

CONGRESS DIRECTOR COURSE

ONE

Let's start by looking at the requirements for accreditation as a QBA Congress Director:

1. Thorough understanding of all the laws, with particular reference to the more 'difficult' areas such as misinformation and misunderstanding, alerting regulations. The standard required will be higher than that for club directors.
2. Must show the ability to organise a large pairs or teams movement; be able to run a barometer pairs movement and a round robin or swiss teams movement; understanding of across the field scoring.
3. Must be able to advise congress convenors on all tournament matters, such as tie breaking, promulgating of regulations, establishment of appeals committees, permitted systems, announcements before the event etc.
4. Must have a clear understanding of the roles of the Director and the Appeals Committee.
5. Must be familiar with the QBA general, systems and alerting regulations.
6. Must show expertise in breaking of ties, scoring of fouled boards, arrowswitched boards, unplayed boards, adjusted and split scores.
7. Must have an understanding of the Masterpoint Scheme and know the requirements for reporting results for masterpoint purposes. Must be aware that it is the Director's responsibility to ensure that the results are reported to the State Masterpoint Secretary.
8. Must have passed the QBA Congress director Accreditation Exam. Candidates for this exam must have had at least 12 months directing experience as accredited QBA Club Directors or demonstrate comparable accreditation and experience from other states.
9. Must undertake to observe any QBA requirements in relation to ongoing registration as a congress director. The QBA may require some evidence of ongoing self-education. The QBA will require membership of the Australian Bridge Directors' Association as a condition of registration.

PAPER 1 MOVEMENTS & SCORING

Must show the ability to organise a large pairs or teams movement:

The Director is responsible for the on-site technical management of the tournament. He has powers to remedy any omissions of the Tournament Organizer. Law 81B1

Prior to the Event:

Ideally, clubs should consult the director before the entry form is sent to the QBA Masterpoint Secretary for approval. Failing that, the director should be conversant with any undertakings made on the entry form - particularly systems permitted, format, division of field, special prizes.

Everything should be well prepared so that the director is not rushing around in the hour before the start.

Non-ABF Registered Players:

Congresses are intended for ABF Registered Players. The convenor should be the one to check why a player is not registered. Perhaps s/he is a bona fide visitor. Particularly during April, May and June players may have simply overlooked paying their annual levies. The policy is not to turn the occasional person away but the matter should be followed up.

In reality, it usually falls upon the director to bring any non-registered players to the attention of the State Masterpoint Secretary. She will report any habitual breaches to the QBA Manager.

Boards:

Local players are accustomed to 50-56 boards per day. A few more may be tolerated eg in a Mitchell Movement qualifying, however player dissatisfaction becomes very obvious if a day is too long.

For a 5 boards per round Swiss Pairs, 1 set per 3 tables is reasonable. Placing 2 sets within a group of 6 tables works well.

For an 8 board match, 1 set per 5 tables will do (1 per 4 is very comfortable). The longer the match, the fewer the sets needed.

Nothing slows down a day more than having players wait for boards. Extra boards are always a good policy, particularly if the venue is crowded.

No matter how reliable the board dealer, always check the first and last board (some say check the second last) of every box against the hand record. Check that every board in every box is in the correct order. Finding 14,16,15 for example, can be an indication that cards have been dealt into the wrong boards.

Stationery:

Clubs usually have stocks of Teams Pickup Slips. Check that they are in a format that suits the entry of data into your computer.

Swiss Pairs Pickup Slips may be downloaded from the QBA Website www.qldbridge.com/director/downloads.php Others are available from jpgss@uq.net.au

Pasting the slips is probably the easiest way of making them available for inspection - don't forget this is a requirement under the QBA Regulations. (Section H Page1) Some form of scrap paper needs to be on hand for this *and glue* and a tumbler to hold the glue sticks (nozzle end up) to lessen the number of gluey blobs.

Time per Board:

A turnaround of 35 minutes for a 5 board Swiss Pairs should be attainable. 60 minutes for an 8 board match is not unreasonable. (A time of 7 minutes per board is set for QBA Championship events.)

Be firm about the amount of time available for each set or match. Announce how long players have to commence their last board. Be consistent. Be prepared to remove boards. The day will drag on if slow players are allowed to dictate.

Don't allow extra time just because it is the lunch break or the last match of the day.

Format:

If no information to the contrary is on the entry form it will be assumed by everyone that the format will be standard as per Section E.

Start on Time:

Even a minute or two late is noticed. Announce when the next session is to start.

Seeding:

Seeding and field strength are important when qualifying pairs into finals from different fields. A strong pair in a weak field has an advantage over a strong player in a strong field when qualifying per section etc. Seeding does not change during a qualifying event. If there are to be two sessions of qualifying, then the seating of players for session two should not be based on their position after session one.

First Round for a Swiss Draw:

Mathematicians tell us that it doesn't matter who plays whom in the first round. However, perceptions are important for player happiness. While Top Half against Bottom Half, in whatever shape or form,

has its detractors, random draws are also often seen as unpopular particularly when they produce something like 1 v 64 and 2 v 3 for the first round.

How Many Rounds in a Swiss Movement:

Note that the figures in the QBA Course Notes are *minimum* numbers. Events don't suddenly become overswished when these figures are exceeded. They may be considered underswished if fewer rounds are played.

Deciding when an event will become overswished is an imprecise science. It is best to aim at a number of rounds below half the number of contestants.

Half Tables in Swiss Pairs:

In practice, convenors are strongly urged to have a standby pair. Stand by pairs are precious, but need to understand that they must be available right up to the scheduled starting time.

Know how your scoring programme handles half tables.

Qualifying Rounds in Pairs Events:

Don't be afraid to use a combination of Mitchell and Howell Movements if numbers are awkward.

Be aware that your scoring programme may not be able to handle a combination of Mitchell and Howell and that additions and factoring may need to be done in Excel or by hand. This is becoming less of a problem as programmes improve.

Accurate seeding is necessary. Strong pairs in weak fields have an advantage.

Half Tables in Pairs Qualifying:

Be careful. If you are qualifying some number of pairs per section after two sessions then you simply can't swap half tables around willy nilly for the second session. A half pair that changes field belongs to neither. (This is a major error by exam candidates.) Pairs that are being compared against each other in the first session for a place in the finals must continue to be compared against each other in the second session.

Don't overlook the use of NS Rovers, 1½ Appendix Movements etc.

It is not unheard of to have two pairs sitting out in a qualifying session. To be avoided, of course, but fairness of the qualifying event must take priority.

Be able to run a barometer pairs movement:

Pickup slips may need to be generated by hand though many of the newer programmes produce them at the push of a button. Movements are readily available - Ian McKinnon's "Bridge Directing Complete" is an excellent source and also the QBA Webpage.

Give thought to the stationary pair. It often involves a less robust player or may need to be a particular strength pair depending on the movement. If there are no other constraints consider using a middle seeded pair.

If running several sections in the one room with boards moving across, consider which way they are to go. Will the "Championship" be able to see boards they are yet to play as they move towards the door, the amenities or towards refreshments? With sufficient boards, perhaps "Championship" and "Plate" can share, to increase security.

It is usual to move boards so that all sections play them in ascending order. Should sections be playing a different number of boards per round then a relay area is needed so sets can be reshaped.

And a round robin or swiss teams movement:

Odd Tables in Swiss Teams:

Again, a standby team is usual, but always be prepared for a triangle. Be able to produce a distinct set of boards for a triangle if necessary. Be aware that triangles need their own additional space in the room.

Know how your scoring programme handles triangles. Consider the best time to have the half match if one is necessary. Having it first works well, but may depend on how many matches before lunch. Half matches may be split over the lunch break – just make sure only morning session boards and triangle boards are used before lunch.

Be able to explain how a half match is scored. Double the imp difference then halve the VP's.

Rather than running 2 half matches per round in the triangle, consider running two whole matches per two rounds. Saves a lot of time but there are security problems. The triangle needs to be separated from main area players who may be roaming around.

Fresh stationery for the triangle is helpful. If using real boards 1-8 and 9-16, try to use boards 17-24 for example from the triangle set. Having the triangle set of boards in a different colour also lessens confusion.

Triangles are not difficult to run - have your three tables in a row and the comfortable way is EW up one table to start (assuming pre-dealt boards) then “boards back one table and EW up one table” after the first match is played, just like an ordinary Mitchell.

The biggest drawback is that players don't like triangles.

Again, directors differ as to what strength teams should play in the first triangle. If top half is drawn against bottom half then having an assortment in the triangle sounds reasonable. Another reason for having any half match first.

Understanding of across the field scoring:

ATF is particularly useful in qualifying pairs into finals from large fields. Results are matchpointed across all sections to produce a single NS winner and a single EW winner. A single overall winner may be found using an appropriate rate of arrowswitching. Players dislike arrowswitching, fail to understand it and often record scores wrongly.

Again, accurate seeding is necessary. Players playing against a weak section of the overall field have an advantage.

If needing to cater for a half table, moving a pair within the same overall NS or EW field is less of a problem if trying to avoid or reduce the number of sitouts.

Deciding which pair to move is not just a matter of “moving a bottom seed” because bottom seeds “don't matter”. Creating comparatively bottom heavy sections should be particularly avoided when using ATF scoring.

Workload:

The Director needs to be available to give proper attention to rulings and appeals. Be cautious about spreading yourself too thinly, even though the QBA Regulations only require a second director beyond 30 tables.

Help with caddying and/or scoring is essential for most Swiss Pairs and large Swiss Teams.

Directors don't do anybody any favours by being run ragged all day and perhaps doing some tasks poorly.

Your First Congress:

Support is available for your first congress. This may range from having someone more experienced to score for you to having an experienced player in the field keep and eye out for potential problems.

Practice Exercises:

How would you run a 14 table matchpointed pairs event over 3 sessions to find a single winner?

You are to run a qualifying event over two sessions followed by two sessions of finals. What do you do with 31 tables?

How many sets of boards do you request for 27 tables of Swiss Pairs playing 5 board rounds?

How many sets of boards do you request for 26 tables of Swiss Teams playing 8 board matches?

What is a symptom of an event that is overswished?