

MINUTES

ACBL National Laws Commission
2011 Spring Meeting in Louisville, KY
Saturday, March 12, 2011 – 10AM

Members Present:

Chip Martel, Chairman
Peter Boyd
Chris Compton
Allan Falk
Ron Gerard
Georgia Heth
Jeff Polisner
Eric Rodwell
Matt Smith
Howard Weinstein

Members Present via Conference Call:

Gary Blaiss
Robb Gordon

Also Present:

Matt Koltnow, Tournament Director
Al Levy, District 24 Director
Jim Miller, National Recorder
Sam Whitten, Assistant National Recorder

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

1. Allan Falk moved and Peter Boyd seconded the approval of the minutes from the Orlando meeting. The minutes were unanimously adopted as submitted.
2. The Laws Commission members discussed the application of Law 76. The members considered whether a spectator viewing a “broadcast” is “at the table” under Law 76B? Jeff Polisner raised the issue of the enforceability of this provision with regard to online spectators. Robb Gordon raised the issue of whether there was a difference between an online viewer and a spectator physically present at the playing site. Allan Falk pointed out that Law 81 empowers the Director to correct any irregularity that he becomes aware of in any manner. Peter Boyd asked whether Law 76C1 prevents normal conversation between a player and spectator. Chip Martel pointed out that under Law 81, it

does not matter how information comes to the attention of the Director. The Committee discussed whether Law 76 prevents a spectator from bringing an irregularity to the attention of the Director. Matt Smith pointed out that the previous version of the Laws spoke about ownership of kibitzer, but the new version has omitted this language. Howard Weinstein asked about partisan interest of a vugraph operator?

3. Allan Falk pointed out that a vugraph operator could be appointed as a Director's Assistant or Tournament Official. There was a discussion about who would be responsible for appointing a Director's Assistant: the Tournament Director or the Sponsoring Organization. Robb Gordon suggested that Law 76a2 was drafted in the 2008 version of the Laws to define a spectator viewing online as a viewer and requires Regulating Authorities and Tournament Organizers to prescribe acceptable conduct for viewers.
4. Robb Gordon suggested that if a vugraph operator is considered a Director's Assistant, then it would create two different playing conditions, i.e. tables with vugraph operators versus tables without vugraph operators. Chip Martel suggested that the expectations of a vugraph operator be defined by the ACBL. He also suggested that there should be a distinction between a vugraph operator pointing out organizational errors and pointing out more substantial bridge errors (the former is likely something we want, while the latter, probably not). Jeff Polisner suggested that spectators would be unlikely to follow the regulations. Howard Weinstein argued against allowing a vugraph operator to have the power to change the result of a match. Jeff Polisner, Allan Falk, and Chip Martel suggested that the Competition & Conventions Committee should address this issue.
5. Eric Rodwell moved that the Laws Commission encourage the ACBL to create regulations addressing the responsibilities of tournament non-directorial staff to report errors or irregularities. Allan Falk seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
6. There was a discussion about the application of Law 81C3. Should the Director correct an irregularity that he becomes aware of in any manner? Should the Director correct an irregularity when the Director is at the table in an official capacity making a ruling; When the Director is at the table in an unofficial capacity passing by or kibitzing; and When the Director becomes aware of an irregularity through the action of a kibitzer or spectator. Eric Rodwell asked whether the Director was required to correct a revoke that was pointed out by a spectator. Chip Martel asked whether a spectator was allowed to tell the Director about a revoke.
7. Matt Smith asked, if the Director is at the table and sees a revoke before it becomes established, should he correct it? Georgia Heth suggested that the Director should correct the revoke before it becomes established. The

- Commission members discussed whether the Director should correct the revoke before it becomes established.
8. Matt Smith suggested that the Laws Commission define “rectify” under Law 81C3 to mean equity. Robb Gordon agreed with this definition. Allan Falk questioned whether the Laws Commission has the power to make this change. Chip Martel promised to speak to the drafters of Law 81 to discuss the intended meaning of “rectify” in Law 81. The issue was tabled until the next meeting in Toronto.
 9. There was discussion about Law 12c1(b): Adjustments when the non-offending side makes a serious error. In particular, an example was discussed where the non-offending side bids 6♥, and the offending side continues on to 6♠ based on unauthorized information. The Commission felt that it was important to make a distinction between the cases where it is at all likely that the non-offending side could make 6♥. In that case the Laws Commission members felt that both sides should receive plus 980/1430 for making 6♥, but if the 6♥ was likely to go down then the non-offending side would receive their actual score in 6♠, even if it makes as a result of a serious error. Whereas, if 6♠ makes as a result of a careless or inferior play but not a serious error, the offending side would receive the most unfavorable result that was at all probable in 6♥, while the non-offending side would receive the most favorable result in 6H that was likely.
 10. The Laws Commission members discussed the application of Law 68a to a situation where the declarer shows his hand to the defender on lead. Even if it does not matter what the defender on lead does, what if his partner still has a decision to make. Does this constitute a claim under Law 68a? The Laws Commission members decided that this was not a claim under Law 68a.
 11. The Laws Commission members discussed a situation where the declarer announces that the contract is cold and that only overtricks are at stake. The Laws Commission also felt that this situation was not a claim under Law 68a. Under Law 73f, an innocent player could obtain relief for damage based on drawing a false inference from a remark. Chip Martel stated that damage could be caused by a defender being misled by declarer’s remark or the declarer could gain information from the reaction of the defenders to his remark. In either case, an innocent player would be entitled to redress. Eric Rodwell moved that an innocent player be entitled to redress for damage caused by a remark made by the opposing side under Law 73f. Peter Boyd seconded the motion. The Motion carried unanimously.
 12. The Laws Commission discussed creation of a Drafting Committee to work on the preparation of the 2017 version of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge. Robb Gordon, Chris Compton, Allan Falk, Gary Blaiss, and Adam Wildavsky agreed to work on the project. Gary Blaiss indicated that he would be willing to chair the

committee. Al Levy agreed to talk to the WBF about forming a joint drafting committee.

13. Chris Compton moved that the ACBL create their own drafting committee for the 2017 version of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge without WBF cooperation. Motion failed.
14. Gary Blaiss made a Motion that the ACBL Laws Commission cooperate with the WBF to develop the 2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge. However, if the WBF is not interested in forming a joint committee, than the ACBL would form their own committee. Eric Rodwell seconded the motion. Chip Martel made a motion to amend the motion that the ACBL Laws Commission develop a preliminary draft of the 2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge with the intent to coordinate with the WBF. Eric Rodwell seconded the amended motion. The Amended Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sam Whitten