World Bridge Officials Visit Chinese School

On Tuesday 13 December 2011 in Beijing, IMSA and WBF officials had the opportunity to visit one of China's most prominent schools where bridge is taught extracurricularly with great success.

International Mind Sports Association (IMSA) President José Damiani and World Bridge Federation (WBF) President Gianarrigo Rona headed a group of distinguished guests for a visit to RDFZ, the High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. This is a most exclusive educational institution for boys and girls 13-18 years old but talented children from all over China may be admitted at an even younger age. All in all, there are some 4,000 pupils in RDFZ.

Besides providing high-level education, RDFZ encourages pupils to widen their horizons by taking up extracurricular activities, ranging from sports to arts and hobbies. Of the many possibilities open to them, it is remarkable that some 850 pupils choose bridge! The younger ones are introduced to the game through minibrige, while the older pupils are offered expert coaching which has led RDFZ to represent China at the 2011 Pacific Asia Bridge Federation Championships and win silver medal in the Youngsters category.

The official delegation was welcomed by the RDFZ bridge society most warmly. School officials gave a detailed account of how bridge is
run in RDFZ, while IMSA President José Damiani congratulated, on behalf of the delegation, all involved in this extremely successful effort.

Subsequently, WBF officials José Damiani, Gianarrigo Rona, Patrick Choy and Chen Zelan presented the winners of a recent in-school competition with their prizes, and finally expert teacher Philippe Cronier of France conducted a class of minibridge for some 50 very young bridge beginners. Several bridge deals were then played, with WBF officials taking part in the competition together with RDFZ pupils.

The World Bridge delegation left RDFZ most impressed with what they had experienced. The general feeling was that this is a prime example of how bridge should be promoted among young people, to the benefit of both the pupils and the game. As such, it can serve and stimulate similar efforts all over the world.

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WBF President Gianarrigo Rona awards the Cup to the winning team of an in-school competition.

WBF Chairman Emeritus José Damiani and WBF President Gianarrigo Rona with the winning team

The interest is obvious in the faces of the new bridge competitors...
Expert teacher Philippe Cronier of France and WBF President Gianarrigo Rona on duty instructing the young bridge newcomers.

WBF President Gianarrigo Rona and WBF Chairman Emeritus José Damiani in play with RDFZ pupils.

WBF Spokesman Panos Gerontopoulos explaining bridge issues and posing with RDFZ pupils.