

Special Board Meeting Minutes

American Go Association

Meeting Date and Time: April 15, 2020, 7:00 pm EST

Overview

Official Board Statement from April 17, 2020

At a Special Board Meeting held on April 15th, the AGA board, with the agreement of the Go Congress organizers in Colorado, voted to postpone the 2020 US Go Congress in Estes Park to a future year, meaning that there will be no US Go Congress in 2020.

Over the next few weeks, the AGA and the US Go Congress will continue with the cancellation process, including refunding registration fees that were already paid. We expect these refunds to happen over the next month or so; you do not need to reach out to the Congress team to get your refund.

Given the seriousness of the Coronavirus epidemic, the AGA cannot in good conscience bring together our customary crowd from around the country and the world. The AGA does not take this decision lightly, and plans to resume our annual US Go Congress in 2021, with as much play (both fun and serious) as always.

At this time, the AGA is recommending cancelling all in-person go events (both club meetings and tournaments) through the end of May, but feels that it is too soon to make recommendations about summer events, given that local conditions may vary.

Please stay safe and healthy

In Attendance

Lisa Scott (Chair, Central Region)
Devin Frazee (Central Region)
Chris Kirschner (Western Region)
Chris Saenz (Western Region)
Gurjeet Khalsa (Eastern Region)
Dan Ritter (Eastern Region)
Paul Celmer (At-Large)

Andy Okun (President)
Samantha Fede (Secretary)
Estes Park Congress Directors
Eric Wainwright
Howard Landman
Paul Barchilon

Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

a. 7:05pm EDT

2. Andy Okun, President, presented a timeline of the AGA/Go Congress Coronavirus response:

- a. Chris Kirschner brought it front and center in late January at AGA Board Meeting, considered AGA's response to SARS in 2003, and decided that we might well follow a similar course of action. This was, of course, when the disease was localized primarily still Hubei province, so the scope of the issue was extremely different.
- b. Response changed in early March, creating a contingency budget/plan assuming a much smaller Go Congress attendance, hoping we would be able to proceed with a much smaller attendance. As we entered April, however, it became clear that even our worst-case scenario from mid-March was perhaps actually our best-case scenario.
- c. To be cautious, and risk averse, and to not risk the lives or health of any players, we decided that it would be best to recommend postponing the 2020 US Go Congress. It would be irresponsible to ask anyone to come to such an event. Nearly all conferences have been postponed/canceled since the beginning of March (and stretching already into the fall).
- d. We spoke with the CO team, some of whom are on this call, on Saturday. After a good deal of discussion of all sides of the issue, it became clear that while no one was thrilled at the prospect of postponing the 2020 US Go Congress, it was the resigned opinion of everyone on the call that postponing was the best move.
- e. Online versions of the Masters and major tournaments aren't feasible. We can't have a serious competition online because of AI, and we've been having trouble finding organizers for online events during this epidemic.

3. Discussion of rescheduling/plans/msc questions:

- a. Eric Wainwright: Andy summarized it, we are of course sad to have to postpone for the year, but we don't think it's feasible. We spoke to our contact there, who said that many of the larger groups are already move to the prime weeks next year. The only available one is the second week of August, which will be late for some people. Our deposit will ride in full to the year after (2022) so it looks like that would be feasible. To extract our deposit, we'd only be able to get 30%.
- b. Paul Barchilon: Another concern is that all the equipment is here in Colorado and it's an expense to send it to Ohio and back the following year. [Approximately \$2000 each way]

- c. Howard: Perhaps we can considering our scheduling to not overlap with European Go Congress.
- d. General consensus that 2022 would work better for the Colorado congress to be rescheduled, with Ohio going as planned in 2021.
- e. Dan: How will current registrations for Congress be handled?
- f. Lisa: Refunds.
- g. Andy: There's some loss in terms of transaction fees, but that will be an AGA cost.
- h. Chris Kirshner moves that the Colorado Congress be postponed until the facility is able to sustain us, tentatively 2022. Dan seconds.
- i. Lisa and Samantha will write a congress announcement, Andy and Chris K recommend by this weekend.
- j. Paul B.: For events where there's a prize that is attendance at Congress, can we roll that to the following year? [yes]
- k. Vote on the motion, unanimous, approved.
- l. Devin: Motion to cover the costs of the Colorado team for cancelation (transaction fees, storage costs). Gurujeet seconds.
- m. Vote on the motion, unanimous, approved.
- n. Chris Saenz: Can we discuss AGA stance on tournaments for the rest of the year? We're starting to discuss the Cotsen (in October).
- o. Lisa: We've canceled things through May as an AGA policy, but certainly it's a big question.
- p. Chris K: We[SGC]'re canceling an event in August, but it seems to be early to make a blanket statement. It's possible things could proceed with some adjustments, particularly at smaller events.
- q. Howard: This would seem to be a state-by-state question.
- r. Chris Saenz: Things may die down by then. I'd like to add it to the agenda to talk about at the next meeting.
- s. Andy: We need to update our statement either from the executive or from the board. I think our advice is no face-to-face go for the time being.
- t. Chris Kirschner would like to state that the Maryland Open's run is continuous*. Dan seconds.
- u. Howard: Colorado should also get recognized for a zero years streak!
- v. Unanimous

4. Meeting adjourned at 7:43pm EDT

Addendum

Official Board Statement from March 14, 2020

Generally, the AGA considers promoting face-to-face go to be one of its biggest priorities. As COVID-19 has progressed, however, it has become clear that practicing social distancing is something that everyone needs to do for their health and the health of those around them.

With that in mind, the AGA is encouraging folks to cancel or postpone all planned club and tournament events in March and April. This is a developing situation that is changing weekly (and lately daily), and we hope that we will be able to resume in-person play soon – once the pandemic has subsided.

The Seattle Go Center in Seattle and the National Go Center in Washington, DC have both suspended tournaments and face-to-face play and are closely monitoring the situation. Updates are at seattlego.org and nationalgocenter.org.

At this time, the AGA is making no recommendations about events in May or any time after that. Preparations for the US Go Congress in Estes Park at the beginning of August are continuing, even as we develop contingency plans in case the effects of the pandemic continue into the summer. Congress staff are working closely with the YMCA and monitoring recommendations from public officials. Colorado has declared a state of emergency and recommended postponing gatherings of 250 or more for the time being.

Stay safe – and maybe take this opportunity to rediscover online go playing, read some go books, and watch some of the many videos available on Twitch and YouTube!