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A focus on non-metropolitan clubs

To all club administrators:

Welcome to the third issue of Insight, a publication for all those involved in the administration of bridge clubs across the state. In this issue, we focus on bridge in non-metropolitan New South Wales. This follows on from the Regional Representatives Meeting held on 20 May, which generated much discussion and several worthwhile ideas.

One of the areas of discussion was what priority clubs should be giving to reviewing their constitutions, now that the new model constitution mentioned in the last issue of Insight is available via the NSWBA website. Warren Robinson, the NSWBA Honorary Solicitor, encouraged clubs to review their current constitutions, to retain any useful specific provisions, to take on any relevant new elements, but to make sure nothing was in conflict with new laws. He also strongly advised clubs to become incorporated, for the protection of office bearers.

Another matter of interest was the role NSWBA could play in the ongoing education and development of club administrators, directors and interested players, in relation to e.g. masterpointing, directing, effectively using the NSWBA and ABF websites, and the more general issue of using technology in bridge. This was especially relevant to non-metropolitan bridge clubs. We are now investigating the acquisition of a software licence to enable us to deliver and record videoconferences and webinars, which should make it possible for the NSWBA to offer some interesting and worthwhile online educational activities in the near future.

There was much discussion at the Meeting about the decline in attendance at regional Congresses. Contributing factors were noted to include the ageing of the player population and the increased number of ABF Gold Point events that were more attractive to at least some players. One suggestion was to increase

efforts to arrange inter-club competitions, an approach that has worked very well in the Metropolitan North region of Sydney. This issue contains an article with feedback and suggestions from those who have had some success – or some challenges – with organising such competitions.

I'd like to remind all clubs about the Under Hundred Masterpoint State Championship: please see the "Tournament information" section of this issue for details.

As always, we welcome questions from you, or contributions for a future issue of Insight. Please write to either Wing Roberts (Office Manager, NSWBA) or Rakesh Kumar (Council member) with news, ideas, or suggestions (email addresses for both can be found on the NSWBA website via About Us>Officials).

Julian Foster
Chairman NSWBA



from the NSWBA Council

New Laws from 1st August



At the June meeting of the Council, there was discussion about having a face-to-face session for metropolitan clubs on the introduction of the new Laws of Bridge, which take effect from 1 August. Unfortunately, nothing can be arranged in the next few weeks; however, club representatives can attend a Directors' seminar on 5-6 August at North Shore Bridge Club, being run by the ABDA. This costs \$55 per participant. A PowerPoint presentation related to this session will be made available via the NSWBA website.

More Attention for Novice and Restricted Players

A proposal to create a separate Council portfolio to deal with matters of importance to novice and restricted players was strongly supported. An interested member of the Council agreed to consider taking on this role.

Dealing with Bad Behaviour

The issue of dealing with offensive behaviour was discussed at some length, the point being made that one troublemaker can cost you five tables. While emphasising the need to deal with things promptly, it was also stressed that due process had to be observed when applying penalties and/or suspensions. Council considered the Congress disciplinary and ethics regulations which had been adopted in Victoria and applied to all Congresses in that state. The Honorary Solicitor, Warren Robinson, agreed to review the documentation and to bring a formal proposal to a future Council meeting.



Women's Training

The Councillor who is responsible for Women's Bridge Development, Liz Sylvester, last year initiated a Women's Teams of Three to encourage and support the development of female players. On 5 July she invited Liam Milne to host a workshop for a selected group of players. Although the project is still a work in progress catering for small numbers, feedback is welcome to help shape the future direction.

It's a record!



Somewhat belatedly, the Guinness Book of Records has recognised the late Marion Rice as having been the oldest active bridge player in the world!

Marion Rice played frequently at the NSWBA premises on Goulburn Street. She learnt the game at her 50s, and became a bridge lover until she passed away at 107 last November. Those who knew her would remember how independent she was, and that she would ride her "shop ride" like a formula one driver over a few blocks to the club. Bright, independent and always well dressed, she soon became an icon of the club and the face for "Bridge for Brains".

The NSWBA had submitted an application for recognition by the Guinness Book of Records in 2015. Persistent follow-up by Wing Roberts eventually led to the recognition of Marion Rice as the current record holder in July 2017 (the previous record holder was 102 years old).

Marion has donated a morning tea to the Sydney Bridge Centre on 7th August (Monday) 10:00am start. If you can, please come and join the celebration of the memory of Marion Rice. **H**

Sharing the knowledge

You are not alone in the bridge family – let's share experiences for everyone's benefit.



Inter-club competitions

Some regions have vigorous and very successful inter-club competitions, while others have none at all. Because inter-club competitions might be particularly useful for bringing together members from non-metropolitan clubs, we asked for advice and feedback from organisers who had had some success, as well as from those who had found it all a bit frustrating. Here's a summary of what they told us.

In the Sydney North region, inter-club Pairs and Teams Challenges run on different dates during the year. Starting in 2008, the organisers soon learned that a single day event, with a focus on the social aspects of bridge as well as friendly club rivalry, was the way to popular success. This year, the Peninsula Bridge Club ran the competition, which had 36 teams entering from 8 clubs. Teams from clubs that had smaller entries were combined into an All Stars group. The field was divided into four categories based on average masterpoints and played a round robin within their category. The number of matches and number of boards per match was determined by the number of teams competing in the category (either 7 eight-board rounds or 9 six-board rounds).

Teams finishing in the top half of each category earned points for their club. Importantly, therefore, teams across the whole range of experience were involved in their club's chances of winning the challenge trophy. This undoubtedly contributed to the high participation rate and the success of the event. Cath Whiddon and David Farmer, the organisers, also highlighted the great effort of many others, including directors and caddies, volunteers who assisted with set up and with the kitchen, and players who contributed superb food for the day.

For those interested in organising something along these lines, Sydney North have shared their supplementary regulations (and organising rules) which are at http://bridge-game.info/files/austega/2016/sydney_north_inter-club_events_supplementary_regulations.pdf. David Farmer points out that having a regional website helps the co-ordination across clubs.

In the Hunter Region, a successful inter-club competition has been running for a decade. This is a teams event that is held 3 times a year, with a perpetual trophy awarded for open, restricted and novice divisions at the

end of each year. The first event for 2017 attracted 35 teams, representing 10 bridge clubs. However, Caroline Carey, who is the co-ordinator for the Newcastle Bridge Club, noted that it was often difficult to find out much about it, so she gave it 'presence' and 'branding' by creating a Facebook page with its own artwork and logo.

Although she commented that some bridge players resist or are dismissive of Facebook and other social media, her hope is that in time, this method of promoting the Hunter inter-club competition will gain followers among the 'younger' set of players. One reason this might work is that she has made the page about people rather than results, so that even if it reaches only a subset of the playing community, it might achieve its purpose.

Things have been a bit more challenging in the Central West region, where Peter Reed had proposed an inter-club event, run simultaneously with the Country Teams regional qualifying event. This was to have had open, restricted, novice and super novice categories, with the winners in the open division qualifying in first position for the Country Teams, and winners in the other categories becoming their respective regional champions for the year.

However, there were significant difficulties in getting the idea off the ground. This was in part because of a lack of support for teams events, especially from smaller clubs, and in part because the high average age of the majority of bridge players translated as unwillingness to travel the distances involved.

Peter suggested that the popularity of the NSWBA State Wide Pairs and Novice events, which were run remotely, was instructive. He attributed their success to the fact that players were able to compare how they performed against other clubs within the state (or nationally) and also because they did not have to get out of their environment or comfort zone to participate. Peter wondered whether a teams event could be run on similar lines.

BBO to the rescue, maybe? Something for the NSWBA to consider... 

Forthcoming Tournaments

Bring these State Events to your club! There are new rules this year for sending pairs to the championship finals, and players can still earn red master points in club heats.



More State Events to come...

The State and Country Mixed Pairs Finals were held at the NSWBA on 27-28 May and attracted 33 tables, equalling last year's record turnout. Of the 66 pairs competing, 24 were from non-metropolitan clubs, with representation from as far afield as Dubbo, Camden Haven and Batemans Bay. This is the highest participation by Country pairs to date.

The State-Wide Pairs is scheduled to run from July 31 – August 6. General information about this event is available at <http://www.nswba.com.au/tourn/state/se.asp?Y=2017&E=swp>. If your club is participating, your organiser should have received all relevant information by email by now. If not, email swp@nswba.com.au. It's not too late to enter – just complete the online entry form at <http://www.nswba.com.au/forms/statewidepairs.asp> and all the relevant details will be emailed to you.

The Under 100 Masterpoint State Championship, run in four masterpoint divisions (1-10, 10-25, 25-50 & 50-100) is starting in September. See <http://www.nswba.com.au/tourn/state/se.asp?Y=2017&E=uhmp> and the associated links for full details. This event is specifically designed for the less-experienced players, who make up 70% of the bridge playing population. There are two independent stages. The first stage consists of normal club sessions, from 1 up to a maximum of 6, held during September and October. The second stage (Local Finals) will be held simultaneously over 2 sessions on Sunday 26 November 2017 at about 20 different centres scattered around NSW. Each of the four MP divisions is masterpointed separately, so 50% of entrants in each division will receive an award. Complete the relevant online entry form (links from the above webpage) if you

want to run club sessions or host a Local Final.

Finally, but very importantly, **the draft calendar for 2018** is taking shape. The dates for the National and NSW State Championships have been set and dates for Congresses are being added as the applications come in. All events are listed at <http://www.nswba.com.au/tourn/draft.asp> but you can quickly check your club's entries via the "Search by club" dropdown list. However, it may be easier to follow the link to the pdf 2018 Planner. The information presented in the Planner shows all scheduled events in wall calendar format, allowing easy identification of potential clashes. You should check the draft calendar regularly – while the dates for the National and State Championships are extremely unlikely to change, the Congress dates are quite fluid until mid-November. 📅



Tips

Try to arrange your congress at a similar time each year, to help bridge players make attending a habit.



Directing

Have you prepared your directors – and your players – for the introduction of the new Laws of Bridge in August?



Getting Ready for the new Laws

A director’s course was held at NSWBA on 13th May, led by Tony Howes, the Head of Accredited Directors. 18 players attended the course and were introduced to the new Laws. NSWBA is scheduling the next Directors’ Course – Club Level in the second half of the year and will soon announce the date on the web.

The Australian Bridge Directors’ Association (ABDA) will be holding their 2017 workshop/ seminar at the North Shore Bridge Club in Willoughby, on Saturday 5th August (from 9:30am) and Sunday 6th August. A major focus will be the new Laws which come into effect on August 1. The seminar is open to all, but limited to the first 120 paid participants, with preference given to current ABDA financial members.

Apart from getting your directors ready for the new Laws, it’s also a good idea to prepare your players. One approach might be introduce a small component of the changes before every session, to help players to learn and adapt.

John McIlrath, the National Director Development Officer for the ABF, would like to hear from all directors who might be interested in getting involved in directing events beyond club level. Please email him at nddo@abf.com.au. 📧

Youth Bridge

If ever you needed proof that investing effort in youth bridge was worthwhile, the latest news from Johnno Newman, the Youth Co-ordinator for NSWBA, provides it in spades. Johnno reports that Jamie Thompson and Matt Smith, who were members of the under-25 team representing Australia, won the Open Swiss Pairs at at the recent Asia Pacific Bridge Federation Championships in Seoul (see photo). The following week, Jamie came back and won the Victor Champion Cup in Melbourne, with ex-youth players Shane Harrison, Dave Wiltshire and Max Henbest. This was Jamie and Shane’s first big open national victory.

If your club would like to get involved with promoting youth bridge, please send an email to youth@nswba.com.au. 📧



Grant applications

If you are attempting to apply for a government grant for your club, it’s worth noting that the NSW government recognises and acknowledges that bridge is not gambling; misunderstandings about this have in the past led to rejection of applications. This is also relevant to applications to promote bridge in schools. 📧



Marketing

Continuing the success of the marketing workshop at Nambucca Valley Bridge Club, Sandra Mulcahy, the ABF National Marketing Officer ran another one at Griffith Ex-Servicemen’s Bridge Club on May 1, 2017. At the invitation of Carol Sheldrake, the Education Councillor of NSWBA, a further **Marketing Workshop will be held at the the Hunters Hill bridge club** on August 23, 2017.

Tentative plans have also been made for another marketing workshop to cater for clubs in inner western Sydney. NSWBA would like to hear from any clubs that would like to be involved – please contact us at office@nswba.com.au

NSWBA strongly supports these marketing and promotional activities and will gladly assist clubs elsewhere in the state to organise a similar event. **■**

Generating Leads

From time to time the NSWBA receives inquiries from the general public or outside organisations regarding setting up a bridge group. We also recently received a request from a local government council to set up a bridge group in their community centre. We have shared this information with our affiliated bridge clubs in the area and have invited them to take up the lead. **■**

Bright Ideas

Start with Something Small

One of the important elements in marketing is “calling for action”. Almost every club puts the name of their club on the pens they give away, but do you remember to put a contact on them as well? For example, a website or phone number?



Insurance for clubs and members

Tips and advice provided by the ABF insurance partner, Tony Bemrose Insurance Brokers.



Public Liability

TBIB has useful insurance policies for clubs, including public liability insurance; and continues to increase its range of discounted offerings for members (plus their families), for example with a new Australia-only travel insurance policy.

Q: We have been approached by an Anglican Church group regarding the possibility of using one of our rooms once a month for about an hour and a half for a small church service. We would not be charging them for this as some of our members attend the Church. Would the public liability insurance that NSWBA has for us cover us or would this group have to take out separate public liability insurance?

A: The Public Liability arranged by the ABF automatically extends to your club. The policy will cover the club for their responsibility as a property owner in the event someone from the Anglican Church group suffers a personal injury due to negligence on behalf of the bridge club.

The church group themselves also have a responsibility to their congregation and to the bridge club. It may be prudent that they also have a Public Liability policy in place to protect their interests and responsibilities. If they are affiliated with the national church body they should contact them to see if they have protection under one of their policies.

For advice on your travel insurance speak with Steve Weil or Joshua DeJun at Tony Bemrose Insurance Brokers on 07 3252 5254 or email steveweil@tbib.com.au or joshuadejun@tbib.com.au. **■**



**Tony Bemrose
Insurance Brokers**