

US Chess Delegates Meetings, Indianapolis, August 6-7, 2016
by Ken Jones

Firstly, here are the results of Missouri's representatives in the youth tournaments held concurrently with the US Open:

National Girls' Tournament of Champions: Thalia Cervantes, 4.0-2.0 (=7th)

Barber K-8 Champions: Jonathan Gollapudi, 3.0-3.0 (=21st)

Denker High School Champions: Jason Zhou, 2.0-4.0 (=32nd)

I attended these meetings as the only Missouri delegate. While I was allowed to choose an alternative 2nd delegate at the site, I declined to do so. Firstly, there were not very many other players from Missouri attending; and secondly, because this was my first Delegates meeting, I did not have any information for the alternative on what to expect, how to vote, etc. However, in no instance would an extra vote have changed any result.

All the materials given to me (Annual Report, Delegates Call, financial statements, etc.) will be brought to the next MCA Board meeting, although it's likely that they can be found on-line as well.

I will begin by reporting that the United States Chess Federation (USCF) has begun to re-brand itself as "US Chess" in its publications. While all three of these names are currently used, we should expect "US Chess" to predominate in the future.

US Chess is now in a period of growth and on solid financial footing. Total membership is up; the number of rated games last year set a new record. Of note is that the highest area of growth is the age group immediately *after* scholastic players—meaning that retention of young players is strong. The money borrowed from the LMA fund will be repaid by the end of the year (and ahead of schedule). Currently, US Chess has approximately \$1 million in net assets (although it was noted that cost reduction, not revenue growth, was the basis for this increase.) Because of this positive financial situation, the Executive Board has revised its organizational goals to the following:

1. Grow the game
2. Inform and engage the educational community about the benefits of chess
3. Continuously improve US Chess operations and member services
4. Expand the depth and breadth of chess partnerships
5. Increase chess opportunities for under-represented segments of society

In an effort to increase revenue growth and use its status as a 501(c)(3) educational and charitable tax exempt entity, US Chess will make a significant commitment to a fundraising campaign beginning no later than January 2017.

We now come to Old & New Business. I will not attempt to list all the motions found therein; fully 75% of them came from one delegation (NY) and seemed to me to be a series of rules and by-law changes driven from incidents in that area's scholastic chess arena. They were all resolved by being defeated, referred to a specific committee for further study, or withdrawn by their makers. Instead, I will concentrate on a few items that seem more relevant.

ADM 16-12 (Reinstatement of State Affiliate Program): This was referred to the EB for study last year. This program was discontinued due to budgetary constraints a few

years ago. If reinstated, annual cost is estimated by the VP of Finance to be in excess of \$75,000 a year. Motion failed.

ADM 16-31: “US Chess shall comply with all laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law with respect to chess tournaments sponsored by the organization.” During discussion, there was a question of how transgender players would be categorized; the Chairman stated that US Chess will adhere to federal guidelines which hold that a person’s sex is self-identified. Motion passed.

ADM 16-45 (Elimination of term limits for the Executive Board): Current by-laws state that an Executive Board member who has served nine consecutive years cannot be nominated again until at least two years have elapsed since the end of his/her term. Because the election cycle takes one year, this effectively creates a forced absence of three years. The motion asked that this restriction be removed (i.e., the elimination of term limits.) There was considerable discussion. Personally, I believe that term limits are not advantageous for voluntary organizations like US Chess and that we run the risk of losing willing and able members of the talent pool. However, the majority of delegates did not agree with me. Motion failed.

ADM 16-46 (Refinement of 3-term limit for the EB): It was noted that Executive Board members who begin by serving partial terms (i.e., being elected to fill a vacancy) are penalized because serving 3 more full terms would exceed the nine year limit described above. Therefore, a motion was made to refine the language of ADM 16-45 above to state that any EB member who had won an election to fill a vacant seat could serve up to 3 more sequential terms (9 years) provided that their first partial term was less than 18 months. Motion passed.

NM3 (Term limits for Committee Chairpersons): I am putting this here, although it did not follow the above two motions chronologically. A motion was made to apply the 9-year term limit to all Committee Chairpersons. (Membership in the committee would still be allowed, just not as Chairperson.) Motion failed.

ADM 16-60: “The Delegates request that alternative locations be selected after our contractual obligations with the Gaylord Opryland have been exhausted.” This motion highlighted the dissatisfaction of some parties for holding the National Scholastic tournaments in the same place every year. It was noted by the makers that Nashville has a small market airport and flights there can be more costly. This motion was referred to the US Chess office for further study, while noting that current contracts run through 2021.

NM2: (Creation of a “Tournament of Senior State Champions”): This motion requests that US Chess create a tournament for players aged 50 or above, to be played during the US Open (concurrent with the Barber, Denker & Girls Championship events) beginning in 2017. Each state affiliate would be allowed to send one representative to compete. Motion was referred to EB & US Open committee for study with power to enact.

NM6: A motion was made to include a “Senior Championship” to the list of events recommended for state affiliates. Motion referred to EB for study.

NM9: A motion was made to increase the number of delegates per state to a minimum of two, with the caveat that at least one of them has to be less than 40 years of age.

This is an attempt to force US Chess to involve younger members in decision making. Motion was referred to States and By-laws committees for study.

NM10: A motion was made to allow those who have never been USCF (US Chess) members to play in one tournament without having to become a member first. It was noted that this is consistent with the stated goal of "growing the game." Motion was referred to US Chess office for study.

(end)