

**Minutes**  
**AMERICAN GO ASSOCIATION GENERAL**  
**ASSEMBLY**  
**Saturday, August 9, 2008 – 2:00 PM PDT**

Meeting called to order by: Mike Lash at 2:05 PM PDT  
Type of meeting: Annual Congress General Assembly

Attendees:

Keith Arnold: Baltimore Go Club, Univ. of MD GC  
Terry Benson: Brooklyn Go Club, New York Go Center  
Steve Colburn: Empty Sky Go Club  
Willard Haynes: Davis/Sacramento Go Club  
Mark Rubenstein: Evanston Go Club  
Paul Matthews: Feng Yun Go School  
Paul Celmer: Lancaster Go Club  
Matthew Mallory: Milford Go Club  
Allan Abramson: NOVA Go Club  
Paul Celmer: Triangle Go Group, Lancaster Go Club  
Wanda Metcalf: Massachusetts Go Association  
Glenn Peters: Portland Go Club, Corvallis Go Club, Sunnyvale GC  
John Hogan: Seattle Go Center  
Harold Lloyd: Cleveland Go Club  
Todd Heidenreich: XYZ Private Go Group  
Thomas Hsiang: Empty Sky Go Club  
Garrett Smith: NOVA Go Club  
Zhaonian Chen: Princeton Go Club, Hoboken Go Club  
Chris Kirschner: executive VP  
Roy Laird: At-large director, New York Go Center, Brooklyn Go Club  
Phil Waldron: Tournament Coordinator  
Andrew Okun: Western region Board member-elect  
Michael Lash: AGA President  
Pauline Pohl: AGA secretary

## **1. Roll Call**

Due to the low turnout, we went around the room and each attendee announced their name and the club/clubs they represent.

## **2. 2007 Assembly Minutes Presentation and Approval**

Keith Arnold made a motion to approve last years' minutes. John Hogan seconded the motion. All voted to approve last years' minutes.

## **3. Board of Directors' Report**

Lash gave the attendees a few minutes to review the Annual Report before summarizing it and answering questions. John Hogan asked about the reference to possibly revising the by-laws to create two new offices: President-elect and Immediate-Past President. Lash said it is a subject that came up as a way to promote a smooth transition to a new president while retaining the experience of the past-president. No decision has been made to change the by-laws, but it will be considered by the new board.

Laird said the highlights of his term as Chairman of the Board included facilitating the website upgrade and better relations with the American Professionals.

## **4. AGA President Report**

Lash reviewed the highlights of his four-year tenure: Overall membership increased modestly while the number of life members doubled to 68. Major tournaments have been organized, including the Youth Go tournament, the World Mind Sports Games, and

the Ing Master's cup. Lash mentioned that Nicole Casanta headed-up the Youth Go Tournament and it ran smoothly.

Lash appointed Chris Kirschner to the position of executive vice president which had been established in the 2005 revision of the by-laws. He said Kirschner's experience and energy allowed Lash to accomplish a lot, including cleaning up AGA policies to create clearer procedures and greater transparency of decisions.

Lash thanked Mark Rubenstein and his team for their contributions to the website upgrade. He said the new webmaster, Steve Colburn, has some exciting ideas to add new features to the website including a valuable members-only section.

During Lash's two terms, the AGA continued their good relations with the Nihon Kiin and strengthened relations with the China Weiqi Association and the Korean Go Association. He reported on a promising meeting at the Congress to establish a relationship with The Korean Tourism Board. "The World of Weiqi" magazine donated 400 sets of boards and stones to the AGA that have been distributed to locations across the country to be lent out for events.

Lash said he is ready to let Allan Abramson take over and he appreciates the support all members have provided over the past four years.

Keith Arnold said Lash took over at a particularly difficult time for the AGA and did a great job. All in the room applauded.

## **5. AGA Treasurer's Report**

Lash said that the new Treasurer, Adam Bridges has added detail to the financial reporting, especially concerning the Ing funds. Lash hopes that this clearer reporting will help our relations with the Ing Foundation.

Allan Abramson noted that some of the entries in the table of expenses in the Annual Report on page 26 lacked labels. He said he will work with Bridges to get the details.

Roy Laird made a motion to raise the life membership dues to \$1200 from \$1000, since it has remained the same price for so many years. Mark Rubenstein seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Rubenstein asked how long a usual member remains with the organization. Keith Arnold said this kind of decision should not be made without having it announced in advance and placed on the agenda before a vote is taken. Willard Haynes agreed, and suggested a friendly amendment to put it on the agenda for next year. Laird revised his motion to put on the agenda for next year's general assembly, an item to raise the life-member dues to \$1200. Abramson suggested the motion should be to investigate the idea and propose a new price for next year. A committee will be formed to look at the dues structure. John Hogan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to form a committee to explore the dues structure and make proposals for changes next year.

Lash explained that the procedures for getting Ing grants has changed so that we go through Dr. Ernest Brown at the American Ing Goe Foundation instead of requesting money directly from the Ing Foundation in Taiwan. The new procedure results in getting grants as requested for projects or tournaments rather than getting a block grant each year.

Although we haven't gotten the requested funds for the Ing activities at this year's Congress, he expects the money to be approved.

Terry Benson asked if we are earning a high enough rate of interest on our money. Abramson assured Benson he will be evaluating the investments as he takes office and will make changes as needed.

## **6. Communications/E-Journal Report**

Laird reported that a contract was signed this past spring with Internet4Associations to build a new and improved website. He reported that the current website was viewed by people in 56 countries during the Congress. The e-Journal team recorded 100 games this week while simultaneously broadcasting them on the KGS Go Server. The EJ also broadcast games this year from the World Amateur Go Championship and the European Go Congress, enlarging our presence as a leader in "go cyberspace" and teaching local organizers how to broadcast their own games in those venues.

John Hogan suggested that it would be a good idea to notify viewers and members that the look of the website will be changing. Laird agreed that would be a good idea and it could have the added benefit of generating increased interest and traffic to the website.

Keith Arnold mentioned he hates the new logo on the new website, because it looks like the two players are making an obscene gesture at each other. Laird said the circular picture is not actually a logo, but is a color graphic to fill in the spot on the banner. Abramson said the membership should be consulted on any decision to replace the logo.

Terry Benson made a motion that we replace the new picture with the old AGA logo until members vote. Lash suggested that we notify the membership that we are considering adopting a new logo. Benson said no changes should be made until the members can vote at next year's general assembly. Willard Haynes asked if there is a reason the old banner couldn't be used on the new website. Webmaster Steve Colburn said we could, but it wouldn't go with the rest of the website and part of the reason for the new site was to modernize and update the look. John Hogan said no changes should be made with out a vote. Rubenstein said the picture was made for web use only and is not intended to be used on print materials. Benson said a logo is a serious part of creating an identifiable brand, and once one is chosen, it should be on everything.

## **7. International Affairs Report**

Thomas Hsiang reported on the explosive growth of activities at the International Go Federation for the past two years. IGF is the international body that represents amateur go. There are 70 national members and 10 Directors including himself in the IGF.

The first item of his report was on the change of IGF Statutes. This was undertaken to place IGF in compliance with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) guidelines. In addition, a new class of members was created – the “association members” – to allow cross-nation organizations to join in IGF. This change is expected to make IGF the much-needed central forum for coordinating all international activities and discussions.

He next reported on the new development of the WAGC – World Amateur Go Championship. This crown jewel of international amateur go competition will open up to nations other than Japan, starting 2010. The current plan is to have the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WAGC celebrated in 2009 in Shizuoka, at the foot of Mt. Fuji; followed by Shanghai in 2010, coinciding with the World Expo. It is expected that this open-up will greatly benefit the international promotion of Go. Hsiang urges the AGA to start thinking about a possible future date of holding a WAGC in the United States.

Third on the list is the growth of international tournaments. There is now a multiplicity of international events that routinely invite US representatives. In addition to WAGC, the Korean Prime Minister Cup, the International Pair Go Championship, and the Ing Goe Youth Tournaments, we further have the Hangzhou International City Team Tournament and the new Hiseoul World Businessman Baduk Fair. Several others may emerge in the next few years. Hsiang encourages chapter representatives to carry the news to their members and invite them to participate as AGA's ambassadors. In all cases so far, the participants at most only need to pay their own airfare; all other expenditures are borne by the organizers.

Hsiang then moved to the biggest item at IGF, the Olympic movement. There are two parts to it: IGF is working to hold the first World Mind Sports Games in October 2008, and IGF has started the process of seeking International Olympic Committee recognition of Go as an IOC sport.

On the Olympic movement, IGF has been following the path led by bridge and chess. In 2004, IGF was admitted to GAISF – the General Association of International Sports Federations. Following that, Go joined force with bridge

(WBF), chess (FIDE), and draughts (FMJD) to form a new organization, IMSA (International Mind Sports Association), with the specific goal of holding an Olympics-like mind sports competition at the 2008 Summer Olympics venue. Eventually, the event was named by IOC as the first World Mind Sports Games, or WMSG.

This historic event won the host country's approval in 2007. China further graciously agreed to provide room and board costs for all participants. The organization has since progressed rapidly and the first WMSG will be held in Beijing from October 3 through 19 this year, with six medal categories for Go, including individual, team, and pair competitions.

As an interesting side note, Hsiang mentioned that AGA was a charter supporter for IMSA, having provided a share of the seed fund that led to the great success of IMSA and WMSG. He congratulated the AGA Board for making this wise investment.

Parallel to WMSG, IGF has been working on seeking the recognition of Go as an IOC sport. There are many issues that need to be addressed before this recognition can take place. For example, IGF needs to have a concrete youth development program and a women participation program in place, IGF must be WADA anti-doping compliant, and there must be an international set of playing rules. Hsiang reports that all of these fronts are being pushed by IGF.

Lastly, the new World Pair Go Association was introduced. This new organization will inaugurate on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Pair Go Championship to be held in November, 2009. Hsiang reported that he and Allan Abramson have been actively involved in organizing the

WPGA and the inauguration festivities. AGA will also have a seat on the WPGA Board of Directors.

Abramson announced Hsiang will be the Go co-Tournament Director at the WMSG. Abramson also reported that he will nominate Hsiang for the new position of Vice President of International Affairs. There was applause all around.

## **8. New Business**

### **a) World Mind Sports Games- Review of Process and Results**

Lash said that last October he got word that the WMSGs would occur and there were no procedures in place to select the team. A decision was made to hold qualifier events rather than just using ratings. Since this was the first time and the event will likely recur, he asked for input on the selection process.

Paul Matthews said he remembered the original announcement said the final selections would be made at the Congress, but the time was reduced and an exception to the residency requirement was made to allow Michael Redmond to play, so it appears the AGA has no real processes or procedures and instead it acts on whims.

Lash said on the first point, we didn't initially know that the team would have to be announced by the end of June. The early decision was required by the organizers, over our objections, because of the lag time in getting visas to China. In future years – if the event is held in London, the site of the 2012 Olympics, for example, the final qualifying event could be held at the Congress. On the second point, he has focused a great deal of energy during his time in office on

establishing rules and policies so the reasons for decisions are more clear, and once policies are established, no more exceptions should be granted.

Keith Arnold said he accepts that the change in deadline wasn't the AGA's doing, but otherwise the rules of participation were slack. When a citizen professional was allowed to enter without participating in a qualifying event or satisfying the residency requirement, all citizen professionals should have been invited. Abramson said that Kirschner and Lash were scrambling from day one, and China was not forthcoming with rules and dates. It was difficult and people did the best they could under the circumstances. The Board granted the exception for Redmond. Even if the process was properly followed, the result – very few US pros on the team – is disappointing. This raises a caution for future events that maybe the pros should be invited based on status rather than having them earn qualification points. Only one American resident professional who is otherwise qualified, Hui-ren Yang, is going to Beijing. It looks inappropriate. Next time, we should anticipate the consequences of the selection procedure.

Benson said the transparency and consistency were lacking because of the time frame. Exceptions are a bad idea. If we are to choose professionals for tournaments we need to have a better plan. Hogan said this should be considered the alpha or beta test of the process, and he looks forward to a “bug-free” system in four years. Kirschner said that we had never picked more than one or two contestants for a tournament before—never 22. The rationale for having qualifier events was to encourage strong players to show up to more events rather than only showing up for large events. The intent was to get more people involved and to reward active participants.

Andrew Okun remarked that he heard that there were no complaints about the point system, probably because a draft version of the plan was widely circulated and well understood.

Glenn Peters said he is wary of adding another tournament at the Congress for top players. Some of them have two big games per day as it is, and adding a third large event would be tiring for them.

Kirschner said we will have two or three years to prepare for the next WMSG, and we should do better next time. There was talk of having a WMSG in Russia when they host the Winter Olympics in 2010, but his impression was that that would only be the case if the 2008 event didn't work out. He expects the next WMSG will be in London in 2012.

### **b) New Website- New Value Created**

Lash said the new website will have member-only features that will provide a good argument of why to join the AGA. In the past, too many of the valuable features were just given away. Steve Colburn said one new and exciting feature will be the ability to get an instant AGA member number. This will make tournament directing easier as no provisional numbers will have to be used.

Rubenstein said he wants to publicly thank Roy Laird and Steve Colburn for taking over many of his responsibilities on the website upgrade when he was devastated by his wife's illness and passing.

### **c) Tournaments- Qualifiers; TD Responsibilities, AGA Resources**

Lash said we need tournament directors and people who understand the rules and follow the rules. He suggests the possibility of certifying TDs at various levels as they gain experience by directing successful tournaments. He announced that Philip Waldron has accepted the position of National Tournament Coordinator. He said the position was vacant for a few years, and he is thrilled that Waldron will take over. Waldron said he assumes we will get an invitation to send a university student from North America to the World Student OZA tournament in October, although we haven't received one yet; the invitation often comes late, so he is planning ahead. Citizenship isn't required, but the player must be a full-time student at a North American University. He said the Fujitsu will be held in November this year, earlier than usual.

Abramson announced that Keith Arnold has been named chairman of the governance committee. Arnold said he is happy to announce that he has selected most of the members of his committee. Rick Mott, Jeff Shaevel, David Weimer, Steve Stringfellow, Polly Pohl, and one other TBD person will serve on the committee.

Glenn Peters said he thinks that Congress organizers "reinvent the wheel" every year, and perhaps it should become an AGA event rather than a club sponsored event. Kirschner said this idea has been proposed before and as the Congress gets larger, more people agree it is a good idea. This may be an idea whose time has come.

## **9. 2009 Congress Presentation**

Todd Heidenreich presented the George Mason University/NOVA Go Club proposal for the 2009 Go Congress. Garrett Smith is the new president of the NOVA Club, and will be Heidenreich's Assistant Congress Director.

The George Mason University Campus is 8 miles from Dulles Airport and 15 miles southwest of Washington, D.C. All buildings are air conditioned, which is important because the average temperature during the first week of August is 89 degrees. There is campus-wide wi-fi, which will enable the e-journal to broadcast games like they did this year. Dorm rooms will be double or singles with common bathrooms/showers on each floor. Suites are pairs of dorm rooms sharing a shower. There are hotels nearby, but not within walking distance. There are approximately 20 hotels of various prices within 3-5 miles. Parking is available on campus for approximately \$30 per week. The playing room and lecture rooms are in a building at the center of the campus.

Proposed pricing is as follows:

Adult \$230  
Youth <22 years \$150  
Youth <13 years \$75  
Meal Plan \$225  
Banquet \$30  
Dorm Single \$300  
Dorm Double \$200  
Suite Single \$450  
Suite Double \$200

Adult on-site \$705-955  
Adult off-site \$585  
Youth \$605 (405)- 855

Keith Arnold made a motion to approve the bid of GMU/NOVA Group to hold the Congress in 2009. Willard Haynes seconded the motion. The attendees unanimously approved the proposal to hold the 2009 Congress at George Mason University organized by the NOVA Go Club, except for the traditional “No” vote by Heidenreich.

### **10.Old Business**

none

### **11.Adjourn**

Haynes made a motion to adjourn the National Assembly. Arnold seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 5:15 PM

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary