

## *New England Bridge Conference*

### Minutes

#### Tournament/Scheduling Committee Meeting

Granite State Regional

Friday, June 23, 2023

#### Committee- Present

Mark Oettinger - Vice President & Chair

Curtis Barton - President/ ex-officio

Carolyn Weiser- Secretary

Sally Kirtley - Tournament Manager

Sue Miguel - I/N Chair

David Metcalf - Tournament Advisor

Mark Aquino- Regional Director

Peter Marcus - Tournament Coordinator

Gary Peterson - TD

Paul Burnham -CBA

Venky Venkataramani- EMBA

Absent

Jack Mahoney- Past President

Dick Tracy - NHBA

Vice President Oettinger welcomed the members of the committee and called the meeting to order at 6:00.

A motion was made, seconded and so approved to accept the Minutes of the TSC Meeting of February 9, 2023, with one abstention.

VP Oettinger noted that as of today, our numbers should be up to pre-pandemic figures. This is a function of everyone's hard work and of Bridgefest. S. Kirtley estimate that we were at approximately 75% of the last Nashua numbers on the first day but we brought it up to equal 2019. Wednesday was down a bit. All in all, we should be very pleased with the numbers. This tournament had to be considered a lost leader. It was not a perfect experience. RD Mark Aquino noted that the 2 x 2 x 2 schedule is very popular.

The primary mover was Sue (Miguel) with Bridgefest as well as the additions to the schedule to accommodate pro teams. Some came. (S. Miguel) It was too late in their planning for many. Warwick is the next chance. The can fly in there.

(M. Aquino) I don't think we should abandon the schedule. The largest tournament was in the Pacific northwest. The biggest regional was Greensboro. Many including Jonathan Steinberg were there. We have to watch the schedules. We are not considered in the top tier of tournaments, but we are for Bridgefest, which was an outstanding success.

(S. Miguel) Today's schedule needs tweaking. Six teams (in Bridgefest) played after the lesson. Sally (Kirtley), Carolyn (Weiser), Denise Bahosh, and Sonya Gower filled in. We had 20 tables Wednesday. There were 10 on Thursday. Kim Gilman just advertised to her game, not to the rest of the Bridgefest players. This is the first time we tried three days.

(M. Aquino) It's hard to sell if we don't know what did, the changes etc., so we can sell it to the rest of the country.

(S. Miguel) we charged \$20. Originally it was free. It is branded. I am the "Fairy Goldmother". Whatever I do, they listen. Today we had a lesson on teams. Tomorrow we will have a team game in the afternoon. Today the team winner received 1.8 points. We are marketing to the New and Advancing Player.

(VP Oettinger) Thank you again for all you work.

(S. Miguel) For Warwick we have another team lesson and we have added Bridgefest to the Saturday teams.

(VP Oettinger) We are scheduled for Warwick from Tuesday, August 29 to Saturday, September 2. Sunday is not available. A general discussion on Sunday followed.

S. Kirtley) The hotel will not extend us to Sunday. The 325-room block is a bit scary, but I think we will make it.

## Review of 2023 Schedule

(VP Oettinger) We are scheduling one regional ahead. Our goal is to extend that. We have finalized Warwick, that is an important step. We have talked about a generic schedule.

(S. Miguel) We have a generic schedule. What we add will depend on the popularity of events (teams, KOs). Where they are popular, we will keep them. We have added the Next Generation Gold-Rush Pairs. Traditionally the Gold Rush was under 750. (see chart at the bottom). Our schedule can handle Pros to Bridgefest.

(VP Oettinger) we need a 5-day prototype and a 6-day prototype. We need to tailor or schedule to the location and the time of year.

(S. Miguel) I'd like to schedule a pick-a-day fun event. Perhaps try the "Midnight Swiss" at 7:30, or a KO at 7:30 that would cost you \$1.00 a round: "pay to stay." Make it a more social event. Market it as a fun event. Perhaps we could do it on a Friday night.

(VP Oettinger) Warwick is set.

(S. Miguel) it is ready to mail.

General discussion followed.

(VP Oettinger) The most important thing is that the dates are October 31 to November 4, 2023.

(RD Aquino) Southbridge includes Sunday.

General discussion followed regarding Southbridge being 5-days Wednesday through Sunday and Marlboro being Tuesday through Saturday. S. Kirtley will review availability with the hotels. Historically, the November tournament was shorter.

(P. Marcus) Our regionals were 6-days. We tried both 6 days and 5 days, in both configurations the first days were terrible. Southbridge draws less. We don't have to standardize our tournaments. The number of days (6 or 5) should depend on the location and date (season)

## 2023 NAP

This year it will be on-line.

(Pres. Barton) We are planning to have the NAPs and GNTs both on line forever, or until we decide differently. There will be a motion tomorrow night. (ExCom meeting)

## Review and Finalize 2024

(VP Oettinger) We need to decide if we are will have four or five regionals in 2024. Everything depends on finding the sites.

General discussion followed.

Under consideration is Southbridge -April 17-21; Nashua- June 18-23; Warwick- August 27-1; Fall, November 5-10. Everything depends on finding sites. Everything is in flux. Four tournaments in a year seems reasonable.

(General Discussion followed)

(G. Peterson) Would it be possible to hold a split site regional in CBA and MBA?

(P. Marcus) This has been tried elsewhere and was an unbelievable failure.

(M. Aquino) In my discussions with D-24 I can tell you that D-25 is head and shoulders ahead of the other Districts. We do very well. We are demand and supply driven. We are holding our own. Three or four spaced regionals with no loss in money would be an admirable goal. You can credit Sally (Kirtley) and the other leaders who all do a magnificent job. Peter (Marcus) is right, we don't know what the future is.

(VP Oettinger) we are doing well. There was no "bridge before." There is no history. We cannot be guided by the past. It is a new world of bridge. D- 24 is out of the bridge business. D-3 is limping along. They now have two tournaments. We need to provide events that will get their players to come to us. We need to develop incentives for the top players to come to us.

Regarding collaboration, I would like to experiment northward. Players from our northern states, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, feel somewhat excluded. We might try to bring them into the fold. It used to be very popular to go to Canada.

(P. Marcus) There is no "before". There is no regional in CBA.

(VP Oettinger) Maybe we would do a zoom meeting with D-24 & 25.

(RD Aquino ) Sue (Miguel) involves Jeff Bayone. Adam Parrish is still the president.

(General discussion followed and possible interested parties including Ralph Cohen, Bronia Jenkins were mentioned)

(P. Marcus) A make a motion that we not focus on national policy. We have limited time.

(S. Miguel) Bring them on line. On-line could be a component to our regionals.

(P. Marcus) All 7-day regionals should have 1 day when they can hold on-line games-pairs- concurrent with, before, or after. It would be a totally separate event with no combining with the overalls.

It was noted that we have D-7 people here such as Jeff Phipps.

(S. Miguel) There is a definite difference between making a quick buck and changing policy.

[Sue Miguel and Mark Aquino had a separate discussion]

(VP. Oettinger) Provided we get a share of the profits.

(S. Miguel) On-line takes away from live tables. Only Grass-Roots and new players are OK. The ACBL runs 3 regionals per year.

(President Barton rose and left)

Kim Gilman's class had 40 people. They had no clue about face-to-face bridge.

(D. Metcalf) We are competing with ourselves.

(P. Marcus) I am not in favor [of this]. We need to form a small committee, Sue (Miguel), Mark (Aquino), and Mark (Oettinger) to research the possibilities.

(P. Marcus) I am still against it.

General discussion followed.

The consensus was it is too early to make a decision. The earliest would be in 2024. M. Oettinger will put together a committee including Peter Marcus.

Discussion of GNT events

(DD M. Aquino) It is important that there be two types of events- the Championship and all the rest. We need to set up on-line tools to get some of the flight B & C into the fold. We need some face-to-face component, a hybrid model. This needs study.

(P. Marcus) We have to increase the MP limits.

(VP Oettinger) Will there be any participation in the BBO Olympic event?

(M. Aquino) The financial potential is great. We have to think of “on-line” as a means to an end; augmenting nor substituting for face-to-face bridge,

(P. Marcus) The sites were expensive. We can’t give everyone all they want.

(M. Aquino)It doesn’t matter what we choose, there will be complaints. Right now we are just at 76% of Nashua 2019. Brian (no name given) said a regional at 76% is excellent; in New England, it is unbelievable. We should have the president send a letter to the whole district- “Bridge is coming back, join in.” New York is out of the regional business. There are no sectionals in New York or Westchester County. There are a few in New Jersey. Face-to-face bridge is coming back.

(VP Oettinger) Vermont had five minutes on TV about the Longest Day at the Burlington Bridge Club. The database folks have increased our capacity for marketing.

(G. Peterson) I like the term “revival.”

(S. Kirtley) The site looks good, the bidding boxes look bad. Two-hundred tables equal 8,000 players.

(P. Marcus) We had 125 (tables) and can be more. Regarding the bidding boxes, I will do what I did with the Bridgemates. I will buy them and recover the cost at a \$1.00 per box, per tournament, or an agreed on modest rate. The District must provide the storage. I will fund the capital outlay, if we do it so that there is no cost to the district now. We will do it tonight. Regarding the night games, we used to have 10-15 tables. It is down to 6. At that director rate, we barely break even. It is difficult to arrange directors. The question is, should we continue?

(DD Aquino)I would like to suggest that we piggyback on Peter’s idea with an on-line evening session.

(P. Marcus) There is no real demand. If the ACBL would allow we could use the local director concept and bring I a local director to run the night games. They would get experience and they would be covered by the TDs on site.

(S. Miguel) we don’t have to have night games every night,. At Warwick we could have 3 night games, like the Midnight Zip, on Friday.

There was a motion to adjourn, due to time. The meeting was formally adjourned at 7:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, D-25

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From Flyer

Pairs

Gold Rush Graduates Players under 2250 / 2250/ 1250

Next Generation Gold Rush Pairs -LM under 750/NLMs<750/300

Bridgefest - New and Advancing players

Teams

Open

Gold Rush Graduates

Gold Rush  
Bridgefest