

August 2007
Report of ACBL Board of Directors Meetings
Nashville NABC, July 2007

There was music everywhere - in the restaurants, hotels, shopping centers and of course in the late-night entertainment room for the tournament. Maybe that is why everyone seemed to be having a good time. Certainly the tournament turned out to be even better than I thought it might. If the hotel attached to the convention center had been larger--to accommodate even half of the attendees--it would have been outstanding.

On the other hand, Opryland, which is big enough to accommodate two NABCs at the same time and was the site of the previous NABC, is too big and too isolated. Players who attended both tournaments were much happier in the downtown location. The local hosts were terrific, well organized and extended southern hospitality to all. The shuttles to all the auxiliary hotels worked better than ACBL shuttles at past tournaments. The biggest problem was having big buses that made the loop to all hotels so if you were staying at the last stop, which happened to be only two blocks way, it took 30 minutes to get back.

The Board meetings were productive and positive. One of the best things we did was authorize management to plan and implement a championship for youth under the age of 19. This is the result of the work that Patty Tucker in Atlanta is doing and as long as she is spearheading the project, I am sure it will be a great success. The first championship is planned for next summer in Atlanta. If all goes well, the next championship in 2009 will be held at the Summer NABC here in Washington, D.C.

Management has been instructed to develop a plan to ban all non-medical electronic devices from the playing rooms, hallways and bathrooms on floors where any events are being played at NABCs. It isn't just the ringing phone that is a problem. It is the silent text messages, with perhaps hand results, that are the bigger problem. The implementation plan will be presented prior the Fall NABC in San Francisco. This could lead to a lot of controversy. No one should have their cell phone or iPod in the playing room during the session; however, many need their phones as soon as the game is over. Having players turn in phones and retrieve them later may be too costly to handle at an NABC.

The masterpoint committee completed its work and presented a number of changes that were given initial approval by the Board. Whenever masterpoints are involved, a second reading of the motion is required. This will be on the agenda in San Francisco and if it passes there (I believe it will), then the changes will be effective January 1, 2008. The major changes are:

1. Overall masterpoints will be awarded to all pairs that qualify for the finals of the six-session Life Master Pairs and the Blue Ribbon Pairs.
2. Match awards for the Vanderbilt/Spingold are increased to 6.00 masterpoints.
3. The maximum allowable overall award at an open club rating point game is increased to 2.50 at 0.10 per table. Overall awards are allowed for all games of 16 or more tables. Section awards will still be limited to 1.50 for an open rating point game.
4. A cap of 6.00 masterpoints will be added to all special fund or foundations games held at clubs.
5. Match awards for Swiss teams will be increased by 20% in Flight A (and X) strataflighted events (.36 to .44 for regionals; .26 to .32 for sectionals). Swiss match awards at club games will also have a small increase.
6. There is a new formula for knockouts based on strength of field rather than the number of tables in the event.
7. A minimum number of masterpoints for first overall in a 4-session bracketed knockout is set at 6.00. The compact knockout minimum is 4.00 points.

8. Brackets of 12-16 teams will be given full awards. Brackets with 9-11 teams will receive 85% of the award and 3 session KOs will receive 70%.

9. Knockout match awards will be increased for the first match and decreased for winning the second match.

10. A number of changes were made in club and Unit games. Super Club championship, District-wide charity game and 49er pairs were eliminated. The Unit-wide championship and Unit extended team games have been replaced with one class of Unit championships and the number of games allowed per year was raised from 16 to 24. The Unit or District charity games have been replaced with one class of fund or foundation games with a maximum of four per year per Unit and four per year per District.

Playoffs for 5-8 in four-session knockouts have been eliminated. In the case of a three-session knockout with exactly 7 or 8 teams within the bracket, a playoff for a clear third overall ranking is permitted. No change was made to the Compact KO consolation.

The masterpoint limits allowable for Flight B in flighted, stratified and strataflighted events have been expanded to include 2750 and 3000.

STAC conditions were amended so that when a District-wide STAC is held all clubs within the district(s) must be offered the opportunity to participate. If a unit outside of the sponsoring district chooses to participate, all clubs within that unit must be invited to participate.

The GNT and NAP conditions of contest were spelled out regarding participation. Each player must be an ACBL member who is not currently on suspension OR who has not otherwise been placed in an ineligible status by an ACBL disciplinary body and whose dues or service fees are current prior to the unit stage.

Seeding for the NABC final of the Grand National Teams, all flights, has been changed. Teams will play a one-day Swiss event to qualify into a seeded knockout bracket. Each Swiss event will be eight 7-board matches. The knockout matches will be 64 boards in length in the championship flight and 56 boards in length in all other flights.

The Educational Foundation has been added as a choice along with the Junior Fund, charity fund or international fund that clubs may choose as a special game. These may be sanctioned any time except February is reserved for the Junior Fund, April is reserved for the charity foundation and September is reserved for the international fund. The masterpoint rating for Educational Foundation games will be the same as the other fund games -- 100% Sectional black points.

We granted an additional regional to Quebec City in April 2008 as part of their 400th year anniversary celebration.

All International fund money raised or collected by ACBL will now be sent on a trimester basis to the USBF. This money is for the sole purpose of subsidizing US athletes that is now the responsibility of the USBF.

A few additions were made to the Code of Disciplinary Regulations:

1. The definition of a member in "good standing" is spelled out.
2. For disciplinary purposes, a month is defined as 30 days regardless of the calendar month during which the sanction is served.
3. A person charged for a violation will be given a copy of the complaint or a summary of the facts of the complaint and the name of the complainant.
4. Clarification of authority over club sponsored games is added. The only club games a unit, district or ACBL have jurisdiction over are those where they are the sanction holder, club manager or club board of directors.

The Board authorized Management to establish procedures and guidelines to suspend or rescind a club game sanction or a club director's accreditation for cause. These procedures will be submitted for approval in San Francisco.

Reinstatement of the Unit membership rebate program has been put on hold again and deferred to the San Francisco meetings. This is the program to reward Units for getting new members.

It is sad to report that the Spring 49er pairs and the Fall non-life master pairs have been deleted from the NABC schedule. The reason of course is the dwindling attendance in these events.

In my St. Louis report, I mentioned that we anticipated closing on the sale of the building in Memphis soon. That deal fell through when the buyer was unable to secure financing. Since then we have received and agreed upon another offer from a buyer with established financing. Closing on the old building should be complete by the end of August and our search for a new office location will be well underway.