

GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS REPORT, MAY 2009

for the District 14 website

GNTs WHAT WE DID re. WHAT TO DO

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May 29, 2009

A year ago I said that we should do something about the decline of interest in the GNTs and identified three key issues: **venue, waning interest, and winning team remuneration**. The District Board granted Minnesota a venue for the 2009 GNT District finals, I helped coordinate the planning for the District final, and was appointed as the District 14 GNT coordinator this spring after Bruce Burns resigned. It is with both pride and pleasure that this report is presented to the District.

My initial initial comments, for those of you with more than a passing interest in the GNTs, as the new GNT Coordinator after the District Finals in March can be found here: **GNTs Recap, Review, Resolve** http://moot.typepad.com/minnesota_bridge/2009/03/gnt-recap-and-beyond.html#more

Venue

Holding the GNT District Final in the Twin Cities proved to be a great success this year. The District Final Table Fees topped \$6,000. 33 eligible teams entered versus 10 last year, 108 tables in play versus 34, and the weekend produced a profit in excess of \$3,000 which meant >\$750/winning team just from this event, an amount which exceeded the entire payout from 2008.

Minnesota deserves a chance to show it can repeat or improve on this level of performance and interest for another year, but the question remains: how you balance the District's geographical diversity with the historical concentration of tournament-interested players coming from Minnesota?

One possibility might be online play at the District finals. Sharon Anderson will promote District 14 as a test case for online GNT final play. Preliminary discussions are underway and I am hopeful we can have the Championship flight include offsite teams and/or players from monitored locations. Pre-registration would be required so that the logistics of matches could be arranged ahead of time. BBO (Bridge Base Online) has already done this in the qualifying rounds of the National Collegiate Bridge Competition. All participants in the Championship flight would need to become familiar with online play procedures.

Interest

In an informal survey after the dimly attended 2008 District final I learned that Flight C players cannot be presumed to be "in the loop" and that District final attendance could be boosted with better communication.

The success of the District Finals was due in no small measure to diligence in publicizing the event via tournament flyers, and at local clubs & sectionals, on the web site and the Minnesota bridge blog, and the efforts of Tony Ames to both promote club qualifying play and in assisting interested players in team formation. This was particularly beneficial in flight C where team formation isn't a given. Many Flight B pairs lacked teammates as well. The winning Flight C team was put together by Tony. His efforts proved invaluable in boosting the size of the district final.

I raised a question a year ago that still begs an answer: how much interest would be generated in participating if the team payouts not only covered hotel and entry fees at the Nationals but additional monies that could cover airfare too!

Winning Team Remuneration

The \$1480 being distributed to winning teams this year approaches a 150% increase over 2008's payout of \$624. As the new District 14 GNT coordinator I am committed to reaching a goal this year of \$400/winning player which is a GNT profit of \$1600. I dream about \$2,000/team, but am worried about a "sophomore slump". It would be nice to be able to "win a trip" that isn't the right to pay for a trip to represent District 14. \$400/player probably won't cover airfare and 2 nights hotel let alone entry fees and District final expenses, but \$500/player might.

Notes and Observations

Last year I suggested that the current structure of relying on GNT qualifiers and a GNT final in Fort Dodge as the sole source of funds for distribution was failing and a failure. I hope this statement proves to be inaccurate on a continuing basis.

In the 07-08 cycle there were 343 tables in 49 club-qualifying games.

In the 08-09 cycle there were 564 tables in 78 club-qualifying games, a healthy increase. Here is a table identifying the last 2 years of club qualifiers and table counts by Unit:

Unit	2007-2008	2008-2009	comments
MN-103	0	13- 87 tables	dramatic
MN-178	7- 68 tables	24-203 tables	290 tables from 68 in MN; more than a quadruple
IA-163	25-130 tables	23-115 tables	-15
IA-216	4- 35 tables	5 - 61 tables	+26 75% increase
IA-235	2 - 10 tables	1 - 10 tables	
NE-184	5- 47 tables	5 - 42 tables	-5
NE-241	5- 50 tables	5 - 40 tables	-10
ND-104	1- 3 tables	2 - 6 tables	
SD-162	0	0	
total	49- 343 tables	78-564 tables	+221

Minnesota club qualifying revenue to the district was up over \$1100. 35 teams entered the District final which produced over \$3000 in profit, a dramatic performance improvement.

I believe we should still consider additional revenue sources and commit to finding a way to give each team \$2000 in the future. I wonder if a district-wide STAC might be held with profits used to defray travel costs of teams to the District finals. It does seem like a burden vis a vis gas and hotel expenses to make a long journey, and if we assisted teams who undertook the travel it might demonstrate our dedication to the value of the grass-roots event. Some of the grasses' roots are sown far from the final's venue. Just an idea

The GNTMay2009 Board Report included a number of handouts with proposed actions. Much of the report was tabled to future board meetings. I annotated the agenda from the May 2009 board meeting on May 23 and renamed the agenda documents for ease of tracking in this web report:

THERE'S A LOT OF INFORMATION TO DIGEST.

NEW PROCEDURES, NEW CONTEST CONDITIONS, NEW PROPOSALS

OLD THORNY ISSUES LIKE VENUE AND DATE FOR DISCUSSION.

IF UNIT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NEXT BOARD MEETING COULD TAKE THE TIME TO REVIEW THESE DOCS.... IT WOULD SURE MAKE THINGS FLOW MORE EASILY IN OKOBOJI IN OCTOBER

Agenda Handouts +Annotations from the May 2009 GNT Board Report

Web

Doc.#	Handout File Name	Proposed Action	Board action
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|----|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 3. | <u>GNTMay2009financialfinal</u>
thanks to Steve Gaynor and Darlene Anderson on venue identification
only 1 Unit final in district in this cycle, 8 tables @6/table/ session:= \$96
Over ½ of the \$3,000 was due to the \$11 surcharge (\$1518), an amount which will be negatively impacted next year because Units 103 and 178 are going to hold a joint Unit Final with an incentive that if you are on a winning team at the Unit final your entry fees at the District final will be reimbursed for as long as you remain alive in the competition.
Changes to the conditions of contest, vis a vis the Flight B & C finals, will partially offset the impact of the loss of income from lower surcharge fees, but the revenue hit will be undeniable:
One team of unit final players contribute \$12 to district coffers: \$3 from each player instead of the \$11 x 4 = \$44 received had that team not been in unit final play.
Maintaining revenue neutrality in the face of lost surcharges may be a challenge in the 2009-2010 cycle. A small increase in table fees at District finals, which have been \$11/session for many years, seems inevitable at some point unless we continue to build on the number of tables in play in club qualifying games. | Distribution to Winning teams: \$1480; | <u>PASSED</u> |
| 4. | <u>GNTMay2009 Logistics</u>
I have put an appendix at the end of the new Conditions of Contest re. GNT logistics
look for a Liaison's handbook and communication lines established for each unit. | Unit GNT Liaison <u>proceed to identify Unit liaisons</u> | |
| 5. | <u>2009-2010 D14 GNT CoC.pdf</u> | Adoption after discussion; | UNDISCUSSED |
| 6. | <u>GNTMay2009CofCSubstantial Changes</u> Discussion
New Conditions of Contest
Incentivize play at Unit Finals emphasizing gold points.
A more gentle cut for finals play in Flts. B & C
Buy-in fee for A and Open players who did not play in a club-qualifier
Round robin format in superflight with 4 entrants | | |
| 7. | <u>GNTMay2009 Unit Final Proposal</u> Discussion, motion to accept or strike from CoC draft
Proposes an incentive for holding Unit Finals by creating a separate pool of funds | | |
| 8. | <u>GNTMay2009PolicyChangeProposal</u> Motion to Amend;
Cleans up existing language in District14 policies re. GNTs | | <u>TABLED to FALL MEETING</u> |
| 9. | <u>GNTMay2009future D14sched</u> Set GNT final dates 3 years in advance
<div style="text-align: center;"> 2010 May 15-16 in Twin Cities <u>PASSED</u>
 Hayward's move off the third weekend in May helps us in 2010
 A survey regarding Date & Venue for GNTs was conducted through the Gopher.
 Mother's Day is not an answer to the problem
 2011 April 30-May1
 2012 April 28-29
 Strategies to free up the first weekend in May for District GNT finals
 Split-Sectional solution Discussion, direction to Sharon to take to ACBL
 This idea, voted down at Las Vegas Board meeting could ease the squeeze in our Spring </div> | | |

Calendar

FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION 2010?

I am hoping that we can adopt the new Conditions of Contest (most of it anyway) and update the District 14 policies regarding GNTs at the Fall meeting. It would be really helpful if unit representatives to the District board could review the materials beforehand.

The proposal regarding Unit Finals and the segregated pot of funds as well as long term solutions to the date of future GNTs will probably need to be tabled until next Spring's meeting, simply due to time constraints. District Policies encourage setting dates 3 years in advance and this is a worthwhile effort. Doing so without stepping on the toes on other sectionals will be the challenge, but one I HOPE we can meet.

I will be sending an email to each Unit's president to identify a representative who can help promote the GNTs and work with me and the club managers to further the success of this tournament.