

Conclusions

Goldsmith

Only four appeals in national events! Wonderful! Appeals committees (AC) didn't cover themselves with glory, but half were very close.

I'm getting tired of agreeing with Bartusek's dissents. Mark, make your ACs pay better attention to you!

Normally, I don't comment on regional appeals, because they are usually straightforward, because I think the ACBL ought to review directors' work routinely, and because the time is usually better spent working on the national appeals, but with only four of those, I did the regional ones, too. They were a much more interesting bunch than normal. As with the ACs, the panels didn't exactly cover themselves with glory. Neither was truly awful, but neither was especially good, either.

Directors ought to be very careful about ruling director's error.

That only occurs if the director prevented a normal score from being obtained and that normal score is needed. If an assigned score is required, then director's error almost never applies.

Twice in this set, poll results rather surprised me. I wonder about the procedures used to pick the players for polls. In a regional AC case I heard recently, a poll was taken and the results astonished the whole AC. We asked who was polled; it turned out that the four players consulted could have been argued to be the four most conservative expert players in the room. I don't claim that the directors intentionally chose those four players to get a desired result, but a representative sample is not obtained with a poll size of four, and if the sample is biased, poor results are obtained.

Again, I do not intend to imply that the results of the polls in these cases are suspect; in fact, my personal poll upheld the directors' poll results in the one that surprised me the most. In that poll, about half the players thought that the decision to be made was not close. Those players were split evenly between the two choices. AC members take note: even if you have strong feelings that an action is automatic, consider the possibility that other players may feel very differently. Tournament directors (TDs): try to avoid ACs with fewer than five members to attempt to get multiple viewpoints.

Wildavsky

Only four appeals in NABC+ events? Fantastic! Granted, this could be a statistical fluke. In the abstract we should expect fewer appeals when there are fewer infractions at the table, when TDs consistently make correct rulings, and when ACs consistently uphold correct rulings. I don't know whether to attribute the drop to any or all of these things, but for now kudos all 'round. The TDs in particular seem to have done well. I'll assume that the hundreds of rulings they made that were not appealed were correct, or at any rate not clearly incorrect. Of the four rulings appealed three were upheld, properly. The one that was overturned was a close call. To go an entire tournament without a clearly incorrect ruling is an impressive achievement.

The TD Panels for the secondary events also did well, correcting a few poor rulings and not overturning any rulings that were clearly correct.

There's still plenty of room for improvement. If I had to make one request this time around it would be for more complete information on the appeals forms. To accomplish the goals of the appeals process not only must justice be done, it must be seen to have been done.