

AGA Board Meeting
12/18/2016

Attending

Gurujeeet Khalsa (Board Chair, Eastern Representative)
Diego Pierrottet (Eastern Representative)
Lisa Scott (Central Representative)
Martin Lebl (Central Representative)
Andrew Jackson (Western Representative)
Chris Kirschner (Western Representative)
Andy Okun (AGA President)
Bob Gilman (EVP)

Meeting called to order at 8:04pm EST

Agenda

Approval of Minutes
President's Report
Treasurer's suggestion to raise membership fees
50 State Championship Tournaments Discussion
Gilman can report on Congress Escrow Situation

Approval of Minutes

AJ and LS: Discussion of timeliness of agendas and agenda items, and discussion of these items well before the board meeting.

GK: The lack of board conversation may indicate that the AGA is running well.

AJ: I would disagree, I think that there are some overhanging issues that makes me at least be wary of taking on new projects until this is resolved (LS seconds)

GK: Approval of minutes. Discussion of changes to minutes before approval.

LS moves to approve 8/21 minutes, EZ moves to second. All Approve.

CK moves to approve 11/6 minutes, LS seconds. All approve.

President's Report

AO: At the Pair Go Championship in Tokyo, the INAF Board Meet. The Nihon Ki-in had a change in leadership. The main matter of substance was the National Go Center. They asked for more information about financials, etc.

GK: The new information will be going out to the INAF Board tomorrow.

AO: Great. Also, our pairs acquitted themselves well.

AO: With internal issues, we have two openings that need to be filled as soon as we can. The first is Treasurer. We have found someone willing to help with the tax aspects of the position, but not someone willing to take on the day to day bookkeeping for the organization.

We also need a new Tournament Coordinator. We have people taking care of the necessary items as they come in, but we need a new person to take on the full position.

LS: Don't we need a secretary?

AO: We have a secretary in Peter Schumer, but not a recording secretary.

BG: It would be good to have a Tournament Coordinator with international experience, wouldn't it?

AO: Yes, that would be helpful, but more important is having someone experienced in playing and managing tournaments.

AO: The AGA Archive has also been moved to the Bay Area and **David Doshay** and Karoline Li are working as AGA Archivists.

CK: Karoline is an actual expert archivist, so she may have suggestions for how to best maintain the archive.

GK: We should invite her to come to some future meeting and let us know what she is doing and plans to do.

Membership Dues

LS reads suggestion sent by Roy Schmidt to the board.

Diego? It may be a matter of restructuring Congress and membership fees.

GK: We are not in a financial position where we need to raise dues, so I would suggest not raising dues unless we need to. The comparisons are interesting, but not necessarily compelling.

CK: According to the minutes, this is absolutely relegated to the chapters.

LS: But us making the recommendation is how it would happen at the Chapter Assembly.

GK: So let's put aside whether or not we can make the change and discuss what we would like to recommend, if anything.

EZ: From my reading of the suggestion, it seems that the USCF is doing much more, so if there are things that we would like to do, then that is something to consider. I think that we are more limited by other things, such as staffing.

LS: Being limited by staffing is being limited by income.

GK: I think we need to decide on our vision and then decide on whether or not we should raise funds.

DP: I don't think we are strapped for cash, but I do think we should look at restructuring, for example in relation to the Congress.

BG: I think that it would be unfair to request more money from the number of members that we have who don't attend Congress and never play in a tournament.

AO: I think that people will bear a membership increase if we can tell them what it's for. They would go for the paid help idea if we have a good plan for it. I also agree that this is something that the Assembly would need to do. We can think about if there is something that we would like to do and make the recommendation by April.

AJ: As VP of Operations, I have been working with a number of high skilled volunteers, and it would be nice to be able to compensate them. When I lose volunteers, it is often because they find new high paying jobs, so we could no longer afford him. To be fair, we could also not afford him if we increased the rates slightly. However, we were able to make some nice connections.

LS: I think that one main use of additional funds would be to support an issue that I've been proposing off and on for a few years: an assistant to handle the day to day things, especially for our very generous volunteer President and VPs, and be a point of contact for members.

AJ I think an Administrative Asst. to the President would be fantastic to make sure the basics are happening.

BG: I'd like to comment that we have a deficiency in longer range budgeting and planning in the organization. We have tried to take care of this in the past, but have not been as effective as we would like. Perhaps we could form a committee who could do this long range planning, include vision and funding. I would be willing to serve on such a committee.

ML: Having a staff who would do the administrative stuff so that we have some consistency would be nice. However, I am not sure how much would be necessary to pay for this or if a dues increase would cover it.

LS: I think that having someone to do marketing and day to day matters (such as answering emails timely and making sure that the right people respond) and be a point of contact would help bring back members, since one of the main complaints from people who choose not to be AGA members is that they don't get any benefit and that we're not well organized.

EZ: I think that we also need a perspective on this. We used to look for go players, but you know schools are great at organizing parents to do things.

AO: We have had parents who have been very good volunteers in the past.

AO: Part of the issue with taking day to day work off of the President's plate is the problem of getting organized to the point where that is possible.

GK: I think that if we are going to have an administrative person, we need well-defined duties and management. I'm not opposed to the idea, but

LS: We've been similarly disorganized as long as I've been volunteering (roughly 6-8 years)

CK: It always seems more disorganized than it is.

CK: When you bring paid people in, it is not simply getting people to do work we don't have volunteers for, but a fundamental change in the structure of the organization. At the president's level, this happens either as the administrative assistant (who does as the president directs), or an executive director (who really does the day to day things). Both of these represent a substantial revision.

GK: If, for example, we want to get a marketing plan and pay someone to do that, then I'm for that. I'm not for just hiring someone without a vision or plan. I would support us getting professional advice and a marketing plan, which may lead to paying someone.

LS: To bring this to one of our other frequent issues, how can we grow if we do not have the administrative capability to handle it? If we get members but then they do not feel that they are receiving enough services, and we can't handle their requests, then they leave.

Google Gift

AJ: We still don't have a plan for what we're going to do with our generous gift from Google. It would be nice to have something set up so we can tell them. The AlphaGo event happened in March and the contract was signed over the summer. I would like to know the plan.

CK: I think that's a good point. We should have a plan.

LS: Does anyone have a plan?

AO: Yes, I have a plan, I have worked on it, and I will report back soon. **ACTION ITEM FOR AO**

DP: I think there are two things we're discussing, one is how to justify raising rates for more returns, and one is restructuring the weight of the cost and what it means to members. I think we need to discuss those rather than focusing on how we are spending the money.

GK: I would take away from this discussion that we are deficient in a few things: hiring a part time person, google gift, raising rates, a vision for how we want to go.

AO: Yes, and partly this comes from the fact the AGF and AGA are so separate. We have two organizations with different tools for one coherent vision. This makes it a little more difficult to have a coherent vision. We are reacting in a good way to thinking and discussing Roy's suggestion, but there are bigger picture issues that need to be worked out, and that make us different from Chess folks, for example.

BG: I think that this discussion is good inasmuch as it helps us improve our process.

CK: I'm going to suggest an idea of a motion here: **We should plan on having a meeting of the Board (and appropriate others) to create a Five-Year Plan and put it on the calendar. This would be an executive meeting, and that we should do it annually. We will put this issue on the agenda for the next meeting.** LS seconds.

GK: I'm in favor of the idea. I know we have made some efforts in the last few years. I would like the idea of finding a weekend when we could meet.

AO: The problem is purely a matter of what Congress week is like.

LS: I would like to at least attach it to a major tournament like the MD Open or the Cotsen, which people attend anyway.

AO: Yes, I agree. I can go anywhere.

GK: Before the next meeting, let's get the discussion going by email.

The Motion passes unanimously.

BG: I would suggest that our various VPs be asked to submit their needs and ideas for a meeting like this.

GK: I agree, but we can discuss this next month.

50 State Championship Tournaments

EZ: Chris K and I have been discussing this for the last month, and today I distributed a timetable for 2017. The first half of the year would be finalizing the framework, and then over the summer hold 5-7 state tournaments, and then 10-15 states holding tournaments during the second half of the year. We could also hold a 1 hour meeting during the Congress for training and questions. When I think of how many state cha

LS: I am curious about how you came up with the goal of 5-7 tournaments over the summer and 10-15 tournaments over the rest of the year, and if you have reached out to any state organizers in coming up with these numbers.

EZ: I haven't reached out to anyone yet, since we want to make sure to have things in place first, but I picked the first number because of the number of states that already have active organizations.

LS: Just looking at the timeline you sent out today, giving state organizers notice in April of a tournament may not be enough time for them to organize by the summer. This is particularly true for states that hold their major tournaments in the winter and spring already.

EZ: I think it may vary state to state, and that's fine. I see this more as a process, getting more organizers and volunteers involved, etc. It may take 1-2 years to reach 20 states and then a few more years to get all 50.

LS: I think we're not conservative enough

AO: I think the number we have may depend on how strict we are with requirements. If we have very loose requirements, then we may get a lot of states participating quickly.

GK: If we think about the tournaments that exist on the east coast (NJ Open, MD Open, a DC Cherry Blossom tournament). We are trying not to overlap and to space things out in the region. This would be more difficult if we had to account for more states in the area too.

CK: One of the things that we're considering is that the states could have quite a bit of power to engineer how these tournaments are run. They could use the existing tournaments to seed top players into a championship among the top players, with a separate championship.

LS: But that's a weekend when the top players won't be participating in the regional tournaments.

GK: I wouldn't want, after coordinating PA and MD, to find that VA had put their tournament in the middle and diminish those tournaments.

EZ: I think that you're right and scheduling may be an issue, and would require lots of collaboration with local directors. On the other hand, right now a lot of players would want more tournaments. I think these tournaments might also attract more players who haven't been active recently.

CK: These are mostly start-up problems. We expect to distribute a framework to chapter leaders by February, and they can then respond to that.

LS: I want to bring this to another related issue on the opposite end of the spectrum. Is there any place in the framework for states with smaller numbers of go players who want to have their championship in combined tournaments in other states.

EZ: We could have some centers for smaller states that could use other states platform.

LS: So, that's within the framework?

EZ: We thought about it, but is it in the framework?

CK: These are key issues, but these are state issues, and we should communicate with them.

LS: Yes, but this is going to be one of the first questions that they ask.

EZ: Quick response to Lisa's point that IL tournaments attract players from out of state

LS: What about those states in which only 1 strong player regularly comes to events, so if that strong player knows that he or she won't get any games against other strong players, he/she may choose not to attend the tournament. However, if they knew that they could play the strong players in (a) neighboring state(s), then they would be more likely to come out, and we wouldn't end up with a kyu-level state champion.

EZ: Brings me to a point about total AGA players ever. We've had something in the range of 20,000 over the years. We may see people come back who haven't attended tournaments in a while.

LS: But they still need something to draw them in.

AO: People in different states will do things based on their own conditions.

LS: But 26 states don't touch the coasts and don't attend coastal tournaments often.

CK: The plan is that we will present a framework to the states and then make changes.

LS: I think that the framework needs to include these concerns before it is sent out, since they are the concerns that we know will come up immediately, so why wait and address them after presenting something different to the public when we know that they are real, current issues.

ACTION ITEM: Put this discussion into an email so it can be examined in detail.

EZ: The state could identify the top players within the state and then set up a special tournament for those players, either at the Congress or within the state.

CK: Some small states may choose to have a 3 game tournament among the top 2 players in the state, and we need to be prepared to accept that.

GK: Time to move on for tonight

Congress Escrow Accounts

GK: Are there any news items?

BG: Houston is being resurrected and they plan to have a workshop and invite a pro to attend. The other old escrows are also moving positively.

The next meeting is set for 8pm EST on Sunday, January 29th.

LS moves that we adjourn. EZ seconds. Motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 9:36pm EST.