

TOPIC: 425 Mile Rule for Regional Tournaments

While we can all agree that running two regionals that actively compete for the same players is self-defeating, we find a sizable flaw in the 425 mile rule. Clearly, the distance does not reflect how population density affects attendance. The current decision process gives one district veto power over another if the first has tradition or has sanctioned first. The problem is this ignores what the players want.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Make regional sanction decisions data based, not based on distance rules alone. Demonstrate that one regional will cannibalize another by showing actual attendance patterns and lost income risk against existing commitments. If the risk is demonstrable small, then allow both tournaments. We should strive to serve the most players possible. Define risk and the number of players who attend both tournaments, not some unproven concern about decline in attendance. Decide based on data, not fear.

TOPIC: Leadership Responses to Advisory Council Proposals

From time to time the Advisory Council Chair can provide feedback and rationale why an Advisory Council proposal has been defeated by Board Action. This does not happen routinely. When the Advisory Council makes a proposal to management for their action/decision, there is no formal mechanism to getting feedback about what was done, and if the idea rejected, why it was rejected. In the spirit of good advice and counsel we believe a more transparent communication among the AC, BoD and Management will improve the quality of our relationship and the quality of the proposals brought for consideration.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: For every proposal put forward by the Advisory Council, we should receive a one or two paragraph answer from Management or the Board of Directors that details the decision, and the basis for the decision. These responses should be available for the next general Advisory Council Meeting.

TOPIC: Advisory Council Communication – Between Meetings

With the establishment of Advisory Council Committees on Teachers and Club Managers, Growth, Ethics, and Bridge, the Advisory Council should use the Bridge Winners forum to communicated between meetings.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: The Bridge Winners Advisory Council Forum authors should be kept up to date (perhaps with authors in a visible list), allow only members of the Advisory Council and the Board of Directors to Post articles and polls, and allow any Bridge Winner member to comment on relevant discussions. This ensures a broad spectrum of input that should only help the quality of the proposals, and the decisions reached from their consideration.

TOPIC: Online Silver Point Games

Clubs helped establish STaC games and reaped a historic benefit from increased attendance during those few weeks. Silver points helped attract many NLM players to club games. Post covid, there are a number of additional ways that silver points can be earned without attending face to face club games. This has hurt attendance at STaCs and undercut F2F club attendance.

Unfortunately, ACBL-wide data is not available to us. We have examples where a F2F club that usually saw a 20-40% bump in tables now sees no increase for STaC weeks. Likewise, we see online VACB games go from 4 tables to 70 tables during Silver Linings Week (a good thing).

While we do not want to penalize online play, we do not want online play to penalize F2F STaC attendance. The ACBL runs silver point games that are not affiliated with a Club.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: We ask that the frequency and size of online silver point awards be reexamined to mitigate the bias benefitting online games. We expect a range of results as conditions vary broadly. We ask that any bias that reduces STaC attendance be eliminated. Consider restricting silver point games online to VACB clubs with 1x awards as an appropriate path forward.

TOPIC: Upgraded Club Championships (UCC) for Clubs that Recruit Effectively

Whenever we bring in 10 new members we get 1 upgraded club championship. A large club that brings in 30 members a year gets 3 UCCs. They run 10 sessions a week 520 sessions a year, 3 of which are UCCs. That's a 0.58% award rate over all sessions played. Compare that to a one-session per week club that would get close to a 6% reward for the same achievement. A club or bridge center that hosts two sessions a day should get proportionately more than a club that runs once per week.

In addition, more black points do not attract more tables any more. UCCs should offer a more attractive reward.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Consider increasing the # of games award per 10 new members to 3 UCCs, or perhaps allow one week of UCCs for every 10 new members recruited. Consider awarding pigmented points, for example allowing up to 25% Gold in the UCC games from recruiting success.

TOPIC: Online Bulletin Ads – Allow online ads to differ from Print ads.

Ads in the ACBL Bulletin are not inexpensive. A typical ½ page costs \$750 plus \$100 designer fee. Digital ads cost nothing to publish (but do have design cost).

There is a crying need to advertise tournaments, bridge classes, and club games, in addition to emails and websites currently in use. The pending ACBL Marketplace has been under discussion for 4 years with no prototype in sight. Online-only ads offer help. They can utilize less graphics and color, but allow greater reach into the ACBL bridge community. They might reduce print ad revenues if advertisers rebalance. However, this will test the impact and value of print versus online ads.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Allow purchase of online-only ads for their design cost. These ads apply to Regionals, Sectionals, Classes or Clubs. These ads appear as an online appendix to every online Bulletin. The result will be an increase in table fee income to the ACBL. This proposal becomes moot with the implementation of the ACBL Marketplace.

The Advisory Council Teachers & Club Managers Committee