

THE RED BARON SPEAKS

Jan-Feb 2012– Larry Creakbaum

My first writing of the Red Baron was in April of '08 and as I traveled around the country in '07 @ '08 after my retirement in '06 I heard a lot of complaints about the rating system. So I set out to see there was substantial mood to change. None has risen to the surface. There were some efforts there, but nothing has happened. In my first six months of writing I proposed at least three different methods to try. I do not think any of them were ever tried. I personally believe the rating system as it exists today is the catalyst to why players traveled hundreds and thousands of miles by car and airplanes to compete with complete strangers years ago. We are no longer strangers. Yes new players come and old ones go, but someday we are going to wake up and no one is doing the ratings. Since we are no longer strangers, let us put our efforts together and do something to help Ron Bowers.



I used Indiana as my study state. In the 2011 ratings there were approximately 143 players rated from Indiana. Only 10 of these players had more than 3 raters and only 7 had 3 raters. The rest had 0, 1 or 2 raters. Then I decided to look at Michigan. Michigan has approximately 203 rated players with only 8 with more than 3 raters, 4 with 3 and the rest with 0, 1, or 2. Then I looked at the rating committee and there were two from Indiana and one from Michigan. Three raters for two states? They cannot travel enough nor have enough differences to have any consistency. We need more raters and they need better tools to rate with. Each state needs to develop a method of record keeping be it be wins and losses, points scored, who they played, or anything else someone thinks of. Be creative. Then when rating time comes the raters would have a reference to review to make their decision. If you want to read my earlier writings, open eShuffleboard.com and click on newsletters on the left message board.

After the ratings I had several comments on playing conditions and equipment. These things are slowly improving as time goes on.

The next big subject was written rules that would be common throughout the world. I have heard the biggest market for tables is China, so forget learning Spanish or French, learn Chinese. I have promoted for some time that the rules can easily be written by taking copy from either TSA or the Federation and making changes that you want to apply to your venue by a series of **bold face**, *italics* and ~~strike-through~~ so changes would



be easily identifiable. **I am happy to note Houston HHO was the first to do** hope others will follow.

Houston is a good event, but a terrible time of the year to travel space available on the airlines. I had purchased a one way ticket to HOU on Southwest and planed on space available on Delta to come home. When I went to the gate the agent said "I do not care who you know in Atlanta, you cannot get on this airplane." I struggled on down the concourse to Southwest and bought a one way ticket to IND on Southwest which left 15 minutes earlier and got home one hour earlier than Delta. I later heard from players who were leaving about the same time that Delta was paging me.

I probably will not fly Delta again as my son is changing companies within the holding corporation. Republic Holdings owns Chautauqua, Shuttle America, Lynx Aviation, Republic, and Frontier. He is upgrading to a larger aircraft and switching from Chautauqua to Shuttle America. That means the airlines I can travel changes to United, US Air and Frontier. He is in training into February which means he has no benefits and I cannot fly.

After returning from Houston and resting up my legs, I ventured out to a couple of Indiana events. One of them was a true round robin doubles event at the American Legion in Bourbon Indiana the first week end of February. The post is in an old two story building with a steep, long, narrow stairway to the second floor. There are three boards upstairs and two boards downstairs. Our board assignments were up-down, up-down, up-down until the final three games when we got two in a row down stairs before going up for the 12th and final game. The following week end I rested and ten days after Bourbon I jumped (crawled) in the Van and headed for Hurst, Texas for the Williams-Melton open. Upon arrival I entered a round robin to get some time on a board. The first frame I approached the end of the board with quivering legs still feeling the effects of Bourbon. I finally improved but question ever entering another true round robin.

Well, that's enough for now. Hope to see you at the next event.