

MINUTES

ACBL National Laws Commission
2010 Fall Meeting in Orlando, FL
Saturday, November 27th - 10 AM

Members Present:

Chip Martel, Chairman
Adam Wildavsky, Vice-Chairman
Georgia Heth
Howard Weinstein
Eric Rodwell
Peter Boyd
Allan Falk
Robb Gordon

Members Present via Conference Call

Gary Blaiss
Ron Gerard
Jeff Plisner
Roger Stern (during discussion of rubber bridge rules)

Also Present

Sam Whitten, Assistant National Recorder
Mike Flader, TD and scribe
Matt Koltnow, TD
Jim Miller, National Recorder
Al Levy, District 24 Director

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 AM.

1. The New Orleans minutes were approved with the addition of Jeff Polisner to the Conference List. Moved by Robb Gordon, seconded by Howard Weinstein.
2. Items 3 and 5-9 from the Philadelphia WBF Laws Committee meeting of October 8, 2010 were discussed. (WBF minutes are attached to the end of this document).

Alan Falk raised the issue of whether or not item 12 would be affected by the Americans For Disabilities Act. Jeff Polisner suggested that this issue be referred to the League Counsel for an opinion and that it might not be within the purview of the National Laws Commission.

Item 3: The minutes of the WBF essentially show that they have accepted our definition of Logical Alternative.

Item 5: The issue of who can answer a question asked at the end of the auction about whose lead it was was discussed. Peter Boyd pointed out that a member of the declaring side should correct an erroneous statement. Howard Weinstein stated that a face down opening lead says something about assent to such a statement.

Item 6: There was much discussion on the issue of whether or not the variation in tempo constituted a violation of Law.

Weinstein felt that the player should receive a procedural penalty.

Martel felt that a disciplinary penalty should be assessed in extreme cases.

Wildavsky pointed out that the WBF committee adjusted the score earned at the table without attaching a moral sanction.

Rodwell questioned whether or not our slow play regulations impact this issue.

Polisner felt that the committee had erred in not addressing the issue of a violation of the proprieties.

Boyd said the solution to the problem is to strive for even tempo in making all plays and questioned that we have to say that the variation was intentional before assessing a penalty.

Weinstein felt that we need to be careful in making assertions that such departures from correct procedure are intentional.

Rodwell made a motion to disagree with Item #6. It failed for lack of a second.

Item 7: The Commission did not comment on the content of Item 7.

Item 8: There was much discussion regarding the extent to which the opponents are entitled to know that the opponents are having a misunderstanding. No consensus was reached, and the issue was tabled for further discussion, perhaps online.

Item 9: A discussion of item 9 was skipped at this meeting.

3. There followed a discussion of items 2 and 4-7 from the WBF Laws Committee meeting of October 12, 2010 (WBF minutes are attached to the end of this document).

Regarding law 50D, the commission felt that the phrase "lead any card" did not erase the Unauthorized Information created from the defender having a penalty card.

Item 4 was not discussed.

Item 5 was discussed and it was suggested by in this case, while the defending side may get -980, the declaring side would normally be assigned plus 480, but if there was a reason to think the number of tricks taken would change with the different contract, then another score could be assigned.

Wildavsky suggested that we agree with item 5.

In the discussion of Item 6, general agreement with the WBF meeting was reached and that a correction to allow the auction to continue normally should be interpreted broadly because of the provisions of law 27D.

4. The ACBL has been contacted by the Portland Club regarding a revision of the Laws of Rubber Bridge, last changed in 1993.

Roger Stern said that he would participate in this effort and suggested other people who might provide input.

Gary Blaiss said any revision of any set of laws requires financial support from ACBL. He noted that at the time of the last revision of the Rubber Bridge Laws, only ACBL members were involved.

Chip Martel asked for volunteers to lead the ACBL effort in this.

Peter Boyd felt that the Commission should look for other volunteers who are experts at Rubber Bridge.

Rodwell wondered if the Laws needed to be changed.

Stern felt that they needed to be as similar to the duplicate laws as possible.

Boyd agreed and said that he wanted the revoke penalties to be the same.

Sam Whitten stated that the ACBL would be willing to contribute to the effort.

The discussion ended without a motion.

5. Item 5 of the second WBF meeting was discussed by Adam Wildavsky. The discussion revolved around the score to be given to the offenders. Georgia Heth suggested that the law implied that 650 should be assigned rather than 680, but, Adam suggested that the second sentence in the law meant 680.

Adam stated that the role of the Laws Commission is to resolve ambiguities in the Law and that the WBF would like to keep it simple, this view agreed to by Rodwell.

No motion made.

6. Gary Blaiss said that it is time to start discussions with the WBF regarding the next revision of the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge. Al Levey offered to speak to the WBF President regarding this issue.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Flader

Minutes of the meeting of the WBF Laws Committee held in
Philadelphia PA, 8th October 2010

Present:

Ton Kooijman - in the chair
Chip Martel - Vice Chairman
Grattan Endicott - Secretary
Max Bavin
Maurizio Di Sacco
Joan Gerard
Al Levy
Jeanne van den Meiracker
Jeffrey Polisner
William J. Schoder
John Wignall

Apologies The President Emeritus
Bertrand Gignoux
David Harris
Dan Morse

Guests: Herman De Wael, Rena Hetzer, Adam Wildavsky.

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1. The Chairman welcomed members of the committee and guests. He observed that not only are guests welcome but if they feel they have a useful contribution to make to the discussion they should feel free to speak. He added that he planned there would be two meetings of the committee in the course of the tournament.
2. A further document concerning treatment of insufficient bids was put for discussion at the second meeting.
3. There was a discussion of the definition of a 'logical alternative'. It was agreed that the call actually chosen by a player is normally considered to be among the logical alternatives with respect to the application of Law 16B1. An exception may arise in the case of a call that it would be impossible to contemplate in the particular circumstances.
4. Concerning 'play period' the committee confirmed its minute 8 of 8th September 2009.

5. Asked to determine who should respond to the question “Is it my opening lead?” (see Law 20C1), the committee observed that all players at the table are responsible for ensuring that a correct reply is given. The Director may deem silence when a reply is made to constitute assent.
Regulations may provide for situations when playing with screens.
6. The committee discussed a situation in which a defender seized the first trick and switched rapidly to a singleton in another suit, partner returning the lead for a ruff. An appeal committee had considered “inappropriate” the speed with which the lead was made. Concurring with that view the committee remarked that it is never necessary to make a play quickly. A player may not be mindful of the potential for unauthorized information but if on a rare occasion the creation of unauthorized information is deemed intentional an infraction has occurred.
7. The committee read a comment by a player that something he termed the ‘Kaplan doctrine’ had been overturned by the minute regarding Law 20F1 recorded on 10th October 2008 and reaffirmed in item 13 of the minutes of 8th September 2009. Remarking that the limits of enquiry are defined in Law 20F1 the committee drew attention to the fact that they do not extend to exploration of hypothetical situations not related to the partnership understandings applicable in the current auction.
8. The committee agreed that if a player infers from information given that opponents have had a misunderstanding he is entitled to use that inference at his own risk. Opponents are entitled only to correct explanations of opponents’ partnership agreements.
A player who hears partner give an explanation that does not conform with the partnership understanding is required to offer the correct explanation at the due time stated in Law 20F5(b). However if he is uncertain as to what is the correct partnership understanding he is under no obligation to speak immediately, the matter then being one to refer for resolution to the Director at the end of the play under Law 20F6.
9. The committee considered the situation of a claim by declarer whereupon it is noticed that dummy at an earlier stage has failed to contribute a card to a trick and consequently has a card too many. It was agreed that no penalty is applied (Law 64B3). The Director determines which card to remove from dummy and then resolves the claim deciding any doubtful point against the claimer. If the claim statement has been rendered invalid the Director should determine what would have happened if the board had been played out.

10. Having in mind a case of a disputed Declarer's claim and an admission by an opponent that he had revoked on the last trick played, the revoke not being established, the Chief Tournament Director suggested it had been an oversight not to include the WBF minute of 12th January 2000 in the 2007 laws. With a slight amendment the committee confirmed that the minute is still valid. It now reads: "If a defender revokes and Declarer then claims, whereupon a defender disputes the claim so that there is no acquiescence, the revoke has not been established. The Director must allow correction of the revoke and then determine the claim as equitably as possible, adjudicating any doubtful point against the revoker."
11. The committee put back for further consideration at its next meeting the question of application of Law 50E in situations when the other defender is not on lead (i.e. in selecting discards or the card with which to follow suit).
12. The committee took note of a discussion on BLML concerning cards exposed when a spectator "pushing past" a table stumbles into a player. Observation was made that in such a circumstance the Director is empowered by Law 50 to designate that the exposed cards are not penalty cards.
13. A question concerning a fouled board in a knockout match was put back to the next meeting as also a matter on which the ACBL had invited an opinion from the committee.
14. With reference to Law 72A the subject of so-termed 'dumping' was discussed. It was agreed this is a matter belonging to regulations. It was noted that there exist widely diverging opinions on the subject; the WBF asserts that players must play to win "at all times and in all circumstances", reports suggest that the ACBL calls upon players to play to win every board, the English Bridge Union finds no objection to players who try to lose a match with the object of having the best chance of winning the event, and others have advocated that the object should always be to win a session or a match (which it is believed is the substance of the WBF stance.) It was observed that a side that believes it has the upper hand in a match must surely be within its rights if its aim is to avoid swings.

15. The committee referred to minute 2 of 12th January 2000 concerning the two trick penalty in Law 64. The minute states that the legal substitute card determines ownership of the trick and that Law 64 is then applied and may result in a two trick penalty but not necessarily so. The minute was upheld.

16. The words "next in turn" in Law 55A were considered. The chairman had informed an enquirer that the 'next in turn' refers to the LHO of the offending hand and this had been disputed. The committee confirmed that the LHO of the offending hand is meant. Observation was made that Law 53A has the effect of moving the turn to the left of the lead out of turn and it remains there unless and until that lead is rejected.

The committee had addressed a nineteen page agenda; three items had been put back to the following meeting while another three remained yet to be reached.

Mr Martel left the meeting after item 10 and Mr. Wildavsky after item 12.

The next meeting was fixed for 2 p.m. on Tuesday, 12th October 2010.

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Note: the foregoing minutes are as agreed in the committee's meeting on 12th October 2010.

Minutes of the meeting of the WBF Laws Committee in Philadelphia PA
on 12th October 2010.

Present:

Ton Kooijman in the chair
Chip Martel, Vice Chairman
Grattan Endicott, Secretary
John Wignall, Chairman of the Drafting Committee
Max Bavin
Maurizio Di Sacco
Joan Gerard
Jeffrey Polisner
William J. Schoder

Apologies:

The President Emeritus
Jeanne van den Meiracker
Bertrand Gignoux

Guests:

Peter Boyd, Herman De Wael, Adam Wildavsky.

1. After slight amendment the minutes of the 8th October 2010 meeting were agreed.
2. The committee recorded that reference to 'any card' in Law 50D is subject to the provisions of Law 50E.
3. Referring to Ton Kooijman's Appendix conveying his opinions on matters of law on the WBF web site it was agreed that the mention of his title as chairman of the committee shall be removed.
4. There was a discussion of the treatment of a fouled board in a teams match. Opinions varied. It was agreed that such treatment was a subject for regulation and that the committee would not offer advice to Regulating Authorities on the matter. However, unless regulations state otherwise a Director may apply Law 86D as he thinks fit.
5. An ACBL example was cited of a contract of 6 Spades reached after a slow signoff by the partner. The contract should go one light but defender revokes allowing it to make, an example of a serious error unrelated to the infraction. It is decided to adjust the score.

The defending side will bear the consequence of its serious error and be awarded -980. The declaring side will be put back to the five level and as to the number of tricks to be awarded the Director will assess what would have happened in that contract. (At the lower level it may be that declarer and/or defender would have reason to play differently.)

6. Further ideas about applications of Law 27 were discussed. It was decided not to add to the advice in the minutes of 10th October, 2008, which Regulating Authorities may apply as they think fit. It was noted, however, that efforts to allow calls that it is hoped will achieve normal bridge results are protected by the possibility of recourse to Law 27D at the end of the play.
7. The absence of the words "had the irregularity not occurred" from Law 12C1(c)(ii) rarely has consequences for the ruling and how this law is dealt with is in the hands of Regulating Authorities and Directors.
8. A so-called 'Reveley' score adjustment is one in which for equity a weighted score [see Law 12C1(c)] includes a percentage of results obtained via use of the call that was actually made at the table. There are anxieties that such adjustments may encourage players to infract the law by allowing them some proportion of their infractive result. For this reason such adjustments should in general be avoided.
9. A 2010 update of the WBF Code of Practice was presented and agreed after amendment.
10. It was reported that a draft revision of the laws of online bridge had been prepared. It was agreed to consult with interested parties on this and subsequently communicate again with the committee on the subject
11. The committee noted that the Portland Club continues to be interested in updating the laws of rubber bridge and that Mr. Martel had agreed to nominate a person to work with the WBF and the Portland Club on the project.
12. On a motion by Mr. Wignall the committee thanked the Chairman for his conduct of the meetings in Philadelphia and the Secretary for his preparation. The meeting then concluded.