

AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Sunday, February 22, 2009 – 7:00 PM EST

Roy Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM EST.

Type of meeting: Regular monthly conference call

Attendees:

Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)
Celmer (Eastern Region)
Laura Kolb (Central Region)
Roy Schmidt (Central Region) Chairman
Willard Haynes (Western Region)
Andrew Okun (Western Region)
Allan Abramson (President)
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

Absent

Jie Li (At Large)

1. Approval of minutes for January 25, 2009 meeting

Willard Haynes made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 25, 2009 Board conference call. Andy Okun 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. Policy Decision Request- Policy and Procedures for Selection of Representatives for International Tournaments

Phil Waldron (Tournament Coordinator) joined the call for this discussion. Haynes asked Waldron's opinion on the issue. Waldron said the goal of the policy has been to "spread the wealth" of travel. If the policy was to be changed, Waldron suggests making all rules applicable to both pros and amateurs alike. If the two-tournament limit were lifted, Waldron would suggest increasing the number of required games to more than 10 games to make sure players have to attend local tournaments as well as the Congress to qualify. He would eliminate the minimum rank requirement, so the games at local tournaments could be played against opponents with ratings lower than 6D.

Robbins said if that requirement is slackened, a player could go only to local tournaments and be eligible. Waldron said that is fine, because the player still has to win the qualifier event to win the right to represent the US overseas, which would be a highly contested tournament.

Abramson said Feng Yun is against having to play in amateur tournaments both because she does not want to compete against her students and she does not want to win all of the tournaments or give “free teaching games”. Okun said he thinks Feng Yun has a valid point. Robbins said she could play in just the NJ Open and the MD Open and qualify. Waldron said Feng Yun’s argument is not fair, because she is also getting an all expenses paid trip, which means she gets something in return and the games are not “free teaching games.”

Celmer asked if we do keep the 10-game minimum, who is going to keep track of the running tally? Waldron said it is easy to tell how many rated games a player has been in, but not how strong their opponents have been.

Abramson said it sounds like the Board does want to maintain the ten game requirement. Robbins said he thinks Waldron would like it to be more like twelve games. Kolb said that although it is easy to get the minimum required games if one attends the Congress, it would be difficult to do if the person cannot attend the Congress for some reason.

Abramson said the ten-game requirement tends to keep the ratings fresh and accurate which is a good thing. Abramson summarized the discussion so far: Keep the ten game rule, include professionals in the ten-game limit. Players must compete in at least one tournament outside of the Congress. The ten games can be played against players of no minimum rank. (drop the 6D+ requirement)

Robbins made a motion that Allan Abramson and Phil Waldron write up an exact policy with the minimum number of rated games and the number of tournaments allowed per year and then have the Board vote on it via e-mail in the next week or so. Haynes seconded the motion. The vote was 5-1 in favor of voting in e-mail. (Okun against)

b. Policy Discussion-Lifetime Memberships

This issue has been referred to the Policy and Governance Committee for consideration, as it may involve membership changes needing Assembly approval.

c. FYI- Membership Cards

Abramson said simple lamination would cost around 35 cents per card. There is a big company called American Bank Note Company that prints plastic credit card-like membership cards. Their cost for an initial batch for current members would be about 80 cents per card. Subsequent production would be done in batches of 50 at a rate of \$1 per card. Paper cards would continue to be sent out as temporaries. Robbins said there are about 50 new members every 6-8 weeks on average.

Abramson said we could buy our own machine at a cost about \$2500. He is against that option, because we would have to get someone to do the work, the ink cartridges are expensive, and the machine might break. Laminating the cards would cost less, but the quality of the credit card style cards would be better.

d. FYI- Prize Money Data/Ing Funds

The Ing funding situation has made prize money less available. Abramson recommends funding the Ing-Redmond Cup using the \$22,000 Ing reserves we have and adding \$3000 out of AGA reserves for this year. The question has come up that if Ing money is not being used to sponsor a tournament, it would be possible to use AGA rules rather than Ing rules in the tournaments. Abramson said that we should continue to use Ing rules as a gesture of good will in hope that funding will continue when the economy improves. The consensus was that this was a good idea.

There will be a reduced youth subsidy this year for Congress registration. The Ing Masters Cup budget will be reduced significantly, because that has been an expensive tournament to run in the past.

e. FYI-Budget Situation

The Mind games deficit was larger than expected. We needed to spend \$27,000 out of AGA money to pay for sending the team. Membership dues are lower this year than last year for reasons unknown. Abramson is sending notes to all on-line membership applications. Interestingly, most new memberships are youth members.

f. FYI-NY Go Center

Abramson talked with Paul Anderson of the NY Go Center. Michael Simon, who has been living in Tokyo, has been working quietly to restore the NY Go Center to financial health. He is also instituting rules and procedures to give the Center a more democratic and international, rather than Japanese identity. Okun has been collecting brainstorming ideas of how to make the Go Center more able to pay their property taxes and overhead.

End of President's report. (8:13 PM EST)

4. Old Business

a. Revision of selection procedures for international representatives

Discussed under President's report.

b. Membership card upgrade

Covered under President's report.

5. New Business

a. NY Go Center

Covered under President's report.

b. Funding for chapters in need

Schmidt said the NY Go Center's problems raising funds to pay property taxes raised the issue of what the AGA might want to do to help clubs with financial problems. Abramson said he thinks the New York Go Center's situation is unique, and there is no need to develop a larger policy. With the current budget problems, it would be a bad time to start funding chapters.

Robbins suggested that people from the NY Go Center might communicate with people from the Seattle Go Center to see if they have common problems and might share some solutions.

c. Establishing fund-raising committee

Schmidt said that we need to start coming up with some other ways to raise money besides collecting dues. Celmer said we might want to hire someone to help us raise money as a permanent, ongoing part of our organization. Schmidt said there had been talk in the past of getting corporate sponsorship at the rate of \$10,000 per company. Abramson will ask for volunteers to form a committee to try to raise funds for the AGA.

d. Equipment Loans

Roy Schmidt mentioned that there are still AGA clocks on loan to the NY Go Center, and that raised the question of how much AGA equipment is out there and whether it is being kept track of. Abramson said one set of Congress equipment gets sent from on Congress Director to the next, and Chuck Robbins has some equipment in storage. Abramson said he would collect a list of what the AGA has and report to the Board next month.

e. Ratings Policy

This item was deferred from an earlier Board meeting. Abramson said there was a tournament run on the west coast where the organizer did not send in membership dues of the players, so the question arose whether those games should have been rated. Abramson said he is against allowing games of non-AGA members to be rated. The AGA has not had any specific requirements of tournament directors. The AGA has a policy of rating games played at clubs between two AGA members if both players

agree. Robbins said he thinks a ratings policy should probably come under Phil Waldron's responsibility as AGA Tournament Coordinator. Robbins said there is a loose and unwritten policy that for a tournament to be AGA rated it needs to be sponsored by an AGA chapter and the results must be submitted within 30 days.

6. Establish time and date for next Board meeting

The next regular monthly conference call will occur on March 15, 2009 at 8:15 EDT.

7. Adjourn

Okun made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Robbins seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to adjourn at 8:50 EST.

Submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary