

MINUTES
AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Sunday, September 16, 2007 – 8:00 PM EST

Meeting called to order by: Roy Laird at 8:05 EDT
Type of meeting: Regular monthly conference call

Attendees:

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

Absent:

Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

1. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

Action items: Motion to approve the minutes of the August 2, 2007 annual Congress meeting. Approved unanimously.

2. President's Report-Mike Lash

a) Pro teaching Ing Grant

Mike Lash reported that he wrote a supplemental grant application to the Ing Foundation for \$14,000 to add to the current \$6,000 we have to support a teaching program using American Professionals. Lash is exploring the idea of expanding the professional teaching program through AGA Chapters and is considering funding them at the rate of approximately \$1000 per workshop or program.

Chuck Robbins said that he has held workshops for the past ten years. Most of the time they make a profit and when they have a loss, he has been protected by using his Congress reserves. Robbins said that he thinks the grant should be used to protect chapters from a loss rather than to reduce the fees charged to participants.

Lash said the goal is to include as many participants as possible. The programs is also going to target chapters without any Congress funds and these will need more help than others. Roy Laird asked if there would be a requirement for a percentage contribution from the sponsoring chapter? Lash said he would use a collaborative process to

determine the amount of sponsorship and expects to be flexible, but would not approve having the AGA pay for all of the costs of any workshop. Laird asked what Lash expects the ratio of sponsorship to participant costs to be. Lash asked what Robbins' experiences with costs have been. Robbins said Mr Yang usually charges about \$375 per day plus travel and lodging. Lash said that \$1000 sounds like a reasonable amount since a workshop could easily run over \$3000. Robbins said he doesn't think that the AGA should artificially reduce the prices, because people would have expectations of a lower price for a workshop. Laura Kolb asked if the idea was to allow students or lower income people to attend a workshop they may not otherwise be able to afford. Lash said that the idea of different prices for different participants would be considered.

b) Tournaments

Mike Lash reported that there is a team going to China in October for the third straight year and the HangZhou International Cities Event. Nicole Castanza has been recruited to manage the event administratively for the AGA and has done an excellent job. There are five or six people going so far. There will be a team of three and people can also play individually. Lash said there will be some meetings that he would like to attend during the tournament, but isn't sure whether he will be able to get away from work to do so.

Lash said he has been talking to a group called the American Go Honor Society. They are an independent group comprised of students. AGA officials are exploring co-sponsorship of a National School Team Championship with the group, which may lead to recruiting some more youth members to the AGA.

c) AGA Chapter Outreach Program

Mike Lash said he is working with Phil Waldron and Arnold Eudell, calling 188 Chapters around the country, 60 of which have expired. They are talking to people to find out what they are doing and reaching out to see what the AGA can do for them.

End of President's Report

3. Rank Certification

Laird reported that he circulated a draft proposal for the Rank Certification Program and asked if there were any comments on it. When there weren't, he said the committee would continue working on it and they should have something in place by the end of the year.

4. Tournament Director Responsibilities

Laird said there have been some problems regarding timely and complete reporting of rated tournaments, which the Board has been discussing by e-mail. He reported that Celmer has agreed to support chapters who may not know how to report results in a timely manner. Celmer said he will be looking at the tournament schedule and matching it up against rating results and he will contact organizers to help them if they need it to get their results reported. Celmer said he thinks we need to fill the National Tournament Director position to fix this problem in the long run.

Laird said the situation has changed, because due to extensive improvements in the rating system by AGA Rains Statistician Paul Matthews, we are able to rate tournaments more quickly, and players can view their results instantly online. This creates expectations the AGA must meet –these younger players are a major growth area, and bringing them in builds the AGA’s future. Some tournament directors may not be aware of this. Since one of the most valuable services the AGA provides is the rating service, we need to focus on getting timely updates to ratings.

Willard asked if the software programs that do the tournament pairing could generate the results automatically? Robbins said the software helps, but there can be problems, because the contact information, e-mails, addresses, etc. is the type of information that directors have a harder time providing.

Laird said two things besides rating data are required from tournament directors:

1) membership payments for new/renewing members and rating fees for non-members;; and

2) contact information for each player. For new members, the AGA needs certain information, such an address to send a membership card. Certain data, especially address, e-mail/phone, are needed even from non-members, to be sure the ratings are being applied to the correct person, and so that the player can be contacted if there is a problem. Laird said he thinks the tournament directors should be required to provide the data in a timely manner.

Gordon Castanza asked how such a rule could be enforced. Laird asked if Castanza had an idea. Castanza said he thinks it should cost the director money somehow. There may be a licensing fee to be a certified TD. Or the TD’s who have been reliable at getting results turned in could train newer TD’s. There could be a disciplinary procedure for delinquent TD’s progressing from a phone call to suspension. Haynes said his chapter holds four tournaments per year, and their TD has no formal training. If someone had to pay a fee to be a TD, he expects it would be harder to find someone to run a tournament. Laird agreed we should avoid actions that reduce the number of tournaments that are held. The number of TD’s who do not report their results promptly is a small percentage of the total. He thinks Celmer’s gentle approach is appropriate.

Laird noted that the current policy on the web site is that TD’s should be required to report their results within “a few days” of the tournament. However this may not be a well known fact, and has not been strictly enforced. Celmer said that some people who have been running tournaments for years may not be aware that the ratings can be updated so fast because in the old days it was only done every month or two, so if they are made aware of the improvements they may start reporting their results more quickly.

Roy Schmidt said that most players are accustomed to getting instantaneous ratings results on line and they expect quick results from tournaments. Laird suggested that we

let Celmer continue contacting TD's who haven't reported their results and see how much progress is made.

Schmidt asked if enforcement of a policy would be easier if tournaments could only be rated if they are supported by a Chapter? Laird said two major tournaments, the Cotsen and the American Go Honor Society tournaments are not supported by a chapter. Lash pointed out that the Go Honor Society tournament will not be AGA rated and the Cotsen Event could be affiliated with a Los Angeles chapter.

Celmer asked if there might be a way to encourage tournament organizers by recognizing or certifying reliable TD's. There was some discussion of a TD mentor program, but no firm plans were made.

5. New Business

Willard Haynes said that at the Go Congress, he would meet people from Japan who would give him their business cards and he would like an official AGA business card to be able to share. Lash said that all officers should have official AGA cards. Haynes said it's important that they all have the same format. Laird said he has a card from the New York Go Center, but he will try to come up with a design for an AGA card and will send it around for comments.

6. Schedule next monthly Meeting and Adjournment

The next monthly Board meeting will be held Sunday, October 28, 2007 at 8:00 PM EDT.

Willard Haynes moved to adjourn the meeting. Gordon Castanza seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:10 PM EDT.

The meeting was recorded, and minutes were submitted by: Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary