

ABF TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN SYDNEY 1st September 2013 at 10:00 am at NSWBA

1. PRESENT

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

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Guideline document for training international teams – PR ongoing.

PR has concluded that any such enterprise involving travel or mentors is very expensive. It is possible to organise training via BBO, and this approach is currently being used. A voluntary mentor would be ideal, but they are hard to come by.

Successful cheap training depends on volunteers and the willingness of the participants.

Mutual Obligation Document

PK has updated the document provided by David Stern. DS has further ideas which he would like to add (KM to organise).

When players commence play in the Playoffs, they agree to abide by this document.

At the conclusion of the Playoffs the proposed subsidies for the Target Event should be available immediately. NTCs will provide successful teams with policy documents and other information. *The MC requests that this document is signed off prior to the commencement of the playoffs in 2014. The MC would like the final in advance of its meeting on 11/12 January 2014.*

Notification of changes regarding Regulations

There should be a readily accessible document on the ABF website, citing any change to the published Regulations, and the date of its implementation. This would be similar to that currently in operation for changes to PQP matters.

NTCs to set this up. *Noted and agreed.*

Appeals – document for members and chairs of committees – BN ongoing

Penalties for failure to enter scores and input of incorrect scores.

Since the implementation of a penalty policy, the number of errors had reduced dramatically, as evidenced at the ANC, Swan River and Coffs Harbour.

There remains a responsibility on the CTD to aim for the most complete and accurate data to be posted and used for a subsequent draw. Slow tables should be informed of their time status allowing them to speed up to complete the session.

Peter Busch document on the obligations of scorers

This will be sent to scorers for their feedback. NTC's to organise

Yellow Systems in the Butler Pairs

These will only be allowed in stages after the first.

Regulation change regarding PQP awards after a withdrawal – ongoing

Comments on Regulation Changes in general

The changes resulting from recent meetings have been sent to various parties who might be interested, such as Michael Wilkinson, Ron Klinger, Barbara Travis, John Brockwell, Jan Peach and others. No major issues resulted.

2. PQP Allocations

It is relatively easy to ascertain the total number of PQP earned in the previous year for any event. This would give a measure of the strength of the field. However it was felt that any change in the current PQP allocations should take into consideration factors such as: the size of the event, its location, its format, and its length.

Any organising body can apply for award of PQPs for their event(s), but applications will only be considered at the August TC meeting, and so must reach the Chairman by 31 July.

For 2014, the only change to the current PQP allocations will be the addition of the Adelaide Open Swiss Pairs with awards of 16, 8, 4, 2.

Early in 2014, the PQP allocations for the 2015 year will be considered.

3. Consumption of alcohol at ABF events

The Regulation should be changed to read 'Finals of Teams events'. LK

4. Byes in the ANC teams

The concept of eliminating byes in the ANC Teams was endorsed. There were problems with the 2nd round robin draw in Adelaide, meaning that the top teams did not play each other in the final rounds. This can be eliminated in future by retaining the draw as published, but simply moving one round so that the two teams from one state play each other in the first round of the second round robin.

The suggestion that NSW provide a second team as a result of a proposed Country Carnival was considered a good one. However, it was felt that each state should be free to determine the composition of the second team (if required). As state entries close some 4-5 weeks prior to the event, there should be sufficient time for the home state to propose any second teams necessary. *This matter will be raised at the Mid Term meeting of the ABF on 2nd November 2014. Outcome will be conveyed to the TC.*

5. Joint MC/TC meeting items:

A joint MC/TC meeting was held on 23rd June. This was considered beneficial, and should be repeated each year, probably in June.

Issues considered:

Target Events

The Target Events for International Representation are expected to be:

Zone 7 leading to the Bermuda Bowl in odd numbered years. If Zone 7 is held alongside the APBF, then the Australian Team will play both. If the APBF is disconnected from the Zone 7 Playoffs, then the target event for the Australian Team will be Z7 and will not necessarily include participation in APBF.

The Mind Sports Games in those years in which it is held.

In Rosenblum years, 2014, 2018 etc the TC will recommend a Target Event on a year by year basis. Possibilities would include the Commonwealth Games, the APBF or the Asia Cup (if an invitation is forthcoming). For 2014, this is the Asia Cup.

At the conclusion of the Playoffs, participation in the designated event(s) will be offered, with the subsidy (if any) as determined by the MC, notified at that point (this may influence acceptance of the offer). Any replacements or augmentations of teams will be as per the Regulations.

The Butler Pairs

This year the Butler Pairs in Adelaide were very popular. The participation in the Butler would appear to be unpredictable. At the previous ANC held in Adelaide, Stage I (of the three stage event) of the Open consisted of only 22 pairs compared with 60 pairs in 2013. The PQP allocation for the Butler Pairs is already at the top level, so increasing the awards was not considered a mechanism for increasing it's appeal.

Howard Melbourne's request to be allowed to represent Australia.

His residency and recent activity playing for other NCBO comply with WBF regulations. However, as the regulations stand, he does not comply with ABF regulations. He has a 2 year temporary visa, which may be converted to a permanent visa after he has resided in Australia for 2 years (from Sept 2012).

It would be possible to expedite his ratification as an Australian, if there was a change to the Regulations, indicating that an applicant will be eligible to represent Australia if he is a current temporary resident, and can satisfy MC he will be eligible to, and is in the process of becoming permanent Australian resident. ***The MC endorsed this proposal and asked that the regulations be updated accordingly. Chair of TC to reply to Melbourne.***

Dissemination of information to Representative Teams

NTC's to be responsible. In particular, players should be made aware that they are subject to WBF regulations regarding Drug Testing. ***NTCs to provide copy to the MC and post to the Playoff Web Site.***

Team for Commonwealth Games – top eligible team from 2014 NOT

Regulations regarding eligibility to take up this representative offer to be drafted by LK. These will be posted on the web as soon as EM has approved.

KM to amend Outcomes document from MC

6. Format of the Butler Pairs

Communication was received from W. Lazer indicating that he thought that Stage II of the Butler Pairs was too long. The event became demoralising for the poorly placed pairs. He suggested that *The Open Butler would be improved greatly if the 10 table stage 2 were seeded into EW and NS fields and played a 10 round Mitchell. This would qualify 5 pairs from each field to a 5 table Howell final. The total number of rounds required for this Stage 2 / Stage 3 format is still 19 so no change to the current timetable is required.*

The TC feels that there should be a Customer Feedback mechanism, possibly at the conclusion of events such as the Butler Pairs, to test the feelings of more of the players. However, feedback such as this is likely only to result in negative comment. ***MC concurs.***

Datum Calculation

Currently, the decision whether to use Leader's Butler or Full Field Butler is at the discretion of the TO for the various events. It was felt that there should be consistency across events in this calculation, the decision as to what to use is to be left to the NTCs. ***Noted.***

VP Scale

In 2014, the WBF Victory Point scale will be used in ABF events. This should include the Butler Pairs. ***The MC endorsed.***

7. Swiss Draws in Round 1

Correspondence was received from P. Gue indicating that there was inconsistency in the manner in which the draw for round 1 of ABF Swiss events was made. The various methods include random; numerical displacement; some other form of top vs bottom.

This should be standardised for all ABF events. ***Endorsed by MC.***

8. Inaccuracies inherent in Scoring Programs

At present there is no way that scoring programs in use at ABF events can be tested to ensure that their coding is error free. Quality control should be assured.

At the recent ANOT, the display of results after round 1 suggested that the draw for round 2 was not correct. In fact the draw was correct, but the display misleading.

In the Seniors' Butler Pairs in Adelaide, no pair in round 2 played the correct opponents (although the difference was minor).

Errors such as these, both in calculation or display of results or draws should be identified and remedied.

Will the NTCs be considering this – please reply.

There is scope for other disparity between scoring programs such as rounding up or down.

9. ABF On-site Representatives

The nomination of the ABF On-site representative should be made from those who will be present at the event. In order of preference the person in this position should be:

(a) An NTC (unless he has other duties such as directing or scoring)

- (b) Chairman of the Tournament Committee, *or member of the ABF Management Committee.*
- (c) A suitably qualified person. ~~such as Richard Grenside or John Broekwell~~
- ~~(d) A qualified person from the field.~~

At the conclusion of the event, the On-site Representative is required to submit a report to the ABF. In order to facilitate this they should be provided with a template outlining which, if any of the following occurred at the event: appeals, conflicts, field complaints. *MM to draft – MC would like to see a copy when done.*
The On-site Representative is the face of the ABF at these events.

10. Acclimatisation prior to play

Communication was received from B. Travis recommending a change to the requirement that players arrive on site on the day prior to the start of the event, when in a similar time zone. The change suggested is that for the same time zone, players should arrive in time to have a full night's sleep prior to the Opening Ceremony, and two nights for a substantial time zone shift.
PR to respond.

11. Captain's Report

Team Captains should be provided with an up-to-date information kit upon their appointment. There should also be a Captain's Report Template as each Captain must make a report to the ABF following an International Event. The secretary of the MC should acknowledge receipt of this report. There should be scope for feedback from the players. Teams should be equipped with a uniform. Recent observations indicate that a blazer is not necessary, but instead, smart wear which identifies the team should be provided.

There should be a person with whom Captains should liaise. This will ~~could~~ be the TC Chairman. **If the TC Chairman is not available, then the ABF Secretary should liaise. or perhaps the Marketing Coordinator.**

If a team performs well, there should be a congratulatory message from the ABF. This was not done when the Seniors won the recent APBF.

A daily blog was published on the ABF website during the recent APBF Tournament. This was compiled by David Morgan. Perhaps this is an area where again the Marketing Coordinator could be involved.

12. Other Matters

GNOT Regulations.

The question of formulating the regulations for the GNOT qualifying rounds was considered. This should be the responsibility of each region and does not have to be consistent Australia wide. Each region should negotiate with the ABF (JB) the number of teams that will qualify from their region. The GNOT final will be held at Tweed Heads.

Team Augmentation due to *force majeure*

The augmentation of Australian Teams after ratification for reasons of *force majeure* (as happened recently in China after the sudden death of Bobby Richman) was considered.
Under these circumstances, the team should propose three pairs as possible replacements to the ABF via their Captain. These may or may not include the partnerless player, and may or may not include players with whom the player in question has earned at least one PQP. *Force majeure* initiates a situation where amicable solution is the major consideration.

It was considered that at all major International Tournaments there be an on-site ABF representative. In Bali, this will be Simon Hinge. Responsibilities commence at the time that that representative arrives on site for the Tournament.

NPC of Australian Teams

On occasions there are requests for a compromised party to be an NPC. For example, a spouse or close relative. Under these circumstances there may be the possibility of conflict of interest perceived by either the MC or TC. In these situations, the team must be approached individually with the suggestions, and the decision must be unanimous. *MC referred this to General Counsel for comment.*

Standard format for ABF events

A document has been prepared by Peter Reynolds and is attached as an appendix.

Calendar Dates

World Youth Championships	13-21 August 2014
Rosenblum	10-25 October 2014

As the Rosenblum coincides with the proposed dates for the 2014 Sydney Spring Nationals, a request has been forwarded to the venue to see if a shift of 1 week might be available.

It was considered that conflicts which arise such as this should be attended to, if possible, by the particular Tournament Organiser.

Playoffs 2014

Matt McManus will draft the regs. The format will be the same for all playoffs and will be as for the 2010 Open playoff.

Next meeting : Saturday November 23rd 2013

APPENDIX 1

Tournament Structures for ABF Licensed events

Background Issues.

There are a number of Tournament Structures commonly used in bridge. These include:

- Swiss Movements (with or without Finals),
- Round Robin Structures including Seeding into Groups and playing finals, and
- Knock out Structures.

The right tournament structure is a function of the objective(s) of a tournament. There can be many objectives including:

- Determining a winner
- Determining a specified number of places
- Ranking throughout
- Large participation or large number of entry units
- Profitable for organisers
- Profitable for participants
- Enjoyable experience for participants
- Enjoyable for spectators

As bridge in Australia is an amateur sport/pastime key objects for most will be around enjoyment and participation, with a necessary outcome being a winner. Profitability will flow from participation and enjoyment.

Tournament structures also need to be cognisant of other constraints like time, facilities and cost. The key constraint for a Bridge Tournament, as an amateur sport/pastime, tends to be time. Typically the structure of the tournament needs to accommodate a large number of participants (or entry units) and reach a conclusion in a limited timeframe.

Factors affecting the duration of the Tournament include:

- Number of Sessions available, including night play and airline flights,
- Total number of rounds and number of rounds per session,
- Number of Boards per day,
- Match length, and
- Breaks between sessions.

Typical Tournament Structures

Some common tournament structures are discussed below. The list is not exhaustive and convenors are welcome to suggest other structures or combinations to the Tournament Committee.

Swiss Movements

Swiss tournament movements were originally devised for chess tournaments to deal with a large number of competitors and inadequate numbers of rounds or time to seed into groups and play finals.

There is a good discussion of various strengths and weaknesses of a Swiss Movement in the attached article (Appendix A).

Number of Rounds

The number of rounds required to produce a clear result is primarily a function of the number of participating units and the scoring method including the range of possible match outcomes. The number of required clear places also has a significant impact on the required number of rounds.

$$EU \leq 2^{(N - (P-1) - R)}$$

where EU: Entry Units

N: Number of Rounds

P: Number of clear Places required

R: Range of Match Results where R=0 for win or loss only, R= 1 for discrete win, draw, loss results, and R= 2 where the size of the win modifies the result (as per bridge teams matches).

So for a Bridge event where a Swiss qualifies 2 Entry Units to a final that has 9 rounds then the maximum number of entries to achieve a “sound” result is

$$64 = 2^{(9 - (2-1) - 2)} = 2^6$$

It should be noted that this is an approximation and if the number of Entry Units slightly less than the formula consideration should be given to adding a round.

This formula assumes the match results are an accurate reflection of skill so for short matches or small fields scored against averages consideration should be given to adding a round.

It is not theoretically possible to “over-Swiss” a tournament as increasing rounds simply adds accurate places and at the extreme becomes a round robin. It is possible to make the last rounds boring and pointless by having considerably more rounds than the required places.

Seeding of Swiss fields is not particularly important although having the top half play the bottom half in round one does help the sorting of the field and assists in accuracy with a limited number of rounds.

Knock out Structures

Knock out tournaments are ideal when limited resources to hold matches require the total number of matches to achieve a winner needs to be minimised (i.e. Tennis Tournaments where the number of courts is always limited). They will accurately determine a winner. Other places can be determined but the accuracy depends on seeding.

A significant disadvantage of a knockout tournament is half the field is no longer participating after the first round. This often leads to events where the knocked out units are fed into other events or repechages. The Australian GNOT final is a good example of such an event where there is an advantage that stays with winners rather than being dissipated when the repechage team or teams re-join the main event.

Round Robin Structures including Seeding into Groups and playing finals.

Round Robin Tournaments generally involve every Entry Unit playing every other Entry Unit in a match with all places determined by the total score. If each match is an accurate reflection of skill then a round robin is in theory completely accurate.

In practice no individual match is completely accurate and different conditions at different times effect results. In Chess tournaments double round robins with each contestant playing each other contestant with both the white and black pieces are considered very accurate events. In a Bridge Teams match the longer the match the more likely it will be an accurate reflection of skill.

So whilst round robin events are very accurate, the main disadvantage becomes evident, especially for large fields, in that they consume large amounts of resources and time.

Large round robin events where there is a significant disparity in skill can also become boring.

Round robin events also tend to lack a climax for which it is easy to gain publicity or promote the sport. It is for this reason that most sports that adopt a round robin qualifying series that provides finalists for a finals series.

The WBF commonly adopts Round Robin structures seeded into groups followed by knockout finals for its events. This works well where there is a strong event eliminated entry units to start.

A disadvantage of this type of structure can be the need to accurately seed the groups.

Appendix A – Swiss Movements

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss-system_tournament

A **Swiss-system tournament** is a commonly used type of tournament where players or teams need to be paired to face each other for several rounds of competition. This type of tournament was first used in a Zurich chess tournament in 1895, hence the name "Swiss system". The Swiss system is used when there are too many players to play a round-robin tournament. It is also preferable to an elimination tournament if all of the players can play at the same time (e.g. as in chess but not in tennis, due to a limited number of tennis courts).

For the rest of the article, the term *player* will be used to refer to the parties involved. A team may be considered as a player when teams are playing against other teams.

A Swiss tournament goes for a predetermined number of rounds, with all of the players taking part in each round. In each round two players compete head-to-head. All players participate in the entire tournament – none are eliminated. The winner (and top places) of the tournament is based on the final scores of the players. The final score is based on the number of points they accumulated for each round. In some competitions, one point is awarded to the winner of a round; in others, a number of points can be earned each round.

The principle of a Swiss tournament is that each player will be pitted against another player who has done as well (or poorly) as him or herself. For the first round, players are paired either according to some pattern or randomly (according to common practice in that type of game or sport). For subsequent rounds, players are sorted according to their cumulative scores and players are assigned opponents that have the same or similar score to that point. One proviso is that the same players never oppose each other twice. There may be adjustments made to the natural order. For instance, in chess the pairings may be changed to equalize the number of times a player has been White and Black.

Determining a clear winner (and, incidentally, a clear loser) usually requires the same number of rounds as a knockout tournament, that is the binary logarithm of the number of players rounded up. Therefore three rounds can handle eight players, four rounds can handle sixteen players and so on. If fewer than this minimum number of rounds are played, it can happen that two or more players finish the tournament with a perfect score, having won all their games but never faced each other.

Compared to a knockout tournament the Swiss system has the inherent advantage of not eliminating anyone. That means that a player can enter such a tournament knowing that he will be able to play in all rounds, regardless of how well he does. The worst that can happen in this respect is being the player left over when there is an odd number of players. The player left over receives a bye, meaning the player does not play that particular round but receives a point. The player is reintroduced in the next round and will not receive another bye.

Another advantage compared to knockout tournaments is that the final ranking gives some indication of relative strength for all contestants, not just for the winner of the tournament. As an example, the losing finalist in a knockout tournament may not be the second best contestant; that might have been any of the contestants eliminated by the eventual tournament winner in earlier rounds.

In a Swiss system tournament, sometimes a player may have picked up such a great lead that by the last round he is assured of winning the tournament even if he loses the last game. This leads to two disadvantages. First, a Swiss system tournament does not always end with the exciting climax of the knockout's final. Second, this unmotivated first-place player may lose their final game, thus affecting the standings of other players. One fairly common fix for this issue is to hold single elimination rounds among the top scorers. In Scrabble tournaments a player with such a strong lead will often be paired against the highest-placed player who cannot possibly finish in the prize-winning zone; this process is known as *Gibsonization* (also known as the *Gibson Rule*) after it was first applied to the U.S. Scrabble Champion David Gibson in the 1995 All-Stars tournament. He is the all-time top money winner in the history of Scrabble, and earned a particular reputation by clinching victory in major events before the final round. Because of this, players are said to be *Gibsonized*: after winning, they are paired with lower-ranked players to avoid affecting the ranking of runners-up.

An additional disadvantage is that, while the players finishing near the top are typically those with the best performances, and those finishing near the bottom are those with the worst performances, the players in the middle tend to be jumbled with little meaningful order. For example, at a recent edition of the European Chess Championship, players scoring $5\frac{1}{2}/11$ had performance ratings ranging from 2189 to 2559; such a difference suggests that the stronger-performing player would score more than 90% against the weaker-performing one. One player with a 2441 performance rating scored two and a half points better than one performing at 2518.

The system has been used for pool trialing in England. To overcome there being multiple players with the same perfect score, players are eliminated after a certain amount of losses. This causes a final match where only one player will end with a perfect score and automatically qualify, while the rest of the field will play a round robin to determine the final number of entrants.

Compared with a round-robin tournament, a Swiss can handle many players without requiring an impractical number of rounds. An elimination tournament is better suited to a situation in which only a limited number of games may be played at once, e.g. tennis. In a Swiss system, all players can be playing a round at the same time.