

Rule the board

Hong Kong has garnered second place in the vote for cities to appear on the 80th anniversary edition of the iconic Monopoly board. *Junior Standard* talks to Hong Kong's first Monopoly championship winner

YOU may have played or at least heard of the board game, **Monopoly**, before. This year, fans of the board game are buzzing as it is celebrating its 80th anniversary. A lot of events and surprises are being planned all over the world. For example, the French (法國的) version has replaced the game's paper notes with real euros in 80 sets – totalling 20,580 euros (HK\$172,436).

Hong Kong is not **on the sidelines**. Last month, our city was voted as the second favourite location for the coming world edition to be launched in September. It means that Hong Kong will appear on a grid in the dark blue section, which is the most expensive part of the board. Lima (利馬), capital of Peru (秘魯), was voted in first place. Macau (澳門) is going to hold the 14th Monopoly World Championships this September too, six years since the last championship was held.

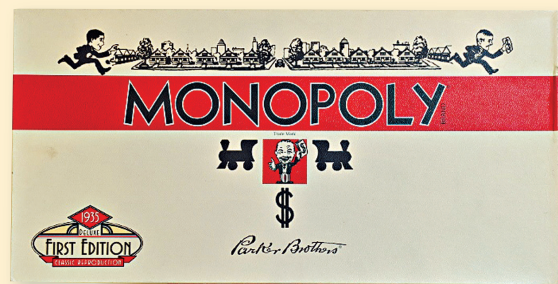
The Hong Kong **preliminary** event is going to be held on 26 April at Maritime Square (青衣城). The winner will represent Hong Kong in the world final. In fact, Hong Kong has a brilliant record in the championship. Ng Hon-yuen (吳漢源, a famous local writer with the penname of Butt Wah-lau (畢華流), won the Monte Carlo (蒙地卡羅) champion in 1996. *Junior Standard* talked with Ng when he and his son, Ng Cheng-yin (吳井然), joined a Monopoly family competition earlier this month.



▲ Hong Kong's 80th anniversary edition, released in 2015.



▲ Monopoly world champion winner Ng Hon-yuen (right) and his son.



▲ The first Monopoly game was released in 1935.

Fact box

1. The original Monopoly game is based on Atlantic City (大西洋城), New Jersey (新澤西州), in the US (美國).
2. It was first made and sold in 1935 by Parkers Brothers in the US and Waddington's in the UK.
3. The board game is currently published in 47 languages and sold in 114 countries.
4. More than 1 billion people have played the Monopoly game worldwide.
5. The total amount of money in a standard Monopoly set is US\$20,580.
6. The longest recorded game of Monopoly ever played lasted 70 days.
7. Every few years, national champions meet for the Monopoly World Championships **tournament**.
8. The 14th Monopoly World Championships will be held in Macau this September.

Junior Standard: Could you tell us about your experience of winning the championship?

Ng: I started to play Monopoly in the 1980s. I had actually won the second prize in the Hong Kong preliminary twice before I won first place and went to Monte Carlo for the world championship. At that time, I memorised the whole game board and I was quite clear about my strategy.

JS: Do you think the game is more about luck or strategy?

Ng: You definitely need some luck as you need to throw the dice before each step. However, in such a well-designed game, you must use your wisdom to **accumulate** as much wealth as possible to ensure your win.

JS: What is the most crucial skill of a good Monopoly player?

Ng: Dealing. You start with few things or nothing, and you need to decide on the appropriate timing and objects to buy or sell in order to **maximise** your property. By dealing again and again, you will win when you finally have a monopoly on the market.

JS: What do you think of Monopoly in general?

Ng: It is widely recognised as the best board game in the world as of now. First of all, it is a friendly and healthy game that is fit for the whole family. Secondly, it is well-designed, and actually the structure of the board and the basic rules have not changed in the past 80 years, despite some tiny adjustments of cards for different editions. Any change of the board would change the whole game. Third, it has leaderboards so you will know how you get an achievement and how to improve.

JS: Do you still participate in the championship now?

Ng: I got less involved in the championship after 1996, but still play the game now, especially with my son. Actually, I have kept playing various games, including chess. I am currently a Chinese teacher and the tutor of the chess club at a secondary school.

The Monopoly exhibition is being held in Maritime Square until 3 May.

Vocabulary

monopoly (n) 壟斷

M: Meaning **E:** Example

M: having complete control over something, so that it is impossible for others to become involved in it

E: The reformists moved to end the state **monopoly** on land ownership.

If you say that someone does not have a monopoly on something, you mean that they are not the only person who has that thing.

E: Locals do not have a **monopoly** on new-build properties.

1 iconic (adj) 象徵性的

M: something important or impressive because it seems to be a symbol of something

E: The adverts helped the sports brand to achieve **iconic** status.

2 on the sidelines (idm) 置身事外

M: having no influence on a situation

E: The country no longer wants to be left **on the sidelines** when critical decisions are made.

3 preliminary (n) 預賽

M: an event that introduces or prepares for the main competition

E: He easily won the **preliminary** contest for the high jump.

4 accumulate (v) 積累

M: to collect or gather over a period of time

E: The mineral can **accumulate** in the body until toxic levels are reached.

5 maximise (v) 最大化

M: make something as great in amount or importance as possible

E: In order to **maximise** profit, the firm would seek to maximise output.

6 tournament (n) 聯賽

M: competition in which players who win a match continue to play further matches in the competition until just one player or team is left

E: They lost two games in a row and were eliminated from the **tournament**.