

QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTED DURING 2003 PLAYOFFS

Question 1:

What do you think of the structure for this year's playoffs event?

Answers (in alphabetical order)

Dave Beauchamp: "Not keen. Don't like opportunities for dumping by teams with present structure."

Sheila Bird: Not impressed. Structure lends itself to manipulation (or perceptions).

Seamus Browne: Any format where it is not in your interest to win a match is not a good format.

Ted Chadwick: Too prone to 'dumping', e.g., it would have been advantageous for Fordham to 'chuck' their quarter-final match against us to improve their opponents in the semi-final and keep a good team out!!

Nola Church: Day 2 is disappointing when the 2 top teams play each other and one is knocked out.

Sue Coleman: Pathetic

Karen Creet: Format open to abuse and creates opportunity for less than optimum result. Should have been longer matches. Changes to format should include consultation with players.

Valerie Cummings: Impossible. To run an event which encourages teams to lose matches to benefit them in the draw, and which requires tired players to continue for very little reward, is not satisfactory.

Kieran Dyke: Carry-forward method abysmal. We meet a semi-random team in the 2nd and 3rd rounds [stages] of the event and our carry-forward is dependent on our results against the team we play rather than overall results. We finished first on the first round [stage], didn't drop a set in our quarter-final and play a team which lost its quarter-final and go into the semi-final with a negative carry-forward. Obviously we should have conceded our Q/F from 60 Imps up, or contrived to lose the match so as to play a different team and enjoyed a positive carry-forward against a different opponent.

Obviously any format which can provide incentives to lose matches is both inept and evil. Equally regulations which expect players to try to win each board at the expense of trying to win the event are appalling.

Candice Feitelson: I hated it!

Peter Fordham: Poor (most kind euphemism I can think of)

1. 6 teams is too many, Four is plenty.

Peter Gill: Appalling. A team could lose five matches, run fourth next day, lose by 100 Imps, then beat Team 1 by 1 Imp over 48 boards, then lose by 100 Imps but still represent Oz at the PABF. That's ridiculous.

1. In the Open, the 3 teams with heaps of PQPs dominates Stages 1 and 2. This suggests strongly that 4 teams is more than enough. The others are simply not competitive and it does them little good to be bashed up by the players who are worthy of overseas representation. Similarly in the Women's, Teams 5 and 6 were not competitive for the first two days.

2. It should be winner-take-all. To send anything but our best team to the PABF is like the ABF saying, "We haven't won the PABF Open for 30 years; let's try to maintain that record."

Joe Haffer: Danger of manipulation too great! Needs a format where losing cannot be beneficial to a team. I appreciate that you try new things.

Sartaj Hans: The format was on the right track because a good event should be a knockout. The irrelevance of a match was a big negative.

Elizabeth Havas: Shocking.

Julia Hoffman: All potential weaknesses were exposed. Quite unsuitable.

Avi Kanetkar: See no point in the Thursday 16-board session.

Matthew McManus: It wasn't very good.

Zol Nagy: Farcical. Can't have a scenario where losing matches leads to such demonstrable benefits. Day 1 was so meaningless that it was easy to lose focus.

Bruce Neill: Negative: The fact that losers can continue is terrible. It can create real evil or suspicions it is impossible to disprove.

Positive: Day one with little at stake is good. It gives time to warm up.

The playoff for 3rd/4th is ridiculous. It's unrealistic to expect a team that has just lost an important match to back up and play well in a meaningless match. The Tournament Committee should forget the idea. If they insist, it shouldn't be scheduled the same day as the semifinal, and they should allow forfeits.

Peter Reynolds: There are too many problems with losing teams having options to continue. 1st should always get choices.

Bobby Richman: Early bits serious waste of time, blended with some possibilities for manipulation

Merrilee Robb: Not appropriate.

John Roberts: Not good, although selecting two teams is a good idea. No hanging around for losers.

Jessel Rothfield: Far too complicated. Some contradictions. Encourages losing a match.

Marcia Scudder: Lousy.

Barbara Travis: Farcical. Never heard so many teams talking about chucking matches.

Therese Tully: Open to abuse.

Anonymous contributions:

Dislike the current structure. 1, 2 or 3 can manipulate their match to ensure that a particular team is in (or out).

Not much. It would be better with only four teams so we could play longer matches in the semi-final and final.

At least it was a chance for pairs to warm up.

So stupid it isn't funny.

Not the best.

Terrible.

Round-robin too short. Either double or longer matches. Winner of round-robin has too many advantages.

Not good. Encourages chucking.

Not good

(From Ross Folkard, non-competitor: Terrible) Summary: Against: 36. For: 3 mildly positive comments.

Question 2:

Would you prefer a structure along these lines:

1. Double Round Robin
2. 1st and 2nd go to semi-finals
3. 3 to 6 play off for other semi-final berths

Dave Beauchamp: In Bowl and Olympiad you play teams of different standards --- have to win well against weak teams, so a double round robin preferable. If wish to continue this format, suggest 5 teams, double round robin, Team 1 pre-qualifies for semis, other 4 play-off in round-robin for 3 spots.

Sheila Bird: Yes but there may be other options

Seamus Browne: Yes

Ted Chadwick: We are qualifying for Bermuda Bowl (Olympiad next year) where we play 20-board VP matches, so please, please, let us qualify by playing 20-board matches. Athletes qualify for 100 metres by running 100 metres.

Nola Church: Double Round Robin, yes, but 1st and 2nd to finals. Others play some sort of Swiss.

Sue Coleman: Double round-robin or triple round-robin

Karen Creet: Yes, anything better! Other structures should be considered.

Valerie Cummings: Double round-robin

Kieran Dyke: Sure. Unlikely to be much worse than what we have.

Candice Feitelson: Double Round Robin

Peter Fordham: Soem preliminary matches (1/2/3 round robins) then final only. If picking two teams, the current format does not necessarily pick the second-best team. Must have some mechanism for that, such as after four teams have been chosen for semi-finals A: 1 vs 2 (winner to final), B : 3 vs 4 (loser out), Winner of B plays loser of A for 2nd final spot.

Peter Gill: Not much better. It's still fairly bad.

1. A possible format is: 4 teams in Playoff. Team with most PQPs selects its opponent for semif-inal. 2 x 128-board semi-finals, 128 board grand final and shorter playoff for third. Winner-take-all.
2. If you must have 6 teams then how about 5 x 28-board round-robin, 112 board GF between top 2 and playoffs for 3/4 and 5/6 for PQPs.
3. Personally I think teams of 4 should definitely be allowed to take part and teams of 5 maybe, too. As well as saving travel costs, this icnreases the chances of Australia ending up with a strong team In 1979 the Borins were added to the team and we came 3rd in the Bowl. In 1989 Marston-Burgess were added to the team and we came 3rd [actually 4th - rdk] in the Bowl after a foursome won the playoff. Augmenting and doing well overseas seem to go together.

Joe Haffer: Double round-robin with playoffs for 1st / 3rd / 5th. Preferably 20-board matches. More emphasis on round-robin because that is the format that Australia plays internationally. We never get to the knockout stage.

Sartaj Hans: Good idea. Two 128-board matches. Or am I dreaming? Only one team should represent Australia.

Elizabeth Havas: Yes.

Julia Hoffman: Yes (minimum 16-board i.e., 32 vs each team in round robin). Or 1st and 2nd go to finals and suggest play round-robin or Swiss to rank for PQPs.

Dorothy Jesner: Double round-robin

Avi Kanetkar: Should be 20-board double round-robin with top two teams fighting for the top spot.

Matthew McManus: I think only four teams should play in the event.

If only one team is to represent:

Day 1 3 x 20-board round-robin

Day 2 64-board semis; 1st chooses from 3 and 4.

Day 3 / 4 : 112 board final.

If two teams are to represent:

Day 1: Highest PQP team vs lowest PQP team; 2 vs 3; 64-board matches

Day 2: 64 boards (A) 2 winners play; winner to final

(B) 2 losers play; loser eliminated

Day 3: 48 boards (C) loser of (A) plays winner of (B)

Days 3 / 4: Winner (A) vs winner (C) 16 and 64 boards.

Zol Nagy: Double round-robin

Bruce Neill: Worth consideration

Peter Reynolds: 20-board double round-robin with final

Bob Richman: Improvement

Merrilee Robb: Double round-robin but would prefer Butler event

John Roberts: Double round-robin to select 4, 5 and 6 out. Longer semi-final and final.

Jessel Rothfield: Yes.

Marcia Scudder: Certainly better.

Barbara Travis: 1. 4 teams : 128-board semi ; 128-board final

2. Double round-robin

Therese Tully: (She circled #2 with no other comment. Don't know what that means. rdk)

Anonymous:

Much better.

Yes.

Double round-robin with final.

Double round-robin, 1st and 2nd to final

Better is Double R.R. and then two leaders play off.

4 teams: 1 v 4, 2 v 3. Winners to playoff, i.e. two long matches. Have already played umpteen matches to get to play-off.

(Ross Folkard: Yes.)

Ron Klinger: All those suggesting the double round-robin format in its simplest form ignore the potential for a clear-cut leader to throw a match in the last or 2nd last round to eliminate a threat or allow a weak team to reach the final. The format this year had the worst scenario with so many opportunities to benefit by losing deliberately.

If you do have a double round-robin (good idea), 20-board matches seem popular, then follow Fordham's and McManus' rugby league suggestion: (A) 1 vs 2, winner to final; (B) 3 vs 4, loser out (meanwhile 5 vs 6 play for PQPs); then loser of (A) plays winner of (B) for other final spot, loser out and scores PQPs for 3rd place.

This type of method is essential if you are selecting two teams [the ROBERTS team were severely disadvantaged this year in losing the chance to be Australia's #2 team] and reduces the benefit of throwing a match in the latter stages of the round robin.

The chances for chucking can be further reduced by having the draw in the 2nd RR in reverse rank order so that #1 plays 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 according to rank after 1st RR.

Other comments were received on the questionnaire about venue and subsidies:

VENUE:

Sheila Bird: Venue too noisy (particularly teaching).

Kieran Dyke: The venue is barely adequate if it weren't continuously inhabited with frequently loud and occasionally grumpy duplicate players.

Peter Fordham: Location poor. Playing conditions (air-con) awful!

SUBSIDY:

Sheila Bird: All teams should get subsidy.

Nola Church: Also WA should get some sort of subsidy. They do not have the same opportunities for PQPs.

Elizabeth Havas, Barbara Travis: All teams should get REAL subsidy. Real subsidy. Check enough seat at airfare rate, e.g., bet 8 seat @ \$200 NOT AVAILABLE ex Adelaide. (So many from Sydney that big savings. We paid \$150 each. [Not sure whether this last sentence means what they pair or what they received. rdk]

Julia Hoffman: Full airfare for WA / NT. Possibly partial airfare for SA, QLD, TAS. Nil for NSW, VIC, ACT