

Sleety and Slick in St. Louis!
Report from District Director Margot Hennings
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The weather was not as cooperative as it might have been during the Spring NABC in St. Louis—hence “sleety” in the title—but that did not deter players from having a “slick” time in some of the best playing space we have enjoyed in quite a while. Tables were placed spaciously in well-lit ballrooms and the convention center and both playing sites were easily accessible from the host hotels. The pre-tournament estimate of 9600 tables was exceeded and table count would have been even higher without the final weekend’s snow. The major flaw—and it WAS major—was the inability of the BridgePad electronic scoring device servers to work well with the hotel’s limited WIFI capability. Also, the “technology poltergeists” (to use the term coined by the Daily Bulletin) ran rampant throughout the two-day National Mixed Pairs causing a great deal of both director and player frustration.

Congratulations:

Yet again, D6 players did well at the St. Louis Spring NABC, with the most notable accomplishment among us belonging to Mike Cappelletti when he and partner Dick Wieland (formerly of the DC area and now a Connecticut resident), bested 315 other pairs for the win in the Silver Ribbon Pairs. Peter Lesnick was 9th overall in this same event. Kudos to Greg Humphreys, who was 3rd in the Rockwell Mixed Pairs, followed closely by Sylvia Shi and Alex Prairie who were 5th, and Alan and Annie Schwartz who were 12th. Alan Sontag was 8th in the Jacoby Swiss Teams, while Beth Palmer was 2nd in the concurrent Machlin Women’s Swiss. Other high-level overalls in NABC and NABC+ events included Jim Gaarder and Jimmy Ritzenberg: 6th in the North American Pairs (NAP) Flight B; Mike Gill and Noble Shore: 11th in the NAP Flight A; Beth Palmer and Shawn Stringer: 14th in the Whitehead Women’s Pairs; and Brad Theurer and Barry Bragin: 14th in the Lebhar IMP Pairs. Other players too numerous to mention here placed in the mid-low overalls of many other national events, so it was a fine showing “overall” by D6!

Special Awards

In my previous report from San Francisco, I congratulated **Joe Olivier** from Chesapeake, VA (Unit 146) for being selected as the **2013 ACBL Goodwill Member of the Year** and noted that **Millard Nachtwey** was one of two co-recipients (together with Audrey Grant) of **this year’s national ACBL Honorary Member of the Year award**. All of these award recipients were honored at the Goodwill Reception in St. Louis, with Joe’s bridge-playing Dad making the trip all the way from California to see his son receive one of ACBL’s highest awards. This proves yet again how notable our District is in its volunteer efforts—you all should be very proud of these awardees.

Administrivia

All new rules and regulations are effective as of January 1, 2014 unless otherwise noted. Not all motions passed by the BOD are discussed, only those likely to be of interest to or directly affect you. For those of you who use the Codification to research topics, the Governance Committee is almost finished in its extensive review of this document to eliminate outdated items. I hope you

will be able to see the difference and be confident that the information you find is accurate and current, something that has been a problem in the past.

New NABC Events

The St. Louis NABC saw the debut of what I hope will be just one of several new “10K” events to be added to the schedules of our three NABCs. In St. Louis, the 81-table, two-day Swiss for players with fewer than 10,000 MP was a hit among those who played in it. The reaction to the survey about that 10K event was very positive, and a committee established to review all three of the NABC schedules will work to suggest time slots where events for under-10K players would be attractive. The most obvious is a “10K Vandy” in the Spring against “the” Vanderbilt, one of the last major events not to already have had limited “mini” and “micro” events carved out under it as have the Spingold, the LM Pairs, and the Blue Ribbon Pairs, just to name a few. Discussion about more 10K events (a 10K Mixed Swiss and a 10K Pairs in the Summer) will continue at the Atlanta Summer BOD meetings. As always, if you have suggestions or comments about anything I write about, please be sure to let me know at margot10bridge@cox.net.

ACBL Membership Requirements

One of the more controversial items on the Spring agenda that had been carried over from the Fall 2012 meeting in San Francisco, was management’s proposal that one must be an ACBL member before participating in an ACBL tournament at any level—sectional, regional, or national. Although the benefits of being a membership organization are many, it seemed to a number of us that sectionals at a minimum and even regionals should be excluded from the membership requirement. I am most familiar with what is happening in Northern VA, of course, but am sure that many throughout D6 would agree with me that the active “push” we have towards encouraging school bridge players and seniors in retirement homes would not want to encounter a set-back just because we all of a sudden require everyone to ante up for an ACBL membership before they play in a local tournament.

The final motion that passed in St. Louis was to require ACBL membership at NABCs prior to participation in NABC or NABC+ events, which is perfectly reasonable. Any non-members who play in any other events at NABCs and who have more than 20 masterpoints must pay \$4 per player per session, which also seems reasonable. Further, except for charity events, STaCs or events limited to players with no more than 20 masterpoints, sponsoring organizations are required to charge an extra \$4 per player per session at a regional and \$3 per player per session at a sectional if a player is a non-dues-paying member of the ACBL. This fee is to be retained by the sponsoring organization and need not be remitted to the ACBL—this latter part seemed strange to many of us, but that is what we passed. The hope is that this increase in the mandatory fee will encourage those who play frequently in ACBL-sponsored events but who are not members, to join for the bargain Junior (under age 26) fee of \$15 or for the first-year fee of \$28 for those over 26.

Masterpoint Policy for Online Bridge

The motion requiring that the ACBL create a dual system where face-to-face masterpoints are kept totally separate from on-line points was soundly defeated. The reasoning of those of us who voted against this motion was that online and non-online masterpoints are currently already calculated separately, and ACBL already had plans to publish separate lists in the ACBL

Bulletin. For purposes of achievement level, however (e.g., Life Master, Gold Life Master, Grand Life Master), online points will count in the totals required to achieve each rank as long as the requirements for pigmented points (recently raised) are met.

Raise in Age to Play in ACBL Senior Events

After considerable discussion and in large part due to the age requirement to play in world senior events, the BOD raised the minimum age for ACBL sanctioned Senior events from 55 to 60 years of age. However, in fairness to those who have played in these events in the past who are between 55 and 60 now, those eligible under present rules on December 31, 2013, will remain eligible in subsequent years. So, if you have played in Senior events before, you may continue to do so. Unfortunately, if you are not 55 by the last day of this coming December, you must wait until you are 60 to play in your first ACBL Senior event.

ACBL Alert Chart:

The following bids are no longer alertable: 1) A weak jump shift by advancer where “advancer” is defined as the partner of an overcaller; and 2) All 2D responses to a strong 2C opening.

ACBL Convention Chart

The ACBL Mid-Chart is amended to add four additional numbered paragraphs: Opening weak 2D or 2H opening bid showing at least 5-4 in the majors, if the five-card suit is known and if the 5-card suit is unknown, opening weak 2H bid showing 5-5 (or more) in hearts and any other suit, and opening weak 2S bid showing 5-5 (or more) in spades and a minor. In addition, the ACBL Superchart, #5 under Disallowed Bids, is amended to read, “Opening one bids which by partnership agreement could show fewer than 8 HCP *in first and second seat* (Not applicable to a psych).”

Playing Directors in STaCs

A motion that passed last fall in San Francisco that made playing directors in STaC games and their partners ineligible to receive overall STaC masterpoint (silver point) awards, but still eligible to receive section awards, was modified in St. Louis. The modification now allows this restriction to be waived at sponsor option as long as the intent to waive the restriction is noted on the sanction application when it is submitted to ACBL Headquarters.

ACBL General Conditions of Contest

For those who play behind screens in top-level events, a vugraph operator is now allowed under the ACBL General Conditions of Contest to point out an incorrectly scored result to the players or director where the situation does not apply to a revoke, claim, or concession.

Put this in a separate box at the end of this article:

Looking Forward to the Youth NABC and the World Youth Open Championships

I urge all players under the age of 26 to consider traveling to Atlanta from August 3-11, 2013 to play in what may well be a once-in-a-lifetime event for you—the World Youth Bridge Open Championships (WYBOC). This event follows immediately on the heels of the annual Youth NABC (YNABC) sponsored by the ACBL. Both of these Youth events are concurrent with the Summer NABC in Atlanta. The ACBL, District 7 (home district to the state of Georgia), the Mid-Atlantic Bridge Conference (MABC), and the United States Bridge Federation (USBF), as well as a number of anonymous private donors, are all generous sponsors of the WYBOC. In

addition to reduced entry fees and potential housing subsidies, almost all meals will be entirely subsidized and terrific after-game entertainment (bridge will be finished shortly after 6 p.m. each day) offered, including a Hospitality Room with DJ and snacks, and trips to Coke World, Olympic Park, and an Atlanta Braves baseball game. If you are interested, please go to www.worldbridge.org and look for the World Youth Open Championships link in the right-hand column of the home page. If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to ask me! (See email address above.)