

District Director's Report

Spring NABC 2017

Kansas City, MO

Kansas City Overview

One of the first events of the 2017 Spring NABC in Kansas City, MO - the 0-10,000 MP Swiss Teams - drew a lot of attention because the winning team was led by none other than Microsoft founder Bill Gates! It's great to see someone of his stature and accomplishments with the same passion as the rest of us mere mortals.

A total of 108 players from New England attended this NABC, and most had a pretty good time. The hospitality was great, and the playing conditions were fine. The playing areas were fine, there was ample access to affordable food concessions, restrooms were conveniently located, and the problem we had seen with dirty playing cards in Orlando was corrected. Attendance was, however, predictably low at this location. At 8,691 tables, this was the third-lowest Spring NABC attendance in the past 30 years. More about this later...

After all the excitement around the richest man in the world enjoying our pastime had subsided, all attention shifted and stayed riveted on the phenomenal achievements of our district's young superstars – Adam and Zach Grossack.

The Grossacks are class acts!!

Big news all week in Kansas City was the buzz created by the amazing performance of Newton, MA, brothers – 19 year old Zachary Grossack and 22 year old Adam Grossack. They started off like gangbusters in the highly prestigious Platinum Pairs, which is considered the toughest matchpoint event in the world. They were in the lead with one session to go in this 3-day event, and finished a very respectable 5th. Later in the week they paired up with another pair of young brothers from Sweden, with whom they had never played before. This time Zach won the event, and Adam finished 3rd! They paired up with a couple of Italian stars for the Jacoby Open Swiss during the last weekend, and they were leading this event as well with just 3 rounds to play, before they dropped to a very respectable 15th overall.

All told, the Grossack Brothers amassed more than 440 Platinum points in Kansas City, leading all players in the...

D25 Top 25

Rank	Name	Residence	Masterpoints
1.	Zachary Grossack	Newton, MA	248.43
2.	Adam Grossack	Newton, MA	192.25
3.	Allan Graves	St. Johnsbury, VT	160.71
4.	Paul Fireman	Chestnut Hill, MA	96.59
5.	Franklin Merblum	Bloomfield, CT	89.10
6.	Lloyd Arvedon	Woburn, MA	85.43
7.	Barry Bragin	Prospect, CT	78.64

8.	Douglas Doub	West Hartford, CT	76.65
9.	Andy Avery	Jamaica, VT	49.02
10.	Pat McDevitt	Brookline, MA	41.64
11.	Karen McCallum	Exeter, NH	39.07
12.	Ru Hong Terajewicz	Newton, MA	39.02
13.	Sheila Gabay	Newton, MA	38.71
14.	Simon Kantor	Feeding Hills, MA	37.66
15.	Lewis Gamerman	Randolph, MA	37.35
16.	Barton Buffington	North Kingstown, RI	36.84
17.	Mark Aquino	Jamaica Plain, MA	36.41
18.	Geoffrey Brod	Avon, CT	33.61
19.	Doug Anderson	Quincy, MA	33.28
20.	William Braucher	Billerica, MA	30.20
21.	Nathan Glasser	Somerville, MA	28.38
22.	Cenk Tuncok	Amesbury, MA	27.77
23.	Xiaoquian Liu	Hudson, MA	26.93
24.	Maxim Siline	Hudson, MA	26.93
25.	Rick Holcomb	Malden, MA	25.84

Top 10 NABC+ Finishes by New England players in KC

Doug Doub & Frank Merblum	Baldwin Flight A NAP	4th
Barry Bragin	Lebhar IMP Pairs	2nd
Adam Grossack & Zachary Grossack	Kay Platinum Pairs	5th
Lloyd Arvedon	Leventritt Silver Ribbon Pairs	5th
Sheila Gabay & Pat McDevitt	Rockwell Mixed Pairs	7th
Zachary Grossack	Silodor Open Pairs –	1st
Adam Grossack	Silodor Open Pairs –	3rd
Franklin Merblum	Silodor Open Pairs –	9th
Paul Fireman	Silodor Open Pairs –	10th
Allan Graves	Vanderbilt KO Teams –	tied 3/4
Paul Fireman	Jacoby Swiss Teams –	4th
Allan Graves	Jacoby Swiss Teams –	9th

Andy Avery NABC 0-10K Swiss 3rd

Other notable accomplishments by New England players in KC

Harvey Epstein Lee, NH Sat AM299er Pairs 1st
Bart Buffington Sat Eve A/X/Y Swiss 1st X/Y
Lew Gamerman Sat Eve A/X/Y Swiss 2nd X
Ru Hong Terajewicz Sat Eve B/C/D Swiss 1st B
Michael Lieberman-Nathan Glasser, Somerville, MA;
Reid Barton, Arlington, MA Sat Zip KO1 – 2nd
Nathan Glasser Sunday AM Side Pairs 2nd A
Stewart Rubenstein, Christina Parker, Newton Center, MA ;
Christine Halkiotis, Diogo Teixeira, Wellesley MA - Sunday Eve Swiss 2nd B
Alan Godes, Needham, MA Lucy Morini, Warren VT – Mon Eve B/C/D Swiss 1st B/C
Nathan Glasser, Doug Anderson Monday Compact KO 2 -1st
Joanna Gleason, Jean Senat Fleury, Chestnut Hills, MA Mon-Tue Daylight KO 2 - 2nd
Bernhard Kohn, Jr., Bloomfield, CT Wed AM 299er Pairs 1st
Lynn Duncan, Wenham, MA Wed Gold Rush Pairs - tie 1st /2nd
Bart Bussink, Cambridge, MA Zach & Adam Grossack, Lew Gamerman Wed Zip KO 1st
Victor Chubukov, Somerville, MA Wed Zip KO - 2nd
Allison Ryan & Yan Drabek, Florence, MA Thu AM 299er Pairs – 1st
Allison Ryan & Yan Drabek, Florence, MA Thu Aft 299er Pairs – 2nd B 1st C
Lucia Enica, Belmont, MA Thu Eve Swiss – 2nd A 1st B
Doug Anderson Thu Open Pairs – 1st Byan & Yan Drabek,
Florence, MA Thu Eve 299er Pairs – 2nd B 1st C
Joyce Pearson, Framingham, MA; R. Muggia, Andover, MA
Ru Hong Terajewicz Thu Zip KO – 1st
Allison Ryan & Yan Drabek, Florence, MA Fri AM 299er Pairs – 2nd A 2nd B 1st C
Barton Buffington Thu-Fri KO3 – 1st
Lew Gamerman Fri Zip KO 1 - 2nd
Allison Ryan & Yan Drabek, Florence, MA Sat Aft 299er Pairs – 2nd A 2nd B 2nd C
Sabrina Miles Sat Open Pairs – 1st B

CEO Update

Efforts to replace outgoing ACBL CEO Hartman are ahead of schedule. The job was posted in every edition of the Kansas City Daily Bulletin. A sufficient number of high-quality candidates have been identified so as to not

require our incurring the expense of a search firm at this time. Stay tuned for more news in the coming months....

Board Effectiveness

The Board of Directors devoted a significant amount of time at the Kansas City meetings to explore ways to improve business processes, communications, meeting planning, and overall effectiveness. Paul Cuneo, the new DD from Houston, convinced a retired HR executive from Shell to volunteer his services to facilitate a very productive four-hour session focusing on setting the stage for progress in all these areas. There's a lot of work that needs to be done, and it is very difficult getting things to change in a board this large, but some major inroads in identifying opportunities for future improvement got started. There are 7 new board members and all share a strong desire to revector the board in a positive direction. I'm excited about the prospects for the future.

Tournament Attendance

Declining attendance at NABCs and Regionals is a subject that the entire Board of Directors will be devoting a lot of attention to in the upcoming months. I've been asked to serve on a couple of very busy Task Forces focusing on improving attendance at our regionals and NABCs across the ACBL. One of the big issues I have been talking about for the past 5-10 years is our increasing age of membership. This has certainly impacted attendance as well as our ability to sustain the volunteer network we need to keep our tournaments profitable. This month, the average age of members across the ACBL exceeded 72 years of age for the first time! We just got a new Marketing Director, and we will soon have a new CEO. I'm hopeful that they will be putting some new initiatives in place to open up younger markets with an eye towards starting to turn around the increasing average age. I'm hoping we can leverage some of the significant learnings we have had in New England in recent years, and I will be looking to many of you for input and advice in these regards.

Code of Disciplinary Regulations

A huge effort is underway to re-write the long-standing ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR). There are some controversial aspects of this, and Bart Bramley, Chairman of the Ethical Oversight Committee (EOC) addressed his concerns before the entire board. Among other things, the EOC wants to be able to have its own legal counsel, but the ACBL wants their In-house Counsel to represent the EOC's interests in cases concerning cheating, or ethical issues. There will be further discussions around this topic in Toronto.

Increased NAP Subsidies

The Board of Governors had asked the Board of Directors to reconsider its close vote against providing \$200 to each 3rd place finisher in the District NAP finals, as well as \$100 each to each 4th place finisher in flights B & C. This was one of the motions I wrote and proposed in Orlando, so obviously I was strongly in support of it. In an attempt to help get this passed, I had recommended that the monies for this come from the Grass Roots Funds so it would be cost-neutral to the ACBL. It seemed like a great idea to me, but unfortunately not to a majority of board members, and the motion once again failed. (11 Aye; 13 Nay; 1 Abstain).

Fall BOD Meetings

There were two motions related to Fall BOD meetings, and they both failed. The first was to hold all Fall meetings at or near ACBL HQ. The second was to move the 2018 Fall meeting to a location at or near the ACBL HQ. I voted against both. I think it is great to save money, but I didn't think management's arguments were convincing, and didn't examine all options. New board members do have an orientation at ACBL HQ and the Spring 2019 NABC is scheduled to be held in Memphis, so there is plenty of opportunity for board members to interact with staff. I'm going to propose a motion in Toronto for the board to meet just twice a year effective 2020

– for 5 business days in January or February in the Memphis/Horn Lake area, and for the 5 business days immediately *following* the Summer NABC. The current arrangement by which board members cannot participate in the first major event of the NABC as well as in the Flight A NAP finals is, I believe, a major disincentive for players to aspire to serve on the board.

Entry Fees for Team Events

Motion to reconsider increasing entry fees for five- and six-player teams failed. The major issue here is the overall financial situation of the ACBL, which is not great, and the large number of pro teams for which the additional entry fees are not a major factor.

Increased Masterpoints for Regional Events at NABCs

Masterpoints for Regional Events at NABCs will be now be 14% higher than Regional Events at Regionals. The purpose of the motion was to provide a greater incentive to get players to attend NABCs and to get a better value for the relatively high table fees for these regional events (\$16 per session).

World Bridge Federation Dues

The ACBL currently pays \$1 per member, or approximately \$168,000 per year to the World Bridge Federation. This has been a major area of concern for many of our players, and for ACBL Management. Some board members have been trying to find ways to reduce this cost. There was a motion to assign all dues responsibilities to the National Bridge Organizations (The USBF, The CBF, and the Mexican Bridge Federation). There also has been a proposal from the USBF to provide the ACBL with a \$50,000 grant for each of the next several years to help defray the ACBL's financial burden. All of these matters were deferred until Toronto, so that sufficient details could be properly developed, reviewed, and understood.

Summary and Conclusions

The ACBL is going thru a period of some uncertainty and change due to the recent resignation of the CEO, but the efforts at finding a suitable replacement are proceeding well, and we should see things steadying soon under some new leadership.

The Board of Directors is also going thru a period of major change, and it has a lot of new members, which I believe is a good thing. Major efforts are underway to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

New England players – especially Zach and Adam Grossack – once again demonstrated their ability to compete successfully at the highest levels of competition.

108 of our players of all skill levels attended the Kansas City NABC, and most of the players I spoke to had a great time. The food was great – especially the barbecue, and there were some excellent museums and art galleries in the immediate area.

Bridge is a great game for everyone – for the young and for the old, for middle-schoolers and PhD's, for all walks of life, including the richest man in the world - Bill Gates! The greatest challenge for the Board of Directors is to help sustain this great game for generations to come.

Toronto is an outstanding venue for the 2017 Summer NABC, July 20-30. I hope to see you all there!

Mark

Mark J. Aquino, Sr.

District Director, ACBL District 25

P.S. We've got some great events later this month that will provide an opportunity for players of four different masterpoint levels to compete in an NABC – Open, Flight A (Under 6,000 mps), Flight B (Under 2,500), and Flight C (0-500 Non Life Master). I'm talking, of course, about the Grand National Teams District Finals. Winning Teams in all four flights will not only be able to compete in the National Finals in Toronto, but will also receive a generous \$2,000 per team subsidy from District 25 - playing only against their peers.

Flights A, B, and C will be held in Sturbridge, MA during the weekend of April 22-23.

The Open (or Championship) Flight will be held in North Falmouth at the Sea Crest Resort during the weekend of April 29-30.

This means that if you meet the masterpoint requirements, you can compete in Sturbridge, and then, win or lose, test your skill against “the big boys and girls” in North Falmouth the following weekend.