

Press Conference of 18th World Xiangqi Championship in Houston USA Concluded with a Bang

Xiangqi, also known as the “Chinese Chess”, is one of the oldest and the most popular board games in the world in which both players start out from each side of “Chu River”, a game believed to have a history of over 2000 years. Upon the resolution by the Executive Committee of World Xiangqi Federation (WXF), the 18th World Xiangqi Championship will be held in Houston, Texas, USA on November 19-25, 2023! This is the first time ever for the United States to host such a prestigious event.

On February 10, 2023, the press conference of the 18th World Xiangqi Championship was grandly held at the renowned Royal Sonesta Hotel at Houston, with invited media friends, VIP guests and local players present.

Hu Yushan, co-chairman of the Organizing Committee of the 18th World Xiangqi Championship and Chairman of Houston Xiangqi Association, announced at the press conference that the Championship was sponsored by the World Xiangqi Federation, hosted by Houston Xiangqi Association and American Xiangqi Association, and co-hosted by Houston Sports Authority. He introduced that as the world’s highest level Xiangqi event, the World Championship will be attended by delegations from nearly 30 countries or regions around the world. More than 120 world-class Xiangqi elites shall gather in Houston to compete for the highest honor in the Xiangqi arena. The competition is divided into men's individual, team, women's individual, and junior events. The competition will attract tens of millions of local and global Xiangqi enthusiasts. The organizing committee will live broadcast the opening and closing ceremonies and the whole process of the competition through major online media platforms in both USA, China and other countries and regions.

Collin Zheng, Vice Chairman of World Xiangqi Federation, Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the 18th World Xiangqi Championship, Chairman of American Xiangqi Association, and Li Mingdong, Vice Chairman of the 18th World Xiangqi Championship, made a special trip from New York to Houston to attend the press conference. Collin Zheng made a warm welcome speech to welcome all the distinguished guests present at the conference. Zheng pointed out that we will usher in the first World Xiangqi Championship held in the United States in November this year. This is the glory not only for Houston, but for the whole country. Then Vice Chairman of the 18th World Xiangqi Championships Li Mingdong told the audience that AXA will give HXA its full support in terms of manpower, material resources and financial resources. Li told the attendees that Collin Zheng came to Houston with several thousand dollars donations from people in New York area.

Then another key figure in organizing the World Championships, attorney James Shu (“Xu Jianxun”) came up. He is a well-known practicing lawyer in the U.S. by profession, and at the same time, he serves as the Co Chairman of the 18th World Xiangqi Organizing Committee and Vice Chairman of Houston Xiangqi Association. Mr. Shu introduced the background of how the Houston Xiangqi Association was awarded the right to host the 18th World Xiangqi Championship and the work Houston Xiangqi Association has done so far. According to Shu, after receiving the confirmation of Houston hosting the World Championships, we realized many difficulties, especially fundraising matters. However, the principal leaders of the Houston Xiangqi Association and the American Xiangqi Association have stated that they will take the lead in making donations

and guarantee the start-up funds. Because of the huge popularity for Xiangqi in China and other Asian Countries or regions and the potential to develop the game in other parts of the world, we are confident and determined to make this World Championship the most successful one. Our basic principle of organizing competitions is: run first-class competitions and spend the least amount of money. We must do our best to live up with the history of Xiangqi, live up to the great expectations of our players, and realize a dream that we could run a world-class Xiangqi event in our lifetime. We hope that through such an international event, we can enhance the international image of Houston, enhance the power of our Chinese community in the United States, and enhance the overall image and profile of the game of Xiangqi around the world.

Xu Jianxun introduced some VIP guests and friends from the media, including Janis Burke, chief executive of the Houston Sports Authority, Luo Ling, Asian Liaison to Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Wea Lee, chairman of the South Chinese News Group, Fang Yichuan, Executive Director of the Chinese Civic Center, and Juan Laginia, General Manager of the Royal Sonesta Hotel. Janis Burke, Luo Ling, Wea Lee, Fang Yichuan, Juan Laginia and others all made brief speeches.

As the co-organizer of this tournament, Houston Sports Authority CEO Janis Burke said, "I am looking forward to learning this new game. Thank you so much to the World Xiangqi Federation for having confidence in Houston. We are very grateful and honored," said Janis Burke, CEO of Houston Sports Authority, co-host of the event. "Our Chinese American community is near and dear to my heart," Burke said, recalling the big success of the 2021 World Table Tennis Championships held in Houston, also for the first time in the United States.

Hu Yushan also introduced other details of the Championship. The "World Xiangqi Rules" are implemented in the game. Each game basically takes 60 minutes for each side, plus 30 seconds for each move. There are 9 rounds of point-based Swiss system competition for men: after the 8th round, the top 2 players will go to the championship and runner-up finals, and the other players will participate in the 9th round of point-based competition. In order to encourage the players to fight for the first place and achieve good results, the total award of this competition is as high as more than 70,000 US dollars. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the World Xiangqi Federation, and there will be celebration activities, such as a 30-year large-scale photo exhibition. In addition, based on the feedback from various aspects, the organizing committee also considers inviting guests from all over the world to gather in Houston during the World Championship to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment and development of the World Xiangqi Federation. Through this World Championship, we will hold a series of activities such as Xiangqi culture exhibition, artificial intelligence forum, rapid Xiangqi competition, exhibition competition, etc.

In addition, Xiangqi organizations around the world expressed their congratulations to Houston for hosting the World Championship in the United States for the first time by sending congratulatory letters, including Chairman of the East Malaysia Xiangqi Association Zeng Lingwei, Vice Chairman of the European Xiangqi Association Kochski, Chairman of the German

Xiangqi Association Michael Nägler, Vice Chairman of the World Xiangqi Federation, and President of the Canadian Toronto Xiangqi Association Ruan Guoheng.

The press conference of the 18th World Xiangqi Championship was held at the balcony on the second floor of the beautiful and elegant Royal Sonesta Hotel. The press conference lasted nearly three hours, and 70 guests were invited to attend the event. During the reception, beautiful musicians from China played the Chinese zither, and the melodious sound of the piano echoed at the spacious balcony, which was extremely evocative. The hosts and guests toasted frequently in a cheerful atmosphere, wishing the 18th World Xiangqi Championship a complete success!



Hu Yushan, Co-chairman of the Organizing Committee of the 18th World Xiangqi Championship and chairman of Houston Xiangqi Association, delivers speech



Collin Zheng, Vice Chairman of World Xiangqi Federation, Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the 18th World Xiangqi Championship, and Chairman of American Xiangqi Association, gives remarks



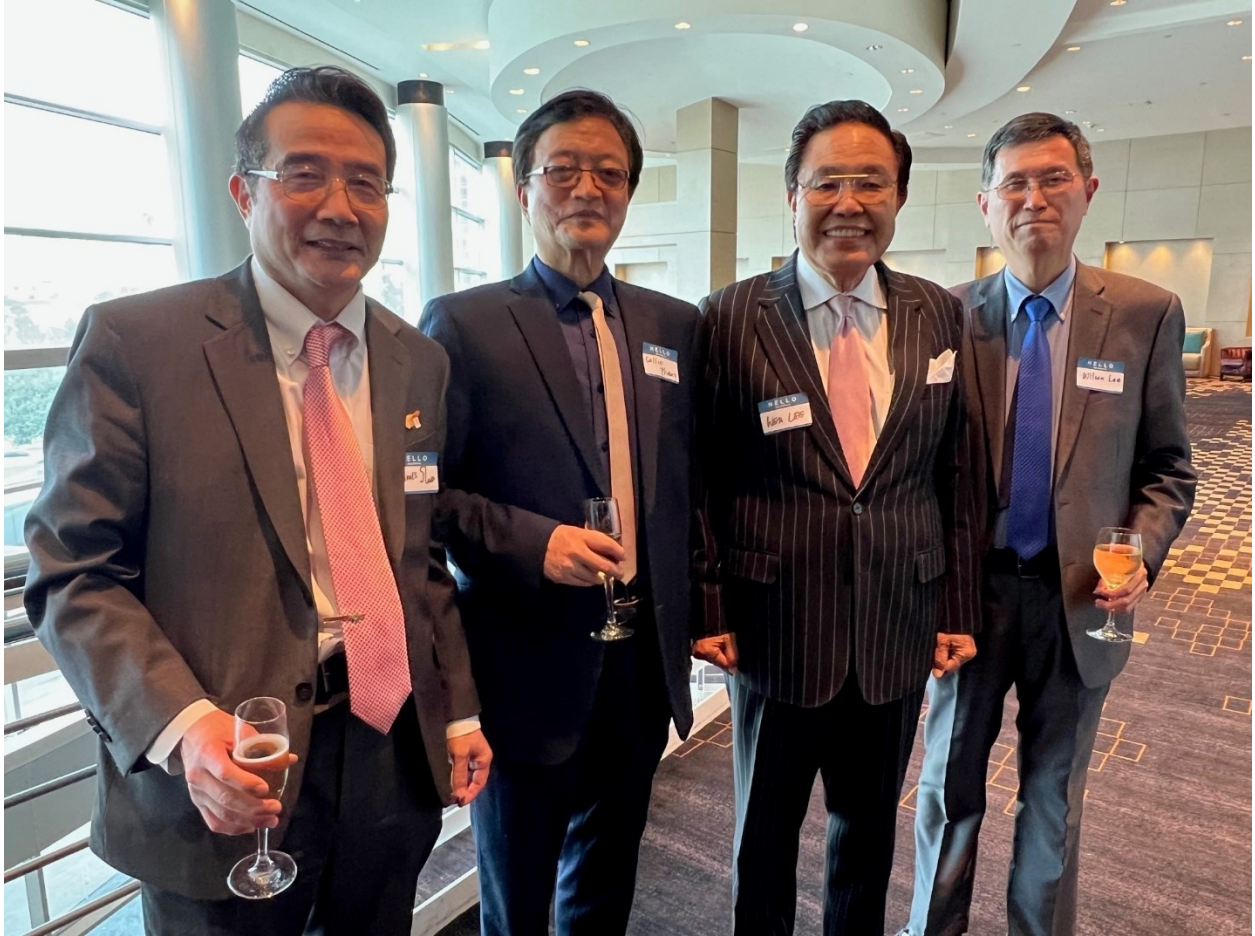
James Shu, Co Chairman of the 18th World Xiangqi Organizing Committee and Vice Chairman of the Houston Xiangqi Association, delivers speech



Leaders and VIP at the press conference. From left: Janis Burke, Chief Executive of the Houston Sports Authority; Li Mingdong, Vice Chairman of the 18th World Xiangqi Championship; Collin Zheng, Vice Chairman of World Xiangqi Federation, Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the 18th World Xiangqi Championship, and Chairman of American Xiangqi Association; James Shu, Co Chairman of the 18th World Xiangqi Organizing Committee and Vice Chairman of the Houston Xiangqi Association



Xiangqi player representatives at the press conference. From left: Nhat Le, Minh Nguyen, Yogi D



From left to right: James Shu, Collin Zheng, Wea Lee, Wilson Lee.



From left to right: Yichuan Fang, Wea Lee, Janis Burke, Ling Luo, James Shu, Leon Chen, Noel Chen at the reception prior to the conference.



Group photo of 18th World Xiangqi Championships leaders and VIP guests



Group photo of leaders, VIPs, Xiangqi players and volunteers