

The B's Needs – Feedback from Clubs/Unit 145

Since our meeting in February Lois and I met with Unit 145 club owners who had time to meet with us. In each case we presented 3 questions:

- “Why aren’t people attending Regionals”
- “How do we get people to attend regionals”
- “How do we maintain our player base”

I have summarized the responses but we feel the following quote from a C level player says a lot about why we’re not keeping our playing base. This quote is from a young confident individual with a strong career who is accustomed to dealing with all sorts of people in their jobs and isn’t someone who would fall apart at the first negative comment. Yet, if this is how this player feels, how are the less confident among us dealing with this situation. We think it speaks volumes to why we are losing our player base. Here is the quote taken from an email correspondence with a unit board member

“... and a general frustration with the bridge world (we had another run-in with a poor sport on Wed.). I wish there were a more conducive place to be able to play where you can learn the game and not be at the mercy of people who don't want to deal with beginners. We will see what happens, but I may be playing online instead (where you can get up and leave if you want)”...

Summary – Why aren’t people attending Regionals?

1. Expense to attend is high
 - a. Meals
 - b. Rooms
 - c. Entry fees
2. KO groupings are high – B and C teams find themselves matched against the Super A teams
 - a. They feel they can’t compete
 - b. Disheartening when you go into it knowing you don’t stand a chance after all the money you paid to attend
3. Newer players don’t go due to lack of confidence

4. Players still working and don't have time.
5. They go for the pigmentation and once they get it they just play at local clubs.
6. Players don't go due to partnerships and distance.
7. Table counts are down both day and night. When people lose their partners through death or illness they just stop playing.

Summary – How can we increase attendance at Regionals?

1. Communication Board at Clubs with the flyers and announcements **
 - a. Regionals
 - b. Sectionals (Gala for Unit 145)
2. All area club games should be cancelled during a regional
3. A way to organize car pools – carpooling in general for people who don't have rides to the regionals **
 - a. college students who live on campus without a car especially in need of rides
 - b. put a signup sheet at Senior Centers offering ride and the seniors will sign up for regionals and club games
4. "8 is enough" was brought up – someone who plays in Florida mentioned it.
5. Use what we know from ACBL records
 - a. Based on past attendance records sectional to sectional and regional to regional.... Who has attended in the past but no longer attending? Then reach out to the missing and find out why, then compile the reasons looking for trends and things that can be modified. Then choose the three largest things and fix them.
6. Promote the Mini McKinney in clubs and remind players that tournaments are a good way to win points to win the unit honors in their point bracket.
7. More flighted events.
8. Revamp the mapping (start times of various events) of the games so as not to pull C players out of other main games to play in gold rush
9. Strats need to come down for the Gold Rush, 499 is a good limit. This would put more people in the C stat in the open game, 500 to 1500 point players. **
 - a. Primary concern with Goldrush - It was a brilliant idea when the district needed fresh ideas. But it has turned into the focus point of regionals leaving every other group in the dust.
 - b. 299er Goldrush isn't doing anything for the 299er group. They leave 299ers not ready to play in open pairs.
10. Lessons at regionals.
11. Encourage Kibitzing.

12. Directors must officiate fairly - zero tolerance - they shouldn't lean their rulings more to the favor of the well know players.
13. More hospitality, snacks, free coffee, etc.
14. KO's and Swiss teams - the number of boards played seems to be reducing.

**** Indicates this suggestion was made by multiple club owners**

Summary – How can we increase our player base?

1. Develop an education program that can be test marketed. It should be a teaching program with a curriculum and a program that you can advertise and market. Then you encourage the students to start playing in local clubs.
 - a. Handpick teachers who can teach, use one central location. This could cause some problems for teachers who might not be included in this group but they would still have the advantage of more people ending up at their clubs to play once they have learned.
 - b. Key in Rhode Island would be finding the right central location.
2. Identify the obstacles for new players
 - a. Attitude of the teacher
 - b. Location
3. Get into high schools and colleges, with high school teams competing against each other. Lois added Boys and Girl Club as a possible group since there is already supervision. Teachers have to stay late at the schools.
4. Get into senior centers, lots of players there; you can make the club game or Regional a day trip, where you provide the bus - Similar to Foxwoods trips.