Minutes
AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Sunday, January 13, 2013 – 8:00 PM EST

Attendees

Western Region Director – Chris Kirschner
Western Region Director – Steven Burrall
Central Region Director – Robert Barber
Central Region Director, Chair – Daniel Smith
Eastern Region Director – Gurujeet Khalsa
Eastern Region Director – Paul Celmer
Director At-Large – Edward Zhang
AGA President – Andy Okun
AGA EVP – Ted Terpstra

Absent

Secretary – Chuck Robbins

Guests

Lisa Scott (taking minutes)

1. Call to Order: 8:05pm EST.
2. Additional Items/New Business
    a. Teacher Certification
3. Approval of Minutes
    a. Khalsa moves to approve minutes; Celmer seconds. Carries unanimously.
4. Setting Priorities
    a. There was a set of potential priorities circulated. These priorities are briefly discussed in order, and the highest priorities are chosen.
        i. Rank Certification – Generally considered high priority
        ii. Policy for managing reserve funds – already in process
        iii. Volunteers – discussion subgoals concerning how best to get positions covered and value our volunteers is summarized below.
            1. The President and the Volunteer Coordinator have discussed this issue to some extent, with plans to move towards this goal.

2. Many of the subgoals are an essential on-going part of the organization since it is a volunteer organization.
3. Kirschner indicates that the goals are good, but may be too aggressive as a one-year policy goal, particularly as many of the items are something on which a volunteer organization must always focus.
4. Zhang suggests that this year we focus on 30-40% of the volunteer positions. As former Volunteer Coordinator, he is particularly aware of the lack of definition of volunteers and their positions.
5. Kirschner suggests that we fill a few positions at a time, give them a few months, and the re-evaluate the position and go from there. This would be one reason that this is a multi-year goal.

iv. Fundraising
1. Okun indicates that the marketing committee is already actively working toward a goal like this. A public goal may make the committee work harder, but it is already an active effort, much more than it has been in the past.
2. Khalsa asks what we have gotten in terms of sponsorships in the last 1-3 years.
3. Discussion of whether or not the monetary amount of the goal is appropriate. Kirschner indicates that this type of goal seems too easy to fail, as it does not have "8 out of 10" or "6 out of 10" outcomes, it is simply succeed or fail.
4. Okun indicates that specific goals include: finding a real sponsor for the Masters; finding sponsors for a proper domestic North American Professional Tournament. Accomplishing both of these goals would be roughly $50,000, would be a big victory, and they would be concrete accomplishments.
5. Okun indicates that one of his goals for 2013 is to hold a professional tournament, and this is related to the proposed goal. Khalsa says that he likes this goal as it includes fundraising and other associated features of the goal.
6. Zhang suggests further cultivating our relationships with current and potential sponsors.
7. Okun informs the board that at the Marketing Committee meeting this past week, the Committee did a similar goal-setting process, including discussing the way in which the

AGA has liaise with sponsors in the past.

    v. Establish a Prospective Member Database

        1. Discussion of how we identify a prospective member: individuals, organizations, etc.

        2. Khalsa suggests that this priority can be used to identify people early, when they have expressed any interest in the game of go, but before they have actually come to an AGA tournament or become an AGA member. The goal is to reach out to a broader audience of potential members.

        3.

   vi. Establish a Mentor System

        1. Okun indicates that this is something that most people on the phone have experienced, but not something that has touched all AGA or potential-AGA members. The AGF already has a type of mentor system in place, but for a much smaller population. Our mentor system would necessarily be somewhat different.

  vii. Paying for Core Services

        1. Paul Barchilon submitted a suggestion that we pay for core services, specifically the membership database and ratings systems. Okun does not know his thoughts on the issue yet because he does not know the cost or whether or not the service would be better.

        2. Smith thought it was worth discussing. Khalsa would support it for core services, for example the AGAGD.

        3. Okun indicates that the question is what do we consider core, and what is worth paying for. The AGAGD is an example of creating something, even if it is an update of what we had before, whereas the ratings system is routine upkeep and data input. Paying someone to maintain and to create are two different things. This may be a cost/benefit discussion rather than a goal discussion.

        4. In light of Okun's remarks, Khalsa now feels that this something we need to do on an ongoing basis, and is not necessarily a goal.

        5. Okun suggests that we don't make it a goal, but move it to current business and discuss investigating the issue.

 viii. Membership

1. Smith indicates that if we got 1000 new members, that would pay for a profession to run the database, or other part or full-time person.
2. Okun is concerned with having a goal of new members. We do not understand how we get or keep members; this is a problem in an of itself, but the lack of knowledge on the issue exists nonetheless.
3. Khalsa is concerned that we do not have a concrete means of reaching this goal.
4. Okun says that the goal of utilizing a concrete means of increasing membership is great, but we don't know what that means would be. He is also concerned that because Abramson did not find a means of increasing membership, one of his promises, and lost some goodwill on account of that.
5. Terpstra (Executive VP) shares that yesterday he ran a free tournament and was able to sign up 10 new AGA members through the event.
6. Okun would prefer a goal of running some number of tournaments or new tournaments, and would be a more concrete of moving towards this goal through means over which we have more control. In-person tournaments are one of the raisons d'etre of the AGA, so this would be a natural way to increase membership.
7. Khalsa asks who would accomplish this goal of 1000 new members?
8. Smith indicates that he would suggesting hiring someone, and that they may come up with reasons to join other than tournaments.
9. Kirschner suggest that the goal for retaining this number of members is too high. Chess and bridge associations have similar drop-out rates to the AGA, and Kirschner has a feeling that this drop-out rate is unavoidable, especially if they still have it with their greater resources.

ix. Player Strength
1. Smith feels that because we have put so much effort into providing services to stronger players, we should also focus on the far greater number of weaker players.

2. Okun concurs that it is a good idea to provide services to players, for example double-digit kyu players, trying to become stronger. This could be a type of a mentor program.
3. Zhang suggests that this and the previous item are very related. The top-value items for AGA members are the EJournal, tournaments, and ranks. Zhang suggests that increasing the number of subscribers to the EJournal would be a great promotional tool.

x. Publicity
1. Okun summarizing the goals, consisting of one or a combination of the following: 1) 1 million viewers of something on YouTube; 2) 1 cumulative hour of national news time (ex. 1 minute in 60 markets); 3) Broadcast news appearance in all 3 regions.
2. Khalsa asks what the YouTube idea would be. Okun responds that the Marketting Committee has discussed using a company that does someone auto-tuned videos, but has not moved forward due to financing. Many of the videos that get high play on YouTube are not the kind of videos we would necessarily like to promote.
3. Zhang suggest that we use the EJournal more and create promotional flyers connected to big events in major areas.
4. Okun is looking for a volunteer to fill a position that would liaise with Asian organizations, serve as publicist in Asia, etc. We have the advantage of being a relatively cheap organization to sponsor, and could be particularly useful to Asian companies in re-promoting at home.
5. Zhang has learned a little about internet marketing, which would use the internet to promote in ways that we are not currently promoting ourselves.

xi. Develop a Stronger AGA online presence
1. There are three parts of this goal: 1) a branded online (teaching and playing) AGA presence; 2) creating of an AGA online rating system; 3) Organize and direct regular rated online tournaments.
2. Okun indicates that he would only undertake part 2 if it were one of the board's key priorities, because it would entail a great deal of work and details to work out. For part 3, the AGA currently uses online games to determine representatives or qualification for specific tournaments, but

does not have rated games.

3. Okun indicates that there is a much greater presence for AGA online tournaments now than a few years ago, and that there will be more of a branded presence, simply because that is the way things are trending.

4. Khalsa asserts that many of the AGA online tournaments do not appeal to, for example, 6 kyu players like him the way that they do to strong players. He is not convinced that creating an online rating system is as difficult as Okun is concerned it might be.

5. Burrall thought that the online rating system is similar to the job of maintaining the ratings system that we have, so maybe it would be better to wait until we have solved our current ratings system problems.

6. Okun says it may make sense to wait, although he is not sure that the overlap is huge.

7. Smith suggests that to do it properly, we would need to have an automated system that would record the result. We may be able to pay some of the online servers to incorporate this.

8. Zhang says that online tournaments are extremely important for remote and kyu players.

9. Khalsa says that this would be another member benefit. Players would be required to be AGA members.

10. Zhang suggests that we could treat the rating as provisional or something like that, to mark it as different but to still recognize achievement.

11. Khalsa and Smith feel strongly that we use our strongly established algorithm for calculating the rating.

12. Okun concurs, specifically if we are getting data from a number of different servers, it will only be meaningful if we are using our algorithm.

13. Okun relates that Jonathan Bresler has indicated that more rated games to input will not be tremendously more work, but that he believes the additional work will be in getting the system set up.

xii. School Teacher Certification

1. Okun summarizes that teachers could essentially receive a certificate from the AGA to indicate that they have gone through our course and can teach go in school. He expresses a sincere concern that these people not be

confused with professional or strong amateur teachers who are likely of a different caliber.

2. Okun reminds the board that we have encouraged a number of a teachers and librarians to teach go, and it may be beneficial for them to have specific credentials to present and put on their resume.
3. Discussion of what would be necessary for it be respected as a certificate
4. Kirschner indicates that at the Congress, there would be a course spread over 4 days for 4 hours, with 8 different presenters, who would create the course.
5. There is significant response in favor of this idea, and discussion of the best way to create a course that would be recognized as a real credential by teaching and other organizations.
6. Khalsa asks if this would be a logical extension of the AGF's efforts. Kirschner says that he mentioned it at the AGF board meeting, and there was some interest in funding it, but they would like to know more about the program and about the number of attendees.

b. Move to choosing priorities
   i. Okun says that he has taken notes, but with a single exception he give preference to the choices made by the board in terms of which items are most important, but he may work on others as well.
   ii. Kirschner find the Rank Certificates to be an extremely high priority that can actually reasonably be easily accomplished.
   iii. Burrall comments that under option 11, having a room staffed by AGA personnel to help beginners would be a direct response to complaints that there are not enough resources for many players.
   iv. Okun suggests that we consider Rank Certification to be an automatic priority, and that everyone choose 2 other priorities, and the two with the greatest votes will be the additional priorities.
       1. Top Priority is Rank Certification, followed closely by developing a stronger online AGA presence.
       2. The Board will also give its go-ahead to the teacher certification idea, although giving it less priority.
       3. The Board will further discuss the priorities of establishing a mentor system and a "potential member" database, ==as a priority.==

4. <mark>The AGA will work to increase its online presence on go servers, as a way to provide services to members in outlying areas.</mark>
5. The Volunteer Coordinator will work on the volunteer goal as a multi-year project, with subgoals to be addressed as data making it possible to do so is collected.
   c. Barber moves to accept the priorities listed above. Khalsa seconds. Unanimously approved.
5. USYGC Tournament Prizes
   a. Paul Barchilon has asked that the AGA give prizes to the Junior and Senior champions of Congress registration in light of the changes in the purpose of the tournament.
   b. Khalsa moves that we approve prizes of up to $2500 for the Junior and Senior winners of the dan brackets of the USYGC tournament.; Barber seconds. Unanimously approved.
6. President's Report
   a. Questions about a lag in updating ratings
      i. Specific complaints received from the Bay Area and Colorado about how slow the ratings have been updated.
      ii. Okun indicates that the tournament cannot be rated until all questions about the membership having to do with the tournament have been solved. (For example, new members, returning members, and questions about memberships). The ratings coordinator then inputs the data once per week.
      iii. Barber comments that from the quarterly tournaments he has run in the Chicago area, there have been few complains.
      iv. Khalsa indicates that he has run into membership issues more than ratings issues.
      v. Burrall wonders if this is a problem associated with the fact that the Bay Area tournaments sign up a number of new members, and make use of promotional memberships. He is not sure if some paper documentation is used or if it is mostly electronic.
      vi. Okun and Burrall determine that the problem probably occurs when there is a 2 week delay because of membership issues, and the next tournament is quickly approaching, so this creates concerns among players and organizers that they may not have updated information.
   b. There is a new go server, "Go 9 dan." They have organized a 10 game series between Gangshang Shi, Andy Liu, John Lee, and Lee Sedol. They have also set up a very strong player tournament (8 dan+), and

would like us to help them promote the tournament. Okun is going to send a letter to players 8 dan+, especially in recognition of the fact that they have set up the 10 game series, and is informing the board.

c. Barber moves to enter executive session to discuss matters that may have an influence on the financial future of the AGA; Khalsa seconds. Unanimously approved. Enter executive session at 10:03 pm EST.

d. Barber moves we exit executive session. Zhang seconds. Unanimously approved.

e. Executive session exited at 10:25 EST.

7. Next meeting tentatively scheduled for February 3rd.

8. Barber moves to adjourn. Khalsa seconds. Unanimous.

9. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 EST.