

AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Sunday, March 15, 2009 – 8:15 PM EDT

Roy Schmidt called the meeting to order at 8:15 PM EDT.

Type of meeting: Regular monthly conference call

Attendees:

Jie Li (At Large)
Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)
Celmer (Eastern Region)
Roy Schmidt (Central Region) Chairman
Willard Haynes (Western Region)
Andrew Okun (Western Region)
Allan Abramson (President)
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

Late:

Laura Kolb (Central Region) joined at 9:10 EDT

1. Approval of minutes for February 22, 2009 meeting

Andy Okun made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 22, 2009 Board conference call. Chuck Robbins seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Call for additional agenda items

Jie Li asked for a new agenda item so he could report on his trip to Japan.

3. President's Report

a. Policy Decision Request- Policy and Procedures for Selection of Representatives for International Tournaments

Allan Abramson said he thinks there is a consensus among the Board to drop the two trips per year limit. There has been more controversy over extending the ten-game requirement to the pros, and Abramson said there has been talk of replacing the ten-game rule with the system used for establishing qualification for the Mind Games. Okun said he not only is against a ten-game limit for pros, he is against the requirement for amateurs as well. Robbins said he wants to encourage more strong players to attend tournaments. It is unfair for the strong players to get trips without paying anything back

to the AGA and other players. Attending tournaments is like the strong players giving something back to players who will not have a chance of winning trips abroad.

Roy Schmidt said the Mind Games system would encourage tournament play, but is more flexible because it has a rolling two-year total for tournament games. Abramson said Kirschner's system for the Mind Game qualification was put together under time pressure, and it served well for that tournament, but it is complicated. Players face uncertainty, because they cannot know how many points each tournament is worth until they know who else attends the tournament. Abramson is in favor of requiring strong players to participate in tournaments in exchange for the chance to travel with expenses paid. Schmidt asked whether we could leave the exact number of games required out of the policy. Abramson said it would make changing the requirements less cumbersome if that were the case.

Okun made a motion to drop the limit of two trips per year. Haynes seconded the motion. The vote was five in favor and none opposed with one abstention. (Jie Li) The motion carried.

Regarding the ten-game limit, Robbins would like to make the limit 11 games to ensure that strong players play in at least one local tournament. Jie Li said playing that many tournament games would put a burden on strong players who cannot attend the Congress. Robbins said he is okay with keeping the limit at ten games as long as at least one local tournament (of any size and against any strength opponent) is included.

Celmer said a ten-game limit seems sufficient. He thinks the professionals are unhappy enough and increasing it to eleven would only irritate them more. He is worried about record keeping and enforcement of the rule.

Okun said he is against the ten game requirement, because he doesn't see any benefit from it.

Schmidt said Phil Waldron had mentioned someone had recently played in a qualifying tournament without meeting the ten-game requirement. Abramson said the rule only came into effect in December, so we are just starting to enforce it now.

Okun asked if professionals and strong players would receive notification about the eligibility requirements. Abramson said there has already been publicity. There will be an article in the e-Journal, e-mails will be sent to strong players, and those who are not eligible will not be invited to qualification tournaments.

Schmidt said he thinks it is important to require professionals to play the ten games if the goal is to encourage greater participation in tournaments by strong players, but if the goal is to keep amateur ratings fresh, the pros need not be included.

Robbins made a motion that we extend the ten-game requirement to apply to all players who want to attend overseas tournaments (including professionals). Celmer seconded the motion.

In favor: Celmer, Li, Robbins, Schmidt

Opposed: Haynes, Okun

Absent: Kolb

The motion carried

b. Internet Tournament Conditions

Because we lost the Ing Foundation Funding, Abramson is suggesting holding Youth Tournament playoffs on the internet using referees and/or cameras. Terry Benson is strongly opposed because of a fear of cheating. Abramson asked the Board if they wanted to comment on his decision.

Robbins said if there is a local referee, there should be no problem. The web cam would be acceptable to him if there are no referees available. Jie Li said a web cam would not show if the player were getting instant messages or some other form of cheating. Abramson said the penalties would be severe if someone were caught cheating.

c. Status Request: Board Member Calls to Chapters

Abramson asked the Board members if they have had a chance to start calling chapter representatives in their districts.

Haynes said he has not contacted any chapters yet. He would like to have a list of topics for discussion handy. Robbins said he has talked to chapter representatives as friends, but he has not raised any particular issues. He also would like to know what in particular to ask.

Abramson said he would like to know:

- 1) What their opinion is about why members drop out of the AGA
- 2) If they are willing to make efforts to recruit new members, and
- 3) If they have needs for assistance from the AGA that are not being met.

End of President's report. (8:56 PM EDT)

4. Old Business

a. Revision of selection procedures for international representatives

Discussed under President's report.

b. Ratings Policy

Abramson asked what the Board wants him to do about a ratings policy. Schmidt said there is currently an absence of a policy on which games can be rated by the AGA. Questions to consider are: Does there need to be a certified Tournament Director? and can any game between two AGA members be rated?

5. New Business

a. Jie Li's report from his trip to Japan

Li reported on his recent trip to Japan.

6. Establish time and date for next Board meeting

The next regular monthly conference call will occur on April 19, 2009 at 8:00 EDT.

7. Adjourn

Haynes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Robbins seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to adjourn at 9:15 EDT.

Submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary