

CHAPTER 4 – THE CLUB SANCTIONED BRIDGE GAME

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I.

Chapter 4 - THE CLUB SANCTIONED BRIDGE GAME

ACBL issues sanctions that authorize the holder to run duplicate bridge games at which ACBL masterpoints are awarded, thus permitting ACBL members and others to compete on a regular basis in their own community. This chapter presents ACBL rules and regulations pertaining to these sanction holders (clubs) running sanctioned masterpoint games.

It is the responsibility of the club to comply with all local, state and federal laws.

SECTION ONE: ACBL CLUB MASTERPOINT GAME SANCTION

An ACBL club sanction grants the right to an entity to conduct bridge games at regularly scheduled times and locations and award masterpoints at those games in accordance with specific ACBL rules and regulations.

There are approximately 3,200 clubs that conduct ACBL sanctioned games. Some operate only a monthly game, while others operate as many as 21 games a week. Altogether, over 3 million tables of sanctioned games in clubs are played annually throughout ACBL territory.

Games must be conducted in accordance with both the letter and the spirit of ACBL regulations as well as the Laws of Duplicate Bridge. The success or failure of games conducted by a club is the responsibility of the club manager. The club manager is free to operate the club as he or she sees fit, as long as the operation of ACBL sanctioned games falls within the limits prescribed by ACBL.

I. ELIGIBILITY

Any individual ACBL member, group of ACBL members, or nonaffiliated organization (such as a country club, a fraternal or industrial organization, or a church or other religious group) may apply for a sanction. When ACBL issues a sanction, the sanction holder is given the right to conduct bridge games and award club masterpoints in accordance with ACBL rules and regulations. Sanction application forms are available on the ACBL website and from the ACBL Club and Member Services Department.

II. SANCTIONED GAME PROVISIONS

A. SCHEDULING MASTERPOINT GAMES

A club may conduct one or more regularly scheduled games under one sanction at varying sites. The club must list all regularly scheduled games that will award masterpoints and all addresses where these games will be held on the sanction application. Once the sanction is granted, only those game sessions listed on the application may award masterpoints. If a schedule change is contemplated or proposed, two weeks notice must be given to ACBL before the change may be made. However, no notice is necessary if a club's regularly scheduled session falls on the evening (6:00 p.m. or later) of December 31 (New Year's Eve). The club may schedule two sessions of play that night – one to begin before midnight and the other after.

B. ADDING GAMES

A club may add or change game sessions on a sanction any time during the year, provided that it notifies in writing, the ACBL Club and Member Services Department and pays a fee for each game session changed. See Appendix G.

C. CANCELING SESSIONS

ACBL regulations permit the canceling of a specific session without penalty. See Chapter 4, Section Three, IV, E. The club manager or director must note the canceled game session on the Monthly Report Form. No fees are refunded for canceled game sessions.

D. NON-EXCLUSIVITY OF SANCTION

ACBL sanctions are not exclusive. ACBL encourages open competition among clubs and will sanction two or more club games simultaneously in the same community but usually not at the same location. When two or more club games do occupy the same quarters (as happens when a group of sanction holders cooperate to maintain a city bridge center), they may not operate simultaneously unless their games are of a different class. Units may not compete with existing club sessions. A unit may sponsor a club session or sessions when no existing club session(s) is in operation in a given area. Exception: Units operating a club-type session prior to a new session receiving sanction may continue to do so.

E. CLUBS IN GOOD STANDING

Clubs that operate in full compliance with ACBL regulations remain in good standing. On application, ACBL will renew their game sanctions for the following year. However, ACBL will not renew sanctions for clubs that have unresolved problems with monthly or special game reports until the problems are resolved. ACBL is not obligated to renew sanctions for clubs with significant violations of ACBL rules and regulations.

III. COST OF A SANCTION

All fees and charges for sanctions are payable in U.S. funds or designated equivalent.

A. NEW CLUB GAMES

ACBL considers a club game new if it has not been sanctioned previously at the specific location for which it is applying, if it failed to renew its sanction by January 31, if it is on inactive status, or if it has not conducted regularly scheduled duplicate games during the preceding calendar year. However, if a club moves to a new location in the same area and retains its club number, ACBL does not consider it new. Should a new club game sanction be denied, a specific reason will be given.

B. ANNUAL FEE

When a club files its annual sanction application, it must include the fee for each regularly scheduled game session. This fee is paid once a year. See Appendix G. A regularly scheduled game session is held at the same time of day, on the same day of the week, either weekly, every other week (for example, every other Wednesday), twice a month (for example, the second and fourth Wednesday of every month), or monthly. Games that operate for a short time during the year (for example, during summer months) are subject to this fee, just as if sessions were held throughout the year.

C. TABLE FEES

A club must pay a fee for each sanctioned game session held plus a fee for each table in play. ACBL charges only one game session fee if different levels of games are held simultaneously. Clubs not using ACBLscore must show on the Monthly Report Form the number of game sessions played, as well as an exact listing of the number of tables in play at each game session. See Chapter 4, Page 5, Table 4.1. The club must send this report to ACBL along with the remittance to cover the fees due. Clubs will be charged an additional \$2 per game fee if they either mail a hard copy of the monthly masterpoint and financial reports or submit reports using an outdated version of ACBLscore. New clubs requesting sanctions will be required to report electronically using ACBLscore.

NOTE: Table and session sanction fees are waived for any game that a club schedules to recruit new members and for which it charges no entry fee.

IV. OBTAINING A SANCTION

A. WAITING PERIOD

When ACBL receives an application for a new club game sanction or reinstatement of a lapsed sanction, there is a 30-day probationary period before the sanction is issued. During this period, copies of the application are sent to an official of the unit in which the club is located and, on request, to the district director for their assessment.

ACBL also requires a 30-day probationary period when a club game sanction is transferred. During that time the unit and/or district director may assess the club's new management.

The ACBL will waive the 30-day probationary period if the unit or the district director agrees in writing to the waiver.

B. ALLOWABLE OBJECTIONS TO A SANCTION

A unit or district director may object to a masterpoint game sanction being granted on the grounds that: (1) the proposed quarters are not suitable, or (2) the applicant's record as an ACBL member indicates previous failures in meeting ACBL standards. ACBL may refuse to grant a new sanction because of the club manager's history of failure to adhere to ACBL regulations. If ACBL rejects an application because of an objection from the unit or district director, the applicant may appeal the rejection to the ACBL Board of Directors. The applicant must make the appeal within 30 days of the date he or she received notice that the application was rejected.

C. DURATION OF A SANCTION

A sanction is valid until the end of the calendar year for which it was issued. See Chapter 4, Section One, V. C. ACBL will not renew a sanction if the club fails to observe regulations, including those that concern reporting and paying for special events sanctioned by the club.

If for some reason, such as remodeling playing quarters or location loss, a club must close a game for an extended period of time, ACBL will place the sanction on an inactive status. ACBL will not renew the sanction for the following year unless the club has a location and a specific date when games will resume.

D. CANCELLATION OF A SANCTION

ACBL management has the right to cancel or suspend a club game sanction for cause upon 30 days notice to the club manager. Any one of the following shall constitute "cause" for cancellation or suspension: operation of a club out of compliance with ACBL regulations or unsuitable club venue. A cancellation is for a fixed period of time whereupon the club manager may apply for renewal or permanent without the possibility of renewal.

ACBL management may immediately suspend or cancel a club game sanction if the "cause" for cancellation is such that continuation of the sanction will result in substantial and immediate violation of ACBL Regulations; or increase the likelihood of lawsuit against the ACBL; or result in violation of state or Federal law.

The 30 day notice of suspension or cancellation shall provide the club manager with the option of providing ACBL management with reasons in writing why the suspension or cancellation should not take place, whereupon ACBL management, in its own discretion, may leave the suspension or cancellation in place, amend the suspension or cancellation or withdraw the suspension or cancellation.

The club may file a written appeal of a suspension or cancellation with the Appeals and Charges Committee of ACBL Board of Directors within 30 days of the effective date of the cancellation, provided however, that the suspension or cancellation will remain in effect until the appeal before the Appeals and Charges Committee has been decided. In order to be considered, such written appeal must include reasons why the cancellation is inconsistent with the terms of this Section D.

V. SANCTIONED CLUB GAME REQUIREMENTS

A. MANAGER

Every ACBL sanctioned masterpoint club game must designate an active ACBL member as its manager who is a member in good standing whose dues or service fees are current. The manager

may be elected, appointed, or hired. The club manager is accountable to ACBL for the enforcement of ACBL rules and regulations in all sanctioned games the club conducts. The club manager must supervise the following activities:

- Preparation and filing of the Monthly Financial and Masterpoint Report(s)
- Correspondence with ACBL on club game matters
- Application for sanction renewals and reporting any change of club managers or session changes on a form provided by ACBL. The signatures of the club manager or officer must be on the form when it is filed.

B. IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS

CLUB IDENTIFICATION NUMBER:

Each club holding ACBL sanctioned games receives an identification number, which should be included on all correspondence with ACBL.

GAME SESSION NUMBER:

For identification in filling out the Monthly Financial and Masterpoint Forms, all game sessions are assigned identifying numbers as shown in the Table below:

GAME SESSION IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS

GAME SESSION	NUMBER	GAME SESSION	NUMBER
Monday morning	1	Thursday evening	12
Monday afternoon	2	Friday morning	13
Monday evening	3	Friday afternoon	14
Tuesday morning	4	Friday evening	15
Tuesday afternoon	5	Saturday morning	16
Tuesday evening	6	Saturday afternoon	17
Wednesday morning	7	Saturday evening	18
Wednesday afternoon	8	Sunday morning	19
Wednesday evening	9	Sunday afternoon	20
Thursday morning	10	Sunday evening	21
Thursday afternoon	11	Other games, cruises, etc.	22

Games that start prior to noon are morning games; games that start from noon to but not including 6:00 p.m. are afternoon games; and games that start from 6:00 p.m. to but not including midnight are evening games.

C. SANCTION RENEWAL

In the fall, ACBL provides every club manager holding ACBL sanctioned masterpoint games a renewal application. The manager should indicate corrections, additions, or changes on the renewal application. The manager should then submit the application form to ACBL headquarters with the appropriate fees. Noted changes become effective January 1 of the year for which the sanction is granted. Unless otherwise noted and approved, renewals for club games must have the signature of the club manager. If ACBL does not receive an application for sanction renewal before January 31 of the New Year, the sanction will be canceled.

D. ARBITRATION AGREEMENT

An application for an ACBL club game sanction will not be accepted until the club manager signs the following arbitration agreement: SHOULD ANY DISPUTE, OF WHATEVER KIND OR NATURE, ARISE BETWEEN ACBL AND THE UNDERSIGNED CLUB, IT IS AGREED THAT SUCH DISPUTE SHALL BE RESOLVED BY BINDING ARBITRATION PURSUANT TO THE RULES OF THE AMERICAN ARBITRATION ASSOCIATION OR SUCH OTHER METHOD OF BINDING ARBITRATION AS MAY BE AGREED UPON MUTUALLY BY THE PARTIES.

E. MONTHLY REPORT FORM

The club must submit a report for each month by the sixth of the following month for the players' masterpoints to be included in the next issue of the Bridge Bulletin and must include the appropriate remittance. If a club's monthly report(s), with fees, are not received by the 10th of the following month, a late fee will be assessed.

SECTION TWO: TYPES OF CLUB MASTERPOINT GAMES

There are four types of regular club games: open, invitational/restricted, newcomer, and Bridge Plus. One or more types of games may be listed on a single sanction.

For ease of identification, especially in filling out monthly reports, these games are assigned classes as follows:

Open	Class 4
Invitational/Restricted	Class 3
Newcomer	Class 2
Bridge Plus	Class 1

On written request to the ACBL Club and Member Services Department, the club may change the classification of a game.

I. OPEN GAME

This game is open to all ACBL members. Prohibiting or allowing non-members of ACBL to play does not affect open game status.

A. ALLOWABLE MASTERPOINT RESTRICTIONS

In an open game a club may stipulate that each participant hold a minimum number of masterpoints but cannot stipulate a maximum. For example, an open game could specify that all players must have no fewer than 20 masterpoints but could not refuse entry to a Life Master.

B. ALLOWABLE RESTRICTION OF CONVENTIONS

Club managers may regulate conventions in games conducted at their clubs. A complete list of conventions that may be used for club play is shown on the ACBL General Convention Chart/Mid-chart/SuperChart. See Appendix A.

C. OPEN GAMES IN CLUBS WITH MEMBERSHIP FEES

A club that charges a membership fee may conduct an open game, but the game must be open to all ACBL members. The club may however, allow its own members to play at a reduced fee. The entry fee for a non-club member may be as much as 100% more than a member's entry fee.

D. NUMBER OF BOARDS

An open pair game must have a minimum of two-and-one-half tables. A two-table individual with a one-winner movement or a two-table team game (match awards only) is allowed. In any open club game every contestant must be scheduled to play a minimum of 18 boards to receive full masterpoint awards. Sanctioned clubs may hold shortened regular open games with a minimum number of boards played of 12-17. Masterpoints are awarded at 60% of the award for open games. Sanction fees are reduced for games of 12-17 boards. See Appendix G.

E. MENTOR-NOVICE GAME

A club may hold a Mentor-Novice game as an Open Game even if the club stipulates that one member of each partnership have fewer than a certain number of masterpoints. There must be no limit on the number of masterpoints allowed for the mentor player. The club may hold this game on a regular basis or as a special event. Any special game held in a club is eligible to be held as a Mentor-Novice game.

F. EIGHT IS ENOUGH

A club may hold an 'Eight is Enough' team game as an Open Game. There must not be an upper limit on the number of masterpoints allowed for "A" team members.

II. INVITATIONAL/RESTRICTED GAME

An invitational game is one that limits or places restrictions on who can participate in its events. Participation commonly is limited to:

- Members and guests of the organization that holds the sanction (such as country club or fraternal organization).
- Personnel (and their families and guests) of industries that are currently participating in commercial and industrial leagues
- Players who hold fewer than a stipulated number of masterpoints (when the maximum permitted is fewer than 20, the game is defined as a newcomer game)
- Sections or directions segregated according to strong and weak pairs
- Strong players forbidden to play as partners
- Husbands and wives only
- Life Masters excluded or required to play with non-Life Masters
- Members of one sex only

Eligibility may be restricted for any reason except those that violate ACBL bylaws.

An invitational/restricted game may have no fewer than two-and-one-half tables (except in the case of a two-table individual with a one-winner movement or a team game), and every contestant must be scheduled to play a minimum of 18 boards.

The following regulations should apply when an ineligible person or pair participates in a restricted club game:

- At no time should the director use a pseudonym, non-member, deceased member or similar to disguise the identity of an ineligible player or pair.
- If a player falls outside the masterpoint limits for the given game but has only recently gone over the threshold, for that one time a director may allow the pair to be eligible but club management or the club director should advise the player they will no longer be eligible to play in that game.
- Clubs always have the opportunity to raise the ceiling of their masterpoint-restricted games by submitting a request in writing to the Club and Member Services Department.

- If the club determines that having a director, manager, or ineligible player playing with an eligible player will serve the club's interests they may do so. This pair should be marked as ineligible, and as explained in III.B. below the rankings shall be affected accordingly.
- In the case where two ineligible players are asked to play so that the game will not have a half-table, this pair should remain a phantom pair with none of the scores recorded for this pair nor for their opponents.
- An ineligible pair (not the phantom pair) will still count for the club's monthly total of tables.

III. NEWCOMER GAMES

A newcomer game is limited to players who hold fewer than 20 masterpoints, although a club can set a lower maximum, such as 1 masterpoint, if it so desires.

A newcomer game is conducted to acquaint new players with duplicate bridge and to encourage participation by inexperienced players.

A newcomer game must consist of at least two and one-half tables. However, there are masterpoint awards for two-table newcomer games conducted as individuals or team games. Participants must be scheduled to play a minimum of six boards.

Any club with a sanctioned game may conduct a newcomer game session. The game session may be run any time. The club must list the newcomer game session on the sanction application and the monthly report. When the newcomer game is run concurrently with another sanctioned game, only the table fees are due ACBL.

ACBL recognizes that some relatively skilled players, through failure to register their club masterpoints, retain masterpoint eligibility to participate in newcomer events inappropriate to their skill and/or experience. When the director or club management determines that the ability of a player is vastly superior to that of the other newcomer game participants, the club may refuse entry of that player in its newcomer events. In such a case, the director should advise the player, as diplomatically as possible, that he or she is too proficient to play in the newcomer game. The director should encourage the player instead to participate in the club's games with a higher masterpoint limitation or the open games.

A. PLAYERS WITH 20 OR MORE MASTERPOINTS

Subject to specified conditions, a club may allow one or two players who hold 20 or more masterpoints to play in a newcomer game. This would be the case when there is a single newcomer player available whose participation would eliminate a half-table movement. For example, if there were 13 pairs plus one single, there would be a 6½ - table game which, by adding a player, would become seven tables. In this instance, the club may allow one non-newcomer to play. In addition, when there is an odd number of newcomer pairs entered, resulting in a half-table movement, the club may allow two non-newcomer players to participate if each plays with a newcomer partner and if a Mitchell-type movement is used; that is, the two newcomer/non-newcomer pairs sit in opposite directions. These pairs are ineligible for masterpoint awards from the newcomer event. In no case may the two non-newcomer players play as partners.

A partnership, including one with a fill-in player (non-newcomer), may use only the conventions the club allows for that game.

B. LOSS OF RANKING

Pairs in which one partner is a non-newcomer will not receive masterpoints and will not be ranked. For example, if an ineligible pair earns sufficient matchpoints to have finished second, that pair is not ranked. Instead, the third-place pair is ranked second and receives the second place masterpoint awards. In such a case, all lower-ranked pairs move up one rank, accordingly.

C. TABLE TOTALS

Ineligible pairs count in table totals. For example, ACBL considers as a three-table game one that consists of four pairs of newcomers and two other pairs, each of which is made up of one newcomer and one non-newcomer, even though the two mixed (non-newcomer and newcomer) pairs are ineligible for masterpoint awards.

D. THREE-MEMBER PAIRS

At the discretion of club management, three-member pairs may participate in newcomer games. The club will apportion earned masterpoints among the three players in a ratio that approximates the number of boards each played. For example, a pair consisting of newcomer players A, B, and C finishes first in a newcomer game where each member of a two-member pair is entitled to .40 masterpoints, or .80 masterpoints for the pair. In this three-member pair, however, A, B, and C split .80 masterpoints according to the number of boards each played.

IV. SPECIAL FUND GAMES

Clubs are allowed to hold games to benefit special funds. These include the Junior Fund, the ACBL Charity Foundation, CBF Charitable Fund, local governmentally approved charities, the International Fund, and the Educational Foundation. These games are charged an extra per table fee to be remitted to ACBL (except for games to benefit a local charity). Masterpoint awards for these games can be found in the Club Masterpoint Charts at the end of this chapter.

A. JUNIOR MONTH

January is designated as Junior Fund month. In January a club may hold as many games as they have sessions to benefit the ACBL Junior Fund. During any other months, excluding April, May and September, one game per month per sanctioned session may be a special fund game for the Junior Fund.

B. CHARITY MONTH

The month of April is designated as Charity Month. During this month, each sanctioned club game is authorized to run its regularly scheduled sessions Charity Games. All clubs may run as many charity games as they have games scheduled. During any other months, excluding January, May and September, one game per month per sanctioned session may be a special fund game for the Charity Fund. An extra per person fee is contributed to the ACBL Charity Foundation in the U.S. and the CBF Charity Foundation in Canada. See Appendix G.

Clubs may use their charity fund sessions to conduct one two-session charity fund championship. The same ACBL regulations that pertain to a two-session club championship apply to a two-session charity fund championship. This includes the right to schedule the charity event at a time and place that differs from that of the regular game.

The entire contribution must be made to an official ACBL beneficiary. See C. below. A club may charge any table fee that it chooses. Masterpoint awards for these games can be found in the Club Masterpoint Charts at the end of this chapter. Masterpoint awards for these games can be found in the Club Masterpoint Charts at the end of this chapter.

i. BENEFICIARIES

OFFICIAL ACBL BENEFICIARIES: The first ACBL sanctioned charity game, if any, plus at least every other subsequent game conducted by a club in a calendar year must be for the benefit of the ACBL Charity Foundation or, in Canada, the CBF Charitable Fund. ACBL sanctioned charity games not required to be run for the benefit of the ACBL Charity Foundation or the CBF Charitable Fund may be for the benefit of any governmentally-recognized charity, charity foundation or charity fund.

Under exceptional circumstances and on written application, the ACBL Charity Foundation will permit a club to hold its first charity game of the year for a local beneficiary and its next game for an official ACBL beneficiary. Of the proceeds from the first charity game, a minimum amount per player must be contributed to the principal beneficiary.

SECONDARY BENEFICIARIES: A club that has selected a secondary beneficiary may make whatever contribution it chooses out of the surplus proceeds from the charity session. Some local charities provide playing space and publicity in exchange for a portion of the proceeds.

LOCAL BENEFICIARIES: The second charity club championship may be conducted on behalf of a local charity, if the Internal Revenue Service approves the charity as tax-exempt. Note: the ACBL Educational Foundation qualifies as a local or secondary beneficiary. A minimum amount per player must go to the beneficiary.

TWO-SESSION EVENTS: A club may divide the proceeds from a two-session event equally between an official ACBL beneficiary and local beneficiaries. If the sessions are unequal in size, the official ACBL beneficiary receives a minimum amount per player from the larger session and the local beneficiary a minimum amount per player from the smaller session.

Any club that, in any calendar year, runs one or more allowed special local charity games that are sanctioned for extra masterpoints must make available for public inspection an accounting of all funds raised in such games no later than February 28 of the following calendar year.

ii. CHARITY FUND GAME AWARDS

A club conducting invitational games may hold allocated charity championships as open events in which all ACBL members are allowed to participate, rather than conduct them as invitational events. The club must adequately advertise the fact that the game will be open. The rules for awards for an open charity championship held by an invitational club are the same as those for an open club.

Except as provided in the preceding paragraph, awards for the first two allocated charity events held by an invitational or newcomer game may be found in the Masterpoint Award Charts.

iii. REPORTING CHARITY FUND GAMES

Clubs must report on the monthly financial report games conducted for local beneficiaries, listing the name of the beneficiary and the net amount contributed. In this case, however, they should send the contribution directly to the charity

C. International Month

September is designated as International Fund month. During September a club may hold as many games as they have sessions to benefit the ACBL International Fund. During any other months, excluding January, April and May, one game per month per sanctioned session may be a special fund game for the International Fund.

D. Educational Games

During any months, excluding January, April, May, and September, one game per month per sanctioned session may be a special fund game for the Educational Foundation.

E. Grass Roots Fund Month

May is designated as Grass Roots Fund month. During May a club may hold as many games as they have sessions to benefit the North American Pairs and the Grand National Teams. During any other months, excluding January, April and September, one game per month per sanctioned session may be a special fund game for the Grass Roots Fund.

Funds raised shall be returned annually no later than 90 days after Grass Roots Fund Month to the individual District in which those funds were raised, and shall be used by the District to help fund Grass Roots Events. Grass Roots Events are defined as the Grand National Teams and the North American Pairs. The ACBL shall not charge the Districts any fee for the cost of collecting and disbursing these funds. Details can be found in the ACBL Codification [Chapter 5 Section B](#).

V. OTHER CLUB GAMES

In addition to regular and special fund games, ACBL designs several programs to stimulate bridge activity. If the sanctioned activities listed below do not meet the requirements of a group or organization, ACBL may be able to prepare a special program that does. Anyone interested may contact the ACBL Club and Member Services Department.

A. ACBL INTRODUCTORY GAMES

A club may conduct ACBL introductory games without first obtaining sanctions, but the games must have ACBL approval. The purpose of these games is to acquaint members of nonaffiliated groups or organizations with duplicate bridge and the American Contract Bridge League.

Bridge teachers, club managers, or enthusiastic individual members are usually the ones who organize introductory games. Groups, such as luncheon clubs, religious organizations, or industries interested in the social or promotional possibilities of these games often sponsor them.

The individuals who direct these games should have reasonable qualifications. The director usually issues club masterpoint receipts, which are available from the ACBL Club and Member Services Department.

Each game must have at least three tables, and each player must be scheduled to play a minimum of six boards.

B. HANDICAP GAMES

Handicapping of regularly sanctioned club games can encourage players with limited experience to attend the games by giving them more opportunity to win club masterpoints. Stronger players also may be freshly challenged by having to play better in order to win. The game may be organized in any of the following ways:

- Creating a new game at a time different from that of existing games (with the expectation of drawing players not now engaging in duplicate play)
- Converting one session per week from an existing game to a handicap game
- Converting an existing game to a handicap game for half of its sessions (for example, every other week there could be a handicap game)
- Where the clientele is large enough, converting a section of play to handicap format, keeping one section as regular duplicate bridge
- Creating a bridge team league in which all players have handicaps for a round-robin season
- Conducting Swiss team sessions at specified times with the teams handicapped

Clubs may establish handicaps by averaging a player's previous performances in comparable club game sessions or by considering the player's ACBL rank.

To establish handicaps for existing clientele, directors should use past recap sheets from recent game sessions. For example, to compute each participant's percent of possible score for the last three games in which each took part, the player's matchpoint score would be divided by the maximum possible score, and then a percentage average would be computed. The average is the sum of the three percentages divided by three. The handicap percentage would be determined by subtracting the average from 0.650 (par) and multiplying the result by 0.80 (or 0.90). This method would provide the player with a handicap of 80 or 90% of the difference between their "average" and a stated par of 65%.

A sample handicap determination follows: Scores were 0.510, 0.537, and 0.610, for a total of 1.657. Dividing the total by 3 yields an average 0.552. Then, subtracting 0.552 from 0.650 yields 0.098, which multiplied by 0.90 equals a handicap of 0.088, or 8.8%. To arrive at the handicap for a pair, the handicaps of both players are added together and divided by two. While the game is being played, the percentage handicap for each pair is converted to handicap matchpoints. This is accomplished by multiplying the percentage handicap by the possible matchpoints (for example, 156 average equals 312 possible). The handicap matchpoints for each pair are posted in a column in which they can be added easily to the raw score matchpoints. The after-game calculations are merely a matter of adding two matchpoint totals together. A sample calculation follows. Percent handicap times possible matchpoints equals the matchpoint handicap, which is to be added to raw score.

$$0.088 \times 312 = 27.0$$

$$0.81 \times 312 = 250.$$

$$102 \times 312 = 320.$$

$$125 \times 312 = 390.$$

$$0.75 \times 312 = 23.$$

This calculation may be eased by subtracting the lowest matchpoint handicap from all the others. Thus the pair with the lowest handicap has nothing added to their raw score, and the other matchpoint handicaps are reduced appropriately. As an example, if the lowest handicap in the field is 15 matchpoints, subtract 15 from each pair's calculated total.

When a contestant has not played in three previous games, the club director may use any of the following options:

- Explain that the player cannot use a handicap until he or she completes three games at the club
- Establish the handicap based on only one game (at the conclusion of that game, or at the conclusion of two or three games)
- Base the handicap for the first game on the player's rank. See Table 4.2. For non-members, ACBL suggests that the handicap shown on the chart for the Club Master category be arbitrarily assigned

There are two methods of awarding masterpoints: split masterpoint awards or 100% awards for scratch winners and 50% awards for handicap winners. In the split masterpoint method there are two winner categories, or fields: raw score and handicap score. The first-place award in each field will be one-half of what it would be normally (maximum in each field for first place will be 0.75 club masterpoints). Players placing in both fields (which is what often happens) receive the total of the two awards added together.

In the other method the scratch winners receive 100% awards while the handicap winners receive 50% awards. Players receive the higher of the awards but not both.

Handicaps based on rank are easier to administer and maintain than any other form of handicapping. Using the rank format, each member's handicap is added to that of his or her partner to determine the size of the handicap. One board equals the maximum matchpoints possible on a board. For example, a Junior Master (1 1/4 boards) playing with a Sectional Master (3/4 board) would have a handicap equal to two boards.

For further information about handicapped games, the pamphlet "HANDICAPS" is available on the ACBL website.

TABLE 4.2 HANDICAP BONUS TABLE (RANK)

<u>Player Rank</u>	<u>Masterpoints</u>	<u>Percent Handicap</u>	<u>Bonus Board</u>
Rookie	0 - 4.99	25	1-1/2
Junior Master	5 - 19.99	22	1-1/4
Club Master	20 - 49.99	19	1
Sectional Master	50 - 99.99	16	3/4
Regional Master	100 - 199.99	13	1/2
NABC Master	200+ (not LM)	10	1/4
Life Master	Under 500	5	1/8
Life Master	500+	0	0

C. STRATIFIED PAIRS

A stratified pair game is one that produces more than one set of winners. All pairs are ranked in the top strat; the pairs in the top strat are eliminated in determining the ranks in Strat B; both A and B pairs are eliminated in determining the ranks in Strat C. It is possible for Strat B and C pairs to place in the higher strat, but Strat A pairs are eligible for A awards only; and Strat B pairs are eligible for A and B awards only. The strat in which a pair plays is determined by the player who has the most masterpoints or by the average masterpoints of the two players. (No player may have more masterpoints than the maximum for the event).

Stratified pair games may be conducted with two or three strats. The lowest strat may have any upper masterpoint limitation suitable for the club. The lowest strat must have at least five pairs for overall awards to be issued and at least three pairs in a comparison group for section awards to be issued. There should be approximately the same number of pairs sitting N/S and E/W in each strat, so that the section awards will be equal.

The game is first scored on the total number of tables in play, and masterpoints are computed from the Open/Invitational point award chart. Awards for the second strat include tables in the remainder of the game (all but the top strat) and are computed from the appropriate point award chart.

In a Newcomer strat (0 to 20 masterpoints), only tables in this strat receive masterpoints, from the newcomer award chart.

The club issues masterpoints to each player based on the place of finish. If the player places in more than one strat, the player receives the higher of the two awards, not both.

For further information about stratified games, the pamphlet Stratifying Your Club Game is available on the ACBL website.

D. HOME-STYLE

The purpose of the home-style bridge concept is to attract primarily the non-duplicate bridge playing public to ACBL clubs. Home-style bridge is an easy-to-run, fun game. Since cards are shuffled and dealt for each hand, social and rubber bridge players adapt to it easily.

The Swiss pairs format is the most popular among the clubs that have tried this program. Pairs are each assigned a different number and are seated at random for the first round. Players cut for the deal and, in most movements, play four deals per round. At the end of the round they total their scores and report the point difference (either plus or minus) to the game director. The game director converts the score to victory points and records this figure on the recap sheet. See Chapter 4; Section Seven, I., B. 2. Starting with the two highest victory point totals, the director assigns the seating for the next round so that pairs with the closest scores play against each other. The same procedure is used for all succeeding rounds. A record of the pair assignments for each round must be kept by the director so that pairs play against each other only once in the same session. After all the players receive their seating assignments, the next round begins.

Overall and match awards are issued for this type of contest. Match awards are based on total score before conversion to victory points. In the case of a tie, each pair receives one-half of the match award.

Match awards, which are based on the number of boards played in the match and the classification of the club, may be found in the Masterpoint Award Charts located at the end of this chapter.

Open clubs issue .04 club masterpoints to the winners of each four-board match, and invitational/newcomer clubs award .03 club masterpoints for each four-board match. Overall rank is based on the total victory points won in a complete session of play. Players receive either the overall award or the total of the match awards, whichever is greater. For overall masterpoint awards, refer to the charts at the end of this chapter. These games earn the same overall masterpoint awards as any other regularly sanctioned club game; that is, awards are based on the type of club (open, invitational/ restricted, or newcomer).

Home-style bridge may be used in club games only. It may be used in club championships and charity club championships but not for ACBL-wide events, district-wide events, or any other special events. Clubs must apply to the ACBL Club and Member Services Department to conduct home-style bridge games that issue masterpoints. The Alert procedure and skip bid warning are not encouraged for this type of event.

Regular convention cards should not be used for home-style games. An inexpensive, specially designed home-style convention card is available from ACBL.

E. COLLEGE PROGRAM

ACBL offers duplicate bridge activity on college campuses. On request, the ACBL Club and Member Services Department will send information to any student or faculty member who is interested in operating a sanctioned bridge game on any campus within ACBL jurisdiction. The sanction application should be completed in accordance with the regulations listed below and returned to the ACBL Club and Member Services Department.

- Games are to be open to students, faculty members, and their spouses only.
- No matter how many times a year a game is scheduled, an annual fee for each game session must accompany the application. The sanction year runs from January 1 through December 31.
- The college game is not required to operate on a regular schedule. The day of the week may be changed if the change does not interfere with the schedule of an existing open club on the campus.
- The game will be allotted one session with club championship rating for every 12 regular sessions played.
- The college game is rated as an invitational game.

- Each game must submit a Monthly Report of all game activity that occurred during the preceding month. Report forms are sent along with sanction approval. The Monthly Report must be submitted to ACBL no later than the 10th of the month following the month in which the reported games were played.
- A fee for each game plus a fee for each table must be sent with the report form.
- A faculty adviser must co-sign the sanction application and must agree to serve as the official ACBL contact.

F. HIGH SCHOOL GAMES

A high school interested in adopting a program similar to that offered to a college should write to the ACBL Education Department for more information.

G. PUPIL GAMES

A bridge teacher may apply for a special sanction to conduct a pupil game. ACBL will issue the sanction free of charge if: (1) the applicant is an ACBL member, (2) the game is restricted to bona fide students of the sanction holder, (3) the lessons run for a minimum of 45 minutes, and (4) at least six boards are to be played. A minimum of at least eight participating students is required. If there are only two tables, the game must be run as a team event, individual event, or Swiss pair game.

The game may be sanctioned as a regularly scheduled session or periodically, subject to ACBL regulations. The sessions may be run at different times and places from the lessons. A monthly report form is not required for pupil games, and there are no session or table fees.

The teacher who runs the game need not be an ACBL club director. The interests of both the teacher and the pupils are advanced substantially, however, if the teacher has such a rating.

H. BRIDGE PLUS+

These games provide a transition from ACBL beginning bridge classes to newcomer games conducted at ACBL-sanctioned games. They may be operated by bridge teachers, club managers or ACBL club directors. Players are encouraged to ask for advice on bidding and playing the hands.

A sanction is required to conduct an ACBL Bridge Plus+ game. Bridge Plus+ sanctions are issued free of session fees if all of the following conditions are met:

- a) Only students with fewer than 5 masterpoints may participate in the game.
- b) The game must consist of a minimum of six boards.
- c) Monthly reports must be sent to ACBL by the 10th of the month following the month in which the game was held.

The teacher who runs the game need not be a club director. The teacher/director resolves all irregularities.

I. CRUISE SHIPS

The ACBL sanctions duplicate games as part of the social program aboard cruise ships. Any ship that conducts sanctioned bridge games must pay an annual sanction fee. This fee permits the ship to conduct sanctioned games on all its cruises for the entire year. A letter of permission from the cruise line authorizing a director to conduct a bridge program on the ship for a calendar year must accompany the sanction application. The ACBL provides a free supply of club masterpoint receipt pads.

The ACBL will sanction games on a ship for a single cruise that does not exceed 14 days, charging a sanction fee. There is one sanction fee for cruises of one to seven days and a larger sanction fee for cruises of eight to 30 days. See Appendix G. Whoever receives sanctions for cruise ships are expected, within the constraints placed upon them by the cruise lines, to actively promote ACBL for the purpose of recruiting new members.

ACBL defines the duration of a cruise as the period from the time the ship leaves the port of embarkation until it either returns to that port or terminates the advertised cruise at a different port. A 40-day cruise to the Orient, for example, is a single cruise, even though it may involve 18 days going, 4 days in port, and 18 days returning.

Cruise ships need not hold club masterpoint games at regularly scheduled intervals. Since the games are part of the social activity, they must suit the convenience of the players. The technical operation of the games must follow the regulations set forth for most sanctioned club games, with the following exceptions:

- There are no table and session fees, and the director of the sanctioned cruise game does not have to submit a Monthly Financial Report form.
- When 18 or more boards are played, the awards will follow the scale of 80% of open games.
- When 12-17 boards are played, the current scale of 50% of open games will apply
- Directors also may hold Newcomer games if warranted.
- ACBL regulations require that these games have a club or higher rated director.

As a supplement to the cruise games authorized, cruise championships may be scheduled in accordance with the following regulations:

- A limit of one cruise championship event every 14 days may be held during the cruise. The event may be of one or two sessions. Typical cruise championship events are open pairs, men's and women's pairs, mixed pairs, and individuals.
- Masterpoint awards for cruise championships are 80% of an open game championship. Players who earn masterpoints in a cruise game receive their points from ACBL.

Directors or managers on cruise ships need not pay the per table session fees, but must submit club masterpoint reports to ACBL at the end of the cruise. The report should include the dates of the cruise, name of the ship, and the cruise sanction number. Send the report to cruisepoints@acbl.org.

J. LAND CRUISES

The sanction fees for land cruises are the same as they are for ship cruises. The only difference is that the "cruise" is held on land. Land cruises that operate at a single site in an ACBL country for more than 14 days will be sanctioned as a club game and report as one. All other land cruises held in an ACBL country that are open to all ACBL members will be able to award masterpoints at full open club value. ACBL would consider, for example, a sanctioned bridge game held over a weekend at a vacation resort as a single land cruise.

K. SANCTIONED ONLINE COMPUTER GAMES

Sanctioned online games award masterpoints that have no pigmentation. The total number of masterpoints available to be awarded in an online club game is the same as in a comparably sized face-to-face game.

Computer networks running ACBL sanctioned games must meet specific criteria including but not limited to: ease of use, clarity of presentation, availability of rated director online, ability to enroll ACBL members online, ability to transfer masterpoint information to ACBL electronically, and the ability to provide concise achievement records.

L. AD HOC GAMES

A club may run up to two ad hoc regularly sanctioned masterpoint games per calendar year at a date and time not currently sanctioned. These games are subject to the same rules and fees as a normal club masterpoint game.

M. Games with Prepared Deals

Regular Club games with a masterpoint limit of 20 or less (0-5, 0-10, 0-20) are allowed to use prepared lesson hands for teaching purposes. A prepared hand is set up to allow students to practice a specific skill. The game must consist of at least six but no more than 12 boards and be held in conjunction with lessons. A minimum of at least eight players is required. If there are only two tables, the game must be run as a team event, individual event or Swiss pair game. Masterpoint awards are based on the club masterpoint games award chart. The normal table fees, if any, for club games are applicable.

V. GAME MOVEMENTS

A movement is the method of progression during the game, indicating the seat to be occupied and the boards to be played by each player at each round.

A. PAIR MOVEMENTS

A club may conduct pair games of any legal size (two and one-half or more tables) using either Howell or Mitchell movements. When 14 or more tables are in play, it is permissible to split the game into two sections, with each section containing at least seven tables. Duplicated boards are desirable but not mandatory.

The most commonly used pair movements are:

MITCHELL: This movement keeps the pairs in two groups, N-S and E-W, with the aim of having all N-S pairs meeting all E-W pairs and playing all the boards. Typically the boards move one table lower and the players one table higher each round. There is a winner for each section for both the N-S and E-W pairs with the highest score.

HOWELL: This movement produces one winner from a field in which all pairs play each of the boards in play, with comparison in direct competition with other pairs on approximately half of the boards, and adverse comparison on the other boards.

B. INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENTS

A club may run individual games (two or more tables) with either Rainbow or Shomate movements:

RAINBOW: This is a movement in which contestants are divided into groups corresponding to their original starting directions, with separate instructions for progressing to each group.

SHOMATE: This movement (also called an irregular rainbow) does not keep the players in a particular group, thus allowing comparison across the field.

C. TEAM MOVEMENTS

A board-a-match team game can be run with a regular board-a-match movement, a Mirror movement, or any other approved movement.

