

# Southern California Chess Federation

Minutes from Zoom meeting

May 11, 2025

## In Attendance

**President:** Ala'a-Addin Moussa

**Vice President:** Melik Khachiyan

**Membership Secretary:** Randy Hough

**Secretary:** -

**Treasurer:** Frank Lee

**Other Board Members:** Dedian Guo, James Harrell, Angela Liu, Jim Mennella, Chris Roberts, John Wright

**Non-Board members:** Arcie Pragale

## Board Members Not In Attendance

Linus Eisenberg

Chuck Ensey

## Agenda & Minutes

- The Zoom meeting was called to order by President Moussa with a quorum at 7:05 PM.
- President Moussa moved for the agenda to be approved. Harrell seconded. Ayes 10, Nays 0. Agenda unanimously approved.
- President Moussa moved for the April minutes to be approved. Hough seconded. Ayes 10, Nays 0. April minutes unanimously approved.

Chris Roberts agreed to take minutes in the absence of Secretary Ensey who is in Europe.

## Membership Secretary Change

President Moussa gave some history of this Office noting it had been held by Jim Mannella and more recently by Randy Hough. He noted the function has become ever more technical with the advent of e-Voting, email blasts to members via MailChimp, the need to maintain accurate mailing address information for *Rank & File* mailings, and the need to closely track SCCF membership status on tournament advance entry lists. Because of this, President Moussa believes it's appropriate to make the online membership database created last year by Chris Roberts, for e-voting, the official database record.

President Moussa moved: Effectively immediately, Chris Roberts will take on the position of Membership Secretary. John Wright seconded. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Chris Roberts abstained. Motion approved.

Chris expressed his gratitude for the decades of work and dedication Randy has put into the care, feeding, and maintenance of this critical SCCF resource. And, Chris expressed his hope that Randy would continue to help maintain the online database since Randy has extensive and valuable knowledge of the SCCF members.

President Moussa stated the goal was to get membership levels back to pre-Covid levels, i.e. about 1,000 members.

### **Financial Report**

- Frank Lee reported the following account balances - B of A checking: \$100.04, Chase checking: \$11,430.10, Chase Savings: \$100.00, and a PayPal balance of \$35,890.00 for a total of \$47,520.14. The PayPal balance is mostly entries for the upcoming Memorial Day Classic and donations for the SoCal State Championship, so the large balance is temporary.
- Notable transactions this month were several large donations for the SoCal State Championship.
- Arcie Pragale presented a Balance Sheet that might be needed if SCCF incorporates and becomes a 501(c)(3). He offered to help the Board since he is a CPA.
- Randy Hough reported he has not yet closed the BofA checking account.
- Randy Hough reported he had \$325 in deposits for the Treasurer.

### **Incorporation & 501(c)(3) status**

- John Wright explained 501(c)(3)s, their pros and cons, and the steps to achieve such a status. The first step would be for the entity to become a corporation – currently SCCF is an unincorporated non-profit. Incorporating provides useful liability protection for Board members. Another consideration is that corporations can be either Public Benefit or Mutual Benefit entities.
- If SCCF incorporates, then it's current By-Laws and Constitution will need to be folded into, and replaced by, Articles of Incorporation.
- If SCCF incorporates, there are more exacting financial reporting requirements.
- Randy noted that Summer Dylan recently setup a 501(c)(3) and may be able to advise SCCF. President Moussa mentioned that Dewain Barber setup a 501(c)(3) for Chess Prodigies, but Summer Dylan informed SCCF that the organization will not contribute scholarships to SuperStates due to ongoing audits of their status.
- After a brief discussion, President Moussa asked for a vote on how Board members felt generally about incorporating. Jim Mannella stated he liked the idea of having liability protection for Board members. Chris Roberts agreed.

President Moussa moved: The Board agrees that it is a good idea to incorporate to provide liability protection for Board members. (((TBD))) seconded. Ayes 10, Nays 0. Motion approved.

### **Membership Report**

- Chris Roberts reported on the membership: 261 Regular, 430 Juniors, 19 Life and 6 Complementary memberships for a total of 716.
- We are getting an influx of members from the Memorial Day Classic and Pacific Southwest Open tournaments that require SCCF membership for all SoCal residents.
- Memberships continue to expire especially near large weekend tournaments. We continue to send out monthly Mailchimp email blasts to recently expired (90 days) members to encourage them to join/renew.
- Chris Roberts reported that advance entry “punchlists” that show SCCF membership status for entrants continue to be an effective tool in boosting SCCF membership levels.
- Dedian Guo said autorenewals can be helpful in keeping membership levels up. John Wright is using autorenewals with Stripe at SGVCC. Chris Roberts agreed to look at what it would take to add this capability to SCCF’s join/renew webpage.

### **Rank and File**

- Still need several candidate statements for incumbents: Melik Khachiyani will send soon, Dedian Guo will send tomorrow, and Angela Liu will reach out to Linus Eisenberg for his candidate statement. There are two non-incumbents who have submitted candidate statements. President Moussa encouraged Arcie Pragale to run for the Board. Arcie said he preferred to help from the outside for the time being.
- Julian Colville just submitted his article on the Western Class.
- Outstanding still is an article from Isaac Wang on his achieving his second IM norm.
- Angela Liu stated she is looking into an LA Elementary School outreach program that would be a branch of SCCF. Details forthcoming. Funds may be needed. Melik Khachiyani suggested including schools in the Glendale area.

### **Upcoming Tournaments**

Melik Khachiyani reported he is contemplating running norm tournaments at Shadow Hill in Tujunga where one of his students will own a brand-new building.

### **SoCal Invitational State Championship**

- President Moussa is very pleased with the donations of almost \$11,000 so far.

- Preparations for the event are coming along nicely.

### **The Memorial Day Classic (MDC)**

- Preparations for this year's MDC are coming along nicely. There are about 150 advance entries this year compared to 198 and 213 in 2024 and 2023, respectively.
- Randy Hough wants to do a MailChimp email blast to players who live near the MDC venue because it is the only major tournament in that area this year.
- Randy Hough plans to reach out to scholastic coaches since advanced entries in scholastic section is very low.
- Dedian Guo said he would send out an email encouraging players to sign up for the MDC.
- President Moussa asked if the MDC needed anything. Scoresheets according to Randy Hough. A quick estimate of 1,000 scoresheets was estimated after noting that 240 players x 6 games each would be 1,440 scoresheets. But, many players have their own scorebooks.
- President Moussa agreed to procure 1,000 scoresheets at the US Chess online store.
- Randy confirmed that FIDE rules require scoresheets with a duplicate sheet.
- Liability insurance was discussed again and the Board agreed that the MDC should obtain such insurance.

**US Open in LA area** (Dewain Barber) Table until next meeting.

### **Roundtable**

#### **US Chess Executive Board (EB) candidate request**

Jim Mennella reported he received a request from US Chess EB candidate Alan Canter. Canter requests the SCCF Board to make a formal declaration that endorses him in the upcoming EB election. The Board briefly discussed the request. Randy Hough noted the Board has never endorsed an EB candidate. Several felt the Board should continue to remain neutral.

Jim Mannella moved: The SCCF Board authorizes Jim Mannella to notify Alan Canter that the Board is not endorsing any candidates in the US Chess Executive Board election. President Moussa seconded. Ayes 10, Nays 0. Motion unanimously approved.

### **Next Meeting & Adjournment**

- The next meeting was set for Sunday June 8 at 7 PM via Zoom.
- The current meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM. Thanks to all for attending.

