



Tournament Committee

MINUTES

Meeting held in Sydney (NSWBA)
Saturday 5 September, 2015, 10:00-16:20

1. PRESENT

David Morgan (Chair), Therese Tully, Laurie Kelso, Marcia Scudder, Eric Ramshaw, Peter Reynolds, Sean Mullamphy, Matthew McManus

Apologies: Sartaj Hans

Bruce Neill joined the meeting for the first 15 minutes to provide background to some requests from the MC.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a. Playoff dates for 2016 and 2017 approved by MC and published on ABF website
- b. Alternative formats for some numbers of entrants when Swiss events attract a small field approved by MC and promulgated by SM.

Further discussion of other numbers was considered under item 7 (below).

- c. Change to masterpoint awards for match-pointed pairs events

The TC recognised that technological changes made it possible for masterpoints (or fractions thereof) to be awarded for results on smaller encounters than presently approved. TC decided that the initial focus should be on IMPs-scored events.

The TC recommends that the threshold for awarding sessional, as well as overall masterpoints, be reduced from the current 7 to 5 boards per encounter. MC ACCEPTS RECOMMENDATION.

- d. Stand-alone restricted congresses

The TC was strongly of the view that Congresses for players with a limited number of masterpoints should be encouraged as they provide an incentive for less experienced players to take part in tournaments. The current regulations permit stand-alone novice events; other restricted events (for example those for players with 0-299 masterpoints) can only be run in conjunction with an open event.

The TC recommends removing the requirement that any masterpoint-restricted event other than a novice event be held in conjunction with a parallel open event. MC ACCEPTS RECOMMENDATION.

- e. Guideline document for training international teams – PR ongoing.

3. REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS

In response to a request from the MC, the TC considered target events for Australian representative teams (open, women's, seniors', and youth).

The TC recommends that the current target events for open, women's and seniors' teams continue:

- *In odd years, the target event should be the Zone 7 Playoffs and, if teams qualify, the World Championships. When the Zone 7 Playoff is associated with the APBF, teams would be expected to compete in this.*
- *In even leap years, the target event should be the World Bridge Games.*
- *In even non-leap years, the Asia Cup should be the target event.*

MC ACCEPTS RECOMMENDATION.

In addition, the TC noted that, in Asia Cup years, the ABF may also wish to encourage (and subsidise) participation in the Commonwealth Games, or the Rosenblum/McConnell/Rand. The standard at the Commonwealth Games was considered to be lower than that at the Asia Cup, and the Commonwealth Games does not offer separate events for Open, Women's and Seniors' Teams.

MC TO CONSIDER AS PART OF FUNDING STRATEGY.

For Youth events, there are competitions for four teams: U26, U23, U18 and Girls. The TC noted that Youth events are in general are funded from the Youth allocation, along with funds raised by the Youth Committee. While the TC thought there may be value in focusing on the U26 event, it thought that the decision as to which teams take part in the events on offer should be determined by the Youth Committee in conjunction with the MC. Subsidies would depend on funds available to be allocated, the number of teams involved and the location.

Also in response to a request from the MC, the TC considered the best way to improve performance of Australian representative teams. A number of ideas were debated, including whether ABF subsidies should be linked to performance.

The TC recommends that any additional funding for representative teams be used for pre-tournament performance enhancement via mentoring, or the use of a Sport Psychologist to assist with mental preparation. NOTED

4. PLAYOFF FORMAT

As a result of the publication of the proposed new format for the 2017 Playoffs, written responses were received from a total of 9 players, while further opinions were forthcoming at the forum held in conjunction with the Butler Pairs in Fremantle. The TC wishes to record its thanks to all those who provided feedback.

The proposed KO format met with virtually unanimous approval. Most responders indicated that the more boards in each match the better. In suggesting 112 (64/48) for the two day match, the TC was mindful of the need to accommodate the unlikely and still complete the match at a reasonable time. Examples include an appeal on the second day [the TC believes it is highly desirable that all contestants know the score of the match before starting the final set]; or a tie. The TC was conscious that the draw for the matches on the next day is dependent on the results in the previous matches.

The TC recommends that the proposed KO format be adopted, and that:

- *the new format be used for the Women's and Seniors' Playoffs as well as the Open;*

- *matches be of 128 boards, except that matches in the Seniors' Playoffs be 96 boards (48+48), with participants asked for their feedback on whether these should be extended to 128 boards* [the TC recognised that an appeal from a board in the penultimate set would not be resolved prior to the start of the final set unless the start time was delayed for at least two hours];
- *the review process be used instead of appeals, with a pool of players who are not participating being available to be polled if required for a review* [this is the international norm, and it reduces demands on participants compared to an appeals process];
- *teams should be ranked using PQPs (total of all players, thereby giving an advantage to 6-person teams)* [this is objective and does not rely on the opinions of members of a seeding committee];
- *there be a limit of 8 teams for each playoff; and*
- *to eliminate ties, the higher-ranked team in any match start with a 0.5 IMP carryover.*

MC ACCEPTS RECOMMENDED FORMAT SUBJECT TO PLAYER CONSULTATION ON FORMULA FOR RANKING BASED ON PQPs, PARTICULARLY WHETHER FORMULA SHOULD GIVE PREFERENCE TO 6-PERSON TEAMS OR BE NEUTRAL IN THIS RESPECT.

Note: PR opposed limiting entries to eight teams.

For consideration at a later date: At present, there is no discounting of PQPs earned provided the two players are in the same "unit". This can lead to some untried partnerships in the Playoffs, which is not necessarily consistent with the ABF's objective of having the best team represent Australia.

Many of the respondents suggested that the new format be implemented for the 2016 Playoffs (see attachment). This provoked much discussion.

The TC recommends that the new format be implemented for the 2016 Playoffs

MC ACCEPTS RECOMMENDATION FOR PLAYOFFS IN NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016 ONWARDS IN NEW FORMAT. MC WILL INVITE FEEDBACK FROM ALL HOLDERS OF PQPs ON PROPOSED USE OF NEW FORMAT IN FEBRUARY/MARCH 2016 AND FINALISE THE FORMAT BEFORE 31 DEC 2015.

PR and ER dissented, pointing out that for good governance reasons no change should be made in this PQP year, as it has not been advertised prior to the commencement of the period.

If the MC does not support the change for the 2016 Playoffs, then *the TC recommends that the Open playoffs use a format similar to that for 2015*, notwithstanding the negative feedback from players if only six teams are entered about a three-day RR to eliminate only two teams.

8 Teams	2 Divisions as previously used
7 Teams	Double RR (14 rounds with bye) over 3 days, then 1 day (64-board) semi-final, 2 day (128-board) final
6 Teams	Triple RR (15 rounds) over 3 days, then 1 day (64-board) semi-final, 2 day (128-board) final.

The TC recommends that if 6 Teams enter the Women's or Seniors' then a double RR followed by a 2 day final.

The TC recommends that when the formats are confirmed for the 2016 and 2017 Playoffs, the formats should be sent to all those on the ABF emailing list.

5. PQP TRANSFERS

The TC recommends that all PQPs earned in Open events are able to be transferred to the Women's and/or Seniors' compilation without restriction. MC ACCEPTS RECOMMENDATION (SUBJECT TO CATEGORY ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA).

However, the TC notes that any individual must request such a transfer by emailing pqp@abf.com.au as the maintainer of the PQP list will not know, for example, who is a senior. As previously, transfers from concurrent Women's and Seniors' events will continue, with the addition now of the Playoffs.

6. FORMAT FOR BUTLER PAIRS AT THE ANC

The TC received comments from a number of players about flaws in the format used for the Seniors' Butler at the ANC in Fremantle (where the small number of contending pairs played each other early in the event). It had also had inter-session correspondence about the issues that confronted the organisers with the Women's Butler, and had received a proposal for changing the format of the Open Butler (from Ron Klinger advocating that it should be run as a two-field [EW+NS] event producing two winners). As well, the MC asked for the TC's views on whether there might be any advantages if the Butler were separated from the ANC.

The TC noted that changes to the event formats and locations (including rotating the Butler among states/cities) were possible if the Butler and ANC were separated. However, it was aware that a number of states remained keen to hold the two events consecutively.

The TC concluded that no changes were needed to the Open Butler but that changes could improve the Women's and Seniors' events. In particular, the Women's Butler should run in parallel with the Seniors' Butler, with women's pairs, like seniors pairs, having the opportunity to participate in stage one of the Open Butler.

The TC recommends that the Women's Butler be played Monday-Thursday, concurrently with the final Stage of the Open Butler, and using the same boards. The format of both the Women's and Seniors' should have two stages, a Swiss on Monday-Tuesday to reduce the field to 10 pairs then a final for each, over Wednesday-Thursday. A consolation event should run alongside these two finals. The regulations should allow for the Women's and Seniors' fields to be combined if one is considered too small to make the first stage viable.

MC WILL INVITE FEEDBACK FROM ALL INTERESTED PLAYERS ON PROPOSED NEW FORMAT.

7. ALTERNATIVE FORMATS WHEN SWISS EVENTS ATTRACT A SMALL FIELD

Further issues were considered for "Swiss" events with small fields (i.e. where the number of entries is less than twice the number of rounds).

The TC recommends that, where the number of rounds exceeds half the number of entries, a two stage event be held, with a new draw commencing at or near the half way point, allowing units to play each other again if the draw dictates. The TC notes that tournament organisers need to be careful not to advertise such events as "Swiss".

MC ACCEPTS THIS AS A VALID OPTION BUT NOTES THERE ARE ALTERNATIVE FORMATS THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED.

MM to prepare paper mandating the formats to be used by organisers for different numbers of entrants.

8. ANC FORMAT

The problem of eliminating the bye in the ANC Teams was reconsidered. The solution adopted for the last three years, of the home state having two representative teams, was not accepted well by a number of state associations and players.

An alternative is to incorporate triangles into the format. MM to draft a paper for consideration by TC.

9. ARBITRATION TO RESOLVE ACCUSATIONS OF CHEATING

The TC, at the request of the MC, discussed options for handling cheating allegations in light of recent developments and proposals for NBOs to consider options such as arbitration. The TC agreed that it was highly desirable that appropriate procedures be in place before any cases arose. It noted some of the benefits of processes like arbitration, including the lower level of formality compared with other legal processes, but was uncertain how appropriate such processes might be. For example, who would be the other party in an arbitration?

The TC reaffirmed that, at present, accusations of cheating should go first to the Recorder, who can then pass the issue to the Ethics Committee.

10. NEW VP SCALE IN SWISS PAIRS

The new VP scale was originally designed to be used in RR events, but for the past few years has been used throughout Australia in Swiss events. For Swiss Pairs events, the scale used has been for fewer boards than the length of the match to compensate for the dampening effect of scoring against a datum. Two issues have arisen. The technical one is that there are fewer blitzes than was expected when the scales were created. The blitz point – equivalent to the old 25-3 – should occur between 4-5%. However, data from national, state and congress events are that the percentage of blitzes is around 2% for Swiss Teams events and 1% for Swiss Pairs. The other, of greater concern to players given their objections, is that the scoring scale places a higher premium on winning matches than did the old scales and, consequently, very small wins and losses to take on much more significance.

MM has supplied Peter Buchen with data for him to consider.

11. APPLE WATCHES AND OTHER NEW ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The TC discussed whether new regulations were needed to deal with Apple watches and other new electronic devices. We agreed that the existing regulations, which refer to "electronic communications devices" should apply to all Apple watches and similar products -- indeed, to any device of any sort that can communicate electronically, even if that might not be its principal function. The current regulations prohibit players consulting such devices.

The TC recommends the current regulation about electronic communication devices be extended to include "or taken with a player if the player leaves the table during the match".

MC ACCEPTS RECOMMENDATION.

This is to prevent people consulting the running score, viewing viewgraph etc. The TC agreed that it was good practice, where the venue allowed, for all such devices to be placed on a side table for the duration of the match. Where space restrictions precluded this (as in the current GNOT venue) players needed to take action to leave them behind (which we noted included women taking handbags with them to the bathroom -- i.e. take phone or other device out of handbag first).

Meeting closed at 16:20.

12. NEXT MEETING

11 December 2015 at NSWBA in Sydney.