

MINUTES  
AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Thursday, August 2, 2007 – 1:00 PM EST

Meeting called to order by: Roy Laird at 1:09 EDT  
Type of meeting: Meeting in person at the US Go Congress

Attendees:

Roy Laird (At Large) Chairman  
Paul Celmer (Eastern Region)  
Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)  
Laura Kolb (Central Region)  
Willard Haynes (Western Region)  
Gordon Castanza (Western Region)  
Mike Lash (President)

Observers:

Terry Benson  
Chris Kirschner  
Karen Jordan  
John Hogan  
Rong-hao Chen

Absent:

Pauline Pohl (Secretary)  
Roy Schmidt (Central Region)  
Robert Barber (Central Region)

**1. Welcome new member**

Chairman Roy Laird acknowledge outgoing Board member from the Central Region Bob Barber for his valuable service, and welcomed Laura Kolb to the Board. She had run unopposed when Barber declined to run for re-election. Laird invited her to say a few words about her goals as a Board member, and invited other members to share their thoughts and priorities for the coming year.

Kolb stated that she has been playing go for about six years, and works as a patent attorney in Chicago. She is especially interesting in developing a stronger national organization and more fruitful relations with the international go playing community. She also views support for chapters as a priority.

Gordon Castanza is President of the Tacoma Go Club and organized the final round of the new US Youth Go Championship tournament. He is very interested in youth development and teaches go to underprivileged children at a local community center.

Paul Celmer has played for more than 15 years. He co0directed the US Go Congress last year and is the chapter representative for the Triangle Go Club. His top priorities

are corporate sponsorship and membership development. He is also interested in the rank certification program.

Willard Haynes is president of the Davis-Sacramento Go Club, and his priorities include corporate support and the AGA's relationship with American professionals.

Chuck Robbins has been playing for 35 years and is the co-director of this year's Congress. He is interested in improving relations with American professionals.

Roy Laird is president of The New York Go Center and the current webmaster, and served as AGA President from 1998-2003. He is especially interested in upgrading the AGA's media presence, especially the website, as well as all the priorities other Board members have expressed.

### **3. Election of Chairman**

Roy opened the floor for nominations for Chairman of the Board. Gordon Castanza nominated Roy Laird; Willard Haynes seconded. Chuck nominated Paul Celmer; there was no second and Celmer declined the nomination. Laird was elected chairman as follows:

Laird: Yes

Castanza: Yes

Celmer: Yes

Haynes: Yes:

Kolb: Yes

Robbins: No

### **2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

Gordon offered an amendment to the previous minutes that was unanimously accepted. Willard moved to accept the minutes, Paul seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **3. President's Report-Mike Lash**

***International invitations:*** President Lash began by noting the growing number of invitations to send American players to international events. He recently formed a team of five players to attend the Second Chinese Youth Go Championship August 19-23. Players will attend at their own expense. A player must also be selected to attend the Second Korean Prime Minister's Cup, organized by the Korean Amateur Baduk Association in October. The highest placing eligible player in the US Open will attend.

***Finances:*** Lash summarized the financial statements that appear in the 2007 Annual Report, noting that the AGA spent less than anticipated, while income was higher than expected, resulting in a surplus of \$30,000 which will enter the general reserve. He and Adam Bridges, the AGA's new treasurer, are reorganizing the AGA's finances with a separate account for Ing programs, more detailed accounting for the US Go Congress and other changes. A question was raised, can the detailed Congress accounting be completed for previous Congresses? However, this would involve a great deal of work

and in some cases the data a not be available; the consensus was to focus on moving forward in a more orderly way.

**Website Upgrade:** Lash also reported that a committee would be formed to implement a major upgrade of the website, to include graphic redesign, a content management system, an integrated database and other features to increase the friendliness and usefulness of the site. (The Board has previously approved up to \$5000 for this project.)

**American Professionals:** Lash reported that he, COB Laird and Operations VP met with the six American professionals who attended this Congress. He described a very positive useful meeting with extended discussion of future plans. Several pros supported a proposal that would seek and distribute funds to chapters for pro workshops, especially in areas where professional instruction is not available. The AGA will develop such a proposal. Other interesting and exciting ideas were also discussed.

Lash reported that the possibility of forming an American professional association, to represent the interests of professional players and credential American pro players, was discussed. Those present generally took the view that such an organization would be premature at this time. Paul Celmer asked, how are American representatives selected for international tournaments? Laird commented that at the meeting, although there was little interest in a formal association, there seemed general agreement that the AGA represents the interests of American professional players. No other putative entity representing American professionals was mentioned. Terry Benson commented from the floor that it might be useful to create a more structured means by which to communicate with American professionals through a “go-to” person; but Laird responded that until a natural leader emerges among the pros to represent their interest, periodic collective communication is probably the realistic alternative.

Lash concluded his report by stating an intent to focus less on operational detail in his reports, and help the Board to focus on the larger picture.

#### **4. Rank Certification Proposals**

Chris Kirschner reported that the Ranking Commission’s current recommendation is probably the best compromise available on an issue where the AGA has been deeply divided for years. Earlier this year, the Board instructed the Committee to study how to ring American pros into the process; the recommendation is that pro endorsement should be optional. Certification should be based mainly on the empirical validity of the rating system; more rigorous criteria will be established to ensure that AGA certificates have real value. In addition, players will be able – in fact encouraged – to seek the endorsement of a professional player as well.

Chuck Robbins commented that the AGA should help to develop a viable professional for go players in the US, and limiting pro involvement does not advance this goal. Lash responded by asking whether the AGA should serve the interest of members or pros – Chuck saw this as a false dichotomy. Helping pros helps everyone because we count on them to teach us. Ropy noted that pros who have been consulted about the proposal

do not seem enthusiastic; some would probably participate, but they think there are more important ways to spend our energy. Paul Celmer stated his think had evolved and he now favors pro involvement as an option rather than an integral part of the process.

On a motion to authorize the Rank Commission to proceed with a rank certification program offering the option, but not requirement, of pro endorsement, the vote was as follows:

Laird: Yes  
Castanza: Yes  
Celmer: Yes  
Haynes: Yes:  
Kolb: Yes  
Robbins: No

(Chuck Robbins left the meeting at this point)

#### **5. IMSA Mind Sport Games – Beijing 2008**

President Lash reported that a firm decision to proceed with the IMSA Mind Sport Games in Beijing next year will be taken on September 30. The AGA will be invited to send a team; to do so would require a major fundraising effort. Roy Laird noted that as a 501c3, the American Go Foundation can receive such donations as tax deductible, as long as they support the American team or otherwise fall within the AGF's mission statement.

#### **6. New Business**

Roy Laird noted that in addition to the usual arrangement with major vendors Yutopian/Kiseido, Slate and Shell, Nemesis -- more and more entrepreneurs have begun to view the Congress as a business opportunity. This year's ventures included calligraphy (proceeds eventually donated to AGA), commemorative T-shirts, and production of instructional videos based on Congress material. How should the AGA view this commercial activity? In preliminary discussion, some felt that since the Congress and AGA produce the event, thereby creating the business opportunity, it's reasonable to expect to share in the proceeds of such ventures. Other felt that the potential financial gain is relatively small, and there a more permissive attitude will encourage others to add value to the event in various ways. The discussion was tabled till the next meeting.

Terry Benson stated from the floor that the AGF still has some unfinished business with accounting for equipment distributed by the AGA and AGF. He will present a report in the near future.

Next meeting was set for Sunday September 16 at 8:00 PM EDT.

*Submitted by Roy Laird*