

Proceedings of US Chess Federation Executive Board Meeting
February 20 -21, 2010 conference call

This document is a summary of the proceedings of the meeting. It includes motions made, action items accepted, and subjects discussed. Details of discussions, etc., can be obtained from the sound files online.

Saturday, February 20, 2010 - Open Session I

At 9a.m. Board President, Jim Berry, called the conference call meeting to order in open session. All Executive Board members were present - Ruth Haring, Mike Atkins, Randy Bauer, and Bill Goichberg which created a quorum. Also attending were Executive Director, Bill Hall; Assistant Executive Director and Director of National Events, Pat Knight Smith; Chief Financial Officer, Joe Nanna; and IT Director and Webmaster, Phil Smith.

EB10-028 (Berry) Accept the minutes for the November EB Meeting. **PASSED 5-0**

Reports

Executive Director, Bill Hall reported on membership revenues comparing them with last year's results. He stated that the new non-magazine membership option has Adult membership revenue slightly down. However, January membership numbers were very good in spite of the sluggish economy. Overall, membership revenues are only a little behind projections. Hall noted that Affiliate revenue, "the engine that drives our organization", is very close to 2009 figures and is on track.

Other topics he covered were the emailing system which is now working; improvements to the Affiliate support area on the website; and the winding down of litigation details of which would be discussed in closed session.

Then, Director of National Events and Assistant Executive Director, Pat Smith, reported on prospective U.S. Open locations. A 2013 US Open contract offer from Madison, WI received negative input from the Board. The Board discussed possible future locations and expressed interest in booking sites several years out to capture currently advantageous rates.

Smith noted that booking for the Spring Nationals Senior High and Elementary Championships are good. The Junior High is a little slow but not unusually so.

She stated that there had been problems with the 2009 K-12 at the Hilton Anatole. After lengthy investigation and discussions she was able to negotiate out of a \$70,000 charge for attrition. The Board congratulated Pat Smith on a job well done.

Hall then covered Action Items. Included were IOC Funding, Arbiters Seminar, Promotional Seminars, promo DVD, 10 to 10 Wild Card Proposal, \$2 Scholastic rating fee, TD Certification, policy changes for representative to World Junior Girls Championship, grant writing and the House of Staunton. Input from Mike Nolan and Dan Lucas is needed on some restructuring ideas. He asked that the Operations Review which is to contain goals, plans and accomplishments be carried over as an action item for the next meeting.

Next, Chief Financial Officer, Joe Nanna gave the Treasurer's Report. He stated that finances are a struggle. USCF has \$360,000 in short term debt including \$100,000 due the LMA and \$250,000 to Cumberland County Bank. That line of credit expires mid June. There are no problems with the mortgage holder First Tennessee. The day to day cash flow is very tight and is being monitored closely. Estimates from auditing firms are being received for the annual audit and that the Audit Committee will select a company by May.

Bill Hall interjected that typically we would pay off all debt by early March. Due to the extraordinary legal fees we are behind this year. Without some drastic measures, which are being worked on, we're going to have a serious problem come summer.

Randy Bauer noted that looking at the P&L statement, revenue is tracking very close to projections. Write off of a large bad debt and an unanticipated profit sharing payment plus the extraordinary professional fees are creating the short term issues. We must either drastically restructure or find additional sources of revenue.

The Board then discussed possible ways to increase memberships and raise capital. Suggestions included a telethon, email solicitation, phone solicitation, a donation button on the website and a benefactor promotion.

Unfinished Business

Mike Atkins addressed the first item stating that a USCF Committees web page with links to active topics the committees are working on had been discussed online.

Bill Goichberg then focused on Life Titles and Victory Points, saying he thought a six month break between initiating the two would be best. Life Titles are long over due. They need to be implemented and displayed online.

The Board requested a prioritized list of projects from Mike Nolan for discussion at the Sunday meeting. Mike Atkins asked that an update of the server situation be included.

At this point Bill Hall asked Phil Smith, IT Director and Webmaster, to join the conference call. Smith gave a general report on the status of the computer system with details to be discussed in closed session. Bill Goichberg questioned whether an unused server mentioned could be used for ratings tests. Smith said it seemed doable and would work with Mike Nolan to get this set up.

Updated requirements for the U.S. Championship Invitational requirements for 2011 were presented by Bill Goichberg. The Board discussed the proposed requirements and made a few changes.

EB10 – 029 (Goichberg) Approve the proposed US Championship and US Women's Championship invitational requirements, to be effective with the 2011 Championships.

PASSED 5-0.

US CHAMPIONSHIP AND US WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP INVITATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Effective with the 2011 Championships

FORMAT: In recent years, the US Championship has been a 9-round Swiss with at least 24 players, and the US

Women's Championship a round robin with at least 10 players. Different formats may be used in the future if desired by the sponsor and approved by USCF.

• **MEMBERSHIP:** Players must be USCF members in good standing at the time of invitation.

• **RATING:** Usually some players are invited based on USCF rating. The number of qualifying spots based on rating shall be determined by USCF in consultation with the sponsor.

• **DEFENDING CHAMPION:** For each event, the most recent winner of the event is automatically qualified.

• **US OPEN:** The top finishing US player in the most recent US Open, plus possibly one or more additional top finishers, qualifies for the US Championship. The number of qualifiers shall be determined by USCF in consultation with the sponsor.

• **US JUNIOR AND GIRLS JUNIOR:** The winner of the most recent US Junior Championship qualifies for the US Championship. The winner of the most recent US Junior Girls Open Championship qualifies for the US Women's Championship

• **US SENIOR:** The top finishing US player in the most recent US Senior Open usually qualifies for the US Championship, however if no US Senior is held between two US Championships, the second US Championship may have no senior qualifier.

• **TOURNAMENT OF STATE CHAMPIONS:** The winner of the most recent online Tournament of State Champions usually qualifies for the US Championship.

• **OTHER QUALIFIERS:** Other qualifying events may be designated by USCF in consultation with the sponsor.

• **WILD CARDS:** USCF may grant the sponsor the right to select a number of players for "wild card" invitations. Such invitations will be at the sponsor's discretion, but are generally players of at least Master strength (US Championship) or Expert strength (US Women's Championship).

• **TIMING OF INVITATIONS:** Invitations based on rating are usually determined about 2 to 3 months before each tournament. Qualifying events may be held at any time since the previous Championship.

• **TIES:** Ties will be broken by the number of games played in the 12 months prior to invitation.

• **ACTIVITY REQUIREMENT:** Players must play a minimum of 15 USCF-rated games against players rated over 2200 (US Championship) or 2000 (US Women's Championship) in the 12 months prior to invitation, with at least 8 of these games taking place in the U.S. Matches, private tournaments, and games at a faster time control than G/30 are not counted.

• **RESIDENCY:** Before becoming eligible for USCF invitations, non-United States citizens who have FIDE ratings or have represented another country in a chess competition must fulfill the following residency requirements:

1. A player who has a green card, or other acceptable proof of permanent U.S. residency such as an I-94 Visa, O-1 Visa, H1B1 Visa, or Student Visa, must complete one continuous year (12 months) of United States residency, with a U.S. address, immediately prior to the event in question. Occasional brief visits to foreign countries during this 12 month period are acceptable, but the player must be in the US for a majority of this time. In addition, players may be required to provide a written promise that they will apply for U.S. citizenship as soon as legally possible.

2. Players must complete and sign a USCF residency form, and these residency forms must be received by the USCF prior to the time when invitations are determined. The USCF then has the option of requiring the player to change his or her FIDE status to U.S. Blank residency forms can be obtained from the USCF office.

3. Players must refuse to represent other countries within the waiting period as specified above. Playing for another country at any time requires a candidate for invitations to begin a one year waiting period anew. Representing another country is defined as playing in the national championship of another country, and/or playing as a member of another country's national team in international competition.

4. Zonal events: In years in which the U.S. Championship and U.S. Women's Championship are also Zonal tournaments, any qualification spots allotted by FIDE from these events for the FIDE world championship competition will be offered only to the highest-scoring players who also fulfill all FIDE requirements. If a question arises as to USCF versus FIDE requirements, FIDE's criteria shall be used.

5. Players shall, in general, suffer no penalty for simply participating in a FIDE-rated event under their current national affiliation code, such as in international norm-granting events other than those listed in #4 above.

INVITATIONS ARE A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT

Note: USCF invitations are a privilege, not a right afforded to any player by virtue of his or her status as a USCF member. The USCF reserves the right to not issue invitations to any particular event, or to change these criteria without advance notice.

New Business

Moving on to New Business, President Berry made a motion of acclamation for the U.S. Team and Coach IM John Donaldson in recognition of an outstanding performance at the World Team Championships.

EB10- 030 (Board) The USCF Executive Board congratulates the USA Team for their silver medal result at the World Team Championship in Bursa, Turkey January 2010. The EB thanks the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis for their sponsorship. The US team consisted of Grandmasters Hikaru Nakamura, Alexander Onishuk, Yuri Shulman, Varuzhan Akobian, Robert Hess, Ray Robson and team captain/coach IM John Donaldson.

GM's Nakamura and Onishuk achieved individual gold medal results.

The EB would like to recognize IM John Donaldson's continued extraordinary record of success leading US teams in international competitions.

PASSED 5-0

The idea of Gold Memberships was introduced for discussion by Bill Goichberg. (See Appendix A - BINFO 201000081 for Gold Memberships proposal) Outlined as a means of encouraging people to renew their membership without lapse, the plan would encourage people to play in tournaments and promote the USCF. Bill Hall and Bill Goichberg agreed to accept implementing Gold Memberships as an action item.

At noon the meeting was adjourned for a lunch break.

Saturday, February 20, 2010 - Open Session 2

New Business Continued

Bill Goichberg expressed the need for a Benefactor Membership promotion. He was concerned that a Life member could not convert to Benefactor online. Additional publicity is needed possibly a web thank you and/or Chess Life mention. Randy Bauer said the Board should establish a consistent policy for recognition including a thank you box on the website with picture and short bio of the person, if they approve plus a box in Chess Life with the same information. Bill Hall will work on this as an Action Item.

Email services was the next item discussed. Ideas included emailing members when the new issue of Chess Life is available which Bill Goichberg felt helps with membership renewals, updates the email data base and notifies members of benefits they are not using; sending emails for affiliates about upcoming tournaments; simuls, lectures etc. is now being done; and

sending emails about tournaments being rated and rating changes. Bill Hall will continue working on this item.

Bill Goichberg, Mike Atkins and Bill Hall will work together in creating a plan for free publicity to those offering seminars on organizing and directing tournaments, or other topics promoting chess and the USCF. Goichberg has tried to get this project started but said it needs more publicity such as a box ad online and in Chess Life. He encouraged Board members to hold seminars.

The Board then talked about web strategy. What services or benefits could non-members receive for registering on the website? Bill Hall will confer with Phil Smith regarding website capabilities. Online play came into the discussion and the Board formed a subcommittee to examine the subject.

EB10-031(Board) The USCF Executive Board appoints an online play subcommittee to evaluate and explore opportunities for the USCF to benefit from online chess related activities. Committee members are Ruth Haring, Bill Goichberg and Bill Hall.

Passed 5-0

President Berry introduced the next topic – reactivating the most active player list and most active tournament director list. Bill Goichberg commented that this had been discussed and agreed upon previously, but no action had been taken. Lists should appear in Chess Life on Line monthly and Chess Life magazine quarterly. Bill Hall said he would have Mike Nolan generate the reports and discuss Chess Life space with Dan Lucas. The Board expanded the idea to include most active affiliates. Mike Atkins suggested and everyone agreed the lists should appear in the Delegates' Call. It was also suggested that “Most Active Player” and “Most Active Tournament Director” be added to the awards given at the U.S. Open luncheon.

Mike Atkins had been working with the TDCC on the next item – Modification to the Tournament Director Certification Rules. The Board discussed the up and downsides to the issue of testing. Bill Goichberg wanted more inclusion especially at the affiliate/ club TD level to encourage more tournaments. Atkins said that TDCC feels that for many players club tournaments are their introduction to USCF play; that players should have a good introduction to tournaments and these tournaments should be fairly, professionally and adequately run. As an Action Item, Bill Goichberg and Mike Atkins will work to improve communication with the TDCC and craft a motion acceptable to everyone.

Auto-resignation of Executive Board members who sue the USCF was then discussed. Ruth Haring proposed this be made organizational policy and become part of the swearing in statement. Legal concerns were raised and the topic was tabled.

Open Session 2 was then recessed.

Sunday, February 21, 2010 Open Session 3

President Berry called the meeting to order and proceeded to vote on proposed motions.

EB10-032 (Atkins) Moved that Matt Lodge be added to the Denker Committee.

Passed 5-0

EB10-033 (Goichberg) Moved that Bob Rasmussen is appointed chair of the Clubs Committee.
Passed 5-0

EB10-034 (Goichberg) Moved that John McCrary and Randy Hough are added to the Awards Committee. Existing members who continue are John Donaldson and Harold Winston. Chair is Donaldson and liaison Bill Goichberg.
Passed 5-0

The meeting was then adjourned.

Appendix A:

BINFO	201000081
Date	2010-02-07
From	Chessoffice
Status	Standard Release
Release Date	2010-02-12
Subject	Gold Membership proposal

- *To:* JABerryCG@xxxxxxx, Riharing@xxxxxxx, randybauer2300@xxxxxxxxxx, matkins2@xxxxxxx, bhall@xxxxxxxxxxxx
- *Subject:* Gold Membership proposal
- *From:* Chessoffice@xxxxxxx
- *Date:* Sun, 7 Feb 2010 01:38:02 EST
- *Cc:* USCF BINFO System, Chessoffice@xxxxxxx
- *Delivered-to:* USCF BINFO Systemxxxxxxxxxx
- *Delivered-to:* USCF BINFO System

Following is an idea I am calling "Gold Membership," though we already have Gold Affiliates and perhaps some might prefer another name. Gold Affiliates in effect make a donation in return for recognition and publicity. For member donations we already have Benefactors, and I see Gold Memberships as working differently, addressing the problem that many members renew only when necessary to play in their next tournament.

Gold status would work like this: anyone who has paid Adult or Senior dues for at least the last 5 consecutive years of membership, without interruption, would be a Gold Member.

That means all Life Members would obtain Gold status, a new benefit promoting good will with this valuable group. But more important, Gold Members who pay dues year to year would lose Gold status if they renew late, and others would fail to build towards it if late. Renewal mailings would be more effective, reminding members that they must renew by a deadline or lose Gold status, or whatever credit they might have towards it. Not only would some renew on time rather than after a lapse as a result, but others who delay renewal until the next tournament, though not planning so at the time, never return. And some Young Adults or other categories might pay Adult dues in order to obtain Gold Membership.

Gold Members would be listed on MSA, and there could be special class prizes restricted to Gold Members at national tournaments. Affiliates would be encouraged to offer such prizes as well, and could support USCF by doing so while still offering something that will tend to boost attendance. And we might even consider holding an annual National Gold Members Championship. The special prizes would make competitive sense, as they would tend to go to older players with well established ratings, a group that wins fewer class prizes than the average adult, and much less than kids. The prizes might not need to be very large to get players to think that they should renew promptly in order to be eligible- for example, if about 3% of the US Open prize fund was allotted to Gold Member prizes, each class could have a prize of about \$200, giving players out of the running for the regular prizes something meaningful to shoot for in the late rounds.

If programming to count consecutive membership years is possible only for the future, then for faster qualification we might begin with 3 years required, increase this requirement by a year annually until reaching 5 years, and recognize Life Members as Gold only after 3 years..

Bill Goichberg