

ABF TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN SYDNEY

12th FEBRUARY 2012 at 10:00 am

1. PRESENT

Kim Morrison (chair), Peter Kahler, Bruce Neill, Eric Ramshaw, Peter Reynolds, Marcia Scudder.

Matthew McManus, Laurie Kelso, Sean Mullamphy were also in attendance.

2. ABF EVENTS

(a) General Matters

i. Dissemination of information.

The chain of events at present is that the minutes of the TC meetings are internally confirmed, then passed to the MC for approval. In general there are points on which the MC requires modifications. The revised minutes then go to the ABF General Counsel. After approval they can be published on the web. Regulation changes go to Laurie Kelso, who implements the changes and ensures that the relevant personnel are notified of changes.

ii. **Last minute changes** are sometimes unavoidable in the running of ABF events. These require information to be passed on to the players and relevant parties quickly. Every effort should be made to keep the information, particularly that regarding timing, up to date on the web as the majority of players have access. However, it was felt that an additional safeguard might be to institute a TWITTER regime, with TWEETS announcing last minute changes. This would require players to be instructed to interrogate TWITTER. An alternative could be for the TO to send changes via SMS to the captains – requiring prior registration of a suitable mobile number.

iii. **Appeals** after the last qualifying round can be very time consuming, and disruptive to the smooth running of the tournament. Therefore it is suggested that there be some significant monetary outlay to lodge such an appeal, the money only being returned if the appeal was found to have merit. For appeals held before the final qualifying round, and which would delay the start of the final round, it is suggested that there be a group of tables surrounding that of the appellants for which the draw is held back, and resolved only after the result of the appeal is known. All other matches, which are not affected by the outcome of the appeal, can start on time.

iv. **For Swiss Pairs** events, where two leaders become evident early, the draw is such that these two pairs will always be in opposing directions. This means that good results for one of the pairs actually benefit the other, and vice versa. It is recommended that Swiss draws should routinely see alternation of 1 (NS) 2,3 (EW) 4,5 (NS) with 1,2 (NS) 3,4 (EW) 5,6 (NS).

v. **OH & S.** The issue of possible non compliance with OH & S regulations for staff at ABF Tournaments was raised. It was felt that all TO's should be aware of the need for staff to have suitable breaks during their working time to allow for rest and food. The possibility of producing a Risk Assessment document for the running of the tournament was considered. This is an issue that may need to be discussed by the ABF MC.

(b) Summer festival of bridge (SFOB)

- i. **The Last Train** is now defunct as a PQP event. The suggestion was made that it be replaced by a preliminary event for which there would be no PQPs.
- ii. **New Format for SWPT/NOT.** This was well-received by the better players, but many of the lesser players felt deprived of the extra day. The TC suggests making rounds 1 and 2 of the SWPT each 10 boards, to increase the accuracy of the final 8 placings. These would be predrawn to allow for a seamless movement from round 1 to round 2.
- iii. **Black Friday** unfortunately turned out to be disappointing, with hundreds of players not involved in the revamped **Blue Ribbon Pairs (BRP)**. The TC suggests that Friday be filled by a new one day event, perhaps Swiss pairs.
- iv. **Blue Ribbon Pairs (BRP).** Despite lack of interest in this event prior to the Festival, this event did prove to be successful, and those who played found it enjoyable. The TC suggests that for 2013 this be a two day event, possibly changing the format to Match Points converted to VPs (the format currently used in the DCOP). The BRP would run concurrently with the NOT semi-finals and finals, Australian Mixed Teams, and perhaps incorporate the existing National Flighted Swiss Pairs. (Losing semi-finalists from the NOT could drop into the Final of the BRP if they wished). In addition, the Category finals from the SWPT, with even more categories, could be reintroduced. However, the format of the Festival is determined by the TO, with reference to the TC only for those events with associated PQPs.
- v. **Finals.** The TC recommends that there be consistency between the final series of the NOT and the NWT/NST. The semi-finals of the NWT/NST should allow for 1st in the qualifying to choose from 3rd/4th, with the proviso that 2nd may also opt to be included in that choice. There was a change of start time for the NWT/NST final, details of which were not absorbed by some players. Consequently they arrived late. In this electronic age, the suggestion was made that such changes be circulated using SMS to the captain, or TWITTER.
- vi. **Seeding in Summer Festival.** Seeds were determined as the mean of those supplied by the members of the seeding panels.
- vii. **Early round draw in NOT.** In 2012 the draw did not comply with the Tournament Regulations, which state that ties are broken on totalimps. This will be corrected for 2013. However, the change was recommended that whenever a team scores 25, its opponents be regarded as scoring 5 for the purposes of tie breaking which involves the sum of the opponents Victory Points. This change should apply to all tournaments and should be included in the Tournament Regulations.
All scorers need to be notified
- viii. **BBO.** This was not considered to be of acceptable quality. Problems were mainly associated with the competence of the operators. Traian Chira and Ray Ellaway will be taking over responsibility for BBO at ABF events and it is hoped that this will lead to improved services.
- ix. **Scoring.** This needs to be improved. There were long delays before scores and the draw were available on the internet. The player names were not captured for adequate display of features such as datum leaders. Our bridge playing population has become accustomed to very high levels of service with respect to scoring and display of results, so unfortunately, an inferior effort, for whatever reason, is not received well.

(c) Playoffs

A general rule is recommended for the Playoffs where Brown Sticker and HUM systems are only permitted in the Playoffs, if they are permitted at some stage of the World Event for that year. For 2012, the World Mind Games preclude the use of these conventions at any time, and so they are not permitted in the Playoffs. The allowed systems for the Playoffs will change from year to year depending on the Regulations of the specific World Target event. This may lead to difficulties for 2013 and beyond, where the early time slot (see below) may precede the publication of system regulations for the Target event. **In this case, it is recommended that the system regulations for the most recent equivalent event prevail.**

In the **2012 Playoffs**, it may be necessary to have different time frames for the Open and Women's events, depending on the total number of entries in each. The final timetables will be promulgated when these numbers are known.

The **2013 Playoffs** will take place in December 2012 on a trial basis (player feedback will be sought at the conclusion). This necessitates a truncation of the PQP award, with the final events for the 2013 Playoffs being those at the 2012 Sydney Spring Nationals. The 2012 GNOT will be first event with PQPs counting towards the 2014 Playoffs. Holding the Playoffs in December allows sufficient time for notification of teams attending the APBF, usually in the following May. A preliminary notice will appear soon on the ABF website, giving approximate dates and conditions. The significant change for the 2013 Playoffs is that, in order to enter the Playoffs, each player must have earned at least 1 PQP in that category (Open, Women's or Seniors').

Augmentation of 4 person teams for International Representation should follow the rules in the General Regulations, except that the ranked list may contain pairs who did not play in the Semi-final or Final. However, there should be a requirement of a minimum number of pairs on the list (say 2 or 3) who did play in the Semi-final or Final.

(d) Australian National Championships (ANC)

The TC recommends that byes be eliminated from the ANC Teams. To avoid byes for the Open, Women's & Senior series the TC recommends addition of a second team from the Home State or, if not possible, from that state which most recently hosted the ANC, which has not had double representation in the previous year. For this to work satisfactorily, all states must notify their intention, or otherwise of sending teams in each category, by the end of March. If two teams represent one state, only the higher-placed team after the round robin can qualify for the final. The TC recommends that the ABF waive the entry fee for this additional team as it is for the mutual benefit of all participants. To avoid byes for the Youth series the TC is seeking advice from the Chairman of the Youth Committee. **KM**

(e) ANOT

The inclusion of an Open Swiss Pairs event to run concurrently with the existing Women's, Seniors' and Restricted Teams from 2012 was approved. At this stage there will be no PQP awards for the new event.

(f) CALENDAR

Various options for the location of the Butler Pairs in the Calendar were discussed. The TC has previously recommended the combination of the Butler Pairs with the GNOT to be held at Tweed Heads in July. This would occur unless the state which would normally have been allocated the Butler Pairs wished to retain the event. In 2013, SA have indicated that they would like to run it. In 2014 NSW have left the options open for it to be combined with the GNOT or with the ANC, or, indeed at some other time in the calendar. In 2015, WA would like to run the Butler Pairs. So there will be no firm decision to combine the Butler Pairs with the GNOT in July until at least 2016. ACT have indicated that there is no place for the Butler Pairs as a permanent option there in winter, or in the Floriade/Parliamentary season.

The time slot for the Barrier Reef Tournament was also discussed. The June long weekend, traditionally its home and currently clashing with the VCC, is to be abolished leaving long weekends in Queensland in May and October. In 2012 it will be held in June in Cairns, in 2013 in Townsville in October and in 2014 in McKay in May. The proximity of the ANOT is a concern.

3. OTHER MATTERS

- (a) **Duties of the National Tournament Coordinator(s) (NTC)**
Discussion took place as to the relative authority of the NTC (or alternative on-site ABF representative); the Tournament sub-committee and the Tournament Organiser during ABF events. It was concluded that issues that become apparent near to the event should be discussed by phone or email by the Tournament sub-committee and NTCs, with the decision to be sent to the TO.
- (b) **Length of Finals**
The recommendation is 64 boards, unless there has been prior dispensation for a smaller number of boards from the TC.
- (c) **Mutual Obligation Document between International Representatives and the ABF**
International representatives should expect to be working on their partnership, with respect to both bidding and play, from the time of selection until they fulfil their overseas commitments. The recommendation is that this work be overseen by the non-playing captain with a report to be submitted to the ABF bimonthly.
- (d) **Training of International Teams.**
Various possibilities exist for this, including internet based practice, seminars and mentors. A document will be prepared outlining the approaches which would be feasible for a given budget (say 10-50 K). (PR)
- (e) **Non-Playing Captains for International Events.**
After each international event, the non-playing captain should also submit to the ABF a report, not exceeding 3 pages in length. This can be accompanied by supplementary material for historical use. Guidelines for the report content will be written (BN).
- (f) **Appeals Personnel**
Instructions for Appeals Chairs and members of Appeals Committees will be compiled (BN). A national register of possible Appeals Chairmen should be available to assist TOs to compile their lists. The list of personnel from which Appeals Panels will be selected for a particular tournament should be vetted by the NTC prior to the event. For events such as the Playoffs or the Summer Festival, the possibility of a duty roster of Chairmen and Members to be available at short notice to constitute an Appeal, was discussed. It may be considered appropriate that those people should be paid, or food provided in exchange for them being available.
- (g) **Changes to Alert Regulations**
Correspondence was received from Michael Wilkinson suggesting some simplification and changes to the alert regulations; including announcements of 1C and 1NT styles, alerting of non-transfers in standard transfer situations and alerting of specific doubles. The concept of an overhaul of the Alerting Regulations is directed to the Alert Regulation Committee.
- (h) **Discussion Forum**
There has been a multitude of emails circulating, commenting on various issues. The MC (and TC) believes that the best way for players to air their opinions would be via a discussion forum. This

would allow threads to be set up, and see interested parties 'discuss' issues freely. Those issues considered appropriate could then be discussed by the TC, with player input already available. Setting up of the forum should be initiated by the Player Liaison Committee.

- (i) **Champion Pair:** It was considered appropriate to institute the concept of the Champion Pair. This pair would be the best performed pair at the Blue Ribbon Pairs at the Summer Festival, the Dick Cummings Open Pairs at the Spring Nationals, and the Open Pairs at the Gold Coast Tournament. The prize could be entry to an overseas event. This should increase the prestige of these three Pairs events.
- (j) **Word based system card.**
This was considered to be the domain of the System Committee.

5. Correspondence

- Email from Ross Crichton re ANC byes (KM)
- Email from Ron Klinger re overseas events and calendar issues (KM)
- Email from Ben Thompson re rules for representing Australia (KM – referred to Eilis Magner)
- Emails from players (Ben Thompson, Jenny Thompson, Barbara Travis, Ron Klinger, David Stern, Sartaj Hans) re playoff date change.
- Email from Sheila re Brown sticker conventions in playoffs (KM)
- Email from Ron Klinger re starting times of NST (KM)
- Email from Ron Klinger re appeals process (KM)
- Email from Michael Wilkinson re alerting regulations (KM)

4. NEXT MEETING TBA

ACTIONS:-

- Set up TWITTER or SMS for last minute changes.
- Appeals panel for use after the last qualifying round.
- Change in Swiss Pairs draw mechanism
- OH&S issues at ABF Tournaments
- Summer Festival issues – mostly the domain of SM who was present at the meeting. A correction to the tie-break procedure for early draws in the SWPT to be made (SM to notify his scorer)
- Playoff and augmentation rules - KM to keep PG and DS informed
- Removal of Byes from the ANC – KM to liaise with states and the Youth Committee.
- Calendar issues – Butler Pairs – still under consideration; Barrier Reef – new timeslot from 2013
- Duties of NTC – MC in conjunction with TC and NTCs
- Mutual Obligation Document – Players and the ABF for International Events – PK to prepare
- Training of International Teams – PR to consider and produce a guideline document.
- NPCs for International Events – BN to produce guideline document
- Appeals – documents for members and chairs of committees – BN to draft documents
- Changes to alert regulations – to Alert Regulation Committee
- Web based discussion Forum – to be set up, perhaps by Player Liaison Committee in collaboration with the webmaster.