 - Win 8	0-1	20	Loss 12 - Win 14	0-1
5	Seeded 3 vs 14	1-0	13	Loss 1 – Loss 2	1-0			
6	Seeded 6 vs 11	1-0	14	Loss 3 – Loss 4	0-1			
7	Seeded 2 vs 15	1-0	15	Loss 5 – Loss 6	0-1			
8	Seeded 7 vs 10	1-0	16	Loss 7 - Loss 8	1-0			

	Round 4			Round 5			Round 6	
#			#			#		
21	Win 9 - Win 20	1-0	25	Win 21 - Win 22	0-1	27	Win 25 - Win 26	0-1
22	Win 10 - Win 18	0-1	26	Win 23 - Win 24	1-0			
23	Win 11 - Win 19	1-0						
24	Win 12 - Win 17	1-0						

Pro Win 27

1	Andriy Kravets	6d	UA	2649
2	Lukáš Podpěra	6d	CZ	2647
3	Artem Kachanovskyi	6d	UA	2644
4	Thomas Debarre	6d	FR	2641
5	Viktor Lin	6d	AT	2623
6	Dmitrij Surin	6d	RU	2623
7	Cornel Burzo	6d	RO	2608
8	Dragoș Băjenaru	6d	RO	2592
9	Csaba Mérő	6d	HU	2585
10	Lukas Krämer	6d	DE	2579
11	Grigoriy Fionin	6d	RU	2576
12	Juri Kuronen	6d	FI	2576
13	Jan Hora	6d	CZ	2572
14	Zhao Pei	6d	DE	2568
15	Tanguy Le Calvé	6d	FR	2567
16	Benjamin Dréan-Guénaïzia	6d	FR	2563
17	Benjamin Teuber	6d	DE	2537
18	Timur Sankin	6d	RU	2560
19	Bohdan Zhurakovskiy	6d	UA	2558

Top 15 EGD Max. Rating

CEGO Wildcard

Reserve Players

## AN ALL-UKRAINIAN FINAL

The first round of the 3rd Professional Qualification started on Friday 4 March at 9:30 AM. As the tournament functions by a double elimination format, no players would be eliminated in the first round and so everyone could ease into it. The biggest surprise of round one came from the top of the bracket, where the number one rated player, Andriy Kravets 6d, was defeated by the lowest seated participant, Benjamin Dréan-Guénaïzia 6d (game 58, page 276). In the opening, Kravets played an unusual move at 13 with black, an old joseki, which resulted in a fight. Dréan-Guénaïzia could not capture any of black's stones directly, but used the aji to force his opponent into awkward looking shapes. White created some territory on the left, but it felt like he could have done better. After the jump into the centre at 35, black was slightly ahead. Forty moves later, at move 75, Kravets played a severe tenuki on tengen, which seemed to solidify his lead. The jump not only reinforced his own group, but it made white's stones in the vicinity weaker, at the same time reducing his sphere on the upper side of the board. In return, however, Kravets had left his group on the right side unattended, which was pressured by Dréan-Guénaïzia, who enforced a series of exchanges towards the centre. At move 88, out of nowhere, the tables turned. Dréan-Guénaïzia struck with a Lee Sedol-esque wedge, a move that looked like an overplay at first sight, but turned out to salvage his position. Both Andriy Kravets and Pavol Lisý, who later reviewed the game, could not find a good response, and Dréan-Guénaïzia captured four important black stones in the centre. White had gained a lot and was suddenly ahead. Kravets still had chances, and found a way to create a two-step ko on the left side. Unfortunately, he did not gain much from it, as the available threats were not big enough. Dréan-Guénaïzia continued to play well in endgame and Kravets resigned at move 206, being behind by komi or so.

All other games of the first rounds were close and exciting. Particularly the pairing of Thomas Debarre 6d and Jan Hora 6d, which resulted in an array of tenacious local fighting, several ko's and big trades (game 57, page 276). The match between Cornel Burzo 6d and Lukas Krämer 6d was also worth following live, and climaxed in two shocking swings towards the end (game 60, page 277).

### THE FINAL RESULTS OF ROUND ONE ARE:

**Benjamin Dréan-Guénaïzia defeats Andriy Kravets by resignation.**

**Csaba Mérő defeats Dragoş Băjenaru by 4½ points.**

**Thomas Debarre defeats Jan Hora by 8½ points.**

**Juri Kuronen defeats Viktor Lin by 4½ points.**

**Artem Kachanovskyi defeats Zhao Pei by 5½ points.**

**Dmitrij Surin defeats Grigorij Fionin by 1½ points.**

**Lukáš Podpěra defeats Tanguy Le Calvé by 3½ points.**

**Cornel Burzo defeats Lukas Krämer by resignation.**

Round two took place on the same day, at 4:00 PM. The winners of round one were paired with each other, which meant that the losers played amongst each other as well. Players that had lost in the first round and lost again in the second, were eliminated. These were: Jan Hora, Dragoş Băjenaru, Lukas Krämer and Zhao Pei. The remaining participants could recharge their batteries, as the next round was to be played the following day, in the morning of Saturday 5 March.

From round three onwards a loss would mean immediate elimination from the championship, and many players would see their dreams of becoming a go professional evaporate into thin air.

The third round was reserved for players that had already endured one defeat, eight in total, and had to fight amongst each other for survival. Players that had won both games skipped this round and awaited the survivors in round four, in what were effectively the Quarter Finals.

Viktor Lin defeated Lukáš Podpěra, Andriy Kravets defeated Dmitrij Surin, Tanguy Le Calvé defeated Juri Kuronen and Grigorij Fionin, the youngest contestant in the field, got the better of Csaba Mérő.





Top: Jan Hora (Czech Republic) plays against Viktor Lin (Austria)

Bottom: Zhao Pei watches the match between Artem Kachanovskyi (Ukraine) and Dmitriy Surin (Russia)

## THE QUARTER FINALS

In the Quarter Finals that were played on Saturday afternoon, Benjamin Dréan-Guénaïzia from France – who had not lost a game yet during his first participation in the championship – continued to impress the viewers and the scribe alike. He defeated Viktor Lin from Austria in an immaculate match, pressuring a weak group of his opponent from the start of the middle game all the way down to the end, when a ko decided the fate of the 43-stone white dragon (game 67, page 279).

In a territory oriented game between Thomas Debarre from France and Andriy Kravets from Ukraine, it seemed like Kravets had the edge from the early opening. Despite fighting his way back into the game bit by bit and showing great endgame, Thomas Debarre could not catch up enough and lost by 2½ points after 291 moves (game 69, page 279).

The third game of the Quarter Finals was between Tanguy le Calvé from France and Artem Kachanovskiy from Ukraine. Le Calvé had only lost his first round to Lukáš Podpěra and defeated fellow young dogs Lukas Krämer and Juri Kuronen afterwards. Artem Kachanovskiy was still undefeated.

Le Calvé had the black stones and used the initiative to give his opponent a tough time. He pressured Kachanovskiy's groups repeatedly and created thickness in the centre. At a certain point, a big white group was in a dire situation, but somehow and seemingly without effort, Kachanovskiy conjured eye space from a barren area and made his group alive. Even though with every battle it felt like Kachanovskiy was forced to create small territories, he proved too resourceful and decided the game in his favour by a surprisingly big margin of 8½ points (game 68, page 279).

In the meantime, Cornel Burzo proved too much for the talented Grigoriy Fionin. When Fionin – perhaps unnecessarily early – invaded his opponent's top right corner at move 24, Burzo allowed him to live in return for a very thick position on the outside. Burzo then converted muscle into an attack, and cleverly used the new thickness he gained from it to create a giant moyo in the centre.

At move 99, the centre had already crystalised. Burzo played out the game solidly, deciding it by a comfortable difference of 16½ points (game 70, page 279).

## THE SEMI FINALS

The field was down to four players. On Sunday morning 6 March, Artem Kachanovskiy faced Cornel Burzo and Benjamin Dréan-Guénaïzia once again played Andriy Kravets. Of this illustrious quartet, Andriy Kravets was the only one who had lost a game during the championship.

The Semi Finals took place in a different room of the hotel, much larger and luxurious, decorated with a chandelier, and the atmosphere rose to new heights of intensity.

Artem Kachanovskiy took the black stones against Cornel Burzo. In the opening Burzo attempted to set up a big framework at the top, but with move 43 Kachanovskiy boldly placed a stone smack in the middle of it. At move 68, Burzo had exchanged one moyo for another, and had given up the top in exchange for the centre. Another way of looking at it, however, was that Kachanovskiy's invasion had been successful; he had created a considerable amount of territory at the top and even retained sente. The mission of Kachanovskiy in this game seemed to be one of destruction, because at move 69 he was tempted to invade the next moyo. Burzo showed his fangs and attacked more fiercely this time, only to end up with another trade. Not much of the centre was left, but the opponent's lower side was also destroyed. Burzo's left side grew large, but in the scrimages Kachanovskiy had taken quite some territory in several parts of the board. A final exchange occurred when Burzo lived inside Kachanovskiy's territory on the upper side, immediately retaliated by a big reduction of Burzo's territory on the left. Behind on territory, Burzo pressed for optimal endgame, but left a weak group abandoned. Kachanovskiy played the deciding kosumi at move 195, capturing white's nine stones, and Burzo resigned (game 72, page 280). Artem Kachanovskiy from Ukraine advanced to the Finals!



In the second Semi Finals match, the second Ukrainian, Andriy Kravets, took revenge on Benjamin Dréan-Guénaïzia for his loss in the first round. Dréan-Guénaïzia played the Chinese opening with black, a formation that seeks to build big and optimise the initiative, but it was Andriy Kravets instead that dictated the tempo. After invading the top left corner and making life in sente, Kravets came back to play on the left side, a sequence that has become standardised in modern professional play. When Dréan-Guénaïzia connected solidly at move 23, it was not absolute sente against the top left corner, and Kravets could play tenuki once more. He invaded the

upper right corner, and effectively erased the top territory, making it increasingly difficult for black to let his opening stones work together. Instead of black, it was white that built up a framework after move 36. After pressing down white's formation on the lower side, Dréan-Guénaïzia invaded on the left. An invasion that turned sour about 25 moves later, when Dréan-Guénaïzia had ignored perhaps one move of Kravets too many. After a desperate ko fight, black's group died without compensation, and Kravets won by resignation (game 71, page 280). Andriy Kravets from Ukraine was the second finalist.



Everybody watches the Semi Final between Benjamin Dréan-Guénaïzia (France) and Andriy Kravets (Ukraine)







## THE FINAL

Saturday 6 March was nerve-racking for the players, as both the Semi Finals and the Final took place that day. The Final turned out as an all-Ukrainian one, with the only two Ukrainian players in the field both making it all the way to the end of the championship. Great news for Ukraine, since the country could add a second professional go player to its records. But perhaps the match-up was not ideal for the players themselves, as it is difficult to play such an important game against a good friend.

Artem Kachanovskiy had the black stones and played a calm and collected opening. He staked out a framework at the top, which Kravets leaned on with a classic reduction play at move 20. The sabaki that followed seemed good for Kravets at first, until he perhaps pushed it too far and sacrificed a big chunk of stones in return for territory on the right side. It seemed as though Kachanovskiy had an overconcentrated position, but when he played a stylish nose-tesuji, followed by a clever squeeze, black's presence in the centre became dominating. Throughout the rest of the game, which was played out all the way to the end, Kachanovskiy used his thickness well, which made it difficult for Kravets to create any additional territory. After move 289, both players passed; the official referee for Chinese counting, Li Yue, rearranged the stones on the board and announced Artem Kachanovskiy's victory by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  points, earning him the title of fifth EGF professional.

- >> **For a full interview with Artem Kachanovskiy, please refer to page 37**
- >> **A game review of the Final by Pavol Lisý 1p can be found on page 281**

**Left: The all-Ukrainian Final of the 3rd Professional Qualification Tournament: Andriy Kravets (left) versus Artem Kachanovskiy (right)**

**Next page: Artem Kachanovskiy received his professional dan certificate two months later, at the 2nd European Go Grand Slam Tournament in Berlin**