

ABF TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN SYDNEY 8 NOVEMBER 2009

1. PRESENT

Kim Morrison (chair), Eric Ramshaw, Peter Reynolds, Marcia Scudder
David Smith
Observer: Laurie Kelso

Actions

2. CONSIDERATION OF ABF TOURNAMENTS

Bridgemates: In 2010 Bridgemates will be in use for ALL events. They are the new updated version, Bridgemate 2, which allow

- Review of scores by the players
- Up to 8 boards' scores on the screen simultaneously
- Side by side scores in columns distinguishing NS scores from EW scores

SM to liaise with Martin Willcox re 2010 Summer Festival

Scoring errors: Bridgemate 2 has now been used in the Spring Nationals. The CTD, Matthew McManus reported on their successes and failures. In order to minimise the effect of any problems which might be encountered at the Summer Festival, the following strategies are recommended:

- There will be backup server(s) available at the venue. Updated Bridgemate 2 servers will be available at some time, but not necessarily before the 2010 Summer Festival.
- There will be additional staff and equipment as deemed necessary by the Chief Scorer, to ensure that even a catastrophic failure can be dealt with.
- All teams results will be input on both the Bridgemate 2 and in addition an agreed score provided at the conclusion of the match on a paper slip.
- The draw for the next round will be made using the data acquired through the Bridgemate 2 units.
- At the conclusion of scoring a session, a caddy will correlate the results obtained by the two input methods and flag any discrepancies. The teams involved in these flagged matches will be clearly displayed on an electronic screen and at several places in the foyer and playing area
- During the next round, each team will be provided with a small sheet of paper, listing the scores which were provided to the Bridgemate 2. Errors should be corrected as soon as possible at the end of a session however corrections will be accepted up to the beginning of the next day (excluding the last day whence by 8pm Thursday evening). Once a draw has been made it should not be altered.
- On a roster basis, one Director will be allocated the task of manning a computer in the playing area where players can inform the scorers of errors in score input.

- A document outlining 'Player Obligations' regarding scoring will be promulgated, both before and during the Summer Festival. The document will be published in the ABF Newsletter and on the Website, and a copy will be placed on each table before the commencement of any event. Obligations will include the necessity for players to check that scores for all boards have been input to the Bridgmate, and that they are correct. A representative of both NS and EW at each table should check the scores before departing the venue. . MS to draft
- To facilitate location of particular teams should the need arise, and to make life easier in general for the players, each team will have a home table, which will not change during the event. It will be more important than ever for the caddies to check that Board 1 (say) of each set matches the hand record. In order to ensure that all duplicates of the boards are consistent. We are aware that this change removes the advantage of having both tables in any one match playing the same physical boards.
- To ensure, as far as practicable, that the results and draw are correct for the two rounds 13 and 14 on Friday of the SWPT, corrections of rounds 12 scores will be allowed until 12:30pm on Friday, and from round 13, until 4:00pm on Friday.
- An appeals committee should be on standby before the last round of any qualifying event.

(a3) Player survey

From 090509 minutes: A survey will be undertaken, both at the Summer Festival and on the web to try to ascertain the preferences of a large proportion of players, both attending and not attending.

PR to design

Possibilities might include:

- Start SWPT on Sunday (moving Swiss Pairs to Saturday and redesigning a matchpointed pairs event to take place Friday – Sunday (see below)), ending on Thursday [2 sessions only on Sunday, 3 on Thursday]. The NOT to commence on Friday. *Note from ABF MC – please consider GNP national final when making any decision.*
- Start SWPT on Monday playing only 12 rounds (and a commensurate reduction in entry fee), finishing on Thursday then NOT from Friday to Monday.
- Possible new matchpointed pairs event to run over 3 days (Friday to Sunday) with cuts after 1 and 2 days, those eliminated having the right to drop into the Mixed Teams.

The survey would cover other more general issues such as:

- why the players choose to come to Canberra,
- which events they like to play in,
- whether they also play at the Gold Coast.

The popularity, or otherwise of the late start and night play on the Monday of the SWPT (and Wednesday of NWT/NST) should also be polled. It might be possible to retain the late start (to allow travel to Canberra) but run two sessions in the afternoon/early evening – finishing at about 7:00 pm.

It might be informative to conduct this survey among the New Zealanders, both in Canberra and at the Gold Coast.

The survey would be designed to allow answers to all questions, by including alternatives such as ‘do not know’ or ‘no preference’. An incentive to take part in the survey would be two lucky prizes to be drawn on Friday morning of the SWPT (to be eligible, you must include your name on the survey response).

(b) ANC 2010

(b1) BUTLER PAIRS

(b1o) Open

Stage 1 of the Butler pairs was considered to be highly desirable since it

- gave access to local players to a Gold Point event
- produced revenue for the host state

It was considered that the optimum format for the Open Butler Pairs at the 2010 ANC in Hobart was:

Stage 1 to be held on Saturday and Sunday as a 10 round Swiss, each round of 12 boards, giving a total of 60 boards per day. This would qualify 20 pairs to the second (and final) stage. This would consist of 19 rounds of 12 board matches to be held over Monday – Thursday with 5 matches for the first three days and 4 on the last. There were 36 pairs in Hobart in 2002.

(b1s) Seniors

Stage 1 of the Butler pairs was considered to be unviable for the Seniors, based on the entry in 2002 of 14 pairs. It was therefore considered that the Seniors’ Butler should cover only 4 days, Monday – Thursday. The number of entries would determine the exact format, but the ideal would be to run parallel to the Open Butler, using the same boards and times. If necessary, some sessions could be eliminated from the schedule, but it should be considered essential that the event conclude at the same time as the Open Butler.

(b1w) Women

This was considered to be the most problematical event. The entry in 2002 was 18 pairs. However, the event was structured to allow for the inclusion into Stage 2 of the state appointed “Automatic entries”. As there will be no automatic entries for the 2010 Butler (in either the Open or Women’s events), the number of direct entries to the Women’s Butler is likely to be higher than in 2002. If the entry is 26 pairs or more, then the recommendation is that the Women’s event will run parallel to the Open, with at least 6 pairs being eliminated in Stage 1 and 20 pairs proceeding to the final stage. If, however, the entry is no more than 20, Stage 1 will be unnecessary and the event should be shortened to run parallel to the Seniors (Monday – Thursday only). Problems arise if the entry falls into the intermediate range of 21-25 and the decision as to the format will have to be made at the eleventh hour.

It is clearly advantageous for the entry into the Women's Butler to be large enough to allow a viable Stage 1 and we would suggest that the convener make every effort to encourage locals to enter (clubs could subsidise pairs to enter, etc). It might also be possible for the Women's Liaison committee to try to get people to enter.

Whichever format is adopted organisers should ensure that the completion time of the final stage coincides with that in the Open and the Seniors' events. Entrants should assume there will be a Women's stage 1 (most likely) and make arrangements to arrive for play Saturday morning, Should numbers be insufficient then they could enter the Open stage 1 as non-contending pairs if they wish.

(b1c) Congress (consolation) Butler

For pairs who have not qualified and any other entrants this event will be run in parallel with the other finals.

(c) 2010 OPEN AND WOMEN'S PLAYOFFS

The Playoffs in 2010 will be held at the York Convention Centre (Bowlers' Club) in Sydney. The Playoffs will be in Pairs format and will incorporate two pairs from the Last Train events to be held as part of the Summer Festival in January 2010.

Stage 1 will comprise a Round Robin of the 16 pairs, playing 15 rounds of 10 boards over 2½ days (6, 6, 3 matches per day using an 8 board VP scale). This will reduce the field to 10 pairs.

Stage 2 will comprise a Round Robin of the 10 pairs, playing 9 rounds of 16 boards over 2½ days (2, 4, 3 matches per day). The head to head results from Stage 1 will be carried forward and added to the results from Stage 2 to give a composite 26 board match (with VPs allocated according to a 20 board scale). It was noted that this method of carry-forward might not be conveniently accommodated within Martin Willcox's scoring program.

Nominations will be taken via a Web entry form, which must be received by Friday 19th December, 2009. The ranked list of successful nominations will be available on the Web by 31st December 2009. *The ABF MC endorsed this suggestion asking that a time of 7.00pm AEST be included in the deadline for receipt of entries.*

The ABF Webmaster, Pauline Gumby will be asked to design the interactive web based form which will include the two names with ABF numbers for the pair, their individual PQP awards and the total PQPs for the pair. Note that the change whereby players on the panel no longer have to have accrued at least 1 PQP in the same unit does not apply until 2011, i.e. for pairs to enter the 2010 Playoffs they must have the requisite 1 PQP in the same unit. Signed declaration of availability forms must be with the ABF Secretariat by the end of January (allowing submission of this form during the Summer Festival). *The ABF Webmaster to send the pro-forma entry form to the ABF General Counsel for review prior to being posted to the ABF Website.*

As a result of the 2010 Playoffs there will be just one Australian Team, which will comprise the top three pairs. This team will be offered attendance at all Target Events for 2010. If one pair does not wish to (or is unavailable to) attend one or more Target Events, then their position will be offered to the next ranked pair (down only to the 6th pair).

Target Events for 2010 will be:

1. PABF in Hamilton, NZ
2. Commonwealth Games in India. Note that there may only be one team invited to this event, in which case, the invitation will go to the Open Team.

Note: The Rosenblum Cup (World Series) in Philadelphia, USA is an open entry event.

In the case of the Seniors, it is likely that it will be possible to send more than one team to the PABF. The Australian Team resulting from the playoffs would be the first team (with subsidy) and other contenders would be determined by a Call for Nominations.

4. ABF TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS

Laurie Kelso is chairman of a committee responsible for the upkeep of the ABF Tournament Regulations.

The Tournament Regulation that are currently in force are those dated June 2008 which are available on the web. Changes to the Regulations fall into two categories: those which are formulated in consultation with New Zealand and so apply to both countries (or are agreed to differ) and those which apply only within Australia. The first are for regulations which impact on the players – such as those relating to alerting or system requirements. They also include Law Interpretation. Discussions relating to any changes of this nature take place at the Gold Coast Congress with the intention of being agreed and in force by April 1. These changes rarely impact on the ABF Tournament Regulations.

KM to liaise
with LK

For changes to the ABF Tournament Regulations, submissions from the team of regulation monitors should be available by December, with a view to discussing them at the April meeting of the Tournament Committee. Once changes are approved by TC they will be forwarded to LK and JB for consultation. If considered acceptable they will be forwarded to the ABF General Counsel and the MC (possibly at the meeting coinciding with the ANC). Finally JB will incorporate them into the next version which is scheduled to be available on the Web by November and for implementation by the following January 1.

There is a need to update the appendices of the Tournament Regulations.

There also appears to be a problem with the tie breaking regulation. It should be noted that the final stages of the GNOT are a special case. Because of the structure of the event, where teams drop from section to section, it is not feasible to break ties

except by playing extra boards. This should be included in the Supplementary Regulations for the GNOT.

Supplementary Regulations can take precedence over the General Tournament Regulations, but only in certain areas. The General Tournament Regulations need to be vetted to ensure that it is clear when the Supplementary Regulations can and cannot take over.

Regulation Changes

5.3.4 Other teams events

Provided that the provisions of paragraph 5.2 of these Regulations are met, any system may be played in all other teams events (paragraph 1.2 of these Regulations) with the following restrictions:

- (a) YELLOW systems shall not be played in any of the first three rounds of the event
- (b) YELLOW systems shall not be played at any time in the bottom two-thirds (rounded up) of the field.

A change to (a) will be:

YELLOW systems shall not be played in any of the first three rounds of a Swiss teams event.

A change to (b) will be:

YELLOW systems may be played when the rank of the Yellow system team is in the top third of the field (rounded down) including ties.

12.4 In multi-session events, errors in scoring made by the players may be corrected within 30 minutes of the posting of scores for the session or up to 30 minutes before the start of the next session whichever is later, except that in teams or Butler pairs events, where the players are required to provide the Director with the results of matches played, errors in scoring made by the players may be corrected up to 30 minutes after the match scores have been agreed.

We need to include: Correction periods are usually stipulated in the supplementary regulation. However, corrections cannot go further back than the draw in a Knockout event, or the commencement of a tie breaker.

Specific to the SWPT, a recommendation is that, in an effort to ensure that the draw for Friday morning is as accurate as possible, corrections can be made up to 8pm on Thursday night for any of the rounds completed. The official draw for the penultimate rounds will be available on the web and at the venue as soon as possible

after that. No corrections affecting the draw will be incorporated on Friday morning.

Player Obligation Document

A new clause should be drafted and inserted into the Regulations regarding player obligations regarding checking the completeness and accuracy of scores entered at the table via Electronic Scoring Devices (see 2a1).

In order to better communicate revisions to the Tournament Regulations, a “box” system appended to the regulations document (analogous to the one used by PQP Compiler John Scudder for communicating changes to PQP regulations) will be introduced.

The appointment of ‘Regulation Monitors’ has proved to be a positive initiative and we recommend that this continue.

5. OTHER MATTERS

(a) New Member of the Tournament Committee

The MC has approved the appointment of Bruce Neill as a member of the Tournament Committee.

(b) Security with Online Broadcasts

The issue of security for play which is broadcast online in real time was discussed. It is now feasible for the public to have access to results, and hand records, via their computer, mobile phone or other electronic device. There is no implication that players would deliberately attempt to use unauthorised information to their advantage, but there is a definite possibility of accidental acquisition of this information.

Tournament Organisers are responsible for ensuring that there should be no contact between players and the public who may have access to results via online broadcasting. Specifically, opportunities arise for contact during visits to the toilet and during smoking breaks.

Tournament Organisers and Directors should ensure that players are advised not to use mobile phones or other electronic devices in the playing area, and not to discuss hands while in the toilet or smoking areas.

It was considered that the benefits of online scores and BBO broadcasting far outweighed possible breaches in security.

(c) Removing boards as a result of slow play.

In some tournaments, it is current practice to remove boards in the last couple of minutes of the round to ensure that all tables have finished play by the expiration of the allowed time. However, the same effect could be achieved by reducing the length of the round by a few minutes and then not removing boards from the table until the time for the round has expired. It was felt that the players would be more accepting of this approach.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- Matthew McManus regarding the permissible use of Yellow Systems. See change in the Tournament Regulations above.
- Griff Ware regarding the application of an adjusted score after a misboarding in which the players at the table were not at fault in the Australian Swiss Pairs. There were conflicting outcomes depending on whether the General Tournament Regulations or Supplementary regulations for the Tournament took precedence.

This is an area that needs to be specified as unalterable by the Supplementary Regulations, which currently state:

In Butler pairs movements scored by IMP, the Director's aim will be to preserve the integrity of the scores on a board if a meaningful result can be obtained. The Director may allow some results to stand while cancelling others or may treat the board as two separate entities. If the board is cancelled, the Director must award an adjusted score of datum plus 3 IMP.

It was considered that 3 imps may be too severe and should be reduced to 2 (yet to be finalised).

- A request for a change of format of the HGR to a 2 day Swiss was considered. This change was recommended by the TC.
- NTGold organisers (Pam Nunn, Phil Gue & Martin Willcox) sought approval for recommended changes to the format for 2010. All recommendations were approved. They are:
 1. Qualification numbers to the finals in the matchpointed pairs can be modified by the director in accordance with number of entries.
 2. The Swiss teams can be reduced from 9 rounds to 8
 3. The Swiss pairs can be reduced from 12 rounds to 11.

7. NEXT MEETING

The meeting finished at 4:00pm. The next meeting will be held in conjunction with the 2010 Summer Festival in Canberra.