

Final Report of the Task Force on Youth

November 1, 2009

[Note: The Task Force on Youth was established at a September 5, 2009 meeting held in conjunction with the 2009 Illinois Open. All attendees had been involved in youth chess for many years, and most had served, either presently or in the past, as presidents, officers or board members of ICA and/or CoChess. This final report was presented by its chair, Michael Zacate, at the annual meeting of the ICA on November 1st.]

The Ad Hoc group referred to as the Task Force on Youth established by ICA President Tom Sprandel for the purpose of making recommendations for improvement to scholastic chess in Illinois to the ICA Officers for action submits the following proposals, suggestions and motions:

A) In as much as many scholastic programs tend to be insular, the ICA needs to be assertive in communicating and getting cooperation. The ICA needs to seek out existing scholastic programs and obtain contact information in order to develop an e-mail list with which to communicate relevant information. Use advertising techniques at scholastic events to increase awareness of the ICA website. Encourage use of the ICA website by scholastic players and organizers by having specialized sections with scholastics in mind; e.g., scholastic calendar, resources to aid beginning organizations and instructional materials like an online guidebook. Compile e-mail lists to be made available to interested parties under procedures established by the ICA officers; e.g., organizers, tournament directors, players (or parents) in K-8, players in 9-12 and chess resources.

B) ICA officers communicate to organizers and tournament directors of K-12 events the expectation that through either a first round meeting, or postings at the tournament, that information on rankings, ratings, pairings, tie-breaks, and general tournament procedures be provided to parents and coaches in attendance. To facilitate this goal, the ICA officers oversee the development of recommended wording for signage to be made available for download via the ICA website and by a presentation outline for use at coach/parent meetings.

C) In order to introduce competitive chess to the greatest number of students from all backgrounds, the ICA encourages organizers of scholastic events to use the following guidelines:

1) Include a non-USCF section with USCF rated events. Entry fees for such a section is suggested as \$10 or less per player with a per school cap not to exceed \$100. Emphasis to be placed upon participation and improvement in non-USCF sections with awards limited in number and size.

2) Sites be used that are free or low cost to organizers as a means of keeping entry fees low. Such venues as schools, park districts, clubs, or hotels providing reduction by sleeping room offsets offer good possibilities.

3) Size of awards be limited according to category (place, team, class, other). The prestige of an event should speak for the award rather than the height of a trophy. Large numbers and size of trophies can significantly increase entry fees without benefiting the vast number of participants.

(Such awards might be thought of as being similar to tournaments with very high entry fees with large prize funds in which the many provide the few with rewards.)

4) Every scholastic event is encouraged to have an after report disclosing minimal financial information that might include cost of venue, awards, and total tournament income less total tournament expenses.

5) With non-print delivery available and increasingly common, the current level of membership is unnecessarily high. Non-print membership in the ICA should be significantly reduced for scholastic players. ICA officers are encouraged to use their influence and delegate votes to advocate for lower USCF membership rates. The ICA officers are also encouraged to advocate for higher scholastic rating fees to provide revenue offset to the USCF. The high rating fee can be thought of as analogous to a user fee as opposed to the sort of tax that a high USCF membership resembles.

D) The ICA establish a permanent committee (similar to the USCF Scholastic Council) the purpose of which is to open communication channels among scholastic organizers, develop programs to encourage the growth of scholastic chess (USCF and non-USCF) and to oversee scholastic endowment funds.

The chairperson of the committee to be an elective officer of the ICA (yes, it requires amending the Constitution). The council able to form such advisory sub-committees for such purposes as the council deems useful composed of council or non-council members that have scholastic interests.

E) Establish scholastic endowment fund(s). Funds of the endowment to be used for such purposes as: ICA Warren Program, supporting player participation in major events such as the Denker, starting school programs with equipment, matching funds for instructors in schools. Funds for the endowment(s) to come from: a portion of each scholastic ICA membership, scholastic organizers encouraged to contribute a small sum (such as a quarter) for each tournament participant. In addition, utilize the 501(c3) status of the ICA to solicit funds from within and without the chess community from individuals, organizations, and corporations for specific programs. To ensure the growth of the endowment, expenses from the funds are limited each year to a percentage of the fund plus interest earned.

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