

**CEO REPORT**  
**February / March 2008**  
**Detroit, MI**

To: ACBL Board of Directors

cc: Linda Mamula  
Peter Rank

From: Jay Baum, CEO  
ACBL

**MEMBERSHIP:**

2007 membership finished with an increase of 983 members. Membership as of 2/1/08 stood at 158,269, an increase of 284 for the month.

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/bod/08JanActiveMembership.pdf>

**TOURNAMENT:**

**2007 Table count:** There is an article in the March issue of the Bridge Bulletin announcing the fact that we topped 3 million sanctioned tables in 2007. While we could not determine the exact club that put us over, we were able to determine that it happened while the December report was being run for the Hartford Bridge Club in West Hartford CT.

2007 tables for all tournaments were 464,573. That breaks the record set in 2004 of 463,409.

While club tables are not official, our count to date for all club game tables is 2,535,630.

[http://web2.acbl.org/bb/bod/07\\_08TC.pdf](http://web2.acbl.org/bb/bod/07_08TC.pdf)

**HALL OF FAME:**

The deadline for voting in the Hall of Fame election was February 19. Nick Nickell and Mike Passell were elected to the open category of the Hall of Fame.

**COOPERATIVE ADVERTISING PROGRAM:**

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/bod/CoOp2007.pdf>

## **NEW MEMBER NEWSLETTER:**

ACBL will mail the first of the new-member newsletters at the beginning of April to new members who joined between January 1 and March 31 of 2008. This group of new members will receive their second newsletter at the beginning of July, their third at the beginning of October and their final issue early in January 2009. The second group of new members (those joining between April 1 and June 30 of 2008) will receive their first newsletter early in July and will follow a similar schedule for the next three issues.... and so it goes. Only the first issue is complete at this time. The other three will be developed during this year.

## **WIRELESS SCORING DEVICES:**

Two products are known to us at this time – BridgeMate (BM) and BridgePad (BP). They are compatible with ACBLscore and have been used in ACBL-affiliated bridge clubs and at some sectional and regional tournaments.

Players quickly adapt to using the devices, so acceptance is high.

Here are some product features, limitations and comparisons:

- Both products virtually eliminate scoring errors, so there are few instances of corrected recap sheets.
- BP offers a variety of on-screen displays that appeal to club players. BM features multiple screen displays.
- The BP screen display is large. The unit itself is compact. The BM screen display is smaller. The unit is larger.
- The BM unit is clearly meant to be used as a table-top device. The BP unit is small, similar in design to a cell phone and can be held in the hand.
- Both units ask for East-West confirmation.
- BP units can be stored and randomly distributed to tables for the next use. BM units are table-specific, requiring director intervention to set or reset table assignments.
- BM appears to be a mature product. The software developer of BP is continuing to test and release updates, and the product appears to be evolving.
- BM is for sale only. BP offers devices for sale or lease.

### **Analysis**

At the current price, the devices continue to be somewhat of a novelty for clubs. There is little or no chance for financial payback, gain or savings. For use at sectional tournaments with traditional schedules, the devices could show some savings.

The most efficient model would be that which was used during the integration of bidding boxes. Ideally, the devices would be purchased by a group of clubs or units, used for club play and assembled at one central point for use in sectional tournaments.

### **SECTIONAL TOURNAMENT AT CLUBS:**

I will make an effort to spell out exactly how a STaC has been run in the past, and the very small differences in how they will be run in future.

1. STaCs are sanctioned by units. Some units assign these sanctions to a district or conference (a group of districts).
2. The ACBL, in sanctioning these events, assigns a director-in-charge (DIC).
3. The STaC sponsor publicizes the event and clubs register according to the outlined procedures established by the sponsor.
4. The sponsor provides a list of participating clubs to the STaC DIC.
5. Clubs play, they report their games, electronically in most cases, to the STaC DIC.
6. Using ACBLscore, the DIC assembles the individual club gamefiles into a masterfile. All rankings and masterpoint awards are generated from the masterfile.
7. The STaC DIC reports the tournament results to the ACBL.
8. The STaC DIC reports the results and the financial accounting to the sponsor.
9. The STaC DIC furnishes results to clubs and webmasters as requested by the sponsoring organization, in many cases on a daily basis.
10. All DIC functions are outlined in the STaC Conditions of Contest (attached). Some small changes will be submitted during the 2008 review of all CoC. Please note that we have established a policy with regard to funds due from participating clubs – *i.e.* the ACBL will not be responsible for collecting funds on behalf of a sponsor.

We anticipate no major changes in the way STaCs are run, though some improvements will be implemented.

The improvements we are making:

- We have reserved a toll-free number for STaCs that will end in 7822 (STaC).
- We are developing a STaC web site that will include a list of all STaCs sanctioned, a registration form for clubs that will create a database for each STaC (the sponsor will not have to provide a list of participating clubs), a list of participating clubs and posting of daily results.

Insofar as STaC DIC assignments, there will be some changes:

We have had a number of STaCs run by part-time TDs. We will no longer be using these TDs. Why? Two reasons:

- 1) We have idle salaried employees available for these assignments;

- 2) The time involved in properly servicing STaC sponsors, when using part-time employees, will incur unrecoverable hourly charges to the ACBL.

While a STaC assignment is a high-stress, labor intensive assignment, the physical location of the DIC is not relevant. A highly organized DIC needs nothing other than Internet access, a telephone, optional FAX machine and great patience. STaC assignments during 2008 will be limited to a small number of salaried tournament directors.

As to the finances of a STaC, our proposal, approved by the ACBL's Board, calls for STaC fees to be assessed on a per-table basis. The ACBL will no longer charge a STaC by the session for tournament director services, nor will TDs be charging sessions against tournaments for any purpose. Such a plan normalizes STaC charges, guarantees sponsor success and opens STaCs to small areas that in the past could not afford the session rates charged by the ACBL.

A STaC pro forma was developed using 2006 data. This information has been provided to the finance committee and to the full board during the recent meetings in San Francisco. In presenting this plan, we also asked for no other changes in the tournament fee schedule.

The model year 2006, generated \$405,000 in sponsor billings. The sliding scale formula is projected to produce \$380,000 in sponsor billings. With salaried TDs being used to run these tournaments, there is no one-to-one correlation with revenues to expenses.

As background, we sanctioned 77 – 71 – 73 STaCs the last three years. We currently have 65 requests, which is on track to repeat the number of sanctions in earlier years. The last three years saw table counts of 96,300, 95,900 and 96,300. We have no reason to believe this year's number of tables will be significantly different. Historically, we can expect approximately 74 tournaments, generating approximately 96,000 tables.

Based on this history and the timing of sanctions, these tournaments will take the equivalent of 2.5 full time, salaried employees. Assuming all overhead costs are included, the expense item is projected to be approximately \$165M. The residual gets close enough to the number used in foregoing any tournament fee increases for 2008.

## **General Conditions of Contest and Guidelines for Sectional Tournaments at Clubs (STaCs)**

Sectional Tournaments at Clubs (STaCs) provide bridge players with the opportunity to win Silver Points at their local clubs. All of the ACBL's rules, regulations and procedures for running a sectional tournament apply to the organization and management of a STaC. ACBL's current STaC guidelines and fees will apply.

Sponsoring organizations may, with ACBL approval only, amend these conditions for a specific event. Such amendments should appear in all printed tournament schedules and be posted prior to the start of event.

The director in charge shall make the final decision on any item in these conditions. Furthermore, the director in charge will resolve any issue not specifically covered.

### **SPONSORING UNIT**

1. A STaC may be scheduled for up to seven consecutive days, but may include only, one weekend. Management may however, grant an exception to the weekend requirement for cause. A sanction application must be sent to the appropriate district tournament coordinator at least 12 months prior to the scheduled tournament date. The ACBL may sanction a STaC when it receives the sanction application with fewer than 12 months advance notice if there are no scheduling conflicts and the STaC can be advertised in "The Bridge Bulletin" calendar schedule at least one month prior. No STaC may be sanctioned to conflict with any ACBL-wide event.
2. While only units may apply for a sanction to hold a STaC, there is no objection to a unit nominating a district or districts to conduct the tournament. In district-wide STaCs, all clubs within the district(s) must be offered the opportunity to participate. Participation is at the club level when sponsored by a district. If a unit outside of the sponsoring district chooses to participate, all clubs within that unit must be invited to participate.
3. A sponsor may schedule morning, afternoon and/or evening sessions. For the purpose of determining which session a club should participate in, use the standard club session designations. Many STaCs schedule only two sessions per day. The local sponsor must designate the sessions to be scheduled. As an example: Morning games would be those starting prior to 12:00 local time, afternoon games start prior to 17:00 local time, and evening games 17:00 and later.
4. STaC sessions may be scheduled at any participating club for any session that the club has a regularly sanctioned game at that club. Additional games may be held at the option of the sanctioned club. However, when a scheduling conflict exists,

preference shall be granted to the club that holds a regularly scheduled game at the time in question.

5. Each Sponsor must develop a schedule of games and conditions of contest. This schedule and the CoC must be sent to all clubs participating in the STaC. The types of events normally scheduled at a regular unit sectional are permitted. open/stratified pairs are easiest for most club directors to run. All pair events are single-session events. Team games shall be stand-alone events at the site played.
6. All masterpoints awarded are silver and sectionally rated. Overall awards are based on the total entry in each event except that Swiss Teams overall awards are based only on the entry at the individual site.
7. The use of hand records is encouraged but not required. For a STaC using hand records, the DIC may permit games at sites not using hand records to enter the main event or to enter as a side game for ranking and masterpoint awards.

### **PARTICIPATING CLUBS**

1. Any club within the area of the participating unit may hold a STaC game in lieu of its regularly scheduled club game. Additional games may be held, as noted above.
2. The ACBL General Convention Chart will be used unless the sponsor specifies and advertises otherwise.
3. A minimum section size of 10 pairs is needed to be included in the Championship session. Sections with fewer than 10 pairs may be reported, combined, and included as a sectionally rated championship event. This restriction may be modified or waived prior to the start of the tournament at sponsor option.
4. Invitational games will be scored and ranked as stand-alone sectionally rated championship events with one restriction unless these games are open to all players and advertised as such.
5. Limited masterpoint games will be scored and ranked alone unless a similarly limited masterpoint game is held at one or more other STaC sites. In this case, these games will be scored together for overall rankings and masterpoint awards.
6. Playing directors may not duplicate the boards in games using hand records. The club director of such a game may play only with the consent, in advance, of the DIC of the STaC.
7. Non-playing directors are encouraged but not required for games with no more than one section of 17 tables or less. Non-playing directors are required in games larger than 17 tables or with two or more sections.

8. Each club must report results to the (DIC) within the designated time limit. The time limit is 36 hours from the end of each game unless the sponsor specifies an earlier time limit. In no case may this time limit be less than 24 hours from the end of the game. Club games not reported within the time limit will be scored, ranked, and issued masterpoints as a sectionally rated side game if received prior to the final reporting period.
9. Reporting will be by e-mail attachment of the gamefile. Arrangements may be made with the DIC to report by FAX or voice. Reporting procedures will be distributed to the clubs with the STaC Conditions of Contest.
10. The final reporting period for the STaC ends 24 hours after the last event ends. Later reports will be returned to the club, to be reported as a regularly scheduled club session.
11. The correction period at each club is 24 hours after the completion of the session. A club must post a copy of the recap for inspection at the end of each session.

### **DIRECTOR-IN-CHARGE**

1. The DIC of a STaC must be an ACBL tournament director or higher rank.
2. The DIC of a STaC, with the approval of the sponsor, will develop reporting guidelines.
3. The DIC will organize and provide results to participating clubs.
4. The DIC will create reports at the end of the STaC as requested by the sponsor.
5. The DIC will provide standard Sectional tournament reports.
6. In addition to the expected functions of a DIC, the DIC may be asked to perform a variety of additional tasks. Typical tasks may include distribution of hand record printouts, pre-tournament advertising, or a post-tournament bulletin. The DIC and the sponsor will determine the time and fees for these tasks.

### **RECORDER PROCEDURES AT NABCS:**

#### **I. Purpose of Recorder System at NABCS.**

##### **A. Background.**

- The recorder system is a BoD-approved program that originated in the 1980s. Bobby Wolff was the first ACBL Recorder. Bobby

trained and worked with a number of other volunteers who were his assistants.

- Bob Rosen succeeded Bobby as ACBL Recorder in what was a position filled by a volunteer. Bob Rosen also worked with several assistants
- In the 1990s Rich Colker became the ACBL Recorder. He also used assistants at various times. During Rich's tenure, the position became a paid employee position.
- When Rich left, Gary Blaiss was selected by the CEO to fill the position. Gary has also used assistants at various times with only marginal success. When Jim Miller became available, Jim was selected to work with Gary as an assistant.

## **B. Purpose.**

The aim of the recorder system is to establish a method of dealing with complaints that:

- By themselves do not warrant the filing of formal charges;
- Are very serious but with only the implication of wrongdoing and without substantial evidence necessary to bring formal charges or
- Should be addressed by counseling and/or education.

## **C. Definitions.**

- **Assistant Recorder:** A person authorized to act by or on behalf of a recorder.
- **Complaint:** A written accusation by an ACBL member, a non-member playing in an ACBL sanctioned event, ACBL management or a unit or district alleging conduct in violation of CDR 3 who requests that charges be made to the appropriate disciplinary body.
- **File:** The collection of written documents that include the player memo, any written response, all investigative notes and other documents.
- **Player Memo:** A written document informing the Recorder about an incident. This is not a complaint but may be used as the basis for a complaint.
- **Recorder:** The person with the ultimate responsibility for carrying out the duties outlined in these guidelines.
- **Reporter:** The person who signs and files the player memo.
- **Subject:** The person who is the subject of the player memo.



## **II. Submission of a Player Memo (PM).**

### **A. To a Tournament Director.**

- Players usually request a PM from a tournament director after the round or after the session.
- After completing the form, the player gives it to a tournament director, who may or may not know anything about the incident, to take the form to the NABC Operations Office.
- Players also drop the completed PM on the directors' scoring table, sometimes without telling a director.

### **B. To the Operations Office.**

- Some players go directly to the NABC Operations Office to obtain a player memo and or to submit one.

### **C. Reports.**

- Except for allegations of cheating, a reporter must submit a written PM.
- Very few allegations of collusive or premeditated cheating are given to the recorder in writing.
- Some submitted written reports may unearth possible cheating (such as reports of unusual auctions or consistent tempo problems). However, a direct allegation of cheating (use of signals, pre-arranging deals, etc.) is oral and off the record.

## **III. Maintenance of Player Memos at the NABC.**

- During the tournament, player memos that have been submitted are maintained in the NABC Operations Office.
- Recorders check the file at least once a day and usually two or three times a day to review new submissions.

## **IV. Preliminary Review.**

- Preliminary reviews are conducted by the recorder or an assistant at the NABC at which the PM is submitted.
- After a preliminary review, the recorder decides whether to investigate the memo.
- During this review, it may be necessary to try to locate a tournament director who was involved before proceeding to determine what, if anything, was discussed at the table and if the director made any comments to those involved.

- If an auction or play involves bridge expertise, confidential opinions of qualified experts may be sought as well as opinions of previous recorders.
- After the preliminary review, if the report does not merit completing the investigation to decide whether to record, an attempt is made to contact the reporter on-site to inform him or her of the recorder's disposition of the report.

## **V. Investigative Actions.**

### **A. Location of Subjects, Reporters, Tournament Directors and Witnesses**

- When a report is investigated by the recorder or an assistant at the NABC, except for reports of cheating (see VI. below), the tournament director in charge of the NABC Operations Office is asked to locate the people with whom the recorder needs to speak.

### **B. Discussion with witnesses and the tournament director, if any.**

- If a tournament director is noted as being involved but has not made comments on the report, the recorder will attempt to contact that tournament director before speaking with anyone else. Sometimes, the tournament director has already addressed the issue appropriately and the recorder has only to reinforce the tournament director's comments.
- There are times when witnesses, if any, have to be interviewed, but this usually happens after speaking with the subject.
- An attempt is made to respect the confidentiality of the reporter such that the recorder does not inform the subject of the reporter's name, although usually the subject is able to work it out.

### **C. Discussion with Subject.**

- The subject of a report is asked about the situation that has been reported. The subject is given an opportunity to submit a written rebuttal, which will be maintained with the report.
- If the subject does not submit a written rebuttal, the recorder will note the subject's comments on the PM.

### **D. Discussion with the Reporter.**

- There are some instances, either before or after the recorder has spoken to others (above), when the recorder has to interview the reporter.

- This may be done because the recorder may not understand the problem the reporter has submitted or because there are some facts presented by the subject, tournament director and or witnesses that contradict the reporter's facts – for example, the auction reported may not be the one the subject saw.

## **E. Serious Ethical Transgression Investigation.**

- When investigating an allegation of suspected cheating by use of signals, peeking, etc., the recorder may use many tools.
- Most such investigations take place at that or subsequent NABCs.
- There are occasions when the recorder will talk to a senior tournament director who works in the area in which the subject normally plays to arrange observation at regionals or sectionals.

### **1. Tournament Directors (TD).**

- Frequently, the recorder will ask on-duty TDs, to observe a subject surreptitiously.
- The recorder will tell the TD, in general terms, the type of behavior that is being questioned.
- The TD is instructed to keep his observation and report confidential.
- Occasionally, a senior TD will be asked to arrange such observation at tournaments in his or her area.

### **2. Kibitzers.**

- There are instances where the recorder will ask a player whose ethics, skill and confidentiality are trusted to kibitz at a subject's table (or nearby) to watch for certain behavior.
- This method is used only when someone with such qualifications is available and would not be suspected by the subject.

### **3. Video**

- While there has been a lot of discussion about use of cameras, there has been no prosecution of unethical behavior because of information originally discovered using cameras.
- Video evidence has been successful in confirming evidence of misbehavior that was obtained by direct "eyeball" observation. However, it is expected that this can be changed if our new arrangements for use of video monitoring is a significant improvement of the view of table play.
- We will be able to view the play live and alter the focus as appropriate and necessary because an expert videographer will be operating the equipment.

## **F. Discussions with parties unconnected to the incident.**

- The recorder has a large network of people with whom to consult about an incident.
- The recorder or assistant recorder's consultation may occur at an NABC in person or after an NABC by telephone or e-mail.

### **1. League Counsel.**

- League counsels have given bridge advice to recorders as well as legal advice.
- We have been fortunate that current and past league counsels have been competent players.

### **2. Previous Recorders.**

- Previous recorders have been most useful as persons with whom the recorder can discuss these matters while maintaining confidentiality.

### **3. Expert Players**

- There are some expert players of unquestionable bridge integrity who are consulted about situations.
- The recorder maintains the confidentiality of any reporters and subjects during such a consultation.

## **VI. Resolution.**

### **A. Administrative File.**

- When a player memo is received that is not considered of significant importance to investigate, the resolution is to place in an administrative file to maintain a record that it was received and addressed.
- After an investigation, a memo that is not thought significant enough to record is also filed in the administrative file.
- In both cases, the reporter is informed that the incident will not be recorded. In the latter case the subject is also informed that the incident will not be recorded.

### **B. Recorded File.**

- During or after an investigation, if the incident is judged significant, the recorder will inform the parties that the incident will be recorded.
- The subject is informed, when appropriate, that a future report may result in the recorder filing a complaint.

- Many bridge incident reports simply require the recorder to educate the subject about law and regulation as to the acceptability of their actions.

### **C. Complaint Submitted.**

- When a reported incident is serious enough, or if the recorder knows or discovers that there have been previous reports of the same misbehavior, the recorder will make a complaint to the DIC of the tournament and ask that the DIC make charges to the NABC Tournament Disciplinary Committee.
- For a serious ethical transgression, however, the recorder would go to the CEO and League Counsel to request a charge to the Ethical Oversight Committee (EOC). The chairman or co-chairmen of the EOC would set a time for the hearing, which may be at that NABC or a future NABC.

### **D. Investigation of “Cheating.”**

- At present, the recorder maintains written reports of investigations that have not led to prosecutions. The reports are maintained in a file available to the recorder (*i.e.*, not in the administrative file or in the database (recorded file)).
- Even though a current allegation may not have been confirmed by an investigation, in some cases players or pairs may be observed by the recorder from time to time at NABCs without a new report being submitted.
- Rumors regarding pairs or players who have been investigated or are being investigated will continue to abound.
- Unless an investigation of a serious allegation of cheating leads to a complaint being submitted, there is no way for the recorder to inform the membership that allegations have been or are being investigated.
- The end result is that no recorder has developed a method to eliminate or reduce rumors.

### **ACBL STRATEGIC PLAN 2005 – 2009:**

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/bod/081StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf>