



American Contract  
Bridge League

# I/N Tournament and Program Planning Guide



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## Introduction

Intermediate/Newcomer sectionals and I/N regionals are run exclusively for players with a limited masterpoint holding and stand alone; I/N programs also are run for players with a limited number of masterpoints and are organized as a part of a regular sectional or regional tournament.

The material in this guide has been designed to assist in planning and running a successful regional or sectional I/N tournament or program.

If the ACBL can be of any assistance to you in the development of your I/N tournament or program, send an email to [marketing@acbl.org](mailto:marketing@acbl.org) or call the Marketing Department at 662-253-3112.

If you have questions about scheduling, sanctioning or directors, please contact the Bridge Administration Department at [tournaments@acbl.org](mailto:tournaments@acbl.org) or at 662-253-3100, ext. 3164.

## I/N Tournaments vs. I/N Programs

An Intermediate/Newcomer program should not be confused with simply scheduling newcomer games at a tournament. An I/N program is a collection of bridge activities designed for new and advancing players.

I/N tournaments offer all I/N program components in a relaxed atmosphere, among fellow Intermediate and Newcomer players. When these elements are combined, a tournament becomes an ideal experience for new players who are interested in competitive bridge.

### Components of the ACBL I/N program are:

- ♠ Games for 0-5, 0-20, 0-49er, 0-99er, 0-199er and 0-299er players each session
- ♠ New Player Services Committee
- ♠ Directors who are experienced in working with newcomers
- ♠ Fliers to invite the players and guarantee partners
- ♠ Celebrity speakers
- ♠ Social events
- ♠ A special area or room for the I/N games
- ♠ Trophies for each overall win in a newcomer event
- ♠ An area that highlights the winners

A unit or district is encouraged to offer an I/N program in conjunction with all of its sectional or regional tournaments. An I/N program does not require a separate sanction.

## I/N Sectional and Regional Tournament Allocations

Limited/Junior Sectionals must be at least one day and no more than five days in duration. A Limited Sectional is defined as a sectional with a masterpoint limit of no more than 500. A unit may not schedule more than three one-day Limited Sectionals in any calendar year.

Each district is entitled to run three limited regionals which may be any of the following:

- A. Junior
- B. Youth
- C. Non-Life Master regional with an upper limit of 750 masterpoints.

These regionals can be held concurrently with an open sectional or a senior regional. A district may allow a unit to conduct its I/N regional.

A unit can run its own I/N tournaments, or it can give one or more I/N sectional sanctions to a club under its jurisdiction. An I/N sectional sponsored by a unit should be organized to attract players from a larger area, whereas one run by a club may attract only local players and should be organized accordingly.

# Tournament Timeline

## Three Years to One Year Out

### Choosing a Site

Prior to applying for a sectional sanction, a unit should appoint a Tournament Chair, select dates for the tournament and secure a site.

When selecting a site, a few things to keep in mind are:

**Location safety** – Is there a lighted parking lot? Is it in a good part of town?

**Amenities** – Are there enough bathrooms? Is the lighting (especially at night) sufficient for card play?

**Hotel discounts** – (Regionals) Check with hotels located within easy walking distance (if possible) of the playing site for a weekend package deal. Some hotels give special rates for rooms and also serve a complimentary breakfast. If enough rooms are booked for the tournament, the unit or district might be offered one or more complimentary rooms to use as a hospitality suite or to house volunteer workers.

**University campuses** – Some universities offer sites on their campus that can be rented as playing space. They may also offer rooms and a meal plan. These dormitory locations are attractive to bridge players. They allow the players to enjoy tournaments where lodging, dining and playing can be arranged under the same roof. Campus sites can often be secured during summer break or long holiday weekends. Check with the local college or universities in your town to discover these super bargains.

**State parks** – Tournaments held in these locations can be fun for the entire family. Parks with a resort facility generally offer special rates during the “off” season. Not only can you get special room rates, but you might also arrange extra discounts for meals that come with the plan. Resort parks may offer golf, swimming, fishing, boating or other activities for non-bridge-playing family members to enjoy while the bridge player is happily playing.

**Chamber of Commerce** – Check with your local Chamber of Commerce for other conventions and activities scheduled for the weekend you are considering for your bridge tournament. It is important that you verify that hotel rooms will be available for your out-of-town players before making a final date selection.

Once the site is chosen, meet with site management to discuss the necessary arrangements for the tournament. Site management will use these notes to create a set of specifications for the tournament to distribute to their staff.

The items on the following checklist should be discussed and agreed upon at that time.

## Tournament Site Checklist

Once the site has been chosen, meet with the facility management to discuss the necessary arrangements for the tournament. The site management will use these notes to create a set of specifications for the tournament to distribute to their staff.

The items on the following checklist should be discussed and agreed upon at that time.

- Playing space** - ACBL requires at least 81 square feet per table with extra room for director's tables, water stands, book vendors, etc. as needed. A copy of the projected playing area should be sent to the Director-in-Charge. If there are any changes, a revised copy of the floor plan should be sent to the DIC of the tournament.
- Lighting** - At least 20-foot candles of illumination, 30 inches above the floor, are needed for all tables. Additional lighting may be necessary, particularly at the director's table.
- Tables and chairs** - Arrange for table and/or chair rentals if necessary.
- Smoking** - Areas for smoking must conform to local and state law.
- Extra tables** - If possible, six- and eight-foot tables are needed for directors, Partnership Desk, Hospitality Desk, bookstore, supplies, water tables, etc. Impress upon the facility the need for frequent maintenance of the water stations.
- Director's office (Regional)** - At least a 12x18 sq. ft. room that can be locked is needed for supplies and the director's office.
- Hotel rooms (Regional)** - Book enough rooms for staff and volunteers and a hospitality suite at the host or nearby hotels. A room block should be reserved for players who wish to stay at or near the tournament site.
- Refreshments** - A provision for coffee and soft drinks must be made.
- Cleanup** - If cleanup is not provided by the facility, other arrangements must be made.
- Microphones** - Microphones may be needed, especially in large rooms.
- Coat racks** - Either coat racks or a check room must be available, especially in cold weather.
- Mirrors** - Any mirrors in the playing room must be covered.
- Food service** - If food is served by the facility, inform them of the hours bridge players will be eating.
- Power** - There need to be power outlets for the director's table and for time clocks.
- Trash** - Large trash containers need to be plentiful throughout the playing rooms.
- Wall space** - If the facility does not allow for hanging recaps and posters on the walls, easels or push pin boards must be provided.
- Daily bulletin** - Arrangements must be made for bulletin production if the tournament chooses to produce one.
- Safe deposit box** - Arrange to have a safe deposit box to store tournament receipts.
- Bookstore** - If the tournament has a bookstore, hall space will be needed.
- Tournament Desks** - Where will the desks for prizes, hospitality (registration), partnerships and information be located?
- Signage** - Some of your committees, such as registration, will need signs and decorations to identify them.



## Sanctioning the I/N Tournament

Before a unit or district applies for a sanction, it should select the dates for the I/N tournament, secure a site and appoint a Tournament Chair (TC). The unit may list a Tournament Correspondent or Tournament Contact if the TC has not been officially named. The TC for this type of tournament is often the Unit Intermediate/Newcomer Coordinator or the Unit Education Liaison if there is no I/N Coordinator appointed.

The sanction application must be submitted through [TourneyTRAX](#) one year prior to an I/N sectional or three years prior to an I/N regional.

Any ACBL member may apply for a sectional or regional tournament.

Applications submitted in a timely fashion are sanctioned subject to conflicts with “traditional” tournaments.

Untimely sanction applications are subject to the regulations governing conflicts. (See the [ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations](#).)

## TourneyTRAX

If you are new to [TourneyTRAX](#), you will need to create an account. You may create the account with the same information that you use for your MyACBL login, but the accounts will remain separate.

To create your account, click on “Click here to register” next to “New User?” on the login screen.

### Tournaments Login



The screenshot shows a login form with the following elements:

- A blue "Sign in" link at the top right.
- Two input fields: "ACBL Member#" and "Password".
- A "Sign in" button below the password field.
- Links for "New User? Click here to register" and "Forgot Password? Click here to request" at the bottom left.

Once you have created your account, login and click “Tournament Application” on the right side of the screen.

Complete all fields (fields with asterisks are required) and submit the application.

**Tournament Application**

**Tournament Basic Information**

Click here to search events by date range & district

Fields marked with an asterisk (\*) are required.

Start Date \*

End Date \*

Tournament Name \*  Application Date : 07/21/15

Category \*  Type \*

District  Unit

MP Restrictions  Conventions Allowed

**Proposed Tournament Site**

Site

Address

City \*  Greater Metropolitan Area

State/Province \*

Zipcode \*  Phone Number

**Hotel Information**

Copy Address from Tournament Site

Name

Address

Local Phone#  Nightly Rate

National Phone#  Book-By Date

Parking Fee

Parking Note

**Menu/Quick Links**

Home

**Applications**

Tournament Application  
STaC Application  
GNT/NAP Application  
My Applications

**Tournaments**

My Tournaments

**Profile**

My Profile  
Frequently Asked Questions  
Contact Us  
Sign Out

**Reports**

Tentative Schedule

**Other Links**

Tutorial Videos  
Volunteers (Coming Soon)  
Application Flow (Coming Soon)  
Tournament Flow (Coming Soon)  
FAQ's (Coming Soon)

TourneyTRAX will automatically select the appropriate District Tournament Coordinator.

Once the application is submitted, it must then be approved by the District Tournament Coordinator before being sanctioned as a tournament.

Only the Tournament Chair is allowed to make certain changes to a tournament. Fliers must be submitted to the ACBL Tournament Coordinator for approval and posting.

## One Year to Eight Months Out

The schedule of events should be done at least eight months before the tournament starts.

I/N Sectionals – One to five days long.

I/N Regionals – Two to six days long.

I/N Programs – Run as part of a regular sectional or regional, this should run concurrently with all of the regular sessions of the tournament to encourage players from out of town to attend.

## **Schedule of Events**

Have the same schedule every day. Offer the same events at the same time both afternoon and evening. Use imagination in naming your events and add morning games and Swiss teams. You can even schedule knockout events.

I/N sectional tournaments can have an upper masterpoint limit of 50, 100, 200, 300 or NLM (500). No matter which limit you select, events for all groups within the selected range should be scheduled each session. For example, there should be events for players who have masterpoints of 0-5, 0-20, 0-50, 0-100, 0-200, 0-300 or 0-NLM (500). The 0-200 and the 0-300 or 0-NLM (500) categories are for intermediates.

By offering all of these single-session events every session, it is easier for players to find partners. With specific activities listed for each session, the Intermediate and Newcomer players will feel invited, and more people will attend. Don't worry about offering so many different events. It's better to have only a few players for a stratification than to have none. Whenever an event attracts too few tables to form a separate game, the director can stratify any two or three groups to create a very enjoyable event.

## **Diverse Scheduling**

The scheduling should be as diverse as possible. Single-session events in all categories are a must, but by all means, offer two-session championship games, too.

Be creative and use special names and themes for each of your events to give them personality. You can name the games after sponsors and/or teachers whose students are playing in the tournament.

Consider a "Best of Two" trophy. A partnership must have the best-combined percentage for both sessions to win, but players can choose to enter only one session. The "Best of Two" event offers more masterpoints than a two-session championship making it a popular game.

Consider a trophy for best overall performance in the tournament. This is an excellent way to highlight someone who participates in a lot of sessions.

## **Bridge Plus+**

Bridge Plus+ is a shorter, friendlier, low-key duplicate experience created especially for students with 0-5 masterpoints who have taken one or more of the ACBL beginning bridge courses. The game is patterned after the students' classroom experience. They play 10 to 14 deals in a two-hour game supervised by an ACBL Accredited Teacher. Use this game at one session of your I/N tournament to introduce local bridge students and social bridge players to duplicate bridge for the first time. Consider starting with a free lesson followed by a Bridge Plus+ game. This is a popular format used with the NABC I/N programs.

Schedule a Bridge Plus+ game (without entry fees) on one afternoon of your tournament. A successful game requires the cooperation of your local bridge teachers. Ask them to distribute free play coupons and encourage their students to come to the Bridge Plus+ games, or allow the teachers to sell entries to their students and keep the money. When the student arrives at the Bridge Plus+ game, give a free play for another session of the tournament. This is an excellent promotional idea. Students who play twice will tend to come back to play in more sessions.

Bridge Plus+ players are encouraged to ask questions on bidding and play. The teacher's job is to guide the players to answer their own questions. Invite local teachers to help out at these sessions.

## One Year to Eight Months Out *Cont.*

### 0-5 Masterpoint Events

Consider having a day or session when the 0-5 players play free. This is an excellent promotional tool to bring in new people. Mail out coupons or ask teachers to distribute them.

ACBL regulations state that three tables constitute a legal game. If there are at least three tables of players with 0-5 masterpoints each, the director should offer them a separate game. These players are more comfortable in a group of their peers. If they have a good time, they are more likely to return to play in another session.

The Director-in-Charge should limit the number of boards played in entry-level games. I/N players often play more slowly than those with more expertise, and they are not conditioned to having a good time playing cards for more than a couple of hours at a time. ACBL regulations state that a minimum of 18 boards must be played in each session to award masterpoints. I/N games run no more than 24 to 25 boards. When these players are able to play more, it's time to move them to an open game. (In Bridge Plus+ games, ACBL requires only 10 to 14 boards. In 0 to 5 games, as few as 10 boards can be played. See the [ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations](#) for details or call the Tournament Department, ext. 3164 for more information.)

### Swiss Teams

Schedule a Swiss team event on Sunday. Also schedule a full complement of pair games (0-5, 0-20, 0-50, 0-100, 0-200, 0-300 and 0-500). Advertising a diverse schedule usually attracts more players, and because new players enjoy playing in team games, having pair games gives you the opportunity to invite new players to participate in the team games if a team is needed to fill out the movement.

### Conventions

The DIC and the Tournament Chair should review the conventions that will be allowed for the I/N tournament. The ACBL Limited Convention Chart may apply for I/N games having an upper limit of 20 masterpoints.

However, ACBL suggests that the ACBL General Convention Chart be allowed in all I/N games. (Click [here](#) to see all of the ACBL Convention Charts.)

## Staffing the Tournament

### Tournament Chair (TC)

The unit appoints the TC who has the overall responsibility for planning and running the tournament. The TC works together with the unit or district board and the unit's Tournament Coordinator to get the tournament sanctioned and to develop a tournament budget. The TC is the sponsoring organization's official liaison with the Director-in-Charge.

The TC should include the I/N Coordinator in the planning and organizing of the I/N tournament/program, or the I/N Coordinator can serve as the TC. The TC should also work with the unit's Education Liaison and the area's bridge teachers to focus on opportunities to bring new players (students) into the games.

To run a successful tournament, the TC must put together an effective team of volunteers for committees.

The TC and/or the I/N Coordinator are responsible for:

- ♥ Ensuring attendance.
- ♥ Providing an attractive selection of events for each group to play in each session.

## One Year to Eight Months Out *Cont.*

- ♥ Providing a friendly environment that will encourage newer players to play more bridge - both at the tournament and club level.
- ♥ Providing social activities for the players.
- ♥ Having a continuous dialog with the I/N players throughout and after the tournament.

### Director-in-Charge (DIC)

ACBL allows a local director to serve as DIC of an I/N sectional if the tournament has an upper masterpoint limit of 100. A sectional for players with more than 100 masterpoints must have a tournament or higher-rated DIC unless use of a local director is approved by ACBL management. All DIC assignments must be made by the ACBL Tournament Department.

I/N regional tournaments must be staffed by an associate national or higher-rated director assigned by the ACBL Tournament Department.

I/N programs held as part of a sectional or regional tournament will use the directorial staff assigned to the tournament. It is suggested that the unit request an I/N director, one who is experienced in working with new players, and that the I/N director work all of the sessions in the I/N program. This will allow the new players to bond with the director and feel a sense of security and familiarity.

The unit or district can request a specific director on the sanction application. These requests will be honored whenever possible.

The DIC handles all aspects of running the I/N tournament. This includes setting up the games, selling the entries, handling the tournament proceeds, supervising the other tournament directors and paying their expenses, handling appeals and completing and submitting the required paperwork.

### Directing Staff

In addition to a DIC, other directors are necessary to help run the tournament. The number of directors you need will be based on the expected attendance.

If you have a personable, local director who would like to work with the I/N directors at the tournament, contact the Tournament Department for information on how to proceed.

### Committees

For smaller tournaments, the work of several committees can be combined. Hospitality, Registration and Membership can all work together. In some cases, groups and individuals will be given specific assignments and asked to report back to the TC.

Committees

- ◆ Publicity and Promotion
- ◆ Hospitality (New Player Services)
- ◆ Partnership
- ◆ Membership
- ◆ Prize
- ◆ Entertainment
- ◆ Caddy

## One Year to Eight Months Out *Cont.*

At the first meeting of each committee, the members should brainstorm about what they can do to ensure the success of the tournament. The TC should then meet regularly with the committee heads for several months before the tournament to review and coordinate the activities of each group. The TC should make regular reports to the unit board as the plans for the tournament develop.

### Publicity and Promotion Committee

The main responsibility of the Publicity and Promotion Committee is to get the word out about the tournament. Publicity and promotion are the key ingredients in attracting outside attendance and ensuring the success of an I/N tournament.

If the new players aren't invited, they won't come. New players like to feel that they were given a personal invitation.

**No tournament publicity should occur until the tournament is sanctioned. In addition, ACBL must approve all tournament advertising before it is printed and distributed. (The approval of your sanction does not imply approval of your schedule of events.)**

**Tournament Flier** – Your flier needs to be bright and cheerful. In addition to the schedule, it should include special features of the I/N tournament or program such as:

- ♣ Guaranteed partners – For anyone who shows up an hour before game time
- ♣ Playing with your peers – All the participants will be Newcomer or Intermediate players with about the same amount of bridge-playing experience
- ♣ I/N tournament directors – Special directors who work well with Newcomers and Intermediate players
- ♣ Free lesson and speaker program
- ♣ Free 0-5 game
- ♣ Free Bridge Plus+ game
- ♣ Entertainment and refreshments
- ♣ Door prizes (goodie bags, etc.)
- ♣ Trophies

To view a sample I/N flier, click [here](#).

**Schedule** – In advertising the schedule, make certain you show the different stratifications on the flier. It is important that each person know there is a specific place for them (e.g., If it's a 199er tournament, show 199er, 99er, 49er, 0-20 and 0-5 newcomers). Remember, the director will try to make the best games possible for the players. What you want is for everyone in every category to know they have a place to play, so they will show up. This is especially important if you are talking about an I/N program as part of a larger tournament.

Never advertise events, as warranted. This will keep people home. Have the same events every day – same stratification and same time. Use your imagination to name the events to increase their appeal and to challenge the players.

Note: The tournament can offer a free game as high as 199er and not have to pay any sanction fees, as long as the game has zero entry fee and is used as a promotional tool to attract new players.

**Extra Activities** – The chair of this committee needs to work with the Entertainment and Hospitality Committees to see what they are planning. The tournament will be fun, so make it sound that way in the flier.

## One Year to Eight Months Out *Cont.*

**Mailings** - A mailing to advertise the I/N program should be made to the group targeted to attend. Select your target group for the mailing based on the number of masterpoints they have earned (0-5, 0-20, 0-50, 0-100, 0-200, 0-300 or Non-Life Master 0- 500 masterpoints). Pressure-sensitive, printed mailing labels can be purchased from the ACBL targeting almost any group you wish in the sponsoring unit. These labels cost \$.25 each for the first 1000 and \$ .15 each label after that (\$20 minimum order). The labels can be ordered by telephone or by email ([listlabel@acbl.org](mailto:listlabel@acbl.org)).

For the best results, mail your advertisements six to eight weeks ahead of the tournament dates. This gives potential participants time to set up partnerships and make arrangements to attend. This is very important for out-of-towners who must make travel and hotel arrangements.

**ACBL Tournament Email Services** - ACBL will send an email announcing your tournament free of charge. For guidelines and instructions, click [here](#).

**Special Funding from ACBL** - The ACBL has a cooperative advertising program (CAP). CAP will refund 50% of eligible advertising costs with a maximum reimbursement of \$500. Qualifying advertisements are date-specific ad campaigns for beginner bridge lessons, newcomer programs, social bridge recruitment events and ACBL member recruitment. Click [here](#) for more information on the ACBL Cooperative Advertising Program.

**Radio and TV Public Service Announcements** - Many commercial radio and television stations will broadcast a certain number of public service announcements (PSAs) every day. By making the Friday night game a charity game, the sponsoring unit often can get free announcements on radio and television. If you are offering free bridge lessons at the tournament, the stations will usually announce them as well. Many newspapers are happy to publish such news in their weekly or monthly calendar of events. Click [here](#) for information on creating a press release.

**Newspaper Articles/TV News Spots** - Call or email the entertainment editor of your local paper and the "about town" news reporter at the local TV stations to tell them about the I/N tournament. You may get some additional free publicity for your local bridge activities by including information about free lessons or a free game.

**Telephone Subcommittee** - The Publicity and Promotion Committee Chair should appoint a telephone subcommittee to contact the I/N players in the unit(s) to encourage them to come to the tournament.

**Social Bridge Players** - Several members of the committee should arrange to visit all social clubs in the area to invite people who play bridge to participate in the I/N tournament. This is an ideal way to give social players a positive, fun introduction to duplicate bridge. Remember, there may well be hundreds of people in your town who have never tried duplicate and who might enjoy the game if you give them a chance to discover that competition can be great fun.

**Area Bridge Teachers** - The committee should coordinate its efforts with the unit's Continuing Education Committee (or Education Liaison) to ask area bridge teachers to invite their students to the tournament. These teachers should receive free invitations for their 0-5 players and fliers to share with all of their students. Give the names of the teachers you are working with to the Hospitality Committee. They should be asked to serve as hosts and hostesses at the playing site. Students like to see familiar faces when they arrive.

**Distributing the Fliers** - Encourage players at the local clubs to take fliers to any social players they know. Ask unit members to post the fliers at libraries, shopping malls, YMCA, YWCA, senior centers and country clubs.

**Convention and Visitors Bureau (Local Chamber of Commerce)** - Check with these groups to see what they might be able to do for your tournament. The Convention and Visitors Bureau sometimes offers giveaways provided by their members (boxes of cereal, perfume, etc.) or a booklet of coupons for your customers to use during the tournament (restaurants, etc.). If you apply in a timely fashion, the Chamber of Commerce may support the tournament with a grant.



## One Year to Eight Months Out *Cont.*

### **Hospitality Committee (New Player Services)**

The main function of the Hospitality Committee is to make the new players feel welcome.

#### **New Player Services (NPS) Program**

It is suggested that you take this opportunity to develop a NPS program for your unit. NPS is primarily a public relations program. A group of unit members serve on a committee where they take turns being in the I/N area, welcoming the players, answering questions and chatting.

New players often venture into club games or their first tournament with more than a slight level of trepidation or fear. Fear of embarrassment or failure may cloud the excitement of an advancing player. NPS Committee members help advancing players put these fears aside. The work of this committee results in a positive experience for the players - one that they will want to repeat again and again - even if they come in last!

Through a NPS program, a group of volunteers are able to greet newcomers with a friendly face while providing information and assistance.

The New Player Services Program Guide can be found [here](#).

By implementing a NPS program in your unit, you will establish a committee that can continue to function at all levels of play to help ease new players into the bridge community. It's a nice feature at a club game, a sectional or a regional. NPS Committee members are encouraged to visit the I/N program at all NABCs to help out.

If the intermediate and newcomer players feel welcome, they will be inclined to attend the unit's future I/N sectionals and regionals.

#### **Hospitality Desk**

The people manning the Hospitality Desk need to be able to answer all types of questions, and when they can't come up with the answer, promise to get back to the player later on.

Set up a table where players can get local information about bridge lessons, club games, local hotels and local restaurants. Take-home materials on these subjects are invaluable. Ask the area clubs to provide fliers listing their newcomer and intermediate game schedules and distribute them during the tournament. Poll local bridge teachers - it's helpful if you can produce a list of the bridge courses currently being offered in the area.

Have on hand an ample supply of ACBL's "Welcome to the World of Duplicate Bridge," a pamphlet that contains valuable information on what to expect at a duplicate game including bidding boxes, Alerts and Announcements, computer scoring and ethics. It also contains the "Fat Free" convention card, a simplified version of the official ACBL convention card.

"Welcome to the World of Duplicate Bridge" can be ordered free of charge from the [ACBL Resource Center](#).

You can download a PDF of the "Fat Free" convention card [here](#). Or order in bulk from [Baron Barclay](#).

#### **Registration Desk**

Set up a desk to register the players and to distribute special registration gifts, or "goodie bags," as they are often called. New players love receiving presents.

Registration cards: Have each player fill out a card so the unit or district can get valuable information on each new player and at the same time properly distribute any gifts.

Gifts: Free plays from local clubs, lists of area clubs, I/N games and bridge teachers, a tournament flier for the next sectional or regional in the area, a convention card holder, an instant scorer (available free from ACBL), a list of restaurants in the area and a candy bar or some other treat are great items to include.



## One Year to Eight Months Out *Cont.*

**Name tags:** Name tags help new players get to know each other. They may be issued at the registration desk, included in the gift bags or made available at the selling desk. To help the new players feel more at ease, the people hosting the tournament should also wear name tags.

**Extras:** The Hospitality Committee should aim to make the room in which the events are played more pleasant and comfortable for the players. For example, the committee can place dishes of hard candies on the registration and Partnership Desk, provide coat racks and hang decorative signs for the various information desks. Balloons, posters, paper flowers, etc., all add a festive air.

### Partnership Committee

**Staffing the Partnership Desk** – Units or districts often staff the Partnership Desk with local intermediate players and newcomers, generally because they have a good feel for matching up other intermediates and newcomers. In addition, these players may be willing to fill in with people who are still looking for partners when it is time for the session to begin.

**Guaranteed Partners** – If you want to attract new players to the tournament, offering a guaranteed partner service is extremely important. Ideally, players seeking partners should arrive one hour before game time. Have a stand-by person ready to play in case there are an odd number of players who need partners. If your volunteer stand-by doesn't get to play, it's a good idea to thank this person for helping out with a free play for another session of the tournament.

**Standby Pairs** – It's a good idea to have a pair of eligible players stand by in case they are needed to fill a game with a half table. Anyone willing to fill in should be allowed to play free.

### Membership Committee

**Membership Desk** – It's a good idea to have a Membership Desk or booth available at your tournament and located with the Hospitality Desk.

**Supplies:** Stock the Membership Desk with instant membership forms (available from the DIC), ACBL's [Your Best Partner In Bridge](#) brochure and [Bridge Life magazine](#). One of the best times to get a new player to join is immediately after winning a masterpoint.

**Help from Local Clubs** – Ask local club managers to help at the Membership Desk and use the instant membership forms that bear pre-designated ACBL player numbers. Memberships issued from this desk can help clubs earn an upgraded club championship and increase rebates to club officials. The club officials can earn the recruitment credit. This is a perk that the unit or district can offer to a club (or clubs) that might have canceled a regularly scheduled game in deference to the tournament.

**Junior Memberships** – ACBL offers a Junior membership to players age 25 and under at a cost of \$15 per year provided the player is enrolled in school. The name of the student's school and the student's birth date must be on the application. A Junior membership entitles a student to:

- ♠ 12 annual issues of the Bridge Bulletin magazine.
- ♠ Participate in the online College Bridge Bowl.
- ♠ Scholarship opportunities.
- ♠ Discounted entry fees to the NABCs and similar discounts at many sectional and regional tournaments.
- ♠ Opportunity to participate in the Junior Team Trials and win a trip to the World Junior Team Championships.

## One Year to Eight Months Out *Cont.*

### Prize Committee

**Overall Awards** – It is suggested that you award trophies for each overall win and overall in each stratification. These awards can be trophies, engraved glasses/mugs, ACBL Bridge Bucks, etc. Trophies of any kind are extremely popular with new players – but if it's a trophy you decide to give, remember the bigger the better.

**Section Top Awards** – Section top awards are nice because they allow more people to collect prizes. Decks of ACBL cards, convention card holders, glasses engraved with the name of the tournament or an item that represents the area are all popular choices.

**Door Prizes** – Door prizes are fun, and you can award them in several ways.

First, fill three separate containers with slips of paper bearing section letters, table numbers and directions, respectively. By drawing one slip from each container, a winner can be determined, (e.g., Section A, Table 3, East).

Another way to award door prizes is to play Bridge Bingo at the end of each session. This will only work well if the games in the room are scheduled to finish at the same time and this activity is given publicity before the fact (otherwise the players will leave or gather around the scores).

Here's how it works: Players use the last hand played as a bingo card. At the microphone, a member of the Prize Committee instructs the players to put their hands face up on the table, dummy-style. Taking another deck of cards that has been shuffled, the caller turns the cards up one at a time, calling each one out to the players. When players have the card that is called, they turn that card face down. The first player who turns over all thirteen cards is the winner. (It's also possible to use this gimmick to get the room quiet before the game starts.)

**Awards Presentation** – To add more interest to the tournament, a local official could be invited to formally acknowledge the winners immediately after each session as you award the trophies. The excitement is in the moment! It generates enthusiasm for others to try to win a trophy. Newcomers like to see who won the trophies, so make the most of the presentations. One of the members of the NPS Committee might be available for this job.

Remember that many players come just for one session. They should be able to take their trophies home with them right after the game – even if there is a later score adjustment. The goodwill you have created is worth much more than the cost of an additional trophy!

**Copies of the Event Overall Award** – The DIC can run two extra copies of the event overall awards on the computer to give to the winners. A member of the Prize Committee should check to make certain the DIC (or a designated TD) is planning to do this.

**Club Free Plays** – The Prize Committee can work with local club managers to arrange for free play coupons for the participants in the I/N tournament. If a club is willing, a free play coupon can be added to each gift bag or given out as a door prize. The players appreciate them and these coupons give the players a reason to visit a club and possibly become members.

**Photos of the Winners** – Intermediate players and newcomers like to be photographed when they win.

Photos placed on a computer-generated event leader sheet make a great Wall of Fame or Rising Stars display. The last time the winners play at the tournament, they can take their picture with them. Make sure each winning player gets a photo!

Let your imagination go and get more creative with your Wall of Fame. Consider a pot of gold where you post pictures of the winners on the gold coins. Suspend stars from the ceiling and hang the pictures on them.

Often the I/N director will be available and willing to help with the photography.

With all decorations, make certain the playing site allows you to hang materials on the wall. If not, plan on free-standing displays – use easels, wire arches, white boards, etc.

## One Year to Eight Months Out *Cont.*

**Prize Desk** – At an I/N tournament, the section tops can be given out at the same time as the overall trophies. At a larger tournament, there is usually a prize desk for section top awards because so many are given.

### Entertainment Committee

The Entertainment Committee plays a very important role in the success of an I/N tournament. Here are some suggestions for activities you can provide that are popular.

#### Speaker Program

Organize a speaker program. Local experts and teachers make great speakers. Who is more of a celebrity or expert to beginners than their teacher? If teachers are speaking at the tournament, they are going to make sure that their students are there to hear them. Teachers don't want to speak to an empty room. Mini-lessons or bridge tips should be scheduled for each afternoon and evening starting 45 minutes before the session.

#### Here are some steps to follow:

- ♥ Put together a schedule for the tournament.
- ♥ Confirm and reconfirm with your speakers.
- ♥ Try to have a couple of back-up speakers who can step in if something goes wrong.
- ♥ Check out the tournament site and select an area for the speaker program that is appropriate – not too much traffic, good lighting, sufficient space, etc.
- ♥ Ask your speakers to provide a one-page handout that you can either photocopy before the tournament or reimburse the speaker for copying.
- ♥ Provide a microphone and a whiteboard.
- ♥ Schedule local experts and bridge teachers to speak for 30 minutes before each session. If you don't have enough volunteers, schedule speakers only once a day.
- ♥ Decide how you are going to compensate the speakers – with an honorarium or a free play – and be prepared to give them their compensation at the conclusion of their talk.

#### The speaker program can lead into a lot of other possibilities:

- ◆ You could have a book signing for speakers who are authors.
- ◆ You could give a door prize of one of the books written by a speaker.
- ◆ You could gather a panel of the speakers to answer questions after one of the sessions. (Coordinate this with a pizza party between sessions, and you'll see a lot of players returning for the evening session.)

#### Free Lesson on Saturday Morning

Offer a free "Introduction to Duplicate" lesson on the Saturday morning of the tournament. Coordinate this activity with the Education Committee. This group will help you select a local bridge teacher to make the presentation.

This gives local teachers a chance to bring their students who haven't tried duplicate to the tournament.

Schedule a Bridge Plus+ game to follow. Don't charge an entry fee. This is an excellent promotion and, if done well, should bring the unit or the district some new business.

You also could offer a beginning bridge lesson – Lesson One of the ACBL Bridge Series course "Bidding in the 21st Century" (The Club Series) was designed as a promotional piece – and recruit people who don't play. The teacher who gives the lecture should offer the rest of the course for a fee following the tournament for those who are interested.

## One Year to Eight Months Out *Cont.*

### **Special Saturday Night Bridge Show**

Offer a special Saturday night bridge show. This activity takes a lot of organization and work but is well worth the time spent preparing it.

Invite eight of the better-known players in the area to get together to deal and play about 10 hands as a board-a-match competition. Include five or six of the more interesting deals in a pre-duplicated set of boards for the Saturday evening events. Write out the hands on transparencies and at the end of the game, show them with an overhead projector on a screen, chalkboard or large sheets of paper taped to the wall.

This presentation should be done in an entertaining fashion. When discussing these hands, include some errors. It's good for the newcomers to realize that experts don't always make the right bid or play.

Note: The players who pre-play the hands can't participate in the actual event.

### **Panel of Local Experts**

Organize a panel of local experts to answer bidding and playing questions about hands the intermediates and newcomers have just played. (Hand records for the players are necessary to make this activity work.)

### **Social Activities**

Social activities are important. You can hold an informal dance by clearing the bridge tables and turning on a disc or tape player. Unit or district volunteers can cook various dishes to create a before-the-session breakfast or dinner buffet. A wine and cheese party is fun either between sessions or after the evening game.

### **I/N Reception**

If you host a between-sessions party for the I/N players, be certain to invite some local bridge stars or dignitaries to attend. The new players enjoy knowing who's who!

## **Caddy Committee**

**Caddy Chairman** – The Chair of the Caddy Committee is called the Caddy Master and is usually the only member of this committee.

The Caddy Master hires, schedules, supervises and pays the caddies.

**The Right Kind of Caddy** – Caddies are not there just to pick up score slips. They should be pleasant and friendly, and it is helpful if they have an interest in bridge. A personable caddy can enhance the players' enjoyment of the game. In addition, caddies often hear about problems that directors may be unaware of and can bring them to the directors' attention (such as a very slow table).

**Training the Caddies** – Click [here](#) to see the Caddy Master's Guide, a brochure designed to help train the caddies.

**Caddy Bridge Lessons** – If you have four or more caddies interested in bridge, ask one of the local teachers to give them some mini-lessons between sessions. These youngsters can easily get started with MiniBridge and may want to take lessons when the tournament is over. This activity could lead to an entry into one of the schools the caddies are attending.

### Tournament Supplies

If you are not providing your own supplies, check with the DIC to make an arrangement for ordering. If the unit/district is providing its own supplies, an inventory should be taken at this time. Order any additional supplies needed from the supply company of your choice.

Remember to include hand records. Normally, the DIC or another supply-carrying director will bring the required hand records and printouts to the tournament.

Time clocks (optional) and bidding boxes (required) must be provided by the sponsoring organization.

### Supplies Checklist – 200 or fewer tables

- Five sets of [Duplicate Boards](#)
- [Decks of Cards](#)
- [Table Cards](#)- Sections A and B
- [Howell Guide Cards](#) for 3-4-5-6-7 tables
- Small Guide Cards for 14-16-17-18-20-22-24 pairs
- [Entries](#)
  - 1 pad of blank entry blanks
  - 1 pad of Section A entry blanks
  - 1 pad of Section B entry blanks
  - 1 pad of Team Entries
- 600 [Swiss Reporting Slips](#) (100 each of 6 colors)
- 1000 [ACBL Convention Cards](#)
- 500 [“Fat Free” Convention Cards](#)
- 200 [Swiss Teams Inserts](#)
- [Pick Up Slips](#)
  - 1000 White (102A)
  - 1000 Yellow (102A)
  - 500 Green (102A)
- [Recap and Press Sheets](#) are generated by the computer.  
(Order these only if you are not using a computer.)
- 3 boxes of pencils
- [Zero Tolerance Posters](#)

## Four Months Out to Tournament Start

The Tournament Chair and the Tournament Correspondent are notified through TourneyTRAX of the staff assigned for the tournament, their sessions and lodging requirements. Reservations should be made for the specific staff members and committee members who will be staying at the host hotel. If the hotel has provided any free rooms, it is often a good idea to assign these rooms to staff members rather than committee members since the staff will generally spend more nights at the hotel.

### Three months out

- ♣ Review the plans for publicizing the tournament.
- ♣ Schedule meeting with New Player Services Committee members to decide on tournament assignments.
- ♣ Design a flier to advertise the I/N program.
- ♣ Confirm hospitality, speakers, panel show, free lessons, etc., which will be advertised on the flier.
- ♣ Submit the flier to ACBL for approval prior to printing.
- ♣ Order preprinted, pressure-sensitive labels for mailing I/N fliers.
- ♣ Check playing space and arrange for ordering newcomer championship hand analyses from the DIC.
- ♣ Decide on decoration theme and purchase supplies.
- ♣ Ensure that prizes and trophies are ordered.
- ♣ Prepare a club/teacher listing for I/N information table.
- ♣ Check that a supply of ACBL materials has been ordered for the I/N information table ([Welcome to Duplicate](#), [Bridge Life](#) and [Your Best Partner in Bridge](#)).
- ♣ Discuss with area tournament directors their willingness to distribute fliers to nearby tournaments they attend.
- ♣ Confirm speaker schedule with the speakers.
- ♣ Begin coordination with teachers to invite their students to special games and events.
- ♣ Review plans for the I/N hospitality goodie bags.
- ♣ Check with tournament site management. It is important to reconfirm all arrangements. All sectional and regional tournaments for which the ACBL issues a sanction are covered under a general liability and property damage policy. A certificate of coverage can be obtained by completing this [form](#).

### Eight weeks out

- ♠ Send out I/N fliers.
- ♠ Send information to ACBL Tournament Email Services.
- ♠ Follow through with local publicity.
- ♠ Reconfirm arrangements for all social activities.
- ♠ Send confirmations for all NPS assignments including I/N guaranteed partnership program.
- ♠ Reconfirm with teachers all special activities for their students.
- ♠ Order trophies and prizes.
- ♠ Collect free plays and sponsor gifts for I/N hospitality bags.

## Four Months Out to Tournament Start *Cont.*

### Three weeks out

- ♥ The Telephone Committee should phone all I/N players in the unit and extend an invitation to attend the tournament, mentioning that partnerships will be arranged.
- ♥ Get names of committee members who will be working during the tournament and arrange to have badges made for everyone.

### Twelve days out

- ♦ If the supplies are to be shipped, verify their arrival time with the tournament site.

### One week before the tournament

- ♣ Reconfirm again with the speakers.
- ♣ Verify that all signs for the tournament are ready.
- ♣ Make sure Zero Tolerance posters (or similar signs) are available.
- ♣ Continue working with local publicity.
- ♣ Confirm with the Caddy Master that the caddies are hired, trained and have their assignments.

### Three hours before first session of tournament

- ♠ Ensure playing area is set up including decorations, signs and information table.
- ♠ Ensure everything is available for speaker program and that someone is prepared to introduce the speaker every session.
- ♠ Meet with I/N director to discuss last minute details and announcements to be made before each session.
- ♠ Review with the DIC what you expect to be done each session:
  - ♣ Awarding of prizes after each session,
  - ♣ Taking photographs of the winners,
  - ♣ Asking winners to join ACBL,
  - ♣ Giving winners copies of the overall award sheet,
  - ♣ Explaining the scoresheets and masterpoint awards.

### Before each session

- ♥ Be responsible for the performance of all specialized I/N services.
- ♥ Follow through with the speakers. (Is there a thank-you gift?)
- ♥ Confirm that all positions are staffed (including I/N partnership).
- ♥ Check on last-minute arrangements for social activities.
- ♥ Have applicable trophies in view.
- ♥ Give the I/N director any special announcements for the players.
- ♥ Socialize with I/N players!

## Daily Tournament Checklist

Here is a list of the things the Tournament Chair should check each day of the tournament. You may want to print and date a new checklist for each day of the tournament to assure nothing gets missed.

- See that the hotel/motel bulletin boards have the proper information concerning events and starting times.
- Ask for a listing if the property has a closed-circuit TV channel for daily activities.
- Inspect the tournament site (well before game time) for proper setup of tables, cleanliness and site compliance with cleanup information.
- See that the Hospitality Desk and Partnership Desk are properly manned.
- Check daily arrangements with hotel/motel/convention center concerning entertainment and refreshments ordered for that day.
- See that trash containers are available.
- Check drinking water supply and stations, cups, etc.
- Inspect restrooms for cleanliness and maintenance.
- Look for obstacles that might block emergency exits and eliminate them.
- Check that site has unlocked emergency exit doors.

## Final Session of the Tournament Checklist

- Settle finances with the DIC unless other arrangements have previously been made. All fees due the ACBL must be settled by the end of the tournament.

If your I/N sectional has been approved to be run by a local club director, the Tournament Chair is responsible for submitting the results (a copy of the game files on disk) within two days of the end of the tournament to [Tournaments@acbl.org](mailto:Tournaments@acbl.org). The unit will be billed for the amount due ACBL.

- Arrange gratuities for site personnel.
- Arrange with the site management for protection of unused supplies until they are picked up.

## After the Tournament

After the tournament, there additional steps to complete.

- ◆ Publicize the names of winners in local media.
- ◆ Handle any problems that may have occurred.
- ◆ Thank committee members.
- ◆ Get a disk of the names and ACBL numbers of participants in the tournament; ask for the entry blanks to retain addresses and contact all new players.
- ◆ Submit a report to the board on the tournament.



## After the Tournament *Cont.*

- ◆ For six months after the tournament, the Publicity Committee should assist the unit or district in sending advertisements announcing their regular tournaments to the players that attended the I/N tournament. If the unit or district has a newsletter, this committee should send copies to these players. Follow-up publicity can help bring players to future tournaments.
- ◆ Working with the Education Committee, you might also want to phone the players who participated to see if they enjoyed the tournament and to get suggestions for the next tournament. It's a good idea to have a special game in mind to invite these players to attend when you call. Your goal is to see if you can get them to be more active locally.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Tournament Sponsors and DICs

This is a list of areas requiring pre-event discussion between a DIC and a sponsor. When the DIC and sponsor are new to each other, these topics should be covered before the tournament in order to ensure a smooth and cohesive operation. Over time, the sponsor preferences become known to the DIC and little or no discussion is necessary.

While the final option on many of these decisions rests with the sponsor, the sponsor should recognize the professional expertise of the DIC and make all efforts to reach a collaborative conclusion.

In unusual or unexpected circumstances (e.g. fire, power failure, impending severe weather, etc.) the DIC is responsible for making decisions in everyone's best interest.

### **Pair Game Type Movements (Individual, Pairs and BAM):**

Number of boards played (number of rounds is a function of section size). Typically 24 to 27 in open games, 24 in gold rush games and 24 maximum in I/N games.

Sponsor's preference of 24 or 26/27 should be determined in general, not session-by-session.

#### **Type of movement**

The environment in which our games begin requires that movement decisions be made by the DIC.

If the sponsor has specific suggestions in this regard, the sponsor should discuss this with the DIC in advance.

#### **Combined scoring**

Typically sections are combined for scoring and ranking in open and flight A(X) and B/C events.

Not combined in gold rush and I/N events.

Side games vary by circumstance.

As with type of movement, this is usually left to the DIC with sponsor input welcome.

#### **Time per round**

Typically the time allowed for pair games is 15 minutes for two-board rounds and 21 minutes for three-board rounds.

Sponsors wishing to deviate from these suggestions should consult with the DIC prior to the tournament.

## **Swiss and Round Robin Team Games:**

### **Number of rounds and number of boards per round**

For two-session events, common choices range between 48 and 56 boards. Top flights often play more boards per round than concurrent lower flights (seven rounds of eight and seven rounds of seven). When a small event and a larger event share close quarters, they often both play six rounds of nine (or six rounds of eight instead of 7 x 7).

Round robin or Swiss, day of the week, getaway day, length of break, player desires and other factors need be considered.

One session (side games) are four rounds of six. The starting time of the next session is one of the determining factors for the number of boards played.

The option, provided the subject has been discussed in advance, rests with the sponsor.

### **Time per round**

A set amount of time in which to play, compare and report has become the norm. The typical time allotted is eight minutes per board; this includes playing the boards, comparing scores and turning in the results. Often an additional minute or two needs to be given to inexperienced groups and a minute or two less when the sponsor has requested an early departure. Sponsors wishing to deviate from these suggestions should consult with the DIC prior to the tournament.

### **When (and if) to break (length)**

Sponsor option.

### **VP scale (20 or 30)**

Typically included in advertising.

Sponsor option. Substantial departure from past practice must be discussed with the DIC in advance.

### **Pairing**

Complete (and almost complete) round robins are paired entirely in advance. Swiss events typically are random in round one and paired by Swiss team rules thereafter. The TD, based on game size and other considerations, sets various parameters of loose or tight pairing in ACBLscore.

### **Bracketing**

Brackets are typically determined by the TD when entries close. In an open event, the top bracket is typically played as a Swiss and is sometimes sold as open to any team.

## **Knockout Events:**

### **Number of boards**

Typically, KOs play 24 boards per match. Flight A KOs (rare) sometimes play 28. Compact KOs are 24 boards. Morning sessions are 24 boards (or fewer).

### **Handicapping**

Sponsor option. ACBL requires that advertising note whether the tournament will, may or will not handicap. Sponsor and DIC should discuss exact details in advance.

### **Replays**

Typically not permitted but a sponsor may opt (in advance) to allow or to allow after an intervening match.

**Bracketing (including where to break and three sessions)**

Sponsor option. Large KOs rarely pose problems in bracketing. In relatively small events, when entries close, the TD must make brackets that will displease the fewest contestants. Sometimes one or two three-session brackets is the best solution. The sponsor should make desires, if any, known to the DIC in advance.

**Additional Sponsoring Organization Responsibilities**

**Conventions permitted**

The sponsor decides whether conventions from the Mid-Chart (or in rare situations from the SuperChart) will be permitted. ACBL rules pertaining to publication of conventions permitted must be followed.

**Electronic scoring**

The sponsor arranges for electronic scoring devices, if desired, in advance. Some sponsors own them, others rent them from various sources. The DIC must know in advance what, if any, those arrangements are and if a sufficient quantity will be on hand. Financial details need be agreed upon in advance if directors are involved in the rental process.

**Hand records**

Electronic sets (purchased from ACBL) are provided by the DIC. Typically the DIC arranges for copies to be printed for after-game distribution. If boards are not pre-duplicated the DIC arranges for necessary hand records to be printed. The sponsor pays all costs.

**Masterpoint Averaging**

Sponsor option. Masterpoint averaging, if used, must be noted in the tournament advertising.

**Number of breaks**

Sponsor option. Typically zero, one or two hospitality breaks. Number and/or length of breaks is often determined by distance to and number of facilities.

**Pre-duplicated boards**

The sponsor may arrange to have boards pre-duplicated. The DIC must approve the security and reliability of the arrangements and supplies the ACBL pre-dealt hands.

**Seeding**

The sponsor may provide a person to assist the selling director with seeding or leave it to the director to seed the players.

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