

AGENDA
AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Sunday, December 14, 2008 – 8:00 PM EST

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 by Roy Schmidt.

Type of meeting: Regular monthly conference call

Attendees:

Jie Li (At Large)

Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)

Celmer (Eastern Region) –arrived 8:45

Laura Kolb (Central Region)

Roy Schmidt (Central Region) Chairman

Willard Haynes (Western Region)

Andrew Okun (Western Region) arrived 8:10 PM

Allan Abramson (President)

Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

1. Approval of minutes for November 2, 2008 meeting

Willard Haynes made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2008 Board conference call. Laura Kolb seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Call for additional agenda items

No items were added to the agenda.

3. President's Report

a. Discussion-Prize money

Abramson said he wants to decide whether using money for prizes and transportation is the best use of our budget. He might prefer to use the money for promotion of go and the AGA instead. Robbins said under the new Ing Foundation practice of requesting funding on a project by project basis, we are no longer limited to \$100K per year and might be able to fund both prizes and promotion.

Abramson said the US Youth Go Championship offered 16 kids travel and housing money and prizes costing \$12,000-16,000 for one year. Is this really the best use of that much money? Using that much money to help only 16 kids is a large fraction of the available money for just a few kids.

Jie Li asked for a list of how much money is being spent and on how many players are being helped. Robbins suggested involving the Ing Foundation in the conversation, asking whether we need to reduce spending on prizes to get more money for promotion of go.

Mr. Yang of the Ing Foundation has expressed a dislike for spending his grants on prize money and travel expenses for only a few players.

Okun asked if we have another way to help kids play go other than offering prize money. Abramson said starting clubs in schools is a high priority. Abramson thinks bringing Chinese teachers to the schools is a great idea. They may teach many students during their three-month visit. The airfare for one teacher helps a lot of children.

b. Discussion-Board Duties

Abramson suggested that Board members call chapter representatives periodically both to improve AGA-chapter relations and to get some ideas.

Robbins said he talks to about 15 chapter representatives per month. Okun said he thinks he can call each club once per year. Robbins suggested that Allan provide some questions he wants answered so there can be a focused conversation.

c. Discussion-Rating Qualifier Games Played on the Internet

Abramson asked the Board members whether they would be in favor of allowing internet playing for professional/strong player tournament qualifying events. Okun offered to make a motion that we allow internet play. Abramson said he's not ready for that step yet, he is just looking for feedback at this time. Jie Li said he is in favor of allowing rated internet games. Schmidt said that the qualifier games played by strong players on the Internet are equal in quality to over-the-board games because of the stakes the players have in the outcome of the games. Schmidt also suggested the use of arbiters at each end of such matches to ensure fair play. Abramson said that web cameras with microphones could help ensure honesty, so there wouldn't need to be as many referees. Abramson said he doesn't expect people to cheat, but wants to make sure people feel confident that nothing bad is going on. He said before making any decisions about allowing rated internet games, he'd like to run it past the general membership for comments.

d. Establish AGA Hall of Fame for 25th Congress?

Abramson said he thinks the idea of an AGA Hall of Fame is overdue. It would reside on the website. He would like to have Mr. Yang and Mr. Ing high on the list of potential inductees. Haynes asked how this differs from the Lasker award. Robbins added that there is already the Nakayama award. Robbins suggested it should be automatic that anyone who has already received those awards would qualify for charter entry into the Hall of Fame. There have been two Nakayama winners and 4 or 5 Lasker award winners so far. Robbins said we should also have a web page dedicated to the life

members to encourage more of those. The board enthusiastically encouraged Abramson to develop this idea further.

e. Information-Go Camps

Abramson reported that he has been approached by the Korea Amateur Baduk association requested two-week summer go camps to make it worth their time to send groups of children to the US. Todd Heidenreich said he could arrange to have a two-week camp this summer. Jie Li suggested giving attendees the option of staying for either of the two weeks or for both weeks. Haynes said the camps were established originally to help US children improve and wondered whether focusing on Asian students would reduce space for US kids. Abramson asked the Board if they thought bringing Asian kids would reduce opportunities for U.S. kids. Robbins said it would increase cultural exchange opportunities. Abramson said he thinks the number of teachers would increase as the number of attendees increases. Okun said Jie Li's suggestion that some people could come for a whole two week camp while others could come just for the first week or the second week is similar to how other summer camps operate. Okun thinks the addition of another week and Asian kids would add to the experience for US kids.

f. Information-International Representation Policy

Abramson reported that Phil Waldron's revised International Representation Policy is out for comments. He has asked that comments be submitted by the end of December.

Abramson has received one response so far. (From Thomas Hsiang who liked the revised policy)

g. Information-Communicating with Members

Abramson reported he is working on the first President's report to members. He wants to encourage volunteers by describing potential projects. It will be periodic, but not so much as to feel like SPAM. The first one should be out within two weeks.

End of President's report.

4. Old Business

a. Revision of selection procedures for international representatives

Schmidt reported that Phil Waldron has asked for Board input on the revised procedures for international representation. There were two parts to the revision. The first part, the qualifications of participants, was a policy document and would be voted on by the Board as policy. The second part, the selection procedures, is an administrative document. Although the Board might express its approval of the document, there won't be a formal vote as there is for policy. Since the revised procedures are still being circulated for comments, Schmidt suggested delaying Board action until next meeting.

Okun made a motion to table discussion until the next meeting. Haynes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5. New Business

a. Membership card upgrade

Celmer had previously suggested upgrading the quality of the membership card. He thinks a plastic or laminated card would be better.

Robbins said he researched equipment. For \$1000-\$3000 you can get a machine to print on plastic. Each card would cost \$.25 to \$.75 depending on how many you buy.

Okun suggested that there are companies that will contract to produce the cards, saving us the expense (and labor) of using our own machine. Abramson said he likes this option better and said he will pursue this idea and report back to the Board next month.

b. Enhanced chapter services

Schmidt said the Houston Go Club is offering services to its members that the AGA should already be providing. He asked the Board, "Should we partner with the Houston club?"

Robbins suggested getting AGA webmaster, Steve Colburn on one of our conference calls to see if he can provide the same services for less money.

Abramson said this is a difficult question, because the money that is being charged makes the Houston club a vendor, which we have policies about. For example we don't endorse specific vendors or their services.

c. Pro issues

i. Playing fees

At the Portland Congress, a small group met with professionals to discuss issues. One issue that came up was when professionals go to invitational tournaments they give up teaching fees they would otherwise earn. Jie Li said they are already getting paid to play in tournaments. Schmidt said they would like to be paid more just for showing up and

playing. Robbins said he thinks sponsor money could be used for this, but using membership money is not a good idea. Abramson agreed with Robbins.

ii. Certified arbiters

There is a concern that people who run tournaments involving professionals and strong players have made mistakes and not followed proper procedures. The professionals would like to have better trained tournament officials. Abramson said there have been initiatives in the past, but there was a lack of volunteers. Robbins said Phil Waldron in his position as tournament coordinator may be able to make this happen. Robbins said we need a good TD guide and a way of certifying TD's. Schmidt said the Chess Federation has an actual written test for tournament directors. Okun asked how we can motivate TD's to want to be certified. We don't want to discourage people from holding tournaments. Robbins suggested giving a year's extension to TD's after being certified and subsequently holding four tournaments. This suggestion was met with skepticism.

Abramson said he'd like to have a competition to develop a tournament pairing software program that can become a standard program for AGA tournaments.

iii. Invitations

The professionals would like to see a formal invitation including details such as fees, prizes, timing for payment, and other stipulations and conditions, so they can make an informed decision whether to attend an event or not. The Board agreed that this seems like a reasonable request and should be honored in the future.

6. Establish time and date for next Board meeting

The next regular monthly conference call will occur on January 25, 2009 at 8:00 EST.

7. Adjourn

Okun and Kolb simultaneously made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Robbins seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to adjourn at 9:47 EST.

Submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary