

Report of ACBL Board of Directors Meetings

Chicago NABC, July 2006

Chicago is a very good place to hold an NABC and this time, with a new hotel for us located in a better part of downtown Chicago, it was wonderful. We were close to Marshall Fields and the Miracle Mile, many wonderful, reasonably priced restaurants and a myriad of attractions - museums, theater, boat trips. Our hosts were outstanding providing two nights of entertainment from the Improv Group Second City. They also had singing and dancing ethnic groups performing in the hour before the evening session began, which I enjoyed. Between meetings, reseeding, and other obligations, I rarely get to see any late night entertainment.

Once more most of the time in the meetings was spent on defeating motions (unfortunately a couple passed that I believe shouldn't have), but there were one or two positives. The ACBL is going to purchase D&O insurance from the Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company that will cover all of our Districts and Units. The ACBL is paying for this coverage so it is free to Districts and Units. While this is called Directors & Officers insurance, it covers all committee members and volunteers as well. This is protection against lawsuits and does not cover physical injuries or damages that fall under a General Liability policy. It is a good thing. Many of us believe it should have been provided years ago.

Bridgmate, a wireless scoring system I mentioned in the Dallas report, was used for all events at the World Championships in Verona, Italy this past June, which I attended. This was the first time that most of the Americans there had used Bridgmate and all were very positive about its use and hope that the ACBL will soon follow suit. The system needs to be adapted to ACBLscore. Management is working on doing so and will test it at a regional near Memphis. They expect to bring a recommendation to the Board at the meetings in Hawaii.

A recommendation to hold the Spring 2011 NABC in Louisville, Kentucky, at the Galt House Hotel and Suites, March 10-20 was accepted. It is a one-site facility that was recently totally renovated. In addition downtown Louisville has been transformed recently.

The significant proposals that were defeated:

1. Abolishment of Women's events from the NABC+ events. Fortunately, there were only six Board members in favor.
2. Abolishing appeals committees from all events at NABCs. All NABC+ appeals would be heard by tournament director panels in a manner similar to regional appeal hearings at the NABCs. This was a much closer vote with 12 of the 25 Board members voting in favor.
3. Raising the minimum age for senior events to 60. While everyone agrees this would have been appropriate back when the event was created, only eight Board members believed it should be changed now.
4. All ribbon qualifications shall expire five years after being earned. This only had three supporters.

Currently, the first ACBL sanctioned club charity game in a calendar year must be for the benefit of the ACBL Charity Foundation. The second game may be for the benefit of any recognized charity or charity fund. For any subsequent games, at least half or more must be for the ACBL Charity Foundation. There is a proposal, which has been deferred to the Fall meeting, that only the first sanctioned charity game in a calendar year must go to the ACBL Charity Foundation.

Each NABC has a day, not counting the opening Thursday, that is designated as Educational Foundation/International Fund day. A motion was made to eliminate this designation any contributions from the entry fees to these organizations. It was soundly defeated in committee, however, it passed in the full Board meeting. I was on the losing side of this, but the Board of Governors voted to ask the Board of Directors to reconsider this action.

Occasionally, motions sent back by the Board of Governors for reconsideration are accepted. One sent back to us for reconsideration at this meeting was to include the names of the deceased players on the ACBL

web site that lists the all-time top masterpoint holders. The deceased players will be interspersed within the numbered list with a note that this list includes all members whose masterpoints are able to be determined. What this means is that, while ACBL masterpoint listings are non-existent prior to 1987, anyone they know about will be included. Of course, the most famous deceased masterpoint holder is Barry Crane, who was number one at the time of his death in 1985.

New sample bylaws for Units have been approved and will be sent to those Units requesting assistance. All Units are encouraged to review and update their bylaws every few years, especially to ensure that they are in compliance with local State law. The model bylaws has a running commentary along with the sample paragraphs. The Bylaws committee will be working on adapting this model for Districts at their next meeting.

Beginning next year the Senior Knockout Teams at the Fall NABC will start on Friday instead of Sunday. Pre-registration will close at 11:00 a.m. the day of the event and there will be no special rescheduling of the final.

General conditions of contest for knockout teams were changed so that should any head-to-head match end in a tie, a 4-board playoff will be played (two boards in Compact KO events). In three-way matches, the first tie breaker will be Board-a-match scoring and the second will be total points.

Blue Ribbon eligibility will now include first through eighth in the Vanderbilt, Spingold, Women's, or Senior Knockout Teams at NABC Championships and first through 16th when these events run 7 days or longer. Also included will be first through 10th and all ties in all other nationally rated events that have an upper masterpoint limit of more than 1500 masterpoints, and first through 15th and all ties in a nationally rated six session event with no upper masterpoint limit. We passed this primarily so that the foreign players, who only play at NABCs, can qualify.

Registration for the Mini-Spingold will be prior to the evening session on the day preceding the start of the event, just like the main Spingold. A later entry may be accepted, at the discretion of the Director-in-Charge of the event, if it is beneficial for the event.

Committees outside the board were formed in different years and with different rules as to appointments and terms of office. These committees are Hall of Fame, Laws Commission, Disciplinary Committee, Competition and Conventions, and Ethical Oversight. In order to be treated equally, the following regulations were approved for each committee:

1. The President, after consultation with the current Chairman, appoints the members subject to board approval.
2. The committee elects the chairman from among its members.
3. The members will be appointed and confirmed at the spring NABC. The term of office will begin the day following the end of the Spring NABC and will expire on the day following the end of the appropriate subsequent Spring NABC.
4. Vacancies for any reason will be filled by the President at the next meeting of the Board of Directors, subject to board approval. The newly appointed member will serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

A proposal has been made to conduct an educational program for the Board of Directors at the March 2007 Board meeting in St. Louis. The program should last one-half day and be conducted by outside consultants with topics determined by the President and Management. We have had various meetings with outside consultants in the past for one, two or three days. In general they were a waste of time mostly because they were always conducted by someone who knew nothing about bridge or our organization. Personally, I am always willing to try again but certainly have doubts. A decision will be made at the Fall 2006 NABC about whether to hold this meeting.

The Appeals and Charges committee had a case before it that came from a bridge appeal committee. Consequently, we passed clarifying legislation that recourse from a Bridge Appeal Committee Decision in

accordance with The Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge may be allowed only as follows:

1. On a point of law to and at the discretion of the ACBL Laws Commission.
2. On an allegation of bias of a committee member or members. The appellant is required to present evidence that the bias was not known at the time of the hearing.
3. The appeal must be filed within thirty days of the decision of the Bridge Appeals Committee that heard the issue.

Some good news. ACBL Mailing Lists will be provided members of the ACBL Board of Directors, Chairman of the Board of Governors, unit and district board members or officials and club managers free of charge. The listing will be sent as an attachment to an e-mail. Management will set fees to cover costs for any other method (e.g. diskettes, hard copy).

In my Dallas Report, I mentioned a proposal to combine the Charity Foundation and the Educational Foundation into a single Foundation. In Chicago we decided to hold a special session to discuss whether to combine the Foundations.

It seems that some Goodwill committee members occasionally fall from grace so we passed a motion that a Goodwill Committee appointment is a lifetime appointment as long as the member is a "member in good standing." If he loses good standing, the appointment will be suspended until he regains good standing. Expulsion from the ACBL, suspension for one year or longer or probation for two years or longer will result in permanent removal from the Goodwill Committee.

And finally we amended the conditions for the Grand National Teams 2006/2007 and beyond on replacements and substitutions as follows:

1. Replacements and/or substitutions not addressed by the District conditions of contest are resolved as follows: Every team member must play at least half of the boards of each match (exclusive of play-offs) in order to continue participating on that team for the remainder of the event.
2. A team member must play at least 40% of the boards, excluding play-off boards, for as long as the team survived to qualify for overall masterpoint awards and other privileges. No contestant may play any match after it has become mathematically impossible to play at least 40% of the boards (excluding play-off boards) played by the team.
3. An ineligible player is disqualified. The ineligible player's team will be disqualified unless the Director-In-Charge determines that teammates were unaware of the deficiency of the disqualified member. Any team reduced to fewer than three original members due to disqualification of ineligible players is disqualified.
4. Substitutes will be permitted at the discretion of the Director-In-Charge of the NABC. No more than two substitutes at a time will be permitted on a team.
5. A team reduced to three members for cause at the site of the NABC will be permitted a replacement at the discretion of the Director-In-Charge. A replacement for the Finals receives match awards only. In no case is a team permitted to replace more than one player at the site of the NABC.