

# ABF TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN SYDNEY 7<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at 10 am NSWBA Sydney

### 1. PRESENT

Kim Morrison (chair), Marcia Scudder, Eric Ramshaw, Laurie Kelso  
Sean Mullamphy was also in attendance.  
Apologies: Peter Reynolds, Matthew McManus, David Morgan,

### 2. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

**Guideline document for training international teams** – PR ongoing.

#### **Format and Dates for 2016 Playoffs and beyond**

A document has been written outlining suggestions for a permanent position on the calendar for the Playoffs, taking into account the issues affecting its choice. The document also outlines the suggested formats for the Playoffs for different years in the International Representation cycle of four year. After ratification by the MC, this document will be put onto the ABF website where all interested parties will be able to comment. It is anticipated that when these comments are considered a decision can be made which will be instituted for either 2016 or 2017 Representation.

The document in its current form is in APPENDIX 1.

**In summary, the TC recommends that the Open and Women's Playoffs be held in early December each year, and that the format follows the current practice of Teams selection basis in all years except even non-leap years (2018, 2022 ...) when it will be Pairs based. MC approved TC to put this proposal on ABF website for comment, noting any changes will not be made before the playoffs to select 2017 teams.**

### 3. SWPT/NOT FORMAT

David Morgan has produced a document for discussion. It outlines some different options for the SWPT/NOT. This is attached as APPENDIX 2. The TC decided that in the light of the Peter Buchen/Matt McManus paper and the general acceptance of the current format that this option should be considered at a later time.

### 4. EVENT FORMATS

Peter Buchen and Matthew McManus have produced a document outlining the results of simulations testing various formats and scoring methods. The first two paragraphs of this paper forms APPENDIX 3. Some relevant outcomes of this study are:

- ◆ that there is no benefit from splitting the first round of the SWPT into 2 x 10 board matches, thus creating a 13 round event instead of the current 12 round event.
- ◆ a better outcome is achieved, with fewer 'bolters' making the cut for the NOT if the first round draw is 1 v 2, 3 v 4 ..
- ◆ for the SWPT there was virtually no difference in outcome if the scoring incorporated a range of VP scales.

TC has requested further input from David regarding the following questions:

- Do you have a formula for the number of rounds required to produce a winner or x qualifiers for Teams & Swiss pairs?
- What is the best VP scale to use in Swiss pairs? ie which scale for x board matches
- Is there a formula or world standard for calculating Carry-over and when it should be used?
- Is there a formula for calculating drop-in scores? e.g. losing semi finalists in the Sping Nationals teams to the Dick Cummings, or from the Seniors' and Women's teams in Canberra to the Swiss pairs or GNOT KO losers to the Swiss.
- In the Seniors' Butler this year the numbers dictated a Swiss but it was overswished by a mile. To maintain the length of the event (4 days) what is the validity of a) playing 9 matches twice in length? b) playing a Danish for the last x rounds? c) any other ideas?

**The TC recommends no change in the format of the SWPT/NOT. The recommendation from the paper for the first round draw of 1v2, 2v3, etc will be considered for the following year after players have the opportunity to comment. MC approved recommendation.**

## 5. PQPs for the 2015 CALENDAR YEAR:

All events on the PQP table were reevaluated as an annual review. Changes to be made for 2015 are:

GNOT	36	18	9	(to be consistent with other events that have semi finals)
BEST	36	18	9	(downgraded to C, reflecting the smaller field sizes in recent years).

A document has been produced which will be available on the web which outlines the criteria for an event to be awarded PQP status. (Appendix 4)

## 6. ANC:

### Interstate Teams Championship

Correspondence was received from several parties (Pele Rankin, David Beauchamp, Ben Thompson, NSWBA) all against the two team policy which has been in place for the last two years. In 2014 NSW fielded two teams in both the Women's and Seniors' events in order to eliminate the Bye. In the Women's event the second NSW team were victorious.

The correspondents felt that having two teams from one state did not fulfil the charter of an Interstate Teams competition.

The TC would like input from the states indicating their preference for

- ♠ a bye
- ♠ the 2 team policy
- ♠ other – this needs to be accompanied by an alternative.

### Butler Pairs

A survey was conducted at the 2014 ANC during the Butler Pairs.

#### Butler Pairs Survey

Which of these formats would you prefer for the Butler Pairs Championships?

1.  Current format – Qualify 20 pairs for Stage 2, then 19 x 12 board matches
2.  Qualify 16 pairs for Stage 2, then 15 x 16 board matches
3.  Qualify 12 pairs for Stage 2, then 11 x 20 board matches
4.  Qualify 20 pairs for Stage 2, seed into Ns and EW field, play 10 x 12 board matches, then top five each direction qualify for a Stage 3, 9 x 12 board matches
5.  Other – please make suggestions overleaf

Name: . . . . .

## Results

### Open - 24 responses received out of 40 players

Option	# supporting
1	9
2	2
3	3
4	8
5	2

Other suggestions (option #5):

- 14 pairs to Stage 2
- Full Mitchell in Stage 1 to qualify 16 pairs to Stage 2

### Women's - 23 responses received out of 36 players

Option	# supporting
1	13
2	5
3	2
4	1
5	2

Other suggestions (option #5):

- No weekend play – same format as Seniors'
- prefer no weekend, but if there needs to be, then 3 stages

**Unidentified – no name given – 4 responses**

Option	# supporting
1	1
2	3
3	0
4	0
5	0

The results indicated that:

For the Open, about 60% are happy with the status quo (i.e. a two stage event), the remainder preferring 3 stages

For the Women, there is a clear majority in favour of the status quo (i.e. a two stage event) of about 85%. Most of those preferring the 2 stage event, favoured the cutoff at 20 teams, with a 19 round Stage 2.

**The TC recommends no change to the Butler Format.** *MC approved recommendation.*

**7. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**ABF TR**

General Counsel has requested that some of the Post Event Items currently in the ABF TR be removed and made into separate documents. Examples are: Augmentation, Player Replacement. LK

**Playoff entries**

The advisability of having an odd number of teams in Division 2 of the Playoffs was considered. It is certainly preferable that the number of teams in Division 2 be even, so consideration may have to be given to the idea of truncating the field at an even number.

**8. Next meeting:**

No date was confirmed.

## APPENDIX 1

# Playoffs to select teams to represent Australia

## 1. Timing

### *Background*

The timing of the playoffs to select teams to represent Australia in international competition has varied during the past decade. This has frequently led to complaints from players. The absence of a fixed date means that the event needs to be scheduled every year, creating uncertainty for players and organisers, and a debate every time about the most suitable (or least unsuitable) dates.

The ABF Tournament Committee is seeking to resolve this problem. It would be advantageous to have a permanent time slot for the Playoffs. However, there are a number of issues to consider when determining the optimum time.

Any changes adopted will not come into effect before the Playoffs to select the 2017 Australian teams. The dates for the 2015 Playoffs are already set and the 2016 Playoffs will be set in the normal way when the 2016 calendar is prepared.

The International Target Events for which we are selecting teams via the Playoffs repeat in a four year cycle.

1. (Odd years 2015, 2017, ...) The Bermuda Bowl, Seniors Bowl and Venice Cup are contested (usually in September / October), but in order to determine whether they will be eligible to take part in these events, Australian teams are required to contest the Zone 7. Currently, the Zone 7 Playoffs are held in conjunction with the Asia Pacific Bridge Federation (APBF) Championships which take place in the preceding May/June. We are required to name our teams for the APBF by the end of March.
2. (Even Leap years 2016, 2020, ...) The APBF does not hold a Championship event, just a congress to which we do not send Australian representative teams. The WBF holds the World Bridge Games (formerly the Olympiad) to which Australia has automatic entry and does not need to notify the WBF until June/July.
3. (Even but not Leap years 2018, 2022, ...) the WBF Championships are open entry, so we do not send Australian representative teams. The APBF combines with other Asian and Middle Eastern nations from WBF Zone 4 to hold the Asia Cup, in the same time slot as the APBF Championships in odd years. We are required to name our teams for the Asia Cup by the end of March.

The necessity to name teams to represent Australia at the APBF by March is therefore an important factor in determining the timing of the Playoffs.

On the local scene, it is important that the Playoff dates do not conflict with our major events (nor with some other international events at which our top players compete). These include typically:

GNOT in November

Summer Festival in January

Gold Coast Congress in February/March

Tasmanian Festival of Bridge in March

ACBL Fall Nationals

NEC

YEH

## ACBL Spring Nationals

Considering these factors (and the uncertain dates of Easter and Passover) allows us to determine the window between the end of the previous International Cycle and the submission deadline (31 March) for the first representative event of the next year (APBF) during which the Playoffs should be scheduled.

### *Proposal*

That the playoffs for the Open and Women's team each year be held early in the preceding December. This requires a one-off change to the Playoff cycle, to shorten the preceding PQP year.

For example, hold the Playoffs in early December 2016 to select the team to represent Australia in 2017. The 2016 PQP year would terminate after the 2016 Spring Nationals.

### *Rationale*

This avoids the already busy January-March period, and allows sufficient time for the winners to arrange leave and make any other necessary personal arrangements prior to the APBF Championships and Zone 7 Playoffs. It also allows the team time to prepare and practice together at strong events such as the SWPT/NOT and the Gold Coast Open Teams.

### *Further considerations*

- Should the same timing be used for the Playoffs in all years, when the external pressures are not as great in some years?
- Should the Seniors' Playoffs be held concurrently with the Open and Women's Playoffs?
- Should the Women's Playoffs be held at a different time to allow women to compete in both the Open and Women's (and, possibly, the Seniors') playoffs?

## **2. Format**

### *Background*

There is a long-running debate about whether to select teams via a pairs-based or teams-based event. Different countries and different states adopt different approaches (e.g. NSW selects pairs only; Victoria now has a playoff among self-selected teams).

The PQP system was initially used to restrict the number of entrants to the playoffs to the teams that included the best-performed players. The current two-tier approach (if there are sufficient entries) allows anyone to enter, provided they have earned at least one PQP while rewarding those teams with the highest number of PQPs.

### *Issues*

Proponents of pairs-based selection argue that this allows under-appreciated or emerging pairs, a better chance to compete.

Proponents of teams-based selection argue that it encourages teams that are more harmonious and therefore less likely to perform poorly under pressure.

Currently, selection is via a teams-based playoff for the years when the Bermuda Bowl or World Bridge Games are being held. In the fourth year, a pairs-based selection method is used as there is no world championship that is contested by national teams.

### *Proposal*

That the current approach to pairs- and teams-based selection be retained.

That the current two-tiered approach to the Playoffs when contested by teams be retained. That the Open and Women's Playoffs are held in December, and the Seniors' in March.

*The deadline for comments is 30<sup>th</sup> November. All proposals will be considered bearing in mind the considerations above but particularly those from players with likely interests in the outcomes.*

*Should the proposal be well accepted then it could be introduced in 2015 for the 2016 representative team for the Olympiad.*

*After agreement by the MC, this document will be published on the ABF website. Feedback would be directed to a box accessible to all members of the TC for consideration. Depending on the feedback, a decision will be made, which will be applicable for the Playoffs to determine the 2017 teams.*

## Improving the SWPT and NOT

### *Issues*

During the past 20 years a number of different formats have been tried for the NOT. These have sought to reconcile potentially conflicting aims:

- An enjoyable week for all.
- An opportunity for teams that are fringe contenders to play KO matches.
- An opportunity for serious contenders to win KO matches.

Increasing the length of the KO matches increases the likelihood that better teams will win the event. However, the price for doing so with the current format has been to reduce significantly the number of teams who are contenders, and whose interest is retained, for the duration of the event. When the SWPT was a 14-round Swiss, between 25% and 33% of the teams were still mathematical contenders at the start of the last morning. That number has fallen to x%.

In addition to reducing the number of interested teams, it also places a higher premium on getting the Swiss right to ensure that all the top teams that play well have a reasonable chance to qualify. When more teams qualified this was less of an issue: if you didn't make the top 16 or 20 you weren't playing well enough to deserve a place in the NOT.

### *Objectives*

Future SWPT/NOTs should have these objectives:

- Offer a different experience from the Swiss team format used in all other national teams events (except for the GNOT) for those who are interested
- While retaining the popular Swiss for the majority of participants.
  - Offer alternate pathways to the NOT.
  - Qualify a sufficiently large number of teams to the NOT to provide a chance for teams that would not otherwise make the KO stages of other national events.

### *Proposal*

Run two events – the SWPT Swiss and the SWPT KO – in parallel, both qualifying teams to the NOT.

- 10-round Swiss of 20-board matches qualifying 12 (13) teams to the NOT R16.
- 3(4)-round KO qualifying 4 (3) teams to the NOT R16.
- If three rounds then matches of 40/60/60 boards, with entries limited to 24 or 32 teams
- If four rounds then matches of 40 boards, with entries limited to 48 or 64 teams.
- Losers drop into the Swiss with scores equal to [the fourth-placed team] [average of top eight?] [check Peter Buchen's simulations]
- Entries to the KO are seeded using seeding points [like those used by the USBF] [determined by the quotient of PQPs divided by the PQPs available for first place in all the PQP events entered]
- The undefeated teams from the KO would have the last session on Wednesday and the first session on Thursday off. The last defeated teams in the KO would contest two matches (rounds 9 and 10) of the Swiss.
  - Teams from the KO have first right of choice of opponents in the NOT R16 (random draw to determine rank) followed by the top four placegetters in the Swiss.
  - After 10 rounds of the Swiss the top 12 (13) teams progress to the NOT R16.



- The remaining teams play two more rounds in the Swiss, with the first placegetter being declared the winner.
- NOT R16 is a 40-board match; NOT R8, R4 and final are 60-board matches.

*Further considerations*

- In theory a straight ten-round Swiss is insufficient to select 12 or 13 teams. However, the dropping in of teams from the KO should overcome some? most? of the problem.
- Qualifying 12 or 13 teams should ensure that most of the serious contenders will progress while the number of teams qualifying provides a reasonable chance for lower seeded teams to progress to the NOT.
- I'm uncertain how continuing the SWT Swiss until the end of Thursday will be received. I think we should pitch this in much the same way that the ACBL does with the Swisses it runs in parallel with its major tournament: important events with lots of publicity to the winners and high placegetters.
- Should KO teams retain the right to choose their opponents in the NOT R8 and R4? If not, how should the draw be determined?

## SWPT Simulations

Submission by:

Peter Buchen and Matthew McManus

### 1 Introduction

September 4, 2014

This report presents the results and details of a number of considerations for Swiss Teams tournaments. In particular we look at four specific issues for the ABF's Southwest Pacific Teams (SWPT) tournament.

1. Whether different scoring methods can have a significant effect on the outcome of the tournament.
2. If there are benefits in using 13-rounds over the traditional 12-rounds. The 12-round format uses twelve 20-board rounds with only the first round draw fixed. The 13-round format uses two 10-board fixed-draw rounds for the first two rounds, followed by eleven 20-board rounds with the usual Swiss draw. Both formats utilize the same total number of boards.
3. Is the 12-round format sufficient to establish relatively stable results compared to the 14-rounds used in previous SWPT events?
4. Can different formats (the draw or scoring) affect the number of bolters, i.e. teams that Swiss the event?

These issues are addressed by Monte Carlo simulation assuming a field of 160 teams. In particular, a mathematical model for head-to-head team results is established and outcomes are obtained by randomizing and averaging over some 5000 tournaments.

### 2 Executive Summary

The results of these studies confirm the following:

1. Different scoring methods have virtually no effect on the outcomes as measured by the rank correlations of the average finishing positions using six different scoring methods. These methods included: the new 16, 18, 20 and 24 board continuous WBF scales (12-round tournaments); the 20 board old discrete WBF scale (12 rounds); and the 20 board new WBF scale for the 13-round format (see section 3.7 for full details).
2. The 12 and 13 round formats lead to very similar results with the following observations. Due to the fixed round draws (round-1 in the 12-round format; rounds 1 and 2 in the 13-round formats), teams numbered 81; 82; and correspondingly 41; 42; get a rough deal in terms of their Swiss Indices. The Swiss Index of a team measures the quality of its opponents ( i.e. the toughness of its draws) over all rounds of the tournament. This inequity can be completely removed by having team-1 v. team-2; team-3 v. team-4 etc. in the first round draw, with slightly better effects on other outcomes. The Tournament Committee should seriously consider this change (see section 3.9 for details).
3. While there can be significant variations of outcomes for the top seeds in a single tournament, the average outcomes over 5000 simulations shows a very stable trend. Most of the changes occur in the first 6 or 7 rounds, while a high degree of stability is observed for all rounds greater than 12 (see section 3.8 for details). Thus 12-rounds appear to be perfectly adequate for the 160 team field size.
4. The 13-round draw consistently give fewer bolters than the 12-round draw, but the difference (averaged over 5000 tournaments) from 1.39 to 1.21 makes it hardly worthwhile to use the 13-round format.

# Allocation of PQP

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The primary purpose of Playoff Qualifying Points (PQP) is to select the Australian team via the playoffs. To be eligible for the playoffs each player must have at least 1 PQP. Those players who amass a greater number of PQP are advantaged by playing in Division 1 (unless numbers do not allow for 2 divisions). This gives those teams a second chance to qualify for the final.

The criteria for allocating PQP to an event include:

- Quality of field eligible to receive PQP's
- Size of field
- Rigour of the event (e.g. long final matches)
- Relativity with other events and rebalance of awards due to increased number of events and PQP Inflation.
- Geographical fairness in access to PQP

Each year the Tournament Committee reviews the PQP table for the following year. It also considers applications from States/Tournament Organisers for allocation. In this instance the following criteria would be considered;

- The number of PQP events for that category (Open, Womens, Seniors)
- Comparative events
- A consistency or improvement in field quality over approximately a 3 year period for that event