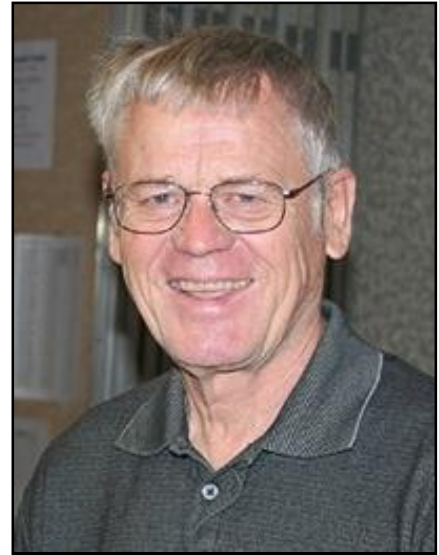


# THE RED BARON SPEAKS

February 2011 ó Larry Creakbaum

The Williams-Melton Reunion in Hurst, Texas was an interesting and grueling event. The events started with the sponsor sell at 7:00 PM, play starting from 9 to 11, suspended around 1 or later, and resuming from 8 to 12 the next day. This accommodated the local working players and the younger ones, but tiring on us older ones.



My flight schedule to Dallas called for a leg to Memphis, a plane change, an on to DFW. Traveling space available, I squeezed into the last seat at IND and made it to Memphis. Arriving at gate C-9, I gathered my walker and my luggage at struggled the 1200 plus feet to A-19. This may not seem far to most persons, but it is to me. Once there I discovered loading was not by Jet-way, but I would have to descend a long flight of stairs to get to ramp level. I could have made it but not with my walker and luggage. After working out with the counter agent the use of an elevator, the flight was full and I could not get on anyway. I was sent to B-2 for the next flight, 800 feet, to find that my chances of making this flight were not good. I knew that a flight to Dallas Love Field left about the same time, so I asked to be listed on that flight, and again struggled the 900 feet to C-4, losing the rubber tip on my cane in route. I called my week end host and advised him of the new time and airport, and although about three hours late I was there. You may ask why I do not use a wheel chair pusher or available golf cart service. I have found at the larger airports they tend to use a relay system of two or three and the end of each leg they have their hand out.

After the long walk out of Love Field and covering the whole terminal at Memphis, needless to say my legs were tired when I arrived at the event site. A few beverages helped but a couple of robins did no good and I was no help to my partner although he tried. We stopped to eat on the way home and after a quite late arrival; I slept in the next day.

Back at the event location the next day, I played a couple of robins to get ready for the singles, but wasted my time. I was caught off guard on the start of the singles and was assigned board one, trapped in by the players on boards 2 thru 6, two beverages low and unable to get any ones attention to receive one. I lost and the

second game played the highest bid player in the sponsor sale and not being on top of my game was quickly eliminated.

I do not remember if this happened in a team event or the singles, but a player rated a minus one had a puck on the corner hanging off the end and the side and was made safe. The area of the room I was standing in, the four or five players were split as to what the rule said. After reading the rule I find both the SF and TSA rules are silent as to how to treat a corner weight. The HOU rules definitely say it can be made safe. Another reason for posted rules as even the best needs a refresher now and then.

Next up was the 4-person draft event which I entered a couple robins, but it was a waste. Both games should have been easy wins but became easy losses. Our first match was one and go home and come back at 9:00, a death sentence for me. I was ready to not play any more in the week but they began pleading for a couple more players to start a robin so I pulled out another twenty and entered. I drew a new player to the game and my game came to life and we were in the game at the end. I saw her pondering about a shot and gave a few hand singles, she made the shot, and we won. The next game we won going a way. We split and it was time to enter the bring partner.

I had already decided not to play when a Texas player came up and asked me to play and I accepted. I played my usual bad first game but we played a second game before being sent home and I did better and we won. I expected the usual bad game the next morning but my partner would not be denied. He played excellent the first game and I picked it up and went on to win four more in a row to win the losers bracket. My weariness caught up with me and we lost the first game to the winners but ended up in second place.

This was to be my last night as I wanted to catch a 6:00 flight the next morning, five of us decided to go to the Fort Worth Stockyards area for a steak. With three cars available but not one big enough for five people we took two cars. After dinner, the couple went in there car to where they were staying and we took our third person back to the event location for his car. We sleepily went down the freeway toward my hosts home when over half way my cell phone rang. Our rider had left his keys in our car. We pulled off of the freeway and after a search found the keys in the pouch attached to the driver's seat. Thirty minutes or more later we were back at the event location to return the keys and collect a complimentary beverage at his expense.

Arriving back at my host's home, I computed the time of departure to arrive at the airport in time. The next morning I knew it was to close but still make able. As we crawled in the car my host put a round bottom coffee cup in the cup holder and as

we backed out of the drive way the coffee spilled. I grabbed the cup and planned to hold till the airport. Four blocks later we pulled into a gas station for gas. While the gas was pumping, the cup holder was cleaned. He climbed in the car ready to go when I asked if we were taking the hose and fill nozzle with us or going to leave it for the next customer. He replaced the nozzle and we were off to the airport for what I was told would be a thirty trip .All of the two minute delays had made making the flight marginal. I went to the ticket counter for a boarding pass and was nicely told I was within a thirty minute window and I could not get a boarding pass for that flight. Then a second agent said nastily that there was an embargo and I could not fly. I asked what an embargo was. He said you cannot fly. What is the embargo for.? You cannot fly. Why the embargo? It's a holiday and the planes our all full. The first agent gave me a boarding pass for the 11:40 flight and thru security I went and on to the gate. The aircraft had already departed. I asked about my luggage and was told they would call the luggage up to a carousel. I had already called my host to return to the airport so I thought nothing about leaving the secure area of the airport. As I retrieved my luggage a Delta agent stopped me and told me to return to the gate. Back thru security I went after calling my host and told him not to come back. There were no gate agents to talk to. When the 11:40 flight left without because of being full, I said roll me to the morning flight and I will try again. I called my host to return to the airport. The next morning we left the house earlier, the flights had plenty room and I easily arrived back in IND at 11:00 AM.