

ACBL Unit 143 Board Meeting Minutes, Monday, February 10, 2025.

Location: The meeting was conducted online using ZOOM.

Attendees: Dennis Abeln, Sandy Bigg, Don Chase, Terry D'Amato, Ken Eiger, Steve Russell, Jay Shah, Janet Vontz and John Welte.

Absent: Dian Brazier and Tod Moses

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00.

President's Report

Mark read a letter of appreciation from Jack Bryant relative to the naming of the Jack Bryant Spring Sectional. The letter appears below:

You and the Board gave me a gift I could not imagine. I still tear up when I think about all of you. I am filled with gratitude, and, if you can believe it, humility ?? Thank you is not enough but it is a place to start. I will continue to try to live up to the legacy.

Jack

North American Bridge Championship St. Louis 2026

Michael Sherberg was introduced as the chairman of the upcoming NABC tournament. Michael has met with the ACBL team and will be visiting the site with them to determine how to use the space.

Information about the tournament will be available upon conclusion of the spring NABC. Some events are fixed by the ACBL. We can add other events.

Phyllis will be coordinating the I/N events.

Michael reports plans are coming along. There will be buses running between three hotels and the convention center. He is recruiting volunteers to chair the various committees that coordinate tournament activities.

Jay asked about the variety of jobs.

Finance chair

Volunteer coordinator

Player Hospitality chair

I/N programs

Information chair

Registration

Partnership

Program including restaurant guide

Publicity

Prizes

Charity (selects local charity to receive proceeds)

Fund raising: ACBL suggests the sale of sponsorships to local corporate entities is a quick and efficient way to raise money.

Dennis said District 8 has funds set aside for the NABC. Unit 143 has money they can contribute..

A surcharge on local games would help raise money.

Michael does not know how much money we are obligated to contribute.

ACBL has developed a mock up for a logo. Mark commented that it must include the Arch.

Volunteers and ideas are requested from the board members, and they can communicate with

Michael through his email address:

sherbergm@sbcglobal.net

Michael exited the meeting at the conclusion of his remarks.

Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the December 9, 2024, meeting. It was approved unanimously.

Approval of the Treasurer's Report

Steve sent the treasurer's report to each member. All tournament costs have not been paid. A motion was made and seconded to approve the treasurer's report. It was approved unanimously.

Old Business

The issue with the gentleman at the Regional that required outside vendors to perform was addressed/ A complaint was lodged by Mark Boswell with the ACBL Recorder. Dennis was interviewed extensively about the claim. If there is a complaint on file, there will be action if there is a recurrence. District 8 decided to drop the matter. Don Chase recommended that the issue be dropped by our board. John Welte suggested a letter be sent. The majority of the board agreed to do nothing. The matter will be deleted from future agendas.

Sectional Tournament

Dennis reported the table count was up 2% from January, 2024.. The proceeds were \$950, up from a \$1292 loss which was affected by low I/N fees in January.

Peter did not run a web movement with 12 and 8 table games. He ran a web movement Saturday afternoon for a 15 table game, and it required 26 boards which shortened the dinner break. Peter

will do what we want. Rick Beye suggests more web movements be used because they create more even distribution of boards and opponents.

Mark will explain the reason for the web movement the next time it is implemented. Time can be added to the schedule to accommodate web movements; however players like to exit early.

Our flyer is set so start times cannot be altered.

An explanation of web movements on the website may help. It will appear after the I/N tournament.

Peter only received one complaint. The board thought his reaction to players getting ahead of the Swiss Teams was a little over the top. (Sidebar: An error by players can cause electronic devices to fail in a Swiss tournament and may explain Peter's stern demeanor)

Life master pins will be distributed at the Spring Jack Bryant Sectional:

Upcoming I/N tournament

John says we are set. Flyers are on the ACBL website. Sandy will send a blast to Pianola.

Ken Eiger will give a 10-15 minute primer on Swiss team strategy Sunday morning a week before the tournament.

John will report trophy requirements to Mark. Mark will procure appropriate trophies.

Dian will take care of hospitality.

Phyllis will be director.

Senior Olympics

Dennis recommends that the Unit pay up to \$100 to upgrade tournament Sanction to award silver masterpoints. It is called an "Other" tournament, not a sectional. The JCC is sponsoring the tournament. The center donates their space; Phyllis donates her services, and the J takes care of any costs. Phyllis will work on a flyer if our request is approved by ACBL.

Dennis moved that the Unit pay the surcharge. The motion was seconded and approved.

There were only 9 tables last year. Anyone over 50 is eligible to play. If the tournament is over 25 tables, Phyllis will still be able to run it since we were not expecting over 25 tables. We would have to make different director arrangements for next year's Senior Olympics if we expect more than 25 tables.

JCC handles promotion. Terry will put something on the website to encourage Senior Olympics

participation beginning a month before the event. The date was uncertain.

Regional tournament.

The flyer was sent to members of the board and suggestions were made. The resulting flyer was resubmitted for approval. A motion was made to approve the flyer. It was seconded and approved.

ACBL is concerned directors will not be prepared to run bracketed pairs. Larry Sealy has been working with Dennis to achieve ACBL approval for the event.

We are prepared to invite the New England director to come to St. Louis to help run the game if necessary. There is no competition during this event so all players will be competing. Peter will gain experience running a bracketed pairs even in an upcoming Chicago tournament if it is included in their menu of events..

The evening Swiss game was dropped. There are evening pairs on the schedule.

ACBL won't approve the plan until we submit a flyer. The ACBL will approve bracketed pairs at that time.

We need to create conditions of contest for ACBL approval

Peter reports that when a bracketed pairs event is run, the morning event is a Howell movement. The afternoon is also a Howell. Everyone plays against everyone.

Player of the Year

The decision is made by combining all points earned in unit games plus points earned in any sectional + 1/3 regional points for each player. The player with the most points is POTY, Player of the Year. The reason for 1/3 at regional events is the increased incidence of pros playing with clients.

A discussion ensued regarding POTY:

Players are confused as to what games are unit games and which games apply.

We could eliminate unit games

The regional game points can be skewed by pros playing with clients.

Some players are aware of their standings. Other players are not that aware of the poty contest.

Online games do not count toward POTY contest.

Mark says online games should not be counted. Mark feels it is too easy to cheat in online games. Even though EDGAR ferrets out cheaters, it takes a while.

The team championship is online. The upper levels of contests have requirements that include phone and video communication reducing cheating.

All POTY games are unit 143 sponsored events. Unit 143 does not sponsor any BBO events.

Mark used to think online games should be closed down, but realized that some people ONLY have online games due to circumstances.

Mini McKenny reports are sent to the unit monthly. . Results for various contests are available on the website, but they are not on the front page. There are links to these contests on the front page.

The ACBL may tell us how other units determine POTY. Further discussion will continue at a future meeting.

Committees

Publicity committee is going along, per Sandy. Flyers will be mailed.

Membership: ad hoc committee focused on improving attendance from I/N perspective, not how to get I/N to open games. The following ideas and topics were discussed:

A personal reach out from a board member could be useful. Email communication may be overlooked and is impersonal.

Discounts for players. Where to draw a line for discounts.

Welcome event for newcomers, perhaps a game including mentor/mentee concept may increase attendance.

Mark mentioned a LM/nonLM event was run every two years at Sectionals and/or Regionals, but was discontinued.

Jay invites new members to call a board member. A website item called “ask the board member” or “ask the expert” or simply, ask a bridge question including an answer for all to read and/or to engage should be considered.

Ken reported that a busload of children came from a school and played bridge at the Houston Regional tournament. Chess clubs and chess teams are common. Why aren't there bridge clubs? Bridge can be introduced to math clubs.

Mark has experience with running a sports team not associated with a school except for the

name, and not getting a lot of support from the school.

A suggestion of a mentor mentee game with time to discuss the hand for immediate feedback was made, but was not met with a positive response from the board. The concept is better used as a training tool. Talking about hands in the middle of the game can be distracting.

There was a discussion to resurrect the Backstoppers charity event.

Electronics committee: no issues

Website committee: no issues

Education committee: It was suggested that sessions should focus on playing the cards, not on conventions. Mark will give a presentation on end plays.

District 8: officers Lori Moore is President; Dennis is VP, Debbie Leary is treasurer; Debbie Romero is chairman of the board which is an advisory position. She will be involved with updating District Bylaws.

Karen Walker stepped down as chairman. Terry D'Amato will take over updating the District website. Bill Buffer is Champaign's new chairman. Dennis is chairman of the website committee and will get information to Terry.

Collinsville is hoping to get their Regional up and going.

Heather Harmeyer is an ACBL tournament rated director and is moving to this area. Her services would help cut costs as there would be minimal travel expenses.

The balance of committee reports will be skipped until the next meeting.

Mark will communicate with Tod Moses regarding his participation on the board.

No other old business

No new business

The next meeting is March 10.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30.