

**ACBL BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
DETROIT, MI
MARCH 3-6, 2008**

**REPORT FROM BILL COOK, JR.
DISTRICT 10 REPRESENTATIVE**

Board actions were as follows:

- Deferred a decision on the future location of ACBL Headquarters until the Las Vegas Board Meeting in July.
- Approved a policy effective at the Las Vegas NABC to disallow from the playing area of national events, adjacent hallways, restrooms or accessible break areas electronic devices capable of sending or receiving communications, excluding health related equipment.

The restriction shall apply to all pairs, team members, captains, coaches, recorders and kibitzers and shall apply throughout any actual playing session or segment.

Penalty for first offense of one full board or 12 IMPS. Penalty for second offense shall result in disqualification from the event for the pair/team.

- Approved Goals and Guidelines for future NABCs.
- Amended the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR). The most significant changes are: 1) an advocate for a complainant cannot be an attorney or a member of the ACBL Board of Directors; 2) complainant's attorney, if they have one, may not be present in the hearing room; 3) "Preponderance of the Evidence" meaning evidence that is more convincing than the evidence opposed to it replaces the previous terminology "clear and convincing proof" meaning proof which is more than a probability but less than the certainty required in a criminal case as the basis for determining guilt.
- Denied a motion to permit a wide range (10-18 HCP) 1 NT opening bids for the approved Mid Chart Conventions.
- Approved as a Mid Chart Convention an opening bid of two diamonds that shows a weak two bid in either major.
- Approved management's proposal to change the way ACBL charges for STaC's effective March 31, 2008. Clubs will now be charged a fee per table based on a sliding scale that is to include all director costs.
- Approved a 3 year commitment to fund teachers for a Shortened Mini Bridge in School program which will be permitted through the 6th grade level only. Teachers will receive a subsidy of \$200.00 per class for eight hours of instruction and supervised play.
- Approved the following policy statement:
"The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), acting as the WBF Zone 2 Authority, expresses its disapproval of all non-bridge related public statements and demonstrations by any Zone 2 federation representative participating in an international bridge competition."

The ACBL request that the federations in the jurisdiction of Zone 2 adopt regulations disallowing such public statements and demonstrations.

- Modified the Master Point Plan to add the following reduction factors for Knockout Team events.

KO Reduction Factors

# of Teams in Bracket	Reduction Factor	# of Teams in Bracket	Reduction Factor
16	1.000	10	0.760
15	0.960	9	0.720
14	0.920	8	0.600
13	0.880	7	0.525
12	0.840	6	0.450
11	0.800	5	0.375

The Bracket Team Average Point Table has been modified to change the next to high bracket (Average Master Points) to 25,000 – 40,000 and the high bracket to 40,000+.

JAY BAUM, ACBL CEO, REPORT INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

- 2007 Membership increased by 983 net members.
- Sanctioned Table Count topped 3,000,000 in 2007.
- 2007 total tournament table count broke the record previously set in 2004.
- Income exceeded expenses in 2007 by \$1,709,000
- The Co-operative Advertising program continues to be very successful, helping bring in 11,420 new members in 2007. \$134,283.70 was distributed to 327 different clubs.
- A newsletter to new members begins in April and will be mailed quarterly. Articles will be geared toward helping new players become familiar with bridge terminology, conventions and ways to improve their game.
- Reported on the current status of wireless scoring devices, Bridge Mate (BM) and Bridge Pad (BP). ACBL will probably use on a lease basis for some events in future NABC’s. ACBL ownership of the devices doesn’t appear to be practical at this time.
- ACBL will begin running all STaC’s with Directors (DIC) who are salaried employees, eliminating the use of part time TDs. STaC fees will be assessed on a per table basis. The ACBL will no longer charge a STaC by the session for tournament director services, nor will TDs be charging sessions against tournaments for any purpose. Such a plan normalizes STaC charges, guarantees sponsor success and opens STaCs to small areas that in the past could not afford the session rates charged by ACBL.

UPDATE ON ACBL STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2009

Objective #1: Sanction Tournaments

This is and will continue to be a core business of ACBL. Completion of the online sanctioning process will be a 2008 priority.

The explosion of online sanctioned games has exceeded expectations and the demand for higher rated games will become a greater issue in the future.

After considering options of clubs operating sanctioned games that deviated from the “Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge,” there was no agreement by clubs or players. The needs of many inexperienced players have been met with Easybridge and IN games.

We have also dropped plans for rubber bridge events, electing to stay with certain events that allow SAYC only.

Objective#2: Provide Quality Member Services

We have added staff to man a “help desk” position moving us closer to being able to assist members in one day or less. The majority of our live calls are technology related (web site or ACBL score) and are solved by the Tournament or Club departments on the day of the call.

Based on the annual survey of members our satisfaction level with members is very high. Will continue to work toward increasing the already high satisfaction level.

Current rating for ACBL members is another major priority.

Among the goals of a current ranking system:

- Produce fairer competitive groups
- Help clubs and tournaments bracket
- Identify fast improving players
- Recognize diminishing skill levels of long time members

Both OK Bridge and e-bridge have developed ranking systems that enable them to rate the results of each board played (across the field) weighted against the “strength” factor of each opponent.

Given the magnitude of data required to be accumulated to evaluate performance by players on individual hands relative to their ranking is beyond the scope of ACBL’s hardware and software, not to mention beyond the scope of its programming staff.

Any rating system other than one tied to master points is not currently within the capability of our organization. If we can accept this as a given, we can start thinking about a rating system based on the information that is available. The goal would be to develop a model that would allow us to use the data in a meaningful rating system.

Objective#3: Expand Awareness of Participation in Bridge

We continue to have a presence at AARP annual meeting.

Robert Levey, a well known media personality in the DC area, will speak again at this year’s Washington meeting.

Bob has also been engaged to author bridge stories for placement in news papers, magazines and alumni publications.

Objective#4: Position ACBL as the Authority on Bridge in North America

The functions of this objective have been completed or are ongoing in nature. It is clear that the ACBL is the first point of contact for anyone seeking information relative to bridge.

Objective#5: Provide Professional Development of Teachers and Directors

ACBL provides a large amount of information and teaching material online. Included in this material are teacher manuals for the ACBL Bridge Series courses, teacher manuals for three of the ACBL Play courses on conventions, tips for teaching the ACBL Bridge Series courses, tips for advertising courses, recruiting students and getting students playing.

Because Bridge Base Online has excellent resources for teachers to offer bridge lesson, ACBL doesn’t believe it is necessary to make the ACBL website available for teachers as a teaching site.

ACBL continues to use TAP as its main accreditation program for teachers as a hands on training seminar. Materials are not available at this time to successfully translate the TAP into an online program.

The Tournament and Human Resources (HR) Departments are formulating new ways to test and retest TD's.

An online application has been added to the web site in order to facilitate the recruitment of TD's and other potential employees.

The revised ACBL Bridge Series (Club, Diamond, etc) is nearly complete. Teacher manuals for the first three courses are available as free downloads from the ACBL website. The final two convention courses should be completed by the end of 2008.

The first Youth North American Championships is gaining momentum and additional sponsors. Atlanta Junior Bridge, led by President Patty Tucker, has done an incredible job of promoting the event to teachers.

Objective#6: Maximize Organization Effectiveness and Efficiency

ACBL plans to eventually structure the headquarter staff into divisions: Operations, Finance and Bridge. Current departments will fall under one of these divisions, each with a division head and a department head. The goal will be to develop a succession plan for each division and each department.

An updated 2008 Employee Handbook is being completed, which includes policy and labor related changes.