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Technology and the ACBL

When we play bridge at a club or tournament the scores are processed in an antiquated program called ACBLscore. Several years ago the ACBL tried to revise this program with not very good results. Two million dollars were spent on the project and the result after two years of work was not usable. ACBLscore is so old that it is impossible to find anyone to maintain it and we live in fear of it crashing and burning, so the time has come to completely revamp the way we score our games.

In addition, the ACBL has been operating with all membership data information on something called an AS400 instead of using modern "cloud" technology. Forgive my lack of technical expertise, but I am told this is also an outdated form of technology that should been changed a long time ago.

Last year, Jay Whipple wrote an article in the July issue of the ACBL Bulletin explaining what we are trying to do now to replace ACBLscore and bring modern technology to the ACBL. If you are interested in the details you can find the article in the ACBL Bulletin archives. This has not been an easy or inexpensive process, but I think I can finally say that our membership will soon be able to see some results of the efforts.

The biggest challenge was to create a separate masterpoint engine that would take the scoring results from scoring programs created outside of the ACBL and transfer the information to our membership data base. With this program almost completed, all scoring will be converted into USEBIO (Universal Standard for Exchange of Bridge Information) format so that it can be uploaded to the "cloud".

What you will see over the next year or two will be new scoring programs used at your local clubs. These are existing software programs created outside of the ACBL. ACBL is testing each of these programs to make sure it will do everything a club needs to do and also have the capability to transfer the game results to the new masterpoint engine.

Some of these programs that will supplement or replace ACBL score are:

EBU/JSS Score (English program)
Magic Contest (Swedish program)
Bridgescore+ (Nicholas Hammond program)
Bridgest (Italian scoring program)
BridgeTD

What we will see at tournaments in the near future:

KO and Swiss team results projection for NABC and most Regionals instead of the papers and displays we now see on the wall.

Electronic ticket purchase (both on-site and in advance) for NABCs and most Regionals. The ACBL has partnered with a company called "Purple Pass" that will manage the process of online entry purchases.

I am confident, under our new CEO, Bahar Gidwani, that we are moving in the right direction in technology and for the future of our game.