

AMERICAN GO ASSOCIATION



ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2004

2003 - 2004

WHAT IS THE AMERICAN GO ASSOCIATION?

The American Go Association is the national organization of U.S. Go players, cooperating with similar national organizations around the world. We:

- ❖ Publish the weekly *American Go E-Journal* and *The American Go Annual*
- ❖ Maintain a computerized rating system
- ❖ Sanction and promote AGA-rated tournaments
- ❖ Organize the U.S. Go Congress, the U.S. Open and qualifying tournaments for international competition
- ❖ Maintain a Web site and organize discussion groups, mentoring programs and teaching ladders
- ❖ Support professional players with tournaments, teaching opportunities and other activities
- ❖ Work to develop a strong national network of chapters
- ❖ Promote Go and enhance public awareness
- ❖ Develop projects to strengthen the U.S. go-playing community

The AGA is working to let more people know about this wonderful game and to develop member playing strength and involvement in the American go-playing community.

Board of Directors

Allan Abramson, Eastern Region, Chair
Dave Weimer, at-Large
Jon Boley, Western Region
Willard Haynes, Western Region
Jeff Shaevel, Central Region
Harold Lloyd, Central Region
William Cobb, Eastern Region

Officers

President

Chris Kirschner

Treasurer: Ben Bernstein

Secretary: Susan Weir

VP for Communications: Chris Garlock

VP for Strategic Initiatives: Mike Lash

National Coordinators

Archivist Craig Hutchinson
Chapter Management Paul Celmer, Nicole Casanta
Community Outreach John Goon
Congress Liaison Bob Barber
Database Manager..... Sam Zimmerman
Education Coordinator Lee Ann Bowie
Equipment Distribution Paul Celmer
Legal & Compliance Coordinator Michael Brockbank
Membership Services..... Tom Hodges, Joel Gabelman
Policy & Governance Chair Keith Arnold
Ranking Issues..... Jeff Shaevel
Ratings Coordinator Paul Matthews
Tournament Coordinator Joe Carl
Tournament Regulations Duane Burns
Webmaster..... Roy Laird
Youth Coordinator Todd Heidenreich

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This has been an eventful year. Chapter formation has matched the soaring membership. Hikaru no Go has arrived, not only as an inclusion in Shonen Jump, but also as an independent book series. The E-Journal has improved its content and plans more improvement. We have produced the first AGA Yearbook, which, with the companion CD Rom, includes not only the material formerly published in the quarterly Journal, but all the content from the 60+ editions of the E-Journal and a good deal more. This year's elections mark the end of the first full election cycle under the new bylaws, which have endured various challenges as we have adapted to working under them. Though they have proven adequate to the task, a number of changes have been proposed, and these will be presented to the Assembly, for review and comment, and then the membership for approval.

The AGA was invited to participate in the Origins gamers convention in Columbus, Ohio (the largest such convention in America) for the first time this year, an unparalleled opportunity to promote go to likely converts. The turnout was spectacular, and we have been invited to participate in another similar event in January.

We are participating actively in helping the International Go Federation develop an international rating system.

At the beginning of this year, I expressed my belief that we should have new leadership in the President's chair before the end of this year, preferably to begin during the Go Congress in August. The Board has acted accordingly, and I will pass this responsibility to Mike Lash at the Assembly meeting scheduled August 6. It has been a privilege to serve. I am happy to report that Mike and I have been working very comfortably together to ensure that you can look forward to both a seamless transition and continued rapid progress. As with Roy Laird, who took on the webmaster job and has provided me with much needed advice and support during my tenure, I expect to continue to support Mike in a variety of capacities, as he takes his turn in the captain's chair.

The reports which follow reflect the hard work of many people, to each of whom a great debt of gratitude is owed by all who love go.

Chris Kirschner
President

Board of Director's Report to the 2004 National Assembly

A Transitional Year

It is safe to say that the past year has brought tumult, grass-roots action, and leadership changes which may be unprecedented in AGA history. Now that time has given us some distance from the events of last Fall and Winter, it is important to begin by stating strongly and clearly that all those involved were acting in what they must have thought were the best interests of the AGA. They all have a long history of service and contribution to the AGA, which must continue to be recognized, respected, and remembered. The Board believes that everyone involved needs to be encouraged to continue to serve our common goal of supporting and promoting GO in the U.S., as indeed some already have. Our common interests must outweigh our individual differences.

Given this background, the Board of Directors, newly constituted this Winter, has dedicated itself to working together cooperatively, to dealing with issues, and to building the foundation for a stronger AGA. It indeed has been a year of transition.

Strengthening the AGA Leadership

The Board established a Leadership Development Committee, with a short-term and a long-term mission. The short-term mission was to engage in a process of recommending candidates for the Presidency. This process was completed in June, with a report to the Board.

The long-term mission, on a continuing basis, is to identify, encourage, and develop new leaders for the AGA. The Leadership Development Committee (Steve Burrall, Ernest Brown, Bob Barber, Duane Burns, Robert Cordingly, Larry Gross, None Redmond, Eric Wainwright, and Sam Zimmerman) will be on the lookout for new talent and energy, and will serve both as mentors to new leaders, and as advisors to the Board and the President in filling positions throughout the organization.

Strengthening the AGA Budget

The Board approved a new Fundraising Committee, reporting to the President. The principal mission of the FRC will be to seek corporate and philanthropic donations and grants of sufficient size to support promotional activities both locally and nationally. These resources will be focused on membership growth as a major long-term goal for the AGA.

Supporting Professionals in the U.S.

The relationship with professional go players in the U.S. should be symbiotic, for mutual benefit. They provide their expertise in teaching us how to play better. We are their students. The Board believes that U.S. professionals should be able to make a comfortable living, while pursuing their own improvement as players. Ultimately, U.S. Go would benefit from a system to develop and to certify professionals for international play, and to support our new top amateurs who wish to become professionals.

In this regard, the Board developed a "Draft Statement of AGA Principles for U.S. Representation in International Tournaments," and invited the American Professional GO Association to work with us on a common policy. Our intent is to create a policy that

would provide inclusiveness, fairness, and transparency in the selection of professional representatives. In June, the APGA declined our invitation. In July, the draft was sent to the chapter leaders for their input. We intend the final policy to apply to events for which the AGA selects representatives, and to those events for which the AGA has the opportunity to make recommendations.

Longer term, we believe that AGA policy and activities should vigorously support the growth and well-being of the U.S. professional community.

Greater Transparency in the AGA

One concern over the last few years has been lack of public knowledge of who and why the AGA pays for various activities, or how people are named for international travel or other apparent benefits. In response to this concern, the Board asked the President to set up clear public procedures describing how and why people are chosen for various AGA activities and benefits, or recompensed for certain tasks. These procedures will be posted for public view on the AGA web site.

A Call for Growth

AGA membership has risen dramatically in the past year, but we still have to break the 2000 milestone. The Board is focusing on ways to encourage significantly greater membership growth, through increased volunteerism, development of interscholastic programs, and greater visibility for our clubs in their communities. This challenge will take years to meet effectively, and we welcome new ideas and initiatives which would foster achieving this goal.

A Smooth Transition

We believe that the Board has demonstrated above all a commitment to cooperation and consensus, which will help the AGA reach all of its goals more effectively. Chris Kirschner, in particular, needs to be recognized for his willingness to serve as President on an interim basis. He has had to deal with a full-time load of issues and activities. As we go through this year's elections, and the convening of a new Board, we hope to pass on this cooperative spirit to those who will follow.

Looking Ahead

The coming year will bring many opportunities. The Board looks forward to working with the new President and the Leadership Development Committee to recruit new talent to the AGA administration. The Board will focus on increasing membership, continuing the youth grants program launched last year, adding new outreach activities, and taking advantage of new opportunities for media coverage of Go. Please consider volunteering to help make the AGA a better and more effective organization.

Allan Abramson

Chair

FY 2004 Treasurer's Report

Ben Bernstein, AGA Treasurer

The financial report shows the AGA to be in good financial health, with adequate funds to consider new ideas and projects bent on spreading knowledge of Go to potential new members. As has been the case for many years, this is largely due to the continuing contributions of the Ing Foundation, which has – as in past years – contributed \$80,000 in cash and \$20,000 in equipment to help us promote Go in this country. We expect this grant to continue in years to come. However, we have been notified that depending on market conditions, the amount of the grant may decrease in order to avoid reducing the capitalization that provides it. The projected budget allows for this possibility by budgeting for \$70,000 in the coming year, instead of the usual \$80,000. In response to The Board's recommendation in the previous year, Ing funds in FY 2004 have been used to support youth mini grants and other promotional activities aimed at youth. This emphasis on developing youth players is also reflected in the FY 2005 and 2006 budgets.

In the following Treasurer's report the increase of \$41,527 represents net additional funds available to the AGA from FY 2004 activities. The other significant activities of FY 2004 (The 2003 Summer Camp and the 2004 OZA) are summarized separately. Note that the OZA expenses include \$5,290 of Congress discounts awarded as prizes and usable for the next 2 congresses, which will be carried as a liability until used or expired. Detail of the FY 2004 Ing expenditures and projections for FY 2005 and 2006 are also shown in a separate report.

AGA Statement of Activities

Description	Totals for FY 2004	As Approved FY 2005	Projected FY 2006
INCOME			
AGA Share Congress 2002	1,586		
AGA Share Congress 2003	17,094		
AGA Share Congress 2004		5,000	7,000
ING Donation	80,000	70,000	80,000
Interest Inc	2,510	3,500	4,500
Member Fees, Donations,	62,028	61,000	65,000
 Sales, Royalties	 6,276	 1,000	 500
Misc	164		
TOTAL INCOME	169,658	140,500	157,000
EXPENSES			
TOTAL AGA Journal	35,615	27,000	30,000
TOTAL AGA Admin	12,893	17,200	14,500
TOTAL AGA Chapter Svcs.	7,007	3,000	3,000
TOTAL AGA Data Base	8,022	7,500	7,500
AGA WEB	2,590	1,500	2,600
Go Camps (2 East & West)			4,000
AGA Equipment & Shipping	6,890		7,000
Bank Charge & misc	30	500	500
New Tournament		1,000	
AGA CD ROM ¹			3,000
IGF Participation		500	2,500
 Insurance		 2,000	 2,000
Marketing/advertising		2,000	2,000
Contingencies/Discretionary		3,000	3,000
Membership Growth Mrktg. ²			15,000
	73,047	65,200	96,600
 ING Expenses	 55,084	 70,000	 81,600
TOTAL EXPENSES	128,131	135,200	178,200
 Change in AGA net assets³	 41,527	 5,300	 -21,200

¹ Formerly budgeted from Ing funds

² Additional \$10,000 is allocated from Ing Grant budget

³ Shortfall, if any, will come from general reserves

Fiscal Year 2006 Ing Grant Budget

Ref. #		2004 Actual	2005 Est.	2006 Proj.
1	Admin.		1,200	1,000
2	CD-ROM1	2,820	3,200	
3	Central	0	3,000	3,000
4	East	2,290	3,000	3,000
5	West	8,275	3,000	3,000
6	Equipment Purchase	3,088	9,000	9,000
7	Equipment Shipping/Storing	3,560	2,000	4,500
8	No. American Ing Cup	11,475	7,000	8,500
9	Pro Competition	8,000	12,000	12,000
10	Redmond Cup	3,016	3,500	3,500
11	Discretionary Spending	-135	3,000	3,000
12	Summer Go Camp 1			0
13	Web		100	100
14	Youth Mini Grants	1,625	9,000	9,000
15	Youth Scholarships at Congress	10,000	10,000	11,000
16	Redmond-Ing Tournament	1,070	1,000	1,000
17	Membership Growth Marketing			10,000
	TOTAL2	<u>55,084</u>	<u>70,000</u>	<u>81,600</u>

1 This expense shifted to main AGA budget

2 Excess to be drawn from reserves as needed

American Go Association Balance Sheet Fiscal 2004

	2/28/2003	2/28/2004
Assets		
Cash and Bank Accounts		
AGA Denver Checking	\$ 1,053	-
AGA MD Checking	11,560	8,095
AGA Denver Money Market	-	
AGA MD Money Market	226,252	258,762
Total cash	238,864	266,857
Advances to 2003 19th Congress	8,008	
Ing Grant receivable		39,985
Receivable from 19 th Congress		6,781
Total assets	246,872	313,623
 Liabilities & Net Assets		
 Net Assets		
17th Congress 2001	5,029	3,529
18th Congress 2002	5,513	7,100
19th Congress 2003		17,094
OZA Congress Credits		5,290
OZA Balance		2,753
TOTAL Reserves for Chapters	10,542	35,766
Net assets - Life members	25,840	27,840
Other net assets	210,490	250,017
Total net assets of AGA	236,330	277,857
Total reserves & net assets	\$ 246,872	\$ 313,623

Hikaru no Go is Here!

Hikaru no Go, originally serialized in Shonen Jump, is now being published in book form as well. We continue to get new players whose initial contact with go was when they read the exploits of Hikaru. This is continuing good news. Viz Communications is also providing direct support by allowing us to use Hikaru images, and by providing other promotional materials. We expect this to continue and grow in the future.

Tournament Regulation

Duane Burns, Tournament Regulations

Our intention is to write comprehensive tournament management rules and regulations for both Internet and face to face tournament play. This project, initiated last year, has had a slow start, but the intention remains. Our expectation is that this effort will pick up steam this year. The ultimate goal is to update the Tournament guide to deal with technological advances barely dreamed of when the current version was written, create a definitive set of rules and regulations for tournament play, and begin a system of certification for tournament directors.

Education Coordination

Lee Anne Bowie

We continue to gather more information on how to teach in various settings. New material is added to the website as it becomes available. For the first time this year we will have a series of seminars on teaching methods at the Congress. We hope to increase this activity at Congresses in years to come. A formal teacher training program is a long term goal.

Youth Coordination

Todd Heidenreich

Youth activities have been growing for several years. Go Camp remains popular, and youth attendance at the Go Congress is rising. We plan to run two Go Camps next year, one on the East Coast, the other in the West at Mills College where it has been the last few years. The strength of our youth players has also been growing more rapidly. The Redmond Cup, and Ing Redmond Cup remain the mainstays of youth competition. Over the last two years, there has been a rising interest in high school team competition. Much of this interest is expressed directly by students who are not waiting for adult assistance to get started.

Membership

Tom Hodges, Joel Gabelman

Things are definitely looking up. We have increased membership 14% in the last year (and 13% the year before), and have every expectation that this trend will continue. The fears of a few years ago that the Internet servers would draw membership away from both chapters and the AGA is now dispelled by reports of people who learned on the Internet coming to clubs wanting to play on a real board. The once remarkable anecdote of a high kyu or even dan player showing at a club being clumsy playing with

stones for the first time is no longer remarkable. Our challenge for the year to come is to do a better job of welcoming new members and retaining them.

With the Board identifying membership growth as a primary goal, and budgeting serious funds to promote growth (see budget), we expect to see more members and to provide them with more reasons to remain active members. (See membership growth chart at end of report.)

Chapter Services

Paul Celmer, Nicole Casanta

Over the last year, AGA Chapter Services has provided both equipment and information to nearly 100 AGA chapters. We have assisted in starting Go clubs, forming chapters, and helping chapters locate players that might be interested in joining a chapter. Other services have included guidance on building club and chapter attendance, and helping previously isolated players contact others in their area. Chapter Services has also provided information to chapters on a variety of promotional issues including creating a web presence and building demonstration boards.

Equipment distribution was also quite busy this year. Over 25 chapters received Ing boards, stones, and clocks. Significant purchases of 19x19 demonstration boards, woodgrain starter sets, cardboard 9x9 sets, and other equipment enabled us to meet all requests for promotional equipment from both AGA chapters and individual AGA members.

AGA PUBLICATIONS:

American Go E-Journal, Journal, Yearbook and Website

Chris Garlock, VP, Communicatinos

More widely read and more relevant than ever, the American Go Association's publications continued to thrive last year.

After extensive discussion and planning, the quarterly American Go Journal was discontinued after the Spring 2003 issue and more resources were invested in producing expanded content for the already highly popular American Go E-Journal, which celebrated its fourth year of publication by growing to over 6,000 readers worldwide by the end of 2003.

We published more game commentaries from a growing stable of top amateur as well as professional players, and recruited a wide range of columnists and other contributors over the course of the year, as well as reviews of go books, software, equipment and more.

The E-Journal staff produced an astonishing 61 issues and 151 game and problem files, and a special team was recruited to put out a daily edition during the annual Go Congress. The Go Classified section continues to grow and develop in interesting ways; it now seems to serve a vital function of enabling go players to connect, as well as a tremendously effective way for buyers and sellers of go books and equipment to find each other.

While continuing to publish the weekly E-Journal, the core staff worked diligently through the fall to produce the first annual American Go Yearbook, a 91-page bound selection of the "best of" the E-Journal that included a CD that included and organized every report, review and game from the year for easy use and access. The Yearbook debuted to great acclaim on both coasts at the Toyota/Denso Oza tournament in Seattle and New York City in January 2004, and photos of Ishida Yoshio and Michael Redmond perusing the Yearbook were published on the AGA's website.

During the AGA's leadership crisis during the Fall of 2003, the E-Journal performed a critical role in providing objective and reliable information to the AGA's members and the go community at large.

Website

Roy Laird, AGA Webmaster

The E-Journal, Yearbook/CD and website are now highly integrated. The reviews organized for the CD are now available online, for example, linked to the books they describe, making it easier to use the "Go Books" section to browse for your next selection. And the weekly homepage photos and caption contests have become one of the weekly E-Journal's most popular features; thanks to Laurie Crammond for maintaining this and especially her assiduous work keeping the Event Calendar up-to-date. The "Problem of the Week" is also back by popular demand on the website homepage, where a new problem appears every week; thanks to Myron Souris.

Of special interest to regular tournament players is the new ratings page. Instead of quarterly or even monthly updates, the ratings are now updated continuously as new tournament data is received and processed, giving players a much more timely and, we hope, accurate idea of their current rating. Users also now have vastly expanded access to ratings data, which has been especially popular. Many thanks to AGA Ratings Statistician Paul Matthews for creating this new set of search functions. We've also added a lot of exciting new content to the links page, the bibliography, support materials for instructors and the Bob High Memorial Library.

Plans for the immediate future of the website include simplifying the "Event Calendar" section and creating and maintaining a comprehensive site index. Jochen Fassbender, a professional indexer who has created many other indexes (e.g. for the BGA site) has kindly agreed to work with Sergej Zoubok, our web consultant, to complete this project some time this year. We're also looking at the possibility of an online store, and a premium content area for members only.

In 2004 the entire communications team has not only continued to expand our base of staff and contributors, but we're constantly re-evaluating the E-Journal, Yearbook and website to see how we can make it more effective and useful for our readers and users. We have initiated an exciting expansion plan that we expect will bring the E-Journal to more readers worldwide by working with our fellow go associations, and of course we continue to build our domestic readership of both members and future members.

One of the biggest challenges we face in the year ahead is the question of how to make our publications relevant to a wide range of strengths, from absolute beginners to top amateur players as well as all those in between, and we are pursuing some interesting and promising ideas and projects.

Ing Grant Management

George Zhou, Chair

Beginning this year, we have begun funding a new program intended to increase youth membership. Budgeted at \$6,000 in FY 2004, \$9,000 in FY 2005 (the current year) and \$9,000 as shown in the projected FY 2006 budget shown above, (See Financial), this is an extended development project. (See Youth Development below.)

This project reflects an increased interest in reaching out to children, and in funding youth development both in terms of number of youth and increasing strength of our youth players.

During this year we have also developed standard forms for seeking funds for various projects. These are available for review and download from the website.

The new emphasis on formal applications (both in regular grants and the youth projects) reflects our intention to evaluate the results of our efforts more consistently than in the past.

Ratings

Paul Matthews

Ratings continue to be updated monthly, and continued improvements have been made in the reporting available on the website. You can see not only your current rating, but also significant information about how it was obtained. (See the ratings page on the website.) This facility also tells the discriminating user whether or not a recent tournament has been submitted for rating. If you are eagerly waiting to see the rating result of your last tournament, you may (gently please) remind the TD that the results aren't yet showing. Note however, that it won't show until the next regular monthly update.

The rating system now routinely calculates the probability of a player being a particular rank given the player's rating history. These calculations are potentially useful for rank certification, and for assigning bands in a traditional McMahon tournament.

In June, Thomas Hsiang presented a position paper, written by Paul Matthews, on international rating system development at the annual meeting of the International Go Federation in Kurashiki, Japan. Extensive meetings were held to discuss ways and means of developing such a system. Thomas and Paul were named to a committee to work on this project over the next year. This is a major step forward in the AGA taking an active role in the world of International Go.

International Go Federation Participation

Thomas Hsiang

Thomas Hsiang was appointed to the IGF Board of Directors this year, and attended the annual meeting in early June with a position paper on international rating systems written by Paul Matthews. The issue was on the agenda for the meeting, and the paper was well received, prompting several additional meetings to discuss means of

developing such a system for the IGF. Thomas was appointed to a development committee, which will work over the course of the coming year, and report progress at the next meeting in June, 2005. More immediately, Thomas also served on the fighting spirit award committee for the World Amateur Championship tournament.

The IGF also has announced that the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) has accepted the application of the IGF for membership in the GAISF. The meaning of this is more clear when you find that the GAISF is related to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which last year rejected go (and chess) as an Olympic Sport, but suggested this alternative approach. We have been asked to apply for recognition by the USOC, and have done so. This is a long range project, but we are not alone in the quest for a mental Olympics style competition. Other games, such as chess and bridge, are actively pursuing this too, and there are serious hopes it might happen as early as 2007.

Youth Development Project

Willard Haynes

This project was conceived 18 months ago by Bob O'Malley, in response to the Board's expressed wish to devote more resources to developing youth players, and began taking applications in Fall 2003. The basic plan is to provide grants of up to \$1,000 to program organizers with well specified plans to teach go to children and youth. Grant submissions are evaluated, and when deemed adequate, are funded at 50% for the first half of the program, which is expected to be of one year duration. At the half way mark, each program submits a progress report, on the basis of which the other half of the grant will be disbursed. (Assuming adequate progress is indicated.) Detail reports are available on request. This is the first report of progress of the overall project, and reflects the first reports of the mini-grant programs.

This program was budgeted at \$6,000 for FY 2004, \$9,000 for FY 2005, and it is budgeted at \$9,000 again for FY 2006. It is clear that we are currently well below those budget authorizations. We plan to advertise the availability of these grants more broadly, to attract more applicants. Most programs are related to schools, and are thus strongly bound to the school year. We therefore expect to have a slowdown in applications during Summer, and a resurgence in Fall.

We currently have seven funded programs: 1 in Florida, 1 in Washington, 2 in Oregon, and 3 in California. The grants range from \$250 to \$1000 (with player goals of 4 to 16) for a total allocation to date of \$3750. There are three additional still being processed. All but one of the seven current programs are directly or indirectly affiliated with a school. The remaining program takes place as an after school activity at a local library. Additional funds will have been disbursed by the time this report is printed.

In three programs, an adult is the primary organizer. In the others, the adult is a club adviser or co-organizer. The grant money has (or will be) used for equipment, go books, tournament or membership fees, tournament prizes, and refreshments at class/club sessions. All of the groups use some combination of instruction in the principles of go, teaching games, commented games, games between students, and problem solving. Some have had guest instructors come in from local clubs. At the midterm review all of the programs seemed to be making good progress toward their goals.