

AGA Board Meeting Minutes 12/17/2017

Present

Andy Okun (president)
Samantha Fede (secretary)
Lisa Scott
Andrew Jackson
Steve Colburn
Chris Kirshner
Gurujeet Khalsa
Martin Lebl (Chair)

Call to order 8:03 PM EST

Approve minutes:

Steve motions to approve minutes from November meeting, Andrew seconds, unanimous approval. Minutes approved.

President's report:

2 things to start thinking about: 1) We need to have a policy for gender specific tournaments or nomination (like where we select a male or female candidate to send to an international tournament) such that we have an official way of handling transgendered individuals.

Martin: I don't think the problem will be on our end, maybe on the Japanese tournament policies side.

Steve: Our database has a non-binary gender option.

Chris: It's important we have a policy before it comes up. It's an evolving topic. For example the IOC policy is only post-surgery.

Andrew: Is that the IOC's policy for all sports or mind sports? I think we can be more accepting than a policy that has to apply to all olympic athletes.

Chris: [bad connection, cannot be understood]

Lisa: I think the exact wording takes research, but if someone identifies as one gender, then I think that's what we go with.

[Chris leaves the meeting due to poor phone connection]

Andy Okun: 2) Stephanie asked used us about awarding ranks in the range of 18 kyu or weaker and we agreed to that previously based on tournament play. Now she's asking to extend that to not just based on tournament play but an exam of go problems and the like, but I'm not sure what to make of that since it isn't consistent with our current tournament play policy for rankings. What does the board think? Do we want to know more?

Lisa: Do people do this elsewhere?

Martin: In Asia I think so, but we haven't and no one else in North America has to my knowledge.

Andrew: I think for a professional teacher to award ranks in the double digit kyu range, we can encourage that. If it makes someone excited to get it, it's a great positive reinforcement tool.

Martin: It should be somewhat close to our rating system though, so that if they show up to tournaments it is somewhat accurate.

[Chris rejoins]

Andy Okun: Possible issues could be that it would only be available to her students and not to everyone.

Chris: We'd have to allow any professional teacher to do it.

Andy: Yes, but it'd be for the professionals' paying students only. For 18 kyu or lower.

Lisa: I think this is okay, and we just need to have some idea of which teachers are doing it.

Martin: We have to make sure that this can be input into our system.

Lisa I want to clarify that this is ranking and not rating, so it does not need to interact with our system.

Gurujeeet: What about the case where someone already has a rank and she's granting a rank higher than that?

Chris: The TD has discretion.

Steve: Would the organization have a copy of the exams?

Andrew: At 18 kyu and up, I think this issue doesn't require this much detailed oversight.

Gurujeeet: So could people do mail order exams then?

Lisa: I don't think pros will be willing to do that.

Chris: I think the pro committee should get involved in this decision.

Andrew: Why? This is about how professional teachers teach beginners. The pro committee is busy doing other things.

Chris: But we're making rules about professional behavior.

Andrew: Professional teachers not players.

Andy Okun: Okay, I was testing the waters here, so how about I draft something and circulate by email and we can work on it further.

Andy Okun: Last thing, I visited the national go center today, and meet with the people organizing the 2018 go congress. I don't have a specific update

Review State Championship proposal for 2018 (Chris)

We have an address now: 50states@usgo.org

DC will have a tournament (but we aren't changing the name to 51 states)

Chris: We generally had positive responses from the chapters, pennsylvania was especially happy-- thinking about doing it in March. In January, we'll be asking state chapters to identify coordinators and sending out information.. California has said it would like a northern and southern championship, and I think since it's a pilot program we'll allow it for now.

Lisa: We'll have to make sure there's a mechanism for dividing the state in half.

Chris: We won't allow people to play for more than one, like our policy for across state lines. But we can't anticipate everything so I don't think we need specific rules on that right now.

Lisa: I think our rules need to be anticipatory; also, New York has this issue as well.

Chris: I haven't heard anything but if they bring it to me, we're not ruling it out.

Andy Okun: I heard from Virginia, and they suggested doing the state championship at Congress this year, since it's in Virginia.

Chris: Maybe, but we don't want a week long tournament. These championships can be part of bigger tournaments in general though.

[Cross-Talk]

Action Item: January agenda item- finalize funding for state championship tournaments

Progress update on the rank certification (Chris)

Chris sent an email with a status update from Jon, who said he expects this to be finished by the end of the year. He wants it to be on an independent server.

Andrew: We just got those communications today, so Steve and I need some time to review, but we have them.

Steve: Are we going to send anything to the membership about this?

Chris: Do we need to notify people before the first run?

Steve: At Congress they asked for information, since we didn't have it for them then, so it would be beneficial to send it out to people.

Chris: Jon would like there to be an advance notice in the ejournal, and it makes sense that there'd be a dummy run.

Martin: I do think there should be an announcement once its up and running. I think Steve was talking about the FAQ and questions about the design, have we made progress on sending that out?

Chris: I had substantial conversation with concerned parties, to whom I sent data that he requested, and I haven't heard since then. [The board has been copied on these communications]

Andrew: I have not heard from him either.

Chris: I'll reiterate to you guys, and I've told him, the system is designed to allow multiple algorithms to decide on the rank, if he designs a working, different algorithm.

New business:

US Go Congress 2017 update:

Lisa: Something I'd like to bring to the board-- the planning committee is considering aiming for a larger surplus than usual, to support the National Go Center, so I think we need to discuss whether we think this is acceptable. They're aiming for 400-500 people, which could mean \$32000-64000 in surplus.

Steve: Isn't there already a lot of money supporting the national go center?

Gurujee: Our primary support is from INOF, which is about \$40,000/yr, and our expenses are about \$60,000/yr. Diego and I are in sync that our first goal is to have it reasonably priced and enjoyable. Our goal is not to make money.

Lisa: And I should be clear, that the registration would be the same as last year, and the rooms would be slightly more than what the university is charging.

Gurujee: My understanding is that the total cost is about \$800 less than San Diego, but I haven't seen the surplus info.

Lisa: That wasn't my impression based on the conversation I had with Diego yesterday.

Andy: I think the point is that we don't want to price out people, so what is the bottom price cost.

Lisa: But last year, my total cost was \$800 as a non-player, so how does that make sense?

Martin: I don't think people realize that the host club gets 50% of the surplus.

Gurujee: Our discussions today were focused on making sure Congress this year is affordable. We didn't necessarily discuss exact numbers. But we discussed \$800 less.

Lisa: Yes, but we expect a significantly lower price if you're getting a dorm with a bathroom down the hall. Not just a little less.

Chris: The people who want the cheapest option are okay with the bathroom down the hall.

Martin: But, you're asking those people to pay an extra ~\$100 for that to increase the surplus.

Lisa: We usually calculate 80% break-even points, and we have a standard 15% mark-up to cover the pros, and this is more like 30%. People were presented the dorm room costs at the Future Congresses meeting, and we aren't going to be giving them the same numbers.

Chris: The way we've always done this is that we keep the mark-up on the cheap rooms lower, and inflate the higher priced rooms.

Lisa: They're still trying to figure out if there will be the more expensive hotel style options available, until we get closer.

Chris: We need that information before we can do a budget.

Lisa: We have a working budget, but we do need those numbers prior to going public. But this is a philosophical question about whether it's okay for us to inflate the surplus.

Gurujee: I think we just need to focus on the budget.

Andy: I think this is a philosophical question because the board was concerned about the surplus from San Diego. Since this is looking to be a similar situation, the board should weigh in.

Lisa: In terms of this discussion, we just need to make the general decision, and of course the final budget information should be figured out with the actual Congress team. I'm happy to talk with you in more detail. I'd like to hear from Steve and Andrew, who haven't weighed in yet.

Steve: I think we need more information.

Andrew: I'd be very concerned to hear that there was a planned \$65000 budget, which would mean it's \$100 more expensive per registrant. We've never had this big of a club run a Congress. The Seattle Go Center stays out of it because it's not looking for funding from the AGA. I was a little concerned about the \$35000 surplus from San Diego this year, and I'm not sure that 500 attendees is a reasonable estimate. I agree with Steve that we need more info.

Lisa: Does the board want to get involved at a detailed level? Do you want the summary or all the details?

Chris: All of it.

Andrew: I'd like to see the summary page and a comparison to the last year and year before.

Martin: I'd also like to see the year before, since it's on a campus like in Boston instead of a hotel like in San Diego.

Lisa: I can put it together and work with Andy to get actuals from last year. I can pull the whole thing for Chris or whoever can dive deep.

Martin: You know, I think we've always aimed to break even, and of course not running a liability, and I don't think we should aim higher.

Andy: I think that using an event like this as a fundraising is not inconsistent with us being a non-profit, but I think we need to inform attendees. There are also ways to evaluate whether this is a good cost other than surplus, such that we can decide how to subsidize things later. I'm not opposed to a portion of things being fundraising. And I will say that part of the motivation for the National Go Center for doing this was in fact to do some fundraising for the center.

Lisa: The expected attendance is somewhere between NC and DC, so 460-480, but we're estimating 500.

Chris: On a completely different note, if there are no options for rooming other than down the hall bathroom options there will be a major drop out. Including me.

Lisa: There's lots of options for hotels and BnBs within 2-3 miles, I'm not sure about walking distance, but we're estimating only 50% onsite for that reason.

Chris: I'm also concerned the budget surplus will set a precedent for future congresses. Although that didn't happen in 2003, and people weren't upset. I think people would be upset in this case.

Lisa: Maybe we could have an option to earmark portions of the surplus to the National Go Center versus AGA?

Chris: I'm also concerned people will have to rent cars because of needing to drive to and from the site to the hotel.

Lisa: True, but also it's far from the airport too, so we may already have that issue, and will likely have a slightly smaller congress. Also if we want to encourage people to stay on site, then if we mark it up too much, it will be cheaper for people to stay offsite. The meal plan is not required for individuals staying onsite.

[Cross talk about nearby hotels]

Action item: Board members will email Lisa questions what information they need to know to make a decision regarding a planned surplus.

Gurujeet: I don't want people to think the go center is trying to do something underhanded here. We've not budgeted this to finance the go center, we have financing otherwise figured out. I do the Go Center's budget, and Diego is doing the congress's budget.

Update on Code of Conduct

Lisa: We have had significant progress from Karoline and we have a draft and some wording. Let's add it to the January agenda so that we can have her join.

Gurujeet: I'd also like to invite Diego to discuss the board's concerns about the Go Congress budget surplus.

Action item: Invite Karoline and Diego to January board meeting

Scheduling

January: 21st 8pm EST .

February: 11th 8pm EST

March: 18th 8pm EST

Andy Okun: On the subject of scheduling, I have an idea here. What if at congress we combine the AGA and AGF meetings? We can discuss it in the future.

Lisa: We may also want a discussion of when to have the assembly meeting at a future board meeting.

Andy: We could also take the routine things off the agenda and take advantage of the specific things that would benefit from everyone being in the same room. I will talk to Terry to see if that would be okay with him.

Chris: What about posting the agendas in advance?

[All in agreement.]

Andrew motions to adjourn, Steve seconds, all agreed.

Adjourned at 9:37 PM EST.