

ABF TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN SYDNEY 10th FEBRUARY 2013 at 10:00 am at NSWBA

1. PRESENT

Kim Morrison (chair), Bruce Neill, Peter Reynolds, Marcia Scudder, Eric Ramshaw, Peter Kahler. Sean Mullamphy and Laurie Kelso were also in attendance.

Apologies: Matthew McManus

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

List of duties for TO/CTD at ABF events

A paper was tabled by BN outlining a possible sequence of events which would document and appraise these duties. The exact performance indicators should be determined by the MC. The document is appended to these minutes.

Yellow system combined with blind seating – Previously published seating rights to apply to all but the ANC Youth. Then, if a pair playing a yellow system is playing in the session, seating rights are lost, if no pair is playing a yellow system for that session, seating rights are not affected.

Vetting of system cards and defences. LK has taken on this responsibility. His report from the recent Playoffs indicated that in general systems lodged contained an acceptable amount of detail. For those that were not adequate, he communicated with the pair(s) in question, and insisted that an updated version be supplied.

For the Playoffs, if Brown Sticker Conventions are allowed in the Target Event, then systems must include defense to that convention.

The ANC system cards are generally of a lower quality, LK will insist that these submissions be upgraded before the event.

Standard format for ABF events – pending PR

GNOT

The MC has determined that in 2014 the GNOT will be held in Canberra in Nov/Dec. The TC feels that major decisions such as this should have been submitted for TC consideration, prior to acceptance. The TC is strongly of the opinion that moving the GNOT to Canberra will have a serious detrimental effect on participation in the Summer Festival, just a few weeks later. We also feel that Canberra itself will be an unpopular venue. While a move from the current venue in Tweed Heads may be needed, it was felt that a more suitable venue should be sought, perhaps in another regional area where there is access to an airport.

BBO chain of command – LK will liaise with Triain Chira and Ray Ellaway to ensure that a procedure is in place for sourcing suitably trained operators for ABF events.

By advertising the starting times for events, and the half time restart has allowed more flexibility as regards restarting the second stanza within each session.

Mutual Obligation Doc for Australian Representative Teams –

David Stern will do a first draft.

Alerting Regulations and the System Card

LK has been attending Systems Committee meetings at which the revamp of the ABF System Card has been discussed. This will allow the use of an editable pdf (viewing and editing available for free using Acrobat 11), and is therefore considered easier for players to use. NZ is keen to adopt our revamped System Card, with suitable change of Logo etc.

Changes to the alerting regulations were considered in a meeting with NZ. In particular the use of announcements was considered desirable. Both the ACBL and EBU use announcements. At first they would be limited to announcing just the opening NT range and any special meanings of a 1C opening.

Any change adopted would have to be advertised widely in, for example, the ABF Newsletter and other similar publications. As with any change, there would need to be a grace period during which players become familiar with the new rules.

However, no changes will be made until approved by both the ABFMC and the NZMC and a suitable start date determined.

Guideline document for training international teams – PR ongoing.

Coaching of international teams is considered desirable. This requires partnership commitment and application. A suggestion of 4 hrs/week of bidding practice with the coach watching and commenting as appropriate was made. The question of the desirability of a National Coach was raised. This would require a suitable candidate and sufficient funds for them to agree to participate.

Alex Smirnov has been available for the Youth Team.

Howard Melbourne has been coaching the Women's Team.

Appeals Committee training

This should be taken on by the ABF Appeals Sub-committee.

Augmentation of a Playoff Team after entries have closed, but prior to the event

This should be permitted, but only from the pool of players who have at least one PQP in the appropriate category and the pair must submit their system card by the due date and satisfy all rules for the event. The PQPs of the added players would not augment those of the team for the purposes of ranking. **MC seeking clarification**

Archiving of Tournament Result

The format of an event from year to year needs to be preserved by archiving at least portions of the Brochure or Program. This does happen for non-licensed events, but it is necessary to ensure that individual licensed events retain this historical data on their websites. Ideally this would be part of the license agreement. **DM to write to states to ask them to comply.**

Approved Changes Notification

It is apparent that changes approved for implementation are not widely publicised, leading to confusion or ignorance of players. This should be overcome by a readily accessible document on the ABF website, citing the changes, and the date of implementation. This would be similar to that currently in operation for changes to PQP matters.

In particular, there is occasionally a need to make a timely change that addresses an important issue before it has been formally incorporated into the Tournament Regulations.

3. ABF EVENTS

(a) Summer Festival

In the future there must be a change to the timing of the final day of each of the three major teams events to ensure that there is sufficient time before the last round to conduct all appeals that have been notified. This is essential to an accurate draw for the last round. SM to work on adjusted timetable.

Currently LK and MM ensure the validity and accuracy of the Supplementary Regulations for all licensed events. This should be extended to cover the non-licensed events as well. The correction period needs to be clarified, particularly in the event of an appeal, followed by a 4 board playoff, necessitated by a tie.

There was a problem with the seeding of the Seniors' event, which was the result of a simple error. In fact there is no great necessity for seeding to be accurate, as all events run as a single field and are run in Swiss format. Seeding becomes a matter of perceived prestige. In future, it is suggested that the CTD seeds each field, and then sends the list to the TO who might see fit to suggest modifications.

There were also issues raised concerning the state of the playing area on the 15th Floor of Rydges where the Women's and Seniors' Finals were being conducted. There was too much clutter in the room and electrical cables were not taped down to avoid tripping.

There were continual problems with updates of adjusted scores or fouled boards. Apparently these changes had to be applied manually because of software constraints. However, if a rescore was done subsequently (for whatever reason) the adjustments are lost and must be reapplied. Apart from being very time consuming, in such a large event, this procedure leads to frustration and complaints from the players affected. In fact, scrutiny of the latest published results indicates that some of these are still in error, with scores shown not even in numerical order.

Accuracy of scores, both throughout the event, and in their subsequent publication is a performance management issue. Some programming effort is required to ensure that this does not persist in 2014.

There was a very significant scoring problem during the SWPT. It was not possible to access the scoring display site for most of the event. It is imperative that this does not recur. The chief scorer must ensure that there is a backup plan in place in the event of some catastrophic failure of their server.

At some intervals a PDF of the current results was accessible from the ABF website, but this did not occur for each round, despite this being a simple contingency. In general, the Australian (and international) public were very poorly served during an event which is often hailed as Australia's Premier Event.

In future, all ABF events must have a backup plan in place. The 2013 Gold Coast will be running with 2 servers, in order to deal with the ever increasing volume of traffic. SM must aim to ensure no repetition of these issues.

The report of the ABF On-Site Representative, Matthew McManus was tabled.

- Appeals advisers should be available for Appeals occurring after Round 12 of the SWPT.
- Tie break boards (appropriately dealt) should be available if required.
- The drop-in protocol for players from the losing semi-finals of the NWT and NST to the second day of the Swiss Pairs needs to be adjusted. The score at which they dropped in was too high in 2013. A more acceptable level was considered to be that used for the DCOP which is the average of the top 6 scores, but not more than 10 VPs from the leading score. Pairs should only be accepted in two's and they should play each other in the first round of the second day.

The issue of Dead Friday was again considered. It is clear that many players simply departed after the SWPT. The events on offer for that day were not sufficiently appealing for players to remain.

A four board playoff was required in order to break the tie at the conclusion of the qualifying rounds of the Seniors' Teams. It was felt that this should have been conducted more quickly.

Additional Fee for Finals

Correspondence regarding additional entry fee for later stages of an event has been forwarded to MC for consideration.

(b) Seniors' Playoffs

Any appeals committee for the 2013 Seniors' Playoffs may be drawn from KM, David Beauchamp, Michael Prescott, Michael Hughes, Alan Walsh, Peter Fordham or any players who may have been eliminated from the event.

Sean Mullamphy to be recorder.

(c) 2014 Butler Pairs

The MC were not happy with the concept that the Women's Butler would start at a variable time, depending on entry numbers, with all three Butler events to end concurrently.

The following structure is therefore proposed.

The Women's Butler will be a 6 day event, commencing Saturday. In principal this allows 29 rounds of 12 board matches.

For a field > 30: Stage I on Sat/Sun to reduce the field to 20, running in parallel with the Open Stage II.

For 30 pairs: a single RR of 29 rounds.

For 23-29 pairs: a single RR, reducing some days to 4 matches, as necessary.

For 17-22 pairs: a combination of a RR followed by a Swiss event (6-7 rounds)

For 16 pairs: double RR.

The Seniors' Butler will run as a Swiss. If it is necessary to curtail the number of rounds played, then the TO has the option of reducing the entry fee appropriately. This was considered to be in the interest of public relations.

It was not considered viable to introduce a Veterans' Butler, despite the fact that the bridge playing population is aging.

(d) Playoffs

Improvements that can be made to the running of the Playoffs include:

- No smoking – allowance for smokers increases security risks and sometimes inconveniences other players as they open doors etc. Players should be able to last for 16 boards without a cigarette.
- Screens for all tables (except perhaps for Division 2 of the Open). This requires a larger venue. In pairs years this would not be a requirement.
- Bidding boxes – unfortunately this leads to a lack of bidding and play records for those tables that are not displayed on BBO.
- Time per board. 8 minutes is the maximum without adding another day to the schedule. Even so, the 64 board semi-final day is a problem.
- Assuming a single division in the Women's Playoff, this should commence on Sunday to keep the later stages of the Playoffs synchronised.
- If there are 7 entries it should be a double RR followed by a final of the top 2 teams.

4. ISSUES RAISED BY THE MC

(a) Appeals

The TC recommends an ABF Appeals Sub-committee be comprised of Sebastian Yuen, Bruce Neill, Sean Mullamphy, Laurie Kelso and Matthew McManus.

Appeals should be published in event Bulletins with names suppressed. This can be achieved by having a scribe present at all appeals who is capable of a concise, accurate summary of the issues, the discussion and the final outcome.

The Chairman of the Appeals Sub-committee can assess the legal status of appeals on a case-by-case basis and suppress publication if considered necessary.

There should be a panel of people who would be available to take part in Appeals. The number of panellists should exceed the requirements as not all will be present at any specific event. The composition of the panel is flexible, with additions and retirement of members with time. It is important that new panel members should become available, but this may take some initial training and observation of the Appeals process in action.

(b) By Laws

The MC is currently updating the By Laws, with the aim of presenting results at the AGM.

(c) Conflict of interest

There have been some instances of appointment of coaches or NPC for international teams where some might perceive a conflict of interest. One such example is the coach of the Australian Women's Team. It was felt that issues of this nature should be dealt with by the MC on a case by case basis. However, the NPC appointed for any team must be an eligible player, unless special dispensation is obtained from the WBF.

(d) The withdrawal of a team from a Target Event and subsequent entry to the Seniors' Playoff

It was decided that there will only be one Target Event for each year which consists of 2 stages. Winning the playoff entitles the winning team to contest the APBF and the zonal playoff and if successful they would then compete in the Bermuda Bowl/Venice Cup. One of the three pairs of the Australian Team can elect not to play in the APBF Tournament & zonal playoff, but not two. If a team finds that it cannot take part in the two events, then their place is taken in all events by the losing finalists in the Playoffs. **The MC concurs.**

Members of the Australian Team for the BB/VC cannot enter the Seniors' playoff as they are unable to declare their availability to play in the Seniors' Bowl, which runs concurrently with the BB/VC. Additional international events may be offered to the Australian Team.

At the APBF Australia is invited to send three teams for the Seniors. The first will be the Australian Team determined by the Seniors' Playoffs. Expressions of interest are sought from other players who took part in the Seniors' Playoffs to form the remaining two teams. If more than two teams express interest, they will be ranked by the TC.

(e) Appointment of NPC

On occasion, it may be necessary for applicants for the position of NPC for an international team to provide credentials. This may occur if the player in question is not well known to the MC.

(f) Tie Breaking

Playoffs which are a RR format, use boards for Tie Breaking.

GC, which is a Swiss format, use Swiss Points.

ANOT, VCC, no final, so share the title, and PQPs

ANC, which is a 2 x RR, use boards.

Butler, stage I, use Swiss Points

SN, which is a Swiss format, use Swiss Points.

Preference should be given to breaking ties where possible using Swiss Points. Boards should be used when there is a difference in the qualifying fields.

For the GNOT ties will be broken by the methods outlined in the supplementary regulations.

Swiss Points need to be modified to exclude extreme results, particularly against weak teams. It was considered appropriate to consult Peter Buchen or David Appleton as to the procedure to be adopted in this modification process.

(g) Carry Forward

Team ranking in qualifying rounds provides the benefit, when moving to the final stages, of being able to choose opponents. It also provides an automatic ranking in the case of a tie (in for example the semi-final).

5. PQPs

This PQP year ends at the end of the calendar year.

If players are eligible (>48 PQPs) to transfer PQPs from the Open to the Women's or Seniors' and wish to do so, they should notify the PQP compiler. **Agree**

6. TARGET EVENT FOR 2014.

It was recommended that this be the Commonwealth Games to be held in Glasgow in September.

It is not known whether there will be individual Open, Women's and Seniors' events.

The APBF is a Congress Event

The Rosenblum has open entry. **ABF MC is considering and will advise.**

7. TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS

The following should be included (subject legal advice):

"The Management Committee has the right to alter, add to or delete from these regulations at any time. The date from which the change is effective will also be determined by the Management Committee and may be retrospective."

8. CORRESPONDENCE

- Email from Terry Collins regarding ongoing fees at the NOT
- Email from John Scudder regarding Butler format

9. NEXT MEETING

Saturday 11th May.

ACTIONS:-

- Mutual Obligation Document – Players and the ABF for International Events – David Stern to be asked to provide an original draft. KM to liaise
- Training of International Teams – PR to produce a guideline document. pending
- NPCs for International Events – BN to produce guideline document. pending
- Appeals – documents for members and chairs of committees – BN to draft documents. pending

List of duties for TO/CTD at ABF events

1. Write and agree a job description with the position holder. This should cover key responsibilities and accountabilities. A question to be answered is whether this is one job description or two since the duties and outcomes of each role are different (cf existing contracts?).
2. Meet with the position holder at regular intervals (once or twice a year?) to set performance objectives:
 - 3 – 5 objectives covering key responsibilities.
 - each must be measureable with key dates and agreed outcomes.

Agree feedback mechanisms to get performance feedback, eg who will provide feedback – MC, TC, co-workers, tournament participants etc.

Agree incentives for performance /non-performance.
3. Prior to performance appraisal get performance feedback from chosen parties
4. Conduct appraisal. Apply incentives and identify and schedule any training required.

5. Repeat process on a timely basis.

This approach raises a key question. Who does the TO/CTD work for? Who will manage and conduct the performance process, eg a MC member in conjunction with the TC Chairman?

As with all systems of this type is is recommended that the system starts off in pilot form and is expanded with learnings to date.