

Funding international representation

International representation is a key role for the Australian Bridge Federation (ABF). As for other national mind-game and sporting organisations, participation in world and regional championships is expensive and largely benefits a small number of members (in the case of the ABF, less than 0.5% of the 37,000-odd members) – but it is nonetheless a vital responsibility of the ABF.

In total, the ABF spends around 16% of its annual revenue holding playoffs and subsidising the travel costs of Australian representative teams participating in world championships and in the qualifying event – typically the Zone 7 playoff that is held at the end of the Asia Pacific Bridge Championship. (Note that funding for the various youth teams comes out of the budget allocation for youth bridge, so is in addition to this figure.)

The World Bridge Federation (WBF) announced earlier this year that future world championships would include an event for teams of mixed pairs. Following enthusiastic player feedback for Australian participation in such events, the ABF intends to send teams to these championships. In 2019, unlike for previous mixed teams events, the Mixed Team will receive some support, although this may be less than that provided to the other representative teams.

The ABF is seeking views from players and state and territory associations on the future funding of the international mixed teams to help strike the right balance and spend ABF funds responsibly.

Issues

The addition of mixed teams requires the ABF to consider whether and, if so, how that team should be subsidised. As well, it requires a broader consideration of the impact on the funding of existing teams:

- Should funding for the mixed team be in addition to the existing funding for international representation?
- Should the existing funding be distributed among all the teams (i.e. the current open, women's and seniors' as well as the new mixed)?
- Should the ABF fund teams at different levels in different years?
- Should the ABF spend some of its funding for international representation on training and coaching?

Each of these issues raises further questions.

If the funding is in addition to existing funding should it be contingent on the ABF raising additional revenue? If so, where would the revenue come from? Or should the ABF reduce its funding of other activities it supports? If so, where should the cuts occur?

If the existing pool of funding is to be shared, how should that occur? Should one or more teams receive priority, i.e. higher subsidies, than other teams? If so, on what basis should priority be determined? By estimated likelihood of success? Should the open team, which participates in the premier event, be better supported than teams in events restricted by age or sex? Should one or more teams be self-funded or receive minimal funding support (say entry fees and uniforms only), as is the practice of national organisations such as Scotland's?

If the ABF were to fund teams differently in different years, should the practice of providing limited support in years when there is no WBF championship for national teams be extended? Should Australia only send largely self-funded teams in those years (i.e. the ABF pays entry fees and provides uniforms only)?

If funding were provided for training and coaching, should this be instead of funding travel or subsidising participation in the playoffs?

[NOTE: This questionnaire is designed so you can complete it electronically. Each box before an option is a tick box: if you click the box it will insert a cross. Click again to remove the cross. Where the question allows an open answer, please type your answer in the box. You can type as many words as you wish. After answering the questions, please save your document and send it via email to david.morgan@abf.com.au before 22 October.]

About you

Have you contested a playoff?

Yes No

Which playoff(s) do you hope to contest in the future? [Please tick as many as relevant]

Open Seniors Women's Mixed

Has the cost of participating in the playoffs prevented you from entering them?

Yes No

Has the cost of representing Australia overseas prevented you from entering the playoffs?

Yes No

Funding for international representative teams

While it would be ideal for Australian international bridge teams if funding for the international teams is increased, the ABF has other funding commitments and may not be able to do so. The next questions assume the budget remains stable and tries to determine preferences for distributing those funds.

1. The current levels of funding should be spread equally among all four (instead of three) international teams, i.e. the mixed team should be funded to the same extent as other teams meaning that subsidies for the other teams would decrease.

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.]

1 2 3 4 5

2. The ABF should select one or two teams (e.g. women's and mixed) for each four-year cycle and fully fund that [those] team[s] while providing less support for the other representative teams.

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.]

1 2 3 4 5

3. The open team should be fully funded; the other teams should share the remainder of the current funding pool.

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.]

1 2 3 4 5

4. The ABF should maintain the current level of funding for each representative team when they travel overseas but reduce the subsidies provided to players who contest the playoffs.

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.]

1 2 3 4 5

5. The ABF should maintain the current level of funding for each representative team when they contest world championships for national teams (i.e. every odd year and every fourth year when the World Bridge Games (the former Olympiad) are held.

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.]

1 2 3 4 5

6. Every fourth year, when there are no world championships for national teams, the ABF should pay only entry fees and provide uniforms for the teams formed from the playoffs.

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.]

1 2 3 4 5

7. The ABF should save money by not running any playoffs in years when there are no world championships for national teams. (These are the years when a pairs playoff is currently used.)

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.]

1 2 3 4 5

8. The ABF should provide training and coaching for national teams (including for players who are likely to be contenders for selection in future years).

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.]

1 2 3 4 5

9. This training/coaching should be funded by reduced subsidies for the teams that travel overseas.

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.]

1 2 3 4 5

10. This training/coaching should be funded by reduced subsidies for contestants in the playoffs.

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.]

1 2 3 4 5

11. Do you have other suggestions for funding international teams? If making suggestions such as sponsorship please be specific about which organisations or companies may sponsor a bridge team.

--

12. Are there any other comments you would like to make on the funding of international teams?

--