

REPORT TO COMMITTEE
CCBC NOVICE & RESTRICTED CONGRESS
27 & 28 August 2022

Following is my report on the above event.

Advertising & Promotion

- Brochures emailed out to all Clubs
- Special novice ½ page brochure emailed out to all clubs
- Special novice ½ page brochure (roughly 10 each) and 20 brochures mailed to selected regional clubs in our surrounding area (Newcastle & surrounds and northern Sydney & surrounds) at a cost of \$165
- Advertisement placed in Bridge Australia for two editions specifically targeting novices at a cost of \$400
- Editorial placed in Bridge Australia specifically targeting novices
- Free of Charge (FOC) entry to our congress given to three winners in a recent NSWBA Teams of Three event that they were running

Assessment of how effective some of the above marketing activities was achieved in the following manner:

- NSWBA website: Mandatory Question on the NSWBA website entry form: “How did you find out about the congress”
- Bridge Australia magazine: The opportunity to be in the draw for a bottle of wine was noted in the Bridge Australia ad if they quoted the ad in the mandatory question on the NSWBA website entry form (which no-one did).
- Question on the Feedback form: “How did you find out about the congress” – it appears that some regional clubs did put up our flyers & distribute brochures sent out, other regional clubs did not.

Recommendations:

1. As no-one mentioned that they'd heard about the event in the Bridge Australia magazine, I don't believe we should advertise again, at least in the foreseeable future. We will submit articles instead.
2. Perhaps for future events in the weeks leading up to our event, we can encourage some of our players to go to other clubs (in our area) for a game and take the opportunity to promote our upcoming event.

Entries

Pairs – 32 pairs of which 10 (33%) were CCBC members

Teams – 13 teams of which 4 (33%) were CCBC members

Approximately 22 CCBC members attended on either one or both days

Given the number of CCBC members who participate in the more competitive sessions (as opposed to the “social” sessions, ie Mon & Thurs pm sessions), 22 CCBC members isn't a bad turnout.

Pricing

The price of \$40 per person for both the Pairs and Teams was set. I did not believe there should be an increase in the price at this time because of the uncertainty of numbers (COVID and reluctance to play face-to-face), I did not want an increase in the price to be a barrier to entering. I have checked a number of regional congresses and \$40pp appears to be the norm. However, a gradual increase could be trialled.

As per what is usually charged for ABF events, and after discussion with John, I introduced a 50% discount for all ABF youth members under the age of 26. The rationale behind this is that it's important to encourage youth members, plus, travel to/from the Central Coast doesn't appear to be a barrier for youth members. To offset this, I propose reducing the prize money slightly in coming events. It is worth noting that CC Leagues Bridge Club are offering a 50% discount for players with under 100mp for some of their events.

For this congress there were only 2 players who took advantage of the youth reduction (there may have been others who were under 26 but we had no way of determining that). These 2 players asked at the check in, but unfortunately David wasn't aware of this discount, so I'm organising a refund for them and this has been reflected in the Budget/Actual spreadsheet.

Recommendations:

1. That the next event (Summer Teams) and future events be priced at \$45 per person with a reassessment in 6 months' time (with a view to a further increase).
2. That a 50% discount for players under 26 be continued.

Results & Prize Money

With a reduced number of tables and as per the information on our NSWBA website for the event, I reduced the prize money – each placegetter (along with the money) received a note in the prize money envelope explaining the reduction.

Restricted Pairs Budgeted 1st \$160, 2nd \$80 - **Actual** \$100, \$50

Novice Pairs Budgeted 1st \$160; 2nd \$80 - **Actual** \$100, \$50

Restricted Teams Budgeted 1st \$300; 2nd \$150 - **Actual** \$200, \$100

Novice Teams Budgeted 1st 300; 2nd \$150 - **Actual** \$200, \$100

The top Novice Pairs & Teams with under 50mp each player received a bottle of wine.

Total prize money paid out \$900

Pairs: Restricted

\$100 - 1st Maeve Doyle & Robyn Rogers (Sydney Bridge Centre & North Shore BC)

\$ 50 - 2nd Sam York & Sam Zilber (Randwick BC)

Pairs: Novice –

\$100 - 1st Kevin & Maureen Carson (CCBC)

\$ 50 - 2nd Christine MacNicol (Long Reef BC) & Dierdre Land (Peninsula BC)

Novices with under 50mp – Marlene Velecky & Chris Hamam (Sydney BC)

Teams: Restricted

\$200 - 1st Colin Speller, Jodie Gudaitis, Nerida Gillies, Sandy Carter

\$100 - 2nd Richard Carter, Jay Novak, Michael Hogan, Robbie Feyder

Teams: Novice

\$200 - 1st David Purkiss, Peter Cloughessy, Jan Lawson, Mark Mathews
\$100 - 2nd John Aldersley, Beryl Lowry, Marcelle Goslin, Denyse Stephens
Novices with under 50mp – Marlene Velecky, Chris Hamam, Kyna Foo, Stephanie Price (Sydney BC)

Recommendations:

1. Maintain the current practice of advertising prize monies, but with the proviso that amounts will be reduced if x number of tables not achieved.

Director

Ronnie Ng was very professional and efficient. We have usually contracted Matthew McManus or John McIlrath for CCBC Congresses, however, Matthew is moving to NZ and John has not been well (this may have changed). I have therefore asked Ronnie for his availability for the next few congresses we have planned.

Recommendation: I've booked Ronnie for 2023 congresses but I will speak with John to see who else is available as we shouldn't put all our eggs in Ronnie's basket just in case he decides to get a better paying job. He currently charges \$400+GST per day. We will need a director for the State event in November 2023.

Catering

This Congress was the first to be held as a face-to-face event since March 2020. Two weeks before the event, we had 13 tables for each day, it appeared unlikely that we would meet the budgeted goal of 24 tables per day.

There were two options, run the event as we had in the past, make a profit and hope for the best with future congresses, or take advantage of the lower numbers and use the event as a marketing/promotional exercise, going all out on two things we had some control over (1) our ability to run an efficient, well organised event and (2) lift the standard of catering.

The aim was to have participants walk away with the impression "wow, that was awesome" and trust that they would spread the word when they got back to their home club. I advised the President that, with the future in mind, we should treat this Congress not as a profit-making venture, but as a 'break-even' event and spend more on the catering than we have in the past. Mind you, I have not had access to past Congress actual expenses, so I have no idea what was "normal".

As this was the first F2F congress I was running, I intentionally kept the number of "helpers" in the kitchen on the low side, too many and there would be chaos. Jan was essential for the planning, purchasing and feedback on what we'd done in the past. She, along with Lee Mitchell and Margaret Brett helped out on the Saturday. Steph and Robyn Price helped out on the Saturday. Each person received 2 "free game vouchers", not enough in my opinion for the amount of effort they put in. I should not have had Jan there for the whole of Saturday, it was too much for her. Robyn Price doesn't have a robust constitution either, and whilst she was helpful, it was hard on her.

Budget: Given the fact that I haven't had access to the actual cost of catering for past congresses, I virtually picked a number out of the air \$1,000 (\$5pp based on 24 tables + 4 helpers each day). This was for lunch, morning/afternoon tea (all day grazing) and nibbles and wine, which was grossly under-budgeted. The actual amount turned out to be (rounded up) \$8.45pp, however, we

purchased more than double the number of cakes we needed which will be held in a freezer for the next congress. If you deducted the amount for the excess cakes, the actual cost of catering per person was \$7.45pp and with some minor adjustments, this should be approx. \$7.00pp for future budgeting.

Recommendations

1. That the committee put together a list of what catering costs were incurred in past events for comparison.
2. Based on the Feedback Form, savory snacks would be good during the day (rather than just cakes), I will add some vegetables and cheeses for the grazing table.
3. Based on the Feedback Form, having different menus on each day was a plus for most people – the amount of labour required on each day was about the same.
4. Source a larger number of volunteers for the 2 days, with shifts of around 3 hours starting at 7.30am and ending around 2pm, then 2 people at 4.30pm to help clean up.

Feedback

A feedback form was distributed to all players on both Saturday & Sunday. On Saturday, 33% of players filled out the form with the only negative feedback being “put the address on every email that’s sent out”, In the future will make sure that this happens. On Sunday, 20% of players filled out the form (mind you many had filled it out on the previous day). All comments were positive, some rating the congress 8/10 and 10/10; and one person even suggesting raising the price to \$50 or \$60 – that had to be David Purkiss’ form!

Emails were sent out to all players (or the person who registered on-line) thanking them for their attendance and also advising them of two of our upcoming congresses (specifically suitable for novices).

Overall

I will keep a record of players from both the pairs and teams and compare them with entries in our next event to determine the level of repeat entrants we achieve.

If you require further information, please don’t hesitate to email me ccbconvenor@gmail.com or marilyn_scott@bigpond.com

Regards
Marilyn Scott