

Submitted by: Peter Marcus, District 25

Item 181-BG04: ACBL Tournament Directors

Board of Governors Motion Issue Sheet

- Subject Matter of Motion (insert a short phrase)

ACBL Tournament Directors, doing work for the ACBL in general and not for the specific tournament they are assigned to, cannot charge that time to the tournament sponsor, but must deduct it from the sessions charged to the tournament.

- Statement of Issue (one or two sentences)

Management of the ACBL Field Organization is, more and more, being decentralized from Horn Lake to individual tournament directors. Often, they are called upon to do ACBL work, e.g., conference calls, develop reports, assist directors at other tournaments, etc., while working specifically at a sectional or regional.

Yet, when this happens, the time they spend doing this non-tournament work is not deducted from the session fees owed by the tournament sponsor to the ACBL. So, in effect, an individual tournament is subsidizing ACBL staff work at the cost of its players.

- The motion itself:

Whenever an ACBL tournament director, independent of title or rank, is assigned as a tournament director to a specific tournament, but performs work that is not related to that tournament but to other tournaments or the ACBL itself, the ACBL will lessen the charge to the tournament sponsor according to the following schedule

0-15 minutes – no deduction

16-60 minutes, 1/3 of a session deduction, based on the charge rate for that director's rank

61-90 minutes, 1/2 of a session deduction

91-120 minutes, 2/3 of a session deduction

121-210 minutes – no charge for the session

Additional time away will repeat according to the same schedule, e.g., a director who spends 300 minutes (5 hours) doing work not specific to the tournament they were assigned to would charge that tournament sponsor 1.5 sessions less than their actual attendance at the tournament would create.

This deduction will only affect the session charge to the tournament sponsor to be paid to the ACBL. The individual director will still receive their full pay, since they are working, just not for the specific tournament to which they are assigned.

In fulfillment of this motion, the ACBL Codification will be modified as follows:

Chapter II, Business Management, Section A, Finance, Section 3, Management Functions

3.1.20 – Management shall ensure that all charges to tournament sponsors, including but not limited to directors’ fees, equipment charges, and supply fees, shall reflect the actual services and supplies provided to the sponsor and be used specifically for the benefit of the sponsor’s tournament.

- Material impacts (what the change causes and who it affects)

The change affects the ACBL, and ensures their charges are fair and appropriate and the tournament sponsors, who will now only pay for work actually done on their behalf. It may also lessen the impact on other directors at the tournament, if the ACBL is less willing to expect directors to stop working on an individual tournament, forcing the rest of the staff to “make up the slack.”

- Reasons why the Board of Governors should adopt the motion (Please attach a succinct summary on a separate sheet of paper)

See description below (starting page 3)

- Risk if the motion is not approved

ACBL directors will continue to do work that has no benefit to an individual tournament yet have the sponsor of that tournament pay for their time and services. This is clearly inappropriate and unfair, particularly to those tournaments that employ senior directors (National and Associate National Directors, Field Managers, and Mentors) who are most likely to be called away from their tournament directing functions to perform these other, ACBL tasks.

For the longest time, the vast majority of ACBL management functions relating to Field Organization/Tournament Department organizations were done at ACBL headquarters or by field directors when not assigned to a tournament. This included tournament staffing, schedule review, NABC preparation and many other ACBL functions not related to a specific tournament to which a director would be assigned.

Now, with almost no experience or knowledge of ACBL tournament functions remaining in Horn Lake, much of this work is done by field staff. Among the many ACBL functions that I have personally seen done at tournament are

- 1) Conference calls relating to many topics, such as management structure, NABC Oversight, staffing and review standards, special projects (e.g., Purple Pass), etc.
- 2) Review discussions between individual directors and Mentors or Field Managers
- 3) Training directors

Obviously, all of these are critical functions and totally appropriate. But, when done at a tournament site, the directors involved are charging the tournament sponsor a session fee that covers their time at the tournament yet are not contributing to that tournament the full time of their work assignment. Instead, they are diverting time from the tournament to these other issues.

In the worst case, I am aware of a tournament where a very senior director, who also had a management-level position in Field Operations, spent almost 50% of his/her time for several days at a regional doing work that was in no way related to that specific tournament. As such, other directors had to fill in for this time and take on more work. Yet, when asked how many sessions should be deducted from this individual's charges to the tournament sponsor, the individual involved expected the sponsor to pay for every session s/he attended at the tournament, even when s/he spent significant time working on non-tournament assignments.

While this is an egregious example, this kind of thing happens repeatedly. It has happened at three of the last four regionals I have DICed. When I wrote to Gary Blevins, Manager, Field Operations, about this issue, I received no reply.

Clearly, the ACBL expects its units and districts to pay for this work and has no intent of funding it on its own, but rather expects the work to be done on site at tournaments knowing that it is also collecting fees from sponsors for work done by directors that has nothing to do with the sponsor's tournament. There can be no justification for this situation and, since ACBL Management has demonstrated that it has no interest to even respond to this concern, let alone address it, it is necessary for the Board of Governors and Board of Directors to ensure that sponsors only pay for work done for the players at their tournaments.

Existing ACBL Policies and Conditions:

A careful reading of both ACBL Codification and ACBL Handbook found no reference to any rules that would cover this situation. In reality, this has little to do with ACBL rules and more to do with basic economics and business practices, i.e., you only pay for what you get. Tournament directing is, in essence, a consulting business, much like home healthcare workers, lawyers, accountants, information technology professionals, etc. A company, large or small, has employees of that company that it then "rents out" to others for professional functions at specified prices. The only significant difference for the ACBL is that, for tournament directing, the ACBL is a mostly monopolistic business, i.e., tournament sponsors are not, in general, free to get directing services from anyone other than the ACBL.

For bridge tournaments, the ACBL provides professional tournament directors to officiate at sponsor's tournaments and charges a set rate, based not on an hourly charge, but by "the session." Obviously, the presumption is that, for that "session," the director being charged for is doing work for the tournament.

Unfortunately, more and more, the ACBL is expecting its directors to divert their time and effort from the tournament they have been assigned to, and instead do other work for the ACBL. Yet, the ACBL has no process for, and has demonstrated no interest in addressing, this abusive

practice whereby tournament sponsors are paying ACBL directors to do work for the ACBL, not for their tournament.

Clearly, the ACBL has never felt the need to document explicitly that ACBL Management should not charge and collect fees from tournament sponsors for work that was not done in support of the sponsor's tournament. Sadly, current ACBL practices demonstrate that this is happening on a regular and repetitive basis, so it is now necessary to codify this requirement, that ACBL only charge a sponsor for work done for that sponsor.