

WPA-APD,

After the last event in Atlanta, there has been a bunch of players discussing ways to make our sport better. In fact, this discussion has been going for a number of years, but started gaining traction during the 2012 US Open. We feel that a lot of the changes made over the past few years, in addition to the vision that is clearly guiding our sport, are moving it in a direction that will be detrimental to its future and longevity.

You sent an email asking for feedback. We have compiled a list of items that we feel would improve our sport which we all love to play. Some of these items relate to general topics away from the tournament site, and some relate to the format, financial accounting, and administration of the tournaments as they are occurring. We are sorry to say that at this point, a majority of us will be unable to compete in any future events if certain changes are not made. These will be explained below.

Unfortunately, we had no choice but to single out certain individuals since they pertain directly to a few issues listed below. Our goal in this document is to present our feelings on these issues, show you how many players voted for each change, and to try and get everyone to come together and better both the WPA-APD and artistic pool as a whole.

Below are the changes that we have discussed. Please be assured that everyone who is listed below was a part of the discussion. We will never have one or two individuals making decisions for everyone. To an outsider's perspective, this is exactly how it appears when the WPA-APD makes decisions. Lastly, when these changes apply to an actual tournament, we are referring to ranking events only. Non-ranked events are irrelevant to this discussion. Additionally, we have included all proposed changes below, even the ones that the majority of us do not support. All voting results are identified, and the issues that were voted down by our group are identified as such and should be discarded. The reason for this is openness and honesty. We have nothing to hide, and we hope that you will move forward in the same manner.

There are 13 of us, so a result of 92% means 12 out of 13, and a result of 85% means 11 out of 13. These are the issues in which a large majority of us agree and want to see changes occur. Of the players included here, almost all of the players from ESPN are included, and all of the top ranked players. Please keep in mind that when fans come out to watch these events, these are the players that they recognize and want to see.

1. Topic: Player Quality

- a. Players need to qualify before they will be allowed to participate in ranked events. We have had numerous comments, including from the owner of Ozone Billiards, that the quality of play was poor. There were players missing 38 out of 40 shots. When you start adding in attempts, that drops their make percentage to below 1%. For a major (ranked) event, especially the World Championship, this is embarrassing. It reflects poorly on the players competing and on the tournament as a whole. A method of evaluating the players before allowing them to compete, whether it be an authorized judge watching them on a skype call or having a tiered qualifier series of tournaments, needs to be put in place.
 - i. **Voting Results: 100% are in favor of this change. Of the two options, 100% are in favor of having some kind of qualification process on skype to ensure players are up to the quality expected by the host location and audience. 54% are in favor of some kind of qualifier tournament, where the top finishers will advance to the main event.**
- b. Only quality players may participate in the show. In the past, the top players would shy away from performing during this 'media/fan' event (where there was almost never any media) for two reasons. First, there were players who were so attention hungry that they would fight to be next and rush off the next person. This happened in Atlanta while Dave Nangle was finishing up his performance, when a player stood up and said in a loud voice, 'Who's next? Can I be next?'. Dave was still in the middle of speaking when this happened. Second, inexperienced performers would get up and do the craziest things, resulting in miss after miss after miss. This happened in Atlanta when a player got up after Dave, set up the exact same shot as Florian, but performed it while sitting on the table (keep in mind that this was the tournament table), and all he did was miscue. Additionally, some acts were not even pool acts – they were carnival acts. The spectators came to watch a trick shot show. While these novelty act performers certainly have talent in their field, this is not the purpose of our events. There needs to be a minimum standard for performance.
 - i. **Voting Results: 92% of us are in favor of this.**
- c. Only quality players should be on the streaming table. Please remember that this is a competition, and competitions do not offer equal results to everyone, but instead need to only provide equal opportunity to succeed. At all sporting events, the top players are always featured more than others. Take a look at golf. They don't even start broadcasting the Sunday round until the lower players have already finished. In tennis, the top players are drawn into the stadium courts while the lesser known players are pushed to the outer and non-televised courts. If it is known that there will be a streaming table, the draw must be done so as to guarantee three experienced players will always be on that table. Flights need to be drawn so there are two top 10 players and one from the next

10. There should never be a new player, or a player who scores less than some minimum standard, on the streaming table.

i. **Voting Results: 92% in favor.**

2. Topic: Purse and Payout

a. Payout: A maximum of 33% of the field will be paid. This includes all money in the purse. Please remember that this is a competition. We are not here to split up money in a fair and balanced way. Tournaments reward the top finishers. Paying last place does nothing but to reduce the entry fee.

i. **Voting Results: 100% in favor**

b. Payout: Sponsors have no say in the allocation of their added money.

i. **Voting Results: 92% in favor**

c. Payout: International players will be paid in cash or a cashier's check. International players may pay their entry fee in cash at the event. However, if they send an intent to enter and then are a no-show, at all future events they will be required to send in their money in advance.

i. **Voting Results: 100% in favor**

d. Referees will not get paid. Our purses are small and are not large enough to pay referees. All players must plan to do one referee session during the event. Volunteers will be taken at the players meeting and if there aren't enough, players will be assigned, mainly from experienced players.

i. **Voting Results: 100% in favor**

e. The purse will support paying a Tournament Director, but he will get at most 10% of the added money, not to exceed \$1000. Please note that this cap includes the fee and expenses combined. We simply don't have enough money to support paying someone \$1000 plus expenses. If players from the WPA-APD or other volunteers want to work the director's table collectively, that money may be set aside and split among those who work. This is the preferred way of doing it since it will reduce the expenses.

i. **Voting Results: 100% in favor**

f. The purse will support giving player participation certificates, but it will not support anything else (frames for the certificates, participation plaques, trophies, etc). Trophies for the top 3 positions and discipline medals are all the purse will support. Unless donated, no other awards are to be purchased other than paper certificates which are cheap. We simply don't have enough money.

i. **Voting Results: 100% in favor**

3. Topic: Tournament Format

a. All ranked tournaments are to be played on 9-foot tables.

i. **Voting Results: 92% in favor. However, the general consensus is to limit only the World Championships to 9-foot tables. Other**

ranked events may be held on 7-foot or 8-foot tables since we want more events.

- b. Playoffs are to be reinstated. When they were removed after the 2012 US Open, almost everyone expressed their dissatisfaction with this decision. We do not understand why the WPA-APD would make such a decision without consulting the players, who obviously liked this change when it was added in 2005.
 - i. **Voting Results: 100% in favor. We kicked around three ideas. Going back to the old format with 40 shots followed by the book shot playoffs received 100% support. Holding a tournament with all book shot playoffs (in a round robin format) received 69% support. Moving to the UTS free style format received 31% support. Therefore, the consensus is to go back to the old format, where the top 12 after the 40 shots advance to single elimination playoffs.**
4. Topic: Shot Program
- a. The player board is to review all changes to the shot program before they go into effect. Please note that this is not to say that the WPA-APD can't make changes without permission. We are simply saying that we would like a chance to review these changes and identify any mistakes. In Atlanta, most of the changes were good. However, there were some obvious mistakes that could have been corrected prior to releasing the changes if only a small amount of testing was performed, or if certain veteran players had the chance to review them.
 - i. **Voting Results: 92% in favor**
5. Topic: Awards Ceremony
- a. Discipline medals are announced first. Position of finish are announced last. Unfortunately, we need to identify one individual here. Despite what Tom Rossman thinks, the sportsmanship award, while an honor, is not the most important award – The first place award is. It was totally unacceptable that there were additional awards presented after Gabi's first place award. That should always be last without exception.
 - i. **Voting Results: 92% in favor**
 - b. The awards ceremony is to start IMMEDIATELY after the final round finishes, without delay. During the final match, the staff working the director's desk should be calculating the discipline winners and the position of finish (including any ties). As the final match is going on, any additional calculations will be done as the match progresses. There was absolutely no reason why Tom Rossman needed 45 minutes to calculate the results when 24 of the players' scores were already fixed. Almost the entire audience leaves and no one is left for the awards except the players and their guests. The same thing happened in Chicago, but there it took almost 90 minutes. If the tournament director is unable to do this, they need to be replaced.

i. **Voting Results: 100% in favor**

6. Topic: Rankings

a. Include 8 of the last 10 events. The trend has been to reduce the number of events considered, which destroys all of the hard work the veteran players have done over the past number of years. New players need to put in their time and pay their dues, not be given a shortcut to the top.

i. **Voting Results: 85% in favor**

b. Ranking points awarded based on position of finish only. No discipline medal awards will be considered. The #1 ranked tennis player is based solely on their position of finish in tournaments, not on their serve percentage, or how many drop shots they executed successfully. The same holds true for all other sports with a world ranking.

i. **Voting Results: 85% in favor**

c. A minimum of \$5000 added is required for a ranking event. No exceptions.

i. **Voting Results: 69% in favor.**

7. General Changes

a. All financial records are open, and to be disclosed upon request by the player board. The WPA-APD is to be open and honest with everyone regarding monies going in and out of a tournament. Prior to Atlanta, a certain player told Nick Nikolaidis that it is not his business what the WPA-APD does with the PLAYER'S money. Andy Segal also sent a request for this information after the prize money distribution was announced, and that request was denied. At the event, Nick Nikolaidis was reprimanded for simply making that request and an argument ensued.

i. **Voting Results: 100% in favor**

b. Tom Rossman has retired. He is no longer going to be the tournament director, or have anything to do with events going forward. If he wants to attend and watch an event, or be a sponsor (as per guidelines above), or to create a special award of which he determines the winner, that will of course we welcome. Unfortunately, he has demonstrated certain biases toward players in the past, and we do not want him to be part of any decision making process going forward, whether at tournaments or on the WPA-APD board in general.

i. **Voting Results: 85% in favor**

c. There is to be no reference to religious events, nor is there to be any religious material on display at any time in the tournament room. Please note that this refers to items that are perceived as being officially sanctioned by the tournament as a whole. This includes any announcements regarding religious events being held at certain times throughout the day. It also includes any display table of religious material in the tournament room, whether it be on the tournament desk or a separate table. This also includes any religious preaching during the fan

show. This does not prohibit any individual player from having religious material by his side or on the player's table while shooting in a match.

i. **Voting Results: 92% in favor**

- d. There will be open elections for the WPA-APD board. All members on the WPA-APD will finish out their current term (details of which will be provided to everyone). Players may volunteer themselves to run for the board and need someone to second that nomination. During elections, everyone who has played in at least two out of the last six events will be eligible to vote. Voting will be open in order to ensure accuracy and fairness. We are not going to accept the WPA-APD voting in their own members because that leads to no accountability. As it stands right now, the WPA-APD is free to do anything they want, and there is no risk that the players will vote you out.

i. **Voting Results: 100% in favor**

- e. Lastly, we know that the code of conduct forbids players from getting together and sending a letter such as this. First, that is totally ridiculous. The only reason why the WPA-APD would want this is to avoid any accountability and silence the opinions of certain players. Second, we have decided as a group that should you take action against any of us (ranking penalties, banning from tournaments, etc), then those actions will apply to the rest of us.

i. **Voting Results: 100% in favor**

Sincerely:

Nick Nikolaidis
Andy Segal
Dave Nangle
Abram Diaz
Gabi Visoiu
Florian Kohler
Steve Markle
Gordon Hedges
Adam Nickels
Jim Glanville
Jamey Gray
Sebastian Giumelli

(and one player who does not wish to be identified – unfortunately this is the position the WPA-APD has put some of us in)