

## **Chairman's Report by Derek Zen**

Our Association is undergoing some big changes, whilst these changes are still underway, I do believe when the dust finally settles, HKCBA will emerge much stronger and more well known, which will provide better opportunities for all our members as well as all bridge players in Hong Kong. We can all look forward to a brighter future for Bridge and HKCBA going forward.

It all started with Asian Games which took place from 18<sup>th</sup> August – 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018 in Jakarta and Palembang, Indonesia. As most of us are surely aware, our Men's team (comprising of Samuel Wan / Derek Zen, WK Lai / KF Mak, Tony Lau / Baron Ng, captained by Leo Cheung) and Super Mixed team (comprising of Pearlie Chan / Helen Yeung, Charmian Koo / Flora Wong, Bubble Ho / Gordon Ho captained again by Leo Cheung) both ended up with a silver medal. In addition, WK Lai / KF Mak secured a bronze medal in the Men's Pair, and Pearlie Chan / Helen Yeung got a bronze medal in the Women's Pair.

The above excellent result surpassed all our prior expectation, the effect of which was all of a sudden bridge is now a widely known sport in Hong Kong, not the least the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee (SF&OC) of Hong Kong. Most of those participated in Asian Games received numerous requests for interview, also after the event, HKCBA got lot more positive feedbacks from various middle schools in reply to our initiative to set up bridge club/classes in these schools.

With Bridge becomes an official event in Asian Games, Government is now willing to step up their support to our Association's activities, baring accident, their annual sponsorship of our Intercity event will likely doubled, saving us from scratching our heads every year trying to secure sponsorships to make ends meet. Also it is likely (details to be worked out) that for future official competitions, i.e. WBF and APBF events, or national event, those representing Hong Kong would have subsidy to cover most of their expenses (amount to be decided), this would mean our not so well off members now have a better chance to represent Hong Kong, and makes the competition even fairer than before.

There might even be a remote chance for keen members i.e. those who might be hoping to turn semi-professional, as we are fighting to get our qualified members (under Sports Association rule) to get subsidy for training, whilst the sum may not be significant (which is why I say semi-professional), it does cover some for cost of living, who knows, might be one day Hong Kong can produce some professional players like Singapore.,

Needless to say, to keep those sponsorship coming, HKCBA must produce consistently good results to match. Not only in WBF & PABF events, more importantly the Asian Games and Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games (which also held once every 4 years), with the next Asian Games to be held in Hangzhou (杭州), from reliable source, we understand Bridge again will be an official event in 2022, but in order to qualify under SF&OC rules, we need good results from 2018 to 2022 to prove that those players HKCBA recommends do satisfy SF&OC minimum requirement, which unfortunately (but understandably) according to our current knowledge, is mainly restricted to results from:

- i) Asian Games
- ii) Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games
- iii) WBF events
- iv) ABPF events
- v) National events
- vi) All other events will have very minimum or even no weight in their assessment.

So for those who wish to represent Hong Kong in next Asian Games, be sure that you can participate as much as you can in the coming 4 years in the above mentioned tournaments.

Please be rest assured that the Council will try our very best to fight for our members and our Association in achieving their dreams.

Last year we participated in quite a number of external events. For Asia Cup held in Goa, India, from 5th to 10th of June, our Men's team (Samuel Wan / Derek Zen, WK Lai / KF Mak, Tony Lau / Baron Ng captained by Leo Cheung) came second, narrowly defeated by China on the last Board, but still an impressive achievement, our ladies ended in 5th out of a total of 8 teams. Our senior ended up 4th out of 12 teams.

In April, our junior team participated in APBF Youth Championships and ended up 3rd.

In August, our junior team ended up 17th out of 22, youngster team ended up 15<sup>th</sup> out of 22 and girls' team ended up 11th out of 16 in World Youth Bridge Team Championships. The triangular interport took place in Guangzhou and Hong Kong team A members Kongo Kong, Terence Chan, Wilson Leung and Yiu Wai Sing ended up securing the crown position, Congratulations! A long awaited good news indeed. We organized the annual Intercity Championships from 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> July, last year we changed the venue to Crown Plaza in TKO, and most of the feedback was very positive, as a result, we will again host this event there in 2019. The open team was won by Vincent Li, Wang Weiming, Wan Wenfai, Shen Qi, Karic Chiu, Winnie Tseung, and open pair won by W K Lai and K F Mak, Congratulations to all medal winners!

With the encouraging financial support from the government, Council decided to bid for the APBF in 2021 (a Bermuda Year), and with the intention if things work out favorably, we are contemplating to bid for 2025 Bermuda Bowl & Venice Cup, this of course, is the dream of most of our members' and the council's, but at present it is still something we are just planning and fight for.

Our total number of members is 326, a meaningful increase over that of 2017. And we have an average of 12 tables in our regular tournaments. Recently we do observe the attendance in our regular tournament is on the rise (the after Asian Games effect?), we do hope we can increase our membership significantly.

It worth to mention that last year our Hong Kong directors have attained the official recognition from WBF. Tiffany Tse is now the WBF approved Tournament Director, while Kelvin Chan, Jerome Cheung and Abby Chiu are WBF approved Assistant Tournament Directors. We are glad to see that we have more high standard directors.

With much regret and sadness, we had to say goodbye to Ella and Raymond, both of them left us during the last year, but we are sure now they are happily playing bridge in heaven and enjoy eternal peace.

One important reminder to all our members, whilst we do observe a general rise in standard in bridge technique, regrettably the same cannot be said for our member's manner at the table, likewise the integrity demonstrated during play. Unfortunately some of those players have been representing Hong Kong on a number of occasions also have the same problems. In their eagerness to win, they forgot the primary rule - that bridge is a sport, and fairness stands above all else, it seems to us some elementary rules are still being ignored by a lot of players, simple rules like:

- 1) You need to explain 'CLEARLY' to your opponent the 'COMPLETE' meaning of your bids.
- 2) When partner makes a bid with 'break of tempo', most of the time (or when in doubt), you shall not bid again
- 3) 'I was not paying attention' is not a defense, under WBF rules, all players should try their very best on all hands, not paying attention is a violation to that code of conduct.

The council will intentionally tighten up on those mal-practices to ensure that Hong Kong players maintain a high standard of sportsmanship, integrity and manner. We will settle for nothing less!

Next few years will be very critical for the development of Bridge and HKCBA in Hong Kong, there are a lot of initiatives need to be achieved, things like:

- a) We are applying to HKSI (體院) to be enlisted in elite athlete scheme (精英運動員計劃), if approved, we will be subsidized for all our training costs.
- b) We are also seeking from Government more substantial and permanent sponsorship to enable HKCBA to serve our members better and also to promote Bridge amongst the public.
- c) We are contemplating setting up a 'Bridge School' with the aim to enlarge Bridge population in Hong Kong.
- d) Needless to say, the preparation and organization of future major events will post a severe challenge to HKCBA and its Council, as I mentioned above, the 2021 PABF, and hopefully the 2025 Bermuda Bowl. As our members can certainly understand, the amount of work involved, be it event hosting, tournament directing and training, public relationship, or even corporate administration will be tremendous.

As such, I am appealing to all our members: please offer your help in whatever way you can, the Council members simply cannot undertake all these tasks adequately and satisfactorily, as we are all part time volunteers. The Association belongs to all of us, and I trust we all wish to see a brighter future for HKCBA and Bridge in Hong Kong, so please do come forth and you can contact any one of our Council members if you are interested.

I wish you all a very Happy New Year, Kung Hei Fat Choy!

Derek Zen