

President's Patch #2. May 2016

The Committee and Subcommittee structure is now posted on the Notice Board. If you have any ideas for any Subcommittee please feel free to approach one of the members.

Pet Peeves - Slow Play and Late Finishes

The most commonly cited pet peeve which disrupts members' enjoyment of a session is slow "play". My Dad's most often used quote was "a quick game is a good game". Didn't matter what the card game, euchre, 500, crib, canasta, poker, etc, the concept is universal to cards.

Directors are trained to warn then penalise. It simply doesn't work. Those people affected will likely vote with their feet. Directors don't like doing it as it generates hostility so typically all one hears is a never ending succession of "hurry along please". And with playing directors on Tuesday night it is simply not practical.

The problem with most slow players is that it is not just "play the hand slow", it is also "in-between the boards slow", looking at the Red Devil results and chatting as to how some of the room bid and made game, whereas they were in a part score and shouldn't partner have invited, blah blah, then they check the bidding slip and find the DDA said they should only make partscore, cue for another discussion.

That is, slow players have no concept that they have been slow and therefore do not believe they are under any obligation to hurry up, and thus any comment that they are slow is met with aggressive resistance along the lines of "we are not slow, you are picking on us, it was someone else's fault, etc, etc."

The result is a slow session for all, as typically the director will hold play up for the whole room at some point(s) to allow catch up.

So what to do about this?

First, we do not want night play finishing at ungodly hours, so finish time restrictions are going to be imposed. If the last round is not played, so be it. There are also going to be limits on the number of boards played which will vary by session. Now these don't actually do anything to address slow play per se, but address one result of slow play which is late finishing, so hopefully no more moans about late finishes.

Second, we will use Tuesday night for trialling initiatives and may roll out to other nights if the attempted slow play reduction is successful. The first initiative to be trialled is for no bidding to commence once a [3] minute buzzer has sounded. Those boards not played are then NOT played at end of evening. A log will be kept of the pairs involved, and this log will be used as evidence that the pair is slow. For example, if over a two month period one pair has logged [4] boards not played, whereas no-one else has logged more than one instance, this may be taken as evidence of slow play. The Recorder will be asked to have a chat to this pair to see if there are ways, now that the emotional "we are not slow" response is not possible, for the pair to improve in future.

Directors need to be trained in both of the above, and these will commence when such training has been completed by the director group.

From the Subcommittees

Social & Tournament: The Charity Pairs tournament scheduled for June 25 has been scrapped. It is being replaced by a Club member only 2 session tournament with fewer boards per session than normal. The intention is to foster more member social interaction. A flyer will be out shortly.

Also, a regular Social Sunday has been proposed. This is casual bridge on a Sunday afternoon, with tea/bikkies. No director, no Red Devils, manual scoring. Gold coin donation table money. More details in due course.

Recruitment and Retention: Beginner lessons start May 2. "Improver" lessons are to commence in June, on Wednesdays 8,15,22,29, from 7.30-9.30pm. These will focus on bidding, and be suitable for those who have completed beginner lessons and want to develop their system. Registration will commence shortly. Down the track slightly we will be offering: a) Switching from Standard American to ACOL; b) Introduction to Precision. Separately, an "opt-in" email Q&A service for bidding/opening lead questions has been started with vigorous debate ensuing. Simply send your email addy to gt@hrlmorrison.com and I will add you to the discussion group.

Sessions:

Monday night: As previously announced the Teams event in July has been cancelled. Champs is shifted from November to fill the July slot. The rationale for these changes are that Teams is a difficult format for hosts when there are small numbers playing and that Champs is better located in July when lesson graduates have been playing almost a year. A Butler Pairs will be held in place of the current Champs slots. These changes will also be incorporated in to the 2017 programme. Also, from June the start time will be 7pm.

Thursday night: A new format Stubbs Handicap Teams was trialled in April. The first 3 nights were a qualifier to the Final or Plate on the last night. Top 4 went into Final, rest into Plate. This was designed to overcome a lack of "sizzle" on the last night. In previous teams events the leaders were typically playing the guys at the other end on the last night. Another change was to the handicapping. A simplified approach was used which was easy to explain, and administer (especially with substitutes), and resulted in significant compression of the score range. Of the Top 4 teams, two were low handicappers and two were high handicappers, while going into the final round the top 2 comprised one low handicapper and one high handicapper, and they played each other. Anecdotal evidence was very favourable (apart from the Red Devil problem on the final night!).

Maintenance: The first chairs have arrived. A working bee to install is being held shortly. Carpet specialists have advised that carpet patching is not possible, thus we are investigating full carpet replacement options (which will be expensive). Gutter cleaning has been actioned, but the back gutter in particular is difficult to access. The Maintenance Subcommittee has experienced poor results with DIY brushes and mesh. If anyone has good experience of a "gutter guard" system please tell the Subcommittee.

Technology: Our current web site is at end of life, and we have an archaic email system. The short list of replacement options has been whittled down to Pianola (www.pianola.com) with a 90 day trial about to start. As well as targeted email marketing, there will also be a Partner Finder function which may assist in reducing the Hosts' workload.

Graeme Thomson