



CLUB MANAGERS

Winter Edition • February 2005

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Dear Club Managers

Congratulations to all ACBL volunteers for one of the most successful years in our history! As of Dec. 31, 2004, membership had risen to 168,380, the highest number since 1996. Tournament attendance was at an all-time high, with more than 460,000 tables in play. Imagine what we can accomplish in 2005! Now for some items of interest:



New Recruitment Incentives

As of Jan. 1, club officials and teachers who recruit 25 new members during a calendar year will receive a \$100 gift certificate to the ACBL Product Store. Gift certificates in the past were for \$50. Good luck, and let us know if you need a supply of instant membership applications. We will be more than happy to provide them to you.

Star Clubs Information

We have eliminated the multi-star and club of the year programs and developed a program to recognize Star Clubs large and small — with new rewards as well. Enclosed you will find a letter describing the new program and application for 2005. The deadline for submitting the application is Dec. 31, 2005.

October now will be designated Jane Johnson Club Appreciation Month.

Spring NABC in Pittsburgh: March 10-18

The ACBL is hosting a "Thank You" reception for club officials and teachers from 4:30-6:00 p.m. on Friday, March 11. Please join us for a fun evening and door prizes. You may view the full schedule of seminars on the ACBL web site. We hope to see you there!

Club Managers Handbook

With almost everything you ever wanted to know, the new Club Managers Handbook is included in this mailing and available online at <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/clubManagersHandbookFinal1.pdf>.

ACBLscore

ACBL offers many special games that provide additional masterpoints for your players and often support worthy efforts. Regulations and fees for many special club games changed Jan. 1. The new version of ACBLscore that includes the changes is now available for download. You must update your program in order to award the correct masterpoints.

To download and install version 7.28:

1. Go to ACBL's web site: www.acbl.org
2. Click "ACBLscore" (near the bottom left hand side of the page).
3. Click "Specs and downloads" (near bottom left hand side of the page).
4. Click "Click here for more information" (right side of the page), and follow the instructions.

Please feel free to contact Dave Smith if you should have questions or encounter a problem. He can be reached at ACBLscore@acbl.org or 901-332-5586, ext. 1336.

Carol Robertson

Carol Robertson
Director of Club and Member Services

Do You Have the Score?

If you manage one of the 700 clubs that do not use ACBLscore, it's time to change. To run a good club in today's world and to give your players the best possible service, you need a computer with the ACBL's fabulous program and a printer.

ACBLscore does more than simplify your game with its quick and easy scoring module. There are many more benefits, as you will read below. And a by product of the program is that it helps the ACBL keep down its costs — and ultimately yours. Contact the ACBL to obtain an authorization code to download the program from our web site.

Advantages of using ACBLscore

Quick Results. ACBL's scoring program will allow you to produce the results of your club game almost instantaneously. This allows your customers to see their scores immediately after the game and it frees you to visit and interact with your players.

Personalized Service. With ACBLscore, you can provide individual printouts of results for your players so they can review their scores. You can produce leader sheets for the winners to take home and show to their friends.

Find movements that work for any game. With ACBL's scoring program, you can find a movement for any number of tables in any game, and handle all movement variations including an individual. You can rank a stratified game with up to three strata, and you can score by matchpoints or IMPs.

Produce the monthly club reports due to ACBL. Sending in your monthly club reports via e-mail as produced by the ACBLscore program cuts down on paperwork and effort.

Keep a directory of your players. ACBLscore allows you to keep a directory of your players. You can periodically print out this information and distribute it to your customers to make it easier for them to contact each other.

Keep a running total of each player's masterpoints. You can use the ACBLscore program to keep a running total of the masterpoints won at your club by each player. This makes it easy to award prizes to top scorers either on a monthly basis or at the end of the year. You can also order a "Player Information" disk from ACBL (for a fee) that has the latest masterpoints for the players in your area.

Figure handicaps for your club players. Because you can keep a running total of all of the game results for each of your players, it's easy to figure their handicaps and to run special handicapped games.

Print mailing labels for your club members. Use the club directory in your ACBLscore program to print mailing labels for your club mailings.

Print masterpoint receipts for non-members. Be sure you give every non-member who wins masterpoints a receipt printed from the ACBLscore program. Most new players who win a piece of a masterpoint will want to start collecting them.

Track player attendance. ACBLscore can help you keep track of which players play the most, and it can also find those who have not played for long periods of time.

Categorize your players. ACBLscore can help you keep track of different groups of players (afternoon players, beginners, those taking lessons, etc.).

Rahn Smith – The Host with the Most

When the Tampa Bay Bridge Center was having trouble getting a Wednesday evening bridge game going, Rahn Smith stepped in with some strong ideas of what needed to be done. He began by convincing the board members that the center might only break even or even lose a bit getting the game started but that they were investing in the future. First, they began giving lots of free plays in the other games—to be used only for the Wednesday night game. One time, the winners would be only the top “C” stratum winners; another, the free plays would go to “A” or “B.” Or door prizes for the game would be yet more free plays. Rahn knows that “big games get bigger, small ones smaller,” so he wanted to boost the numbers while

the game was growing. He told the board, “Get them to come try the game, and I’ll get them to come back.”

And he has! Most important, says Rahn, is that the game director should first be a host.

Make the players welcome, expect

by Lynn Berg

them to act sociable and in a socially acceptable manner. Give them great snacks and finger foods

they can enjoy. Once a month, the Wednesday evening group starts early with a dinner, a chance to socialize even more, followed by a game with hand records. It’s a special occasion everyone enjoys.

“People need a chance to sit down together and talk to one another,” he says, not just to play bridge and leave. This social time is also a time to make new friends and arrange new partnerships. Anyone

who calls ahead is guaranteed a partner; even at the last minute, the director will play in a pinch rather than send a player home without a partner. Rahn even bakes cookies on the premises: The aroma of fresh cookies is a great plus!

Rahn takes the social aspects of the game to heart. He is a proactive director who’s not afraid to talk to a player who is making others uncomfortable. He knows he has to be diplomatic, but he makes sure no one bullies or insults others.

Once the game grew to eight tables, the free play promotion was stopped. Rahn realizes that he can’t slack off, though. The methods and attitudes that grew the game have to be continued. The best, unexpected, side effect? Other games have benefited from Wednesday night’s success and are also larger. ■

50 Years of Goodwill

We know our members spread goodwill every day, but there are three special days each year when goodwill rates an even higher priority. And 2005 makes those days particularly special as it represents the 50th anniversary of the ACBL Goodwill Committee. We encourage clubs to use the anniversary to promote special goodwill activities. A poster with the 2005 Goodwill Days and Top 10 Goodwill Gestures is included in this mailing.

2005 Goodwill Days

Monday, March 14 • Monday, July 25 • Monday, Nov. 21

Top 10 Goodwill Gestures

Greet and Welcome Opponents
Always Say, “Director, Please”
Lead or Place Dummy before You Write
Mentor a New Player
Say, “Thank You, Partner”

Compliment Opponent’s Play
Discuss Hands after the Game
Accept Defeat and Victory with Grace
Leave a Tidy Table
Smile Often!

The warmest place I know

The Anchorage Bridge Club is a thriving, busy place with 14 games a week. It had grown so much it needed to move to bigger quarters, and of course that means a bigger rent. The board and members of the unit-owned club decided to celebrate the move with a weekend designed to recharge member enthusiasm and offer new skills to teachers, mentors, management and players. I was honored to be asked to conduct the classes, seminars and brainstorming sessions, with an eye toward boosting table count.

The agenda was a chock-filled one, with a dazzling variety of activities, but before I tell you about that, here are my impressions of Alaska and Alaskans.

My strongest memory will always be the people. My hosts, Alyse and Pat Galvin and their uncle, unit President Walt Pease, are so special that I've placed them in my "heart family," people you would choose as relatives if you could. They welcomed me into their club, their home and their family.

The people at the club treated me like I had always been among them and always would be. My impression is that Alaskans love where they live perhaps because of the challenge. Folks, any place that cold is a challenge!

Alaska in the winter is magic. The sun pokes up about 9:30–10 a.m. (a lot like I would if I were able!), coasts along the horizon for a few hours and then starts its hour-long sunset. It is stunningly beautiful. Picture the most gorgeous sunset you've ever seen and have it last an hour. At one point during one of my seminars several people got up and walked out. "Wait," said I, "I'm not finished yet!" Turns out they all wanted to see the sunset for a while. Who can compete with that? I went, too, and

I noticed people up and down the street doing the same thing ... enjoying the marvel.

by Marti Ronemus

All day Friday was devoted to accrediting a dozen new Easybridge! presenters and workshops for anyone who wanted to update or refresh their teaching skills. The day was also open to anyone who wanted to be involved in the club's very active mentoring program. We stressed the skills that are shared by anyone who is involved with the care and feeding of newcomers ... a very special breed.



Marti (left) roars with laughter at the Moose Turd earrings included in her Alaska gift basket. In case you wondering, the "Wonderbra" sign refers to a lesson about supporting your partner's suit! The gift basket was presented to her by newcomer Caroline Green (right).

Saturday morning was a marketing brainstorming session, featuring the ACBL's "Guaranteed Growth and Prosperity" seminar. We analyzed where the club was, what areas it especially wanted to see increase, and then we developed a specific plan and mix of products to help them achieve these goals, including some very new ideas. They then planned a follow-up meeting for the Monday after my departure to get the plans started.

Saturday afternoon was a hoot. The object of the afternoon was to get some of the local social players into the club, so I ran a workshop on "Bidding with Nothing But a Smile." After the workshop, the social and duplicate players played together, which seemed to me to be opening a lot of doors to the social players. I hope their taste of duplicate was so friendly and such fun that they'll be back as regulars. The club charged only a dollar, which went to the Junior Fund so it could offer triple masterpoints. That didn't impress the social players but delighted everyone else.

The evening was Pro-Am Swiss Teams. The new club was jammed with players. Each team has a Pro pair and an Am pair, matched up by the club manager, Howard Enbysk. The Pros play against the Pros, and the Ams against the Ams. Everyone likes the format

Two Fun(d) Months

February: Junior Fund

Any regularly scheduled sanctioned session during the month of February can be a Junior Fund Game. The cost is an extra \$1 per person, and players can win sectional-rated black points. (For example, if you hold a sanction for a weekly game on Tuesday afternoon, every Tuesday afternoon session during February can be a Junior Fund Game.)

Let's keep this program running strong so that the future of Junior Bridge remains sound.

In addition to the February games, Junior Fund Games can be held in every month throughout the year except April and September.

For more information, contact Charlotte Blaiss, director of youth programs at 901-332-5586, ext. 1214 or juniors@acbl.org.

Alaska in the Winter

and the evening was a delight. I got to play with Walt, who is one of the most pleasant partners I've ever had. We laughed the whole evening, and I enjoyed every opponent. And Walt dragged me kicking and screaming to a nice second-place win. The bridge was top-notch for both Pros and Ams. Howard runs the club with skill and style.

Sunday we had a one-day Silver Point 299er sectional, which I had the pleasure of directing. These people carry their accommodating spirits to the bridge table ... I didn't see a grumpy face or hear a contentious word all day. I wish all directing assignments were so easy.

Walt, my partner from the Pro-Am Swiss, arranged for a catered feast between games. The food was outstanding. It was like dinner at a huge family reunion. I don't know if there's a rule no one can play bridge at the Anchorage Bridge Club unless they bring some food with them, but the kitchen tables were always sagging from the goodies. Everyone seems to come bearing a plate.

Normally, when you say "travel" I don't think "North," but now I do. And if you ever get to Alaska (you should put it on your life list) be sure to stop at the Anchorage Bridge Club and see all my friends. ■

April: Charity Fund Month

April is designated as Charity Fund Month, with the same fees and additional masterpoints as during Junior Fund Month. All ACBL sanctioned club sessions may be held as Club Charity Championship games. The first charity game held must name the ACBL Charity Foundation or the CBF Charitable Fund as its beneficiary, and any charity game conducted on behalf of a local charity must be preceded by at least one for the ACBL Charity Foundation or CBF Charitable Fund. For more information, contact Margaret Bloodworth at 901-332-5586, ext. 1225 or charity@acbl.org.

The charity grants will be allocated to districts in four-year cycles in an effort to respond to the needs of charities in local areas. In 2005, Districts 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 17 will be given grants. If you would like to suggest a charity, you may submit your selection to your District Director. The e-mail address for each district director is District?Director@acbl.org. Simply insert your district number where the question mark is located. For example to reach the director of District 4, the e-mail address would be District4Director@acbl.org.

SET A GOAL

Maurice Joseph, manager of the Baton Rouge DBC, wrote to us recently with a great idea:

"Baton Rouge is submitting our first new ACBL member application as of 2005 today. We are committed to submit at least 19 more before the end of the year.

"I suggest that you might have some other clubs set goals for their 2005 new member recruitments. It helps when a club focuses on its goal and communicates with its membership about fulfilling these goals."

Remember that club managers receive increased incentives for membership recruitment in 2005: a \$100 gift certificate to the ACBL Product Store for each 25 recruits in the year, along with the \$500 bonus check for 100 recruits over time since January 2002. And units benefit more if you retain those recruits, with \$3.85 per member rebated to them as of the second year of membership.

Thank you, Maurice, for your suggestion to help keep the ACBL strong. We look forward to a great 2005.

Passed by the ACBL Board of Directors in **Orlando FL**

Distinguished Employee Award

An award shall be established to recognize contributions that are made by an employee that dramatically change the nature of the Game or the way the League functions. This award shall be called the Distinguished Employee Award. Management, through the CEO, shall recommend to the Board for its approval the name of such employee when it deems it appropriate. A plaque designating this award will be designed and placed in a position of honor. An article about the recipient shall appear in the *Bridge Bulletin*. The recipient of this award shall receive a plaque and a remembrance of management's selection not to exceed \$2,500 in value.

Jim Lopushinsky — He Scores!

We are pleased to announce Jim has been named the first ACBL Distinguished Employee by the ACBL Board of Directors. Please join us in congratulating the deserving "Lopo." Perhaps no one has influenced the mechanics of bridge more than Jim Lopushinsky, the creator and still programmer of ACBLscore. Gone are the days of matchpointing (and balancing and re-balancing the scores) by hand, searching for Alex Groner to correct a movement, or sending in a shoebox full of club masterpoint slips to the ACBL. You'll read more about him and the program in an upcoming *Bridge Bulletin* magazine.



Jim Lopushinsky — Lopo to his friends — receives his award from CEO Jay Baum.

Insurance Committee

The ACBL President will appoint a committee of board, management and ACBL members to:

Hire an insurance consultant or attorney to assist with the following tasks:

1. Review all liability insurance policies available to cover ACBL and its districts and units and report to the board specifically on what is covered and not covered by these policies at each level;
2. Investigate avenues for insuring ACBL and all its districts and units and make recommendations for purchasing liability policies that will cover ACBL and all its districts and units;
3. Make recommendations about how ACBL and its districts and units should pay for these policies, with a goal of making the insurance affordable for all levels of our organization;
4. Review all liability insurance policies available to ACBL clubs and make recommendations about a method for offering affordable insurance for clubs;
5. Make at least a preliminary report to the Board of Directors at the Spring 2005 meeting in Pittsburgh with a final report no later than the Summer 2005 meeting in Atlanta.

Barred Club Game Players

The ACBL Board of Directors clarified the role of the local unit in hearing appeals that pertain to players being barred from club games.

Remember, when you find it necessary to bar a player from your game, you must provide the notification in writing to the player stating the reason, the player number and the length of suspension.

Also, when you extend the barring of the player to Grand National Teams, North American Pair events, STaCs, qualifying sessions of a progressive sectional, unit or district competitions, and/or unit- or district-wide championships held at the club, you must notify the player of his/her right to appeal the barring to the Unit Disciplinary Committee within 30 days of the notification.

ACBL Masterpoint Regulations

For Continent-wide Charity Games, ACBL-wide International Fund Games, the annual ACBL-wide Senior Pairs, the annual ACBL-wide Instant Matchpoint game and District-wide Charity Games, overall and district awards will be determined as follows (official hand records must be used):

Overall: First Place: 20 points; depth of awards: 10 places

District: First Place: 10 points; depth of awards: 5 places

Winners will receive the greater of the nationwide and the district awards, in addition to masterpoints won at the game itself.

Unit-wide Championships

I. Unit-wide Championships.

- A. Each club within the unit area is eligible to participate in a unit-wide championship that is scheduled on a session for which the club is sanctioned provided that it conforms to all ACBL regulations.
- B. When a club is not sanctioned for the same session for which the unit-wide championship is sanctioned, the unit may grant the club permission to participate in the unit-wide championship.
- C. For purposes of unit-wide championships, morning and afternoon sanctioned games are deemed to be the same session when there is not more than a three and one-half (3 1/2) hour time difference between the starting times of the games. If such is the case, permission of the unit to participate is not needed.
- D. A minimum of five (5) tables is required at each site in order to participate in the overall masterpoint award for unit-wide games.
- E. A unit may combine with another unit to hold a combined unit-wide game. The game will be charged against the quotas of each unit.
- F. Unit-wide championships may be conducted as stratified events.
- G. Non-playing directors are encouraged but not required for games having not more than one section of 17 tables or less
- H. All sites must use identical hands.

Conversion of Non-ACBL Masterpoints

I. Conversion of masterpoints won in countries not in Zone 2 or ACBL.

- A. Except for conversion of WBF masterpoints, previous resolutions permitting conversion of masterpoints won in countries not in Zone 2 or ACBL are rescinded.
- B. The ACBL will recognize and convert masterpoints won in a country outside Zone 2 which has a masterpoint plan.
- C. An ACBL member may receive up to 50 ACBL masterpoints in a single year as a conversion of points won in other NBOs. He/she must be a member of the ACBL. The member must apply to register the points within three years of earning the non-ACBL points. His or her dues or service fees must be current both at the time the points were earned and at the time of application for conversion.
- D. The points shall be recorded as red points.
- E. This resolution is not retroactive.
- F. Management shall determine the ratio at which other NBO masterpoints are converted.

II. An ABA member who joins ACBL for the first time will receive 10% of his/her total ABA points as a credit in ACBL red points to a maximum of 200 points.

Note: The effect of this motion is to require players to earn the black masterpoint point requirement in your club games.

Unit Rebates

Units will receive 11% of full dues payments and Life Master Service fees paid by their members. Whenever there is an increase in membership dues or LM Service fees, 11% of the total will be rebated to the units.



Special Events

We have posted a new web page with details on running all ACBL-wide special events — including online sanctioning. You will find it at Resources for Club Managers>Special Events. Most of these events provide hand records and analyses to add to the fun for your players. Contact Special Events at 901-332-5586, ext. 1286 or specialevents@acbl.org for more information.

Here is what's coming up

ACBL-wide Senior Pairs

Monday, Feb. 28 (morning or afternoon)

For players age 55 and older with analyses by National Tournament Director John Ashton of Portland OR.

ACBL-wide International Fund Game

Saturday, May 11 (afternoon)

Support our teams in international competition by hosting these games.

Worldwide Bridge Contest

Fri. & Sat., June 3 (evening) & 4 (afternoon)

Each participant receives a souvenir hand analysis booklet containing Eric Kokish's excellent commentary. The Worldwide Bridge Contest is sponsored by the WBF. This contest is scored across the world using the Internet to give an overall winner. The Friday and Saturday games are separate events. The Worldwide Bridge Contest provides a rare opportunity to join a major event and compete with players from other countries.

North American Pairs

With lower costs and strong promotion, clubs hosted a whopping 66% more North American Pairs tables in 2004 — with a total of 38,224 for all local events. The number of clubs participating increased from 1430 to 3099. Watch for information on the 2005–06 NAP coming soon! Club qualifying games begin in June.

Guaranteed Growth and Prosperity for Your Club

Attendance at the ACBL "Guaranteed Growth and Prosperity" seminar will send you away with brand new approaches to growing your club. Learn new ways to modernize your club, attract customers and compete in a tough world.

Clubs across the country suffer from shrinking table count. The competition for the entertainment dollar is fierce! You're not just in competition with other bridge clubs, but with movies, square dancing, gourmet cooking classes, bungee cord jumping, skiing ... you name it.

It isn't enough to continue with the approaches to growth we've always had. (A definition of insanity is to perform the same activity repeatedly and expect different results!) We need to find new ways of attracting new players and having them visit our clubs more often. This seminar shows the way to do just that.

Spend a morning with Marti Ronemus, explore new ideas, and leave with a plan customized for you, guaranteed to grow your club. This event at the Pittsburgh NABC will be held from 8:30 a.m.-noon Saturday, March 12. Cost: \$25. E-mail or call Marti mronemus@suscom.net or 717-699-5222.

Really Special Events

The Special Events information pages at www.acbl.org have been upgraded to include all you need to know about masterpoint awards and recognition for winners. The pages now include Canada-wide events as well.

Information for club managers includes online registration, event information, general conditions, schedule and ACBLscore updates. Information for players includes events by date along with descriptions of each special game.