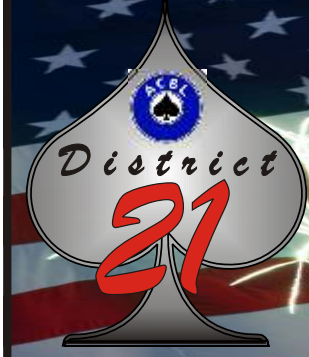


CONTRACT BRIDGE Forum

Happy 4th of July!

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All-Western Championships Regional Santa Clara, Calif. September 1-7, 2009



Hyatt Regency Hotel, Santa Clara CA

Different Strokes for Different ... Districts

By Bruce W.
Blakely
District 21
National Director



[Continued from
last month]

Place Label Here

Another area is our district's desire to hold Swiss Teams events based on average number of masterpoints. As it currently stands, our district holds Strati-Flighted team games based on the number of masterpoints of the player on each team who has the highest number of masterpoints. If any one player has over 2,000 masterpoints, the team must play in a A or A/X, not B-C-D. Our district board considered a motion to have flighting based on the average number of masterpoints so that, if a player had 2,200 and the other three on the team had 1,000 or 1,500 masterpoints a piece, for example, the team could still play in B-C-D. The idea was that a player with only a few points over the threshold, and/or who lives in a smaller unit, could not field a team of four players who wanted to play in A/X.

Essentially this player was disenfranchised from playing in our Swiss Teams on the final day of our regional tournaments.

The District 21 Board which is comprised of 44 members, two representatives from each unit, considered the motion in 2008. Although not all 44 representative were present, the district board's vote was unanimous to change the format and hold Swiss Teams events based on average masterpoints. Subsequently, our tournament directors advised us that this format is not allowed.

Strati-Flighted events may not be based on average masterpoints. The district board asked me to bring this matter to the ACBL National Board to change the rule.

Since ACBL President, Jerry Fleming, and I had brought concurrent motions on the same theme, we consolidated our motions. The unified motion to the ACBL Board proposed allowing both pairs and team events to be run based on average masterpoints and Jerry adopted my suggestion that no one player on a team could have more than 200% of the maximum average allowed. In other words, a team could have one player with 3,800 points and three with, say, 1,300 points each, for a total of 7,700 points, well below the 2,000 point average, but could not have any player with over 4,000 points on the team, since this expert should not be playing in Flight B. This pro-

posed amendment did not harm our district's desire to allow players to be able to continue to play on teams with their peers and friends, but would keep super-experienced players from corrupting the B-C-D flight.

Jerry and I presented the motion in writing and described to the Governance Committee orally what we were trying to accomplish by this motion at the Houston NABC in March, 2009. The committee focused on the difficulty of selling entries; how, if a team were put in the wrong flight, it would foul the movement of the event; and the fact that players with 2,000 masterpoints should just grow up and play with the big boys. I countered by suggesting, as described above, that some players are left with no Swiss event to play in; the restructuring is good for personal dynamics and rapport; allowing players with a few more masterpoints than the limit would not harm the player in the B flight; and it was the overwhelming desire of our district for the event to be allowed.

I also suggested that the matter should be left to the discretion of individual districts; a way to solve any possible inequalities was to make a cap of 120 or 125% of the average masterpoint limit; and, finally, that we are running the league for the benefit of our players, not the convenience of ACBL Directors.

All of these arguments fell on deaf ears before the Governance Committee which voted 6-0 to forbid Strati-Flighted Swiss on a basis of average points. (Since I was not on the Governance Committee, I did not vote.). The committee then considered a revised motion, of allowing pairs events to be stratified on the basis of average masterpoints. It was suggested that, if pairs events were stratified on the basis of average points (averaging only two player's masterpoints) that there should be a cap so a player with 3,900 masterpoints could not play with a student in Strat B. Various caps were discussed. 120%, 125% and 150% were mentioned, but the committee decided to proceed to a vote without a proposed cap.

The Governance Committee then voted in favor allowing Stratified Pairs events on the basis of average masterpoints.

(See Bruce on page 16)



Round Numbers

By Stu Goodgold
District 21 President

Ten thousand. 10,000. 10K to computer programmers and distance runners. 10 G's to gamblers, and 10 Big Ones to gangsters. Whatever you call it, 10,000 is a nice round number. Zeroes are nice and round, so any number with four zeroes in it must be a nice round number. What does all this have to do with the state of bridge? More on that later, but at least I've got your interest.

The Sacramento Regional was a big success, right on the heels of a record in Monterey and our second biggest turnout in the last 10 years for our President's Day regional. Did you happen to read Jay Baum's article in the June ACBL Bulletin? The CEO of the ACBL noted that in these recessionary times, bridge is doing very well. Sectionals are up 2% across the ACBL while regionals are down only 3%. It looks like we are bucking the trend in a most positive way; Sacramento was up 12% over last year. What's more Burlingame was up 20% over the 2008 February regional, which was held in Sacramento, and Monterey was up over 20% over the 2008 January regional, which was held, quite surprisingly, in Monterey. To be fair the 2008 Monterey regional was shortened by a day and zapped by a nasty storm, as was the electrical system.

You might wonder what we are doing to boost the attendance? I wonder too. We have tried to make the tournaments a little more enjoyable for everyone. We held the entry fee to \$10.00 per session while other districts are more. We increased the number of boards in the Flight A/X Swiss, we started pre-dealt hands for all pairs events, we made the hospitality suite better than ever. But when it comes down to it, just how many more players show up because of these little details? Is that the case, or maybe as the pundits said in the Clinton administration, "It's the economy, stupid."

Your District 21 Board meets formally three times a year, at each regional except Monterey. Our last meeting was the end of May, at the Sacramento Regional. The main topic of discussion was the revision of the board's bylaws. Oh hum and yawn might be your reaction, and rightly so. The bylaws really have no effect on whether you play for the finesse or drop the queen. But the proposed changes did directly affect those on the board, so they stifled their yawns for this meeting.

At our previous meeting, the board approved a series of editorial changes which brought our bylaws into the 21st century. There was nothing controversial in those changes and it passed without much debate. This time we delved into substantial changes, deciding if and how to reconstitute the board itself. Each of the 22 units within D21 has two representatives on the board. That can make for a rather large gathering, up to 44 reps plus five elected officers. A couple of units are generally absent from a meeting, and the more outlying units, especially our new ones in Nevada, have trouble sending two reps. The question was raised whether to change this structure or leave it alone. Each rep's job was on the line; they paid attention.

Before going into more details, let's understand the job description of a representative. Each rep provides feedback from the district board meeting to his or her unit's board, telling them what is happening at the district level and the national level. They find out what changes are taking place, what actions are needed from the unit (a recent tax law change has complicated our tax-exempt status), and what resources are available for assisting units.

The 44 representatives also have a say in how the district is run. Among other voting powers, the board elects the offices of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Each unit has a number of votes on the board, which varies by the size of the unit's membership. Each of the unit's reps currently has half of the unit's total vote. Therein lies a problem; if only one rep is present at the meeting, the other half of the unit's vote is not counted.

Should each unit be limited to one rep, should one or two reps be allowed the full unit's vote, or should we keep the two rep requirement? That was the thrust of the discussion. In the end, the consensus appeared to be: allow up to two reps; if only one is present, that

(See Stu on page 16)

DEADLINES

Deadlines for *Forum* copy and ads is the 5th of the month!

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Tournament Trail

Firecracker Sectional

Convention Center, Santa Clara, Calif.
July 1-5, 2009

Wine Valley Sectional

Vintage House Senior Center, Sonoma, Calif.
July 11-12, 2009

Monterey 299er Sectional

Bridge Center, Marina, Calif.
July 25-26, 2009

South County Sectional

Transfiguration Church Hall, Castro Valley, Calif.
August 7-9, 2009