



BRIDGE
MENTORING
PROGRAM



*Hope I bid
this correctly...*

*Great hand to
discuss after game.*

Handbook



American Contract
Bridge League

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Overview

This handbook is designed to help develop and implement guidelines for unit Bridge Mentoring Programs.

If your unit is just establishing a Bridge Mentoring Program, the information in this handbook will assist with the steps to get started and provide ideas to improve and spark new participation in an existing program.

The Marketing Department will be happy to assist you in developing your Bridge Mentoring Program. Please contact the Marketing Department at 662-253-3112 or by email at marketing@acbl.org.



Establishing a Bridge Mentoring Program

Benefits of a Bridge Mentoring Program

- Increased table count at the club level.
- No startup costs.
- Reduced frustration that comes with learning and playing the game.
- Mentored players are more likely to stay with the game.
- Opportunity to host a new event at local tournaments.
- Opportunity for the unit to work with the local clubs.
- Opportunity for all players to give back to the game.

Mentoring Chair

First and foremost, to have a successful program, it is necessary to have a committed Mentoring Chair. The Mentoring Chair is responsible for the operation and promotion of the Bridge Mentoring Program. Some responsibilities of the Mentoring Chair include:

- Appointing a Bridge Mentoring Program Committee.
- Promoting the program to club managers/owners.
- Providing details of the program to each participant
- Registering all participating clubs via an agreement sheet.
- Maintaining the registration forms for mentors and mentees.
- Verifying that all partnerships comply with the program's guidelines.
- Assisting clubs as needed to create partnerships, find more mentors, etc.
- Validating and forwarding reimbursement forms, for subsidized programs, to the unit treasurer.
- Updating the program as necessary with approval of the unit board.





Establishing a Bridge Mentoring Program *cont.*

Implementing a Bridge Mentoring Program

A strong program involves as many players in the process as possible. The program can operate at the club level or through the entire unit.

A few ways to implement a mentoring program are to:

- Establish a program for a single event.
- Establish a program for games that are scheduled periodically.
- Establish a program through mentoring partnerships that play as desired.



Designing Your Program

The needs and resources available to each unit are unique, so how you design your program is up to you. Below are a few suggestions that have been successful in other clubs and units.

Consider launching your program at a Pro-Am or unit game.

Have the Mentoring Chair available to answer questions and provide materials (sign-up sheets, agreement forms, etc.) about your program.

Get your unit board involved in the program.

Since one of the benefits of a Bridge Mentoring Program is increased table count, a unit's board of directors may find this program to be a great way to support the local clubs. For example, you may ask the unit board to pay the mentor's entry while the mentee pays his/her entry.

Have guidelines for the mentors and mentees.

It is a good idea to have a club information and agreement form for each participant to sign. A sample form is included in the resources section of this handbook.

Determine how many levels of mentoring should be encouraged.

It is suggested that you have a requirement that to be a mentee you must be a mentor in the program. For example, the 49er would mentor the 0-5 player, the 99er would mentor the 49er, the 199er would mentor the 99er and so on. This matching technique avoids the problem of too few mentors. You should establish the minimum number of masterpoints required that separate the mentor and mentee, such as 50 points.

Have a recommend minimum number of times partnerships should play each month.

Twice a month is a good place to start.



Designing Your Program *cont.*

Require participating partnerships to be approved by the Mentoring Chair or Committee.

Require membership to the club and/or ACBL for participation in the Bridge Mentoring Program.

Have group mentoring sessions.

If you have a large group of mentees and few mentors, monthly group sessions may be the answer. Below is a way to organize the event:

- After signing in, each mentee is assigned a table. North is reserved for the mentors.
- Mentors draw numbers to get their table assignments so the seating is random and changes each month.
- Provide six pre-dealt boards covering a specific topic (e.g., opening bids, responses and rebids).
- All tables play the boards in the same sequence, and all deals are designed to have South as the declarer.
- After each deal has been played, the mentees are given a printout of the deal, and the mentor discusses the bidding and play.
- Following the post mortem, the player sitting South moves to the West seat. The West player moves to the East seat and the East player moves to the South seat.
- Each participant is declarer for two boards.

Provide special games throughout the program.

Consider adding a mentor/mentee section to your unit championship games.

Provide recognition for the mentor and mentee during and at the end of the program.

Create a trophy that is awarded each month to the program participants with the best percentage game. Also consider having a potluck dinner where the mentees prepare the food followed by a bridge game.



Resources

On the following pages you will find materials to help get your mentoring program started. These materials include:

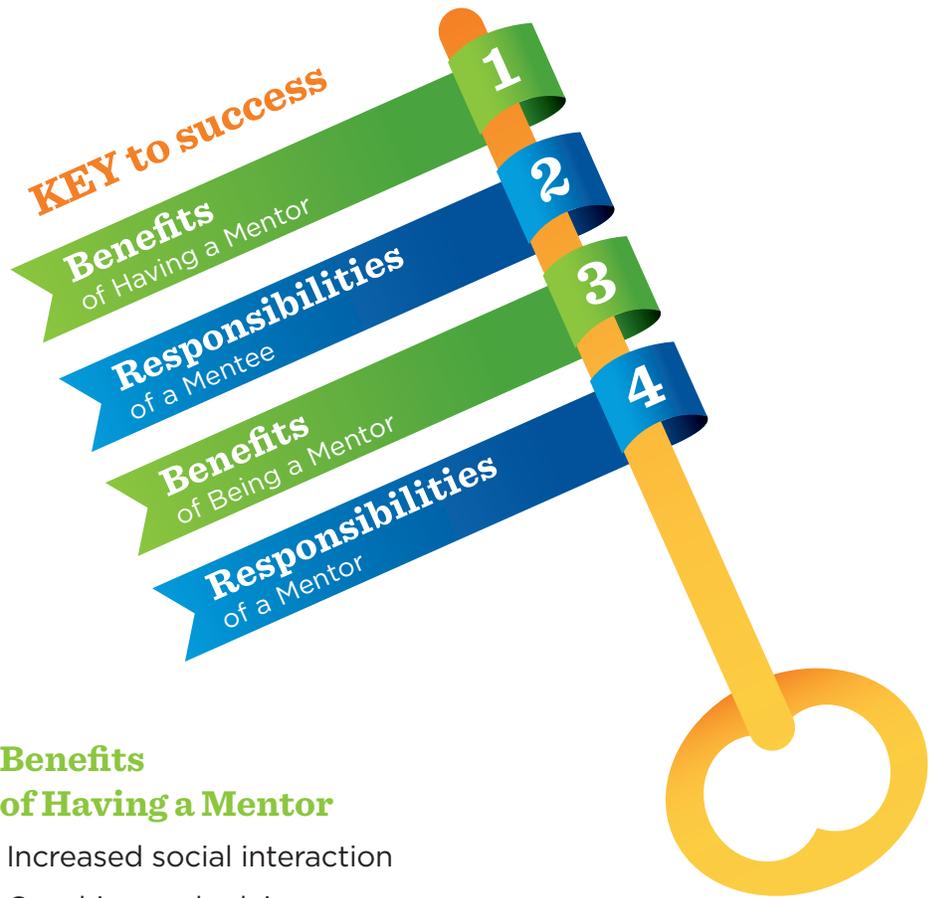
- [Mentoring Guidelines Brochure](#)
- [Bridge Mentoring Program flier](#) (two-sided flier)
- [Sample registration form](#)
- [Sample club information and agreement form](#) (for unit-subsidized programs)
- [Sample unit reimbursement form](#)
- [Expert tip sheet](#)
- [Laws of Mentoring handout](#)



The purpose of the Bridge Mentoring Program is to mentor aspiring new bridge players by guiding their growth in all aspects of the game. Both mentor and mentee must accept certain responsibilities and possess the proper attitude to make the program a success.



Mentor and mentee should allow sufficient time before the game to fill out a convention card. It is recommended that you start with simple agreements and proceed toward more complex systems as the partnership matures. You should spend a reasonable amount of time discussing the problems that came up during the game and analyze some of the hands as a learning tool.



1 **Benefits of Having a Mentor**

- Increased social interaction
- Coaching and advice
- Reduced frustration levels
- Increased success
- Increased satisfaction

2 **Responsibilities of a Mentee**

- Respect your mentor's time.
- Take action on the information provided by the mentor without being overly sensitive to constructive criticism.
- Show respect for your mentor's efforts through behavior and follow-through.
- Pass on the gift of mentoring by taking on a mentee of your own.

3 **Benefits of Being a Mentor**

- Keeps you sharp
- Allows you to set an example
- Shares your love for the game
- Encourages creativity
- Allows you to give back

4 **Responsibilities of a Mentor**

- Give your time unselfishly.
- Possess a level of skill and experience.
- Share your knowledge.
- Commit to play a minimum number of times each month with your mentee.



New Bridge Mentoring Program starting soon!



Great hand to discuss after game.

Contact

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Registration Form

The purpose of the Bridge Mentoring Program is to mentor aspiring bridge players by guiding their growth in all aspects of the game.

- Mentees should have fewer than 200 masterpoints.
- Mentors and mentees should be available to play together at least twice a month.
- Mentors can mentor more than one mentee at a time.
- All participants may choose their own mentor/mentee with approval of the Mentoring Chair. All other partnerships will be assigned. Once you have been matched, you will receive a detailed letter about the program with the name of your mentor/mentee.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

ACBL Player Number: _____

Club(s) I prefer: _____

Day(s) I can play: _____

Number of Masterpoints I have: _____

Check one:

Mentor

Mentee

Unit Championship Game? Yes No

Time of day:

_____ Morning _____ Afternoon _____ Evening



Club Information and Agreement Sheet

The purpose of the Bridge Mentoring Program is to mentor aspiring bridge players by guiding their growth in all aspects of the game.

Advantages to club owners and managers: Increased attendance and no cost to implement and continue the program

Guidelines:

- All participants must be current ACBL members.
- This program is open only to new partnerships. (The club managers will ensure that prior partnerships do not apply.)
- The mentee's masterpoints will not exceed 200 in order to participate and continue participation in the program.
- This program is only applicable at regularly scheduled club games.
- The mentor may tutor only one mentee at a time under this program.
- Both the mentee and mentor can aid in the selection of the partnership. (The club manager will also aid in the selection of the partnership.)
- Only participants that have properly registered for the program are entitled to:
 1. Have the mentee pay 1/2 of the mentor entry fee.
 2. Let the unit pay 1/2 of the mentor entry fee.

Club Responsibilities:

- Accept the registrations for the program and aid in the selection of partnerships. Clubs may enlist the aid of the Mentoring Chair, for assistance.
- All registration forms will be kept on file for future reference. Copies must be sent to the Mentoring Chair.
- Validations of partnerships for purposes of playing at more than one participating club can be made through the Mentoring Chair.
- All participating clubs will receive a unit reimbursement of 50% of the mentor's playing fees plus a \$.50 handling fee for each entry.
- The club owner/manager's signature on this form constitutes an agreement to be part of this program.

Welcome to the program!

Club Owner/Manager

- 1 Treat your partner like royalty. Praise your partner. It increases confidence. A confident, happy partner always plays better. Be understanding; we all make mistakes. When you make yours, you will want reassurance, not criticism.
- 2 Unnecessary conversation is distracting (to you, too — think about what is happening at the table). It is irritating to see your partner looking around the room, bored with the game and talking about other things.
- 3 Unpleasant behavior of any kind has no place at the bridge table. Dirty looks, criticism, etc., make everyone feel uncomfortable.
- 4 Bridge is a partnership game; leave your ego out of it. No one enjoys playing with a “hand hog.”
- 5 Complaining about “bad cards” is useless. Everyone has them at times; it evens out. Sore losers and complainers are not invited back.
- 6 Do not give lessons at the table. If you should be asked, keep the answers short. Postmortems should be held after the session, not after each board.
- 7 As dummy, do not put your cards on the table until the opening lead has been made. To do so gives the defense a real advantage; it tells the opening leader whether or not to lead a trump.
- 8 When you become the dummy, do not ask your partner “to pass his hand across the table” for you to see. It may make partner nervous, delays the game and also forfeits your dummy rights.
- 9 If you are declaring a hopeless contract, look confident. Maybe your opponents will make a mistake. Never give up!
- 10 Pay attention, watch, listen and learn. When you are dummy (as well as when you play), practice counting how many cards have been played in every suit. Start with the trump suit or a long suit in notrump. “Read” your opponents; do they usually underbid? Overbid? Play slowly when they have a certain kind of problem? Knowing your opponents can be a great advantage.
- 11 Although it is okay to “read” your opponents, it is not okay to read your partner’s hesitations or listen for voice inflections. (This is not allowed by the bridge laws.) Bidding and playing “in tempo” without “telling hesitation” will make you an ethical and, therefore, popular player.
- 12 When you are dummy, you are still in the game. It is dummy’s responsibility to make sure that partner follows suit. If partner shows out, you may ask, “No hearts, partner?” Be sure partner plays the cards from the correct hand. Dummy may point out, “You are in the dummy, partner,” if declarer attempts to lead from his hand when the lead is in dummy. Dummy’s conversation during the play of the hand is limited to those two comments.

- 1 The Law of Positive Environment**
Create a positive environment where potential and motivation are encouraged and options discussed.
- 2 The Law of Developing Character**
Nurture a positive character by helping to develop not just talent, but a wealth of mental and ethical traits.
- 3 The Law of Independence**
Promote autonomy; make the mentee independent of you, not dependent on you.
- 4 The Law of Limited Responsibility**
Be responsible to them, not for them.
- 5 The Law of Shared Mistakes**
Share your failures as well as your successes.
- 6 The Law of Inspection**
Monitor, review, critique and discuss potential actions. Do not just expect performance without inspection.
- 7 The Law of Small Successes**
Use a stepping-stone process to build on accomplishments and achieve great success.
- 8 The Law of Direction**
It is important to teach by giving options as well as direction.
- 9 The Law of Risk**
A mentor should be aware that a mentee's failure may reflect back upon him. A mentee should realize that a mentor's advice will not always work.
- 10 The Law of Communication**
The mentor and the mentee must balance listening with delivering information.
- 11 The Law of Fun**
Make mentoring a wonderful experience—laugh, smile and enjoy the process.

Adapted from Mentoring - A Success Guide...
(Wickham & Sjodim, 1977)

