

MINUTES OF THE ACBL LAWS COMMISSION  
MARRIOTT WORLD CENTER, ORLANDO, FL  
NOVEMBER 23, 2004

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chip Martel, Co-Chairman  
Ralph Cohen, Co-Chairman  
Karen Allison                      Eric Rodwell  
Allan Falk                              John Solodar  
Ray Raskin

ALSO PRESENT:

Rick Beye                              Bill Schoder  
Gary Blaiss                              Matt Smith  
Joan Gerard                              Adam Wildavsky

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 A.M.

Chip Martel chaired the meeting.

In recognition of their many years of exceptional service on this commission, the commission extends its gratitude and appreciation to Karen Allison and Bobby Wolff.

The commission welcomes Matt Smith and Adam Wildavsky who were appointed to the commission by ACBL president Bruce Reeve and Ron Gerard who was reappointed.

The minutes from NY were approved.

Co-Chairman Cohen reported on progress on the new draft laws from meetings of the WBF Drafting Committee in Istanbul:

Cohen reported that the idea of the revoke laws being revised such that a side cannot lose a trick to a revoke penalty if they hold the highest trump

still in play at the point of the revoke has been abandoned. He noted that the current WBF draft provides for only a one trick penalty for all revokes (equity notwithstanding). A majority of the ACBL LC members present opposed a change from the penalty provisions of the current law.

The commission once again reiterated reservations about changing laws that in general work well. Concerns were voiced that making radical or numerous changes to the laws detracts from the ability of players and administrators to understand and implement efficiently the changes that are made. As well, it was noted that changing any law risks creating unintended consequences, so the number of changes should be limited to those laws that have proven to currently cause problems. In response to this, Cohen noted that even though that may be the sentiment of the ACBL LC, many interested parties in the rest of the world do not necessarily share this view and their ideas will have to be accommodated to some extent in the new laws.

Cohen also reported that earlier proposals to eliminate penalties for insufficient bids, inadmissible calls, and calls out of rotation in favor of dealing with them as unauthorized information alone have largely been abandoned.

Cohen reported that changes to the laws on claims are still under discussion. Schoder reported that the attitude of the drafting committee seems to be that the claims laws are not seriously flawed as they stand currently, but could be improved by allowing the director to consider as evidence any play that occurred after the claim but before the director was summoned or arrived at the table. He reported that the drafting committee believes that the majority of any problems with claims are caused more by players' ignorance of the requirements of the law than by the law itself, and these could be corrected with better education. The WBF drafting committee sees problems with a defender's claim as more significant than any current problems with declarer's claim, and that issue is still under discussion. Several members of the ACBL LC noted their strong preference for changing the claim laws to allow play to continue after a claim has been made if both sides agree to do so. Even though not all members of the commission were in favor of this proposal, there was consensus that the claim laws should reflect either that change or allowing the director to consider further play after a claim as evidence of its validity.

There was a discussion as to whether the new laws should under some circumstances allow for changes of conventional insufficient bids to the lowest sufficient bid in the same denomination without penalty when the meanings of the two bids are the same.

Some concern was expressed that the extensive reordering of the sequence of the laws in the most recent draft may result in problems. Schoder pointed out that the current hierarchy of the laws progresses from general to specific and that any perceived conflicts in the laws that this is designed to correct are therefore not necessary and would be better served by cross references in the laws.

It was agreed that changes to the current Law 12 should not eliminate the provisions of 12C2. Cohen suggested that the phrasing of 12C2 could be improved if changed from (for the non-offending side) “the most favorable result that was likely” to “the most likely favorable result”. There was consensus that the idea it represents better reflects the wishes of the commission even if there were some reservations with the exact wording.

It was noted that the drafting committee had discussed a provision in the laws that addresses the issue of dumping and that it would be present in the draft laws from Istanbul.

The commission thanked departing member Karen Allison for her long years of service.

Schoder asked the commission to consider its position on how Law 12C1 should be changed to more fairly deal with situations where a pair is deprived of multiple results due to an irregularity not caused by the pair.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.