The American Bridge Association

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS COMMITTEE

AUGUST 17, 2016

Eric Shelton-Chairman

2016 SUMMER REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, August 17, 2016

2016 RECOMMENDATIONS COMMITTEE:

Olive Fulton – Great Lakes
Julia Lee – Western
Rosemary Bickham – Midwest
Carolyn Curry – Northwest
Vera Giddings – Southwestern
Adean Butler – Mid-Atlantic
Gladys Smith – Eastern
Lilian Holeman – Southern

2016 SPRING REPORT:

- The Chairman requested committee representation from each SVP
- Committee assembly completed in March
- Roster publish to board members
- Welcome letter to Committee members was distributed
- 1st official meeting planned for March 29, 2016 @ 6:15pm in Orlando
- Six2016 recommendations were distributed to committee to review
- Committee roster was forwarded to ABA webmaster for publication

2016 SUMMER REPORT:

- The committee agreed to meet via conference calls prior to tournaments to avoid having to meet before and during these tournament. Meeting via conference call reduces the recommendations processing time which will enable us to review and forward our recommendations to the appropriate committee prior to a tournament where the Board, NTC, NTA and Constitution & Bylaws committees meet.

NOTE: Constitution & Bylaws also met via teleconference and processed (4) recommendations prior to this tournament.

- The committee agreed that each sectional representative will respond to the recommendations originating in their section. The representative will also be responsible to provide ongoing status/feedback to the submitter until the process is completed.
- Nineteen recommendations were reviewed and processed by the committee between April and August 2, 2016 in two teleconference meetings.

THERECOMMEDATION COMMITTEE'S ACTION SUMMARY:

- One recommendation returned for clarification
- Six recommendation referred to Constitution & Bylaws Committee

- Four recommendation referred to NTC to ABA Board of Directors
- Four recommendation referred to NTA
- One recommendation rejected

THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS RECEIVED APRIL - AUGUST

1. **Submitted by**: Julius C. Fields - juliuscfields@msn.com
   Section Representative: Gladys Smith
   Submission median: email
   Recommendation: Some Clubs and Units have Scholarship Awards in addition to the National Awards and to assist in this have fund raisers and games. Our Unit has a Scholarship Fund which is funded by a Herman Huff ScholarshipGame or a $100.00 contribution once per Year. Presently the game is given as a "C". Might this be raised to double C points (as the UNCF) or use the Special Game with 10% fee for this? Somethings should be done for Unit or local Scholarship Games.
   Look forward to hearing from you. Julius C. Fields
   Rationale:
   Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:
   Committee Action: Unanimous vote to forward to NTC for consideration
   NTC Action taken:

2. **Submitted by:** Brenda Polk503-703-7365
   Section Representative: Carolyn Curry
   Submission median: email with ABA form attached
   Recommendation:I am recommending that in addition to publishing the place winners of our tournaments on the ABA website (Tournament Trail), that the recap sheets be included. I am also recommending that the hand records be published as well.

   RATIONALE:
   It is difficult and time-consuming to write down scores from the recap sheets posted on the podiums and/or on the walls during a tournament. Not to mention that many of us have to scurry to a meeting as soon as play is over. It will help tremendously if we are able to evaluate our scores at our leisure via the website. This will greatly increase our ability to evaluate our bridge play. The ACBL does it and so should the ABA.

   Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes: Hardcopy hand records are available at the game. This proposal will require additional web storage space and effort to post recap sheets.
   Committee Action: Forward to the NTA Committee for consideration.
   NTA/ABA Action taken:

3. **Submitted by:** Brenda Polk 503-703-7365
   Section Representative: Carolyn Curry
   Carolyn Curry & Eric
   Submission median: email with ABA form attached

Recommendation:
I am recommending that the procedure to calculate how ACBL points factor into the stratifications at ABA tournaments be clarified and publicized. Both ABA and ACBL master points should be taken into consideration when players register for events. The formula should be known to all and should be applied consistently at all ABA nationals and sectionals.

RATIONALE:
Having an established and consistent procedure on the national ABA level, will help the sections apply the formula on the local level.
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes: Multiple conversions have been communicated in the past
Committee Action: Refer to the NTC committee for standardization, communication and publication.

4. **Submitted by:** Willieboyd McNeil Saddler - msincx@bellsouth.net
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman
Submission median: email
Recommendation: I believe the ABA can grow!!! I am recommending that some thought be give n to the treatment of new players as they join. I am recommending that new players not b e allowed to play in separate fields at National and Local Tournaments, but their fees be slightly less than the more accomplished player. Also, lessons should be offered at very minimum charges. When new clubs have their dates taken away for "local special games" they are not happy.
In order to increase the enrollment of ABA, somehow, we much treat the new players special. They feel that they are being taken for granted. We discussed this I am placing in writing at your request.
Thank you your favorable consideration of my suggestions.
Rationale:
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:
Committee Action: Lillian send note back to requester asking for clarification and rationale for the multiple request. Upon receipt of clarified documentation of recommendation/s, further action will be taken.

5. **Submitted by:** Eric Shelton
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman
Submission median: email
Recommendation: To upgrade the National website to have a "recommendations" tab. The tab is accessed via the "members only" feature. It will explain the recommendations process and list the committee by section with picture and contact information. It will have a "submit recommendation" form to fill out online. The form automatically populates the members personal info from the database via the member login feature. The member just types in recommendation and rational. The completed form is stored on-line in a database. The committee, officers, and any member can view this recommendations database to see the recommendations submitted. You must be a member to submit one. This will make the entire process paperless. Utilize available technology. Keep me from having to do all of this typing preparing reports, etc. Will demonstrate to our members our growth in using current technology.

Rationale:
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes: Committee unanimously feels that visibility to the membership**will** promote recommendations from the membership. It also directs members to the appropriate committee member representing their section.
Committee Action: Send to ABA board for consideration
ABA Board Action: The Board discussed this recommendation. It was retracted by the submitter who is a member of the board. (the ABA has higher priorities at this time)

6. **Submitted by:** Dorothy Nance
Section Representative: Vera Giddings
Submission median: hard copy
Recommendation: It is very difficult to travel cross country at our age; I suggest that the National Tournaments be located in the central part of the country.
Rationale: It is very difficult to travel cross country at our age; the long traveling is too hard on the body.
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes: Committee agreed this was not feasible.
Committee Action: Committee Chairman will contact requester and explain rationale.

7. **Submitted by:** Dorothy Nance
Submitted to: Vera Giddings
Submission median: hard copy
Recommendation: The second chance KO should be eliminated if there are not enough people to fill the table count in the flight.
Rationale: It is unfair to the members who are in a lower classification to be playing against members in a higher flight. If flights are combined the members should have an option to play or not play and refund money.
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes: The committee agrees this recommendation warrants consideration. When flight A and flight B do not have 16 teams, sometimes the second chance fields merge flight A & B losers. A flight B team losing in Flight B and then having to play a flight A team in the 2nd chance is not fair. The team should have the option for a refund.
Committee Action: Committee refers recommendation to the NTA.
NTC Committee Action: The NTC committee agreed with the logic of this recommendation and has made the following changes: A second chance KO has been eliminated from the Spring National Schedule (not enough participation). In a Summer National 2nd chance KO, no opponent will face a team in the 2nd change from a higher classification. (formal committee documentation forthcoming)

8. **Submitted by:** Gwendolyn Harris Middlebrooks, PhD.
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman
Submission median: email
Recommendation: The boundaries of each Section in the American Bridge Association, Inc. be specified in the ABA Bylaws. See the ABA Constitution Article X – Meetings; Section I- Sections
Consistent with The Constitution of the American Bridge Association, Inc: Article III-Membership Section I-Individual Membership – Membership in the Association shall be open to **all persons of good character and repute** without regard to race, sex, creed, or national origin.

Section II- Group Membership – The Association will **grant affiliation to those groups which are composed of persons described above**, who organize themselves and exercise the rights and obligations set forth in the Bylaws.
Rationale:
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:
Committee Action: Refer to National Constitution/By Laws committee
Constitution & By Laws Committee Action: Committee determined that the issue was addressed in other areas. Submitter withdrew recommendation. (submitter on committee)

9. **Submitted by:** Gwendolyn Harris Middlebrooks, PhD.
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman
Submission median: email
Recommendation: Criteria for eligibility to serve in ABA leadership positions at all levels of the ABA be specified in the ABA Bylaws.
Rationale:
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:
Committee Action: Refer to National Constitution/By Laws committee
Constitution & By Laws Committee Action: Committee determined that the issue was addressed in other areas. Submitter withdrew recommendation. (Submitter on committee)

10. **Submitted by:** Gwendolyn Harris Middlebrooks, PhD.
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman
Submission median: email
Recommendation: Members of the American Bridge Association, Inc (ABA) interested in serving in ABA leadership positions at all organizational levels (National, Section, Unit, and Club) be required to complete and submit a national criminal background check to qualify for eligibility (included as one criterion).
Rationale:
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:
Committee Action: Refer to National Constitution/By Laws committee
Constitution & By Laws Committee Action: Committee determined that the issue was addressed in other areas. Submitter withdrew recommendation. (Submitter on committee)

11. **Submitted by:** Gwendolyn Harris Middlebrooks, PhD.
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman
Submission median: email
Saturday, April 30, 2016Recommendation: The functions of The Appeals and Ethics Committee of the American Bridge Association, Inc. be expanded beyond the application and/or interpretation of duplicate laws, according to the ABA Code of Disciplinary Conduct to include:
    i. Receiving all complaints regarding behaviors of ABA members and ABA members in ABA leadership positions in legal and/or ethical matters not related to duplicate bridge, but negatively reflect on, or have the potential to negatively reflect on the image and/or reputation of the ABA (bring ill repute).

    ii. Recommending appropriate actions regarding behaviors of ABA members and ABA members in ABA leadership positions in legal and/or ethical matters not re-

lated to duplicate bridge, but negatively reflect on, or have the potential to negatively reflect on the image and/or reputation of the ABA (bring ill repute).

Rationale:
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:
Committee Action: Refer to National Constitution/By Laws committee
Constitution & By Laws Committee Action: Committee determined that the issue was addressed in other areas. Submitter withdrew recommendation. (Submitter on committee)

12. **Submitted by:** Mr. Worth Christler
Section representative: Lillian Holeman
Submission median: email & HC
Recommendation: Proposal for paperless ABA
Rationale: For many years, the Association has accumulated an enormous number paper files which have been manually processed before entering data into the System. With the invent of new technology, the time has come for the Association to take a look at how we can improve our operations and make the Association more efficient in achieving our goals and better service to the membership.
Moreover, we have all the tools available to us to make the change to a paperless organization.
These tools involve the following:

1. ABA Software – ABAtss
2. Internet Service – E-mail
3. ACBLscore

How would this operation work?
1, All sanctioned events should be processed using ABAtss.
2. After processing an event through ABAtss, a single file is sent to the National Office and uploaded into the system and master points are awarded automatically to all winners..
3.Sanctions which are generated by the Vice-Presidents would be e-mailed to the sponsoring group. The director would e-mail the Tss file and the sanction to the National Office.
4. To complete the process, the National Office can set a method of payment so that sponsoring groups can pay online with a credit card or another proven method of payment.
5. We can **continue training** for ABAss and other computer skills needed by directors and Vice-Presidents that may need additional training.
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes: There are actually 5 recommendations in 1. Many are already in place to some degree. Others topics above have been discussed on board or committees with pending plans.
Committee Action: Refer to ABA Board for review and consideration
ABA Board Action: The Board focused this multi-facet on TSS. The board reiterated a prior decision that all sanctioned games must be submitted by TSS or not be processed. The ABA National Office will only process sanctioned games via TSS. Each Sectional VP is responsible for having sanctioned games from their section submitted via TSS.8/10/16

13. **Submitted by**: Iona Walker- ispearwalker@gmail.com
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman - lholeman8@bellsouth.net
Submission median: email
Recommendation: The souvenir packet for all players attending tournaments should include a copy of the Zero Tolerance policy.

Rationale: Players that you meet and play against are so rude to new players and some new players have given up going to tournaments because of the way they are treated by seasoned players. If this policy is implemented and enforced, the membership will increase and there will not be such hurt feelings. The ABA name should be appreciated as an organization that is not only talented, but caring.
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:All players do not get a souvenir package. All players, not just new players need to be reminded about our policy.
Committee Action:positive recommendation, forwarded to NTA (Andrew Echols) Lillian will call Iona to discuss Committee actions.

14. **Submitted by**: Iona Walker- ispearwalker@gmail.com
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman - lholeman8@bellsouth.net
Submission median: email
Recommendation: Include a section for new players in team games.
Rationale: Most large tournament do not have a section for new team players and we end up playing with more experienced players who don't want to play us and make that fact known when we sit down. We need to play our peers..
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:Nationals do have new player team games. Sectional and below are based on attendance.
Committee Action:Forward to NTC. Lillian will call Iona to discuss committee actions.

15. **Submitted by**: Iona Walker- ispearwalker@gmail.com
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman - lholeman8@bellsouth.net
Submission median: email
Recommendation: Reduce the cost of games for new players.
Rationale: It is very hard to play in team games against experienced players and have to lose so much money with no points to take home and no money either. This is a hardship on new players and discourages them from attending large tournaments. I come because my mentor encourages me to attend these tournaments.
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:The Pro/Am/Ham game is only $5, half the price of all other National event games.
Committee Action:Forward to NTC and NTA for consideration. Lillian will call Iona to discuss committee actions.

16. Submitted by: Gwendolyn Harris Middlebrooks, PhD. - ghmiddlebrooks@bellsouth.net
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman -- lholeman8@bellsouth.net
Submission median: email

2. **Recommendation:** **I recommend:** The words "President and" be deleted in the Constitution of the American Bridge Association, Inc. Article IV– Government; Section 1 Governance of the Association

CURRENT: ABA Constitution: Section 1 Governance of the Association

The government of the Association shall be vested in the members at the Business Meetings and in the President and Board of Directors or Executive Committee between Nationals.

RECOMMENDATION: Section 1 Governance of the Association

The government of the Association shall be vested in the members at the Business Meetings and in the Board of Directors or Executive Committee between Nationals.
Rationale:a. Thesentence as structured is redundant because the President is a member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee (as specified in the ABA Constitution); Article IV-Government; Section 2 -Composition of the Board of Directors (2.1 and 2.2)
b. The sentence (as written) is also often misunderstood and thought to mean that the President (alone) can govern the Association.
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:
Committee Action:Referred to National Constitution & Bylaws Committee for consideration.

17. **Submitted by:** Gwendolyn Harris Middlebrooks, PhD. - ghmiddlebrooks@bellsouth.net
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman -- lholeman8@bellsouth.net
Submission median: email
Recommendation: The addition of a statementto the ABA Bylaws indicating that the ABA Board has Fiscal Responsibility for the ABA (with duties specified where applicable).
CURRENT: ABA Bylaws:Chapter III- Board of Directors- Section2 - Authority
Financial Authority of the ABA, Inc. shall be vested in the National President, Secretary and the Treasurer.

RECOMMENDATION: ABA Bylaws: Chapter III- Board of Directors- Section2 - Authority-Fiscal

A. Fiscal
Fiscal Responsibility for the ABA, Inc. shall be vested in the ABA Board of Directors.
B. Financial
Financial Authority of the ABA, Inc. shall be vested in the National President, Secretary and the Treasurer.

Rationale: Specifying that "Fiscal Responsibility" is vested in the "Board" is routinely a "Safeguard" for any organization against fiscal disaster. Of course, this already exists as a governmental and/or organizational practice in the ABA, but it is not stated in hard copy in the ABA Constitution, nor Bylaws.
Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:
Committee Action: Referred to National Constitution & Bylaws Committee for consideration.

18. **Submitted by:** Gwendolyn Harris Middlebrooks, PhD. - ghmiddlebrooks@bellsouth.net
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman -- lholeman8@bellsouth.net
Submission median: email
Recommendation: Assessing a fee for all ABA games in which players earn points. This includes non-sanctioned and sanctioned duplicate bridge games (at all levels). Specifically, a fee should be paid to the ABA by each local club for each game submitted where players will earn City Points.
Rationale: We live in the 21st century and The American Bridge Association, Inc. needs additional and consistent sources of revenue to maintain stability and assure a stronger financial base for operating. The global increase in the "cost of living," (since 1932) negatively impacts the ability of the ABA to sustain itself without additional revenue sources. Obviously, consistent revenue will strengthen the infrastructure of the ABA and provide avenues for members and employees to benefit, now and in the future.

(1) The ABA has experienced a reduction in revenue because the membership is majority seniors (with transportation and/or health problems) that cause:

a. reduced participation in local games and tournaments.
b. diminished ABA membership and/or lack of active participation at all game levels.
c. closed local ABA clubs in many cities.

(2) The ABA has technology based bridge applications that require greater service and maintenance expenses to sustain the high performance levels (speed and accuracy), needed to respond appropriately to the demands of bridge players (bridge Mates, computers, printers,etc).

(3) Local clubs and units submit large numbers of bridge game reports that must be processed quarterly using manual labor and technology. A "labor intense process" involving 100's of transactions is used to generate City Points for members, and the input for each individual member must be done manually.

(4) Members who travel to tournaments pay "a large price" for the points they are awarded at tournaments. Members who play in local club games (and win) are awarded City Points at little personal and club expense, but those City Points must be processed at the expense of the ABA.

(5) The time has come for us to "think outside of the box," and try a different approach for solving a consistent ABA financial problem.

(6) A game fee for local games (where City Points are awarded) will reduce the need to increase annual individual membership dues and tournament fees. Example: We have approximately 180 ABA clubs that schedule one bridge game per week. If a minimum fee is assessed in the amount of $1.00 per local game (where City Points are awarded), this will generate at least $8,640.00 in revenue per fiscal year for the ABA). One dollar is a minimal fee and a "painless financial assessment," for the excellent services the ABA provides.

Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes: **The committee spent a lot of time discussion this recommendation.**
Although there is merit to the recommendation, the current National Office awarding points very late, or not at all has created a climate where charging additional monies is not recommended at this time. When the ABA awards points accurately and timely, should this be reviewed and addressed.
Committee Action: **Forward to ABA Board of Directors.**
ABA Board Action: **The Board discussed and rejected this recommendation. 8/10/16**

19. Submitted by: Gwendolyn Harris Middlebrooks, PhD. - ghmiddlebrooks@bellsouth.net
Section Representative: Lillian Holeman -- lholeman8@bellsouth.net
Submission median: email
Recommendation: **:** A Section Vice President (when newly elected) should be required to

participate in a session designed to give her/him an orientation to the ABA and the ABA Handbook. Specifically, she/he should be guided through a review of the ABA:

a. Constitution, Bylaws, goals, objectives, policies, and procedures
b. History and purpose
c. Organizational Structure

Rationale: An Orientation Session will improve each Section Vice President's:

a. Knowledge of the ABA.
b. Understanding of the importance of her/his leadership role and responsibilities in managing her/his Section, consistent with the image, purpose, and goals of the ABA (parent organization).
c. Ability to work collaboratively and productively within the organizational structure of the ABA.

Pros/Cons/Discussion/notes:The committee agrees this recommendation is excellent. A formal transition process would benefit all Sections and the ABA.
Committee Action: Forward to ABA Board of Directors for consideration.
ABA Board Action: The Board discussed and rejected this recommendation. 8/10/16

THERECOMMENDATION COMMITTEE'S NEXT STEPS:

- The committee will allow time for the notified committees to responds and take action on all submissions and will follow up to make sure recommendations are not "*lost in the shuffle*".
- The committee will keep submitters informed of recommendation status.
- The committee will publish in the bulletin any changes brought about from recommendations from the membership.

The Recommendations Committee would like to thank all submitters for taking the time to write up their recommendations. We all want to improve our beloved organization and this process will produce results.

Thank-you

signed
The Recommendations Committee