

MINUTES OF THE ACBL LAWS COMMISSION  
Marriott Wardman Hotel, Washington, DC  
July 25, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chip Martel, Chairperson	Georgia Heth
Adam Wildavsky, Vice-Chair	Roger Stern
Peter Boyd	Matt Smith
Robb Gordon	John Solodar
Allan Falk (by phone)	Howard Weinstein
Ron Gerard	

ALSO PRESENT:

Gary Blaiss, ACBL Executive Administrative Officer  
Mike Flader, ACBL Tournament Director and scribe  
Matt Koltnow, ACBL Tournament Director  
Linda Green, Visitor

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM.
2. The minutes of the Houston Meeting were discussed. Allan Falk stated that consensus regarding the discussion of law 64 was not reached and proposed that the minutes be approved with the lack of consensus being noted. This was approved.
3. Management's proposed policy regarding Law 27 as written by Matt Smith was discussed.

Robb Gordon wondered if the lack of coaching by the director is a disadvantage to the inexperienced players. Matt Smith pointed out that a number of full-time TD's had pointed out the failure to explain all the options available to the offender is a violation of law 10C1. Gary Blaiss stated that he thought that the players must know the director's opinion of their options. Mike Flader pointed out that when a director is called to the table following what appears to be an insufficient bid, he should speak to the offender away from the table to determine:

- a. Whether law 25 or law 27 applies
- b. Ask the offender privately what his agreements are to determine what options may be selected without penalty

Upon returning to the table, if the director has determined that the call is insufficient and that law 27 applies, then, the director asks offender's lho if he wishes to accept the insufficient bid. If he does not, then, the director explains to the offender those calls

which he may legally substitute without penalty and what calls carry a penalty. By doing it in this fashion, the other players are not able to determine from what I say at the table information about the offender's hand.

Peter Boyd moved adoption of the management policy formulated by Matt Smith, seconded by Georgia Heth.

This motion carried.

Management Policy so approved follows:

The ACBL Laws Commission recommends that Law 27 be administered by the director in a way that minimizes both his involvement in assisting the insufficient bidder make his choice, and in minimizing the amount of information that he transmits to the table by the way he makes his ruling at the table. While it is normal to take the insufficient bidder away from the table to determine what he believed was happening when he made his insufficient bid (for example, to determine if Law 25 and not Law 27 applies), once a determination that Law 27 applies has been made the director should be careful not to "coach" the insufficient bidder. However, the director also should be careful to follow Law 10C1 and be sure that the insufficient bidder is apprised of and understands all of his options, and be prepared to answer any specific questions he is asked. Prior to returning to the table it is appropriate for the director to ask the player if he has any questions. Similarly, when back at the table in the presence of all players the director should carefully explain the law to everyone and be prepared to answer any questions by LHO as Law 10C1 requires.

4. Next followed a discussion Ton Kooijman's response to questions regarding laws 12, 23, and 64.
  - a. Law 64 and Ton's note about a second revoke in the same suit were discussed first. Robb Gordon moved to interpret Law 64 per Ton's suggestion, seconded by Howard Weinstein. Motion carried.

The interpretation so approved follows:

In applying Law 64B2, which refers the director to Law 64C equity under Law 64C, in this instance, requires the director to consider what would have happened had the second revoke not occurred. This may lead to a rectification for the first revoke and equity tricks for the second revoke.

- b. Next the commission discussed Law 23 and whether it is applied to the entire hand or just to the auction. It was pointed out that the WBF had removed the chapter headings from the 2008 version of the law and that the ACBL version of the Laws had put them back in. The WBF interpretation is that law 23 applies to the play as well as to the auction. It was suggested that it should be moved to a different section in a later version of the laws.

Robb Gordon moved to accept the WBF interpretation that law 23 applies to both the auction and the play, seconded by Howard Weinstein. The motion carried.

- c. Next the commission discussed Unauthorized Information in the context of Law 12c1(e). Adam Wildavsky moved that "When considering a score adjustment for a violation of Law 16B, the irregularity referred to by Law 12c1(e) is the action that may have been influenced by the unauthorized information." The motion carried.

5. A discussion regarding adding the previous disclaimer concerning the headings and sub-headings in the ACBL Laws followed. The following was discussed: Resolved that, effective immediately, the below paragraph is added to the Introduction/Preface to the ACBL Laws of Duplicate Bridge.

“The hundreds of headings and sub-headings can help a Director find the section of a law that is applicable to the facts of a case (these headings are for convenience of reference only; headings are not considered to be part of the Laws). The Table of Contents at the front of the book and the alphabetical index at the back should make a Director’s task lighter.”

Motion made by Robb Gordon to accept, seconded by John Solodar. Passed by consensus.

6. Discussion of whether meetings of the Laws Commission should be conducted by telephone conference. The consensus of the group is that it is undesirable to conduct these meetings in this way for the whole group, but that individual members could be allowed to do so and that emergency meetings or small meetings could be held by conference call.
7. Old Business. Allan Falk briefly discussed law 21 regarding Misinformation. The discussion was tabled until the Fall meeting in San Diego when Allan can present his proposal in person.
8. New Business.
  - a. Chip Martel brought up the issue of partnerships playing different systems. An example is pro-client partnership that in practice uses different ranges for its notrump openings. Chip considered two separate issues:
    - Can they have an agreement to do this?
    - If so, how should the agreement be disclosed?

Gary Blaiss pointed out that a pair using different notrump ranges is playing different systems. Matt Smith stated that the ACBL Board of Directors had elected not to allow this.

Adam Wildavsky suggested that this could be discussed online before the San Diego Meeting

- b. Peter Boyd pointed out that artificial adjusted scores in 3-way KO matches may confer upon the team not involved in the adjustment a disadvantage if the net of the adjustment is positive. A way in which this can happen is if the director makes the wrong ruling and no adjustment can allow a board to be played and scored normally, in which case, both teams are treated as non-offending for the purpose of assigning an artificial adjusted score. It was pointed out that the way law 12C1f is written, this may not be the case.

Discussion of this issue centered around whether it was in the purview of the Laws Commission to consider this or whether it should be looked into by the Competition and Conventions Committee. Adam Wildavsky suggested that this could be discussed before the San Diego Meeting.

- c. Meeting adjourned at 11:34 AM.