

September 2002

Report of ACBL Board of Directors Meetings

Washington, D. C. NABC, July 2002

This is a first. The shortened version of my report, which appears in the District 6 supplement, is out and in print before my long version to officials, interested parties and the MABC website. There just wasn't enough time between "our" tournament and leaving for Montreal, site of the World Championships. At least I can add some information on Montreal.

Funny what a difference a few weeks and another major tournament can make in your perspective. Years of planning, fund raising, meetings, negotiations, preparations, and more for the 2002 summer NABC here in Washington, D.C. came to fruition and then all of a sudden it was over. Now it seems like a really long time ago. At least this time I wasn't the Tournament Chairman, having passed those duties on to Margot Hennings, who did an exceptional job. It was far easier to help take care of just one area, the Workers Suite, than the whole thing.

The major disappointment was in the attendance -- just 14,650 tables. We have all the right ingredients -- great single-site facility, abundance of restaurants (many in walking distance), wonderful entertainment, numerous outstanding tourist attractions, and dedicated, knowledgeable, hard-working volunteers. The players had a wonderful time. I haven't found anyone who heard any complaints. I couldn't believe that we wouldn't do better than Toronto did last summer. How wrong I was. I didn't factor in the closeness to the World championships in Montreal or the stock market situation. Even then our table count numbers are better than any tournament in the last eight years except Toronto and Las Vegas. I remember feeling crushed in 1984 (15,228 tables) that we couldn't reach the attendance number set in 1973 (16,043). I just thought that I would try to do better next time, 1993, which did break our records and exceed expectations with 18,270 tables.

The Goodwill Committee honors a deserving local member or several at most NABCs and this was no exception. Charlie and Jeanne Stenger were so honored. Unfortunately Jeanne had a heart attack at the beginning of the tournament and could not be there, but Charlie was there. (Jeanne did recover from this attack and just after the tournament was doing well enough that they were about to send her home. But then she had a second attack and was gone.) Edith McMullin was honored and I inducted her daughter Charity Sack into the Goodwill Committee as a special replacement for Marge Wilson. (Edith and Charity were each surprised because Edith came to honor Charity and Charity came to honor Edith.) Margot Hennings was also honored. Goodwill Chairman, Aileen Osofsky, spoke about Jim Wood, who could not be there because of ill health.

Now as to the Board meetings, the most significant item we passed that will affect all members was abolishing appeals committees. Management is to develop and implement procedures to give the director-in-charge of a tournament the responsibility for making final adjudication of appeals of directors' rulings at that tournament. The effective date is not until January 1, 2004, so maybe some sensible modifications will happen, but I don't hold out a lot of hope. The committee had voted to defer until a special committee could be appointed to study the situation and make recommendations (perhaps a compromise between the two opposing viewpoints). I thought this was the way to go, especially since the motion as written extends to Regionals and Sectionals, not just NABCs. We, the Board, should not make major decisions without thoroughly considering all alternatives. We often have to reverse ourselves and may this time since the Board of Governors voted to send it back to the Board of Directors for reconsideration (one of their few "powers"). We have to reconsider this motion but we don't have to change it.

In my last report I mentioned that the Board (after considerable discussion) voted to hold their Fall meetings in Memphis instead of prior to the NABC in Phoenix. This time with even more hassle, challenges to the Chair's rulings, and motions to reconsider on two different days, all of a sudden we are going to Phoenix after all. The

meetings will begin earlier than usual and finish by noon on Tuesday so that those who want to be home on Thanksgiving will have time to do so.

We upped the ante at NABCs for those who are not members or haven't paid their service fees in the case of Life Masters. Effective January 1, 2003, entry fees for those folks will be \$2.00 per player per session higher than paid-up members. Charity events and events limited to players with fewer than 20 masterpoints are exempt. Signage will post this as a discount to members. And when an NABC is held in Canada the additional fees will be \$2.00 Canadian.

The size of the *Bridge Bulletin* will be determined by Management. They brought a prototype of the new style and it looks great. Plans are to change over to the new size in January. No, it won't fit in the purse anymore (I never did that anyway), but it has a lot more information, including a page that shows the masterpoints won (replacing the masterpoint card). The only real downside, at least as far as the District and Mid-Atlantic are concerned, is that *The Bulletin* will no longer include any supplemental publications. This means more work and more expense, especially since we will have to bear the full cost of postage. We have been planning for this changeover for several months now and I believe as a result we are going to have a very good District 6 publication.

A Unit not running at least two 99er Sectional tournaments per year is encouraged to grant approval to any club within its jurisdiction that applies for a sanction to run such a tournament. Sanction notification/application per existing regulations will be forwarded to the District's tournament coordinator for his or her approval. We are hoping that Units that have personal prejudices against certain clubs/club managers will set them aside for the good of promoting bridge and encouraging our new players. Also, with Management approval, a sponsoring organization may run a limited sectional with a maximum of 299 masterpoints using local directors.

We had a motion to adjust the alert procedure that was just put in place. It had to do with not announcing no trumps if the range was between 15-18. This was rejected. Most felt it had not been in effect long enough to give it a proper test. It really is not a problem. No one is calling the director to "get" something if players forget. Once players get used to it, they won't even think about it.

The Masterpoint Committee gave their report along with a motion for proposed changes in masterpoints. These changes were approved effective January 1, 2003, subject to a second reading at the Fall 2002 Board meeting. They are:

Reisinger

Spingold/Vanderbilt

<u>Rank</u>	<u>MPs</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>MPs</u>
1	200.00	1	250.00
2	150.00	2	180.00
3	112.50	3-4	125.00
4	92.31	5-8	80.00
5	85.72	9-16	50.00
6	80.00	17-32	25.00
7.	75.00		
8	70.59		
9	66.67		
10	63.16		
11	60.00		
12	57.15		
13	54.54		
14	52.18		

Awards for NABC events when the field size is below a minimum threshold is reduced as follows:

Senior and Womens KO

32 or more teams (full award) 140

24-31 teams 120

16-23 teams 100

15 or fewer 80

Four Session Swiss and BAM Events

32 or more teams Full award

16 -32 teams 75% of full award

Fewer than 16 teams 50% of full award

Pair Games

48 or more tables Full award

24 - 48 tables 75% of full award

Fewer than 24 tables 50% of full award

Section awards will be increased by 10% when there is separate Flight A events or when there is one cut in the field. If there is a second cut the increase will be 20%. Any KO bracket is increased by 10% when the average of all players in the bracket exceeds 7500 MPs. There will be some decrease in the middle brackets of large Kos.

Section awards are modified as follows:

1. Flight A section awards are increased by 10% for separate Flight A events.
2. When there is one cut in the qualifying field, section awards are increased by 10% and when there is a second cut, by 20%.
3. When multiple sections are combined for scoring purposes, a less steep award scale (to be determined) will be used to increase section awards.

For all Club/Internet games with 30 or more tables, awards for positions lower than first will be determined using the scale for overall awards for 4 session events.

For Continent-Wide Charity games, International Fund games and District-Wide Charity games, overall and district awards will be determined as follows (official hand records must be used):

Overall: First Place: 20 points Depth of awards: 10 places

District: First Place: 10 points Depth of awards: 5 places

Winners will receive the greater of the nationwide and the district awards, in addition to masterpoints won at the game itself.

The formula for KO's is modified:

1. Top Bracket Only: # in bracket + $\frac{1}{2}$ x (# in lower brackets up to 16 teams)
+ $\frac{1}{3}$ x (number after first 16 up to 50 teams)
+ $\frac{1}{5}$ x (remaining teams)

Brackets Below Top: # in bracket +1/3 x (number up to first 50 but decrementing for brackets already counted) + 1/5 x (remaining teams).

2. When 300 points is reached (average of top team in bracket), the number of tables in lower brackets derived from the above formula is reduced by 50%. When the top team average becomes lower than 100 points, there is no credit for tables in lower brackets.
3. The winning team in a bracket cannot receive more than 90% of the award for the bracket immediately above.
4. Provided there are at least 18 teams (the minimum required for two brackets), the minimum award for the top bracket will be equal to the award for a 16 table bracket (19.93 masterpoints).
5. The MP awards for any KO bracket where the average of all players in the bracket exceeds 7500 MP's is increased by 10%.

Management was planning to reinstate the collegiate championships but ran into a big objection from a majority of Board members. As our CEO put it, "how can you have a high school bridge program and not have something for them in college?" At any rate the Education Foundation came through not only with funds for the program but one of the members, who has a foundation (Bridge and Other Games), has volunteered to administer the program through his foundation.

Even more important is that the Educational Foundation has given Bridge at Schools a further grant which will carry them to the end of the year. In the meantime we are working on other grants and fund-raising projects. We are currently running a raffle with the prize of a vacation home for one week in Puerto Vallarta plus round-trip air fare for two. The times will be at the winner's convenience and could include the week of the Regional in October. The tickets are \$10 for one and \$15 for two. The drawing will be at the Wilmington, Delaware Regional September 29. If you don't have a ticket yet, please e-mail me woodthere@erols.com if you would like to purchase one. Funds aside, Bridge At Schools is going great. We have several pilot schools signed up for this Fall with curriculum to go with the program. It is my belief that this program could save bridge for future generations.

The Coffin trophy for the Women's Board-a-Match team game will be replaced with the Marsha May Sternberg memorial trophy effective with the Fall 2002 NABC. In honoring his wife, Dr. Jim Sternberg followed all the regulations the Board of Directors set up a few years ago which included a contribution of \$50,000. This money is to be put in a trust account administered by the ACBL. These funds would pay for replicas of the trophy which would be given to the winners each year and after 20 years all remaining funds would revert to the ACBL general fund. You wouldn't think there would be controversy over this, but there was. Some did not want to approve the trophy because they wanted the money to be put in the general fund. At last we sorted it out and approved the trophy and made a separate motion to accept the \$50,000 given for trophies into ACBL general funds with the obligation that the ACBL provide replica trophies for the subsequent 20 years.

About two years ago under the guise of cost savings, we stopped paying for the Board of Directors plus the staff at the Volunteers' dinner at each NABC. Many of the Board members do not like having to dress up and there is always the risk of having to eat rubber chicken. A few of us have been attending at our own expense (I haven't missed any) and we all feel that our attendance is appreciated by the volunteers. After all, the main purpose of this dinner is to honor the volunteers and say thank you for their efforts and hard work. At any rate three of us who always attend put in a motion to go back to the old ways and pay for the dinner for any Board of Directors' members, with attendance not required.

The Hall of Fame procedures have been revised. The new combined committee will be: Michael Becker, Chairman, Bill Passell, Cecil Cook, Jo Morse, Mike Passell, Eric Kokish, Jill Meyers, Roy Green, and Jan Martel. Also, the pool of voters has been reduced because one of the voting categories, Diamond Life Master (5,000 points), has been changed to those with 10,000 points. We further honored Hall of Fame members by designating them as ACBL Life Members who are not required to pay a basic service fee or membership dues.

ACBL will survey its membership during the next year regarding the scheduled dates for the Fall NABC. There are basically three choices all revolving around Thanksgiving: hold it ending the Sunday before, hold it during as has been the custom, or begin Thanksgiving evening.

The Mid-chart is amended to permit: a transfer opening bid at the two-level or higher showing a weak bid in the suit being transferred to or a type or types of a strong hand.

Florida asked for an additional permanent site Regional (they actually have seven per year at the current time). My committee had recommended sending this request to the regional allocation committee, but the Florida representative didn't want to wait, so the request was turned down altogether.

Now on to Montreal and the WBF. As many of you know I had to leave Montreal about five days early because my mother-in-law passed away (she was a great lady who lived to be 96). Consequently, I was not there for the excitement/problem/scandal when Disa refused to take the drug test which by regulation is an automatic failure. What happened was actually worse than taking the test and failing (results aren't known for weeks). In addition to not getting her medal, she was not allowed to appear with her team and the press covering the event published the story. It even made *Sports Illustrated*. I wonder if anyone talked to her ahead of time about all of the ramifications of refusing to take the test.

Another disappointment was at the end of the tournament when we received news that the IOC Olympic Program Commission decided that mind sports are ineligible for Olympic programs. Furthermore there will be no recommendation to change the requirement that winter Olympic Games must be played on snow or ice. While this certainly is a major setback, it doesn't mean we should give up our goal of being an Olympic event. It will take more work and more time. Who knows. The IOC may go ahead with having a third Olympics for indoor sports and we would most probably be in.

I should go back to the beginning of the tournament which began on a positive note. Bill Gates played in the Mixed Pairs, held the first three days, which got us a lot of good publicity. He agreed to hold a press conference on bridge and reporters and TV cameras filled the room. I don't know how much of this got back to the U. S., but it was certainly all over Canada.

As for future WBF tournaments, nothing is decided yet. There is some type of tournament every year and for the Bermuda Bowl/Venice Cup **next year** the only thing that has been decided is that we are not going to Bali or any Moslem country. We certainly don't want to be left "holding" the bag again should something occur like the U.S. declaring war on Iraq. Right now the leading candidates are CanCun, Mexico and Poland. The decision will be made as to where we can get the most funding which will probably be Poland. It is doubtful if Mexico has enough money to put on a tournament. China withdrew its offer to host the World Junior Championships next year, but I recently heard that Thailand has put in an acceptable bid.

Kojak (Bill Schoder) has resigned as WBF Chief Tournament Director and Max Bavin from England was appointed to take his place.

Making any changes is a long slow process, especially in the WBF when we only meet once a year. In fact the pair events are only every four years. After Lille four years ago, I was determined to have proper seeding in the pair events and have spoken to everyone from José Damiani on down. Assurances were given but the first event, Mixed Pairs, was awful. After I pointed out some of the disparities, I got to "do my thing" for the Women's and Open Pairs. There was so much flap about the scoring problems (done the European way instead of the ACBL way) that we were assured it would be changed for the future.

Final point. I hope I am around to help with these changes. I am up for election in Phoenix to retain my position as ACBL representative to the WBF. Of course there is competition. Having already lost one election this year (for ACBL President), I am working on winning this one.