



American Contract
Bridge League

Club Discipline Regulations

The purpose of this article is to discuss the impact upon sanctioned games at clubs of the most recent changes to the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR).

The basic rules governing discipline by clubs have been changed very little. A club's disciplinary process is its own. ACBL only has jurisdiction and rules governing discipline imposed by a club in very limited circumstances. Please refer to the ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations (HB), Chapter Four, Section Three, IV, H Club Discipline for specifics.

Club Discipline

Club management should deal promptly and fairly with all cases of improper conduct that occur during an ACBL-sanctioned masterpoint game in the club, including cases of unethical practices. The club manager should either handle these situations personally or establish a standing committee to review all disciplinary problems. Clubs holding non-sanctioned games may deal with problems arising in these games as they see fit.

The club manager can handle many behavior problems by discussing them with the offenders, by issuing a warning, or declaring a period of probation. In extreme cases or cases of repeat offenses, the manager can bar the player from the club game for a stipulated period of time, or permanently.

No open club may bar a player or players as a class, based upon the player's race, creed, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical handicap or on his proficiency at bridge.

Unless a non-ACBL member is currently suspended or expelled from participation in an ACBL sanctioned event at that club is at the sole discretion of the club management and ACBL has no jurisdiction. Therefore, except for a barring alleged to be for the above discriminatory reasons, these regulations do not apply (i.e. the ACBL requirements and rights enumerated in this section do not extend to non-ACBL members).

Except as detailed in the previous paragraph, a club may bar a player for whatever reason it deems proper and consistent with ACBL Rules and Regulations and the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge. An obnoxious or incompatible partnership may be barred as a pair, but each may be permitted to play with other partners.

To bar a ACBL member, club management must notify the player in writing and send a copy of the notification to the ACBL Club Membership Department.

The notification must include the player's name and player number and the reason for the barring.

An open club can bar players from its regularly scheduled club masterpoint games, membership games, ACBL-wide games, club championships, charity and international fund club championships, and other special events specifically allocated to clubs as outlined above.

These regulations also apply to a club with an invitational sanction except that the club has the additional authority to refuse admittance to an invitational game to someone who does not meet the criteria upon which the invitational sanction is based (e.g. a player who has 500 masterpoints is denied admittance to an invitational game that is limited to players with less than 300 masterpoints).

If the member feels that his barring does not comply with these regulations prohibiting barring players as a class, religious or political affiliations, race, creed, sexual orientation, national origin, physical disability or proficiency at bridge, he may appeal the barring to the unit disciplinary committee. Appeals from the unit disciplinary committee may be filed in accordance with and under the authority of the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations. Until the appeal is lodged and heard, the player remains barred unless reinstated by the club unless a stay is granted by the Unit Disciplinary Chairperson.

A club may extend the barring of an ACBL member from Grand National teams, North American Pair events, STaCs, qualifying sessions of a progressive sectional, ACBL-wide games, unit or district competitions, and/or unit-wide or district-wide championships held at the club. A member so barred may appeal the extension of the barring under the process described in the previous paragraph. In such cases, the written notice to the member barred must include the member's right to appeal the action to the Unit Disciplinary Committee in which the club is located within thirty days of the action taken by the club. Such written notice is required, otherwise the barring shall not be effective.

Unless the discipline includes suspension or expulsion from the sanctioned game, ACBL rules and regulations regarding discipline imposed by the club do not apply. These “minor” sanctions are completely between the player and club management.

The following games at clubs are the current games to which the extension of the barring applies. If a game is not listed, it comes under the club barring.

- NAP
- GNT
- STaC
- Progressive Qualifier
- District-wide Championship
- Unit Championship
- Unit-wide Game
- Unit Extended Team Game
- Unit Charity Game
- Unit-wide Charity Game

If the discipline imposed is barring (suspension for a specified time or lifetime expulsion), ACBL rules and regulations (per the ACBL Handbook) come into play. See chart below for a short summary of these rules.

| Action | Notifications in Writing | Notification must include | Appeal Rights | Appellate Body |
|---|---|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Barring from club sponsored games | 1. Barred person 2. ACBL Club Department | 1. Barred person’s name and ACBL player number. 2. Reason for barring. | Only if the barring is alleged to be for religious or political affiliation, race, national origin, physical disability or bridge proficiency. | Unit Disciplinary Committee |
| Barring from ACBL, unit or district sponsored games | 1. Barred person 2. ACBL Club Department | 1. Barred person’s name and ACBL player number. 2. Reason for barring. 3. Person’s right to appeal to the Unit Disciplinary Committee within 30 days. | No limitations on reasons, but the appellant should include reason why the appeal is being made. Appeal must be submitted within 30 days of the action being taken. | Unit Disciplinary Committee |

Change to Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR)

Irrespective of discipline imposed by a club, the unit has jurisdiction over participants in ACBL sanctioned games conducted in its geographical area. A unit has no authority over a club's disciplinary process and only limited appellate jurisdiction over a club's decision to bar a person from its games

The changes made to the CDR affect the jurisdiction of units, districts and ACBL over participants in ACBL sanctioned games held by a club. One of the main goals is to extend the club the opportunity to resolve matters within the club and eliminate the right of a participant to go elsewhere when dissatisfied with the club's resolution.

Changes to Code of Disciplinary Regulations

Effective January 1, 2015

2. Jurisdiction

2.1 Of Units, Districts and ACBL (see also 2.2)

2.1.1 A Unit has jurisdiction over:

- a. Members of the Unit when such a member is participating in a sanctioned event or other activity sponsored by a Unit, District or ACBL.
- b. Persons participating in a sanctioned event or other activity sponsored by a Unit, District or ACBL held within the Unit's geographical boundaries.
- c. Managers and or staff of clubs located in a unit's geographical area in relation to complaints brought pursuant to CDR 2.1.6.
- d. Persons participating in a club sponsored ACBL sanctioned event held within the Unit's geographical boundaries relating to complaints of alleged cheating by use of signals, other unauthorized information, other forms of cheating, or serious breaches of ethics.

Note: In d. above, the unit retains jurisdiction over participants in club sponsored games when the complaint is an allegation of cheating or a serious breach of bridge ethics.

2.1.2 A District has jurisdiction over:

- a. Persons participating in a sanctioned event or other activity sponsored by a Unit, District or ACBL held within its geographical boundaries (District Disciplinary Committee).

- b. Decisions of a tournament disciplinary committee from a tournament held in the district's geographical area, a member unit's disciplinary committee and the district's disciplinary committee and the charged person or persons in each for appellate purposes only. (District Appellate Committee).

2.1.3 The ACBL has jurisdiction over:

- a. Members of ACBL or others disciplined, for appellate purposes only, except where otherwise specified in the CDR.
- b. Persons participating in a sanctioned event or other activity sponsored by a Unit, District or ACBL held under its jurisdiction.
- c. ACBL members who have been disciplined or sanctioned by any other bridge organization.
- d. Members of ACBL or others disciplined, for appellate purposes only, except where otherwise specified in the CDR.
- e. Person's participating in a sanctioned event or other activity sponsored by a unit, district or ACBL held under its jurisdiction.
- f. Violations of CDR sections 3.24, 3.25, 3.26, 3.27 and 3.28

2.1.4 A Tournament Disciplinary Committee, as well as the disciplinary committee of the sponsoring organization, has jurisdiction over persons in attendance at that tournament. Notwithstanding the above, the disciplinary committee of the sponsoring organization has the right to hear a matter within its jurisdiction beyond the date or dates of the tournament. If such right is not exercised, the matter may be referred to the member's Unit pursuant to CDR 2.1.1.

2.1.5 None of the disciplinary bodies noted in CDR 2.2 has jurisdiction over an ACBL employee (member or not) in pursuit of his or her employment with the ACBL.

2.1.6 Except for ACBL Management in accordance with CDR 2.2.5, none of the disciplinary bodies noted in CDR 2.2 has jurisdiction over the club's manager or staff based on actions taken in pursuit of their club activities unless the action is brought by ACBL management.

2.1.7 Except for CDR 2.1.1(d) and except at a unit sponsored club as defined in the definitions section, units, districts and ACBL have no original jurisdiction over behavior at club sponsored games.