

April 2008

Report of ACBL Board of Directors Meetings

Detroit NABC, March 2008

Detroit had everything we look forward to in an NABC site. The facilities were outstanding -- a one-site location with great playing space and first class hotel accommodations. It was part of a large complex which offered eating facilities from fine restaurants to a large food court. There were also many stores and shops including drug stores and small food markets. Even the weather smiled on the tournament. There was snow a day or two at the beginning, but not serious enough to close an airport or schools or even cause any traffic problems.

The local volunteers were more than outstanding. Their planning, organization, pre-tournament work in the areas of publicity and I/N classes and seminars were second to no one. Unfortunately, the table count numbers did not match these efforts except in the I/N area. Personally, I thought the facilities would be enough to overcome any bad images of Detroit or fear of bad weather. Obviously, I was wrong. At least they did better than Birmingham.

The best news is that the Hall of Fame Committee voted to award the Blackwood award to Jerry Machlin. This is the award that goes to someone who has made a significant contribution to bridge but is not necessarily a great player. This award is presented at the annual Hall of Fame dinner held at the summer NABC. We are hoping that since Trudy Machlin is not up to traveling, the presentation can be made at the dinner that will be held here at our NABC next summer.

The Board meetings went well. We did not make a decision on where to move headquarters. Between now and Las Vegas we will be contracting professional help to compare the pros and cons of staying in the Memphis area to moving elsewhere. The question to be answered is, "where will ACBL be better placed ten years from now?" We have a very favorable lease back of our former building, so we have some time to explore possibilities and not make hasty decisions.

We passed a new school program designed to reach out to elementary schools. It is a shortened mini bridge instruction program and will have the same requirements and benefits as the School Bridge program with the following exceptions:

1. no text will be provided;
2. the teachers will receive a subsidy of \$200.00 per class for eight hours of instruction and supervised play;
3. the shortened mini bridge Program will be permitted through the 6th grade only.

Management will advertise and promote this program in *The Bridge Bulletin*, on the ACBL website and in newsletters to teachers. It will begin next school year, September 2008. I hope our District will be able to take advantage of this program.

Management presented their plan for banning all non-medical electronic devices. It is: Electronic devices, excluding health-related equipment, capable of sending or receiving communication, including but not limited to, headphones, earphones, cellular phones and minicomputers:

1. will not be allowed in the playing areas, adjacent hallways, rest rooms or accessible break areas; and
2. will not be used during a session.

These restrictions will apply to all pairs, team members, captains, coaches, recorders and kibitzers and will apply throughout any actual playing session or segment.

A violation of this policy will result in a disciplinary penalty of one full board (12 IMPs at that form of scoring) for the first offense. A second offense will result in disqualification from the event for the pair / team. Kibitzers violating this policy will be removed from the playing area for the remainder of the session. This policy will apply to all NABC events, effective July 1, 2008. At least for now it does not apply to Regional or I/N events. For those who have no convenient hotel room in which to leave their cell phones, I suggest finding a friend playing in a Regional event who can keep it until after the game.

The changes to the Disciplinary Code at this meeting mainly concern banning licensed attorneys from representing anyone in the hearing room. Anyone may be represented by an attorney outside the hearing room. We tried this a few

years ago and then rescinded this requirement. It is my understanding that the reason for this restriction is that attorneys can't help but be attorneys and try to interject legal procedures, motions and other legal technicalities. They treat our hearings as if they were in a courtroom, but, of course, this is not the case. This change will reduce the possibility of consuming a committee's time on frivolous evidentiary matters instead of the issues at hand. This restriction is common in other types of administrative hearings outside the sports world.

Another change to the Disciplinary Code is that the standard of proof for disciplinary committees is changed from "clear and convincing" to "preponderance of the evidence." This is evidence that is more convincing than the evidence opposed to it. If the finding is that the evidence of guilt is more convincing than the evidence opposed to it, then the charged person should be found guilty.

New goals and guidelines for NABCs were adopted. Mostly we just streamlined what was on the books. Of interest are:

1. Financial Goals - Excess revenue should average \$500,000 per year over a period of several years.
2. Location Guidelines - Management and the NABC Advisory Committee will identify:
 - a. approximately 12 top tier locations to host NABCs about every 6 years;
 - b. approximately 12 second tier locations to host NABCs about every 12 years; and
 - c. additional sites for an occasional NABC.

3. Rotation Guidelines

It is desirable that an effort be made to rotate NABCs throughout the three zones. Location has a higher priority than rotation.

4. Rating System

Management, in cooperation with the NABC Advisory Committee, will develop and maintain a rating system for NABC sites and locations consistent with the above goals and guidelines.

5. NABC History

Management will maintain a spread sheet that shows the history of NABCs that includes financial, table count and room pick-up data.

6. Host Hotel

A host hotel is one with which ACBL has established direct contracts for an NABC.

New convention charts have been approved. There are no significant changes in the General Convention Chart, but there are a few in the Mid-Chart. These include:

1. the average masterpoint designator for bracketed KO's has been raised to 1500;
2. all of the items approved for use on the Mid-Chart are now listed;
3. the round length that items on the Mid-Chart may be played is specified. The most significant change is that Multi can now be played only in round lengths of six or more boards (teams). There are also a couple of obscure conventions that are limited to 12 board rounds (KO's).

The new charts will be in effect on July 28, 2008 -- the day after the Las Vegas NABC ends.

The new masterpoint plan went into effect the first of January and all of a sudden there were a lot more masterpoints in the top brackets. The major problem was a programming error which was discovered and "fixed" in February. The new plan figures KO masterpoint awards based on the strength of field instead of how many tables are in play. As the masterpoints per team goes up so does the award. A few teams have so many points that the award would increase out of proportion so a cap per team was established. Unfortunately, the cap got missed in the original programming.

As a follow-up to the incident with the winning Venice Cup team at the awards ceremony, we passed a motion which focused on future behavior. I guess the following motion we passed is watered down enough to be acceptable. "The ACBL, acting as the WBF Zone 2 Authority, expresses its disapproval of all non-bridge related public statements and demonstrations by any Zone 2 federation representative participating in an international bridge competition. The ACBL requests that the federations in the jurisdiction of Zone 2 adopt regulations disallowing such public statements and demonstrations."

The masterpoint committee presented some adjustments to the new plan which were approved. There is a reduction factor in all KO brackets that do not contain a full complement of 16 teams. Any event with 8 or fewer teams will be played as a three-session event. An adjustment was made in the New Formula Table. For computing awards the maximum masterpoints per team is capped at 45,000. The KO reduction factors chart and the new formula table follows.

KO Reduction Factors

# of Teams In Bracket	Reduction Factor
16	1.000
15	0.960
14	0.920
13	0.880
12	0.840
11	0.800
10	0.760
9	0.720
8	0.600
7	0.525
6	0.450
5	0.375

New Formula Table

Bracket Team Average Masterpoints (AVG MP)	Computed Award	Comments
< 500	6.00	
500 - 1000	$6 + 5 (AVG MP - 500) / 500$	
1000 - 5000	$11 + 11 (AVG MP - 1000) / 4000$	Fixed Award = 11 at 1000
5000 - 10000	$22 + 7 (AVG MP - 5000) / 5000$	Fixed Award = 22 at 5000
10000 - 25000	$29 + 19 (AVG MP - 10000) / 15000$	Fixed Award = 29 at 10000
25000 - 40000	$48 + 17 (AVG MP - 25000) / \mathbf{15000}$	Fixed Award = 48 at 25000
40000 +	65.00	

Avg MP Per Team = $4 \times \text{Team Masterpoints} / \# \text{ of Players on Team}$ (Maximum per team = **45,000**)

AVG MP (Bracket) = $\Sigma \text{ Avg MP Per Team} / \text{Number of Teams in Bracket}$

Almost after the fact, we approved Management's plan for StaC charges. The Director fees and a sliding scale of table fees are combined. In general there will be one full-time director at a single location handling all StaCs held during a particular week. The Director service no longer includes having hand records, sending invitations to clubs, units and districts, collecting fees, or answering questions. These services are now up to the Districts or Units.