

Marketing Report October 2016

A general status report for Tournament Chairs and Unit Coordinators was sent out in July (attached). With the introduction of the **Pianola** email marketing tool, our Units will be handling their own broadcast email marketing.

It is a relief for me to get out of the time-consuming process of preparing the email mailing lists. While a few Tournament Chairs (TC's) have succeeded at increasing their tournament attendance, too few of our Units have fully participated.

While **Pianola** will deliver the Tournament message to the players, the TC's will still need to craft a marketing plan. I am still available to assist in that planning process. The steps have been documented in previous communications to our TC's.

Hybrid Tournaments (NLM Regional with Sectional)

There are only four of these tournaments scheduled in 2016 – Jonesboro, AR, Bella Vista, Wichita and Phoenix. Other Districts have not added this type of tournament to their calendars. An ACBL DIC said that attendance increases by 25-40% when a Hybrid tournament is held in place of a Sectional.

OKC had a 7% increase, Bella Vista had a 40% increase and Wichita had a 70% * increase.

Our 299er players really flock to these tournaments. They are excited to play in them. They seek them out and put them on their travel schedule. It is very gratifying to see the energy and enthusiasm that the Hybrid tournaments generate.

Tulsa has opted to run a standalone NLM Regional. Districts have the right to run one such tournament a year.

Tournament Schedules – The event schedules for our tournaments are attracting increased scrutiny. Our TC's should be encouraged to seek advice in the process of designing their tournament schedules; including asking some of our successful TC's to review the schedules.

It is particularly distressing when players don't attend tournaments because the tournament does not offer the events that are desired. Our active player development programs have altered the mix of tournament attendees. We need to continue to skew the events to meet the needs of our NLM players. Table counts increase when we offer the tournament experience that our players want.

Post tournament analysis of the demographics, along with the **Fast Results Surveys**, will help in planning future tournaments. The Fast Results surveys can be used with Sectionals as well as Regionals.

The **Oklahoma City Regional** demonstrated a local commitment to improve the player experience. The support at the Partnership Desk and Hospitality was outstanding. Going forward, OKC needs to market their tournaments, refine their schedule and get an earlier start on tournament preparations. The opportunity to capitalize on the very nice improvements should be recognized.

Attendance continued its 5-year decline pattern (down 5%). My guess is that players have not yet recognized the improvements, but there may be other factors not easily identified. Adding a tournament survey could be a good idea.

The **Topeka Regional** had an increase in tables of 24% (from 390 to 483). Because of the decline in attendance in 2014, the 2016 results just returned this tournament to its' typical attendance level. The potential is there to see this tournament reach the 650-700 table level. Better organization at the local level and an earlier start to the planning process is necessary to achieve better attendance.

* Wichita held a 4-day Hybrid tournament in October 2016. The increase in table counts has been adjusted to compare with prior 3-day Sectionals held in Wichita.

Respectfully Submitted,

Len K. Fettig