

USCF Executive Board Meeting - October 31-November 1, 2009 – Crossville, TN

Open Session 1 – Saturday, October 31, 2009

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by President Jim Berry. Board members Ruth Haring, Bill Goichberg and Mike Atkins were in attendance creating a quorum. Member Randy Bauer was unable to attend due to another commitment. Executive Director, Bill Hall; Assistant Executive Director and Director of National Events, Pat Knight Smith; Chief Financial Officer, Joe Nanna; and Director of Publications, Daniel Lucas were among those also present.

Approval of Minutes

EB10-013 (Haring) Move to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2009 USCF Executive Board Meeting held in Indianapolis, IN. **Passed 4-0**

Officer Reports

Joe Nanna, Chief Financial Officer

Unexpected expenses played a major role in un-balancing plans and were detailed by CFO Nanna. They included a payment to the profit sharing plan required by the Federal Department of Labor as a result of their audit of the plan. A restatement of the Profit Sharing Plan was signed by the Board to conclude that business. Continued cost-cutting or revenue increasing measures are necessary.

Dan Lucas, Director of Publications

Popularity of the Regular and Online-only memberships resulted in the number of monthly Chess Life issues dropping from 49,000 to 27,000 in October. The approximately 3,500 “no-response” Life Members who were moved to the Regular option in October were part of this decrease. As a result, savings in Chess Life line items may be greater than anticipated in May.

Additional tasks, required to prepare the TLA Newsletter and Scholastic TLA Newsletter, have been successfully absorbed by the editorial staff. Joan Dubois and Glenn Petersen are sharing the work load of Ray West since his retirement as Advertising Supervisor. New ways to replace Chess Life ad revenue with web ad revenue need to be found.

Discussion on Chess Life content was next. Ruth Haring proposed there be a regular women’s column with a woman author covering women’s chess. This is in line with FIDE’s push for affirmative action for women. Bill Goichberg suggested that the number of regular columns be increased and include correspondence chess, college chess, and more articles promoting the USCF and chess in general. It was felt that regularly listing the USCF Committees with chair person’s contact information could encourage members to get involved.

The meeting then went into closed session for the rest of the day.

Open Session 2 – Sunday, November 1, 2009

Beatriz Marinello, FIDE Zonal President Report (via telephone)

She has been working on international events, namely the North American Youth Festival and American Junior Championship where Ray Robson won his 3rd GM Norm to become the youngest GM in the U.S., the World Junior Championship in Argentina, and the World Cup. Building an Americas Coalition is her goal.

The main issue at the FIDE Congress was zonal restructuring. Again it was defeated.

A motion that was passed had to do with exporting players and the fees involved to change federations. The national federation a player leaves now gets a fee as well.

Ruth Haring, FIDE Congress Report

This is the 85th Anniversary of FIDE. For the occasion a commemorative DVD was produced and shown at the reception. Ms Haring had procured a copy and played it for the Board.

She noted that no U.S. players were included in the Obituary Section. Better flow of that information is needed.

Her question “Is there a FIDE event the USCF could bid on?” generated a brief discussion. It was agreed to watch for the opportunity. The possibility of approaching the USIOC for funding was raised.

Any ideas for motions for FIDE are welcomed and should be sent to Ms Haring.

Old Business

The Executive Board reviewed the Executive Director’s performance.

New Business

Seminars at U.S. Open

Mike Atkins suggested that the USCF look into sponsoring and holding a FIDE Arbiters’ Seminar the first Saturday and Sunday of the 2010 U.S. Open. Carol Jarecki or Robert Tanner could be contacted as presenters. Bill Hall accepted this as an action item.

After consideration, Bill Goichberg’s idea of offering a free listing in Chess Life or on the website to anyone holding a USCF oriented free seminar to promote chess was accepted. The February 2010 issue of Chess Life was targeted for the first ad. Bill Goichberg and Bill Hall will coordinate implementation.

Bill Hall introduced the new USCF Promotional Video from the SuperNationals. It is a support tool designed to help those interested in promoting chess in schools.

Qualifications for U.S. Championships

Discussion on qualifications for U.S. Championships touched on, qualifier events, wild cards, timing of qualifying events, ties, USCF activity requirements, and residency. It was mentioned that Michael Khodarkovsky had prepared a list of types of documentation the USCF may find acceptable for residency. The Board agreed to complete discussion on this topic via email.

Mike Atkins outlined a plan for a Wild Card Series. The series would consist of ten round robin tournaments outsourced to ten different regional organizers. Winners would be seeded into a championship round robin held at the U.S. Open and the winner of that contest would be seeded into the U.S. Championship. Players could not have played in the U.S. Championship since 1990 and meet other requirements. Invitations would be up to the area organizer, but each regional series should have one scholastic player (under 18) and one women's player. Players could participate in only one area qualifier. Bill Hall agreed to take this as an action item and talk about the idea with Tony Rich of the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis, host and sponsor of the 2010 U.S. Championship. Specifics of the discussion were to be fleshed out in closed session.

Ratings

The status of implementing the USCF Title system which had been approved by the Delegates in 2003 and tested and tweaked by the Ratings Committee was questioned. Bill Hall advised that Mike Nolan was still working on the program. He would contact Mike and ask him to call in with an update.

Problems with the Quick Rating system were outlined by Bill Goichberg. Dual ratings, universal ratings, tests and adjustments by the Ratings Committee were considered. Bill Goichberg made the following motion.

EB10-014 (Goichberg) The Executive Board is concerned about the following problems with the Quick Rating System:

1. Some players who have improved substantially in regular rated play while playing little or no quick chess are very underrated, sometimes by as many as 1000 points.
2. It appears that most players who are rated in both the quick and regular systems, by a substantial margin, have quick ratings that are lower than regular. It would be ideal if the number of players whose quick is lower than regular was about the same as the number whose quick is higher than regular.

To address problem #1, we request that testing be conducted on methods involving rating all time controls in the quick system and varying the K factor based on time control, such as the following:

- a.) G/5-G/29 150%K, G/30-G/60 110%K, slower than G/60 70%K
- b.) G/5-G/29 150%K, G/30-G/60 115%K, slower than G/60 80%K

To address problem #2, we request that the Ratings Committee recommend an accelerated bonus schedule or other method for inflating the quick rating pool so that quick about regular occurs with about the same frequency as quick below regular, and a method for then approximately maintaining this relationship between the two systems.

Passed 4-0

Rate of Rating Change

Bill Goichberg reported that the topic of Rating Change has received much attention on the forums. He explained that before the 1970's a K=32 was used for everyone. Then the formula was changed so that K=32 was used for ratings 2100 and below, K=24 was used for 2100-2399, and K=16 was used for ratings 2400 or over. Although there have been adjustments, the system is thought to be inflated compared FIDE's at the higher ratings. In 2001 a new system was implemented wherein each rating has a different K. As a result the higher ratings now change more slowly than before 2001 with Expert and Class A impacted the most.

Our current K factors are believed by the Ratings Committee to maximize predictive ability. Bill believes that minor differences in predictive value are less important than promotional value, that the larger pre-2001 K factors in the Expert and Class A area were more desirable for promoting activity than the post-2001 smaller K factors, that a larger K factor for the Expert/A area would be more accurate for juniors, and that the increased volatility this would cause for adults would be beneficial in practice even if slightly decreasing predictive value. He has received input from players and TDs since the change in K factors, and has also conducted a recent survey.

Currently there is a Purist vs Promotional argument taking place in the USCF. Ruth Haring thought that players like volatility. Bill Hall said that the rating system should be a hierarchic ranking system.

EB10-015 (Goichberg) Moved that the Executive Board believes that ratings change too slowly at the level of about 1800-2200, and that causing such ratings to change somewhat more rapidly would both promote activity and better reflect improvement by young players. We believe that most ratings in this range should change at least 25% more rapidly than they do at present, and that some in this range should change at least 50% more rapidly.

We ask the Ratings Committee to recommend, before our February 2010 meeting, changes in the USCF ratings formula that will accomplish this objective.

Rationale: Such change would leave all ratings in this range changing considerably less rapidly than they did prior to 2001. The higher rate of change (K factor) for this range used for about 25 years prior to 2001 was more desirable from the promotional stand point than what we have today. **Passed 4-0**

After much discussion, it was agreed that the goal of the USCF rating system is to promote rated play. In order to best accomplish this, the ratings must be credible. Bill Hall will craft an official Policy Statement outlining the "Goal of the Rating System" and email it to the Board for approval.

Rating Floors

The Board then considered the idea of adding rating based floors at 1200 and 1300. Currently such floors exist at 1400 through 2200, generated by the player achieving an established rating at least 200 points above the floor. It was felt that floors encourage declining players to

remain active, and that this effect was as important at 1200 and 1300 as at higher ratings. The idea of proposing even lower floors, at 1000 and 1100, was postponed because Ratings Committee Chair Mark Glickman reported that he feared a larger percentage of these lower rated players would be on their floors due to the greater volatility of lower ratings. Bill Goichberg expressed doubt that an unusual number of these lower players would be on their floors as many are improving juniors, but he will wait to see the effects of the 1200 and 1300 floors before proposing those at 1000 and 1100. There was also discussion of making the new floors retroactive, but it was decided not to do so.

EB10-016 (Goichberg) Rating based floors shall be created at 1300 and 1200. **Passed 4-0**

Victory Points

Adopting a system of master points akin to those awarded in Bridge was discussed. A name for the system was deliberated and "Victory Points" was adopted.

EB10-017 (Goichberg) Moved that the Executive Board approves in principle the concept of "Victory Points" as described below, with the goal of implementing this idea approximately six months after the implementation of the lifetime titles system.

Victory Points

1. This would be a relatively simple cumulative system that could coexist with ratings and titles. It would have no effect on either, but would offer the prospect of increased credit to all players, even those who are declining. It would reward not only activity and success, but also aggressive play (no credit for draws). And though it would not show current strength, most with high point totals would be high rated players. Here is how it might work:
2. For Events with some or all games slower than G/60
 - a. A win over a 1401-1600 opponent earns 1 Victory Point
 - b. A win over a 1601-1800 opponent earns 2 Victory Points
 - c. A win over a 1801-2000 opponent earns 4 Victory Points
 - d. A win over a 2001-2200 opponent earns 8 Victory Points
 - e. A win over a 2201-2400 opponent earns 16 Victory Points
 - f. A win over a 2401 and up opponent earns 32 Victory Points
3. For Events with all rounds G/30 to G/60
 - a. No credit for a win over a 1401-1600 opponent
 - b. Other credits are half of those listed above
4. The G/30-G/60 win over a 1401-1600 could count as a half point, but I would rather avoid decimals in the totals. Or it could count for a point with everything else being doubled, but maybe we should keep most of the numbers low for easier calculation and display. And encouraging kids anxious to score their first Victory Point or Points to play at a fairly slow time control doesn't seem a bad idea.
5. Note that floored players would count as the class below for generating Victory Points. It only takes a 1 point adjustment to do this, so we might as well avoid the possibility that in small tournaments someone could pile up a lot of Victory Points by facing the same overrated player(s) repeatedly. Not all players with ratings ending in

00 are floored, but the cutoff has to be somewhere, so that seems the best place to put it.

6. What would a player get for Victory Points? To start with, we would publish lists on occasion in Chess Life, and more often and in more detail on the web, lifetime totals and annual totals for the national Victory Points leaders, the leaders who live in each state, the most Victory Points scored in each state (not the same thing), and there could be other categories such as largest number of states in which the player scored at least 5 or 10 or 20 Victory Points playing in each state, etc.. There would be special awards for players with 1000 or 10,000 or whatever Victory Points in a year or lifetime. We don't need to decide now what these awards will be called, but it wouldn't be the same name as anything in the rating system or title system.
7. Another possible use for Victory Points is, as with titles, to award class prizes. Once we see how many players in each class have how many lifetime Victory Points, organizers could offer class prizes to players in each class who have a certain minimum number of points (it should be a number no more than half the players in the section are likely to have). Like the Mike Regan idea with titles, such class prizes will favor the older players, who tend to be winning little now, and probably even more so than titles. Players will want Victory Points not only for the recognition, but also the added prize eligibility.
8. Duplicate bridge has long used a relatively simple system of amassing "Master Points" with great success, despite lacking an Elo type system to show current strength. When I used to play duplicate bridge in clubs several times a week, I would see the same players, mostly seniors with over 50% women, appearing regularly and on occasion when they placed high they seemed very happy to receive their Master Point certificates. The entry fees were about \$5 with no prizes other than the certificates; I imagine they are higher today, and some bridge clubs had 14 games per week, an afternoon game and an evening game every day, with about 40-50 people participating in the afternoon and 60-80 at night
This structure allowed fulltime bridge clubs to prosper, while most chess clubs meet just one night per week, are expected by the players to return a substantial percentage of any entry fees as prizes, can afford only the lowest cost sites, and offer no business opportunity for their manager.
9. It's not the best timing introducing two systems at once, but we don't need to do that, and implementation of past changes has been slow; even if we don't specify it, there would probably be a gap between announcing titles and implementing Victory Points. I just hope that gap is not more than a year. The Victory Point system seems desirable as it does some important things that the title system doesn't:
 - a. Even most declining players can easily add to their total.
 - b. No one, after reaching a goal, will feel that further progress is impossible.
 - c. Most players will see progress immediately online after each tournament.
 - d. The point system format is suitable for simple promotional breakdowns by state, year, age, etc. or rivalries between club or team members.
 - e. Rewards aggressive play.
 - f. Encourages play at relatively slow time controls, which is good for the development of young players.

- g. Credits will be available even in short events such as quads and team matches, or for house players.
- h. Allows a desirable new type of class prize, one limited to players who have scored a certain minimum number of Victory Points. The offering of such prizes would likely increase opportunity for players who are not improving, and promote the Victory Point system.

Passed 4-0

Scholastic \$2 Project

Bill Goichberg suggested a trial to start in January or February and end in May or June for a \$2 per game scholastic, non-rated, quick chess only project. The idea was discussed at the 2008 Scholastic Workshop as a low cost option outreach to schools. Ideally this would direct players to USCF rated play and regular memberships. Bill Hall cautioned there's a potential for unintended consequences which may in fact under cut membership. He agreed to take this as an Action Item.

Online Play

Two questions "How to get new memberships from online play?" and "How to rate online play?" generated a lengthy discussion. Bill Goichberg suggested the formation of an Online Play Subcommittee consisting of Bill Goichberg, Ruth Haring and Bill Hall with others to be invited to study the potential for rating online play.

TDCC Certification

The Board went over the proposed TDCC rule changes and additions.

EB10-018 (Atkins) Move to approve the revised TDCC rules and regulations. Passed 4-0

Concern was also expressed by Bill Goichberg and Mike Atkins about the loss of Local TDs who don't wish to take an exam, or fail to pass. Bill Goichberg offered to formulate a motion of recommendation to the TDCC.

Certified Chess Coach Program

EB10-019 (Atkins) Move to approve 5 Scholastic Chess Coach Applications:

Bob Holliman – Level IV, Ralph Bowman – National Level IV, CJ Armenta – National Level IV, Mark Ritter – Professional Level V and Tonya Kranich-Ritter – National Level IV. **Passed 4-0**

EB10-020 (Board) USCF Executive Board approval of applicants is not required for the Chess Coach Certification Program. The Scholastic Council should consult with the USCF Office prior to approvals. **Passed 4-0**

US Girls Junior Open Championship

Ruth Haring introduced the topic of holding a tournament for female players under age 21 to be held concurrent with the Denker at the U.S. Open. The winner could possibly be seeded into another event. Details of tournament structure were left to the office.

EB10-021 (Haring) The USCF Executive Board establishes and recognizes as a National event the U.S. Girls Junior Open Championship (Under21). The tournament will run concurrent with the Denker Tournament of Champions. Entry fee is free if the player is a paid participant of the U.S. Open. **Passed 4-0**

U.S. Senior Open

Ruth Haring suggested that the top woman finisher in the U.S. Senior Open be the U.S. representative for the FIDE World Women's Senior Open. A \$500 stipend was agreed upon and placed as an Action Item in next year's budget.

Feeder Tournaments

The need to create more feeder tournaments going into the U.S. Championship and U.S. Women's Championship was introduced by Ruth Haring. Her idea was to have invitational, limited, B-level, round robin tournaments for those not invited to the U.S. Championship and U.S. Women's Championship. Winners would have a seat in next year's tournament. She felt this would promote chess, draw spectators, and be great for local players. Ruth Haring and Bill Hall agreed to create proposals for additional tournament flights in the U.S. Championships as an Action Item.

FIDE Time Limits

EB10-021 (Goichberg) Moved that USCF ask FIDE VP Bill Kelleher to move that FIDE approve the following:

1. 40/120, SD/1 with 5 second delay or increment is acceptable for norms
2. 40/115, SD/1 with 5 second delay or increment is acceptable for norms
3. The FIDE limit of 12 hours play per day is changed to 12 ½ hours. This would allow two rounds per day at 40/120, SD/1 with 5 second delay or increments.

Passed 4-0

Technology/Internet Sub-committee

An Executive Board sub-committee for Technology and the Internet was suggested by Ruth Haring. People having Internet knowledge, marketing skills and those considered search engine experts will be invited to serve.

EB10-023 (Haring) Move that we create a Technology/Internet Sub-committee. Committee members include Ruth Haring and Bill Hall and others to be appointed at a later date. The committee will address payments to USCF via PayPal, online mailing lists, and link exchange. **Passed 4-0**