



Tournament Committee

MINUTES

Meeting held in Sydney at the NSWBA
Saturday 31st August 2019, 9:45-4:00

1. Present

Peter Reynolds (acting Chair), Sheila Bird, Laurie Kelso, Warren Lazer, Matthew McManus, David Morgan and Marcia Scudder.

Pauline Gumbly (observer in the role of calendar and PQP issues)

Apologies: none

2. Matters arising from previous minutes

a. Player consultation on three-stage format for Open Butler Pairs

WL distributed a survey during and after the Butler at the Melbourne ANC. He has compiled the findings.

Summary

- 23 people completed the survey as at Monday 26th August.
A number of others responded orally or sent emails giving their view.
- About 75% of respondents had played the Butler 4-10 times. Approx 25% had played 3 or fewer.
- All but 1 or 2 had played the 10 table final at least once.
- Over 90% play the Open Butler if they qualify for it.
- It's 50/50 in preference for 2 versus 3 stages, with 1 respondent being ambivalent.
- A few commented that a better c/f is required.
- A few commented that 3 stages would allow bigger stage 2 and maybe 7 table final, quite happily suggesting another day's play.

After discussion, TC agreed to keep the current 2 Stage format for 2020 in Adelaide, but to trial the 3 Stage format in 2021 at Orange. For the 3 Stage format, those in Stage 2 who failed to qualify for Stage 3 could opt to drop in to Stage 2 of the Women's or Seniors' Butler, as appropriate.

b. Accreditation of scorers and scoring programs

This is ongoing, with MM and LK to present a discussion paper at the first TC meeting of 2020.

c. Appeals

TC recommends that the Reviewer system should replace Appeals from the start of 2020. Optimally there will be a person (or persons) on site who is (are) competent at the Review process and have not taken any part in the table ruling which led to the request for the Reviewer, or have played in the event in question. This could be achieved in large events, such as the SF and GC, by having two such people (possibly a Director or an Organiser) present and available to deal with Reviews.

However, it is not necessarily feasible to have an on site Reviewer for small events, such as the Playoffs. In this case, the Reviewer may have to be available by phone. MM also recommended that on rare occasions where the table ruling is complex, it may still be necessary to convene an Appeals Committee (this is within the CTD powers and does not impact the decision to use reviewers rather than Appeals Committees in all instances).

LK is of the opinion that there is only a small number of people who would make competent Reviewers at present, but with suitable guidance, others could be trained to take on this role. LK will compile a pool of people that he deems competent and ask them if they may be able to accept the role on occasions. He will also define the role.

PR will propose this to MC so that details can be included on the ABF website.

d. Future Mixed Teams Playoffs and PQPs of Mixed Events

In light of the increasing number of Mixed Teams events on the International Calendar, TC recommends that the order of the Playoffs be changed to Open, Mixed, Women's/Seniors', commencing with the Playoffs at the end of 2020 determining the 2021 Australian Teams.

The calendar rearrangement would see:

Open Playoffs: November in Canberra over 6 days

Mixed Playoffs: December in Sydney over 4 days

Women's/Seniors': February in Canberra over 6 days.

CIB already includes Mixed Teams and the ANOT is likely to introduce Mixed Teams in 2020. TOs of other National events should be encouraged to consider the introduction of Mixed Teams into their programs.

TC also recommends that for the PQP year commencing with the SN in 2021 (leading to the Playoffs at the end of 2022/beginning of 2023 and thence to the 2023 Bermuda Bowl), the format of the MXT Playoff be the same as that for the other Playoffs, i.e. limit of 8 teams determined by MXT PQPs.

TC discussed the allocation of Mixed PQPs. These would not be transferrable to the other categories, but PQPs earned in the Open or Women's events could be transferred to the mixed category.

For 2020 the MXT Playoffs would duplicate those in 2019, but with no non-contending teams. There would be no necessity to lodge systems.

e. Annual PQP Review

MC requested a rationale for changes made to the PQP awards. This is as follows:

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 entry into the 8 team playoff field and choice of opponent.

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, Women's, Seniors')
- Comparative events
- A consistency or improvement in field quality over approximately a 3 year period for that event.

In this regard comparative events within categories are the primary consideration.

Comparisons/consistency across categories e.g. Open to Women are not of much importance when considering the relative strength of a field.

3. Open Playoff Regulations

MM has drafted the Open Playoff Regulations more closely defining the rules for substitutions and augmentation. The concept of Nominated Pairs, those pairs appearing on the entry list, has facilitated the tightening of these rules. Significant changes are:

Substitutes:

4.4 Substitutes will only be permitted if the team is unable to field two Nominated Pairs. If two Nominated Pairs are available to play, no substitutes will be allowed. The maximum number of substitutes permitted in a stanza is one. If a team has fewer than three of their original members available for any stanza, the team will forfeit the match.

Augmentation:

11.4 Where a team of four has won the right to represent Australia in a designated event, whether having entered the Playoffs as a team of four or having become a team of four following a withdrawal permitted by the MC under 10.4, they must augment a third pair.

11.4.1 The team shall prepare an ordered shortlist of eligible pairs for submission to the ABF TC.

11.4.1 To be included on the shortlist the pair must have participated in the Open Playoff event as a Nominated Pair and must have played at least 50% of stanzas in all matches played.

The entire document will be available on the Playoff website prior to the event.

4. Substitutions for known medical reasons and other reasons for cause.

Arising from recent events:

- a) Discussions relating to substitutions at the ANC, and
- b) Substitutions in the Open Butler Pairs for cause.

TC recommends that the substitution policy for events other than the playoffs should be relaxed in circumstances such as these.

Bridge is one of the few games where seriously ill players can still participate. If we "penalise" teams including teams of 6 that include player with significant illnesses, then these players will not get onto teams.

TC recommends giving the CTD discretion to allow substitutes of any strength into teams, including 6 person teams, for cause. The substitute may become a replacement without

penalising the team. Adjusted scores should not be considered where the unit remains substantially the same. This should include 1 player in a pairs event being replaced, and 1 pair in a teams event being replaced.

5. Review of 2019 ANC

The 2019 ANC was successfully run. The schedule was good, in particular the 4 x 16 board matches in the ANC Teams.

The quality of the field in the ANC Pairs was not high, but could be improved if it is advertised beforehand that players who fail to qualify for the ANC Teams finals can play in the Pairs – in Melbourne it was only made clear on the morning of the last qualifying day that there would be no fee for these players.

The Victory “Dinner” turned out to be a stand-up affair, although the cost was more appropriate for a sit down dinner. It was held at the conclusion of the Pairs on Friday night by which time many of the Teams contestants had opted to go home. TC recommends that this event should take place at the conclusion of the Teams Finals, with presentations of the prizes for the Pairs being held on Friday evening.

The schedule used for 2019 will be essentially unchanged for the 2021 ANC in Orange. The Victory Dinner will be held on Thursday night, with a separate event on Friday night following the conclusion of the Pairs.

6. Other business

a) At the previous meeting a recommendation was made that the Seniors’ Playoff format would be 128 board matches instead of 96, thus mirroring the other Playoffs. This followed a survey of players which did not show a distinct preference for 128 or 96. Unfortunately this item was omitted from those minutes.

b) TC recommends that the board rule for partnership bonus should be 50% (rounded down) to equate to that for each match.

Some discussion ensued as to whether the rule for title should also be raised from 25% to 50% but this was rejected.

c) DM raised the issue of multimeaning openings which are not classified as Yellow. TC feels that the onus is on the players using these methods to adequately pre-alert their opponents.

7. Next Meeting: Saturday Feb 8th, 2020 in Sydney at the NSWBA