



Correspondence

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Email: ibpaeditor@sympatico.ca

John,

Concerning your comments in the March bulletin:

1. It is not true to say that, until 2006, the European Championship was a complete round robin. The 1952 event was held in two divisions with a semi-final and final. Nor is it true to say that the 1932 Championship contained only two teams – Austria, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Netherlands and Norway all took part.

2. As a retired taxation practitioner, I take the greatest exception to your description of the First Tier Tax Tribunal as “a tax tribunal acting out of pure bureaucratic self-interest”. The Tribunal is entirely independent of HM Revenue & Customs and makes its decisions in accordance with the law as it sees it: for what it is worth, I agree with the Tribunal’s analysis. It may be the case that tribunals in some of our former colonies act of bureaucratic self-interest but it is most certainly not the case in the Mother Country.

Richard Fleet, Berkhamsted, UK

Hi John,

The changes you suggest for a new Bermuda Bowl formula are okay, but for the Europeans, how to divide the two zones is indeed a problem - that is one issue. A second is that I cannot imagine not having a European Champion. If the WBF created two zones, in my opinion, a match for the title of European champion between the winners of both zones should be played.

Regards, Marek Wojcicki, Przemysl, Poland

To the editor,

The WBF made comments about Ian McKinnon’s article in the January 2014 issue of the IBPA Bulletin. WBF defends most of Ian’s critiques, but still there are some things that WBF obviously have not thought of.

1. The scale is published as numbers with two decimals. This is OK for humans but today’s computers store them mostly as binary coded numbers. Thus the published numbers cannot be exactly the same as the computer’s representation. (There are some programming languages that allow you to store numbers as integers, with an imaginary decimal point, that is, they are finally after all calculation divided by 10^n , to get the real numbers for presentation)

2. Paragraph 3 in WBF’s rebuttal states clearly the objectives: the sensitivity should be strictly positive

and the concavity strictly negative. This is the case for the continuous function that lies behind the calculations. For integer values of IMPs WBF calculated the corresponding VP’s and rounded them to two decimals. Then it was found the objectives were not met in many instances. They then wrote a program that adjusted the VP values up or down by 0.01 (perhaps even more) to achieve the objectives and keeping the starting point at 0.00 and endpoint at 20.00. Even by then, the criterion was not met in all instances as WBF tells. The published VP values can differ from the correct value by 0.015 or more. Still WBF vigorously advocates that two decimals are enough. Adding one more digit and telling it is a 16 bit integer will in fact lessen the storage need in computer systems.

What should be done?

My suggestion is to have all formulae as before, but before calculation and rounding, multiply them by 1000. Obviously then the objectives are met automatically without any corrections. The thus found values are integers and milliVP (abbreviated mVP as in normal engineering) and should be tabulated as such. There is no rounding in any computer system. Then when competition results are shown to the public, the values behind are still integers - and remain so - but are divided by 1000 and rounded to zero, one, or two decimals according to a setting of, e.g., checkboxes that can easily be changed. If two teams would have the same displayed value, then one decimal is automatically added to the display, thus showing the real difference.

Let us hope that WBF admit its mistake and makes necessary corrections.

Kaj Backus, Helsinki

Dear John,

Regarding Pula: As always the tournament (bridge week) in Pula will take place in September. And we’d like to have it entered into your calendar as in previous years. The details are:

International Bridge Festival
Sept. 6th-17th. Pula, Croatia
www.pulabridgefestival.com
Info and bookings: tihana@pilar.hr

Thanks, Jeff Easterson, Perpignan, France