



Joan McPheat

Joan McPheat has made many significant contributions to bridge in Queensland since she first became involved with directing, administration and playing in the early 1980s. She and Reg Busch (QBA President 1973-1979, 1983-1986 and QBA Life Member) became a formidable directing duo, combining his expertise on regulations, movements, scoring and the Laws with her mainly self-taught computer-programming abilities. This was at a time when computer-bridge-scoring was in its infancy; Bridgemates did not exist; every sub-program required extensive error-discovery and on-the-job testing; and the hardware for data storage and printing was relatively primitive.

And so “Compscore” was born. Of particular importance was the user-friendliness of the software for directors unfamiliar with computers in general and this program in particular. Such matters as scoring errors, arrow-switched and fouled boards, tie-breaking and late adjustments after appeals all needed to be handled simply and efficiently by directors for whom time availability during an event was critical. Many, many years of time and individual effort by Joan (and Reg) went in to refining and adding to the Compscore menu which included:

- Club Mitchell, Howell and teams movements;
- Swiss pairs and teams;
- Multi-session events;
- Congress events;
- Butler scoring for the Queensland Teams’ Trials; and
- Master-pointing

to list just a few.

The Queensland-Wide Pairs has always been popular with most clubs participating with large entries. In the early days, the clubs would hold the event using travelling score cards which would be packaged and posted to Toowoomba into the waiting arms of Ivy Dahler and Enid Busch. They would then sticky-tape the travellers for each board into one continuous strip, each strip being long enough to start at the front steps, wind through the house and finish out in the back yard! Then the arduous task of walking up and down to manually score each board would begin. With Joan’s assistance, a new scoring module was created which allowed the traveller scores from each club to be entered into Compscore, scored, tallied and amalgamated into the final Qld-Wide results listing.

In the mid-1990’s and after a few years of use at club and congress level, Compscore became sufficiently sophisticated to be trialled at the daunting Gold Coast Congress. This was a daring step to take, as the number of entrants in the multi-level pairs events was far beyond anything attempted previously. To complicate matters further, the venue for the GCC at the time was the ANA Hotel – awkwardly taking up all of the 2nd and 4th floors. Joan gathered together a team of scorers who manually entered all of the scores as they were delivered on paper score sheets by volunteer runners. As the data entry for each qualifying section was completed, Joan would move from computer to computer, ready to download the information onto disks. She then uploaded each disk on to her own computer where Compscore could then combine and compile the entire event into one huge set of results. This was a trail-blazing moment in Queensland bridge history and one that required all of Joan’s undoubted courage and tenacity to bring to fruition. All it would have taken would have been

one tiny failure of the system at any point to bring the whole congress grinding to a calamitous halt - collapsing like a house of cards - and the responsibility for its success or its failure was Joan's alone. History should record this triumphant occasion.

Joan became the QBA State Master-point Secretary in 1990, a role she maintained for a remarkable 25 years. The QBA has always been fortunate to have such competent people in this important position (Reg Busch, Ivy Dahler, Joan McPheat and Peter Busch) each of whom has, without fail, regularly reported to the QBA Council with the words "All masterpointing is completed and up-to-date".

Despite the latest developments in technology, Joan's legacy continues throughout Queensland to this day and it is timely for this to be recognised by awarding her Life Membership.

Richard Ward
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