



BOARD MEETING REPORT

Spring 2014
Dallas

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The Dallas Committee put on a great NABC. And it was nice to have a small break from our winter! Table count at the second 10K Swiss event was down from its inaugural appearance at the St. Louis NABC, but count for the IMP Pairs running at the same time was up---so the verdict so far is inconclusive. As described below, the Board agreed to try out some changes to the NABC schedules—these will also be on a trial basis, so please let me know what you think. Our NAP pairs all fought the good fight and we're proud of them. I had only a single morning to check out Dallas and spent it at the 6th Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. It was extraordinary and moving.



Strategic Projects

It won't surprise any of you who have worked on a massive software project and rollout that the **ACBLScore+** project is behind. Management proposed to the Board that the project be brought in-house immediately—this was always the plan, but we're just moving it up—with the current outside vendor retained as a consultant and a new project manager retained. The Board agreed to this plan, together with an additional capital budget amount of \$220,000 to reach completion. The Board is lucky to have Merlin Vilhauer, District 20, among its members---Merlin was one of the lead programmers of the original ACBLScore and is my go-to advisor on the current project. He assures me that the issues delaying the project are pretty standard and he, along with the rest of us, will continue to keep a close eye on the project. Management is confident that we're going to have an excellent product—in our lifetimes!

The ACBL has selected a developer for the **Online Partnership Desk**, a list of developer requirements and definitions have been supplied to IT and the database interface between the ACBL and the developer is being coordinated. The project to **develop a vision of an ideal new Tournament Director structure and identify a path to this structure** is being pursued by the ACBL HR Director who has developed a foundation of vision/structure and reviewed it with the Field Supervisors and will be traveling to various tournaments to meet with TDs and continue to develop the project. Two projects have moved from strategic to operational status: **Understand why people choose to leave the ACBL and identify ways we can best retain our Members**, headed up by Carol Robertson gathered lots of interesting information and statistics (number wonks may contact me if you want more detail) and found three key issues from lapsed members—they would like help finding a partner; they want to receive a renewal application or invoice (they actually DO get these but apparently they don't register with them---the Board approved an automatic credit-card renewal plan that should help with this); and, they would like help finding a club or games and discounts on membership. I think all this info is useful for our club owners as well. **Online Learn to Play Bridge** has incorporated beta testing results in its software, a soft roll-out is underway and marketing to communicate this program via existing marketing channels will commence after Dallas. If you haven't tried this program yet—it's for VERY beginners—I urge you to take a look! All of our strategic projects, including ACBLScore+ continue to be funded largely from the operating budget, so the organization remains in excellent financial shape. Congratulations to the excellent ACBL staff for their work on these projects.



GNT MASTERPOINTS

As many of you may remember, I submitted a motion at last summer's meeting in Atlanta to amend the Conditions of Contest to allow an award for second place in a two-day event when there are fewer than five teams. The Masterpoint Committee asked that I withdraw the motion so that they could address comprehensively the issue of masterpoints and the GNT. They met in Dallas and dealt with every issue EXCEPT this one (they SWORE it was time constraints and nothing personal—hmmm ☺) but have promised on their lives to make sure this issue is addressed before the start of the next GNT cycle. That's the good news; the bad news is that they seem to be leaning against change. Don't worry—I'm still twisting arms and making sure they don't forget the plight of the small district (at least that's how I'm framing it.) I'll keep you posted.



TOURNAMENTS

The Board passed several new rules with which I hope you'll be pleased. First, following an in-depth study of comments from Tournament Chairs and our top Tournament Directors, we have revised and tightened the **Roles and Responsibilities of Tournament Sponsors and DICs**. A copy of the entire revision will be available online shortly, but the rules make clear the delineation of responsibilities between the two parties and those areas requiring pre-discussion. The rules also incorporate some changes made at this meeting, including a new rule that **forbids TDs from pre-matching Swiss Teams after the first round**. Thus, although the first match will continue to be by random draw or random draw within strata, TDs may no longer assign pairings randomly to "speed up the game" but must use the results of the prior match.

The **Conditions of Contest** were revised for the following events: For the **Spingold, Vanderbilt, Wagar KO Teams, Senior KO and the GNT Championship Flight Final** (during the KO stage) **shall be 60-**

board matches (previously 64)

0-1500 Spingold KO Teams shall continue to play **56-board matches** (a motion to reduce to 52-board matches was defeated) **GNT Flight C** during the KO phase will play **52-board matches** (previously 56-board matches)

NABC SCHEDULE

For the past year and a half, a committee of the Board, dubbed the "NABC Fantasy" Committee has been working on seeing if our NABC schedules can be improved. They studied attendance at each event, hotel bookings, spoke with many players, including the top players in the league, shuffled things around and finally came up with a proposed schedule to be implemented in 2015 **on a trial basis**. There is really no way to see if the shifts they recommend succeed in increasing attendance at events and making players happier until we try them. As with all bridge issues, there was a great deal of controversy and MANY opinions expressed on every aspect of the proposed schedule. The new schedule will be available as an attachment to the Dallas minutes when they are posted on line. Two major

areas of contention were the Committee's proposal to move the Blue Ribbon Pairs to the first weekend of the Fall NABC and to shorten the final Fall Roth Swiss from 3 days to two. Both of these proposals were broken out of the schedule for separate votes—the Blue Ribbon proposal was defeated and that event will stay where it is, in the second week, and the Roth Swiss proposal was approved. (I voted against both.) A few other Board Members joined me in questioning the move of the NAOP B/C from the last weekend to the first Sunday/Monday of the Spring, but did not achieve a consensus to break that out for a separate vote. Please, those of you who are NABC attendees let me know as 2015 progresses what you think of the schedule changes so you can help me assess them at the end of the trial period. Many thanks to the Committee, who worked very hard and imaginatively to improve our schedule.



PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EMAIL ME AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS OR SUGGESTIONS OR HEYHOWAREYAS YOU WISH AND I'LL DO MY BEST TO RESPOND PROMPTLY! SEE YOU AT THE FLYING PIG!

BETH

Other News

MEMBERSHIP

As of February, overall ACBL Membership was down by 48 members. This may not seem like much in the total of 167,763 but the start of the year is historically a big growth period. Through the end of February, total Regional table count decreased by 8% but average Regional table count is up 13% (Four fewer Regionals on the schedule for Jan/Feb) Total Sectional table count is down 9% and average Sectional table count down by 6%--again, two fewer Sectionals on the schedule. Average STaC table count was down by 5% but overall table count is down 25%--again, 3 fewer scheduled. The horrendous weather this winter is believed to be a MAJOR factor in these January/February results. So now that spring is here, come out and play!

FINANCE

The 2013 Audit is complete and we have received a clean report. For 2013 the change in Net Assets from Operations was \$200,740, \$22,241 less than forecast.



THE LONGEST DAY – JUNE 21ST

As a result of our tremendous success with TLD last year, The Alzheimer's Association has recognized the ACBL as its top team/partner. Promotion of TLD for this year has started. More than 30 teams have currently registered to participate, with a goal of 250. Registration messaging in the Daily Bulletin, Bridge Bulletin, the website home page and social media is ongoing. TLD ads are being created and will be made available to all registered clubs b April 21. I urge all our clubs to participate—registration info can be found at <http://www.acbl.org/play/thelongestday/>

RANK CHANGE RECOGNITION

As those of you who reached masterpoint milestones in March and April are aware, I am now able to track that info and send you a congratulatory email. I have received many wonderful responses relating personal stories from the tables.

I am working with our fabulous District webmasters, Potter Orr and Steve Moese, to try and post these great stories on the District website, so keep your eyes open and keep those emails coming--I love hearing from you.

