

MINUTES OF THE ACBL LAWS COMMISSION
HILTON HOTEL, NEW YORK, NY
JULY 9, 2004

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chip Martel, Co-Chairman
Ralph Cohen, Co-Chairman
Allan Falk Jeff Polisner
Robert Friend Roger Stern
Dan Morse Bobby Wolff
Beth Palmer

ALSO PRESENT:

Rick Beye Joan Gerard
Gary Blaiss Matt Smith
Grattan Endicott Chuck Wilkinson

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M.

Co-Chairman Martel welcomed two guests of the commission at the meeting: Grattan Endicott (secretary of the WBF Laws Drafting Committee) and Chuck Wilkinson (president-elect of the ACBL).

The minutes of the Reno meeting were approved.

A discussion of the WBF draft laws ensued.

It was noted that there is a philosophical tendency in the draft laws to make many of the laws less punitive than they exist currently in favor of treating many withdrawn actions as unauthorized information with no prescribed penalties. Lead penalties that apply in the current laws are removed from the draft laws. Some concern was expressed that such changes will result in more subjective rulings being made and therefore more appeals of rulings. More general concern was also expressed that a radical revision of the laws may result in unforeseen and undesired consequences. There was a

discussion of whether it might be advisable to allow for some sort of test period before the new laws are promulgated, during which time adjustments for any unintended problems could be made.

Concerns were voiced on whether it is advisable to change laws such that there is little or no penalty disincentive to discourage players from committing infractions.

Mr. Endicott stated that the goal of the WBF Laws Drafting Committee is to harmonize as much as possible the views of the representatives of the various zones, and where that is not possible to offer zonal options on the application of certain laws where practical. It was noted that the draft laws already have more such options than previous versions and it is anticipated that more default laws with zonal options may be in place before the revision process is complete.

There was a consensus on the commission that in general the status quo be maintained on the insufficient bid law, although there was sentiment that provisions on conventional insufficient bids be changed to allow corrections without penalties in some circumstances.

It was suggested that the word “arbitrary” be removed from the draft definition of adjusted score.

Dissatisfaction with the phrase “fair outcome” in draft law 7A1 was expressed.

It was suggested that draft law 7D be one that provides variance of its default provisions by zonal option.

There was a discussion as to whether the phrase in draft law 7E1(a) (“the balance of expectations as it was in the instant prior to the irregularity”) is intended to include only the action taken by a player with unauthorized information, or whether it is intended to include a hesitation itself as part of the irregularity. It was noted that the ACBL Laws Commission has in the past ruled that under current law a hesitation may be included as part of the irregularity for the purposes of adjusting a score.

The commission discussed revisions to the claim laws. Concern was raised that the phrase in draft law 47A referring to exposure of a defender’s cards

needs to be clarified for intent. As well, there was more general concern expressed with the wording of draft laws 47 and 49.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 P.M.

MINUTES OF THE ACBL LAWS COMMISSION
HILTON HOTEL, NEW YORK, NY
JULY 10, 2004

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chip Martel, Co-Chairman	
Ralph Cohen, Co-Chairman	
Allan Falk	Ray Raskin
Robert Friend	Eric Rodwell
Dan Morse	John Solodar
Beth Palmer	Roger Stern
Jeff Polisner	Bobby Wolff

ALSO PRESENT:

Rick Beye	Joan Gerard
Gary Blaiss	Matt Smith
Grattan Endicott	

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M.

The commission continued to discuss the WBF draft laws.

There was a consensus in support of the concept of allowing some claims to be played out, although there was no consensus on the details of the exact procedure for accomplishing this goal.

Strong reservations were expressed to the provisions of draft law 46A3(b) wherein the highest ranking trump card not played prior to a revoke is

exempt from transfer to the non-offending side. A suggestion was made that even if such a provision is included in the new laws that it be made more general to include all situations where, absent a revoke, a trick could not be lost by any legal play of the remaining cards.

Note was made that the draft laws do not fully reflect the philosophy of many Laws Commission members that “a card laid is a card played”. A suggestion was made that an allowable change of call as permitted in draft law 23B should be changed to “without pause (in the same breath or in continuous action)”. However, some on the commission were in favor of allowing changes of calls beyond this standard as long as it is clear that the player made the call as a result of a mechanical mishap and there was no pause “for thought”. The issue of whether non-vocal methods of bidding should be specifically addressed in this law was also discussed.

The provision of draft law 8C2(b) for calling the director immediately upon the sight of a dummy hand that may have used unauthorized information in the bidding was discussed. It was noted that the draft law is unclear on how strong the requirement is for the director to be called at that point, but no consensus emerged on how strong that requirement should be.

There was agreement that declarer should be permitted to examine an opponent’s convention card even if not his turn to play, although it was agreed that defenders should not have this right.

There was a consensus that the partner of the opening leader should be permitted to ask questions of the auction while his partner’s lead is face down, and that draft law 29B be changed to reflect this.

Serious reservations were expressed with the philosophy represented in and the practicality of draft law 4A1.

The commission discussed the advisability of codifying in law the concept that players have a responsibility to protect themselves wherever possible from misinformation or lack of full explanation of opponents’ agreements. It was suggested that this issue might be more properly addressed in the scope of the laws rather than in a specific law.

It was agreed that the idea expressed in draft law 10C8 would be better placed within draft law 7.

Reservations were noted with the provisions of draft law 21E3(b) and whether as written it accomplishes what is intended and is placed where it belongs in the draft laws. It was also mentioned that at a previous meeting of the commission there was a consensus that inferences drawn from opponents' actions should be drawn entirely at a player's own risk.

Concern was expressed with the effect of draft law 51A1 and its possible conflict with draft law 8A2. It was suggested that these matters might be better left to the preface of the laws and/or sponsor regulations.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 P.M.