

1 August 2023

To: Bronia Jenkins and the ACBL Board of Directors

From: The ACBL Advisory Council Teachers and Club Managers Committee

cc: Doug Couchman, ACBL Advisory Council Chair

Subject: Eliminating the VACB Visitor Policy – How This Decision Was Reached and Communicated

Dear All,

With great dismay and disappointment, we ask why the Advisory Council Teachers and Club Managers Committee was not consulted in advance about the decision

- to eliminate the VACB visitor policy,
- to dissolve all pooling of clubs in such games, and
- to announce the change with no advance preparation
- and, to enable club championships on BBO with cash awards

In a new start that emphasized communication and engagement, these decisions fully missed the mark. We provided the New Executive Director and several Board Members with our recommendations and concerns more than 2 months ago – See [ON GROWTH](#). Our recommendations have been fully ignored. Indeed, current decisions proceed in exactly the opposite direction that we recommend. We support creating a strong in-person club business base from which new members will be formed.

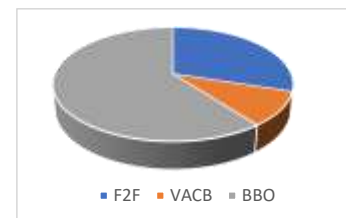
Our committee serves the Teachers and Club Managers of the ACBL – critical stakeholders in your decisions. We offer counsel from deep experience in both businesses. We have consistently asked for the ability to input to Management and Board of Directors decisions that materially affect teachers and clubs prior to making a final decision. What change you make and how you deploy that change both matter.

Our interest is simple. When change happens, we want both Management and the Board of Directors to be working with the best information and data, including potential positive and negative impacts of any material change. We recognize that we are not the decision makers, but we expect a productive relationship with you, one that respects each other's roles and interests.

No one on the Committee was aware of the decision behind today's announcement. As far as we know this decision discussed by the Board of Directors in New Orleans and rendered in Chicago was not even discussed at the Chicago Advisory Council Meeting at either meeting.

Our judgment suggests that open access to the VACB games for all players and the dissolution of pools of clubs will attract more players served by small in-person and VACB clubs to online play, making it even harder for those clubs to remain open. Many small VACB clubs still produce income vital to the support of their in-person counterpart. Whether the change destroys VACB bridge as some predict or causes it to grow disproportionately remains to be seen.

Clearly shifting the club championship game to BBO ACBL "Tournaments" show a careless disregard for smaller in-person and VACB clubs. As of May 2023 BBO owns 60% share of Clubs Games without your additional help. 70% if we rightly include VACB games that must run on their platform. You



have done nothing to reverse this gross share gain caused by the pandemic (BBO share of total club tables in 2019 was 33%). And you wonder why members have left the ACBL.

Our committee members and all teachers and club managers are immediately affected by the impacts of these changes. We needed advance notice to prepare and have yet to receive any information that allowed us to explain to members what changes they would see. In addition, this negatively affects VACB managers, who are dealing with the tremendous fallout of the decision that didn't include them, or give them time to prepare their players, or make appropriate adjustments to their business model.

Recall teachers and club managers are on the front line for member relations and recruiting for most ACBL members. While we continue to expect engagement before major decisions, we are realistic that you value something other than our input or service. Why do you choose to waste our collective knowledge and experience?

We hope to improve our relationship substantially. To do that we need your collaboration. We're behind our proposal to you to create a Committee of the Corporation chartered to manage Club and Teacher impacts. These unfortunate announcements demonstrate why such a committee is necessary. If nothing else, Clubs and Teachers want you to consider their opinions. We believe seeking this collective feedback can only improve the effectiveness and implementation of your decisions.

How shall we engage more productively?

Submitted Respectfully,
Steve Moese K082411 Chair for the
Advisory Council Teachers and Club Managers Committee -
Jeff Bayone, Rich Carle, Ellis Feigenbaum, Steve Gaynor, Kathie McNab, Henry Meguid, Susan Miguel,
Betty Starzec, Sylvana Morici