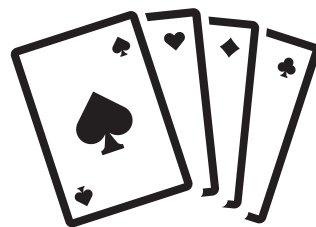




# The ACBL Club Director's Handbook



[www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)  
Revised 2023





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## Dear Prospective Club Director:

Thank you for your interest in becoming an ACBL club director.

The information in this manual will assist you in both passing the ACBL Club Director Test and running local club games.

If you want to take the Club Director Test for certification, you will need to contact a unit official to make the necessary arrangements. The unit will appoint a monitor for you and notify the ACBL of the person selected. Your monitor will receive the Club Director Test and instructions for administering it. You may also take the ACBL's Club Director Course offered at each North American Bridge Championships and some regional tournaments.

The test includes questions about Mitchell and Howell movements, the Laws, the most frequent rulings and ACBLscore commands. The average time to complete the test is three hours.

Please familiarize yourself with ACBL's website ([www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)). The material in this manual is updated there, and it is your responsibility to have the latest information. Chapters 4 and 5 of the ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations are revised annually (<http://web5.acbl.org/about-acbl/administration/acbl-handbook/>).

Information on board regulations is sent to all club managers in the Club Managers Newsletter three times a year and posted here: [http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/resources-and-forms/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/resources-and-forms/).

We suggest that you obtain a hard copy of Duplicate Decisions or download it from the website (<http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/clubs/Duplicate-Decisions-2008.pdf>). Duplicate Decisions presents the laws in everyday language and will help you make good rulings. Using ACBLscore will allow you to run the best possible games and offer outstanding service to your players.

If you have any questions or suggestions for improving the Club Director's Handbook, please direct them to [directorcourses@acbl.org](mailto:directorcourses@acbl.org).

Good luck! We hope you enjoy many pleasant years of directing a club.





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# Resources for Club Directors

## In Print

### Laws of Duplicate Bridge

Handy pocket sized publication available from Baron Barclay Bridge Supply or online at: <http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/play/Laws-of-Duplicate-Bridge.pdf>.

### Director's Quick Reference Guide and Bridge Director's Companion

By Larry Harris

Available from Baron Barclay Bridge Supply.

### Duplicate Bridge Direction

By Alex Groner

Complete reference to assist club directors. Available from Baron Barclay Bridge Supply.

### Duplicate Decisions

Laws of Duplicate Bridge in easy to understand terms. Available from Baron Barclay Bridge or online at: <http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/clubs/Duplicate-Decisions-2008.pdf>.

## In Person

### Club Directors Course

Offered at NABCs and selected regional tournaments.

### Club Director Update Course

A must to refresh your knowledge. Offered at NABCs, selected regional tournaments and online at: [http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/update-courses/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/update-courses/).

### Teacher Accreditation Program

If you don't have a teacher for your club, you may want to become one yourself. TAPs are offered at all NABCs and selected regional tournaments.

### Other Seminars

Seminars on topics such as cruise bridge and club marketing are offered at some NABCs. Check the seminar schedule on NABC web pages.



## Resources for Club Directors

### Contacts

#### ACBL

662-253-3100

#### Baron Barclay Bridge Supply

800-274-2221

[baronbarclay@baronbarclay.com](mailto:baronbarclay@baronbarclay.com)

### Club Services

General: [club@acbl.org](mailto:club@acbl.org)

Monthly reports: [club.report@mail1.acbl.org](mailto:club.report@mail1.acbl.org)

Director education: [directorcourses@acbl.org](mailto:directorcourses@acbl.org)

Club charity games: [charity.fdn@acbl.org](mailto:charity.fdn@acbl.org)

Special events: [specialevents@acbl.org](mailto:specialevents@acbl.org)

ACBLscore: [acblscore@acbl.org](mailto:acblscore@acbl.org) or 662-253-3165

Ruling questions: [rulings@acbl.org](mailto:rulings@acbl.org)

### Online

[www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)

**ACBLscore:** [http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/acblscore/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/acblscore/)

**Find a club:** <http://web5.acbl.org/findaclub.php>

**Club Managers Newsletter:** [http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/resources-and-forms/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/resources-and-forms/)

**Club Managers Handbook:** <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/ClubManagersHandbook2011.pdf>

**Update your club listing:** [club@acbl.org](mailto:club@acbl.org)

**Post your club website:** [club@acbl.org](mailto:club@acbl.org)

#### **New club sanctions/club sanction renewal forms:**

[http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/ClubSanctionRenew08\\_01.pdf](http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/ClubSanctionRenew08_01.pdf)

#### **Sanction application instructions:**

[http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/club-managers/club-sanction-application-instructions/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/club-managers/club-sanction-application-instructions/)

**Club Sanction change application:** <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/ClubSanctionChange.pdf>





## Resources for Club Directors

### **ACBL Handbook of Club Rules and Regulations, Chapters 4 and 5:**

[http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/club-managers/acbl-handbook-of-rules-and-regulations/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/club-managers/acbl-handbook-of-rules-and-regulations/)

**Masterpoint report:** <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/masterpointReport.pdf>

**Membership game report:** <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/membershipGameReport.pdf>

**Monthly financial report:** <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/monthlyfinancialReport.pdf>

**Club Director's Handbook:** <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/cdHandbook.pdf>

**Duplicate Decisions:** <http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/clubs/Duplicate-Decisions-2008.pdf>

### **Become a Club Director:**

[http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/club-directors/become-a-club-director/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/club-directors/become-a-club-director/)

### **Club Director Update Course:**

[http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/club-directors/club-director-update-course/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/club-directors/club-director-update-course/)

**Schedule of Courses:** [http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/update-courses/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/update-courses/)

### **Rulings: Frequently Asked Questions:**

[http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/club-directors/rulings-faq/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/club-directors/rulings-faq/)

**Start an Easybridge! game:** <http://easybridge.com/>

**Become an Easybridge! presenter:** [mronemus@comcast.net](mailto:mronemus@comcast.net)

### **Become a Tournament Director:**

[http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/club-directors/become-a-tournament-director/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/club-directors/become-a-tournament-director/)

### **Alert Procedures:**

[http://web5.acbl.org/tournaments\\_page/charts-rules-and-regulations/tournament-specific-regulations/alert-procedures/](http://web5.acbl.org/tournaments_page/charts-rules-and-regulations/tournament-specific-regulations/alert-procedures/)

### **Handicapping Your Games:**

<http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/HandicapGames.pdf>

**Home Style Duplicate:** <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/homestyleBridge.pdf>

**Small Duplicate Games:** <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/SmallGames.pdf>

**Stratifying Your Game:** <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/stratified.pdf>

**Convention Charts:** <http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/play/Convention-Chart.pdf>

### **Special Events Information for Club Managers:**

[http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/special-events/special-events-information/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/special-events/special-events-information/)

**Special Events Online Registration:** <https://web.acbl.org/SpecialEvents/index.do>

**Special Events Conditions of Contest:** <http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/coc/0607napcoc.pdf>

**Special Events Schedule:** [http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/special-events/special-events-schedule/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/special-events/special-events-schedule/)







# Running a Club Game

There are many elements to running a good duplicate bridge game. This section starts off with some suggestions that have proven to be successful at other clubs.

- 1.1 Tips for Running Really Good Bridge Games . . . . . 12-13
- 1.2 Run All the Games Your Club Is Entitled to Run . . . . . 14
- 1.3 Administration of your Game . . . . . 15-19



# Tips for Running Really Good Bridge Games

The games you run and the way in which you run them constitute the foundation of your club. Pay attention to the details. Observe the habits of your players and try to accommodate their wishes. Don't tolerate bad behavior from anyone. If your games are well run and fun, your customers will be happy.

## **Decide to be a club director who will “go the extra mile.”**

Here are some services you can perform that will enhance the quality of your games as suggested by Lindsey Butler of Charleston SC:

- Be available one hour before game time to assist newcomers and to answer questions from club members.
- Take reservations from all players who plan to attend the following week's game, asking if they will need a partner or a ride, etc.
- Arrange partnerships for players who need them. (All club members understand that their cooperation is expected.)

## **Make name tags for all of your players.**

Make permanent name tags for everyone. They can be kept on a bulletin board at the front door and picked up as the players arrive for each session. Ask players to wear their name tags to create a friendlier atmosphere.

## **Use Duplicate Decisions to help make the best rulings.**

ACBL has produced a booklet to assist club directors in making good rulings. This booklet, Duplicate Decisions, can be used in place of the difficult-to-understand Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge for 99% of the rulings you will be called upon to make. This is a “must-have” for all club directors. It is available for purchase or online at the ACBL website.

## **Start and end your games on time.**

Start promptly and end the game when it is expected to end (approximately three and a half hours for a regular session and two to three hours for a limited game). Players want to know that they have committed a certain amount of time to a game. They may have errands to run after the game or need to get home at night to prepare for the next day.

## **Remember bridge is a timed event.**

Encourage your players to play in a timely fashion. “If you can't play well, play fast,” or “Talk less, play more,” are good reminders. If you have trouble with slow players, you might establish a club policy of “no late plays.” Anyone unable to complete the boards on a given round will receive an artificial score. No Play for both sides if none are at fault. Average minus for both sides if both are at fault. If one side is at fault, they receive an Average minus and their opponents an Average plus. A good director is proactive in this matter. Walk through your playing area when there are seven or eight minutes left in the round. Caution players who have fallen behind. Pay attention to which pairs are causing the problem so when penalties need to be applied, you're sure which pairs to blame.



## Tips for Running Really Good Bridge Games .

### **Use a timer or reminder to help keep the game moving.**

A timer that counts down the minutes in the round and signals each move can be very helpful. The timer lets the players know how much time they have left in each round and helps keep the game moving. If you don't use a timer, give your players a two-minute warning as each round is about to end.

### **Make the starting times for your games fit your customers.**

Know your customers. If you have a lot of seniors who don't like to drive in the evening, don't schedule your games to start at 7 p.m. Be flexible with your times and change as necessary.

### **Simplify the entry-selling process.**

Keep yourself free to welcome your players and tend to any unusual circumstances by NOT selling entries at the start of your game. Instead, put out table mats on the tables you expect to use and have the players choose their tables. Put envelopes on the table marked with the table number and the N-S and E-W pair numbers. Write on the envelope or add a note to each table whether you want this to be an A, B or C table so that you can keep the field fairly well balanced. Ask the players to put their fees in the envelope and note on the outside if anyone needs change, etc.

### **Remember your role as host/hostess.**

When you elect to collect money at the tables for entries, you allow yourself the freedom to greet people as they come in. You are in effect the host/hostess of a party, and you should be with your guests, noticing a new hairdo, a new outfit, asking how her sister is, how his trip was and generally schmoozing. Marti Ronemus of York PA uses this technique to give everyone individual attention and to make them feel welcome. She feels it raises her players' comfort level and increases the "fun" level of the game. In the UK, all club members are required to take a turn as host/hostess within 28 days of being asked — a rotation system for "booking" hosts.

### **Talk with every player in your game.**

Use tournament-style entry blanks at each table and collect them when you collect the fees. Turn over the entries at your desk of the people you have already talked with. This procedure enables you to make sure you have spoken with everyone. Make sure you also say "goodbye" when the players leave.

### **Use bidding boxes.**

Players love bidding boxes — even new players. They cut down on the noise in the room and players no longer have to ask for a review!

### **Post results on the Internet, develop a newsletter, create an email group.**

Players have grown accustomed to being able to see results immediately. Develop an Internet presence for your club and post results as soon as possible. ACBL's website is a great place to submit your results. (Go here to learn how: [http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/resources-and-forms/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/resources-and-forms/)) A weekly email to your members reminds them where to find results, what special games are coming up, players who are looking for partners and any other special information you want to share.



## Run All the Games Your Club is Entitled to Run

If your club conducts its sanctioned games in full compliance with ACBL regulations during the calendar year, you are entitled to run a number of special events. Some can be run by converting your regularly scheduled game, some can be run in addition to your regularly scheduled game, some may be earned and some require the approval of your local unit.

All of these events pay more masterpoints than a regularly scheduled weekly club game. Many also offer hand records and analyses and special recognition for your players.

The most up-to-date information on special games can be found at the ACBL website at [http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/special-events/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/special-events/). Special instructions, dates, masterpoints awarded, additional fees required, regulations and links for online sanctioning are listed. More information can be found in the ACBL Handbook (Chapter 4).

Clubs are allowed to hold one special fund game per month, for any and all of its sanctioned sessions (excluding January, February, April and September). Clubs may choose from any one of the following special fund games: Grass Roots FUNd, Junior Fund, International Fund, Educational Fund or Charity. Please note: The regulation regarding charity games requires clubs to run a game benefiting ACBL/CBF charity for each game that it runs to benefit a charity of its own choosing.

# Administration of Your Game

## Overview of ACBL Handbook Chapters 4 and 5

For a complete description of the rules of administering your game, see Chapters 4 and 5 of the ACBL Handbook. The club director should be particularly aware of the material in Chapter 4, 1 - IV and VI.  
<http://web5.acbl.org/about-acbl/administration/acbl-handbook/>

### **Chapter 4 of the ACBL Handbook will give you information on:**

- How many club championships you are allowed each year.
- Different types and classes of games.
- The rights, obligations and limitations on the club manager and the club.
- What to do if you wish to change your venue or time of a session.
- How to get a sanction for your game (and costs and waiting time involved).
- Different qualifications for sea cruises and land cruises.
- Masterpoints for cruise games.
- All the different types of games available to a club.
- Information on college and school programs.
- Describes how to use a three-person pair in a newcomer game.
- Regulations for awarding masterpoints in all situations.
- What to do when a pair is too experienced to play in a newcomer game even though their masterpoints do not reflect it.
- When the game fees are waived.
- Details the operation of club games (including cash prizes, cancellations, records, insurance).
- Club discipline.
- Systems and conventions allowed.
- Series games.
- Unit-club relations.

### **Chapter 5 of the ACBL Handbook has:**

- A complete listing of points awarded for all types and classes of games in all situations: regular game, club championship, charity club championship.

**Check the ACBL's website at [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)  
for the most current version of  
Chapters 4 and 5 of the ACBL Handbook.**

# Administration of Your Game

## Clubs and Club Regulations

### Sanction fees

Any individual ACBL member or group of ACBL members may apply for a game sanction. Sanctions are not exclusive; the ACBL will sanction multiple games in the same area at the same time of the week. There is a fee of \$11.50 (per year) per session to sanction a game. This fee is submitted with the sanction application or renewal. In addition, there is a charge of \$1.00 per table, each time a game is held. This fee is submitted with the club's Monthly Report. (Sanction fees are subject to change.)

### Classes of games

There are four classes of regular club games: Open, Invitational/Restricted, Newcomer and Bridge Plus+. An Open game is open to all ACBL members and to non-members. The Invitational or Restricted game places a restriction of some sort upon participation in its events. This restriction may be based on ability (measured by masterpoints), or may be something completely different (sex, age, club members, etc.). See Chapter 4 of the ACBL Handbook for details. Newcomer games are limited to players holding fewer than 20 masterpoints. Bridge Plus+ games provide a transition from ACBL beginning bridge classes to newcomer games conducted as ACBL-sanctioned games. These games are restricted to players with fewer than five masterpoints. Bridge Plus+ games are operated by ACBL accredited teachers often working with a club director. Players are encouraged to ask the teacher for advice on bidding and play after play has been completed.

### Types of games

A club may run various types of games. Pair games may be Open, or they may be run as Stratified Pairs or Handicapped Pairs. A club may also run team games or individual games. There are also a variety of different special games a club may run; these award more masterpoints to the club's players than a regular game. (See Chapter 4 of the ACBL Handbook.)

### Stratified pairs

Stratified games may be run with two or three strata. (See Stratifying Your Club Games.) The lowest stratum may have any masterpoint restriction suitable for a club, but must contain at least five pairs. There should be approximately the same number of pairs in each stratum sitting each direction of the game. Players in lower strata are automatically entered in the higher strata and earn the greater of any awards for the various ranks they achieve.

### Handicapped games

The game is scored twice, once with raw scores and once with the handicaps added in. Masterpoints may be issued entirely on the handicapped results, or may be split, half to the raw score placers and half to the handicapped ones. In this case, if a pair places in both sets of ranks, the masterpoint awards are added together. There are several approved methods of determining handicaps. (See Handicapping Your Club Games.)

### Minimum tables

A pair game may issue masterpoints if it is composed of at least two and a half tables (five pairs). An eight-player individual movement or a two-table team game may also issue masterpoints.



## Administration of Your Game - Clubs and Club Regulations

### Masterpoints

Each game must be directed by an accredited game director (or teacher, for Bridge Plus+) in order to issue masterpoints. Points must be issued to all eligible participants, including non-members of the ACBL. The club manager has the responsibility to ensure that points are correctly and promptly issued. Use the ACBLscore program to print PCON (point confirmation) slips to give to non-members; this will help them claim the masterpoints they have already earned after they join the ACBL.

All sanctioned duplicate games award masterpoints to 40% of the contestants in each comparison group (rounded to the nearest whole number with .5 rounded up).

Open games award .10 per section per pair in competition to the first place pair, with a maximum of 1.50 masterpoints. The award depends solely on the number of pairs in play in the field. For example, an eight-table Mitchell is composed of two fields of eight pairs. It will award three places each direction. A six-table Howell is composed of one 12-pair field; points will be awarded to five places.

A game with half a table is always treated as the next whole number. (For example, a seven and a half table Mitchell will award masterpoints each direction as an eight-table game.)

### Awards for lower positions

The second place pair receives 70% of the award for first place. The third place pair receives 50% of the award for first place. The fourth place pair receives 35% of the award for first place. Lower awards are computed by dividing the first place award by the number of the place (fifth is 1/5 of first, sixth is 1/6 of first, etc.).

### Tied positions

Any margin of .01 of a matchpoint or larger is sufficient to break a tie.

When two pairs tie for a position, add the masterpoints for the two ranking positions and divide by two. Each pair receives this number. If three pairs tie, they share the points for the three positions. Fractional overages of .50 or more are rounded up.

When there is a tie for the last position awarding masterpoints, the next theoretical award is projected. This theoretical award is added to the last real award, and the sum is divided by two to determine the actual award for the tied contestants.

### Overall awards

Club games composed of more than one section may issue overall awards. These awards are based on the total number of tables in the game, with a limit of 2.50 masterpoints. Pairs receive either their section award or their overall award, whichever is greater. (For example, a 19-table game is divided into two sections, one of nine tables and one of 10 tables. The pair winning each nine table field will receive .90 masterpoints; the pair winning each 10-table field will receive 1.00 masterpoints. But the best overall pair (out of the 38 pairs) will instead receive 2.50 masterpoints as first overall, and the second best pair will receive 1.88 masterpoints (75% of 2.50) instead of the section award they earned.



## Administration of Your Game - Clubs and Club Regulations

### Awards for restricted games

Restricted games award masterpoints at a reduced rate. If the restriction has nothing to do with bridge ability (example: seniors, club members only), each award in the game is 80% of the points a similar open game would award. If the restriction is based on ability (masterpoints), points are awarded based on the following scale:

0-5	.03
0-10	.04
0-20	.05
0-100	.06
0-200	.07
0-any larger number	.08

In stratified games, the same above percentages of the open awards apply. The depth of awards in a stratified game is based on the number of pairs in a comparison group that are eligible for that particular strat, with 40% of the pairs (rounded as above) receiving masterpoints. A pair that earns multiple awards receives the single biggest one.

Team games award overall awards in the same manner, to 40% of the teams. They also award match awards at .01 per board in the match (a six-board match is worth .06). A two-table team game awards match awards only.

### Reporting the results

All masterpoints from club games are issued by the ACBL.

ACBLscore can automatically calculate the points earned by individual players participating at your club. It will accumulate the points earned for the month. The club manager mails the totals for the month to the ACBL by email or on a disc with the monthly report. The points will then appear on the back cover of that player's monthly Bridge Bulletin magazine.

Clubs using ACBLscore must report games electronically.

For players who are not yet members, ACBLscore can generate a PCON slip. Players will be allowed to register up to 20 masterpoints earned in the previous 12 months at the time they join the ACBL.

No masterpoints will be issued to non-paid up ACBL members or to Life Masters whose service fees are unpaid. For players whose membership has lapsed, the ACBL will continue to track masterpoints (which can be reclaimed upon rejoining) for a period of 90 days. If the player's membership has lapsed more than 90 days, points are only issued if the fees for the lapsed period are paid in full.

# Administration of Your Game

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Can the club director play in the game?**

Directors who do not play, in general, will do a better job. They can be more objective when giving rulings over disputes or infractions of law. Even if no rulings are called for, they can do a better job maintaining the pace of play, moving boards, checking the movement to be sure nothing bad happens, keeping the coffee pot and the cookie plate filled, answering the phone and doing the myriad of other things a club director needs to do during the game.

That said, it is perfectly legal for a club director to play in a regular club game. In smaller games, the director often serves as the standby player.

Non-playing directors are encouraged but not required for games having not more than one section of 17 tables or fewer for the following special events held at clubs or units: ACBL-wide International Fund Games, ACBL-wide Charity Games, Junior Fund Games, Senior Pairs, Worldwide Pairs, ACBL-wide Instant Matchpoint Games, Membership Games, NABC Fund Raisers, Club Appreciation Games, Sectional Tournament at Clubs (STACs) Games, the Canadian Olympiad, the COPC, the CNTC, the North American Pairs club and unit qualifying stages, the 49er Pairs, the Grand National Teams (GNT), Club and Unit Charity Championships.

Club directors can play in any of the special events listed above when they have 17 or fewer tables as long as the game is run as one section.

### **How many special games can I hold?**

If your club conducts its sanctioned games in full compliance with ACBL regulations during the calendar year, you are entitled to run a number of special events. See the ACBL Handbook (Chapter 4) or Resources for Clubs online at [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org) for more information.

### **Are cash prizes permitted?**

Cash prizes are permitted. There is no restriction on the amount that may be given.

### **Can I ban (or allow) certain conventions in my club? Can I bar psychs?**

ACBL regulations permit the governing body of the club great latitude to determine what is best for its own clientele. The club has the right to permit or forbid any convention in a regular club game. It is recommended that all of the conventions on the ACBL Limited Convention Chart be permitted, but even that is not required. Sectional and regional tournaments and most clubs permit the use of any convention on the ACBL General Convention Chart.

In regard to psychic bids, the Laws of Duplicate Bridge state specifically that psychic bids are legal (Law 40). At the same time, nothing in this law says that psychic bids may be used indiscriminately. Partner must be as unprepared as the opponents in terms of expecting the action.

There are a number of free ACBL publications available from the tournament department and online at [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org) that provide information on conventions and the Alert procedure. Note that not only does a club have the authority to permit or bar any conventions, it may even choose not to use the Alert procedure at all.





# Starting Your Game

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## Stratifying Your Club Games

Every club director has the opportunity to stratify the club game into two or three stratifications, and club directors better serve their players and award more masterpoints by doing so. Small games of three to five tables may only be able to bear a break into two stratifications while larger games of six or more tables will frequently allow three stratifications. The best thing about stratifying club games is that the director has the opportunity to serve the players by selecting strats that reflect the expertise of their field of players. (When participating in STaCs, the open game stratifications are selected by the sponsor, but STaC directors may have a lot of flexibility in how they stratify masterpoint-limited games.)

To be able to award points to the lowest stratification (B in a two-strat game or C in a three-strat game) there must be at least five pairs or two and a half tables in that stratification, otherwise no overall awards will be given to the players in the lowest strat.

A stratified game is advantageous to all strats:

1. Strat A players get ranked on the number of tables in the entire field resulting in additional masterpoints.
2. Strat B players have the advantage of possibly winning points in a higher strat, yet their own overall awards are based on a greater number of tables. B plus C players make up the B field which yields more masterpoints.
3. Strat C players are ranked against other Strat C players providing the experience of playing against more skilled players without diminishing the chances of winning. The Strat C players also have the advantage of possibly winning points in the two higher strats, which yields more masterpoints.

The typical process of stratification starts with selling entries, with the director doing the best to “balance the field,” having an equal number of strong, intermediate and newcomer players sitting in each direction. Once the game is sold, the director sets up the gamefile in ACBLscore and then selects the strats that will best serve those in attendance. One day it might be Open/2000/750 and on the next it might be Open/750/100. Both are perfectly reasonable.

Once all the names are typed, the director can pull up the field of players to look at the actual number of players in each strat. By typing <F9> and selecting #11, or typing <F11> and selecting Stratification, the director will be able to assess the group. If there are not enough players in “C” or too many in “A”, it can be fixed by typing <F9> and resetting the masterpoints to better suit the field.

Masterpoints are awarded to each group based on the number of tables in that (and all lower) groups. If you have a stratified game with 10 tables in Strat A (includes all the players), seven tables in Strat B (all the players with less than the B ceiling) and three tables in Strat C (players with less than the ceiling for C) the awards for Strat A would be based on 10 tables, Strat B would be based on seven tables and Strat C on three tables.

## Stratifying Your Club Games

Three more options exist that might benefit players and the club:

- ACBL allows the director to stratify by pair average (This can also be done for Swiss Teams). This can be a great marketing tool and something that encourages players who have moved up in rank to consider mentoring new players. If the club's C strat is typically 750 points, averaging allows a 1490 point player to play with a nine point player and they will fall in the C strat. If the B strat is 2000, averaging allows a 3990 point player to play with that nine point player, and their strat will be B.
- Club directors always have the option of placing a player in a higher stratification than their total points would dictate. It's not uncommon to see a player with only two or three masterpoints from ACBL, but they've played dollar-a-point rubber bridge for 50 years. Stratifying that player in the A or B category would be reasonable and fairer to all the other players in the game.
- While the menu of various stratification gives you opportunities to stratify anywhere from five to 10,000 points, directors can also specify the masterpoint levels used for specific games. To do so, however, you must select "Specify" for all three levels. In this way, you can create your stratification with numbers not found on the regular list. A masterpoint-limited game could be stratified 1350/700/150. If that best serves the players, give it a try!

**Note:** There is one practice that is prohibited in stratifying games. Club directors should never make their stratifications based upon viewing results and then juggling or changing the stratifications to give away more points. Stratification selections should be made early and before any results are entered. Club directors should not move a C pair into the A strat just because they came in first overall. While that C pair will win the A points because it pays more masterpoints than first in C, another pair should not be rewarded for being first in C when they indeed were not. It gives a C pair great joy and major bragging rights to announce on those rare occasions, "We were first in A, B and C!"

# Handicapping Your Club Games

By using handicapping in some of your club games, you can create an environment that is fun for everyone and very encouraging for your new players.

## Handicapping a game

You do not need special permission to handicap one of your games. Handicap games must be held at one of the club's regularly scheduled sessions using one of the following six formats:

1. Create a new game at a time different from existing games with the expectation of drawing players who are not currently playing duplicate. (This requires a new sanction.)
2. Convert one session per week from an existing game to a handicap game.
3. Convert an existing game to a handicap game for half of its sessions.
4. Where the clientele is large enough, convert a section of play to handicap format keeping one section as a regular duplicate bridge game.
5. Create a bridge team league in which all players have handicaps for a round robin match.
6. Conduct Swiss team sessions at specified intervals with the teams handicapped.

## Methods of handicapping

There are two primary ways to establish handicaps for your players: (1) on an average based upon the player's previous performance in comparable club sessions, or (2) on the player's ACBL rank.

### Handicaps based on past performances

Use this method if you have someone willing to do the necessary record keeping and computations in exchange for free plays. The handicap is computed on the basis of 90% or 100% of the difference between the player's average performance and an artificial "par" established at 65% of the possible score.

To establish handicaps for existing clientele, go through recap sheets for the game session at which you would start the handicap program. Compute the percent of possible score for each player for the last three (for example) games in which that player took part, and then compute a percentage average. (The percent of possible is obtained by dividing the player's matchpoint score by the possible score.)

The sum of these three percentages divided by three is the average. To compute the handicap, subtract the average from .650 and multiply the result by .90 or 1.00.

To compute the handicap to be applied for a pair, add the three-point decimal handicaps of the two players and divide by two. While the game is being played, convert the percentage handicap for each pair to matchpoints by multiplying the handicap times the matchpoints possible (i.e., 156 average = 312 possible).

Post the handicap matchpoints for each pair in a column where they can be added to the raw score matchpoints. The "after game" calculations will be easy for all to see and merely a matter of adding matchpoint totals together.



# Handicapping Your Club Games

## Establishing handicaps for players who haven't played in three previous games

These options can be used with players who haven't played in three previous games at your club:

- Explain that these players will compete with no handicap until three games have been completed at the club.
- Establish a handicap based on only one game at the conclusion of that game.
- Base the handicap for the first game on the player's rank (non-members are arbitrarily ranked as Masters).

## Awarding masterpoints

When you have a game of players who do and don't have handicaps, it is suggested that you award split club masterpoint awards. This would give you two sets of winners — raw and handicap.

The first-place award in each field would be one half of what it would normally be (maximum in each field for first place will be 50 club masterpoints). Players placing in both fields (it usually happens that a person having a good raw score will also win in the handicap field) will get the total of the two awards on one slip.

## Handicaps based on ACBL rank

Using this system, every participant is given a handicap based on the ACBL player rank held. Charts have been prepared so the director can easily determine the handicap for any rank of player. The handicaps are cumulative. In other words, the sum of the handicaps of the partners is the handicap for the pair.

Some players in your game may not be ACBL members. It is suggested that they arbitrarily be assigned the rank of Club Master (20 to 49.99 points). However, the club manager's experience and judgment should be applied in determining which non-ACBL members should be placed in rankings for handicap purposes.

One option with this form of handicap is to adjust the rankings of players based on the amount of success they have. For example, you could move the winners "up" one classification for the next game in which they play. If two regional masters win, their handicap would be computed from the Life Master scale for the next succeeding game. This method allows you to include a player's most recent results while using the rank form of handicapping.

## A Tip for Running a Handicapped Game

### Use handicapping to even the field.

By using handicapping in some of your club games, you can create an environment that is fun for everyone and very encouraging for your new players.

## Pair Game Movements

Setting up the movement tends to give the new director more trouble than almost anything else!

If you are using ACBLscore, the program will find the proper movement for you if you need help.

### General Guidelines

The goal in a successful\* open game is to play 24 to 28 boards in three and a half hours.

The goal in a limited masterpoint or advanced newcomer game is to play 22 to 24 boards in three hours.

The goal in a successful\* newcomer game is to play 18 to 22 boards in three hours or less.

\*Successful: The people had a good time, played a sufficient number of boards and are coming back!

### Selecting the Right Movement

There are two basic movements:

**Mitchell:** N-S remains stationary: E-W moves up and boards move down each round in an orderly progress.

**Howell:** One (or more, depending on the size of the game) pair remains stationary; the rest all move each round. Each pair plays N-S some of the time and E-W some of the time; each pair plays against most or all of the other pairs.

## Pair Game Movements

### The Mitchell Movement

Round	1			2			3			4			5		
Table	NS	EW	Bds	NS	EW	Bds	NS	EW	Bds	NS	EW	Bds	NS	EW	Bds
1	1	1	1-5	1	5	6-10	1	4	11-15	1	3	16-20	1	2	21-25
2	2	2	6-10	2	1	11-15	2	5	16-20	2	4	21-25	2	3	1-5
3	3	3	11-15	3	2	16-20	3	1	21-25	3	5	1-5	3	4	6-10
4	4	4	16-20	4	3	21-25	4	2	1-5	4	1	6-10	4	5	11-15
5	5	5	21-25	5	4	1-5	5	3	6-10	5	2	11-15	5	1	16-20

Round	1			2			3			4			5		
Table	NS	EW	Bds	NS	EW	Bds	NS	EW	Bds	NS	EW	Bds	NS	EW	Bds
1	1	1	1-5	1	5	6-10	1	4	11-15	1	3	16-20	1	2	21-25
2	2	2	6-10	2	1	11-15	2	5	16-20	2	4	21-25	2	3	1-5
3	3	3	11-15	3	2	16-20	3	1	21-25	3	5	1-5	3	4	6-10
4	4	4	16-20	4	3	21-25	4	2	1-5	4	1	6-10	4	5	11-15
5	5	5	21-25	5	4	1-5	5	3	6-10	5	2	11-15	5	1	16-20
6	6	6	26-30	6	5	1-5	6	4	6-10	6	2	11-15	6	1	16-20

### Advantages of Running a Mitchell

1. You have an seven-table or larger game. (With six tables, you may also elect to run a Mitchell but a Howell is technically superior.)
2. The game tends to run faster.
3. Many players prefer or need to sit in a stationary position. Half of your players will be stationary in a Mitchell movement.

# Pair Game Movements

## Variations for the Mitchell Movement

Mitchell movements may be classified into two categories: even number of tables and odd number of tables, when thinking of your setup and moves.

### ODD NUMBER OF TABLES

#### Straight Mitchell

E-W will move up one table, and the boards will move down one table at the end of each round.

- 5 tables: 5 boards per table.
- 7 tables: 4 boards per table.
- 9 tables: 3 boards per table.
- 11 tables: 3 boards per table.
- 13 or more tables: 2 boards per table.

The odd-numbered Mitchell movement is a rest for the director. No surprises.

### EVEN NUMBER OF TABLES

#### Skip Mitchell

The even-tabled Skip Mitchell movement is also restful, but the director must wake up at the halfway point. Again E-W will move up one table, and the boards will move down one table at the end of each round — until the halfway point of the game. Then, one time, E-W will skip a table.

(If they don't, they will meet the same boards they played at the beginning of the game.)

- 6 tables: 5 boards on each table. E-W skip after three rounds.
- 8 tables: 4 boards on each table. E-W skip after four rounds.
- 10 tables: 3 boards on each table. E-W skip after five rounds.
- 12 tables: 3 boards on each table. E-W skip after six rounds.
- 14 tables: 2 boards on each table. E-W skip after seven rounds.
- 16 tables: Skip after seven or eight rounds.\*
- 18 tables: Skip after seven, eight or nine rounds.\*
- 19 or more tables: Break into two or more sections as appropriate.

\*skip after round 7 is recommended

In an eight-table game, three boards per round, you must skip the E-W pairs one table (must be after 4) and play seven rounds, 21 boards, which could be a perfect movement for a newcomer or beginner game. An alternate movement is to play four boards a round and skip after four rounds as each player would play 28 boards. Similar problems exist with six- and 12-table games.

## Pair Game Movements - Variations of the Mitchell Movement.

With six, eight or 12 tables, you have another option, one which will enable all of the players to play all of the boards and all of the other pairs in the same direction — a perfect movement. The price you pay is that you need to take a little extra care. (The 12-table game may run a little slowly unless you have two fast N-S pairs at the relay tables.)

Two tables will always be sharing the same set of boards during the same round (the relay). Halfway around the movement, there will be a set of boards that sits out each round on the bye-stand. The bye-stand is always directly across from the relay if you use a clock diagram.

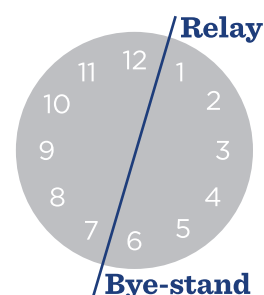
### The Relay and Bye-stand Mitchell

This variation is used with six, eight or 12 tables only. It is a method of playing all opponents and all boards available in an even-table game without a skip. It is used almost exclusively with eight - and 12- table Mitchell movements.

With an eight-table relay and bye stand, you play 24 boards, eight rounds.

1. Have two adjacent tables share boards = Relay
2. Have a set of boards sit out between two tables each round = Bye-stand.  
Boards progress through the relay as though the two tables were one.  
Boards progress through the bye stand as though it were a table.

A quick check method is to draw a clock. Then, if you draw a diagonal line, the relay will be on one end and the bye-stand on the other.



Practically, you should start putting out boards with your relay, and after you have put out half the number of boards, establish a bye-stand.

The principle is the same numbers of boards are on one side of the diagonal as are on the other. As shown above, there are six tables on each side of the diagonals.

### Correcting a misplaced bye-stand when the bye-stand is placed:

#### ONE TABLE TOO LOW

6-TABLE GAME

##### \* Relay between 6 and 1

At round 4:  
Relay between 5 & 6, with the boards on table 5.  
Bye-stand moves between tables 3 and 4.  
All boards put back in numerical order.  
N-S pair 3 trades places with N-S 6 for this round only.

##### \* Relay between 1 & 2

At round 4:  
Relay between 6 and 1, with the boards on table 6. Bye-stand moves between tables 4 and 5.  
All boards put back in numerical order.  
N-S pair 4 trades places with N-S 1 for this round only.

#### ONE TABLE TOO HIGH

6-TABLE GAME

##### \* Relay between 6 and 1

At round 4:  
Relay between 1 & 2, with the boards on table 2.  
Bye-stand moves between tables 3 and 4.  
All boards put back in numerical order.  
N-S pair 1 trades places with N-S 4 for the last round only.

##### \* Relay between 1 & 2

At round 4:  
Relay between 2 and 3, with the boards on table 3. Bye-stand moves between tables 4 and 5.  
All boards put back in numerical order.  
N-S pair 2 trades places with N-S 5 for the last round only.

Table continues on the next page.

## Pair Game Movements

### More Variations for the Mitchell Movement

<p>8-TABLE GAME</p> <p><b>* Relay between 8 &amp; 1</b></p> <p>At round 5: Relay between 7 and 8, with the boards on table 7. Bye-stand moves between tables 4 and 5. All boards put back in numerical order. N-S pair 4 trades places with N-S 8 for this round only.</p> <p><b>* Relay between 1 &amp; 2</b></p> <p>At round 4: Relay between 8 and 1, with the boards on table 8. Bye-stand moves between tables 5 and 6. All boards put back in numerical order. N-S pair 5 trades places with N-S 1 for this round only.</p>	<p>8-TABLE GAME</p> <p><b>* Relay between 8 &amp; 1</b></p> <p>At round 5: Relay between 1 and 2, with the boards on table 2. Bye-stand moves between tables 4 and 5. All boards put back in numerical order. N-S pair 1 trades places with N-S 5 for the last round only.</p> <p><b>* Relay between 1 &amp; 2</b></p> <p>At round 5: Relay between 2 and 3, with the boards on table 3. Bye-stand moves between tables 5 and 6. All boards put back in numerical order. N-S pair 2 trades places with N-S 6 for the last round only.</p>
<p>12-TABLE GAME</p> <p><b>* Relay between 12 &amp; 1</b></p> <p>At round 7: Relay between 11 and 12 with boards on table 11. Bye-stand moves between tables 6 and 7. All boards put back in numerical order. N-S pair 6 trades places with N-S 12 this round only.</p> <p><b>* Relay between 1 &amp; 2</b></p> <p>At round 7: Relay between 12 and 1, with the boards on table 12. Bye-stand moves between tables 7 and 8. All boards put back in numerical order. N-S pair 7 trades places with N-S 1 for this round only.</p>	<p>12-TABLE GAME</p> <p><b>* Relay between 12 &amp; 1</b></p> <p>At round 7: Relay between 1 and 2, with the boards on table 2. Bye-stand moves between tables 6 and 7. All boards put back in numerical order. N-S pair 1 trades places with N-S 7 for the last round.</p> <p><b>* Relay between 1 &amp; 2</b></p> <p>At round 7: Relay between 2 and 3, with the boards on table 3. Bye-stand moves between tables 7 and 8. All boards put back in numerical order. N-S pair 2 trades places with N-S 8 for the last round only.</p>

### More Variations of the Mitchell Movement

The Scrambled Mitchell is used when it is desirable to produce one winning pair. Pairs play some boards N-S and some boards E-W. This is accomplished by switching the arrows designating North so that they point to the original East simultaneously at all tables for certain rounds. The original E-W pairs continue to move; the original N-S pairs remain at their tables, even though they are playing the E-W hands.

The Revenge Mitchell is an allowed movement. This occurs frequently in an eight-table Mitchell game when a skip has been called. In order to play a sufficient number of boards, the pairs play another set of boards against the pair they started against. It only works with even-numbered tables in play.

# Pair Game Movements

## The Howell Movement

### The Howell Movement

#### Advantages of Running a Howell

1. It offers a good duplicate bridge comparison — every pair (or almost every pair) plays every other pair.
2. There is usually a shorter sitout if you have a half-table movement.
3. It's a must for a three- or four-table game.
4. You must be careful to run the whole game if you do not want the scoring to be in decimals or to find that the boards have different tops because they have not been played the same number of times. (ACBLscore allows you to stop a Howell at any time.)

#### Disadvantages of Running a Howell

1. It will take longer to play the same number of boards played in a Mitchell.
2. A slow pair can turn the game into a nightmare.
3. The director must help move the boards.
4. Most players must move.

### Wrong Seats — Wrong Boards

It is standard procedure to allow a pair to play a board sitting in the wrong direction whenever it is necessary to get a proper result on a board and to avoid assigning an adjusted score. Deviating from the directions outlined on the table guide card does not create a problem with the movement — it simply changes the comparisons within the field.

If directors feel a pair is careless in paying attention to the movement directions, they should issue a procedural penalty following a warning for repeated violations for failing to sit in the proper direction. A typical procedural penalty is one-quarter of the matchpoints available on a board.

Play of the wrong board does not necessarily mean that averaged boards are required. If this is the first time the board has been played by BOTH pairs, the result stands. When they are to play that board against their correct pair, they will inform the pair that they will play the board against a different pair immediately at the end of the session, if time permits. The pair that the OTHER pair was supposed to play will be the opponent. Anytime one of the pairs had previously played the board, the first result stands and the second result is scored as Average Plus for the non-offenders.

## Pair Game Movements

### Recommended Short Bridge Game Movements

Avoid Howell movements except for situations noted below. A Mitchell movement should be used whenever possible. Here are the recommended movements:

<b>4-7 players</b>	Social bridge game with players cutting in and out.
<b>8 players</b>	A two-table team game or individual movement.
<b>2½ tables</b>	This is an awkward number. Try to avoid it. A more practical choice is a three-table Howell with a sitout. There are five rounds. It is usually best to use three boards per round since Howells generally run slowly. The disadvantage is that the pairs that sit out will only play 12 boards. You can set up the movement with four boards per round but the complete movement would be 20 boards, likely too much for a two-hour game unless the players are very fast. However, you can curtail the last round (to two boards, for example), awarding averages on the unplayed boards. (If you are using ACBLscore, use Not Played instead of Average for a fairer comparison of boards not played.)
<b>3 tables</b>	Three-table Howell with five rounds of three boards.
<b>3½ tables</b>	Another awkward movement. A four-table Howell is best with two boards per round.
<b>4 tables</b>	Six-round Howell with three boards per round or a four-table Mitchell with a relay and bye-stand with three or four boards per round.
<b>4½ tables</b>	Five-table Mitchell with three boards per round and a 22-minute sitout for the E-W pairs at Table 5 or five-table Howell two boards per round.
<b>5 tables</b>	Five-table Mitchell with three boards per round. If the players are experienced, you can put out four boards per round and curtail the last round by playing only one or two boards and awarding averages on the unplayed boards. (If you are using ACBLscore use Not Played instead of Average for a fairer comparison of boards not played.)
<b>5½ tables</b>	Six-table Skip Mitchell with three boards per round and a 22-minute sitout for the E-W pairs at Table 6. (E-W pair 3 won't have a sitout.)
<b>6 tables</b>	Six-table Skip Mitchell with three boards per round, four or five rounds. Six-table bye-stand one relay, two boards per round.
<b>6½ tables</b>	Seven-table Mitchell with two boards per round.



## Pair Game Movements - Recommended Short Bridge Game Movements

<b>7 tables</b>	Seven-table Mitchell with two boards per round.
<b>7½ tables</b>	Eight-table Mitchell with a relay and bye-stand and two boards per round. There is no actual relay because the E-W pairs at Table 8 sit out for 15 minutes. The E-W pairs will play only 14 boards, but this is preferable to having a 22-minute sitout.
<b>8 tables</b>	Eight-table Mitchell with a relay and bye-stand and two boards per round. Be sure to keep an eye on the board movement when there is a bye-stand.
<b>8½ tables</b>	Nine-table Mitchell with two boards per round. E-W pairs at Table 9 have a 15-minute sitout. Play seven or eight rounds.
<b>9 or more</b>	Mitchell movement with two boards per round. Play six, seven or eight rounds depending on the time available. With a half table, there will be an E-W sit out at the highest numbered table. Don't forget to call a skip after the halfway point with an even number of tables.

With 16 or more tables, you can split the game into two sections. Don't split the game into two sections with fewer tables because two-board rounds are preferable to three-board rounds.

**Note:** Avoid half-table games whenever possible. Keep a list of people you can call at the last minute to fill it or have a standby pair that you reward with a free play for another night when they are not needed.

# Running Swiss Teams

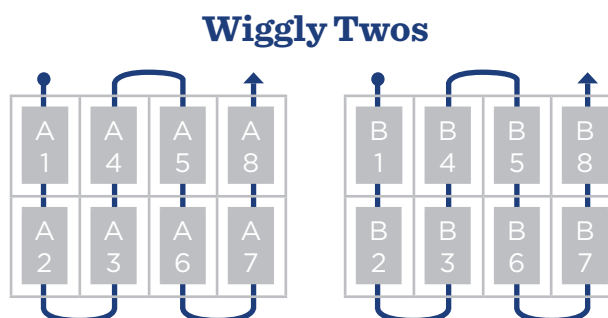
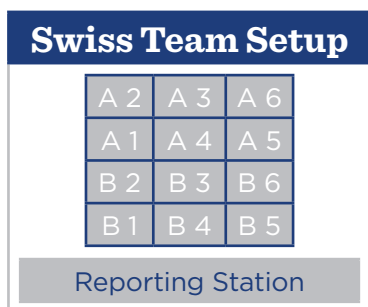
## Selling the entries

In the top right-hand corner of your entry blank, write the team number in large, dark print numbers one through 10 (or however many teams you think are coming in).

Now write the table letter and number on the blanks alternating A1, B1, A2, B2, etc. so that Team 1 will be at A1 and Team 2 will be at A2, Team 4 at B2, etc.

## Setup

1. Divide the room into two sections, tablemats A in one section and tablemats B in the second. The B mats should be laid out exactly the same as A so that like numbered tables are in the same row, but not next to each other.
2. Put five to seven boards on each table in Section A.
3. It often helps if the director turns the tables 45 degrees clockwise. It makes more room for the caddying of boards.



## Starting the Game

4. Have the E-W pairs in Section A take half the boards to the corresponding (like-numbered) table in Section B and stay there to play the round. The E-W pair from Section B moves to the like-numbered table in Section A to play. When a table has played all three or four of its boards, it will call for the caddy to exchange boards between the like-numbered tables in the two sections.

**Note:** ACBLscore will calculate any form of scoring (win/loss, Victory Points, etc.) and assign all new matches automatically. This program eliminates any possible suggestion of favoritism.

# Swiss Team Movements

It is standard practice to use a round-robin movement for four- to seven-team events.

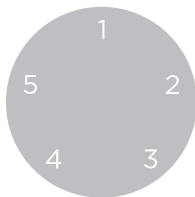
**4 TEAMS      3 Matches      Newcomer: 6 or 7 boards per match  
Intermediate/Open: 8 or 9 boards      Compare results after each match**

	Tables A1 & B1	Tables A2 & B2
Match 1	Teams 4 vs. 1	Teams 2 vs. 3
Match 2	4 vs. 2	3 vs. 1
Match 3	4 vs. 3	1 vs. 2

**5 TEAMS\*      4 Matches      Newcomer: 5 boards per match  
Intermediate: 6 boards per match  
Open: 6 or 7 boards per match      Compare results after each two matches**

1. Have each team sit at its home table.
2. Distribute boards starting with Board 1 on Table 1.  
(1-6 @ Table 1, 7-12 at Table 2, etc., if playing six-board matches.
3. To start the game: see below.

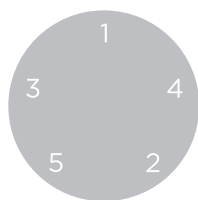
## Matches 1 and 2:



- a. E-W pairs move down two tables from their home base (5 to 3, 4 to 2, 3 to 1, 2 to 5, 1 to 4). Shuffle and play the boards on the table.
- b. E-W pairs take the boards they just played and deposit them at their home tables. They then proceed up two tables from their home base and play the boards that have just arrived there. (1 to 3, 2 to 4, 3 to 5, 4 to 1, 5 to 2). Do not shuffle.
- c. E-W returns to home base and compares scores.

## Swiss Team Movements

### Matches 3 and 4:



- Change tablemats as in the diagram above. (Otherwise the teams would be playing at adjacent tables – a security problem.)
- E-W pairs move down one numerical (two physical) tables from their home base (5 to 4, 4 to 3, 3 to 2, 2 to 1, 1 to 5). Shuffle and play the boards on those tables.
- E-W pairs take the boards they have just played and deposit them at their home tables. They then proceed up one numerical (two physical) tables (1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4, 4 to 5, 5 to 1) from their home base and play the boards that have just arrived there. Do not shuffle.
- E-W returns to home base and compares scores.

### 6 TEAMS

### 5 Matches

**Newcomer: 4 boards per match**  
**Intermediate/Open: 5 boards per match**  
**Open: 5 or 6 boards per match**

**Compare results**  
**after each match**  
**has been played**

	Tables A1 & B1	Tables A2 & B2	Tables A3 & B3
Match 1	Teams 6 vs. 1	Teams 5 vs. 2	Teams 4 vs. 3
Match 2	6 vs. 2	5 vs. 3	4 vs. 1
Match 3	6 vs. 3	5 vs. 4	2 vs. 1
Match 4	6 vs. 4	5 vs. 1	3 vs. 2
Match 5	6 vs. 5	3 vs. 1	4 vs. 2

### 7 TEAMS:

### 6 Matches

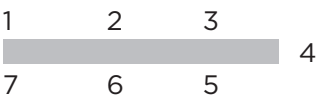
**Newcomer: 4 boards per match**  
**Intermediate: 4 boards per match**  
**Open: 4 or 5 boards per match**

**Compare results**  
**after two matches**

- Have each team sit at its home table.
- Distribute boards starting with Board 1 at Table 1.
- To start the game: see below.

# Swiss Team Movements

## Matches 1 and 2:

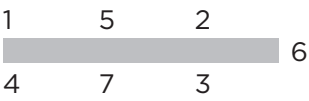


- a. E-W pairs move down two tables from their home base. Shuffle and play the boards on those tables.
- b. E-W pairs take the boards they just played and deposit them at their home tables. They then proceed up two tables from their home base and play the boards that have just arrived there. Do not shuffle.
- c. E-W returns to home base and compares scores.

## Matches 3 and 4:

- a. Follow the same routine as in Matches 1 and 2, but E-W moves down three tables and up three tables in the segment.

## Matches 5 and 6:



- a. Rearrange the tablemats as in the diagram.
- b. Follow the routine for the first and second matches, but E-W will move down one numeric table and up one numeric table in this segment. NOTE: After you have arranged your tablemats, it will be down to two physical tables and up two physical tables (Example: E-W 1 to T7 and then to T2; E-W2 to T6 and then to T1, etc.)

## 7 TEAMS\*      4 Matches      Newcomer: 5 or 6 boards per match

- 1. Set up Teams 1 to 4 in a head-to-head, five or six board matches. Set up Teams 5 to 7 in a round robin, playing two five or six board matches.
- 2. At the end of the first match, match the winners of the head-to-head and the losers of the head-to-head.

	Tables A1 & B1	Tables A2 & B2	Tables C1	Tables C2	Tables C3
Match 1	Teams 1 vs. 2	Teams 3 vs. 4	Teams 5N vs. 7E	6N vs. 5E	7N vs. 6E
Match 2	Winners	Losers	5N vs. 6E	6N vs. 7E	7N vs. 5E

## Swiss Team Movements

The two unmatched teams from the head-to-head that have the highest score go into the round robin. The team from the round robin with the highest score remains in the round robin. Example: Teams 1 and 4 have not met; Teams 2 and 3 have not met. Assume the aggregate score of 1 and 4 is best. Assume Team 7 had the best round robin cumulative score.

	Tables A1 & B1	Tables A2 & B2	Tables C1	Tables C2	Tables C3
Match 3	2 vs. 5	3 vs. 6	1N vs. 7E	4N vs. 1E	7N vs. 4E
Match 4	2 vs. 6	3 vs. 5	1N vs. 4E	4N vs. 7E	7N vs. 1E

\* This movement is recommended **only for Newcomer Swisses**. It seems more like a real Swiss Teams and has the advantage of playing only four matches, thereby running a shorter time. You will not have rematches, but you may — in the second half — have to match teams of quite disparate ranking. Not all teams will play each other.

**8 Teams: 4 matches**      **Newcomer:** 5 or 6 boards per match (5 bds = c. 3 hours)  
Intermediate: 6 boards per match (c. 3 hours)  
Open: 7 boards per match (c. 4 hours)

1. Use Swiss Team Movement.

### EVEN NUMBER OF TEAMS ENTERED

1. Use setup pattern of the type shown in Running Swiss Teams.

### ODD NUMBER OF TEAMS ENTERED

1. Set up a round robin for your three last entered teams. They will play and compare after two matches.
2. Set up the remainder as head-to-head even-table Swiss.

### ROUND ROBIN

1. A round robin is essentially a three-table Mitchell with the tables spaced apart. Set up your tablemats that way.
2. Each team sits at its home table. To start the match, E-W moves to the next higher table.
3. Shuffle and play. When the match is finished, the director moves the boards (NO SHUFFLING) to the next lower table and E-W again move to the next higher numbered table.
4. The teams do not compare until both matches have been played.

	C1	C2	C3
Match 1	Team 1N vs. 3E	2N vs. 1E	3N vs. 2E
Match 2	Team 1N vs. 2E	2N vs. 3E	3N vs. 1E



## Scoring the Game

To run a good club game in today's market and to give your players the best possible service, you need a computer with the ACBL's free scoring program, ACBLscore, and a printer. The program is available to download free of charge at [http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/acblscore/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/acblscore/).

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## Scoring Your Game

### Using the ACBLscore Program

An operations manual is installed as part of the program disk. Press the F1 key for the Help program at any time. Pressing F1 a second time gives even more information.

### Computer Requirements for Using ACBLscore

The ACBLscore program requires an IBM-compatible computer with Windows or MS DOS.

The ACBLscore program can be downloaded from the ACBL website, [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org).

The DOS version will not operate on Vista 64.

The computer keyboard should have a numeric keypad separate from the letter keys for easier numeric entry. A separate set of arrow keys is helpful.

### Printer Requirements to Use ACBLscore

The program can use any printer including dot matrix, laser, ink jet and others. Most printers will only print using a Windows driver. ACBLscore can use any printer with Windows 95, 98, ME, NT, 2000 or XP. It can also use any legacy printer (dot matrix) that works with MS-DOS.

ACBLscore is a user-friendly program with a number of features specifically designed to make scoring and reporting easy. First time users can be intimidated by the program, but these recommendations will help:

1. Sit with an experienced director and watch them set up a game, enter names, score the game and produce results.
2. At a local tournament, ask the director if he might have time during one of the games to let you watch the process.
3. Make use of the ACBLscore help desk: 662-253-3165, [ACBLscore@acbl.org](mailto:ACBLscore@acbl.org).
4. Set up test games at home. Use the entries and score tickets from a previous game and see if you can duplicate the results. Try out the various commands. You can do this as many times as you like; any test games can later be deleted.



# Matchpointing

## Learning to Matchpoint

Knowing how to matchpoint quickly is a lot less important in this computer age than it was in the past. Matchpointing is not included on the Club Director Test. But a club director still needs to know the basics, to be able to explain how scoring works to the customers or to actually score the game if the computer is down.

### Matchpointing

- For every pair you beat, you get one matchpoint.
- For every pair you tie, you get one half of a matchpoint.
- For every pair that beats you, you get nothing.
- If a pair has Average, it has tied with all the other pairs.
- You tie with every pair you can not compare with.
- If a board is fouled, you cannot compare with the pairs that played the board in different conditions than you did.

### Top and bottom

The travelers in this section show which players did better with their cards than the others. We want to reward the pairs appropriately. We will give out marks, called matchpoints, just like a teacher does in school after a test. You give one matchpoint to a pair for every pair they beat and  $\frac{1}{2}$  matchpoint for every pair they tie. The worst matchpoint score on a board ("bottom") will be zero; the best ("top") will be one less than the number of times the board is played. The top will vary from game to game depending on the movement. Bottom never changes.

### Examples

Suppose we had a seven-table Mitchell, playing all seven rounds. The boards are played seven times; bottom is 0 and top is 6.

What about a nine-table game, playing nine rounds?

Bottom is \_\_\_\_\_. Top is \_\_\_\_\_. Average is \_\_\_\_\_.

Average is halfway between top and bottom.

Your answers should have been 0, 8 and 4, in that order.

What about a 12-table relay and bye-stand game?

How many times are the boards played? \_\_\_\_\_

Bottom is \_\_\_\_\_. Top is \_\_\_\_\_. Average is \_\_\_\_\_. (12, 0, 11,  $5\frac{1}{2}$ )

In an 11-table game, playing 27 boards with three boards per table, what was top on a board? \_\_\_\_\_. You needed to work out that they played nine rounds, so the boards were played nine times. (Three boards on a table, 27 boards is nine rounds.) So top was 8.

# Matchpointing

## Let's Matchpoint

In a seven-table Mitchell, all of the tables played the board. When matchpointing, start from the bottom, giving out your zero first. Bottom never changes.

We awarded the following numbers of matchpoints to the N-S pairs: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. They got 1 MP for each pair they beat. We awarded the bottom of 0 MPs to the N-S pair who didn't beat anybody.

Who was it? \_\_\_\_\_.

Right, #2. Give that pair a ZERO.

Who was next worst? \_\_\_\_\_.

Sure. Give 1 MP to the pair who beat only #2, and that's pair #7.

**Note:** We took into account how big a minus the N-S pair had earned. It's better to be only minus 50 than to be minus 100. So the ones who have the least minus get more matchpoints.

We gave 3 MPs to the pair who beat #2 and #7, 4 matchpoints to the next best, 5 to the second highest, and 6 MPs to the pair that beat all six other pairs. So, in order, the N-S pairs got 5, 0, 3, 6, 2, 4 and 1 MPs.

## E-W reciprocation\*

How do we matchpoint E-W?

Do you see that where the N-S pair did the best, the E-W pair that played against them did the worst? And where N-S got a bottom, E-W got a top?

Instead of actually starting from 0 MPs all over again and matchpointing the E-W pairs, we can just give E-W the reciprocal of what their opponents earned. (When N-S gets a 6, that E-W gets a 0. When N-S gets a 2, that E-W gets a 4. When N-S gets a 3, that E-W gets a 3, etc.) So, in order, the E-W pairs got 6, 2, 3, 5, 0, 1 and 4 MPs.

\*In matchpointing, the reciprocal is defined as the difference between the matchpoints received by the N-S pair and top.

## ACBL SHORT TRAVELING SCORE

(Mitchell or Howell)

North player keeps score.

Board 

6
---

Enter E-W Pair No.

No.

N-S Pair No.	Contract	BY	Made	Down	Score		N-S Match Points	E-W Pair No.	E-W Match Points
					N-S	E-W			
1	3N	N	5		460			6	
2	3N	S		2		100		1	
3	3N	N	4		430			3	
4	4S	N	6		480			5	
5	4S	N	4		420			7	
6	4S	S	5		450			2	
7	4S	S		1		50		4	
8									
9									
10								1	
11								2	
12								3	
13								4	
14								5	
15								6	
16								7	
17									

# Matchpointing

## Average Boards

When you matchpoint a board with an average awarded on it, here's what you need to know ...

Each other pair that played the board "ties" with the pair with an adjusted score on the board where we have no direct comparison because of the average (or Average Plus or Average Minus). That means that the pair getting the adjustment receives ½ an MP for each other pair that played the board (which gives them average) and everyone else gets an extra ½ MP for "tying" the adjusted pair.

Here's how it works:

1. Starting with the N-S pair that did the worst, give each pair a matchpoint for every pair they beat and ½ MP for every pair they tie with, including the (Average, Average Plus, Average Minus) pair.
2. Determine top on a (regular) board, divide it by 2, and give that score (average) to the adjusted pair or give them ½ MP for every other pair. The board check total for the board with the average is the same as the check total for each other board in the game.

## How do Average Plus and Average Minus work?

Average Plus (Avg+) is 60% of top on a board (or the average of a pair's other scores if they're having a better game than 60%). Nearly all of the time it's just 60%. And Average Minus (Avg-) is always 40% of top on a board. So if top on a board is 12, Avg+ is 7.2 and Avg- is 4.8. If top on a board is 7, Avg+ is 4.2 and Avg- is 2.8.

When you have a traveler with an Avg+ or Avg- on it, the procedure works just like the one for a plain average. The only difference is that since the adjusted score is a little better (or worse) than average, the total for the traveler (and hence for the recap) will be off by that same small amount.

## ACBL SHORT TRAVELING SCORE

(Mitchell or Howell)

North player keeps score.

Board 

1
---

Enter E-W Pair No.

No.

N-S Pair No.	Contract	BY	Made	Down	Score		N-S Match Points	E-W Pair No.	E-W Match Points
					N-S	E-W			
1	4S	E		1	50				
2	4S	E	4			420			
3					Avg	Avg			
4	3N	W	3			400			
5	3S	E	4			170			
6	4S	E		2	100				
7									
8									
9									
10								1	
11								2	
12								3	
13								4	
14								5	
15								6	
16								7	
17									

# Matchpointing

Average Score

## ACBL SHORT TRAVELING SCORE

(Mitchell or Howell)

North player keeps score.

Board

2

Enter E-W Pair No.

No.

N-S Pair No.	Contract	BY	Made	Down	Score		N-S Match Points	E-W Pair No.	E-W Match Points
					N-S	E-W			
1	4S	S	4		620		6	9	
2					Avg		4	2	
3	4S	S		1		100	-	4	
4	PASS				0		2	6	
5	2S	S	4		170		3-	8	
6	4S	S	5		650		7-	3	
7	5cx	W		3	500		4-	3	
8	PASS				0		2	5	
9	4S	S	4		620		6	7	
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									

Adjusted Score

## ACBL SHORT TRAVELING SCORE

(Mitchell or Howell)

North player keeps score.

Board

5

Enter E-W Pair No.

No.

N-S Pair No.	Contract	BY	Made	Down	Score		N-S Match Points	E-W Pair No.	E-W Match Points
					N-S	E-W			
1	4S	S	4		620		7	9	
2					Av+	Av-	4.8	2	
3	5cx	W			500		5.5	4	
4	4S	S				100	2	6	
5					Avg	Avg	4	8	
6	4S	S		2		100	2	1	
7	5cx	W			500		5.5	3	
8	4S	S				100	2	5	
9	PASS				0		4	7	
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									

# Matchpointing

## Fouled Boards

### What is a fouled board?

When an E-W player puts his hand back in the wrong slot and vice versa (or even something like when a queen and jack in the same suit are switched), it becomes a new bridge deal, and as such, it is impossible to directly compare later scores to those which occurred earlier in the game. Eventually someone notices the results are strange, and the director is called.

### After the fouled board is discovered, what does the director do?

When the fouled board is discovered, it is up to the director to find out after which round the board was fouled. Having done so, the director must matchpoint the board (unless you are using ACBLscore and then the program will take care of the problem).

Matchpointing the fouled board is like matchpointing two completely separate boards which happen to have the same board number. Each group of scores will be matchpointed separately and will have its own separate top. Matchpoint the group that played the board before it was fouled and then matchpoint the other group.

### Here's how:

In this traveler, the board was fouled after round 3.

1. Matchpoint, starting with ZERO, the truncated board for the pairs who played it unfouled.
2. Give each pair in that group ½ MP for "tying" every pair who played the deal fouled. (4 pairs x ½ = 2 more points each.)
3. Matchpoint, starting with ZERO, the truncated board for those who played the deal after it was fouled. (4 pairs in this case.)
4. Give these pairs ½ MP for every pair who played the deal unfouled. (3 pairs = 1½ additional points.)

Your check total should be the same as for the unfouled boards in the game.

## ACBL SHORT TRAVELING SCORE

(Mitchell or Howell)

North player keeps score.

Board 

1C
----

Enter E-W Pair No.

No.

N-S Pair No.	Contract	BY	Made	Down	Score		N-S Match Points	E-W Pair No.	E-W Match Points
					N-S	E-W			
1	6S	N	6		1430		0/2	6	0/-2
2	6NT	N	6		1440		1/3	1	1/-3
3	6S	N	7		1460		2/4	3	1/-4
4	4H	W	4			620	1/2.5-	5	1/2.5
5	4H	W	5			650	0/1.5-	7	0/1.5
6	6H	W		2	200		3/4.5-	2	3/4.5
7	4H	W		1	100		2/3.5-	4	2/3.5
8							Check	Total	21
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									

## Matchpointing

The traveler below has been fouled after the fourth round. Matchpoint it and check your results below.

Only N-S 5, 6 and 7 and E-W 1, 3 and 6 played the board fouled. Awarded matchpoints starting at:

N-S 1 - 3 ( $1\frac{1}{2} + 1\frac{1}{2}$ )

N-S 2 - 3 ( $1\frac{1}{2} + 1\frac{1}{2}$ )

N-S 3 -  $1\frac{1}{2}$  (0 +  $1\frac{1}{2}$ )

N-S 4 -  $4\frac{1}{2}$  (3 +  $1\frac{1}{2}$ )

N-S 5 - 2 (0 + 2)

N-S 6 - 3 (1 + 2)

N-S 7 - 4 (2 + 2)

The E-W pairs get the reciprocals.

The board was played 7 times, so top is 6.

E-W 1 - 3

E-W 2 -  $4\frac{1}{2}$

E-W 3 - 2

E-W 4 -  $1\frac{1}{2}$

E-W 5 - 3

E-W 6 - 4

E-W 7 - 3

## ACBL SHORT TRAVELING SCORE

(Mitchell or Howell)

North player keeps score.

Board 

1E
----

Enter E-W Pair No.

No.

N-S Pair No.	Contract	BY	Made	Down	Score		N-S Match Points	E-W Pair No.	E-W Match Points
					N-S	E-W			
1	3NT	N	3		600			5	
2	3NT	N	3		600			7	
3	2NT	N	3		150			2	
4	3NT	N	4		630			4	
5	1NT	E	2			120		6	
6	1NT	E	1			90		1	
7	2NT	E		1	50			3	
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									

## Checking Your Matchpointing

### Check total on a board

If we separately add up all of the matchpoints on a board for each direction, we will get the “check total” for that board. Each of the boards in any one game will have the same check total.

Look at some check totals. In the seven-table game discussed earlier, we awarded scores of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. The sum of these digits is 21. In the 13-table game, where top was 12, we get a check total of 78. When you have players “helping” you at the end of the game, you need them to add up the check totals on the boards they matchpoint before giving them to you to post on the recap sheet. That way, you will have some protection against a big source of errors.

Is there an easy way for you, the director, to calculate the check total on a board? Sure. Simply multiply the average on a board times the number of times it was played.

## Matchpointing

Think of it this way. In our seven-table game, if all seven pairs had done the same thing on a board, they would each get an average (a “flat” board). Each pair beat no one, but tied 6 pairs, so they got 3 MPs. On a board with a top of 6, average is 3. If all seven pairs got 3, then  $7 \times 3 = 21$ , the check total for the board. Amazing!

### Recap total

It is important to know not only that our matchpointing of each board is accurate, but that our addition was accurate as well. We can check this by adding up all of the pairs’ scores and getting a “recap total.” We then compare the number we get against the number the recap total should be.

What should the recap total be? Easy. Take our seven-table game again. If average on a board is 3 and each pair played 28 boards, Average for one pair would be  $3 \times 28 = 84$ . Because there were seven N-S pairs, the total for all the N-S pairs is  $7 \times 84 = 588$ .

There is another way to get a recap total. Every traveler has a check total. Multiply that number by the number of boards in the game. In our seven-table game, the board check total was 21. There were 28 boards in the game.  $21 \times 28 = 588$ . Magic!

**Check total on a board = Average on the board multiplied by the number of times it was played**

**Recap total = Game average multiplied by the number of pairs in that direction OR**

**Recap total = Board check total multiplied by the number of boards in play**

### Matchpointing the Howell

When matchpointing a Howell, you just matchpoint the pairs that played N-S on the board, then reciprocate for the pairs that played E-W. Write all of the numbers in the top part of the traveler on the appropriate lines, so they’ll be easy to transfer to the recap sheet.

Your check total for a board in a Howell is TWICE the average on the board multiplied by the number of times it was played. This is because the total includes the matchpoints for the E-W pairs as well as the N-S pairs, and so it will be twice as large as it would be in a Mitchell.

Your recap total for a Howell is the number of pairs in the game multiplied by the average for the game.







# Rulings

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# How to Make a Good Rulings

Whenever you approach a table to make a ruling, you are representing your club and displaying your own professional abilities and knowledge. It is important that this be done well. Carry a Law Book or Duplicate Decisions with you when you go to make a ruling.

## **1. Be aware of your game at all times.**

Making a ruling starts before you reach the table. Be aware of the noise level and emotional content of the game. Many times you can hear a situation developing and be on your way to the area even before you are called. If you are on top of these situations, it will keep your game quieter, less tense and progressing easily. Everyone will have a better time. Do not let yourself get so involved talking with players or friends that you must be called two or three times before a table of players can get your attention. If you allow this to happen, the players will be irritated with you before you even reach them. The sooner you get to the table, the less time there will be for an explosive situation to develop.

## **2. Locate the director call and let the players know you are on the way.**

Whenever you hear a call, pinpoint the area and let the players know you are on the way by a wave of the hand, a nod or a call of "Coming" or "Thank You". This will forestall multiple follow-up calls and consequent irritation and noise. If you cannot pinpoint the call, ask the room at large "Who called?" When they raise their hand, acknowledge the call. Then proceed to the table.

## **3. Approach the table as smoothly as you can.**

Don't run, but get there as quickly as possible without disturbing the rest of the room. This may necessitate taking detours or going the "long way round." Do it! Pushing in back of other players or otherwise disturbing their game will annoy them unnecessarily.

## **4. Approach the table in a friendly manner with a cheerful expression.**

When you arrive at the table, ask the question, "How can I help?" Remember, the players are already somewhat disconcerted by an irregularity and are probably on the defensive. Anything you can do to ease the situation will be to everyone's advantage. You will be able to think and comprehend more quickly, and the players will be able to explain and listen more carefully if the tension is lessened.

## **5. Define the problem — bidding, play, conduct.**

Attempt to define the general area of the problem (bidding, play, conduct) without etching it in stone. Remember to be as open as possible to information that the players are trying to give you.

## **6. Remain in control of the situation at all times.**

When the players see that you are ready to listen, they will probably all start talking at once. It is imperative that only one person speak at a time. Sometimes you will need to require a moment of silence so "we can collect ourselves." Choose one player to speak, and indicate this to the others. Say something like "One at a time, please. I will listen to everyone, in turn, but only one at a time. Will you (indicate one player, preferably the one who called you) please tell me about the situation? What is the problem we are considering?" If you can get one agreed statement from the players in answer to this question, or even one key word, you will be able to listen much more knowledgeably and shorten your ruling time considerably.

## How to Make a Good Rulings

### **7. Verify with the players your understanding of the problem.**

Listen to the facts as related by each person, one at a time. At the completion of their statements, verify with the players at the table that this is indeed what happened by repeating it to them sequentially and logically. Do not try to make a ruling until you are able to do this. If you are not careful, you may well find yourself quoting Laws and penalties that really don't apply.

### **8. Quote the Law (preferably by reading it) and see that it is properly applied.**

After you are able to verify the facts, complete with agreement or disagreement on the facts by all concerned, quote the Law applying to the situation, state the options available and penalties that apply and stand by to see that these are selected and paid.

### **9. Inform the players when it is a judgment situation and explain procedure.**

If it is a judgment situation, the director should never make a ruling or adjustment immediately. In cases of this sort, state, "I will consider the problem more fully. Score it up 'AS IS' for now. I will let all of you know my decision later. Meanwhile, please proceed." After consideration, you must return and inform both parties of your decision.

### **10. Leave the vicinity as soon as you can.**

After you make your ruling, don't stick around to get into further discussion. If you have a judgment situation, analyze the deal, check the other results on the board and if possible, get an opinion from appropriate players (players of the same caliber who are not playing or who have played the hand already) or other directors before making a decision.

### **11. Inform the players of their right to appeal a judgment ruling.**

A ruling on a judgment situation can be appealed. The players should be so informed. If your club does not provide appeals committees, directors should (at their convenience) hear the appeal by discussing the situation with the appellants and their opponents, if necessary, at greater length.

### **12. Be able to make book rulings rapidly.**

To be able to make timely rulings, you have to know where in the Laws the various situations are covered. In your spare time at home, leaf through your Law Book or copy of Duplicate Decisions, stopping at various Laws and their places in the book — front, middle, back. Be sure you have read and are familiar with Laws 72-76 (Proprieties), Laws 81-91 (Tournament director) and Laws 92 and 93 (Appeals). Indexing your Law Book or your copy of Duplicate Decisions is one of the most valuable exercises a new director can perform.

### **13. To appear professional, you must have a firm grasp of the material available in your field.**

Directors should be aware of pertinent articles published in the Bridge Bulletin. They must know at least as much as, and preferably more than, the players. This can only be done through extra study. Keeping current is expected of anyone who wishes to run a successful game.

## Common Rulings

**As a club director, you should be familiar with the basic rulings. The most common rulings regard:**

Revokes

Leads out of Turn

Insufficient Bids

Calls out of Rotation

Penalty Cards

Duplicate Decisions explains all of these rulings in easy to understand terms. as a director, this is a must have. you can purchase a copy here (<http://www.baronbarclay.com/>) or download a copy here (<http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/clubs/Duplicate-Decisions-2008.pdf>)

ACBL also has a host of information available on its website.

you can find the Laws of Duplicate Bridge here

(<http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/play/Laws-of-Duplicate-Bridge.pdf>)

You can find the Rulings Frequently Asked Questions here

([http://web5.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/club-directors/rulings-faq/](http://web5.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/club-directors/rulings-faq/))

# Common Rulings

## Hesitations, Huddles and Misinformation

The most difficult rulings for any of us, whether it is a new club director or an experienced National Tournament Director or an Appeals Committee made up of some of the finest players in the world, are those relative to hesitations and misinformation. Pages upon pages have been written on this issue, and curious and serious directors will do well to research the many elements relative to these rulings. One great source is available at the ACBL website — a collection of the Case Books concerning rulings from years of National Tournaments. In these Case Books, you have the opportunity to read about rulings made, appeals filed and outcomes of committees assigned to the appeals.

[http://web5.acbl.org/tournaments\\_page/nabcs/past-nabcs/nabc-casebooks/](http://web5.acbl.org/tournaments_page/nabcs/past-nabcs/nabc-casebooks/)

Law 16 defines many types of Unauthorized Information such as “a remark, a question, a reply to a question, an unexpected alert or failure to alert, or by unmistakable hesitation, unwonted speed, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism” and the director’s charge to be certain that the non-offending side is not damaged.

It is important that a director know the difference between a mistaken bid and misinformation. Here, Duplicate Decisions helps us understand:

### **When the Partnership Misunderstanding Results in Giving Misinformation to the Opponents:**

Two examples may clarify responsibilities of the players (and the director) after a misleading explanation has been given to the opponents. In both examples following, North has opened 1NT and South, who holds a weak hand with long diamonds, has bid 2♦, intending to sign off. North explains, however, in answer to West’s inquiry, that South’s bid is strong and artificial, asking for major suits.

#### **Example 1 — Mistaken Explanation**

The actual partnership agreement is that 2♦ is a natural signoff; the mistake was in North’s explanation. This explanation is an infraction of Law because East-West are entitled to an accurate description of the North-South agreement. When this infraction results in damage to East-West, the director shall award an adjusted score.

If North subsequently becomes aware of his mistake, he must immediately notify the director. South must do nothing to correct the mistaken explanation while the auction continues. After the final pass, South, if he is to be declarer or dummy, should call the director and must volunteer a correction of the explanation. If South becomes a defender, he calls the director and corrects the explanation when play ends.

#### **Example 2 — Mistaken Bid/Call**

The partnership agreement is as explained — 2♦ is strong and artificial; the mistake was in South’s bid. Here there is no infraction of Law, since East-West did receive an accurate description of the North-South agreement; they have no claim to an accurate description of the North-South hands.

Regardless of the outcome, the director shall allow the result to stand; but the director is to presume mistaken explanation, rather than mistaken call, in the absence of evidence to the contrary. South must not correct North’s explanation (or notify the director) immediately, and he has no responsibility to do so later.

In both examples, South, having heard North’s explanation, knows that his own 2♦ bid has been misinterpreted. This knowledge is Unauthorized Information. Consequently, South must be careful not to base further actions on this information (if he does, the director shall award an adjusted score).

For instance, if North rebids 2NT, South has the unauthorized information that this bid merely denies a four-card holding in either major. South’s responsibility, however, is to bid as though North had made a strong game try opposite a weak response, showing maximum values.

## Common Rulings - Hesitations, Huddles and Misinformation

### Director Procedure following Misinformation or Unauthorized Information:

Duplicate Decisions provides a clear step-by-step analysis of how a director should proceed.

1. At ACBL sanctioned events, competitors may now announce that they reserve the right to summon the director when extraneous information may have been made available. There is no penalty for calling the director early.
2. When a player feels an opponent has taken action that could have been suggested by such information, he should call the director when play ends. Again, it is not an infraction to call the director earlier or later.

**Note:** Someone who waits until one or more boards are played is showing diminishing outrage at the infraction the longer he waits. Law 9.B.1.a says the director should be summoned at once when attention is drawn to an irregularity. If dummy made the questionable call, a defender who summons the director when the dummy hand is first displayed gives the director the best chance of making a well-considered ruling (away from the table he can find out what the defenders would have done differently before they know the outcome of the hand.)

### Steps in dealing with unauthorized, extraneous information such as tempo variation (e.g., huddles):

1. Was there unauthorized information available? Was there a break in tempo? **If yes, proceed.**
2. Were the opponents damaged? **If yes, proceed.**
3. Were there logical alternatives to the call chosen by the partner of the slow bidder? (Remember that a logical alternative is a call that, among the class of players involved, would be given serious consideration by a significant number of such players.) **If yes, proceed.**
4. Could the extraneous information demonstrably suggest the call chosen over a likely less successful logical alternative(s). Is it obvious? Is it readily apparent? Is it easily understood? **If yes, proceed.**

**Note:** The use of the word “DEMONSTRABLY” is intended to remove from consideration logical alternatives that are not obviously suggested over another by the unauthorized information. The director should not change a result unless the action chosen can be shown (demonstrated) to have been suggested. The actions that will now be removed by Law have to be suggested in an obvious, easily understood way — it must be readily apparent rather than a product of some subtle bridge argument.

#### 5. Assign an adjusted score.

**Note:** The context of the full auction must be considered. For example, a player is expected to wait about 10 seconds, studying his cards, before calling after his RHO skips one or more levels of bidding.

Finally in the “Techfiles” available to Tournament Directors, the following example case is given, along with some good reminders of how to deal with hesitations in the ruling process:

To examine a typical case, suppose that North opens 1♠, East jumps to 4♥, South passes after a marked hesitation, West passes and North now rebids 4♠. East-West protest. These are the four issues to be resolved:

1. Was there a hesitation which was undue and that gave North unauthorized information?

Most hesitations should be considered undue when they occur in basic, simple auctions. For example, a slow pass as dealer or over an opponent’s one-level opening bid would be considered undue. However, there are some high-level competitive positions in which it is more normal (thus less informative) to break in tempo briefly than to act in tempo — that is the point of the skip bid warning. If East did give the skip-bid warning, a 10-second break in tempo by South is obviously far from undue (a pass in tempo would be undue haste). And if East gave no warning, a normal hesitation by South is not undue. However, an agonized 30-second trance would be undue, regardless of whether a skip bid warning was given.

## Common Rulings - Hesitations, Huddles and Misinformation

2. Did North make a call that could have demonstrably been suggested by the break in tempo when he bid 4♠?

If an overwhelming majority of North's peers would have made the same call without the hesitation, then he has no logical alternative to the action he took even if a small minority of his peers might have actually passed or doubled. If a substantial minority of his peers would choose to pass or double, there is a logical alternative even though more than half of his peers might choose to take the action he did. The question is not whether it is logical for North to bid 4♠, but whether it would also have been logical for him to do something else.

3. Could South's slow pass suggest North's 4♠ bid over some logical alternative?

The answer to this question is likely to be YES if Pass was an alternative. The fact that South had something to think about makes it more attractive for North to choose action over inaction. In contrast, if North is so powerful that his only logical alternative to 4♠ are other bids or Double, then the answer is likely no — South's break in tempo indicates he has some values, but not necessarily in spades.

4. Were East-West damaged by the infraction?

If 4♠ made, or if it was a good sacrifice, usually YES. However, if North's hand was so huge that his alternative to bidding 4♠ was doubling, certainly not passing, and if 4♥ doubled would have been set more than the value of North-South's game, then, there was no damage. If 4♠ went down when 4♥ would also have been set by routine defense, again, there was no damage.

### Some common misconceptions about breaks in tempo are as follows:

1. North is barred by partner's slow pass unless he has 100% action.

**FALSE!** South's hesitation, if it was undue, restricts North's options, but only when alternatives are logical and then only in respect to those alternatives that could be suggested. So North is often entitled to act.

2. North may bid 4♠ so long as he did not base his decision on partner's slow pass.

**FALSE!** Committees should pay scant attention to testimony such as, "I always bid in auctions like this", or "I hardly noticed South's huddle — I had already made up my mind to bid 4♠." It is not that these statements are self-serving and unverifiable — the real point is that they are IRRELEVANT. The issue is not whether the slow pass suggested the 4♠ bid to this particular North, but, whether, to North players in general, the hesitation COULD make the 4♠ bid more attractive than a logical alternative.

3. After South's slow pass, North may not take a doubtful action.

**FALSE!** North will commonly be faced with a choice among a number of reasonable options, all of them doubtful. The rules of bridge require that North do something at his turn — every one of his options cannot be illegal. The illegality is for North to select a particular option that could be suggested over another by partner's huddle.

4. North may bid 4♠ if that would have been reasonable action had partner not hesitated.

**FALSE!** The issue is not whether 4♠ was reasonable, but whether any alternatives were.

5. North may not make a risky 4♠ bid, which could result in a huge set when South has nothing, now that the break in tempo tells him that South has something.

**FALSE!** Even if the 4♠ bid would be disastrous one time in three, there may be no logical alternative to it. The test is not whether the bid would be successful an overwhelming proportion of the time, but whether an overwhelming proportion of players would choose to run the risk.

6. The director's decision (or the committee's) to bar North's 4♠ bid, to adjust the score, in effect convicted North-South of being unethical.

**FALSE!** What the director found was that North's 4♠ bid was a technical irregularity, like a revoke. It adjusted the score to redress possible damage from that irregularity, just as it would take away a trick or two had North revoked. In hesitation cases, directors should be concerned not with crime and punishment, but with damage and redress.

## Common Rulings

### Mistaken Explanation or Mistaken Call

Law 75 is a very exciting Law in dealing with partnership understandings and should be used in conjunction with Law 40, Partnership Understandings. The 2008 version of the Law has incorporated examples formerly included only as footnotes.

**A player recognizes his own error:** In alerting or explaining a partnership agreement, if a player realizes his own explanation was erroneous or incomplete, he must immediately call the director. The director will apply either Law 21, Call Based on Misinformation, or Law 40, Director's Option to Award an Adjusted Score in Partnership Misunderstandings.

**A player recognizes his partner's error:** It is improper for a player whose partner has given a mistaken explanation to correct the error immediately or to indicate in any manner that a mistake has been made. He must not take advantage of the unauthorized information so obtained or leave the table to consult with the director.

1. If the side that has given the mistaken explanation becomes the declaring side, the player **MUST** call the director after the final pass in the auction and before the opening lead is faced. He must inform the director and his opponents that, in his opinion, there has been a mistaken explanation. The director may allow the last bidder on the non-offending side to withdraw his pass if he deems it probable that the pass was based on misinformation. If the player withdraws his pass and substitutes another call, the bidding can then proceed from that point. If the last passer on the non-offending side does not change his call, the bidding as it occurred stands. The play now proceeds.

**Note:** When the director arrives at the table before play has been completed, he should speak separately with each non-offender away from the table to ascertain what different action, if any, would have been taken with the correct or alternate information.

2. If the side that gave the misinformation in the bidding becomes the defending side, at the conclusion of the play, the partner of the player who gave the mistaken explanation **MUST** call the director and inform the director and his opponents that, in his opinion, his partner gave a mistaken explanation. This is one of the case laws where the offending side must own up to its own infraction.

**Note:** In both cases above, the director can award an adjusted score if he deems that the non-offending side was damaged by receiving the misinformation.



# Common Rulings

## Dealing with Psychic Bids

### What is a psych?

The Laws of Duplicate Bridge define a psychic call as “deliberate and gross misstatement of honor strength or suit length.”

The key word is “gross.” If you forget the meaning of a call, that is not a psych. If you make a call with 12 points when your partnership agreement calls for a maximum of 11, that is not a psych — it is not a gross misstatement. If you are playing five-card majors and open the bidding with 1♠ on a four-card holding, that is not a psych. In general your call is a gross misstatement, and therefore is considered a psych, if the call varies by at least two points in strength or two cards in length from your agreement.

### Are psychs allowed?

Clearly Law 40 permits psychs. Psychic bidding is a part of the game.

Excessive psyching leads to implied and concealed partnership understandings, and such understandings are serious offenses — they erode the very basics on which the game of bridge is built. Pairs that regularly use psychs soon learn the type of psychic calls their partner makes and are prepared for them. The opponents do not have this same information, although the rules of the game call for complete disclosure of bidding methods.

### When does psyching become excessive?

It becomes excessive when your partner can accurately work out what you’re doing because of past experience. A series of tactical bids that are also psychs that occur over a period of time might not be excessive because partner is as unaware of what you are doing as are the opponents.

### Are there other psychic bids that aren’t allowed?

Frivolous psyches are especially bothersome and should never occur. These psyches are usually inspired by malicious mischief or a lack of interest in a game that is going poorly. They can disrupt a game by causing an abnormal result.

Unsportsmanlike psychs are equally bad. It is totally against the spirit of the game to throw a psychic call at a contending pair toward the end of the game because you want to create some action or because you’re having a game so bad that one more poor result won’t make any difference. It may make no difference to you, but it could change the winner of the event. Check the ACBL General Convention Chart for psychs disallowed.

### When should you make a psychic bid?

Even when your psych meets the requirement that your partner doesn’t know what’s going on, there should be a good tactical reason for your action. It should never be because you want to get back at so-and-so, or because you’re bored and want to create a little action, or because you’re having a bad game and what difference does one more bottom make?



## Common Rulings - Dealing with Psychic Bids

### Is psyching a good practice?

Psyching, in general, is not a good idea. A psych is a good tactic occasionally, but more often it's a source of irritation, a violation of the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge, an unsportsmanlike tactic, or a combination of all three.

### Why do players become upset when their opponents psych against them?

Although there are many humorous stories about psychs, more often than not, psychs lead to bad scores for the psycher. In addition, players who are the victims of a successful psych often are upset by what they sometimes view as an unfair tactic. It doesn't help the situation any when the psycher chooses this time to gloat.

### What can I do to help my players feel better about this ruling?

Explain to them that you are keeping a log of psychs and also a log of unusual incidents. (And do it.) This is really easy to do on your computer but can be done with pen or pencil and a spiral notebook as well. That way you know how often a partnership actually does psych or have a breakdown in their agreements.

A player who psychs once every six months is a "big psycher" among folks who never psych. And that player is certainly within the law and the spirit of the game.

### What can be done to keep psyching under control?

1. **Education.** Players need to be informed early in their bridge careers about the legal and social dangers of psyching. These warnings should be repeated from time to time. The best vehicles for this are the Bridge Bulletin, unit and district publications, tournament directors, club managers and club directors.
2. **Legal adjustments.** Sometimes it is clear that the partner of the psycher has bid in such a way as to allow for the possibility that partner has psyched — no other interpretation of the call seems to make much sense. Bidding to cover the possibility that your partner psyched indicates at least an implied understanding which is clearly in violation of the Laws. The director should make an adjustment to repair the damage, possibly give a procedural penalty and deliver a stern warning to the offenders.
3. **Possible expulsion.** If a player is found to be psyching excessively, frivolously or in an unsportsmanlike manner, the director should inform this player that if such tactics continue to be used, the player faces suspension from the game.

## When a Director Makes an Incorrect Ruling

The directors occasionally will err either in the substance of a ruling or in its presentation. When the error is one of substance, directors should ascertain whether a different result would have been achieved with a correct ruling, and if so, assign that result with a full explanation to the contestants involved. Unfortunately, the matter will seldom be so clear as to allow such a determination. (A mea culpa posture, “it’s all my fault,” will frequently aid directors in having a changed decision accepted.) When no highly probable new result is evident, a two-way Average plus is appropriate, but avoidance of a committee hearing should never be used by the director as a reason for assigning such scores. Any assigned or adjusted scores are, of course, subject to committee review.

Errors in presentation are more difficult to resolve. It may be apparent to directors that even though they believe the presentation to have been adequate, a contestant may not have understood the situation. In such cases, they should review their own procedures. Should they be less than perfect, they should protect a participant who has been injured by the error. No fixed procedures appear proper in such instances.

Directors at all levels should be willing to admit an error. Players will be more willing to accept decisions when they are known not to be dogmatic in defense of a position. Directors should always be willing to admit to the possibility of error even though feeling strongly about the position.

# Appeals

## Guidelines for Club Appeals Committees

**Note:** Because a club is not required to allow appeals committees, the director shall hear the appeal as provided for in Law 93A whenever a club does not so provide.

### Basic principles of an appeals committee:

1. Club appeals committees usually are called upon to consider matters of bridge judgment and fact. (A club conduct and ethics committee might decide non-bridge matters.)
2. The objective of a committee is to provide a forum for a fair hearing and final decision. These guidelines have been prepared to help achieve this objective. These guidelines are suggested procedures; therefore, a deviation from them does not invalidate the hearing.

### The committee:

1. The committee should be composed of an odd number of members so that a decision may be reached more easily.
2. Those individuals appointed to serve on the committee are expected to be impartial and to present the appearance of impartiality. If committee members feel they might not be able to act impartially, they should ask to be excused. If there is an appearance of possible partiality (e.g., the committee member is a frequent partner of one of the parties), the member should ask to be excused, or the matter should be discussed with the parties involved to determine if there is an objection.
3. There are no preemptory challenges to empanelled committee members. Any party may challenge a member for cause. The challenger must state the reason(s) for the challenge to the committee, and then the committee meets privately to decide the issue. The committee is the sole judge of its membership. There is no appeal from its decision.
4. Proper decorum should be observed at all times. A committee member may be well acquainted with a party, but each should refrain from camaraderie. This applies not only to the hearing but to the periods immediately before and after the hearing.

### Powers and duties of the committee:

The convened appeals committee is considered to have been delegated all judiciary powers and duties of the tournament committee, save for any that may have been specifically withheld by ACBL regulations. It must adjudicate every case that is brought before it, but may dismiss an appeal as being either trivial or frivolous and assess a penalty against the player(s) filing such an appeal.

The director must inform the committee that its rights and powers include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Upholding the director's ruling.
2. Canceling the director's ruling and making any adjustment permitted by the Laws which the committee believes will constitute an equitable solution. This adjustment may be:

- a. to adjust the total point score —

The committee may attempt to estimate what final contract would have been played and/or calculate the probable result that would have been achieved had the infraction in question not occurred. It may then order the board scored as though that result had actually been attained at the table.

- b. to award an adjusted score —

The committee may adjust the matchpoint score received by either or both sides.

## Appeals

c. to cancel results and award an artificial adjusted score —

The committee may cancel the result achieved at the table and award Average, Average plus or Average minus to either side or both sides.

d. to award overall percentage scores —

The committee may award one or both sides their overall percentage score in the session on the board in question (in effect, not permitting the board to affect the disputants' scores one way or another).

e. to assess matchpoint penalties —

The committee may assess a matchpoint penalty against the offenders without granting any compensation to the non-offending side.

### **Procedures for the hearings on appeals for score adjustments:**

1. The chair shall call the hearing to order and proceed as follows:
  - a. Determine that an appeal has been filed and both members of a partnership concur in the appeal (in the case of team events, the team captain concurs in the appeal, Law 92D).
  - b. Introduce himself, panel members, parties appealing, opponents and participating directors. (Anyone else shall be permitted to remain only at the discretion of the chairman.)
  - c. Clarify to all parties that he is in charge, that no one is to speak until recognized by him and that, upon recognition, the individual should address only the panel.
  - d. Explain how the hearing will proceed.
2. The director's role: The director should be recognized first to relate the facts and explain and interpret applicable Laws or ACBL and/or club regulations. Appellants, opponents or committee members, when recognized by the chairman, may ask questions of the director.
3. The appellant parties should then present their side of the appeal.
4. The respondents next should present their side of the appeal.
5. Either side may be questioned by the committee or by the other side through the chair.
6. After all evidence has been received, the chair should state that the testimony phase is closing and will not be reopened unless the committee so decides. The committee then entertains final comments.
7. The chair dismisses all parties and the director so the committee can deliberate in private. The chairman should specify to the parties whether they are to remain available.
8. The chair should conduct the deliberation and poll panel members on any decision proposed. A majority decision shall prevail.
9. The chair should remind panel members that their deliberations are privileged and are not to be discussed with any non-committee members.
10. The chair should notify the director of the committee's decision and then the parties. This may be done orally and/or in writing. If appropriate, the chair should explain the decision to the parties and caution against any continued unnecessary or disruptive argument as such argument could constitute a violation of the Proprieties and subject one to a disciplinary penalty.





# Conventions

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# Overview

## Clubs and Conventions

1. Any conventions may be allowed or disallowed at the discretion of the club's management.
2. Players must have the approval of the club director before using any convention not specifically authorized. (It is suggested that each club post a list of approved conventions in a conspicuous place on its premises.) The ACBL General Convention Chart is approved for almost all tournaments at all levels and generally used for open club games. It is located here: <http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/play/Convention-Chart.pdf>.
3. The conventions allowed in a game may vary in accordance with the masterpoint level of the contestants. The basis for the determinations at each club (or each session of a club) should be what is most desirable for the players at that game.
4. What conventions a club allows or does not allow has no effect on the club's rating.
5. Clubs inclined to permit patrons to test new or little-known conventions or systems are advised to restrict such testing to one of several scheduled sessions. If experience indicates the majority of the club players welcome this policy, it can easily be extended to other sessions.

## Statement on Conventions

The latest version of the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge defines a convention as a call that, by partnership agreement, conveys a meaning other than willingness to play in the denomination named (or in the last denomination named), or high-card strength or length (three cards or more) there.

All ACBL events are “governed” by the appropriate convention chart which lists those conventions permitted in the event. Conventions not included on the chart are not permitted in the event.

Part of the “right” to use a convention is the responsibility of deciding when it applies in probable auctions. The opponents may be entitled to redress if you did not originally have a clear understanding with your partner of when and how to use a convention you are playing.

For example, a partnership that chooses to play conventional bids over opponents' opening notrump bids is expected to have discussed at least the following:

1. Does it apply over strong notrumps?
2. Does it apply over weak notrumps?
3. Does it apply in the direct seat?
4. Does it apply in the balancing chair?
5. Does it apply when used by a passed hand?

All players occasionally encounter situations where they are not sure what partner's bidding means. There exists an added responsibility if that uncertainty arises from a convention they have agreed to play. In these situations, they should tell their opponents all they know. Sometimes, the director will even ask one or both of the players to step away from the table so that the opponents can talk openly with the remaining player.

Actively ethical players do everything possible in these situations to bring opponents back to even terms — to remove any possible disadvantage accruing to them from their side's failure to have a complete conventional understanding.



## Overview

### Partnership Restrictions on the Use of Conventions

***Both members of a partnership must employ the same system that appears on the convention card.***

1. During a session of play, a system may not be varied, except with permission of the director. (The director might allow a pair to change a convention, but almost never their basic system.)
2. At the beginning of a round or session, a pair may review their opponents' convention card and alter their own defenses against their opponents' conventional calls and preempts. After being informed of these alterations in defense, the opponents may not then vary their system.

**Note:** The current ACBL Convention Charts are on the ACBL website: <http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/play/Convention-Chart.pdf>.

### Playing Unclassified Conventions

Clubs should post a list of approved conventions. When your club decides to permit players to use methods not permitted on the General Convention Chart, the opponents should be permitted to refer to written defenses during the auction and play whether those defenses are the users' or have been decided by the opponents of the users.

**Note:** Permission to play an unapproved convention at one club or one tournament does not mean that permission is granted for all clubs and all tournaments. A player must contact the sponsoring organization of each game in which he participates to make sure that the ACBL Convention Chart under which that particular event is played permits the method being used.

### Prohibited Bids and Procedures

1. Systems based on extremely light initial action combined with frequent psychic opening bids are barred from any ACBL-sanctioned event.
2. Appropriate convention charts indicate bids that are disallowed at various levels of competition.
3. An opening one bid (in a suit or notrump) which by partnership agreement may contain fewer than 8 HCP is prohibited. This is not intended to bar psychic opening bids. Psychic natural opening bids are allowed.
4. No conventions are permitted in response to 1NT openings which have fewer than 10 HCP or a range greater than 5 HCP (for example, 13-18 notrump openings) or two non-consecutive ranges of more than 3 points. No conventions are allowed in response to weak two-bids which by partnership agreement may have a range of more than 7 HCP or which by partnership agreement may contain fewer than five cards in the suit.
5. The use of excessive, frivolous or unsportsmanlike psychic bidding is disruptive to the game and can subject an offender to disciplinary action. (See discussion in this manual under Law 40.)
6. Flagrant and deliberate attempts to lose tricks are detrimental to the game of bridge. Such action will subject the offender to disciplinary penalties.
7. Each player is restricted (physically) to one chair.
8. Any time an ACBL member, because of a physical disability or handicap, needs the aid of special equipment or special consideration (e.g., Braille cards, bidding boxes, stationary seats, etc.), no ACBL-sanctioned club, unit, district or tournament may prohibit the use of said equipment or special consideration.

## Overview

### **Psyching a Conventional Bid**

There is no general regulation prohibiting the psyching of a conventional bid, but there is a specific prohibition against psyching some (for example, an artificial opening bid such as 1♣ or 2♣, or a conventional response to an artificial opening bid). Please consult the appropriate ACBL Convention Chart for other prohibitions relating to psychs.

If, however, players psych a particular bid more than once with the same partner, they may be deemed to have established an implicit agreement.



## Opening 1NT or 2NT with a Singleton

The following is an article from the Bridge Bulletin.

**“The time has come,” the Walrus said, “To talk of many things: of shoes — and ships — and sealing wax — of singletons and kings.”**

On many of the occasions that someone opens 1NT (or 2NT) with a singleton, someone else at the table becomes upset with the opener. Half of the time it's an opponent (who has ducked an ace and lost to a singleton king), and the other half it's opener's partner, who has transferred into the suit in which opener has the singleton, causing the partnership to play in a 5-1 or 6-1 fit (going down) when the contract should have been some number of notrump.

Bridge players have different understandings of what the rules are concerning opening notrump with a singleton. It is described, depending on whom you ask, as illegal, immoral, unethical or fattening. The answer is almost always — none of the above.

The ACBL General Convention Chart states, “A notrump opening or overcall is natural if not unbalanced (generally, no singleton or void and only one or two doubletons).”

Also from the General Chart is this definition of natural opening suit bids and responses:

“An opening suit bid or response is considered natural if for minors it shows three or more cards in that suit and for majors it shows four or more cards in that suit.”

Players who, by agreement, use opening bids that are not natural may use only the conventional methods permitted by the General Chart.

If your notrump opening shows a balanced hand, you may occasionally pick up a hand with a singleton, which you may want to treat as balanced. You may use your bridge judgment to open or overcall a notrump with a singleton, provided that:

1. It is a rare occurrence (no more than 1% of the time) and,
2. Partner expects you to have at least two cards in each suit and,
3. You and your partner have no agreements which enable you to discover that partner has a singleton.

### Example:

Using strong notrumps, players may elect to open 1NT with ♠ K 8 3 ♥ A Q 7 2 ♦ A 9 6 5 3 ♣ K.

They might judge that they did not want to open 1♦ and rebid such a weak suit, or raise spades on only three cards after partner's 1♠ response, or rebid 1NT. You may feel such judgment is incorrect, but that was their decision. Similarly, a player playing five-card majors may opt to open ♠ A K Q J ♥ 8 7 6 4 2 ♦ K 8 ♣ J 9 with 1♠ rather than 1♥.

In today's bridge world, you should exhibit some tolerance and understanding of opponents' judgment when they open or overcall a notrump with a singleton — especially for hands where moving one card from a long suit to the singleton will produce a 4-4-3-2 distribution. The player has probably used what little bridge judgment an opponent of yours usually has (just kidding, folks) in deciding to open his hand 1NT (or 2NT).



## Opening 1NT or 2NT with a Singleton

Chef Emeril Lagasse says, “Hey, we’re really cooking here!” when something does not go as it should. A player might decide, “Hey, we’re really playing bridge here! This hand is not unbalanced — even with that singleton!”

If, however, your opponent has opened 1NT with an outlandish distribution — 6-5-1-1, 6-4-3-0 or some such — or has agreements about one-of-a-suit opening bids or other openings which mean that they have to open all 4-4-4-1 hands with 1NT, you should report such to the director. The director should determine whether the pair’s notrump opening is natural or conventional.

There is one conventional 1NT opening permitted on the ACBL General Convention Chart. It’s a forcing 1NT opening which indicates a hand of 16 or more HCP that may be balanced or unbalanced. An example is the Dynamic 1NT opening, which is a cornerstone of the Romex system. This opening requires an Alert.

Another conventional opening permitted by the ACBL General Convention Chart is an opening notrump bid at the two level or higher indicating at least 5-4 distribution in the minors (the opening “unusual” notrump).

There are two types of conventional notrump overcalls permitted. The first is a two-suited takeout, i.e., the unusual notrump. If used by an unpassed hand at the one level or as non-jump overcall, it requires an Alert. The second is a three-suit takeout similar to a takeout double. This always requires an Alert.

## 1♣ Opening Bids

### Approved 1♣ openings:

1. A 1♣ opening is considered to be natural and does not require an Alert if it guarantees at least three cards in the club suit. (The hand may, of course, contain more than three clubs.) If the hand contains only three clubs it probably implies a 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-2-3 distribution.
2. An unusual treatment of the 1♣ opening which requires an Announcement is one where the bid may be non-forcing but does not guarantee three or more clubs. The player must check the appropriate box on the convention card that describes the length of the club suit.
3. There are two basic approaches of the forcing 1♣ opening and both usages must be Alerted.
  - a. The Big Club shows a hand of more than minimum opening strength (15+). This includes systems such as Schenken, Precision and Blue Team. No homegrown system is automatically approved — it must be authorized by the management of your club game.
  - b. A 1♣ bid can be used as a general all-round force showing a hand of opening strength. This may be used as a convenience bid (for instance, playing five-card majors and three or four card diamond openings, 1♣ may be the only attractive alternative), or it may be used because the hand has substantial playing strength and the opening bidder wants partner to keep the auction alive.

## Alerts and Clubs

The objective of the Alert system is for both pairs at the table to have equal access to all information contained in any auction. In order to meet this goal, it is necessary that all players understand and practice the principles of full disclosure and active ethics. Ethical bridge players will recognize the obligation to give complete explanations. They will accept the fact that any such information is entirely for the benefit of the opponents and may not be used to assist their own partnership.

The use of the ACBL Alert procedure continues to be optional with club games. It is strongly recommended that it be used, but there is no mandate to do so. Regulations a club establishes pertaining to club masterpoint games may also be made applicable to club tournaments, club charity tournaments, ACBL-wide events, membership games and split locals. Differing club regulations may not be used for district-wide, unit-wide or sectional tournaments at clubs where several clubs compete for an overall award. In these latter cases, the sponsoring organization (usually a unit or district) establishes the conditions of contest, and the ACBL Alert procedure must be used.

### Guidelines for Alerting:

- Bridge is not a game of secret messages; the auction belongs to everyone at the table.
- Remember that the opponents are entitled to know the agreed meaning of all calls.
- The bidding side has an obligation to disclose its agreements according to the procedures established by ACBL.
- When asked, the bidding side must give a full explanation of the agreement. Stating the common or popular name of a convention is not sufficient.
- The opponents need not ask exactly the “right” question. Any request for information should be the trigger. Opponents need only indicate the desire for information — all relevant disclosures should be given automatically.
- The proper way to ask for information is “Please explain.”
- Players who remember that a call requires an Alert but cannot remember the meaning must still Alert.
- In all Alert situations, tournament directors should rule with the spirit of the Alert procedure in mind and not simply by the letter of the law.
- Players who, by experience or expertise, recognize that their opponents have neglected to Alert a special agreement will be expected to protect themselves.
- Adjustments for violations are not automatic. There must have been misinformation. An adjustment will be made only when the misinformation was a direct cause of the damage.
- Note that an opponent who actually knows or suspects what is happening, even though not properly informed, may not be entitled to redress if he or she chooses to proceed without clarifying the situation.
- When an Alert is given, ASK, do not ASSUME.

## Alerts and Clubs

### How to Alert:

**Using spoken bidding**, the partner of the player making an alertable call says, "Alert."

**Using bidding boxes**, an Alert is made by tapping an Alert card on the table or by tapping the Alert strip on the side of the bidding box. In addition, the alerter must say "Alert."

### Responding to a question concerning an Alert:

It is important to remember that players are not required to understand their opponents' systems. When a partnership makes a call or bid that requires an Alert, it is their responsibility to see that their opponents have sufficient information to comprehend the auction. Frequently, in response to a question concerning an Alert, a player will give a one-or two-word answer such as Brozel, Michaels, Texas, forcing, etc. When this answer is given in a lofty or condescending manner, newer players are often intimidated. This type of explanation may do nothing to alleviate their lack of understanding of the call. This can lead to a poor result and justifiable resentment on their part, which may in turn lead to their departure from your duplicate game. Such responses are improper.

It is important to also remember that players, at their turn to call, have the right to ask the meaning of any call made during the auction or of calls that may not have been made. Players should try to give a brief, complete answer but be willing graciously to explain further when asked. If players are still uncertain as to the meaning of a call or play, they are entitled to ask questions about that call or play to clarify.

Example: 1♣, 1♠, 2♠ — the bid is explained as forcing. Questions may be asked to determine if it is forcing for one round or to game, if it promises a spade stopper, if specific point count is shown. The director can and should be called to the table to assist in these situations and to help protect the rights of the players. The director should make sure the questions do not confuse, embarrass or intimidate the person being asked the question.

# Announcements

An Announcement is one word or a short phrase which tells the opponents directly the meaning of partner's call. When bid boxes are used, the Alert strip is also tapped.

## When to Announce:

Announcements are required in the following four instances only:

1. State the range after all opening 1NT bids.

Example: A 13-15 1NT opening bid is made. The partner of the bidder will say aloud, "13 to 15."

2. After a diamond or heart transfer response at any level to any level natural notrump opening or overcall.

The Announcement is also used for those methods that initially treat the bid as a transfer even though occasionally the bidder will have a strong hand without the next higher suit. When the message is sent that the transfer was not a transfer, just the first step in showing another type of game-going hand, the call that sends the message must be Alerted.

Examples: 1NT – Pass – 2♥ and 1♦ – 1NT – 2♦ – 4♥. If the heart bid shows spades, in each instance, the 1NT bidder will say aloud, "Transfer."

3. After a 1NT forcing or semi-forcing response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid with no interference.

Example: 1♥ – Pass – 1NT. The opening bidder will say aloud, "Forcing" or "Semi-forcing," if there was no other meaning attached to the agreement. If there is more to the agreement, such as showing four or more spades, the opening bidder says, "Alert."

4. Saying "may be as short as one," or "may be as short as two," (depending on the partnership agreement) after all non-forcing opening bids of 1♣ or 1♦, which may be fewer than three cards.

## How to Announce

When bidding boxes are not in use, the partner simply makes the required spoken statement. When bidding boxes are being used, the Alert strip is tapped and the appropriate spoken statement is made. In the event that cards are available with a printed statement, the Alert strip would be tapped and the appropriate printed card displayed to the opponents.

**Note:** It is the alerters' responsibility to ensure that the opponents are aware that an Alert has been made.



# Alerts, Announcements and Reviews of the Auction

Alerts and Announcements, as given, are to be included in reviews of the auction.

## **Failure to Alert or Announce:**

If partner fails to Alert or Announce, a player may not make any indication during the auction. Showing surprise or discomfort may wake partner to the error and would also be a violation of Law. In addition, a player may not make allowances for partner's error. The auction must continue as if partner acted properly.

When the auction is over, the declaring side must reveal to the defenders, after first calling the director, any errors of explanation (including Alerts or Announcements that were omitted) before the opening lead is faced. Defenders must reveal any errors but may NOT do so until the board has been played. Again, the director should be called first.

## **Equity in failure to Alert situations:**

There is no automatic penalty or redress awarded to opponents for inadvertently failing to Alert or Announce as required. However, when a pair's failure to Alert or Announce disadvantages an opponent or benefits themselves, the director should award an adjusted score. The director should strain to award an assigned score rather than an artificial one (see Law 12C).

Law 16 requires the director to judge whether the unauthorized information that was made available was significant. An adjustment is given only if, in the opinion of the director or the committee, sufficient damage occurred. A player should not be given a free shot and an adjustment just because his opponents have made unauthorized information available. However, in some cases a procedural penalty is indicated.

Information received by a partnership as a result of the Alert procedure:

1. If, as the result of an Alert or Announcement, whether an explanation is asked for or not, a partnership may have avoided a misunderstanding; or
2. If an Alert or Announcement is given when it should not have properly been given, and a partnership may have avoided a misunderstanding; or
3. If an incorrect explanation of a call (alertable, announceable or not) awakes partner to a misunderstanding.

Then these actions must be considered as unauthorized information under Law 16 of the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge, and the director should rule in accordance with the discretion and penalties provided in the Law.

Under this Law, it is considered an infraction to take advantage of such information, and the director may decide an adjusted score is in order.





## Alerts, Announcements and Reviews of the Auction

### **Redress in failure to Alert situations:**

A failure to Alert or Announce may entitle a pair to redress if the pair is disadvantaged by this failure, but only if they did not know what was going on at the table. To help in the determination of whether the opponents did know what was going on at the time, the director should ask, "Did you look at the convention card?" A player who does not protect himself by asking questions in the hope that opponents will have a misunderstanding does not have a firm basis for asking for redress. It may be helpful in distinguishing real misinformation from a mere technical failure to Alert to ask opponents (privately, at the same time possible alternative actions by them are discussed) what each felt the unalerted call meant when it was made. Some calls, Alert or no Alert, simply cannot be taken at face value. The missing Alert would not have provided any truly useful information.

When an Alert is made in a situation which requires an Announcement, there is usually no reason for redress. The meaning should be clarified when an explanation of the Alert is requested.

When the director is called to a table where an infraction involving the Alert procedure has occurred, the director should attempt to get a statement from each of the innocent parties (by taking them away from the table one at a time) as to what action each would have taken if he had been properly informed (alerted). Directors should try to get this information before the deal is revealed at which point the players would learn what they should have done. The other way, they have a little guessing to do.

# Definitions

**Alert:** A manner specified by the sponsoring organization by which opponents are notified of your pair's special agreements. These may be given aloud, in writing and/or by using an Alert card or strip. When in doubt, Alert. (There is no penalty for alerting unnecessarily, but there may be one for failing to Alert when one is required).

**Pre-Alerts** (Alerts before hands are removed from the first board of a round or match segment):

- Two-system methods (e.g., strong club when equal or favorable vulnerability; a natural two-over-one when not).
- Systems based on very light openings or other highly aggressive methods or preempts.
- Systems which may be unfamiliar to opponents, such as canapé.
- Super-Chart and Mid-Chart methods.
- Leading low from a doubleton.

**Delayed Alerts:** Beginning with and including opener's second call, an alertable bid above the level of 3NT is a delayed Alert. Passes, doubles and redoubles requiring an Alert must always be alerted immediately.

A delayed Alert is made as follows:

- **Declaring side:** The partner or the person making the alertable call Alerts after the auction is completed and prior to the opening lead.
- **Defending side:** The partner of the player making the alertable call Alerts after the opening lead is made face-down and before the dummy is tabled.

**Control bid:** A bid, not intended as a place to play, which denotes a control (usually first or second round). These bids are usually used to investigate slam.

**Convention:** A call that by partnership agreement conveys a meaning other than willingness to play in the denomination named or, in the case of a pass, double or redouble, the last denomination named. In addition, a pass that promises more than a specified amount of strength, or artificially promises or denies values other than in the last suit named.

**Cue bid:** A bid in a suit an opponent has bid naturally or shown four or more cards.

**Doubles** (in increasing order of penalty orientation):

- Takeout: Partner is requested to bid.
- Competitive: Shows a desire to compete further; partner normally bids.
- Optional: Shows extra high-card values; offers partner a choice between bidding or passing.
- Penalty-oriented: Partner normally passes but occasionally bids.
- Penalty: Partner is requested to pass.

**Relay:** A bid which does not guarantee any specific suit; partner is requested to make the next-step bid (usually) or make another descriptive bid if appropriate (e.g., a diamond bid which usually shows hearts but may not have hearts in some cases).

**Transfer:** A bid of a suit to show another specific suit (e.g., a diamond bid showing hearts).

**Treatment:** A natural call that by partnership agreement carries a specific message about the suit bid or the general strength or shape of the hand.



# ACBL Regulations

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## Active Ethics

ACBL encourages clubs to support Active Ethics. An actively ethical player contributes to the enjoyment of all players by continuously striving to maintain a courteous attitude toward both the opponents and partner and by avoiding any behavior that would make any player uncomfortable. These social attributes are vital to the healthy growth of the game of bridge.

A player who doesn't practice active ethics is a player who may ruin your game. Customers will not pay to play bridge in an unpleasant or contentious environment. It will serve club managers well to be strict with bad "actors." Here are some things you can do:

Zero Tolerance. Have a Zero Tolerance policy at your club. Suspend or expel players who offend.

The ultimate purpose of the ACBL's Z-T program is to create a much more pleasant atmosphere at ACBL-sanctioned games. It's an attempt to eradicate unacceptable behavior in order to make the game of bridge more enjoyable for all.

Below are some examples of commendable behavior that, while not required, would significantly contribute to the improved atmosphere of our games:

- Being a good "host" or "guest" at the table.
- Greeting others in a friendly manner.
- Praising the bidding and/or play of the opponents.
- Having two clearly completed convention cards readily available to the opponents.  
(This is a regulation, not just a nicety.)

Here are some examples of behavior that should not be tolerated at your club:

- Badgering, rudeness, insinuations, intimidation, profanity, threats or violence.
- Negative comments concerning opponents' or partner's play or bidding.
- Constant and gratuitous lessons and analyses at the table.
- Loud and disruptive arguing with a director's ruling.

Z-T requires that when a player at a table behaves in an unacceptable manner, the director should be called immediately. Annoying behavior, embarrassing remarks, or any other conduct which might interfere with the enjoyment of the game is specifically prohibited by Law 74A. Law 91A gives the director the authority to assess disciplinary penalties.

# ACBL Zero Tolerance Policy

Here are the details of ACBL's Zero Tolerance program for tournaments and how we enforce the Z-T policy:

1. At the start of each game, the director will announce that the players will be observing ZERO TOLERANCE for unacceptable behavior. It is requested that the director be called whenever behavior is not consistent with the established guidelines.
2. The director, when called, will assess the situation. If it is established that there was unacceptable behavior, an immediate  $\frac{1}{4}$  board disciplinary penalty (3 IMPs in team games) will be assigned to all offenders. This may involve any one or all four players at the table irrespective of who initiated the unacceptable behavior. If both members of a partnership are guilty, the penalties are additive ( $\frac{1}{4}$  board EACH =  $\frac{1}{2}$  board). The ACBL strongly believes that assigning disciplinary penalties will improve the overall behavior at our tournaments.
3. If it is determined that a second offense has occurred in the same event, then the offender(s) shall be ejected from future competition in that event. An offender removed from an event shall be deemed to have not played in the event. No masterpoints will be awarded and no refunds will be made. In the case of a serious offense and in the case of multiple offenses (three) during a tournament, a disciplinary committee may be convened to determine whether the offender(s) should be allowed to play in other events at the tournament and/or whether additional sanctions may be appropriate.
4. Warnings are strongly discouraged and will be given only when there is no clear violation or in cases where the facts cannot be determined. Offenders are to receive immediate penalties. Regardless of who may have initiated unacceptable behavior, ALL offenses are punishable. Retaliatory behavior is a punishable offense. Frivolous accusations will also be considered as offenses under this policy.
5. In accordance with the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge, a director's ruling in a disciplinary manner is final; however, all such decisions may be appealed. An appeals committee may not overturn the director's decision, but could recommend that the director reconsider the imposition of a penalty. It should be noted that the committee may feel that the penalty assessed was not severe enough and may refer the matter to a disciplinary committee.



# Use of Bidding Boxes

The use of bidding boxes at tournaments has now become standard. In fact, players appreciate the benefits to such an extent that most clubs use them. Players in less formal settings, such as when playing at home, also use them.

## **ACBL regulations regarding bidding boxes:**

1. Bidding boxes will be used in all events except Intermediate/Newcomer events (0-200) at NABCs. Their use will be optional in IN events.
2. Units and districts are encouraged to use bidding boxes in their games.
3. Handicapped players requiring bidding boxes will have preference when availability is limited.
4. Non-handicapped players may use bidding boxes, if available, in games in which such use is not mandated as long as no player at the table objects.

**Note:** Any player has the right to use bidding boxes (assuming they are available) for any ACBL event in which they play, if they are needed because of a hearing impairment. As a policy, we do not question players as to the details of a handicap when they state that one exists. When bidding boxes are in use for this reason, no player has the right to refuse to play with them. Players who have a handicap which precludes their use will have a distinctive card. The card will be displayed on the table and read, "Due to a physical or visual handicap, we are not using bidding boxes."

## **Choosing a call using bidding boxes**

1. A player is obligated to choose a call before touching any card in the box. Deliberation while touching the bidding box cards, removing bid cards prior to the call being considered "made," etc., may subject the offending side to the adjustment provisions of Law 16. A call is considered made when a bid card is removed from the bidding box and held touching or nearly touching the table or maintained in such a position to indicate that the call has been made. Until a call is considered made, the director will treat the situation as unauthorized information and apply Law 16. After a call is considered made, the director will apply Law 25.
2. A call, once made, may be changed without penalty under the provisions of Law 25 only if a player has inadvertently taken out the wrong bid card and the player corrects, or attempts to correct without pause for thought, and partner has not taken action. Picking up the bid cards after the auction is over constitutes taking action.
3. The skip bid warning is given using bidding boxes by displaying the stop card, making a call and then replacing the stop card in the bidding box. LHO is required to take about 10 seconds (while giving the appearance of studying his hand) before making a call.

## **The STOP Card:**

Players should protect their rights and the opponent's by announcing prior to making any subsequent bid that skips one or more levels of bidding. Place the stop card so that LHO sees it (the skip bidder is responsible for gaining LHO's attention). The skip bid is made. The stop card is replaced in the bidding box.

**Note:** If a player forgets to replace the stop card there is no penalty. It is each player's responsibility to maintain appropriate tempo including after a skip bid. If the stop card is placed on the table and a skip bid is not made, the director may judge that the bid card was played inadvertently or not. If the judgment is that the card was played after a "slip of the mind" therefore with intent, then the situation is a Law 16 (Unauthorized Information) situation.

## Use of Bidding Boxes.

### Alert procedure:

Except when screens are in use, a player must say “Alert” out loud when tapping the Alert strip of the bidding box.

### Here are some advantages to using bidding boxes:

1. Auctions can’t be overheard at other tables.
2. No extraneous information is exchanged through a remark or the tone in which a call is made.
3. The need for reviews during the auction is virtually eliminated.
4. Bids out of turn are rare.
5. The noise level in the playing area is dramatically reduced.

### Suggestions to help you become familiar with using bidding boxes:

1. Make up your mind what to bid before you reach into the bidding box. This eliminates shuffling through the bid cards as if you were still debating which to place on the table. This gives unauthorized information that you weren’t sure about your final choice.
2. Develop the habit of placing your thumb over the bid you select as you pull the bid card out. Look at the bid card before you place it on the table. This ensures that you’ve got the card you want.
3. Place the bid cards on the table without special emphasis. “Building” your auction from left to right enables you to display and recover your bid cards most effectively. The bids should overlap so that the entire auction is visible. This includes pass, double and redouble.
4. The red STOP card is used during the auction as a skip bid warning. As with verbal bidding, either you should always make a skip bid warning when a skip bid comes up or you should never use the warning. Place the stop card so that LHO sees it (the skip bidder is responsible for gaining LHO’s attention). The skip bid is made. The stop card is replaced in the bidding box.

**Note:** LHO is required to take 10 seconds even if the STOP card is picked up immediately.

5. A player must say “Alert” out loud while touching the Alert flag on his bidding box. When using screens, silent Alerts are mandatory.

Even with practice and familiarity, accidents will happen and the “oops” rule applies to inadvertent calls or mechanical errors.

For example: You mean to bid 1♠ but accidentally play the 1♥ card on the table. The director is authorized to permit you to change your call if it was inadvertent.

In such a case, some immediate indication is necessary before partner has called. The director should be liberal in judging whether there was pause for thought.

If partner has already taken some action, you now have an obligation, just as with verbal bidding, to continue bidding as though no irregularity had occurred.

# Use of Bidding Boxes

## Skip-bid Warning

**How to announce a skip bid:** The proper way to announce a skip bid using spoken bidding is to say, “I am about to make a skip bid, please wait,” or, “Skip bid, please wait.”

When using bidding boxes, the skip bid is announced by placing the stop card so the LHO sees it (the skip bidder is responsible for gaining LHO’s attention). The skip bid is made. The stop card is replaced in the box.

**Skip bids:** The use of the skip-bid warning is discretionary.

**When the skip-bid warning should be used:** If players are going to use the warning, they must use it whenever they skip one or more levels of bidding — be it an opening bid, an overcall, a rebid or response, strong or weak. Players who use the warning to call attention to the type of bid being made are in direct violation of both the letter and the spirit of the regulation.

**Role of the opponent:** The announcement of a skip bid requires the LHO of the player who makes the announcement to consider his hand for an approximate count of 10 seconds before calling.

**When a player makes a skip bid but doesn’t use the warning:** If a player fails to use the warning, the player who is next to call is still expected to break the tempo of the auction before calling as though a skip bid warning was given. This break in tempo puts no constraints on his partner’s actions. However, when a player takes a considerably longer time, his opponents may become entitled to redress under the provisions of Law 16. Experienced players, especially, are required to pause with or without a warning.

**Purpose of the skip-bid warning:** Use of the warning protects both the user and his ethical opponents (who are not put under time pressure to select a call following a bid that skips one or more levels).

**Skip bid announced but not made:** When a player announces a skip bid and then fails to make one, the director must be called to the table. The director should announce to the table that unauthorized information may have been made available. (The player probably intended to skip the bidding but failed to do so.) The director should inform the partner of the player who made the skip-bid announcement that he must bid his hand on the basis of the auction (1♠, 2♥) and disregard his partner’s statement (or the stop card) (1♠, skip bid 2♥). The director should instruct the players to proceed with the auction and the play. After the deal has been completed, if the non-offenders feel the offender’s partner’s bidding (or play if they become defenders) was influenced by the unauthorized information, they should call the director. The director should question the players and determine if, in his opinion, there has been damage. When the director deems that there has been damage, an adjusted score should be awarded.

**Note:** In situations where the unauthorized information interferes with the auction (or play) and the partner of the person who said “skip bid 2♥” is unable to bid (or play) the hand normally, the director should award the offender no better than Average minus and the non-offenders Average plus or their score, whichever is better.



## Slow Play

Bridge is a timed event. Games should start on time, and the director should keep them moving on schedule. A timing device is a major plus. There is nothing more frustrating for a pair than to follow two slow players all evening and never be able to begin a round on time.

The guideline for ACBL events is 15 minutes per two boards. The director has an obligation to players not to allow one or two persons to make the game unpleasant for the majority. First offenders should be warned, given one round to get back on schedule and informed that in addition to a late play (when allowed), procedural penalties (Law 90) may be assessed for future offenses. It is understood that the director will make every possible effort to determine who is “at fault” before assessing any penalties. When a player is late for the second time, the director may issue a procedural penalty (usually 25% of top on a board).

Before assessing a penalty for persistent slow play, sometimes it is better for the pair and the game as a whole to grant the problem pair a late play (hoping that by putting them back on schedule they can keep up). If this does not cure the problem, the director may then resort to penalties.

It is possible to run a duplicate game where late plays are not allowed. The director can award an adjusted score for boards that are not started before the round ends. The offenders receive Average minus and the non-offenders receive Average plus, or a percentage of their game. If neither pair is deemed to be at fault, the board is scored as No Play.

## Club Discipline

Club management should deal promptly and fairly with all cases of improper conduct that occur during an ACBL-sanctioned masterpoint game in the club, including cases of unethical practices.

The club manager should either handle these situations personally or establish a standing committee to review all disciplinary problems. Clubs holding non-sanctioned games may deal with problems arising in these games as they see fit.

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

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

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

To bar a player, club management must notify the player in writing and send a copy of the notification to the ACBL Club Membership Department. The notification must include the player's name and player number, and the reason for, and the length of, the barring.

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

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

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

A club may extend the barring of a player from 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. A player so barred may appeal the extension of the barring under the process described in the previous paragraph. In such cases, the written notice to the person barred must include the person's right to appeal the action to the Unit Disciplinary Committee in which the club is located within 30 days of the action taken by the club. Such written notice is required; otherwise the barring shall not be effective. The notice must be submitted to the unit and ACBL.

The club may not impose partnership restrictions on such players for these events unless the unit, district or ACBL first imposes them.



## At Your Club

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- 7.2 Setting the Stage at Your Club Game . . . . . 85
- 7.3 Dealing with Difficult Players . . . . . 85

# Tips for Creating a Pleasant Game Atmosphere

## 1. Stressbuster.

The Mountain View DBC wants to ensure that each player has a good time, and it makes certain that the stress level of the new player is kept at a very low level. The directors are trained to keep a constant watch. If things look tense, a visit from the director to lighten up the situation always seems to be welcome.

## 2. Adopt club rules to make your games pleasant.

Randy Shaw of Oklahoma City OK came up with these guidelines for a club plan to help attract and keep new players.

- a. Always speak to the opponents when they sit down at your table.
- b. Teach bridge in the classroom only!
- c. Don't sit or think too long before you bid or play.
- d. Don't criticize or show irritation toward partner while at the table.
- e. Never discuss your opponents' bids or plays if they can hear you.
- f. Work with the club manager to maintain a friendly atmosphere.

## 3. No gloating, no griping policy.

Make your club a pleasant place to play by making signs to encourage players to congratulate opponents who play well against them. Do not permit griping or gloating.

## 4. Don't tolerate bad behavior.

Adopt a Zero Tolerance policy for your club. More players will participate in your games if the experience is pleasant.

## 5. Allow your players to bid ZT.

You can actually bid "Zero Tolerance" at the Scottsdale Bridge Club in Arizona. Yellow Zero Tolerance cards are in the bidding boxes. They have had a positive influence on behavior. Players are asked to flash a ZT card to an offending player (or players) when they feel intimidated or abused. If the bad manners continue, the offended player can call the director. This is an excellent program for new players who are frequently too afraid to call the director when unruly behavior occurs at the table.

## 6. Keep psyching under control.

Check the article in this section for suggestions on how to implement this.

## Setting the Stage at Your Club Game

The club director and/or the club manager are responsible for the atmosphere of the games at their club. They must work together to make the club inviting — a pleasant place where the members want to socialize as well as play bridge. The majority of a club's customers will be looking for a social experience along with their bridge game. It isn't surprising that the most frequent complaint voiced by "drop-outs" is the rude and obnoxious behavior of others.

Club directors need to take a firm stand against the behavior of players who drive newcomers away. Sometimes the situation may be solved by a quiet conversation with a disruptive player about the club's concerns. If this does not alleviate the problem and the player continues to be a bad actor, do not hesitate to take further action. If you don't, your business will suffer.

## Dealing with Difficult Players

You want your bridge club to have a great reputation all around town. You want it to be a club where happy, friendly, well-mannered players are known to gather and play bridge. You want a club where the environment is user-friendly for players of all levels of experience — a club that first-time players in particular will quickly feel is a second home.

In order to attain and maintain the atmosphere described above, you must deal quickly and firmly with players who are likely to disrupt your games and run off players.





# Newcomer Program

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# Overview

## **Purpose of a newcomer program:**

Learning to play and enjoy duplicate bridge has been compared to a journey for a lifetime. And starting out newcomers in an open game is like having them jump on a train going 30 MPH through the station. Many can't make the jump successfully and fall by the wayside. Not only that, they complain loudly and bitterly about how inhospitable the experience is to anyone who will listen. This is anti-marketing at its worst.

Why not stop the train for these people and let them get on in a calm and dignified manner? And why not make this one of those trains that never goes more than 5 MPH so newcomers can swing aboard without falling under the wheels? You will find many people eager and delighted to board. Your club and your unit will grow big and rich and lively again.

## **Differences between open and newcomer games:**

Bridge, and duplicate bridge in particular, can demand many virtues that one wishes one didn't have to cultivate, such as courage, fortitude, cheerfulness under adversity, commitment, empathy, loyalty, psychological insight, memory, judgment and restraint. It's easy to see that newcomers have their work cut out for them.

Players starting the duplicate experience in a newcomer game learn to introduce themselves at the beginning of each round if they don't know each other, or they say hello or some other pleasantry if they are regulars. During the play of the hand, there may be some discussion if an irregularity occurs, such as a lead from the wrong hand, and the director may or may not be called. After the round is over, there may be some postmortem, everyone says goodbye and perhaps something polite about enjoying the game. They're in a milieu where everyone is still getting used to the mechanics of the game, meeting each other for the first time, acquiring new partners and working out their conventions.

If newcomers must begin in an open game, they usually try to introduce themselves and get cold stares for their pains. The director is called continuously because of their hesitations and their slow play — and the newcomers feel like the opponents have accused them of cheating. They do not know the full implications of the Alerts and are too afraid — or too ignorant — to ask. If a new player asks for a full explanation of what an Alert means, the answer usually comes with an exasperated sigh. And that might be the nicest response!



# New Players

## **Make them comfortable.**

A duplicate bridge game can be a frightening experience for the first-time player. Unless that player has been introduced previously to convention cards, the Alert system, bidding boxes, etc., the mechanics of the game can be overwhelming. The ACBL suggests that the club make arrangements to have a host or hostess available at each game to greet new players and help them settle into the routine of the club game. If your unit sponsors a “New Player Services” program, the members of that committee would be available to assist. It’s important to remember that a new player is a potential life-time supporter and customer of your club. Anything you can do to make each person comfortable will add to the success of your business. (The “Exciting World of Bridge” is an excellent handout for newcomers. It can be found online here: [http://web5.acbl.org/learn\\_page/how-to-play-bridge/introduction-to-duplicate/](http://web5.acbl.org/learn_page/how-to-play-bridge/introduction-to-duplicate/), or ordered from the ACBL Marketing Department – [marketing@acbl.org](mailto:marketing@acbl.org).)

## **Hold Games for new players.**

Limited games designed with new players in mind should be offered regularly if you want to generate new customers on a regular basis. Playing against their peers, new players can gain confidence and eventually graduate into the main open games. If the club does not have sufficient attendance for a 0-5, 0-20 or 0-49er game, stratify the open game.

## **Offer Mentoring.**

Mentoring programs can be especially helpful in assisting newcomers to become a part of your club family. Check the ACBL’s website for information on mentoring programs or contact the Education Department.

## **Work with teachers.**

It is suggested that you work with the teachers in your area to provide playing opportunities that will bridge the gap between classroom lessons and the local duplicate games. Teachers know that students who practice what they learn will return for more lessons. Club managers know that students who practice at their clubs will tend to play there after the lessons are over. ACBL offers free “Bridge Plus+” (for ACBL Accredited Teachers) or “Pupil Game” (for any bridge teacher) sanctions for this purpose. Consult the ACBL’s Club Managers Handbook for ideas on how to encourage teachers to bring students to your games.

## **Adjust your timing.**

Remember, when working with new players, that they should not be expected to play on the same time schedule as seasoned players. Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) games need to be run in a more relaxed manner, although no one pair should be allowed to dictate the pace of the game. Ten minutes per board is a good guideline for these players.

## Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) Program

The ACBL has developed a basic formula for helping new players become a part of the local bridge family. The 10 points of the IN Program help to establish the right atmosphere for a new-to-duplicate player to blossom. Become familiar with these 10 points and try to offer them at your club if you want your newcomers to be happy and to play regularly in your games. IN activities can be restricted to any group(s) of non-Life Master players.

There are 10 basic ingredients of a “full” newcomer program for sectional and regional tournaments or IN Sectionals. A booklet entitled “Planning and Organizing your IN Tournament or Program” is available here: <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/units/PlanningAndOrganizingAnINTournamentorProgram.pdf>

### **Games for 199er, 99er, 49er, 0-20 and 0-5 players each session.**

Offer all of these events. A notation, “may be stratified at the director’s discretion,” should appear on all advertising. (A game can be stratified but any group of three or more newcomer tables should be run as a separate event.)

### **Trophies for overall wins.**

New players love to win trophies. The trophies can be regular trophies, glasses, mugs, etc. New players like prizes that say, “First-place winner.”

### **A special room for the IN games.**

A special room or area is necessary if the new players are going to get maximum benefits from participating in an IN Program. The games should be close to the rest of the players so the new players will feel like a part of the whole.

### **Directors who are experienced in working with newcomers.**

Running games for new players requires a combination of public relations and directing skills. The ACBL has trained a number of tournament directors to work with new players. They are referred to as IN Specialists. The ACBL will assign one of these directors to a tournament on request. Any club director can gain more experience in working with new players by spending one or more sessions with the directors of the IN Program at any NABC. They can sign up by contacting the Education Department.

### **Celebrity speakers to give bridge tips before the games.**

Start each session with a special speaker lecturing for 20 to 30 minutes. Speakers who can entertain and give bridge tips on the level of the new players are best for this program. If the topic is too advanced, the speaker will do more harm than good.

### **Social events.**

Social events give the players a better chance to get to know each other and to find partners for future events. Bridge Bingo, a juke-box and dancing, a wine and cheese party, a between-sessions dinner buffet, a hospitality room where new players can meet the local “stars” and bridge officials, a panel show and a pizza party are ideas that have worked.



## Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) Program

### **Pictures of the winners.**

Take Polaroid pictures of the winners and display them. Players love to see who has won in the “Winner’s Circle.”

### **Fliers to invite the players and guarantee partners.**

A flier should be mailed to the eligible players in the area inviting them to attend. Advertise that partners are guaranteed for anyone who arrives one hour before game time. Standby or house players are a real bonus whenever possible.

### **New Players Services (NPS).**

Have volunteers ready to assist new players as needed with questions and information. Have committee members walk around the IN room/area to visit with the players, pass out candy, go from table to table wishing the players good luck in the game to follow. Have volunteers available after each session to help the players interpret the scores. These are services that would be performed by the committee members of a unit New Player Services Program.

### **Newcomer hand records with analysis sheets.**

The ACBL can provide these packages for the 0-20 masterpoint players. This material provides an opportunity for the new players to re-examine and discuss the hands after the game.

## **New Player Services Program**

This program is excellent for making new players comfortable at the club.

**Who:** This program is usually organized at the unit level by the education liaison and implemented by a committee of teachers and volunteers selected by the education liaison. At a club, the club manager would organize the program and select the committee if the unit does not have this program in place.

**What:** New Player Services (NPS) is a public relations program dedicated to welcoming new players into the ACBL family and making them comfortable at all levels of play. Committee members wear identifying badges and make themselves available to offer a helping hand to new players by answering questions, helping to fill out convention cards, giving directions and informing the players of special club activities and programs.

**Where:** NPS are provided by the appointed committee members at all games and activities held at the club.

**When:** A club manager may want to appoint one host or hostess to officiate at each session during the week. The host or hostess would be responsible for recruiting additional committee members to serve with them as needed.

**Units:** The club NPS committee may serve as the start of a unit-wide program to ease new ACBL members into the local bridge family. The unit education liaison would introduce the idea to the unit board for approval. After the program has been accepted, a budget is created, and the committee members are appointed, inducted, receive their pins and begin to implement the program as coordinated by the education liaison.

## Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) Program

### Games for New Players and Students

Your games need a steady flow of new players to keep them healthy. It's important to start newcomers and students off with a positive playing experience. Here are some ideas that have been used successfully:

#### Stationary Duplicate:

**Type 1** - Jerry Helms, well-known player and teacher from Charlotte NC, has devised one type of stationary duplicate game. He reuses selected boards kept intact from one of the regular duplicate games he runs locally. The matchpointed traveler remains with each board.

A group of four students can play these boards and experience a type of duplicate bridge. They can see what other players have done on a hand and, they can see the number of matchpoints awarded for a particular score. The students enter their result on the traveler and see whether the result is above or below average. When Jerry has several tables, he rematchpoints the students' scores in with the results from the regular game. This gives them a total score which can be compared with the results of the players from the original game.

The number of boards played in a session of stationary duplicate can vary with the experience level of the players. They should, however, be encouraged to move toward playing a deal every 10 minutes before they can be comfortable in a newcomer game.

**Type II** - A second way of playing stationary duplicate is to attach a table of students to a regular duplicate game in progress at the local club. The students relay a board or two each round with one of the tables in the regular duplicate game. (Choose a N-S pair with the temperament to enjoy relaying with beginners.)

The names of the students will not show up on the recap sheet. They can start a half hour later than the regular game and finish after about two hours (or whenever they become weary). The students will see the scores of the other players and will be able to compare their results, but they will at no point play against any players from the regular duplicate game. The students' scores do not appear on the official score slip. The students play among themselves and stay at one table.

#### Supervised Play:

Sets of E-Z Deal "Play" cards and analyses booklets for 32 deals have been developed for use with the ACBL Bridge Series courses. They are "The Club Play," "The Diamond Play," "The Heart Play," "Play Course for Advancing Players I" and "Play Course for Advancing Players II."

All five sets are available from Baron Barclay Bridge Supply. Each provides everything the teacher needs to offer a four-week course where the students can practice what they have learned in a duplicate-style game.

#### Tip for running a successful supervised play game:

Barbara Seagram of Toronto ON found that the following guidelines have made her supervised play games very popular:

- Start with a 15-minute pre-game bridge tip.
- Allow players to change their lead, change their bid or change their mind.
- Help as much as necessary throughout the room.
- Stay after the game ends to fuss over the players as the results are read.
- Hand out masterpoints.

## Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) Program

### Bridge Plus+ Games:

General format: Bridge Plus+ games offer new players a duplicate game with a social atmosphere. The hands are not normally pre-dealt. Random hands are used. The players move as in a regular newcomer or open game. The games should never run longer than two hours...shorter is better than longer when using this format.

The games can be run as part of a lesson program or as part of the regular activities at a bridge club or tournament. The ideal situation is to have games available for the students on a weekly basis.

Bridge Plus+ is normally divided into two segments:

- The Bridge Tip – This starts 30 minutes prior to the game and lasts 20 minutes.
- The Game – A two-hour duplicate game with 12 to 16 deals.

**Bridge Plus+ Sanctions** — Bridge Plus+ games award masterpoints. Sanctions are issued through the ACBL Club and Member Services Department to ACBL Accredited Teachers.

**Bridge Plus+ information** — ACBL offers a booklet to help you with this game:

“The Handbook for Lesson Games and Bridge Plus+ Games” (<http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/units/bphandbook05.pdf>) provides all of the information you need to run an effective game. It includes the philosophy of Bridge Plus+, details on how to run this format and a sample bridge tip for your first game.

### Easy-going Games:

Some new players will want an easy-going type of duplicate game that doesn't award masterpoints.

### Post only the winners and runners-up.

Respect the players' privacy and never post all the results. No one wants it known that they didn't do well.

### Don't let the same person win the prize each time.

Sometimes give a prize for overall; vary this with a prize for the person with the best result on a randomly drawn traveling score slip.

### There are no masterpoint restrictions.

New players and LMs are welcome.

### There are no conventions except Stayman and Blackwood.

The format is to “Bid What You See.”

### Always use the Mitchell movement.

There are no relays and bye-stands and no Howell movements for any reason.



## Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) Program

### **Play no more than 16 boards and give no formal rulings.**

If there is an infraction such as a lead out of turn, the director restores order without penalty or choice. (Return the card and play from the right hand.)

### **Declarer is not expected to play dummy's cards if the person who puts down the dummy has to leave the table.**

The director should be ready to sit in to avoid that situation.

### **This game can't be held at the same time as an open game.**

There is no situation that qualifies as an exception.

### **The game always starts on time.**

No reservations and no entries sold in advance. Train the players to know that the game will begin promptly.

### **The game is never stopped to adjust the movement for a late table.**

A new table and boards are simply added at the end.

### **Gear the game for success by cherishing the tables you get rather than hungering for more by looking longingly towards the door.**

Disguise the room to look like you expect half the number of tables that could show up. Put books, flowers, plants and newspapers out. Make extra tables available if needed — but not “empty” if not needed.

### **Give the same 10 basic bridge tips over and over.**

Send players who ask advanced questions to the newcomer game. Don't raise the game level.

### **Let the players know they are slow.**

If the first hand isn't finished in seven minutes, quietly sort the second board into suits. If the first hand isn't finished in eight and a half minutes, tell the players there may not be time to play the second board.

## Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) Program

### Newcomer Games

Newcomer games are usually run on a regular basis by an experienced director/teacher in a club-type atmosphere.

The main difference between a newcomer game and an open game is the level of experience of the players and the number of boards played. The laws of the game start to be enforced more stringently at this level, although still with some leeway for the level of experience of the participant. Regular masterpoints are awarded in a newcomer game.

### Easybridge!

Easybridge! is a proven marketing device for starting a new club game. It can be used with people who know nothing about the game and people who have played socially and are interested in learning about duplicate. Easybridge! is a sanctioned duplicate game at week four; the presenter must be a club director—or do the program in the room with a club director.

**Easybridge! is a 35-week program** divided into three courses. EB1 is 15 weeks; EB2 is 10 weeks; EB3 is 10 weeks. During EB1, the presenter tries to achieve three things: bond the players to himself, bond them to each other and show the joy of duplicate bridge.

**Easybridge! is marketing, not education.** It creates the climate for the players to motivate themselves to play—and perhaps learn—more bridge. Each presenter or designee is expected to start a series of workshops at week five in order to review and to teach. No formal teaching occurs during the Easybridge! program itself. It remains the Garden of Eden where nothing is wrong and everything is worth a try. There are only two rules in Easybridge! (1) you must accept a breath mint from you partner if he offers you one, and (2) you must bid up the ladder.

Easybridge! students tend to go out to play in other games at the club starting at the fifth week. By six months, many are playing several times a week. The presenter is also encouraged to take the Easybridge! group to a tournament in the first three months of play.

### Home-Style Swiss Pairs (Rubber Bridge)

#### Overview

This is a highly recommended form of bridge that can be offered as an alternative to duplicate. It's a fun game that is easy to run. Social and rubber bridge players can adapt to it easily.

#### Equipment

All you need in the way of equipment are two decks of playing cards for each table, a recap sheet, score pads or scorecards and pencils. Assignment cards are helpful, but the director can verbally make the next round's assignments.

## Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) Program

### Format of the game

For the first round, pairs should be assigned at random. The N-S pair at Table 1 should be listed as Pair 1, the E-W Pair at Table 1 should be listed as Pair 2. The N-S pair at Table 2 should be Pair 3, etc.

Players cut for the deal and play four deals of bridge per round.

At the end of the round, they will total up their scores and report the total point difference to the director. The director will then convert the score to Victory Points, using the scale included in this article, and then record the VP total on the recap sheet. After all of the results have been turned in, pair up the pairs that have the closest scores, starting with the two highest totals. Keep a record of the pair assignments for each round and do not let the same pairs play against each other more than once in the same session.

Give the players their seating assignments and start the next round.

### Club masterpoint awards

There will be overall and match awards. Match awards are based upon actual scores before conversion to Victory Points. In the event of an exact tie, divide the individual match award. Please use the Swiss match awards schedule found in the club award charts in Chapter 4 of the ACBL Handbook found online at [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org). Overall placings are determined by the highest total of Victory Points in a session of play. Players in the overall standings earn either the overall award or the total of the match awards, whichever is greater. For the overall awards, please refer to the appropriate one-winner movement in the club award charts. (Chapter 5 of the ACBL Handbook.)





# Bridge on Cruise Ships

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# Overview

## Bridge programs

As an ACBL director, you can work with cruise agents to run a bridge program aboard a ship or you can, in some circumstances, obtain a sanction for a game on a cruise ship and take your own players aboard with you. A list of cruise agents you can contact for possible assignments is available at the ACBL website (<http://web2.acbl.org/As400/clubs/allClubs/cr-clubs.htm>).

## Bridge sanctions

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

The ACBL will sanction games on a ship for a single cruise that does not exceed 14 days, charging a sanction fee. There is one sanction fee for cruises of one to seven days and a larger sanction fee for cruises of eight to 30 days (See Appendix G of the ACBL Handbook online: [http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/Handbooks/ACBL-Handbook-of-Rules-and-Regulations\\_Appendix-G.pdf](http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/Handbooks/ACBL-Handbook-of-Rules-and-Regulations_Appendix-G.pdf) ). Whoever receives sanctions for cruise ships is expected, within the constraints placed upon them by the cruise lines, to actively promote the ACBL for the purpose of recruiting new members.

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

## Exceptions to ACBL regulations

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

- There are no table and session fees, and the director of the sanctioned cruise game does not have to submit a monthly financial report, but club masterpoint reports must be submitted to the ACBL at the end of the cruise.
- Masterpoint awards are 50% of the award for an open club game. Directors also may hold newcomer games if warranted.
- ACBL regulations require that these games have a club or higher rated director.
- There is no requirement that a specific number of boards be played during a session. Masterpoint awards for such events are the same as they are for a complete game.

# Overview

## Cruise championship regulations

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

- A limit of one cruise championship event of each kind every 14 days may be held during the cruise. The event may be of one or two sessions. Typical cruise championship events are open pairs, men's and women's pairs, mixed pairs and individuals.
- Masterpoint awards for cruise championships are 50% of an open game championship. Players who earn masterpoints in a cruise game receive their points from the ACBL.
- Directors or managers on cruise ships need not pay the per table session fees but must submit club masterpoint reports to the ACBL at the end of the cruise.

## Land cruises

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

## Education opportunities

The ACBL highly recommends that teachers and club directors interested in working on cruise ships take the course on this subject offered at NABCs.







# Appendix

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# ACBLscore Commands

## ACBLscore Commands

### ACBLscore MS-DOS version commands

- (ADD) Add a new section
- (ADJ) Outside score adjustment
- (AR) Print ACBL report for a special game (CLUB only)
- (BA) Copy current game file to floppy
- (BO) Display a board (F10)
- (BU) Product output for daily bulletin
- (CA) Print captains for team games
- (CF) Configure event or combined scoring
- (CC) Compute carryover scores from qualifying sessions
- (CH) Change to another section (F7, PgDn, PgUp)
- (CO) Enter or modify carryover scores
- (CP) Extract final scores for continuous pairs
- (D) Update data base from game file
- (EDM) Edit movement
- (EDP) Edit previous session crossovers
- (EDX) Edit next session crossovers
- (EL) Scan all sections for player MP eligibility
- (EN) Enter or correct scores (F2)
- (EV) Event leaders to screen or printer (F6)
- (EX) Export to another game file (Tournament only)
- (FF) Form feed the printer
- (FI) Find a player or verify player eligibility
- (FO) Use fouled board procedure
- (FR) Frequency charts or datums for IMP pairs
- (GN) Next game file in alphabetical order (CTRL-Right)
- (GP) Previous game file in alphabetical order (CTRL-Left)
- (HA) Enter or modify handicap scores
- (I) Import from another game file
- (K) Delete a section from this game file
- (LAS) Revert to last game used
- (LAT) Report of late plays
- (LE) Section leaders to screen or printer
- (LI) List scores in pair order to screen or printer
- (LR) Recap and/or press to screen/file/printer
- (ME) Edit memos to print on recap

## ACBLscore Commands

- (MP) Edit masterpoint awards (tournament only)
- (NA) Enter or modify player names (F3)
- (NE) Go to a different game file
- (NO) Edit notes for this game file
- (OA) Rank overall
- (OR) Print recap sheet at six lines per inch
- (OU) Specify players sitting out in board-a-match
- (PC) Print club masterpoint or NAP qualifying receipts
- (PD) Enter pre-determined IMP datums
- (PE) Event leaders to screen or printer with percentages
- (PM) Edit player masterpoint holdings (bracketed events)
- (PR) Print press sheet
- (PX) Cross-over from a previous session
- (Q) Terminate execution
- (RE) Print recap sheet at eight lines per inch (F5)
- (RO) Post from pickup slips
- (SC) Score the game
- (SE) Change setup of game
- (SHO) Display or print configuration
- (SHX) Display or print cross-over destination table
- (SP) Print short press sheet (one page)
- (ST) Assign strata to pairs
- (SU) Print summary for a pair or pairs on printer
- (TO) Enter and edit event information
- (TR) Transfer names from a different game file
- (TS) Traveler format scores report with names
- (UNB) Restore a backed up or exported game file
- (UND) Undo DBADD command
- (V) View boards
- (WH) Display version # that created this game file
- (WO) Create files for WBF worldwide matchpointing
- (X) Cross-over from a previous session

### ACBLscore Windows version

When in game file, press F11 for command list.



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