

DISTRICT 19 GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS 2018-2019

CONDITIONS OF CONTEST

INTRODUCTION

The Grand National Teams (GNT) is a grass-roots event that begins at the club level, continues with the District Finals competition in the spring, and concludes at the Summer North American Bridge Championships. Players qualify as individuals at the club level and may form new partnerships and/or teams for the District Finals stage. There are four flights: Open Championship Flight, Flight A, Flight B, and Flight C. The winning team in each flight at the District Finals is invited to participate in the national finals of the GNT at the Summer NABC. District 19 awards the team representing the District in each flight a subsidy to assist with transportation and lodging expenses, provided they meet conditions discussed herein. Teams that win the District Finals are expected to represent the District in the national finals or, if they cannot, to immediately so inform the District GNT Coordinator. Captains must verify that team members will play the entirety of the national finals; entering the national finals with the knowledge that one cannot compete throughout that event is a violation of ACBL ethics guidelines.

Subsidies. The winning team in each flight at the District Finals is eligible to receive a subsidy as follows: US-resident players will receive US\$2,000 (team total subsidy); Canada-resident players will receive CA\$ equivalent. This subsidy is paid only if a team commits to play in the national finals to the point of their elimination (or event win) and in accordance with the ACBL Conditions of Contest (CoC). Otherwise, eligibility for the subsidy transfers to the second place finishing team, as discussed under the sections “STAGE TWO – District Finals, **Augmentation and Eligibility for District Subsidies**” below.

Precedence. “ACBL SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF CONTEST GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS 2018-2019” and the 2018-19 District 19 GNT Conditions of Contest may be found at the link below. In the event of conflicts between the ACBL CoC and the District CoC, the ACBL CoC takes precedent.

http://www.acbl.org/tournaments_page/charts-rules-and-regulations/tournament-specific-regulations/conditions-of-contest/conditions-of-contest-grand-national-teams/

District 19 GNT Coordinator

Tim White 8121 SE79th St., Mercer Island, WA. 98040
Phone: 206-979-9041
email: trkwhite@gmail.com

District 19 Director

Marv Norden 4214 Pincushion Pl., Peachland, BC V0H 1X5
Phone (250) 767-6446 (home)
email: marv.norden@gmail.com

The District GNT Coordinator shall have discretion on all issues of qualifications and interpretation of these Conditions of Contest. In any questions where the District GNT Coordinator is charged with discretionary responsibilities involving players in a flight in which the Coordinator is currently playing, the District Director (if available), in consultation with the event Director in Charge, will have discretion in lieu of the District GNT Coordinator; otherwise the Director in Charge will have discretion.

KEY DATES

September 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 constitutes the time period for the club-level qualification stage (STAGE ONE) within District 19.

March 16 & 17, 2019: **District 19 Flight A Finals** in Everett, WA.

March 16, 2019: **District 19 Flight C Finals** in Everett, WA.

April 13 & 14, 2019: **District 19 Open Championship and Flight B Finals** in Victoria, BC.

July 17 - 21, 2019: **National Finals at the Summer North American Bridge Championships in Las Vegas, NV.** (Note: the national finals for all flights will begin on Wednesday afternoon, July 17, the day immediately preceding the beginning of other play in the NABC.)

FLIGHT MASTERPOINT LIMITS:

Open Championship Flight: unlimited masterpoints

Flight A: all members of the team under 6000 masterpoints

Flight B: all members of the team under 2500 masterpoints

Flight C: all members of the team under 500 masterpoints and Non-Life Masters

Flight eligibility is established by players' masterpoint totals as of the September 2018 masterpoint cycle, as reflected in the ACBL's masterpoint run produced in Horn Lake, MS on August 6, 2018. Masterpoints won after this cycle will not impact flight eligibility.

A player's masterpoints won and bridge experience in other organizations will be taken into account by the Director for placement in the flights. The Director is authorized to make decisions on a player's classification.

To encourage increased participation, individuals, pairs or teams are allowed to compete in more than one District Finals flight, see "STAGE TWO – District Finals, **Entry in More than One Flight**" below. Should a player or players prove victorious in more than one flight, he, she, or they must immediately declare to the District GNT Coordinator the flight in which they choose to represent the District in the national finals. This could potentially require that a second place team be the District's representative in the national finals in a flight. That said, the mere presence of a player with victories in more than one flight does not "poison" the eligibility for other team members – augmentation and replacement provision discussed herein would apply.

DISTRICT 19 FINALS DATES, VENUES, SESSION TIMES AND REGISTRATION

Open Championship Flight and Flight B Finals:

Dates: April 13 & 14, 2019. (Note: this event will be co-located with the Victoria Regional.)

Venue: Victoria Conference Centre, 720 Douglas St., Victoria, BC V8W 3M7.

Session Times: Saturday April 13, 2019 at 1:00pm & 7:00pm and Sunday April 14, 2019 at 10:00am & TBA

Parking at the Victoria Conference Centre is \$10/day with in & out privileges – *ask for the bridge rate.*

Flight A Finals:

Dates: March 16 & 17, 2019. (Note: this event will be co-located with the Everett Unit 437 Sectional.)

Flight C Finals:

Date: March 16, 2019. Two full sessions of play are guaranteed for all Flight C entrants. (Note: this event will be co-located with the Everett Unit 437 Sectional.)

For the Flight A and Flight C Finals:

Venue: Beautiful Savior Hall, 12810 35th Ave SE, Everett, WA 98208.

Session Times: Saturday March 16, 2019 at 12:30pm & 6:30pm and Sunday March 17, 2019 at 10:00am & TBA

Directions to Beautiful Savior Hall: From I-5 take exit 186 for WA-96E/128th St SW.

Head east onto WA-96E/128th St SW for ~2.2 miles (128th St SW turns into 132nd St SE). Turn left onto 35th Ave SE. Turn left into driveway; Savior Hall is the 2-story building. Parking is limited on Sunday; carpooling is recommended.

Registration: There is no pre-registration. Players' qualification status, and thus whether they are subject to the BUY-IN fee discussed below, will be checked when they purchase their entry.

STAGES OF PLAY

The Grand National Teams are conducted in three stages: STAGE ONE is club-level qualification; STAGE TWO is the District Finals; the third stage is the national finals.

STAGE ONE – Club-level Qualification

Any sanctioned club may conduct STAGE ONE qualifying games during the qualifying period. No STAGE ONE game may be scheduled in conflict with any portion of the following:

- North American Bridge Championships
- District 19 Regional Tournaments
- The District Finals of the North American Pairs
- National championship events of the US Bridge Federation or the Canadian Bridge Federation

Participation Guidelines. Any of four to six players may form a team for STAGE ONE competition. This team need not compete together at future stages. Each member of a team that qualifies may play with a new partner and/or teammates when participating in the District Finals (STAGE TWO), no matter how many players qualified at a particular club. The purposes of STAGE ONE competition are to provide for qualification to the District Finals by local event play and to raise funds to provide subsidies to the four teams representing District 19 at the national finals. Anyone from anywhere, including a player who is not an ACBL member, is permitted to play in STAGE ONE club-level qualification games, however non-members will not earn qualification for the next stage.

Game Reports and Sanction Fees. GNT club qualification game reports and sanction fees are to be submitted to ACBL in accordance with ACBLscore®.

District Surcharge. District 19 applies a US\$4.00 (CA\$ equivalent) per table surcharge to club-level GNT qualification games, whether a one-session or two-session event is held. The surcharge helps fund subsidies District 19 awards to the District Finals winning teams to represent the District at the national finals. The surcharge is separate from, and in addition to, game sanction fees to be remitted to ACBL. BC-located clubs may remit the surcharge to the District in \$CA at the exchange rate in effect at the time of the club-level qualification game.

Note to club mangers: Clubs MUST send copies of the final results of each STAGE ONE GNT qualification game to the District 19 GNT Coordinator (contact information above) along with a check for the District surcharge, as soon as game results are finalized.

Game Set-Up. The Grand National Teams is run in four flights, see masterpoint limits above. In STAGE ONE competition, clubs may combine the four flights into one stratified event. (STAGE ONE games are normally stratified into three stratifications with the Open Championship and A Flights together in the top stratification.) A club may also schedule games that are limited to one, two, or three of the four flights, as long as it offers at least one opportunity for players within each of the four GNT flights to qualify.

STAGE ONE games may be one-session or two-session games. In a one-session game, all teams must play at least 24 boards. In a two-session game, all teams must play at least 48 boards total (but the number of boards played by an individual may vary). The Director must be a club- or higher-rated Director, and may play if there are 17 teams or fewer. Clubs may decide which conventions to allow in STAGE ONE competition, however it is suggested that the ACBL General Convention Chart (Basic+ Chart once implemented) be the limit, even in matches between two teams in Flight A or the Open Flight.

The format for a STAGE ONE qualifying game may be decided at game time, when the number of teams is known. Any of the following may be used:

- Swiss Teams scored by Victory Points or by Win-Loss
- Round Robin Teams scored by Victory Points, by net IMPs, or by Win-Loss
- Any other ACBL-acceptable team format

Qualification to District Finals. In STAGE ONE games, individuals qualify within a stratification for the next stage by being on a team that accomplishes any of the following:

- wins one-half or more of their matches in a Swiss Teams (a tie is one-half win)
- finishes average or higher in the scoring system used to rank teams (VP or win-loss)
- finishes "middle or higher" within a stratification in the scoring system used

Note to club directors: ACBLscore® does not always qualify every eligible team by the above criteria. It might be necessary for the club to add manual qualifications before making the results official.

In order to gain eligibility to play in the District Finals, players who have not qualified in a STAGE ONE club-level qualification game may elect to pay a BUY-IN fee as described below in "STAGE TWO – District Finals."

STAGE TWO – District Finals

Eligibility Requirements. A player must be a member of the ACBL to be eligible to participate in the District Finals and national finals. A player must be a member of a Unit within the District to be eligible to participate in the District Finals and to represent the District in the national finals. To be eligible for STAGE TWO, a player must have qualified in a STAGE ONE club-level qualification game, or must "BUY-IN" as provided for herein.

Residency Requirements. A member's address of residence on record with ACBL HQ as of September 1 of the calendar year prior to the Grand National Teams national finals shall establish the District in which the member is eligible to participate beyond the club-level qualification stage. The ACBL's Credentials Committee may request documentary evidence from a member whose eligibility is in question.

Players wishing an exception from these residency requirements must have the approval of the District Directors of both the District of the player's residency of record and the District in which the player wishes to play. Both District Directors must agree for the exception to be granted. For the Open Championship Flight, this written permission (email acceptable) from both District Directors will be forwarded to the ACBL's Credentials Committee for final review and approval/disapproval. If the District Directors do not provide their approval, the exception is not granted. There is no appeal from this decision.

Per Session Entry Fees. Per session entry fees will be the same as current D19 regional session entry fees as set by the D19 Board of Directors. At US-sited District Finals venues, entry fees are remitted in US dollars and at Canada-sited District Finals

venues entry fees are remitted in Canadian dollars. There is no provision for credit card payment of entry fees.

BUY-IN Fees. As discussed in the section STAGE ONE – Club-level Qualification above, to gain eligibility to play in the District Finals, players who have not qualified in a STAGE ONE club-level qualification game may elect to pay a BUY-IN fee. At US-sited District Finals venues, this fee is US\$25 for each unqualified player to a maximum of US\$100 per team. At Canada-sited District Finals venues, the BUY-IN fee is CA\$30 for each unqualified player to a maximum of CA\$120 per team. The BUY-IN fee is paid at the time of entry at the District Finals and is in addition to District Finals session entry fees.

Qualification. To qualify to play in the District Finals a player (a) must be a member of a qualifying team in a STAGE ONE competition, playing at least 50% of the boards that the team played, or (b) alternatively may "BUY-IN" at the District Finals as provided for herein. Players qualify during STAGE ONE as individuals in the Flight(s) qualified for by their team(s) as well as any flight below the qualified flight for which the player is also eligible. Players may form new partnerships and teams with which to compete at the District Finals.

Entry in More than One Flight. The District conducts the Finals for flights at a single location in a Saturday-Sunday event each spring, with the exception that Flight C commences and completes in a single day – in this year's case on Saturday. Open Championship & Flight B Finals and Flight A & Flight C Finals are conducted on separate weekends at separate venues. Players, partnerships and teams thus may elect (and are encouraged) to play in more than one flight in the District Finals. However, if they do so and successfully qualify for the national finals in more than flight, they must – immediately upon completion of the later of the two separate District Finals competitions – declare to the District GNT Coordinator in which Flight they will represent the District in the national finals. In this way the District GNT Coordinator can then coordinate as necessary with captains of first and second place teams of affected flights to establish District representation in the national finals.

Augmentation. Other than approved substitutions and approved replacements (see "OTHER REGULATIONS" below), no augmentation of a team is allowed during the District Finals once the event has begun.

Eligibility for District Subsidies. At the District Final, the winning team in each flight will qualify for the District subsidy to attend the national finals. At least three members of the winning team must agree to participate in the national finals, with augmentation permitted as provided for under "OTHER REGULATIONS" below. If a team winning the District Final cannot participate in the national finals under these conditions, the District subsidy will go to the second place team, if they can participate in the national finals as specified above. If both District finalist teams are unable to participate in the national finals, the District GNT Coordinator and the District Director will attempt to combine the two teams to form a team to represent the District in the national finals. If a team

cannot be formed in this fashion to represent the District, then no team will be sent to the national finals.

Permissible Conventions. Contestants are permitted to use only the following convention charts:

- Open Championship Flight: Open+
- Flight A: Open
- Flight B: Basic+
- Flight C: Basic+

Game Set-Up. The expected number of boards per session is set at 30 in the Open Championship Flight and Flight A, 28 in Flight B, and 24 in Flight C. The Director determines the format of the event for each flight depending on the number of teams entered.

All knockout matches are scored in IMPs. All round robin and Swiss Teams matches are scored in IMPs and each match is converted to Victory Points to decide the order of finish. Ties in qualifying round robin or Swiss Teams affecting (a) progression to the second day Knockout stage (event semifinals and finals) or (b) which team finishes in first place and thus gets first choice of semi-final opponents, will be broken as described in the section below. Ties involving the teams surviving to the Knockout stage will be broken with additional boards scored in IMPs as follows:

- If two semifinals teams are tied for one spot in the finals stage, a four-board match will be played between the teams. If a tie then remains, two-board matches will be played until a winner is determined.
- If more than two teams are tied, the Director will determine the nature of the tie-breaking procedure; a short round-robin or knockout round or rounds may be required. The Director may also postpone the start time of the survivor's match to allow for a reasonable break after the tie-breaking procedure.

Most likely formats for the event:

Two Teams: A two-session match on Saturday decides the championship.

Three Teams: The teams will play a two-session round robin knockout to eliminate one team on Saturday. If there is a tie in number of head-to-head wins, it will be broken by total net IMPs. If a tie still remains, it will be broken by number of head-to-head boards won between the teams that tied (as in Board-a Match). The two finalists will play a two-session match on Sunday.

Applicable to Flight B only: If only three teams participate in Flight B, it will be a one-day event.

Four Teams: Teams will play a two-session full round robin on Saturday, with two teams advancing to play a two-session finals match on Sunday. In the event of a tie for the second place position that qualifies for play on Sunday, the tie will be broken by the

number of matches won in the round robin. If a tie still remains, the tie will be broken by head-to-head result. If a tie still exists, the tie will be broken by net IMPs scored.

Five to Eleven Teams: Teams will play a two-session full round robin on Saturday to reduce the field to four teams. In the event of a tie for the top qualifying position or the final qualifying position, the tie will be broken by the number of matches won in the round robin. If a tie still remains, the tie will be broken by head-to-head result. If a tie still exists, the tie will be broken by net IMPs scored. The semi-finals and finals will each be single-session matches on Sunday. The top qualifying team from the round robin will pick its semi-final opponent from among the third- and fourth-place finishers.

Twelve or More Teams: Teams will play a two-session Swiss Teams on Saturday to reduce the field to four teams. In the event of a tie for the top qualifying position or the final qualifying position, the tie will be broken by the number of matches won in the Swiss. If a tie still remains, the tie will be broken by head-to-head result. If a tie still exists, the tie will be broken by net IMPs scored. The semifinals and finals will each be single-session matches on Sunday. The top qualifier from the Swiss Teams phase on Saturday will pick its semi-final opponent from among the third- and fourth-place finishers.

OTHER REGULATIONS

Substitutes. At STAGE ONE, temporary substitutes are allowed at the discretion of the Director. A substitute player who plays at least 50% of the boards is eligible for qualification to the District Finals. For the District Finals (STAGE TWO), substitutes must be approved in advance by the District GNT Coordinator or the District Director. No substitute may be allowed to play more than 24 boards nor more than 50% of the total boards played in the District Finals. Substitutes at all levels may not appreciably strengthen the team. No substitute may be used if four members of the team are available to participate.

Replacements. The permanent replacement of a player who, for cause, cannot continue in the event is permitted only with the permission of the District GNT Coordinator or, in his or her absence, the Director. (A team whose player is removed for cause shall NOT be eligible to continue to the next stage and shall be removed from the field by the Director at the first reasonable opportunity.) Prior to replacement, the replacement need not have played in the event, but must:

- be a member of District 19
- not have played in the event beyond STAGE ONE, and
- not appreciably strengthen the team

A replaced player permanently leaves the event with all masterpoints earned and the replacement earns masterpoints thereafter. A team cannot start the District Final competition with a non-qualified replacement. However, the proposed member may follow the BUY-IN procedure. All team starting members must have qualified at STAGE

ONE or "BUY-IN." Replacement players are not allowed if a team has four members available.

Minimum Participation Requirements. Members of teams are required to play at least 50% of boards in each session, except that a member may choose to play one full session of a two-session Swiss. A team becomes ineligible to continue in the event when fewer than three members of the original team can continue and meet the play percentage requirements.

Augmentation for National Finals. Teams advancing to represent the District in the national finals may apply to augment their teams. Augmentation does not relieve a team of the requirement that at least three of its members who participated in the District Finals must play in the national finals. Augmenting players are expected to be equal in strength to the other players on the team. It is District policy to exclude from the augmentation pool any player who has not played in a prior STAGE of the event. Augmentation requests must be submitted to the District GNT Coordinator for coordination and approval. Submission shall be via email and shall take place **no later than 45 days** prior to the starting date of the NABC at which the national finals will be held. If the District GNT Coordinator determines that the augmentation request is merited, he or she will forward the request to ACBL Headquarters with a recommendation for approval. Final augmentation approval authority is with ACBL.