

World Bridge Federation

Minutes of Laws Committee meeting in Sao Paulo on
Friday 4th September 2009.

Present: Ton Kooijman (Chairman)
Grattan Endicott (Secretary)
John Wignall (Drafting Committee Chairman)
Max Bavin
Joan Gerard
David Harris (leaving prior to item 7)
Al Levy
Jeanne van den Meiracker (leaving prior to item 6)
Jeffrey Polisner
Maurizio di Sacco

Guests: Georgia Heth
Adam Wildavsky
Howard Weinstein

Apologies: Jaime Ortiz-Patino (President Emeritus)
Bertrand Gignoux
William J. Schoder

1. The chairman welcomed all present to the first meeting of the committee in Sao Paulo 2009. He also referred to the sad absence of Bill Schoder who would be greatly missed. The committee expressed deep sympathy for Mr. Schoder in his painful physical condition and asked the Secretary to convey this to him, together with its hopes that he would soon respond to treatment.
2. The Chairman said that it is possible to make a change in the law if only with great reluctance. The Secretary observed that a more common practice had been to add footnotes.
3. The committee received from the Executive Council referral back of the rider entered in respect of Law 86D in the minutes of October 10th 2008. The Secretary was requested to arrange for it to be removed.
4. A request had been received from the ACBL for the committee to consider whether following a tempo breach and a call having a

logical alternative, it would be possible to regard the hesitation as part of the infraction. Mr. Wildavsky reported that the ACBL has now gone away from this thought and the question may be laid to rest. The committee noted as a future possibility deletion of 'in itself' from Law 73D1.

5. The committee observed that the ACBL publication of the current Laws includes in Law 12C1(e)(ii) the words "had the irregularity not occurred". This is a divergence from the 2007 Laws as promulgated by the World Bridge Federation ('WBF'). Mr. Polisner explained the basis of the ACBL's status vis-à-vis the WBF by which it is empowered to make such changes. Mr. Wildavsky remarked that the ACBL Laws Commission had not understood what the law meant in the absence of these words and that in the 1997 laws the interpretation was a possible one. The Secretary observed that while the layout of this law has altered, its English meaning is unchanged from that of the 1997 law. The matter was not considered to need further attention, the committee noting that the Directors present do not recall any occasion where it had made a difference.
6. The committee recorded that Law 23 (and any other where the circumstances apply) is applicable both in the auction and the play. The WBF eliminated chapters and sections in its promulgation of the 2007 Laws and if a publisher has set the Laws in chapters and sections this does not affect the application of such laws.
7. A previous minute of the committee (10th September 2008, re Law 20F1) had been questioned. The law states that in response to questions during the auction and play a player is entitled to be told about "calls actually made, relevant alternative calls not made, and relevant inferences from the choice of action where these are matters of partnership understanding". The minute had clarified that an 'alternative' call is not the same call with a different meaning. Thus if systemically after 4NT a response of 5D shows preferred minor the response here to Blackwood is not an available alternative call systemically and the player has no entitlement to information as to what it would mean. Mr. Weinstein was inclined to the opinion that since a player is entitled generally (Laws 40A1(b) and 40A2) to know the opposing partnership's understandings arising from the calls, plays and conditions of the current deal, when asking questions during the auction and play he should not be restricted by the terms of the specific Law 20F1. The Secretary was of the opposite opinion. The meeting engaged in a lengthy discussion and the Chairman decided that the subject should be continued when the committee reconvened.

8. At the Chairman's request the committee considered the status of information arising when a misexplanation is corrected. The Chief Director reminded the committee that the Director must be summoned. Mr. Endicott had asserted that when summoned the Director should apply Law 21. This states that the Director must judge whether a player's decision to make a call "could well have been influenced by the misinformation given". Mr. Wildavsky said that a player is entitled to know what they have been told - the committee agreed this information is authorized - and to know the opponents' system. He considered that the player in last position in the example (2H - 4H where 2H is explained as 'strong') should be allowed to double the final contract on the basis of his awareness of conflict between these if he receives the information that 2H was weak.

Much discussion ensued. Various examples were debated. The Chairman suggested that in Law 16A1(a) information derived from the legal calls and plays may be interpreted to include both the correct information given and the incorrect information. Under pressure of time the Chairman decided that the matter should be further discussed when the committee reconvenes.

9. Mr. Wignall submitted two questions on behalf of Zone 7:

(a) It was agreed that in no circumstances can the application of Law 69B2 lead to a weighted score. The law requires that "such trick" shall be transferred or not transferred as determined by the Director's ascertainment of facts.

(b) This concerned Law 26B. The committee agreed that the declarer may ban the lead of any one suit at the partner's first turn to play (etc.) and this does not distinguish between suits designated in the legal auction and other suits.

The meeting then concluded. It was agreed to reconvene at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, 8th September 2009.