

CONGRESS DIRECTOR COURSE  
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LESSON 3

We'll start this lesson with a summary written for a 1997 course for congress directors. Everything is still valid.

**QBA Course for Congress Directors 1997.**

**GENERAL:** Congress directors are required to be more deeply conversant with the Laws than are club directors, and must be able to cope with the more difficult areas such as unauthorised information, failure to alert etc. They must also be familiar with the QBA regulations, especially where they relate to red masterpoint congresses. Note that these regulations are the default regulations for QBA approved events unless the sponsoring organisation (SO) has exercised its options to vary them. They should also be equipped to manage events with multiple sections and multiple sessions.

Remember also that the congress Director is responsible for reporting results of red masterpoint congresses to the State Masterpoint Secretary. The QBA Regulations include guidelines for the details and format required for these results.

**PRINCIPLES:**

1. **Preparation:** You may have to assist the convenor with the planning, organisation and promotion of the event. Be aware of the QBA requirements for approved congresses. These are not bureaucratic red tape. They are designed to ensure that players know what type of event they are entering and the basic regulations, to minimise the possibility of player dissatisfaction, and to ensure that, whatever happens during a congress, there will be a regulation to refer to. So advise the convenor on what must appear on the entry form. Sort out also what help you will need during the event.

2. **Movements:** The first criterion should be the technical accuracy of the movement. However, this may need to be modified by various other factors: (a) the wishes of the SO (b) time constraints (c) amount of help available (d) the acceptability to players. The convenience of the TD or minimising his workload should **not** be a significant factor. Avoid any temptation to display your versatility by arranging complex movements. Players don't like them, and there is a large chance that they will go wrong. On this subject: it is good practice, even with simple Mitchell movements, to check after every move that the boards have moved to the correct table. Players have been known not to pass on the byestand boards, and have even passed on the boards they are due to play and proceed to re-play the boards they have just played!

Ideally movements should be complete. This is not always possible within the time constraints. Sometimes skip movements may have to be used in Mitchells, and barometer Howells may have to be shortened. It is highly desirable that all final sections should finish at the same time for presentations to proceed. Do not shorten movements in the higher sections of finals. If necessary, shorten movements in the lowest section(s).

Attention should be paid to seeding the field in qualifying, right down to last place as well as possible. In drawing up charts, if I am confident that there will be no skip or curtailed movements, I prefer to mix the players in each field. This saves pairs the embarrassment of seeing themselves seeded last. If you are seeding for a skip, leave the field in seeded order. This minimises the inequity of a skip movement. If using a curtailed movement e.g. 11 tables curtailed to 10 rounds, I prefer to offset the EW field so that EW1 starts at table 5 or 6. If you leave them in seeded order, you may get complaints that seed 1 NS did not meet seed 2 EW etc.

27 boards per session is about ideal, though you can manage 30 bds in Mitchell qualifying if you push players along. For barometer finals, 9 table (51 bds) or 7 table (52 bds) are ideal. 10 table (57 bds) or 8 table (60 bds) are too long. For barometer finals, work on about 8 bds per hour. You can manage a little faster with Mitchells.

Qld players have been somewhat indulged in contrast to their Southern counterparts. Pre-dealt boards with hand records and barometer pairs finals with virtually instant results are accepted as the norm (not necessarily so in other states).

**Preliminary announcements:** Again, check the QBA regulations about the standard preliminary announcements. Explain the movement, the qualification process, and any regulations re tiebreaks. Specify the systems permitted. Arrange with the convenor to organise an appeals committee of at least three, bearing in mind that it should include any members of the QBA Appeals Committee who are present.

**During play:** Carry your lawbook with you, and refer to it unless you are totally confident that you can rule from memory. If a player queries your ruling or even seems doubtful, find the Law and read it to the table. If you make decisions based on bridge judgment e.g. in unauthorised information situations, always inform the players of their right to appeal. If you are uncertain about the correctness of your judgment, you can even recommend that they appeal. Often when called to a table, you will find four players trying to talk at once. Ask who called you, and give them the floor first. Then hear the others. Dummy, unless the hand is finished, should take no part except to answer any questions of fact you may put to him.

In general, your priority is to make a ruling so that play can proceed. However, provided play can proceed, it is quite acceptable for you to withhold a decision and take time to consider the situation. Once your decision is made, convey it to both parties. Decisions by the appeals committee should be reported back to you for you to relay it to the parties concerned. Try to ensure that appeals forms are available, so that the appeal can be made in writing, and the decision and preferably reasons put in writing.

**Checking scores:** The Laws do not require the TD to check the accuracy of the scores, but in my view, especially with barometer scoring where nobody but the players and the scorer see the score, it is inviting trouble to fail to have some score checking mechanism. It is much easier (and less embarrassing) to change a score before entering it into the computer than to have the players find the error later and then have to rescore.

Recap sheets should always be available as far as possible so that players can exercise their right to check the scores. In a barometer movement where boards are flowing through the field, you will have to keep the recap sheets secure so that players may not see results of boards they are yet to play. But players should be allowed to check their own section's scores on request.

**Computer scoring programs:** The Director should be familiar with at least one computer scoring program. Scoring and score checking may be delegated, but the Director is responsible for the accuracy of the scoring.

**Australian Bridge Directors' Association:** All congress directors are required by QBA regulation to be members of this body. This is not based on some sort of trade union policy, but to ensure that directors are able to continue their ongoing education in directing matters through receipt of the *Directors' Bulletin* as a benefit of membership. The **1997 Laws** will be thoroughly covered in the current and forthcoming issues, so all directors are urged to join now if not already members.

To move on to another area – Swiss Teams events.

### **Running a Swiss Teams event.**

Probably the most popular type of event in Qld, and one of the easiest for congress directors. Computer programs have made running these events a bit of a breeze. But it is still wise for directors to be able to do a draw manually, and maintain records manually.

The principle is that, after a set first round draw, each team is now playing against the team with the progressive score closest to their own, with the proviso that you don't meet the same team twice. (There is a modification of this called the Danish Teams, where you may meet a team twice if they are nearest to you in the progressive score).

**Even and odd numbers.** It is very desirable to have an even number of teams – not only for the Director (an odd number makes much more work), but also for the players. Teams in the whist movement tend to resent being 'outside the mainstream', even if it's only for two matches. So I always stress to the convenor the desirability of an even number. However, occasions will arise when you need to cope with an odd number of teams, when there is a last minute withdrawal or an unexpected arrival. So always be prepared to cope with an odd number. Because the triangle play two half matches, and can't score up until the rest of the field have played two matches, it may be necessary to keep the number of rounds to an even number, say 6 x 9 board matches rather than 7 x 8 boards.

**Pre-dealt boards.** These days, Qld players would be aghast if they didn't get duplicated boards and hand records at a congress. ( I suspect that we may have led the world in this regard. In other states and overseas, boards are still often dealt at the table or at least duplicated by the players). I find that board sharing is very adequate if 4 tables share 8 bds. If you are playing a triangle, you desirably need an extra full set of boards to use in the triangle, and you also need some extra boards (dealt at the table) to start at the third table in the triangle.

It may be appropriate here to produce some material I published in *Directors' Bulletin* a few years ago. But let me apologise in advance for any formatting problems which may appear in your copy. Much of the material I am producing from the past was written in WordPerfect. I have copied this into Word 2000, and saved in Word 97 format so as to make it accessible to all. The major problems appear with tables and boxes, but I hope that this won't be so bad as to be unreadable.

### ***Swiss Teams:***

This is the most popular of all teams events with the average player. It can be legitimately run as a one day event of two sessions, though a one session teams event would be so short as to be meaningless.

Nowadays, these are almost always run by computer programs, but it is still important for directors to understand how to run such an event in the absence of a computer or computer failure.

The first round is pre-drawn. No universal method, but the most common is thus: for say 24 teams, 1 v 13, 2 v 14 3 v 15 etc. From then on, each team is drawn against the team closest to them in the current scores, with the proviso that you don't meet the same team twice. This means that the draw for the next round cannot be made until all scores are in for the current round. You can't afford to wait for persistently slow players, and it is wise to announce that, unless the last board has been started by a specified time, unplayed boards will be scrapped regardless of the results at the other table. (Some directors are doing the Swiss draw one round behind, to leave ample time for the draw. I find this approach very unsatisfactory).

To score manually, you need a score result card for each team, along these lines:

Team No.      1                                      Team Captain: SMITH

Round	Versus	IMPs	VPs	Total IMPs	Total VPs
1	13	24	23	24	23
2	3	5	18	29	41

and so on for all rounds.

IMPs and VPs columns are for the results of each match, and the Total IMPs & Total VPs columns for progressive totals.

As results come in, you update your totals, and put the cards in descending order of total VPs. When all results are in, find your matches, starting from the top. As play progresses and you get to the lower part of the field, you may find the last two teams have already played each other. In this case, you will have to start at the bottom and work a few places up.

How many rounds should you play? The minimum number, according to McKinnon:

No. Of Teams	Rounds
9 - 16	6
17 - 32	7
33 - 64	8
65 - 128	9

If you have too many rounds, you may not be able to find a valid draw. If this happens, you may have to re-match two of the lowest scoring teams. It is certainly possible to have too many rounds (i.e. to over-Swiss). You may not be able to get a valid draw, and you will find top teams, having played all contending teams, drawn to play a poor team. Don't exceed half the number of teams for your number of rounds.

## The Triangle in Teams Events

Neither directors nor players enjoy having an odd number of teams necessitating a triangular match with three teams as part of a larger teams event. But the occasion does arise and we need to be able to handle it. Most directors are familiar with the method, but for new directors I'll briefly cover the standard approach. One problem with this method is seating rights. The second part of this article describes a method which gets round this by having each pair play each other pair in each team.

**Standard movement:** There are two types of movement you may use, a whist or a Mitchell. In the whist movement, the players move up two tables, dropping off the boards they have just played at the intermediate table. Assume 8 board matches. To start, sit the teams at table 1 (Bds 1-4), table 2 (5-8) and table 3 (9-12). Boards are dealt, then the EWs make their first move: 1 to 3, 2 to 1, 3 to 2. After playing 4 boards, the EW move up 2 tables with boards up one table. The draw with boards will have been:

Rd 1: 1 v 2 (9-12)	2 v 3 (1-4)	3 v 1 (5-8)
Rd.2: 1 v 3 (5-8)	2 v 1 (9-12)	3 v 2 (1-4)

Note that teams do not play the boards they dealt - a desirable feature. After this move, players return to their home table and score up their two half matches. Boards are now removed, and a new set of 13-24 is used and the process is repeated.

**Mitchell:** Again, sit players at their home table for dealing. If you wish to avoid teams playing the boards they dealt, then pass the dealt boards down one table before the first move (3 to 2, 2 to 1, 1 to 3). EW players move up one table, play 4 boards, then EW move up one table with the boards moving down as in a Mitchell. The draw and boards:

Rd 1: 1 v 3 (5-8)	2 v 1 (9-12)	3 v 2 (1-4)	
Rd 2: 1 v 2 (9-12)	2 v 3 (1-4)	3 v 1 (5-8).	Now score up and repeat with new boards.

See comments below if using duplicated boards for all matches.

### Alternative method:

Assume 8 board matches.

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Boards 1-4	Boards 9-12	Boards 17-20
5-8	13-16	21-24

Each table has two sets of 4 boards. The boards stay at the same table, and one or other set is played in each of the four rounds. The draw for each round, and the boards played for a particular round are listed. Note that the first named pair in each draw sits NS. The

pairs in the draw are named by their original seating position, not necessarily their current one. To avoid confusion, you could name them differently e.g. team 1 NS as 1A and 1EW as 1B etc. At the end of 4 rounds, each team will have played 16 boards (2 matches) playing 4 boards against each other pair.

Round	TABLE 1 Boards	TABLE 2 Boards	TABLE 3 Boards
1	1NS v 2EW (1-4)	2NS v 3EW (9-12)	3NS v 1EW (17-20)
2	1NS v 2NS (5-8)	3NS v 2EW (9-12)	3EW v 1EW (21-24)
3	2NS v 1EW (1-4)	2EW v 3EW (13-16)	1NS v 3NS (21-24)
4	2EW v 1EW (5-8)	3NS v 2NS (13-16)	1NS v 3EW (17-20)

**The Boards:** If boards are dealt at the table, there is no problem. If the field are playing duplicated boards each of 8 matches, then boards 1-16 may be used from the duplicated boards (the rest of the field are playing these also in their two matches). However boards 17-24 will need to be dealt at the table, as the teams will be playing the duplicated 17-24 when they move out into the field for their next match.

**Organisation:** Of course, the teams in the triangle will not be teams 1, 2 and 3. I'd suggest that for movement purposes, number the tables 1-3 and teams take their temporary number from the table at which they are sitting (but make sure they don't hand in their results with those numbers!). Post a notice such as the above for the players to know where to go on each round, and take out insurance via a table card listing the rounds, the match and boards for each round. The board numbers will need to be modified for matches other than 8 boards. If you are playing with duplicated boards, then the boards for the next match will be 17-32, with a further 8 boards dealt at table 3.

Any questions or problems? Happy to publish questions and answers in the next lesson. Let me know if you find any of the material indecipherable.