

Minutes
AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Sunday, February 28, 2010 – 8:00 PM EST

Meeting called to order by: Roy Schmidt at 8:02 PM EST
Type of meeting: Regular Monthly Conference Call

Attendees:

Jie Li (At Large)
Paul Celmer (Eastern Region)
Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)
Roy Schmidt (Central Region) Chairman
Laura Kolb (Central Region)
Gordon Castanza (Western Region)
Andrew Okun (Western Region)
Allan Abramson (President)
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

Absent:
none

1. Approval of minutes

Gordon Castanza made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 31, 2010 Board meeting. Paul Celmer seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Call for additional agenda items and new business

Schmidt said the Congress organizers have requested that the Board review the arrangements for invitations to the Congress and compensation for professionals attending the Congress.

Okun asked to raise a task for Board members at the end of the meeting.

3. President's report

- a. **Information item: World Pair Go status**
Feng Yun and Jie Li will be our representatives to this tournament.

- b. **Discussion item: Chunlan Cup**
 - i. Ming-jiu Jiang will be our representative to the Cup. He won the tournament last weekend.

 - ii. There were problems with the invitation mailing list so some people who should have been included were not. Abramson came up with an idea to repair some of the damage from the exclusions. He would like to use money from his discretionary budget to sponsor a winter Masters tournament on the internet. He would like to allow all top players to compete regardless of citizenship, etc. He proposes a \$1000 first prize and \$500 for second place. He would require a one-year continuous AGA membership, but not citizenship or green card to get maximum participation. He is still thinking about how long they should be residing in the U.S. The minimum AGA rating he wants is 7.0

- c. **Information item: Ratings System Appointments**
 - i. Abramson asked Phil Waldron to assume the new position of VP for Ratings. Abramson asked the Board to approve the nomination. Okun made a motion to approve the nomination of Phil Waldron to VP ratings. Chuck Robbins seconded and the vote was unanimous.

 - ii. Gurujeet Khalsa has expressed interest in working on the ratings team. He has already worked on the website revisions, and Abramson appreciates having a new volunteer.

 - iii. Celmer asked when Abramson expects the new ratings program to be in place. Abramson said unofficially he estimates a prototype will be up in about 60 days.

d. **Merger of the Fujitsu and the Masters**

- i. Abramson said there was a consensus at the Congress strong players meeting about merging the Fujitsu and Masters tournaments. He circulated another survey recently, and got 15 results with 10 in favor and 5 against merging the tournaments. He asked the Board to discuss the issue.
- ii. Robbins asked what the new tournament would be called. Abramson said he would lean toward calling it the Masters. Okun asked if we could still use the Ing name out of respect. Jie Li said if we call it an Ing tournament, we need to use the Ing rules. Robbins said Mr. Ing cared most about promoting the use of his rules. Schmidt said he thinks using the rules is important for maintaining a good relationship with the Ing Foundation.
- iii. Abramson said he'd like to focus on the question of whether to merge the tournaments or not. Jie Li said the qualification requirements are different for the two tournaments. The Fujitsu requires citizenship and the Masters only requires a green card. It would be complicated to combine two tournaments with different eligibility requirements. Li added that more tournaments are always better for getting strong players to participate in AGA events.
- iv. Abramson said he would prefer to keep the two tournaments separate because he would like to have more tournaments not fewer. Not all of the strong players can attend the Congress to play face-to-face. He would like to continue to promote the Ing rules. He suggests requiring the use of webcams to reduce the possibility of cheating in an internet game.
- v. Schmidt asked how many people he surveyed to get back 15 responses. Abramson said he sent out 180 surveys.
- vi. Robbins said he agrees that we need to maintain a strong commitment to promoting the Ing rules out of

respect for the longstanding support of the Ing Foundation. Li said that strong players usually accept any of the prevailing sets of rules.

- vii. The Board endorsed the President's decision to run two separate tournaments, keeping the Ing name in the Masters tournament, and using Ing rules for the Masters tournament.

e. **Decision item: Budget amendment for membership database revisions**

- i. Abramson asked the Board to approve spending \$3000 to pay Justin Kramer to complete the programming of the website. Kramer provides high quality work at a fair price, and Abramson needs the Board's approval to spend money not currently in the budget.
- ii. Okun asked if the money saved by the new database because of less data entry would offset the extra cost now. Abramson said yes, but he wants to use money from this fiscal year to pay for the work. He needs to get a report from the Treasurer before deciding where we are under budget to see specifically where reductions can be made. Okun made a motion to approve spending \$3000 to pay for Kramer to program the website. Robbins seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the \$3000 spending.

f. **Information item: Switch to Google for Non-Profits for AGA e-mail system**

- i. Abramson said the AGA can save about \$800 per year by switching to Google for Non-Profits, and that he intended to make the change.
- ii. Schmidt said his university switched to Google for their student e-mail accounts, and the students started getting targeted spam. He is concerned about an invasion of privacy.

- iii. Abramson agreed with Schmidt's suggestion to review the Google user agreement from this perspective. He will report back to the Board on this.

g. Information item: Initial results of Go World promotion

- i. There have been between 110 and 120 new and renewed memberships since the start of the Go World promotion. There have been about 50 new members which is higher than usual. He expects about 200 memberships by the end of the promotion. He thinks it's a good response, but not overwhelming.

h. Information item: Congress update

- i. Abramson reported that the typical cost for an adult will be more than \$900. The organizers hope it may get reduced to about \$880 after concessions by the University.
- ii. The reasons for the price increase are: all rooms are in suites of four with a shared bath. All rooms are singles. The Congress will subsidize the rooms for children. With no Ing Foundation money, the subsidy has to come from the adults. The AGF may provide a subsidy for children. The AGA has to pay \$2000 per pro for 10 professionals.
- iii. Castanza said there is a La Quinta hotel within two miles of the campus and there is public transportation close by.
- iv. Abramson said that other than the cost issue, the preparations are going smoothly.
- v. Okun said last weekend was the Southern California Championship and the 2011 Congress organizers took the occasion to visit three LA area campuses. UCLA has a great location but is likely to be expensive. UC Santa Barbara is likely to be cheaper than UCLA, and Santa Barbara is stunningly beautiful. UC Riverside is likely to be the

cheapest option. The facilities are fine, but Riverside is inland and will be hot in summer.

4. Old Business

a. Modification of 10-game rule for International Qualifiers

- i. The Board said last month they would like to discuss possibly changing this rule. Schmidt said serious internet games might be included to satisfy the 10 rated game requirement.
- ii. Robbins said he doesn't think the rule has been in effect long enough to start changing it. He thinks that strong players will get used to the idea of playing ten face-to-face tournament games if they want to travel for international tournaments.
- iii. Jie Li said the goal of the ten-game rule was to get strong players to attend AGA events. Since the internet qualifier games are AGA events they should count. Robbins argued that it doesn't help local organizers to have the strong players on the internet rather than at their events.
- iv. Abramson said he would like to allow the internet games to count because Ming-Jiu Jiang, Feng Yun, Yi-lun Yang, and other teaching professionals can't afford to spend a weekend playing in a tournament. He is concerned about those who make a living teaching go rather than amateurs.
- v. Okun said the issue probably only concerns Ming Jiu and Feng Yun, because Mr. Yang doesn't generally travel for international tournaments.
- vi. Robbins said we already changed the rules for the youth qualifier because Feng Yun objected and she still refused to hold the tournament there. He thinks it would be a mistake to make changes based on every criticism.
- vii. Li said that was a separate issue and the two issues shouldn't be combined. Li states that not allowing winners of local youth tournaments to play in the national field could have a negative impact on the

- youth player. He thinks it is best to separate national championship and world youth qualifiers.
- viii. Celmer said he is inclined to agree with Robbins, because the policy took a long time to put in place and changing it so soon doesn't give it a chance.
 - ix. Kolb said she agrees with Celmer and Robbins
 - x. Okun said he is inclined to allow the internet games to count in the 10-game rule. He made a motion to allow specific internet tournament games specified by the President to be included in the ten-game rules. Jie Li seconded the motion.
 - xi. Robbins said this vote could potentially affect Jie Li so he should probably recuse himself from voting or seconding the motion. Castanza agreed to second the motion and Jie Li agreed to abstain.
 - xii. The vote was 3 in favor and 3 opposed. Okun, Schmidt, and Castanza voted in favor. Celmer, Robbins, and Kolb voted against. The motion did not carry.

5. New Business

a. NAIM and Fujitsu

This was discussed under the President's report.

b. Rating online games

- i. Abramson said Phil Waldron, the new VP for ratings would like to participate in this discussion.
- ii. Schmidt said he thinks the issue of rating internet games is an issue that should be considered at the Assembly level.
- iii. Waldron said things are progressing on the new ratings system. He would like to have a prototype rating program running by the end of March.
- iv. Waldron said that once the new ratings system is in effect, the issue of rating on-line games will have to be decided. He will start by looking at internet results and studying whether there is a difference. After doing the analysis, the decision can be made

- whether to include the games in the ratings database or not.
- v. Abramson said that so far the only people who have been asking for internet games to be rated are the very top players.
 - vi. Okun said he wanted the AGA to come up with a set of rules, perhaps very strict to start with, for which online games would be allowed into the ratings system so people would be able to start organizing some online AGA rated events.
 - vii. Waldron responded that data would need to be collected and analyzed before we could reasonably decide to allow the inclusion of online games in the rating system. He will start by analyzing the American Go Honor society, the Fujitsu Cup, the Ing Masters, and the U.S. Youth Go Championship results that have been held online.
 - viii. Waldron said that the awarding of ranks and the issuing of rank certificates could be automated under the new system.
 - ix. Okun said that, of the various issues that could be addressed once the new ratings system was in place, the issue of awarding ranks was by far the most important; All agreed it was the top priority.

c. Pros at the Congress

- i. Abramson said Karen Jordan is concerned about not inviting Maeda and Guo Juan because they are so popular. The AGA has made a decision to only pay for US professionals this year. Abramson said if pros, other than US pros and those specifically designated by foreign go associations, come on their own they will be given all due respect, but they must pay their own way. Robbins asked if we could reduce the amount offered to American pros to allow us to invite Maeda and Guo. Schmidt said there is an implied contract. Abramson agreed, saying that the \$2000 amount has been established for several years and would be hard to change. Also, if we add two foreign professionals, where can

you draw the line? Robbins suggested that someone raise funds to bring those two popular professionals to the Congress. Abramson said the Congress organizers had the option to raise funds independently for this purpose, but the AGA cannot pay for foreign pros this year.

- ii. Okun said that, as one of the organizers of the 2011 Congress in Los Angeles, he would like to have the option to invite those two professionals then. Abramson said the decision this year was made in response to budget issues which may or may not change in another year.
- iii. The Board majority was for leaving this decision as is, given the economic situation.
- iv. Schmidt said that Karen Jordan is concerned about how to handle professionals who show up at the Congress without an invitation. The Board agreed that we can not pay for uninvited professionals.

d. Volunteer Recruiting

Okun asked Abramson and the members of the Board to send him lists of people who are currently volunteering and positions and tasks that are open so that, during this period when we don't have a volunteer coordinator, he can get a sense of who is doing what for us and how we are doing recruiting and retaining volunteers. Abramson said the biggest hole in the organization right now is the Executive VP spot.

6. Establish time and date of next meeting

The next monthly conference call will be March 28, 2010 at 8:00 EST.

7. Adjourn

Celmer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Robbins seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 10:03 PM EST.

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary