

Proposal, Voting within FAI/IGC meetings, (for 2015 IGC meeting)

In the By-Laws of FAI, there is a ruling:

3.3.6. Unless otherwise specified in Commissions' Internal Regulations, decisions shall be taken on an absolute majority vote.

A definition in the FAI Statutes defines an absolute majority as:

Absolute Majority *More than half of the votes belonging to Members present or represented.*

This would seem to imply that all delegates will vote for or against the motion. However, it is often the case that not all delegates wish to exercise their right to vote, and such non-votes are recorded as abstentions. As the definition above requires more than 50% of members present or represented to vote in favour of the proposal for it to be passed there is a consequence, intended or not, that an abstention has the effect of a “no” vote. However, an abstention, by definition is *not* for either one or the other and should not bias the actual vote representing the opinion of the meeting.

Within the FAI Statutes and By-Laws there is just one mention of abstention, in dealing with the Annual Conference, where it is noted that in the case of a blank voting slip it shall be treated as “abstained”, but nowhere within the Statutes or By-Laws is there information on how an abstention should be treated.

As an abstention is not a vote, and is specifically not for or against, it should therefore not be recorded as an eligible vote. Generally, in most meetings outside FAI, it would appear that an abstention would reduce the number of eligible votes to all those which voted yes or no ie, a simple majority.

FAI does allow for a simple majority when voting when there are more options than just a “yes” or “no”. It is defined as:

Majority (also called simple majority) *More than half of the votes cast by eligible votes present.*

It would appear that, as there are no rules requiring every delegate to vote, an absolute majority can be an undemocratic procedure as it can give an incorrect result if abstentions are counted as a vote. It is also unclear why nearly all decisions within Commissions are required to be by absolute majority. A delegate being absent from the meeting is not seen as a no vote, in fact those countries which do not send a delegate or a proxy are not counted in any way, why then, should an abstention be treated any differently. The delegate abstaining should be treated as absent and like other absentees, not have the ability to influence voting.

The By-Laws of FAI allow for decisions on voting to be determined by Commission Internal Regulations. A proposal within the IGC and passed by an absolute majority could allow decisions to be agreed by a simple majority from then on.

Proposal:

Decisions being voted on at the IGC Plenary meetings shall be decided normally by a simple majority vote where abstentions shall not be counted as eligible votes.

Should a proposal be determined to require an absolute majority by the IGC Bureau, it shall be shown as such in the agenda.

A delegate, who asks for an absolute majority vote on any proposal not already determined by the Bureau, shall give reasons for wanting the absolute vote and the meeting shall vote to accept or reject the request.

Ross Macintyre, New Zealand Delegate, Supported by the Sporting Code Committee.