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Subject: Improving B-Flight Mtg

Improving Flight B

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Agenda

1. What can D25 Flight B Players do to help us retain those Flight C members who achieve the rank of Life Master
2. How can our District's Flight A players better help Flight B players advance in skills – not only in points
3. How can the District improve its scheduling of Flight B events so as to help boost attendance at these events in the future
4. Open discussion

Problem Areas – Why We Are Here

Several fixes have been tried. Attendance shows that the Flight B players are voting with their feet. Attendance is continuing to go down. Currently the Gold Rush events are approximately 50% of our Regionals. The downside is that there is no place for them to go when they get enough points and must leave the Gold Rush games. We are losing the 750 to 2500 players. The new schedule will cut down on the number of events and should make each event larger and more attractive. B-Flight players do not like non-flighted events. All KO's except the Friday night KO where a is separate have proven unsuccessful and have been dropped. Players were unwilling to come without knowing which bracket they would play.

Because of ACBL regulations regarding the issuance of Gold points, the Gold Rush events cannot be capped at 500 or exclude Life masters. (750 max needed for Gold)

Mentoring A>B B>C

M. Aquino suggested that mentoring by both A and B flight players might help. Free lessons and playing with less skilled players, not for pay, would help improve the game for everyone. We should consider way to introduce teaching programs. The new schedule will allow time for expert discussion of session hands and other lessons.

We need to find ways to encourage players not to abandon playing at Regionals when they reach their goal of Life Master. We need to be creative in developing ways to transition players from I/N to Gold Rush; Gold Rush to Flight B/ and Flight B to Flight A. Our numbers keep dropping.

Events/ Scheduling

Simplifying the schedule is a step in the right direction. Players do not what to play in 4-7 table events at a Regional. New creative special events may be helpful.

C. Borrás discussed the “8 is enough” team format. A team can not consist of a total of more than “8” points. A flight players = 3 points/ B flight 2 and C flight 1. This will encourage A flight players to play with C flight players and still maintain partnerships. H. Pawlowski will investigate whether this is acceptable to the ACBL at the Regional level.

Promotion/ Recognition

We used to give Section Top awards but these were dropped when the same individuals kept winning them. Recognition can also be in the form of photographs on line or in the Bulletin and similar recognition. Trophies could also be considered.

Technology

The Score Pads allow the notation of opening leads. Players might find this useful. Cenk Tuncok has introduced new posting at his club in Amesbury that might offer some innovative possibilities.

Alleviate Rudeness/ Improve Decorum

Nastiness and rudeness always turns players away. We should find creative ways to encourage players who are rude to cease and desist. New players should also be taught the rules and proprieties so that they will not take every director call as a negative attack. Expecting the directors to do it all is unrealistic.

Directors

The Directors can also help by being more sensitive, even when they are under pressure. Players should be more acceptant of the fact that at the beginning of the game and at end the directors are under time pressure and may not be as relaxed as at other times.

Hospitality

District 25 has committed more and more of our resources to hospitality. If the numbers continue to drop, it will be impossible to maintain our level of hospitality. Rooms play for the playing area. As fewer and fewer players stay on site, we will have to pick up more and more of the cost for the playing areas. This will require more cuts in hospitality.

Volunteerism

We need more volunteers. District 25 is notorious in not being a volunteer District. We need to encourage players to become involved, not always for play but for the love of the game. Recognition of volunteerism would help. As our attendance continues to drop, we have less money to spend on professions and will need to depend more and more on volunteers.

Social Events

Jane Adams suggested we try something similar to the EMBA Holiday Pro-Am. She will look into the possibilities of such an event at a Regional.

H. Pawlowski noted streamlined schedule will provide evenings for creative events. Paul Harris suggested that a "suggestion box be available for players to make their own observations and suggestions. H. Pawlowski will have one for Cromwell.

K. Gilman asked what we can do about those who no longer come. We can not use email addresses as many list their email as confidential and of those listed many are outdated. We need to contact individual one-on-one. The personal touch is important. A mailing is far too expensive.

J. Grossack added that her sons were mentored for nothing. We need to get personally involved . Mentoring will work. We need a structure to help individuals find a match.

C. Borrás added that at Gatlinburg they gave Bridge Bucks as prizes. These encourage players to return.

A website survey might be helpful, but the numbers who go to the Regional site are very small compared to the number of members. Those who go to the site are already coming, we need to reach those who have stopped coming or have never come.

Using a 3rd session for special events has a drawback as most C flight players can not play 3 sessions of bridge. As we age, that number will go down not up.

We need advocates for each suggestion who will work on specifics and develop workable plans that can be presented to the Tournament Committee.

C. Borrás added that once players become Life Masters they fall into 3 categories: those who aspire, those who feel have potential and want to improve and those who are "semi-social players.

In all the discussions the B-flight players get shuffled aside. Transition plans are important as players go from one group to another. As lesser players move up into higher groups they need to be made aware of the proprieties. A players need to be encouraged to treat their opponents and partners in a manner that will encourage players to return. Without lesser players, there will be no events for the A player to win.

A. Geaski stated that we need to look into methods that have been successful at Sectionals and Clubs and incorporate them into the Regional schedule.

H. Pawlowski reminded the group that this meeting is attached to the Tournament Committee. Any suggestions will be presented to the Tournament Committee which has the authority to recommend actions to the Executive Committee. This endeavor is not a waste of time.

H. Pawlowski was asked about the Zip KO. It began with great promise and numbers that have dropped. The A's are not playing. A banner that will announce the point races during Regionals will be introduced at Cromwell. Section top awards are not the answer. We need to avoid giving recognition to the same individuals. M. Aquino added that photo's go a long way. We should incorporate something like the "Shark's Pointers" or the articles by John Stiefel and H. Feldheim in Connecticut into the website or Bulletin.

Ausra Geaski stated that we need to capture these items and put them into action items and assign individuals to work on them .

Mark. Aquino will take the lead on this and the Committee will reconvene in Cromwell.

Carolyn Weiser