

# AGA Board Meeting Minutes

American Go Association

March 14, 2021

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# Overview

## Summary

At the March 2021 meeting, the AGA board continued a number of discussions that have been ongoing. These included a check-in on how items agreed to in the Strategic Plan were coming, a discussion of how to bring in new players (including tournaments, leagues, capitalizing on media phenomena, and raising the profile of the AGA). The board was also informed that a Professional Qualification Tournament would be taking place in DC in Summer 2021, and that Dan Ritter was appointed Education Coordinator.

## In Attendance

### Current Board

Lisa Scott (Chair, Central Region)  
Devin Frazee (Central Region)  
Chris Kirschner (Western Region)  
Les Lanphear (Western Region)  
Stephanie Yin (Eastern Region)  
Dan Ritter (Eastern Region)  
Ted Terpstra (At-Large)

### Officers

Andy Okun (President)  
Samantha Fede (Secretary)  
Bob Gilman (Chapters)  
Steve Colburn (Server Admin, 2021  
e-Go Congress Director)

## Notable Discussions and Updates

1. Dan Ritter appointed Education Coordinator, other key coordinators stepping down.
2. A Pro Qualifier Tournament to take place Summer 2021 in DC.
3. Strategic Plan items are going more slowly than hoped.
4. Preliminary discussion of when and how to resume in-person go playing, to be discussed fully at the next meeting after research is done.
5. Discussion of how to bring in new players, including tournaments, leagues, capitalizing on phenomena like Queen's Gambit, and better connections between new players and the AGA.

# Minutes

## 1. Call meeting to order

- a. 8:03pm EDT.

## 2. Opening Approvals/Confirmations/Notices

- a. November Minutes: Devin moves to approve, Dan seconds. Unanimous, **Approved November minutes.**
- b. February 7 Minutes: Devin moves to approve, Dan seconds. Unanimous, **Approved February minutes.**

## 3. President's Report

- a. Minor International News Updates
  - i. Request for exemption to hold a major go international tournament in Russia following sanctions prohibiting holding international competitions in Russia.
  - ii. We have been invited on short notice to participate in an online amateur women's tournament in Japan; the highest rated person who responded was selected since there was no time to hold a qualifier.
- b. Officer Reappointments and Resignations
  - i. No reappointments needed.
  - ii. Upcoming positions that will need to be filled:
    1. Tournament Coordinator (Jeff Schaevel stepping down)
    2. Pair Go Coordinator (Hajin Lee stepping down)
    3. Volunteer Coordinator (Steve Colburn stepping down)
    4. Education Coordinator (new position to be filled by Dan Ritter, coordinating spending of AGF funds for AGA education outreach efforts)
- c. Ongoing Items (**all** are informational only)
  - i. 2021 e-Go Congress Update
    1. Steve Colburn taking the lead, starting outreach to previous volunteers.

Ted Terpstra: How will you plan to spend the \$15,000 allocated and balance the budget?

Lisa: There has not been a specific allocation, and we did not last year try to balance the budget since it serves as a way to spread and publicize go. Last year we spent less than \$10,000, not including comps for future congresses.

Andy: In past years, the prize fund was not part of the Congress budget that was balanced. We are willing to run the risk of a deficit in this case.

Ted: Will the open be rated this year? Do we require AGA membership?

Lisa: [Ratings] remain to be seen, and will depend on what TDs want. We have many foreign people. It is not likely, because there is a huge barrier to doing so.

Stephanie: Will there be a registration fee?

Lisa: No. [Ted: Why?] Because we saw such a success with publicizing AGA and go last year.

Dan: I support the way the e-Congress was done last year and how it's planned to be done this year.

Chris: I think the current developers should consider laying the groundwork to have a hybrid event next year, and having the infrastructure to accept payments, for example donations, for this year so that next year we can have that already set up.

Steve: We are set up for that.

- ii. Status of Policy Documentation (see September Board [Agenda](#) and [Minutes](#), as well as [Necessary AGA Policies](#))
  - 1. No progress
- iii. Status of Search for Administrative Assistant
  - 1. A posting is ready to go, will be posted shortly
- iv. Status of Online Ratings
  - 1. Decisions have not yet been made, but Andy understands that the board feels strongly that progress needs to be made. Ted asked about the ratings in the Open this summer; status of this is uncertain at this time.

Devin: Is there a timeline?

Andy: No, we are too early. But starting in the next few weeks.

#### 4. Ongoing Business

- a. Ideas for playing go during the pandemic: [Ideas for Playing go During the Pandemic \(2020\)](#)
  - i. One recent update- Ted added "online rated tournaments"

Ted: Why hasn't it been shared with the chapters?

Lisa: There hasn't been any updates on it. It has also been available to the public through the agenda.

Devin: It was brainstorming but I think we could release it in a more organized fashion.

Andy: Perhaps we can do an EJ article publishing a summary of what people have done.

Dan: Could we bring in some Chess people?

Andy: Yes, and Bridge people

Ted: The local Chess club is running 45 person in person tournaments. We could do that. I'm polling my club.

Lisa: The AGA advice is still to not have face-to-face tournaments. As a federation, of course we can't enforce that.

a. Pro qualifier in 2021

Ted: Isn't there going to be a Pro Qualifier in DC this summer?

Andy: Yes that is planned, but will depend on local conditions. And it will be 8 people maximum.

[Discussion of contacts within various game communities, community work to get gaming guidance from CDC e.g., Scrabble, Bridge, Magic, Checkers, Chess, Cribbage]

b. Reopening face-to-face events

Lisa: The next discussion is under what conditions we could consider reopening face-to-face events.

Ted: My club members are ready to play face-to-face

Devin: I organize something small for people ready to be back.

Lisa: There are local conditions, but as an organization, we need to be conservative.

Chris: A major element in the chess community is legal liability, and that's something we need to worry about instead.

Ted: But if a chapter runs a tournament, is the AGA liable? Is the chapter protected by liability?

Lisa/Andy: This is a legal conversation, there could be issues if we rate it or advertise it.

Board will consider further at the May meeting, after designees do research and liaise with similar organization.

c. Status of [Strategic Plan](#) items for Fall 2020 and Winter 2021

i. Strategic Plan Implementation Status:

1. All board members were contacted on February 21 with a summary of projects they've volunteered for.
2. Acknowledge that everyone has a lot on their plate and should feel free to ask for help dealing with workload if needed.

## 5. New Business

a. How to bring in new players

i. Devin asks if this is for new go players or new AGA members

ii. Tournaments (Ted emphasizes this)

1. Andy: It seems like having additional features with social elements is key to encourage people to be part of the community.

Ted: We have pros give lectures at San Diego Go Club, but I require AGA memberships.

Lisa: There are issues with equity. We want people to be new go players even if they can't afford membership.

Ted: Youth and new memberships are cheap. We don't turn people away in San Diego.

Lisa: Let's think about this beyond just an individual club, at the AGA level. It's great your San Diego club hasn't had that issue.

iii. Leagues

1. Leagues: (proposal from Bob Gilman)

Dan/Devin express enthusiasm

Lisa expresses some concern about ratings in the context of leagues

Lisa: Do you think this is something we can implement nationally?

Bob: Ours is mostly local, but some additional folks join

Dan: It becomes much more complicated as it scales up, but I think it's possible.

[General support for plan for public discussions about leagues]

iv. Media phenomena

Lisa: Are there strategies for capitalizing on media phenomena like Queen's Gambit?

Devin: I think we need to understand the funnels that keep people engaged in go.

Chris: Having a woman as Bobby Fisher is why the Queen's Gambit was so successful.

Samantha: I think any sort of big media thing has this impact. Like Hikaru no Go. We really need a Netflix adaptation of something like that.

v. Better connection to volunteers

Dan: What about a service to connect new players to volunteers. As the education lead, I will work on organizing that.

Devin comments on the need to connect volunteers with the AGA without bureaucracy.

b. Drop in membership

Ted: What are we going to do about a drop in membership (approx. 12%)

Andy: Yeah, I think it's good we have people renewing anyway. But we probably need tournaments.

Lisa: 12% during a pandemic seems like a great number. This is an extraordinary circumstance.

Chris: We should focus on how to move forward.

c. Finalize the board meeting schedule for the rest of the spring/summer.

i. Ted: Changing dates all the time is confusing

Lisa: Dates were tentative. We won't have enough time to make good progress if we have it in April.

[Support for moving the April/May meeting from Dan/Devin/Stephanie/Les]

Scheduled for 5/16/2021 (3 hour meeting)

ii. Will not hold the June optional meeting (unless necessary).

**6. Items for April/May 2021 meeting**

a. Agenda items to add:

i. Chris: Define standards for coming back to in person go

**7. Adjourn**

a. Chris moves to adjourn, Les seconds. Unanimous, adjourned 9:58pm EDT.