

Mr. Anderson called the meeting to order. The meeting was streamed live over the internet thanks to Mitch Hodus (Chief Information Officer). The video copy was not retained as the sound quality of the recording was unacceptable.

ACBL President Report (Ken Monzingo)

Mr. Monzingo gave his personal priorities for the year:

- 1) *Attack and eliminate cheating.* Ken sees eliminating cheating from ACBL Tournaments and sponsored clubs as the top pressing priority. He believes the new committee of experts and the changes to the disciplinary process will ensure that all cheaters are disciplined appropriately and that the game at all levels will be clean and fair.
- 2) *Solve the ACBLs technology problems.* Clarify why there has been a lack of progress. Ken expressed his own lack of clarity on the next steps. He reminded us he's been in his role for only two months.
- 3) Focus finances on a *balanced budget.*

Ken outlined the 5 strategies that ACBL Leadership are pursuing (and how they line up well with his own personal priorities):

- 1) **Increase membership acquisition and retention.** Apparently the ACBL is only spending about 2% of its marketing budget on the Baby Boomers. Ken sees this group as a fertile ground to accelerate membership growth. He wants to see more marketing emphasis on this target audience.
- 2) **Accelerate Tournament Director identification, recruitment, and training.** Ken mentioned he was not very close to the Directors community. He supports the Tournament Director University and wants to see success over time.
- 3) **Deal effectively with cheating.** This costs money (technology to detect and document suspicious behaviors at the table). Ken mentioned that the WBF is looking to the ACBL to lead how National Bridge Organizations and Zonal Organizations can effectively eliminate cheating. Ken supports **ACBL Bridge Integrity Task Force** that ACBL CEO Robert Hartman created the in mid-October. The members are Karen Allison, Larry Cohen, Per-Ola Cullin, Eric Kokish, Jeff Meckstroth, Brad Moss, Steve Weinstein, Chris Willenken, and Kit Woolsey; Howie Weinstein is the Chair. To combat the issue of collusive cheating, they are recommending the creation of a standing Anti-Cheating Commission composed of five members, each a top-level player with an unquestioned ethical reputation. The Commission will have broad and comprehensive powers and responsibilities, including:
 - a. Reviewing reported hands to determine if suspicion of cheating is justified
 - b. Conducting investigations of suspected cheaters (enlisting outside help if necessary)
 - c. Recommending prosecution
- 4) **Maintain effective financial health** – recent pricing changes at the club and tournament level have brought the ACBL to sound financial footing. Patience with the finances is necessary. He claims we are on the right path.
- 5) **Upgrade technology / ACBL Score.** Ken sees this area as a big problem. He wants to clear the slate and start changes at the bottom to build up. Patience and finances are required to get everything where things need to be. Unfortunately Ken was not able to be specific about the coming plans/changes. Ken mentioned that the new Chief Information Officer Mitchell Hodus has made great progress leading the ACBL forward, but did not offer details.

Ken reminded us that the Mission of the ACBL is to:

Promote and sustain the game of bridge and to serve the bridge-related interests of our Members.

A new vision statement will publish shortly.

In closing, Ken reminded us that the actively supports the “Committee of 9” Board of Directors Members who are studying ways to reduce the size of the Board of Directors and improve its operational effectiveness. Streamlining the Board of Directors can cut up to \$125,000 annually in BoD costs and reduce deliberation time.

CEO Report (Robert Hartman)

Robert mentioned that a member met him at a regional recently and asked just what to ACBL employees do at Horn Lake anyway? He thought that was a good question to answer in detail. He wants us to have an accurate picture of the effort it takes to run the business.

Robert presented a thorough and detailed review of the role and work done by the Horn Lake headquarters employees. The details are stunning. *(I asked Robert after the meeting to publish his slides to the ACBL website so all can see. He agreed. What I can provide are just a few of the facts about the work ACBL employees do on our behalf).*

The ACBL does more than \$17 million business annually. The ACBL operates in three countries and serves more than 3000 clubs, 167,000 members, and 7000 Unit and 700 District representatives. The ACBL has 250 employees, 65 of which are in Horn Lake.

The **Club Membership** department works 10 hours a day to answer emails from 11600 members and 2500 bridge club managers. They average more than 232 e-mails per day and 19 people-hours to answer them in a timely way.

Field Support & Operations

- Tournament Director Support – 41,000 e-mails per year (112/day)
- Club Director Support – 487,000 e-mails per year (1334/day)
- These take more than 8800 hours answering them.
- They support 8700 bridge club directors
- 17.5 million deals at tournaments annually
- 1.46 million entries to process

Marketing & Education

- More than 5 million e-mails sent annually. Over 32.4% are opened.
- 12 TAPS training events per year.
- 200 separate co-op advertising programs
- Social media
- Marketing Resource center (1000 + participants)
- 250 pcs/wk to clubs.
- Support >200 Longest Day Teams (\$1.8 MM donated to date).
- 12 magazines 84 pages each to 3 countries
- Daily Bulletins at NABC Tournaments

- Support materials for NABCs

Accounting & Finance

- 75,000 credit card transactions per year
- 60,000 membership payments by check processed annually
- 2500 Club reports totaling \$675,000 annually
- 325 W2's, 1099's etc.

Publicity

- The ACBL outsources publicity to a professional PR firm and pays \$120,000/year.
- There has been a lot of negative news about the cheating scandals in recent popular press – New Yorker, Newsweek, Vanity Fair, Rolling Stone. These articles engaged headquarters personnel in days of discussions providing background and plans to solve the cheating issue. These hours spent are part of headquarter's responsibility.
- The PR strategy creates about 44 Million impressions in places like AARP magazine.
- National Public Radio has provided coverage in NABC cities during NABC tournaments (Chicago, Denver, and Reno to name a few).
- The Cost per thousand impressions for the ACBL is \$2.70. (*For perspective, Forrester Research estimates Average CPMs to rise to \$4.68 by 2017*). The ACBL is getting good value here.

Board of Governor's Financial Information Request

Jonathan Steinberg asked Management to provide financial details to the Board of Governors on several points:

- 1) HQ staffing and Compensation
- 2) Public Relations and Marketing Consultant Expenditures
- 3) Board of Directors Meeting and Travel Costs.

For detailed information see:

<http://www.cincybridge.com/20160209%20Board%20of%20Governors%20Financial%20Information%20Request%20-%20Denver%202015.pdf>

- From 2011 to 2015 (ending Dec 31) the number of employees varied between 58 and 65.
- Total compensation between \$3.3 and 3.7 Million
- Benefits between \$881,000 and 1,087,000 (Cost cutting has reduced this number).
- Prior to 2013, the ACBL spent between 22-37,000 on Public Relations and Marketing Consultant costs. From 2013 the ACBL has spent 133,000 – 143,000 on promoting bridge to the public. This is a very small spend compared to businesses of comparable size to the ACBL.

Operating Finances

- The Operating budget is a net plus over the past 5 years.
- The past two years have seen operating losses of slightly over \$300,000 per year.
- The ACBL is a Not-for-Profit Corporation with a goal to break even financially over time.
- The operating losses will not continue.
- The new operating budget approved by the Board of Directors brings the ACBL back into the black. This includes an increase in sanction fees, fees for STaCs, and increased prices for NABC entries. Included is the new policy to charge entry fees per person for all event where the master point awards are the same per person.

- The Board of Directors themselves cut 5% from their budget for 2016. Other Board of Directors expense cuts are pending (the Committee of 9 looking into the restructuring of the Board of Directors could enable up to a 50 % reduction in Board of Directors overheads).
- Major expenses and increases are seen in the Tournament Director Training program (Tournament Director University) and in the IT Infrastructure improvements sorely needed.
- Cost cutting, staff reductions and fee increases brought the ACBL back to a balanced budget.

Information Management

- Mitchell Hodus has a technology plan for the ACBL.
- First priority is to replace the outdated technology infrastructure supporting all ACBL operations. This costs money. This is about replacing outdated computers and servers with up to date technology. Budget for 2016 is \$385,000 for HQ Netowrk monitoring tools, File servers/disk storage, tape back-up devices, Ghost Tool, and the AS400 computer replacement. Of that amount, \$100,000 is carryover from 2015 for network/firewall infrastructure and upgrading MS Windows. Another \$87,000 will be spent for laptops and printers for directors in the field.
- Second priority is to start down the path of renovating ACBLScore. First, the Masterpoint program will be pulled out of ACBLScore. This will be done by a third party for free. The work is almost complete (Jay Whipple).
- Robert emphasized he wants to recover as much utility as possible from the programming already done that is not in use yet. There are no details how this will happen.
- Robert emphasized that the NABC Smartphone Application has been discontinued. It was a lot of work and extra cost, and has been effectively repoaced with ACBL Live and the browser on one's phone or pad.

The League Counsel reported that the pending suit for a slip and fall incident a the Providence NABC is nearing a disposition. See the attached summary. After more than 10 years of service Peter Rank will retire as league counsel. A committee is searching for Peter's replacement.

Treasurers Report (Georgia Heth –District 8)

2015 saw an small operating loss of -\$303,620 (\$103,687 more than projected). The changes adopted by the Board of Directors project a modest profit for 2016 of \$101,486.

Board of Director Motions

Dick Anderson reviewed those he wanted to bring to the Board of Governors (details in the attachment):

- Item 161-20 Vulnerability inserts required for all Boards in play – Motion Failed
- Item 161-21 Slow Play Penalties – Motion Failed
- Item 161-91 Finance Committee Entry Fees – per person fees – Motion passed effective immediately. This motion means that at NABC's teams of 4-5-6 people pay per person if the event awards master points equally to all players and for a team of 4 for events where master points are awarded proportionally to participation (e.g. Swiss Teams). Each District and Unit is able to adopt this approach for their tournaments as they see fit. Many feel this makes master point awards and table fees equitable.

- Item 161-95 Finance Committee Cooperative Advertising Program – Carried without dissent. Effectively, the refund drops from 75% to 50% for eligible marketing expenses and the maximum drops from \$750 to \$500.
- Item 161-114 Governance/Board Operations Committee – Permanent Committees – Passed by one vote. Defines permanent committee scope and membership. Defines the International Committee and its duties.
- Item 161-155 High School Team Championship – Motion Failed
- Item 161-157 NABC Oversight Committee – Motion Carried. ACBL Tournament Directors shall hear and rule on all appeals filed at the NABC. All conduct, ethics or disciplinary matters will be heard by the NABC Tournament Committee or its designees. An attempt to return this motion for reconsideration was voted down by the BoG.
- Item 161-159 Board of Governance Attendance – Motion Failed. Would have eliminated the need for BoD members to attend the BoG meetings. Defeating this motion was important to keep communication between the two bodies.
- Item 161-201 Limited and Invitational Games in STaCs. Motion to reconsider failed. Unfortunately the motion failed 16-5 with one abstention (3 absent). This issue is not changeable for the near future.

Motions for Reconsideration

This is the open discussion forum for BoG and ACBL Members to address the Forum.

Don Mamula questioned the need to continue supporting the Alzheimer’s Association Charity given all the cost and effort it takes for Headquarters people to make happen. While the events for the Longest Day are popular at the grass roots level, and garner great volunteer support, the ACBL is NOT compensated for its use of employees and publicity. All funds go directly to the charity. There is recognition that this event attracts new members. However there is concern that the effort and monies spent here would be better used partnering with the Education Foundation toward recruiting and retaining new members. Management agreed to investigate tracking/estimating costs and benefits (including PR and marketing for bridge) from the Longest Day and report back to the membership in an upcoming meeting.

Should we move publicity operations in house and save the costs? The ACBL does better outsourcing this to a professional PR firm than trying to be a specialist in this area. We get better exposure and impact and do not have the additional overhead associated with employees. Indeed the ACBL could not hide someone for what it is paying the PR firm now.

There is progress and improvement in the new Housing Bureau supporting NABC’s.

Concern was raised about starting Fall NABC tournaments immediately after Thanksgiving (instead of just before Thanksgiving). Data shows that in the past 5 years since the ACBL made the change, attendance has fallen off. A moratorium was proposed on any new fall NABC contracts until the issue can be studied further. Contracts for fall are in place through 2024.

Robert Hartman agreed that the cost of hosting an NABC in Hawaii makes that venue inappropriate for the future. There will be no more NABCs in Hawaii.

The loss of the NABC App for smartphones was protested. It will not come back.

New Business

Motion 161-01G: Entry Fees Team Events – reconsider 153-52 Charge per person rather than per team. **Failed** BoG approval.

Motion 161-02G

A motion to recommend the Board of Directors pursue a bridge application to help engage and teach people the game on their phones and pads **passed** by the BoG for vote by the BoD.

Steve Moese asked Dick Anderson to reveal the Motion passed by the Board of Directors about the criteria for deciding ethics prosecutions. The initial language would change the requirement from “preponderance of the evidence” (equivalent to fraud conviction criterial in US civil court) to “a clear and convincing proof”. Clear and convincing proof is one step short of “Beyond a reasonable doubt”. Georgia Heth answered that the Board of Directors chose “Substantial Satisfaction” that the evidence proves guilt. This term has no precedence in US legal application, but is prevalent in Europe and is what the international bridge community is aligning to. The ACBL needs to follow suit to harmonize how cheating and ethics violations are harmonized internationally. The weight of “Substantial satisfaction” is greater than “preponderance of the evidence” but less than “clear and convincing proof”. As a result, Steve withdrew Board of Governor’s motion 161-03G as moot.

Steve Moese offered motion 161-04G. Since the Reno Board of Governors meeting was live streamed over the internet and recorded for replay, and that the BoD proposal to not attend the Board of Governors meetings was defeated, Steve modified the proposal to read:

All open sessions of the Board of Directors meetings will be live streamed and recorded.

The motion **passed** by a majority of the BoG and will be presented for vote to the Board of Directors.

Motion 161-05G A motion to provide monetary support to Canadian bridge clubs in view of the recent increases in costs passed by the Board of Directors AND the unfortunate strength of the US dollar was **not passed**.

Motion 161-06G – No ACBL wide events shall be scheduled on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays (they conflict with Sectional and Regional tournaments) **failed** to gain BoG support.

Submitted Respectfully for District 11

Steve Moese

ACBL Board of Governors

Attachment: Board of Governors Handouts



American Contract Bridge League

6575 Windchase Blvd. ♠ Horn Lake MS 38637-1523 ♠ www.acbl.org

Board of Governors
Sunday, March 13, 2016
Reno, NV

- I. Call to Order
- II. Opening Remarks
- III. Approval of Chicago, IL Minutes
- IV. ACBL President report
- V. CEO report
- VI. League Counsel report
- VII. Treasurer report
- VIII. Chairman Report
- IX. Motions for Reconsideration
- X. Old Business
- XI. New Business
- XII. Life Master
- XIII. Closing Statement
- XIV. Adjournment

MANAGEMENT REPORT

To: ACBL Board of Directors

cc: Richard Anderson
Peter Rank

From: Robert Hartman, CEO
ACBL

Date: March 2016

MEMBERSHIP

As of February 1, ACBL Membership stands at 168,403. The comparison from January 2015 to January 2016 reflects an increase of 717. Full membership statistics can be found at:

[Active Membership Statistics22016.pdf](#)

CLUB & MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

The 2015 club table count is 3,146,410 of which 1,014,501 are from online games. The online table counts do not include games held from September through December on the OKbridge site. It appears that we have resolved all issues with OKBridge and they should be back online soon. Attached is the full report. [Club Tbls Report 02-22-16.pdf](#)

There are approximately 3100 clubs we renew game sanctions for each year. More than 2200 have taken advantage of the online sanction renewal application rolled out in the fall. This has resulted in an estimated savings of approximately 340 hours of staff time and \$5,000 on printed materials and postage.

The 2015 Special Events games report is available at this link: [2015 Special Events Report Updated 2-22-16.pdf](#)

TOURNAMENT DIVISION

2015 Tournaments

Overall Regional table counts ended 2015 down 2.55% (4513.5 tables), with one fewer tournament than 2014. Average regional table count was down 1.86% (1,343.1 v. 1,318.9).

Sectional tables were down 3.16% on seven fewer tournaments (4717.9 tables), with average tables showing a 2.46% decrease (158.6 v. 154.7).

STaC tables, thanks to a robust December, ended down only 0.01% (17.0 tables) while holding thirteen additional STaC tournaments, with average tables down 14.46% (1611.0 v. 1378.1). The increase in tournaments combined with decrease in average tables can mostly be attributed to the breakup of the combined District 3 - District 24 STaCs into component Unit STaCs (from three STaCs per year to fifteen STaCs this year).

Total tournament tables decreased by 2.05% (9248.4 tables), with true tournament count decreasing by seven tournaments. [2015TC12.pdf](#)

2016 Tournaments

Given there is only one month of data at the time of this report, the following numbers show wide swings as compared to January 2015:

Regional table count is down 11.31% compared to last January (2030.0 tables). As the number of tournaments was the same, the average table count was down the same percentage (1631.3 v. 1446.7).

Sectional tables were up 14.41% (1801.5 tables) on twelve additional tournaments, with average tables running a 3.64% decrease (195.3 v. 188.2).

STaC Tables show an increase of 129.18% (4061.5 tables) while holding two additional tournaments, with average tables up 56.09% (786.0 v. 1200.9).

Total tournament tables increased by 11.41% (3833.0 tables) with fourteen additional tournaments. [2016TC02.pdf](#)

OPERATIONS

FINANCE

The field work for the 2015 audit is complete and the report will soon be completed and presented to the Audit Committee in Reno. The 2015 audits of the ACBL Charity Foundation and the ACBL Educational Foundation have been completed. For 2015 the change in Net Assets from Operations was a loss of \$303,620, \$103,687 more than the \$199,933 forecasted loss, and \$55,605 better than the \$359,225 operational loss from last year.

In 2015 there was a non-operational loss of \$62,541 due to the decrease in the market value of investments, in 2014, there was a market value gain of \$51,424. Capital expenditures for 2015 totaled \$75,345, a \$845,283 decrease from the \$920,628 spent in 2014. Also, ACBL's net operating cash increased by \$555,058 in 2015 compared to a \$340,029 decrease in 2014.

The January financial results have been finalized and shared with the Finance Committee. The change in Net Assets from Operations was \$6,259, \$42,583 better than the \$36,325 budgeted loss.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Current staffing: 223 full-time and part-time employees

Headquarters – 60 full time employees; 2 part time employees

Our new Human Resources Manager is Nancy Rosenbury. She has 20 years of experience in recruitment, employee relations, benefits administration, and compensation experience.

David Benton has joined the IT team as Senior Network Engineer. David brings experience that will help us transition to a cloud platform.

Field:

Canada – 3 full time Tournament Directors; 23 part time Tournament Directors

US – 36 full time Tournament Directors; 99 part time Tournament Directors

2016 Benefits enrollment

Our 2016 benefits plan offers employees 2 medical plans, vision, dental, flexible spending account, dependent care account, and 3 new AFLAC plans. We enrolled 90 full time employees for these plans, as well as company-provided life, short-term, and long-term disability plans.

We have submitted data, to a 3rd party vendor, for all required Affordable Care Act reporting. The vendor will ensure that we are compliant with all ACA rules and regulations

2015 Performance Review Process

We are using an on-line, web-based tool, Reviewsnap, to create performance evaluations. Employees will write a self-evaluation and managers will write an evaluation for each employee. Employees will be rated on job-based competencies. Salary increases will be based on performance.

MEETING SERVICES

We are continuing to inspect and replace/repair NABC bridge supplies. For Reno, all bid boxes have been cleaned and bidding cards in need of replacement have been replaced. The felt on all of the screen tables and bidding trays has been replaced. The NABC contract for Washington DC (Summer 2022) has been finalized.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Personnel

- Julia Lovel was promoted to Manager, Software Development. Julia has four people reporting to her: Matthew Andrews, Tim Crosas, Paul Ryburn and Mark Turnage.

- David Benton was hired as a Senior Network Engineer on the Infrastructure Team to work with Terry Norton.

Software Development

- ACBLScore 8.01 was released. The major upgrades in this release are:
 - Tournament Mode: Addition of Masterpoint regulation changes approved by BOD
 - Club Mode: New credit card processing process to make us PCI Compliant
- Created new test and development system in AWS cloud and created automated processes for testing software in Development and Staging servers using Bamboo and AWS Code Deploy Software. This dramatically speeds up the software development testing process and reduces risk for deploying new code in production.
- Created a process to handle “email address cleanup” of bad email addresses generated from marketing emails sent thru Constant Contact and Pianola. Helped prime the email list provided to Pianola.
- Implemented Hand Record Swap capabilities in TourneyTrax.

Infrastructure Improvements

- Implemented new redundant firewalls, routers and switches in Horn Lake to bolster network infrastructure. This reduces our single point of failures.
- Migrated three web server capabilities from physical servers in Horn Lake to virtual servers in the Amazon Cloud. WWW, MYACBL and ACBLLIVE now run in the AWS Cloud.
- Upgraded Internet circuit from 20 MB to 100 MB at Horn Lake.
- Installed new backup DSL internet circuit at Horn Lake.

Infrastructure and Operations

- The ACBL started using the Amazon Web Service (AWS) cloud for development and production applications. We are still in the process of determining which systems will be in the cloud and which systems will be operated out of Horn Lake. Currently ACBL Live is hosted on a server in the AWS cloud and the messaging engine which sends ACBL Live notifications to members is also hosted in the AWS cloud.
- The ACBL engaged Protech, a systems integration firm headquartered in Memphis, to evaluate the network and server infrastructure in the ACBL Data Center. We received recommendations on upgrading our network core and firewall infrastructure. Based on those recommendations we have purchased Cisco Firewalls and Cisco Layer 3 switches for our Data Center and hope to have those in place by the end of the year.
- The infrastructure and development teams began to use tools from Atlassian to track bugs, help desk requests, and work requests. These tools help the team focus on the issues at hand and provide us with the ability to see recurring issues.

MARKETING

Resource Center

Designed to be a convenient, easy-to-use tool that allows bridge clubs, teachers, units and districts to order or download virtually anything they need to grow the game, the Resource Center has become a regular part of marketing operating procedures. The two main metrics used to determine success in the Resource Center are site visits and downloads. In the last year, daily visits to the Resource Center have seen a steady increase, averaging around 70 unique visits per day. Site visits peak on days when Tricks of the Trade is released (every other Thursday) and can see numbers as high as 400 unique visits. Visitors to the site between October 1, 2015 and February 20, 2016 downloaded 7096 resources in contrast with visitors from June 1, 2015 to October 1, 2015 who downloaded 5886 resources.

Tricks of the Trade, the marketing blog released in conjunction with the Resource Center continues to receive positive feedback and encourage traffic and downloads. On average, the email blast for the blog has a 43% open rate.

A Forum feature was also launched on the Resource Center in January 2016 with the purpose of providing a place for clubs, teachers and unit/district volunteers to share ideas and best practices. When encouraged, users leave feedback, but more user input is needed to for the Forum to be a reliable, valuable tool.

The Longest Day

The Longest Day 2016 will be held on **Monday, June 20**. This is a day earlier than previous years due to the leap year. Marketing has worked with the Alzheimer's Association to create a custom 2016 The Longest Day poster and a special Welcome Letter that will be included in all registration toolkits for clubs that register with the Alzheimer's Association. Custom Team Captain Guide and corresponding marketing collateral were released on the Resource Center in January 2016.

In addition to the regular The Longest Day games as sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association, clubs in Canada will have the opportunity to play in special games directly benefitting the Alzheimer Society of Canada. Due to branding right on the name "The Longest Day" Canada's event will be known as Trump Alzheimer's but will operate under the same rules and regulations as all clubs for The Longest Day. Marketing is currently working with Kathie MacNab Halliday, along with the Alzheimer Society to create a website for the event, offer online registration, provide online team totals and ensure the experience in both Canada and the United States is as similar as possible. Registration for Trump Alzheimer's is expected to open in March 2016, pending completion of the website by the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

Marketing Solutions, powered by Pianola

Marketing Solutions, powered by Pianola was completed in February 2016 and is currently being used internally to fulfill Tournament Emails Services. While Pianola offers a variety of features, Marketing Solutions has been customized for unit and district use. Once live each unit/district will have access to a database of members it is appropriate for them to contact – their unit/district and surrounding regions. To learn more about Pianola and to read the Terms of Service, visit <http://www.acbl.org/marketing/marketing-solutions/>.

Full rollout of Marketing Solutions, powered by Pianola is scheduled for **Monday, March 14**, after the demo the day prior during the Spring NABC in Reno. To ensure the system is not overloaded, units and districts will be invited to create accounts with the service in groups, until all are registered. Post rollout, Marketing will continue to encourage use and maximization of the service to units and districts through a series of email coaching communications.

New Member Retention

A series of monthly emails have been created to guide our new members on their bridge journey. New members are encouraged to establish their MyACBL and Member Perks (Abenity) accounts, access education resources, and visit their first club or tournament. Each month there is a new education lesson and a one-question survey aimed at helping Marketing better understand the first year member and their needs.

The first new member email was sent in February to members who joined the ACBL in January 2016. The email had an exceptionally high open rate of 68%, which shows us that new members are very eager to engage immediately with the ACBL. Also very high was the click through rate, at 34%

In response to the first survey question asking why they chose to become members, 47% of respondents reported joining to improve and 37% joined to become part of the bridge community. The desire to earn masterpoints or rank status was reported by 11%, and 5% gave other reasons.

New Member Acquisition

To better understand the potential members that are accessing ACBL.org, new dashboard analytics are being added to the website to help us better understand web traffic. Through the dashboard we will be able to separate current member traffic vs. prospective member traffic and monitor which pages are visited by each group to best determine their needs. Using data from the dashboard, we will be able to develop appropriate marketing campaigns to engage potential members. Data gathering will begin in March 2016.

E-Marketing and Communication

Between November 1, 2015 and February 15, 2016, 242 email blasts were sent to members by the ACBL. Email topics included the following: new member engagement, tournament announcements, Tricks of the Trade blog posts, welcomes to new Learn to Play Bridge downloaders, rank change announcements, Mini-McKenney/Ace of Clubs announcements, ACBL program promotions, district newsletters, surveys and reminders about expired memberships. The emails with the highest open rate were first-year engagement emails, recognition announcements, announcements of Learn Bridge in A Day programs and Tricks of the Trade blog posts.

Emails are sent to those who download the Learn to Play Bridge software during the first week of each month. The emails welcome users to the world of bridge and explain the benefits of membership. Since October of 2015, 1445 of these emails have been opened at an average of 361 each month. Many are clicking on both the link to Find a Club and the link to joining the ACBL.

Recognition Programs

Certificates for Mini-McKenney winners were sent via email in February. These are accessible to the winners via MyACBL, and congratulatory emails were also sent. Coding is being tweaked so that unit presidents may also access these certificates to allow them to print as needed for ceremonies or other events. The Ace of Clubs certificates were sent by regular mail to Unit Presidents.

Emails and certificates recognizing members achieving ranks below Life Master are distributed at the beginning of each month. Each rank has a dedicated email that includes links to MyACBL allowing members to print a certificate. The program has been met with positive response from members and features one of the highest open rates of all ACBL email blasts.

ACBL Social Media

Facebook and Twitter are used to engage our members, promote the ACBL, and reach out to the media in addition to including a digital marketing strategy in the majority of our communications and advertising plans. Our Facebook page is particularly active, and with 5660 followers, has grown by nearly 16% in the last year. Our Twitter account has 2071 followers, a number that also continues to grow.

Facebook content is added daily and features a variety of topics including games, winners, historic photographs, famous quotes and more. During NABCs, photo galleries of winners and players are added as well as links to Daily Bulletins. Twitter is primarily used to reach out to media sources and connect members to articles written about the ACBL and bridge.

Privacy Policy

The Privacy Policy and the Terms of Use continue to be communicated to members requesting information. Points of clarification include printed member directories, clubs' access to information, and allowed uses of members' contact information.

Editorial Updates

Revisions to the I/N Tournament Guide, the New Player Services Handbook, and the I/N Coordinator Handbook were made, and these new documents are available on the ACBL website. A new and improved "A to Z" guide is currently being created and will be available by the end of February.

Unit Presidents will soon be contacted to provide input and insight for an updated Unit President Guide. The improved guide will include information helpful for new Unit Presidents.

Creative Services

Creative services were employed for many of the organization's departments and for a wide variety of projects. The first in a series of ACBL-branded instruction videos were made featuring steps of the new payment functions of ACBLscore. This included title design, scripting, recording and more. The new process will be applied to future videos and re-recordings of previous videos.

Cooperative Advertising Program (CAP)

In 2015 the program reimbursed \$159,288.62 to 190 units, clubs, and teachers.

Club, teachers and units who used CAP during 2015 received a report with their average cost per new member. In 2015, costs ranged from \$3.61 to \$684 with an average new member acquisition of \$112.57 for CAP-recruited members, down from \$123.49 in 2014.

Learn Bridge in A Day? (LBIAD)

The ACBL hosts a LBIAD seminar and corresponding teacher training course at each NABC. Reservations are now open for the LBIAD at the Reno NABC. The Educational Foundation also sponsors the course at the unit level. In 2015 they funded 11 events, with six more scheduled so far in 2016.

Participating clubs and units are requested to submit attendee contact information for follow-up marketing and ACBL membership tracking. In 2015, 970 attended a LBIAD class, and 109 have become members.

Lifelong Learning

In 2015, 337 students participated in 16 classes at 12 institutions offering bridge through their lifelong learning programs. So far, 16 students have become ACBL members.

ACBL supported Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) programs at the University of South Florida, University of North Florida, University of Georgia, Coastal Carolina University, University of Hawaii, University of Massachusetts and Casper College in Wyoming. The national director for OLLI has formed a committee to evaluate several education programs, including one submitted by the ACBL, to include as possible curriculum resources for all the OLLI programs.

Other Lifelong Learning programs with ACBL-supported bridge lessons were offered at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven CT, Collin College in Plano TX, Sarasota Technical Institute in Sarasota FL and McGill University in Montreal Canada.

Teacher Accreditation Program (TAP)

We accredited 240 new teachers through 10 TAPs held in 2015. Below is the schedule for 2016. Five TAPs have been scheduled for 2016.

Teacher Accreditation Program Schedule					
Start Date	End Date	City	State	Type	TAP Trainer
3/10/2016	3/12/2016	Reno	NV	Spring NABC	
4/14/2016	4/16/2016	Gatlinburg	TN	Regional	
6/26/2016	6/27/2016	Austin	TX	Regional	
7/21/2016	7/23/2016	Washington	DC	Summer NABC	
11/25/2106	11/27/2016	Orlando	FL	Fall NABC	

Accredited Teachers

The following are the statistics as of the end of 2015:

TAP Accredited	6,468
Better Bridge Accredited	929
Easybridge! Accredited	1,051
LBIAD? Teachers	123
Find a Teacher Database	1,624

Note that teachers may be accredited under more than one program.

Collegiate Bridge Bowl

The 2015/2016 College Bridge Bowl started with 16 college teams. Three new colleges are playing for the first time since the format change: MIT, Rice University and Columbia University.

Youth NABC in Washington DC

All of the information for the 2016 Youth NABC has been updated on the NextGenBridge website. Schedules and information are available. Registration and reservations are open.

School Bridge Program

The following table shows statistics from the School Bridge Program.

Schools	S10	F10	S11	F11	S12	F12	S13	F13	S14	F14	S15	F15
College	2	6	3	5	3	4	3	8	7	6	7	9
High	28	25	41	43	45	49	44	58	57	54	51	40
Middle	95	83	85	104	86	91	81	108	112	106	102	167
Elementary	68	60	45	51	58	60	62	75	78	68	72	89
Total Classes	367		377		396		439		488		537	
Total US Teacher Stipends	\$43,890		\$54,940		\$71,657		\$108,620		\$111,231		\$138,900	
Total Can. Teacher Stipends	\$34,590		\$36,750		\$37,450		\$42,860		\$43,871		\$50,050	
Grand total for Stipends	\$78,480		\$91,690		\$109,107		\$151,480		\$155,102		\$188,950	

Youth and Junior Member Statistics by District

The following chart demonstrates the total number of youth and Junior memberships and reflects paid members only. Previous Total is from Summer 2015 NABC CEO Report.

District	Total	Prev. Total	Diff.	Youths	Juniors
1	23	22	1	14	9
2	43	51	-8	33	10
3	56	60	-4	47	9
4	20	24	-4	6	14
5	10	12	-2	6	4
6	62	51	11	45	17
7	152	148	4	124	28
8	18	18	0	12	6
9	70	60	10	58	12
10	37	42	-5	28	9
11	36	40	-4	30	6
12	15	14	1	4	11
13	34	45	-11	22	12
14	19	23	-4	13	6
15	26	26	0	21	5
16	78	31	47	54	24
17	21	25	-4	13	8
18	3	4	-1	1	2
19	25	17	8	17	8
20	16	13	3	9	7
21	130	122	8	99	31
22	18	18	0	12	6
23	22	21	1	10	12
24	48	60	-12	37	11
25	55	57	-2	35	20
99	25	31	-6	3	22
Total	1062	1035	27	753	309

2011 Summer NABC Management Report: 1154 Total Junior/Youth Members
 2012 Summer NABC Management Report: 1240 Total Junior/Youth Members
 2013 Summer NABC Management Report: 1275 Total Junior/Youth Members
 2014 Summer NABC Management Report: 1208 Total Junior/Youth Members
 2015 Summer NABC Management Report: 1152 Total Junior/Youth Members
 2016 Spring NABC Management Report: 1062 Total Junior/Youth Members

2011: 544 new Junior/Youth members; 247 aged out
 2012: 556 new Junior/Youth members; 461 aged out
 2013: 622 new Junior/Youth members; 424 aged out
 2014: 546 new Junior/Youth members; 359 aged out
 2015: 587 new Junior/Youth members; 364 aged out

Learn to Play Bridge

The following table shows total registration accumulated from the Learn to Play Bridge web app along with those converted into new members.

Month	Total Registrations	ACBL Memberships
Mar-14	872	1
Apr-14	130	1
May-14	76	3
Jun-14	120	1
Jul-14	56	1
Aug-14	2372	7
Sep-14	1221	15
Oct-14	601	19
Nov-14	433	13
Dec-14	408	12
Jan-15	572	7
Feb-15	179	11
Mar-15	2536	19
Apr-15	1369	23
May-15	729	28
Jun-15	4328	78
Jul-15	1948	38
Aug-15	1264	20
Sep-15	1281	29
Oct-15	1409	28
Nov-15	1055	21
Dec-15	856	9
Jan-15	1426	32
Feb-15	821	26
Total	26062	442

LEAGUE COUNSEL REPORT

SPENCER V. ACBL

Facts: On February 28, 2012 Cynthia Spencer and Richard Spencer filed a lawsuit in Providence, Rhode Island Superior Court against the League, Marriott and various other persons and entities, claiming that she was injured in a fall at a tournament “operated” by the League. In fact, the tournament was a 2009 Massachusetts Regional operated by District 25. Insurance counsel in Providence, Rhode Island has been appointed to represent the ACBL.

Insurance counsel reports that “...it does not appear that plaintiff has any documentation that would support a theory against the insured [the ACBL]. Counsel then filed jurisdictional motions to dismiss the matter from the Rhode Island Superior Court based on the facts that the plaintiff is a Massachusetts resident, the League is a New York corporation, based in Mississippi, and the tournament was held in Massachusetts.” Subsequently, The Rhode Island Judge dismissed this complaint for lack of personal jurisdiction. On December 10, 2013, Mrs. Spencer filed a similar complaint this time in the Massachusetts Superior against the League, Marriott and the New England Bridge Conference, again claiming that she was injured in a fall at a bridge tournament “operated” by the League. The insurance company has appointed a new attorney to represent the League in Massachusetts. Insurance counsel has filed an answer on behalf of the League. Insurance counsel reports that Plaintiffs' depositions are scheduled for November 19, 2014. Discovery is scheduled to conclude in March, 2015. We will evaluate the case for dispositive motions at that time.

Discovery has been completed. Insurance Counsel is now in the process of preparing and filing a motion for summary judgment on behalf of the League which will be opposed by Plaintiff. The motion will be heard in December, 2015 or January, 2016. If the motion is denied, the matter will proceed to trial. No trial date is currently set.

Status: Motion for Summary Judgment has been filed by the League. Arguments will be heard by the judge within 30 days.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Rank", with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Peter Rank, Esq.

Dated: February 23, 2016

American Contract Bridge League, Inc.
2015 Actual vs Final Forecast

	\$ Var.	Explanation
	fav/(unfav)	
<u>Revenue Variances:</u>		
Club Fees	25,775	Reached agreement with OK Bridge to pay delinquent club sanction fees.
TD Session Fees	(32,896)	Regionals \$24K and Sectionals \$8K.
NABC Revenue	(53,481)	Denver table count of 9,059, which was 941 lower than the 10,000 tables forecasted.
Bulletin Advertising	(17,259)	Decrease in commercial advertising.
Misc	(2,059)	
Total Revenue Variance	(79,920)	
<u>Expense Variances:</u>		
Salaries & Contract Labor	(22,438)	School Bridge teacher stipends \$25K higher than forecasted.
Benefits	(23,796)	Employee insurance \$16K, payroll taxes \$5K, and employer 401K contributions \$2K.
Travel	83,681	NABC lodging \$83K lower than forecasted due to 3% hotel rebate, more than usual staff discounted rooms, and commissions from overflow properties.
Technology	(19,530)	TourneyTrax maintenance and support
Professional Services	(37,632)	Increased league counsel and flood remediation legal costs \$25K, additional legal costs for disciplinary actions \$10K, and NABC banking fees \$3K.
NABC Other Expenses	22,221	Local per table allowance \$11K, volunteer lodging \$5, prizes \$4K, and childcare \$2K.
Taxes & Interest	(11,153)	\$11K increase due to property tax audit and resulting assessment.
Misc	(15,120)	
Total Expense Variance	(23,767)	
Net Variance	<u>\$ (103,687)</u>	

American Contract Bridge League, Inc.
2015 Comparative Financial Report

	2015	2015 Final		\$ Var.	2016 Final
	Budget	Forecast	2015 Actual	fav/(unfav)	Budget
Operating Revenues:					
Membership Dues	\$ 5,338,390	\$ 5,342,308	\$ 5,340,736	\$ (1,572)	\$ 5,403,608
Club Fees	2,493,542	2,488,583	2,514,358	25,775	2,933,684
Sectional Surcharge	125,692	118,898	118,788	(110)	127,309
TD Session Fees	3,056,047	2,956,158	2,923,263	(32,896)	3,168,221
Sanction Fees	2,243,980	2,179,297	2,169,391	(9,906)	2,188,293
Regionals at Sea	85,500	75,718	72,093	(3,625)	97,500
NABC Revenue	2,150,577	2,261,030	2,207,549	(53,481)	2,607,780
Bulletin Advertising	314,120	305,830	288,571	(17,259)	298,720
Royalties	150,000	148,979	148,979	-	150,000
Education Programs	36,000	32,425	34,876	2,451	33,100
Junior Fund	176,000	198,885	196,160	(2,725)	199,000
Management Fees	34,000	36,166	36,516	350	36,300
Other Revenues	49,919	50,165	57,927	7,761	53,150
Investment	101,800	97,589	102,905	5,316	95,000
Total Revenues	16,355,567	16,292,032	16,212,112	(79,920)	17,391,664
Operating Expenses:					
Salaries & Contract Labor	7,277,885	7,302,262	7,324,700	(22,438)	7,672,435
Benefits	1,686,129	1,549,154	1,572,950	(23,796)	1,748,537
Training & Recruitment	95,480	233,446	232,382	1,064	104,640
Travel	1,463,917	1,420,256	1,336,576	83,681	1,477,102
Postage	314,754	298,813	294,261	4,552	297,440
Supplies	133,286	138,686	145,831	(7,145)	165,979
Printing	252,811	235,485	233,114	2,371	236,555
Bulletin Printing	676,000	682,493	680,663	1,830	689,000
Bulletin Postage	504,000	476,828	480,603	(3,775)	504,000
Minor Equipment	37,565	20,263	24,478	(4,215)	39,450
Facility Maintenance	122,253	120,418	120,801	(383)	113,505
Space & Equipment Rental	108,639	111,219	109,652	1,567	116,042
Technology	229,200	325,920	345,451	(19,530)	581,562
Telephone	117,770	109,005	109,762	(757)	134,750
Utilities	115,000	114,168	112,630	1,538	115,000
Professional Services	937,660	1,111,520	1,149,152	(37,632)	1,043,330
Insurance	415,000	372,218	372,406	(188)	336,000
Advertising	228,900	184,330	193,070	(8,739)	137,600
NABC Other Expenses	499,717	518,998	496,777	22,221	560,700
Other Expenses	363,300	411,022	415,076	(4,054)	376,550
Dues & Subscriptions	177,700	173,252	173,101	151	173,604
Depreciation	528,889	509,521	508,459	1,063	598,948
Taxes & Interest	60,250	72,685	83,838	(11,153)	67,450
Total Expenses	16,346,105	16,491,965	16,515,732	(23,767)	17,290,179
Change in Net Assets from Operations	9,461	(199,933)	(303,620)	\$ (103,687)	\$ 101,486
Investment Gain(Loss)		5,189	(62,541)		
Change in Net Assets	\$ 9,461	\$ (194,744)	\$ (366,161)		

**American Contract Bridge League, Inc.
2016 Capital Budget**

	Final 2016 <u>Budget</u>
IT	
Network Monitoring Tools	\$ 25,000
File Servers/Disk Storage	150,000
Tape Backup Devices	25,000
Ghost Tool	15,000
AS400 Replacement	70,000
<i>Items carried over from 2015</i>	
Network/Firewall Infrastructure	75,000
Upgrade Microsoft Windows	25,000
	385,000
 Field Operations	
Laptops for TDs - 60 @ \$800	48,000
Printer for TDs - 60 @ \$350	21,000
Carrying cases for TDs - 60 @ \$300	18,000
	87,000
 Miscellaneous	
Allowance for Maintenance Items	10,000
NABC Supplies	15,000
	25,000
 Grand Total	 <u>\$ 497,000</u>

American Contract Bridge League, Inc.
Statements of Financial Position
December 31, 2015 and 2014

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash	\$ 1,423,735	\$ 868,677
Investments	4,439,694	4,539,610
Accounts Receivable - Net	471,889	537,835
Due from Affiliates	447	235
Prepaid Expenses	444,485	577,186
Other	26,906	23,703
Total Current	<u>6,807,155</u>	<u>6,547,245</u>
Other Assets		
Property and Equipment - Net	<u>5,049,434</u>	<u>5,482,548</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 11,856,589</u>	<u>\$ 12,029,793</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ 210,734	\$ 130,571
Accrued Payroll	504,429	498,216
Accrued Expenses	466,827	618,676
Accrued Insurance - Retirees	126,912	126,912
Unredeemed Bridge Bucks	108,478	117,127
Deferred Revenue	3,746,964	3,663,791
Unit Dues Refunds	438,710	437,973
Due to Affiliates	314,331	200,375
Total Current	<u>5,917,385</u>	<u>5,793,641</u>
Long-Term Liabilities		
Deferred Revenue	1,420,578	1,369,131
Accrued Insurance - Retirees	1,371,998	1,371,998
Unit Dues Refunds	117,410	99,643
Total Long-Term	<u>2,909,987</u>	<u>2,840,772</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>8,827,371</u>	<u>8,634,413</u>
Net Assets - Prior	3,395,379	7,505,014
Net Assets - Current	<u>(366,161)</u>	<u>(4,109,635)</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>3,029,218</u>	<u>3,395,379</u>
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	<u>\$ 11,856,589</u>	<u>\$ 12,029,793</u>

**Excerpts of
ACBL Board of Directors
Minutes
Reno, NV
As presented by Richard Anderson
March 13, 2016**

BRIDGE COMMITTEE

R. Jones (C), C. Jones (VC)
Aquino, Carman, Heller, Levy, Morse, Norden,
Reid, Robinson, Weniger

Staff: S. Weinstein

Item 161-20: Vulnerability Inserts

Linda Trent, District 22 and seconded, that ACBL place vulnerability inserts in their boards.
(Carried)

Motion failed: Aye: 17, 18, 23 Absent: 3

Item 161-21: Slow Play

Linda Trent, District 22 and seconded, after the Director has been called twice for a slow pair and the clock is at 12 minutes or less, a third call about the same pair shall result in an automatic procedural penalty. (Carried)

Motion failed: Absent: 3

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Robinson (C) Reid (VC)
Bagley, Carman, Heller, Levy, Morse, Whipple

Staff : Brown

Item 161-91: Entry Fees

For team events held at an NABC in which all team entrants receive full overall masterpoint awards, entry shall be charged on a per person basis. For team events in which the overall award is calculated as a percentage of a players participation, entry fees shall be charged on a per team basis at a rate equivalent to four players on that team.

Effective immediately
Carried: Absent: 3

Item 161-95: Cooperative Advertising Program

Appendix 1-E2 of the Codification is amended as follows:

Cooperative Advertising Program

The Cooperative Advertising Program (CAP) reimburses ACBL teachers, clubs, units and districts for advertising expenses for programs and lessons designed for newcomers and/or to recruit ACBL members. CAP will refund ~~50~~ **75%** of eligible advertising costs with a maximum reimbursement of ~~\$500~~**750**. Qualifying advertisements are date-specific ad campaigns for beginner bridge lessons, newcomer programs, social bridge recruitment events and ACBL member recruitment. ACBL reserves the right to refuse reimbursement for any reason for CAP submissions. Submissions by a person who has any ownership, management or conflict of interest in the media outlet in which they are advertising (e.g. personal websites, online and print publications) will not be approved for CAP reimbursement.

For more information on CAP Guidelines and Requirements visit
<http://www.acbl.org/marketing/cooperative-advertising-program/>.

Effective date: April 1, 2016

Carried: Abstain: 15

GOVERNANCE/BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Reid (C)

Anderson, Harlan, Heller, Levy, Norden, Reid, Vilhauer, Weniger

Staff: McGuire

Item 161-114: Permanent Committees

Chapter IV: ACBL Board of Directors Section 2 Permanent Committees, of the Codification, be updated as follows:

Section 2 – Permanent Committees

2.1 A permanent committee is a body established by the Board of Directors to address a functional area for which there is a need for continuing evaluation. It will report the results of its deliberations to the Board of Directors at each regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors.

2.2 The president appoints the chairman and members at the beginning of his term. Membership is comprised of board members.

2.2.1 The Presidents of the WBF Zone Two National Bridge Organizations shall be members of the "International Committee" or any successor committee whose functional area is participation in international bridge organizations and events; they may, individually or collectively, propose motions to the Board of Directors concerning international bridge **or other issues that impact their NBO's**. Their participation shall be limited to Committee activities. Expenses attributable their participation on the Committee shall not be paid nor reimbursed by the ACBL.

Carried: Nay: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 22

Abstain: 4, 16

JUNIORS/YOUTH NABC COMMITTEE

Hennings (C)
Aquino, Calkins, Heth, Janicki, C. Jones, R. Jones, Lane,
Smith, Vilhauer

Staff: Turner

Item 161-135: High School Team Championship

Stu Goodgold, District 21 and seconded, that each district and each unit be allowed to hold one high school team championship event each year. (Carried unanimously)

Motion failed: Aye: 18, 19, 21, 24 Abstain: 7

NABC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Bagley (C)
Aquino, Fairchild, Heller, Hennings, R. Jones,
N. Boyd, W. Sullivan, S. Weinstein

Staff: Boyd

Item 161-157: NABC+ Appeals

ACBL Tournament Directors shall hear and rule upon all appeals filed at North American Bridge Championships. **NABC+ appeals shall be heard by Tournament Director Panels in a manner similar to regional appeal hearings (Ref: 983-02, 992-02).** All Conduct and Ethics or Disciplinary matters shall continue to be referred to and heard by the NABC Tournament Committee or to its assignees.

Effective July 1, 2016

Carried: Nay: 2, 4, 6, 13, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24 Abstain: 20 Absent: 3

Item 161-159: Board of Governors Attendance

That each Board of Governors meeting be live-streamed and available for viewing via the ACBL Web site for 60 days. Non-attending board members are expected to watch the meeting at their earliest convenience.

The only District Directors obligated to attend the BOG meeting shall be the President, Chairman of the Board, Treasurer and host District Director.

No other board member shall receive expenses – unless explicitly approved by the President and Treasurer – beyond the morning after the full board adjourns.

Motion failed: Aye: 7, 9, 10, 12 Abstain: 4, 24 Absent: 3

TOURNAMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Heller (C)

Bagley, Carman, Hennings, Norden, Robinson, Weniger

Staff: Boyd

Item 161-210: Limited and Invitational Games in STaCs

Stephen Moese, District 11 that item 153-70 Limited and Invitational Games in STaCs be reconsidered by the ACBL Board of Directors:

Item 153-70: Limited and Invitational Games in STaCs

Clubs which have a sanctioned masterpoint limited game, may not declare such game as open when there is a STaC.

Clubs which have a sanctioned invitational game may not declare such game as open when there is a STaC.

These clubs, limited and invitational, can play in the STaC, but they will be grouped with like (all invitational together, similar masterpoint limits) clubs.

Effective January 1, 2016

Carried. Nay: 2, 8, 11, 17, 22.

BoG: Carried.

Motion failed: Aye: 8, 11, 17, 23, 25 Abstain: 22 Absent: 3

Board of Governor Motions: Reno March 13, 2016

Motion: 161-01G:

Moved by Barbara Doran, District 6, that the ACBL Board of Directors reconsider Motion 153-32:

Motion 153-32: Entry Fees Team Events

All events held at an NABC, entry fees for team events of two sessions or more shall be charged on a per person rather than a per team basis.

Effective Date: January 1, 2016 Carried Nay: 13, 19, 21, 24, 25 Abstain: 2

Discussion:

We are an aging population and growing older. Many of our members play on 5 and/or 6-man teams because they lack the stamina to play two full sessions because of age, injury or illness. The motion passed in Denver would make these players pay more to play less when all they are trying to do is prolong their ability to play the game they love and continue to attend NABCs. Are we really going to ask players to pay \$16 to play 12 boards? We are, after all, supposed to be selling bridge play, not master points. A team is a team; the entry should be the same for all.

There are other reasons why players must play on multi-bagger teams. Certain volunteers must be free to oversee entertainment and hospitality by 10pm each night (and sometimes from 1pm-3pm or so for special hospitality for daylight players) so they can't play the second half of an evening match. Is it at all fair to charge these players more because they are volunteers? There seems to be a misperception that these volunteers receive free plays which cover "most, if not all" of a Nationals. This is not true. Free plays are paid for from the local budget and a key volunteer might get 3 or 4 one-session free plays as a token thank you from the Tournament Chair. Some players have outside commitments which make them unable to play a whole session. Is it fair to charge those who play 12 boards the same amount as those who play 24?

Another reason for multi-bagger teams is that sometimes you run into a friend or friends who were looking for a partner and/or teammates and add them at the last minute as a favor. Those now forced to play only half (BKO's leave no options other than whole or half) will pay a penalty in the form of boards not played, but paid for.

There are some players already struggling to pay the high entry fees at an NABC. These people form multi-bagger teams to save a few dollars each session at the expense of playing less. Do we really want to harm these players?

Paying \$16 for 12 boards when others in the same event pay the same amount to play 24 is not only unfair, it sends playing into the realm of extravagance. To me, it's like buying a \$1500 purse. I can afford it, but could never bring myself to buy it.

In summary, this motion hurts the aged, the ill, the injured, the less affluent, volunteers, and players trying to do a favor for a friend. I can think of no one it helps. It should be reconsidered.

Motion 161-02G:

Moved by Paul Cuneo, District 16, ACBL will conduct a feasibility study of developing a suite of Apps for mobile devices as described in this paper by partnering with commercial enterprises that create bridge software and Apps. The study will be organized, led and staffed by volunteers who will keep ACBL management informed of the progress. The study will be completed by the 2017 Spring NABC in Kansas City for presentation to the ACBL Board of Directors at their meeting.

Background:

Increasingly, people of all ages are interacting with the world through their handheld electronic devices. Mobile phone and tablet usage has grown exponentially in the past few years since the introduction of smart phones and the interest in PC's has declined accordingly. Across the generations, people are all using these devices, but for many young people it is their primary link to the world. To attract people to bridge, I believe that the ACBL needs a suite of free phone and tablet APPS to generate interest in bridge and encourage people to enjoy the challenge of solving bridge problems as puzzles. The Apps would help them start learning and improving even before taking lessons.

Characteristics of needed APPS:

- Start with declarer play – play against “robots” to maximize the number of tricks taken
- Sight, sound, points and level advancement are rewards for success
- Online and offline play – competing against others when online
- Invite friends to play the same set of hands and compete against them
- Several difficulty levels with advancement dependent upon success at lower level
- Teaching mode to:
 - Allow the robots to replay the hand with score comparison
 - Teach basic declarer play technique
 - Teach common card combinations
- Links to learning tools
- Expand to defense and bidding Apps

I believe this suite of Apps will help us to attract people of all ages to bridge. I believe it is essential for people who have full time employment to have tools available on their mobile devices to play and learn. The suite of Apps will complement online bridge competition sites such as BBO.

Discussion:

This work needs to be done by capable competent volunteers as it is not a high short term priority for the ACBL Board, ACBL management, the Education Department or the CIO. I believe there are lots of players, who have the requisite skills in business, project management and software, who would be willing to volunteer their efforts on this project development. ACBL

staff and interested ACBL Board members can be kept apprised of progress through timely e-mail and teleconferences with study leaders. I believe that partnering with a commercial enterprise is the most cost effective way of providing the Apps and keeping them maintained. Fortunately there are several capable competent organizations that are potential partners.

Attracting Children and Youth

We must begin to attract children and youth to insure the long term future of competitive bridge!!! While our best prospects for growth over the next few years will come from the “Baby Boomer” generation, unless we are able to attract significant numbers of children and youth to play bridge, I am not optimistic about the long term future in North America. While insuring the future of Bridge in North America is a worthy goal in itself, I believe Bridge has another significant role to play for children. That role is to help children learn critical thinking skills by helping them learn deductive reasoning, pattern recognition, probability theory, and inferential reasoning in a way that they will enjoy.

Much has been published that argues the U.S. currently is at a competitive disadvantage against many other developed nations because we are not producing enough college graduates in the STEM disciplines. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Many companies who hire graduates with these skills are funding efforts to improve primary and secondary education in these disciplines. Most of these efforts focus on helping teachers improve their skills for teaching and on improving the materials which are used in the classroom. So far, significant improvement is lacking and the country continues to lag. Dr. Chris Shaw who is a past member of the ACBL’s Education Foundation Board, has published two studies about the effect of learning bridge on improving test score performance. These were small studies conducted over several years that show learning bridge enhanced educational performance as measured by increasing test scores in a statistically significant way. With his permission, the studies are available by e-mailing Paul Cuneo at paulcuneo@sbcglobal.net.

While further and broader research is needed, I’m personally convinced that bridge can make a tremendous contribution to society by helping students learn the critical thinking skills needed to excel in the STEM disciplines and that the benefit will be even greater for economically disadvantaged students. I also believe that the suite of Apps is a critical component of any effective bridge program that is school based. Once the Apps are developed and ready for use, efforts to conduct the research and ultimately have bridge widely supported and encouraged by leading educators can begin. I see that as a multi-year process with the suite of apps as a critical enabler.

Motion 161-03G:

Moved by Steve Moese, District 11 that the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR) for Unethical Behaviour Penalties be modified to include the following note in ACBL CDR, Appendix B pp 55-56: "Clear & Convincing Evidence Required for Conviction and Expulsion"

Discussion:

OFFENSE	RECOMMENDED DISCIPLINE	MANDATORY MASTERPOINT PENALTIES
E12 - Actively seek advance information about a board in play (CDR 3.1, 3.2 and 3.7)	2 years Suspension to Expulsion * # &	25-100% of Disciplined Player's total masterpoint holding.
E13 - Prearrange a deal or part thereof including one card (CDR 3.1, 3.2 and 3.7)	2 years Suspension to Expulsion * # &	25-100% of Disciplined Player's total masterpoint holding.
E14 - Intentionally gain access to hand records for an event prior to the event and enter and play in the event and or give the hand records or copies to another person prior to that person entering and playing in the event. (CDR 3.1, 3.2 and 3.7)	Expulsion * &	100% of Disciplined Player's total masterpoint holding.
E15 - Prearranged partnership collusion by means of signaling to exchange information (CDR 3.1, 3.2 and 3.7)	Expulsion * &	100% of Disciplined Player's total masterpoint holding
E16 - Playing an ACBL sanctioned event while serving a term of suspension (CDR 3.2 and 3.5)	Extension of the suspension to twice the original term to Expulsion * # &	100% of Disciplined Player's total masterpoint holding.
E18 - Cheating and similar ethical violations not specifically cited by other sections of this Appendix (CDR 3.20)	90 days Suspension up to Expulsion * # &	0-100% of Disciplined Player's total masterpoint holding.

* - If a committee imposes a suspension, then it should also disqualify the pair or team from the event. This will mean the pair or team will lose its place in the event, any masterpoints earned in the event and any other benefits it may have earned from playing in the event. Should this disqualification take place after the correction period for the event has expired, other pairs and teams do not move up - the place formerly held by the disqualified contestant (pair or team) remains vacant.

- If a committee imposes a suspension it is encouraged to also impose an appropriate term of probation following the term of suspension.

& - Clear & Convincing Evidence Required for Conviction and Expulsion

This defines the unethical behavior infractions where clear and convincing evidence is required for conviction and sentencing. Other unethical behavior infractions require preponderance of evidence for conviction. Of these, E15 is problematic where no video or play by play records exist.

Motion 161-04G:

Moved by Steve Moese, District 11, that if ACBL Board of Directors motion 161-159 passes, it be amended as follows:

That each Board of Governors meeting and the open session of the Board of Directors meeting be live-streamed and available for viewing via the ACBL Web site for 60 days. Non-attending board members for their respective Boards are expected to watch the meeting at their earliest convenience. Videos will be available for all ACBL members.

~~The only District Directors obligated to attend the BOG meeting shall be the President, Chairman of the Board, Treasurer and host District Director.~~

Discussion:

Item 161-159: Board of Governors Attendance

Moved that: That each Board of Governors meeting be live-streamed and available for viewing via the ACBL Web site for 60 days. Non-attending board members are expected to watch the meeting at their earliest convenience.

The only District Directors obligated to attend the BOG meeting shall be the President, Chairman of the Board, Treasurer and host District Director.

No other board member shall receive expenses – unless explicitly approved by the President and Treasurer – beyond the morning after the full board adjourns.

Effective July 2016

Transparency and live streaming done equitably by both governing bodies promotes accountability and improves communication. BoD closed session deliberation would be exempt, but voting and open deliberation on all motions would be video recorded.

On BoG attendance, the communication between the BoG and BoD on matters directly affecting membership would suffer from the lack of interaction between the Boards. Allowing the Board of Directors to disengage from the Board of Governor's meeting moves communication in the wrong direction.

Motion: 161-05G:

Moved by Jean LaTraverse, District 1, the ACBL Board of Directors to consider ways of providing financial alleviation to Canadian organizations to minimize the impact on members and players.

Discussion:

The financial structure of ACBL sanctioned games has changed significantly for Canadian bridge organizations these last months. ACBL Districts, Units and clubs are all impacted by ACBL rate increases compounded by a significant devaluation of the Canadian dollar.

In recent weeks, we have seen:

1. *3% increase in sanction fees in USD;*
2. *9% increase in director fees in USD;*
3. *Requirement to remit to the ACBL non-member fees collected in USD;*
4. *+/- \$0.17 decrease in the value of the Canadian dollar in relation to the USD*
 - a. *May 2015 \$1USD = \$1.20CDN*
 - b. *February 2016 \$1USD = \$1.37CDN*
 - c. *Thankfully this is down from the \$1USD = \$1.45CDN we had a few weeks ago*

These increases hit hard for Canadian bridge organizations. The ability to absorb these increases is challenging without imposing higher fees to members, something that should be seen as a last resort, ideally. Examples of the results of these financial increases include:

- *One recreation club decided not to affiliate with the ACBL due to the financial requirements;*
- *Another club has converted one of its 3 weekly sessions away from an ACBL sanctioned event to a recreational game; and*
- *Two other clubs have expressed their concern over the fee increases and their ability to absorb the costs.*

Canadians who consume products and services offered by American companies have been seeing noticeable and appreciable discounts offered to them in light of the slumping Canadian dollar.

The financial stability of the ACBL is important and fee increases are to be expected. However, creative and innovative approaches can be implemented to lessen the burden for Canadian members.

Motion 161-06G:

Moved by Steve Gaynor, District 14, no ACBL wide Special Events held at clubs be scheduled on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday except for International Fund Game #1 which is to be permanently held on the Saturday afternoon of Super Bowl weekend.

Discussion:

There are many sectionals virtually every weekend and we should not schedule conflicting events to detract from these local tournaments. Asking to integrate the games into the tournaments is not practical as most sectionals run on a shoestring budget and are not interested in sharing time.

