

Time line for Go Congress Planning and Execution

Last updated August, 2006

This document is intended to provide guidelines about what needs to be done and when, in order to have a well run Congress with the organizers feeling good about what they have done and not too exhausted from their labors at the end.

The dates suggested are not deadlines (unless so noted) but reminders. Typically, you will fall behind on some things. This is meant to be a nudge to let you know when you need to pay extra attention, time and effort to prevent something from falling far enough behind to cause damage, or greatly increase your work load down the line.

This document is not a complete guide on what to do. It assumes you are working closely with an AGA liaison person who is richly experienced in Congress preparation and operation, who knows (or will find out) what the AGA wants, and can provide in terms of help. This person is your primary source of good information, and the one to whom you should turn any time anything seems to be going not according to plan. The AGA Liaison will also check up with you from time to time to see how things are going with respect to this time line.

Note: These times are not (unless so noted) starting times, but finishing times. If you miss one (or more likely more) you want to take action to catch up. But there is nothing wrong with starting and completing things ahead of schedule if you can. All the better if you do. Also, some items clearly are not necessary at the times suggested. The spacing is intended to spread the work out so that the load remains manageable at all times. It is important to get some things done before they are needed, so that when the time comes, you will have the time and energy to do all the things necessary at that time.

37 – 60 months (or more)

Talk to the Liaison about committing to the year in question. Find out who else is already committed, or tentative about the years to come. Talk about where you might fit in. Intentions expressed far ahead often shift in practice, and occasionally a nearer year becomes open.

Obtain a draft copy of the Congress advice book. This will almost certainly never progress beyond draft status, as it needs revision nearly every year. It is nevertheless an invaluable resource, providing many answers, and perhaps more importantly, stimulating questions you didn't realize you needed to ask.

25 – 37 months (or more)

You are now committed to a specific year. You should have potential sites lined up in time to present a brief description at the Go Congress two or three years before yours. Basic financial information gets plugged into a planning spreadsheet (which the AGA will provide). This will include current costs for room & board, and use of facilities. If

you can commit to a specific facility at that time, fine.

12 – 15 months

Get a firm commitment from the selected facility to provide space and services for the dates chosen. If at all possible, get a firm fix on pricing. The planning spreadsheet will now be filled in with all the specific cost estimates for the various things you plan to do, and the prices will be set, or closely estimated if you can't get a firm quote from the facility. This will be presented to the President, (ideally in March or April) the Board in May or June, and the Chapter assembly at the Congress immediately preceding yours.

You must also have at least four other dedicated souls who can be counted on to produce a lot of help over the course of the next year.

10 – 12 months That is, the remainder of August & September

Open a bank account for the Congress. (This will be an AGA account, but one to which you will have access.) The AGA will provide funds as necessary. Start having meetings once a month beginning in September. Use the task list to get people signed up for what needs to be done. Talk to your facility about getting a firm price quote if you don't have one yet. (Not uncommon)

Get started with design for a logo

October

Get a logo finalized.

Get a website going if you don't already have one.

Draft the registration form.

Work with Liaison and AGA Treasurer to set up the accounting system.

November

Work up advertising material to be included in the yearbook in consultation with the Journal editor.

December

Catch up with what hasn't been done yet

Do a site visit with a view to deciding exactly what events and functions will occur where for the whole Congress. In particular, plan your office space. Check for adequate electrical and phone services, and make the necessary arrangements.

January

Deadline for any material going into the Journal yearbook.

Finalize the registration forms. Pricing can't change after this, no matter what.

You should have a signed contract by now. If you haven't, holler, bitch, moan and threaten daily or so until you get one.

Remind the President to get out the letters inviting pros.

February

Someone should start working on the Congress Program. Use copies of the prior years as a starting point, but this is always a bigger job than it seems, and much material will be unique to your site, and will have to be written from scratch. Also, it will be bound, so there is a major editing and formatting task. I usually runs close to 50 pages.

Contact people expected to provide services for which you don't have local staff. (Pro coordination, Tds for the various tournaments, etc.)

Publish registration information.

Prepare a mailer.

Web based registration on line.

Contact Japanese tour group organizers.

March

Send out the mailer.

Get some quotes for Wednesday free day touring trips.

Get quotes for producing t-shirts, mugs, pins, etc. You should have the graphics set, and available in whatever form needed. (Usually a computer file these days)

April

Contact domestic pros re their attendance.

Draft schedule of events.

Fill in TD slots for all tournaments.

Select vendors for t-shirts, mugs, pins etc.

Select Wednesday tours & set up with vendors.

May

Design information package to be sent out to registrants.

Get started on program design and production.

Work with go vendors on setting up space, accommodations, etc.

Prepare to receive equipment (200 sets & clocks, demo boards, etc.

June

Contact Japanese tour group organizers re numbers. Ask for names and ranks.

Get together with facility staff to make detail plans re housing, facilities utilization, etc.

Identify resources for setting up the business office.

First draft of program for review – identify needs and contact those who must supply them.

Final compilation of registrants mailer packages.

Assess financial condition based on currently assumed expenses, and estimated attendance after first late fee deadline. Adjust spending plans accordingly

Draft prize structures

July

Obtain sky glue to replace, repair or repaint falling sky, which you should expect to occur frequently.

Mail registrants info packages to all registrants.

Program content deadline is July 15 – send it to the printer July 25 or before

Design system and arrange for personnel to handle registration. (about 12 – 15 people.

Get commitments for setting up office with phone service as needed. Do not rely on cell phones unless you know the office has good reception. (Usually not the case in basement floors.)

Check to be sure all vendors are on track for t-shirts, mugs, pins, services, rentals, etc.

Assemble on site registration packages

Assess financial status after second late fee deadline, and adjust spending plans accordingly.

Second draft of prize structures – should be very close to final, but that will need some

adjustments based on actual participation.

Congress start minus 10 days

Identify and plug personnel holes.

Set up schedule for delivery of equipment, office space set up, etc.

Obtain all necessary signage

Check to ensure timely delivery of all items ordered.

Congress start minus 2 days

Buy office supplies if not already purchased.

Hope you can start moving in and setting up by now, or at least have a storage area.

New batch of sky glue will probably be needed

Check inventory

Set up for registration

Financial status check

Facilities check

Try to get a good night's sleep.

Saturday

Show time

Decide pro dinner schedules, and lists of invitees. Do this very early, to avoid conflicts.

Sunday

Start planning how to distribute prizes

Post and announce messages about all deadlines

Monday

Start planning for awards banquet

Tuesday

Wednesday

Catch up with all you haven't done.

Financial status check

Finalize prize structure

Formal check with host facility management to identify any problems, or issues.

Set up reimbursements to those who need them. (Pros, Redmond Cup players, Ing/NAMT players, etc.)

Draw three deep breaths

Turn your focus to end of Congress issues. These will play out over the next 4 days.

Finalize banquet structure, content, etc.

Organize transport to airport

Set up process for key deposit returns, and check out.

Take down, packaging & transport of equipment, etc.

Collections, if any outstanding (Usually a low single digit number)

Meet with AGA Treasurer about financial transfers, if possible.

Wednesday of Congress:

Meet with host institution administration to specifically ask them if there are any issues that need attention - particularly financial ones. Your private objective is to avoid them coming to you 3 weeks later with additional charges. At this time you should be able to verify attendance and facilities usage, or identify points at issue so they can be checked out while everyone is still present. It is also a good time to find out if there are minor irritations that can be remedied.

Final Sunday:

Take care to meet your obligations to the host institution regarding tear down, clean up, removal of equipment, etc.

Be really careful driving home - assume you are somewhat disabled and compensate accordingly.

Monday following:

Make sure all checks get deposited.

Take a week or so to rest.

If you haven't already done so, make a date with the host institution to go over the final billing.

If they are slow on that, be low key, but apply a little pressure. Normally, it should not take more than 30 days. If it looks like it will take them significantly and particularly if they are unwilling to specify a date, notify AGA liaison. Slow billing is a bad sign.

Obtain a copy of the billing before the reconciliation meeting. In all cases, but particularly if billing is slow, clean up your own data regarding attendance, payment, facilities utilization, etc. Have this done *before* your reconciliation meeting with the host institution.

Compare the billing statement with your own data. If there are significant discrepancies, try to figure out why, and how much money is involved. Be prepared to negotiate. Notify the AGA liaison to get some advice. Note: significant discrepancies are common but not usual (about 1/3 of Congresses). Usually they get worked out quickly and amicably.

Make sure all tournament results are reported for ratings before August 25 (so they are picked up in the August rating calculations.) During this month, try to get ship everything that needs to be shipped.

Ideally, you have come to agreement with the AGA about cross payments during the Congress. If not, get to work on it. These include but may not be limited to: Funds paid by the Congress for AGA events such as the Redmond Cup, NAMT or Ing, youth subsidy, etc. Funds due to the AGA, such as repayment of money used for start up costs, and advance payments to the host institution.

Balance the checkbook.

Make a list of all outstanding checks and make sure you know how to contact the payees if necessary.

Make a list of outstanding payables.

Refunds

Reimbursements

Bills expected but not yet received

Make a list of any receivables.

Contact those folks and nudge gently to help you clear the item.

October 1

Reconcile with AGA Treasurer. Identify items that need attention, clarification, remediation, etc. At this point you should know within a very few hundred dollars, what your final results should be. With a bit of luck, you will know to the penny.

Everything ought to be shipped, payed received, balanced, and agreed; but there will almost certainly be some details remaining undone.

Make a list of those items that still hang on for one reason or another.

Obtain promises of dates certain to resolve each.

November 1

Begin hounding laggards

December 1

Close checking account

Final reconciliation of all accounting

Our standard is that everything is done and accounting completed before December 31.

January 1

Happy new year with no Congress to worry about! Celebrate wisely and well.