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Chapter 2 - THE MASTERPOINT PLAN

The masterpoint plan is the means by which ACBL ranks each member's accomplishments in sanctioned bridge play relative to other ACBL members. The winners of sanctioned events receive masterpoints in amounts consistent with the importance and size of the events. Members who achieve rankings lower than first place, both overall and within their designated comparison group, receive proportionately fewer masterpoints. Generally, the more masterpoints a member has, the more experienced and skilled he or she is assumed to be.

ACBL awards honor titles to members as they amass a sufficient number of masterpoints to achieve predetermined levels of bridge accomplishment. These titles range from the first plateau, Rookie, through Junior Master, Club Master, Sectional Master, Regional Master, and NABC Master, to the highest honor ACBL awards, the title and rank of Life Master. There are several levels of Life Master: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Diamond, Emerald, Platinum, and Grand.

There are formulas for computing masterpoint awards for all ACBL sanctioned events. These formulas take into account various factors, such as the class of the event, the size of the field, the number of sessions, and the level of competition, thus ensuring uniformity throughout ACBL in determining masterpoint awards.

SECTION ONE: RECORDING MASTERPOINTS

I. THE PLAYER NUMBER

ACBL assigns a seven-digit player number to each member. The member retains this number for the duration of his or her membership. ACBL changes the first digit to an alpha character when the member achieves Life Master status.

Masterpoint awards are processed and recorded electronically at ACBL Headquarters.

II. ISSUING MASTERPOINTS

The result of every sanctioned event must be reported to the ACBL office (usually electronically), and ACBL directly issues the masterpoints won in club games, unit championships or higher-rated events. Clubs may issue Club Masterpoint receipts for masterpoints won in club-sanctioned games. First time new members may provide club rating point receipts and/or references to points won at tournaments. Upon verification, the points won, to a maximum of 20, at clubs and/or tournaments will be credited to the member's record upon joining ACBL.

Clubs must use a current version of ACBLscore to keep track of members' masterpoint winnings. All clubs must send their monthly report by email to ACBL for official recording to members' records. Reports sent in on hard copy may incur additional fees (applies only to existing clubs not currently using ACBLscore). Clubs may still issue Club Masterpoint receipts to non-members and newcomer members as well as any player who requests them. Club managers must record the masterpoint winnings accurately.

ACBL prints masterpoint confirmation notices every month in the member's copy of the Bridge Bulletin, reflecting masterpoint winnings that have been recorded and credited to their lifetime totals during the previous month. The confirmation notices indicate the previous balance, the new credits, the new total, and the tournaments, dates, events, and clubs in which the masterpoints were won. In addition, the non-Life Masters' notices show the red, gold, silver, and black point totals currently held and the points needed, by color, to earn Life Master status. See Chapter 2, Section Two.

III. REINSTATING MASTERPOINTS

A. NON-LIFE MASTERS

Members whose ACBL memberships lapse are classified as “inactive” and do not receive monthly masterpoint confirmation notices or the monthly Bridge Bulletin and may not serve on unit or district boards. An inactive member may reinstate his or her membership by paying the current dues. There is no additional charge for membership reinstatement, nor must the member pay back dues. Such reinstatement includes reinstatement of the masterpoint record, as it was when the membership lapsed.

A former member who has not paid dues for over 90 days, and has become a non-member, is entitled to pay dues that were due and owing for whatever period of time he had non-member status (this payment may be for only those years in which the non-member won points and for which the non-member wishes to pay). Any former member who reinstates for a three –year period will have all unrecorded masterpoints credited at no charge. All masterpoints earned during the non-member period for which payment is received will be recorded to the extent possible.

Any member who pays his dues within 90 days after his membership paid-through date will have his masterpoints recorded free of charge. Such dues payment will be credited from the original paid-through date and no break in membership recorded.

B. LIFE MEMBERS

Life Members who do not pay their annual Life Member service fees are classified as “unpaid.” Unpaid Life Members are active members; however, like inactive members, they do not receive monthly masterpoint confirmation notices or the monthly Bridge Bulletin. Unpaid Life Members are not eligible for inclusion in any masterpoint race or to receive qualified reimbursements to an NABC or any event for which ACBL provides a monetary reimbursement. When unpaid Life Members pay the currently due service fee, they once again begin receiving monthly masterpoint confirmation notices and the Bridge Bulletin.

IV. MASTERPOINTS FROM NON-ACBL SOURCES

New members that have had memberships in other bridge organizations or continue to hold membership in other bridge organizations **MUST** report both that affiliation and the rank achieved. Failure to report these may result in loss of any points or titles won that were not won in open events. Such new members will not be eligible for events or races that are below the comparable rank that they have achieved in other organizations.

ABA masterpoints: An American Bridge League (ABA) member who is also an ACBL member is given 10% of his total ABA points up to a maximum of 200 ACBL red points. This is a one-time award, normally done when the ABA member first joins ACBL.

WBF masterpoints: WBF masterpoints won at the following WBF world championship events not played within the confines of ACBL will be converted to ACBL points for overall placings:

The Bermuda Bowl; the Venice Cup; the Senior Bermuda Bowl; the Rosenblum Cup; the McConnell Cup; the Senior Teams; the Open, Women’s, Seniors and Mixed Pairs held at the World Championships; the Olympiad Open and Women’s Team World Championships.

SECTION TWO: MASTERPOINT AWARD PIGMENTATION

Masterpoints are awarded in six colors: platinum, gold, red, silver, black and unpigmented. The color of each point indicates the difficulty of the event in which it was won, as well as the member’s relative achievement in that event. See Section Four. Color-coding makes it possible to ascertain a member’s performance record in high-rated games.

- **PLATINUM POINTS** are awarded for NABC+ events and include the national-rated senior and women's events with no upper masterpoint limit but not the junior, flight B or other restricted events.
- **GOLD POINTS** are awarded at North American Bridge Championships (NABCs) in national-rated events that have an upper limit of at least 750 masterpoints. Gold points are awarded for overall positions and for section firsts in all two-session regional-rated events with an upper limit of at least 750 masterpoints at NABCs and regional tournaments. No more than two strats or flights of the same event may issue gold points with the exception of bracketed knockout teams. Pairs filling in for one-session of a two-session event receive any gold points earned. Partial gold point awards are given for certain special events.
- **RED POINTS** are awarded for all regionally rated events at NABCs and for all events at a regional tournament when the masterpoints are not gold (see above). In addition, red points are awarded for certain special events.
- **SILVER POINTS** are awarded exclusively in all events at sectional tournaments and also at ACBL-sanctioned sectional tournaments held in clubs.
- **BLACK POINTS** are awarded for overall positions, section positions, and match awards in ACBL sanctioned club games; in all unit events; and in all other levels of tournament competition except those in which gold, red, or silver points or online points are awarded.
- **ONLINE POINTS** are awarded for Internet masterpoint events and are colorless.

SECTION THREE: MASTERPOINT AWARD REGULATIONS

A sanctioned club game awards masterpoints to approximately 40% of the contestants in each session. Section awards for all games (open, invitational, restricted, and newcomer) are based on the number of pairs, teams, or individuals in each group. A complete listing of masterpoint awards available at club games is contained in the charts following Chapter 4.

For a unit championship or higher rated event, the magnitude of the masterpoint award is a function of a number of factors:

- The number of tables entered in the event.
- The classification of the event. The four classification ratings are: unit championship, sectional, regional, and national.
- The number of sessions in the event.
- The masterpoint limitations of the event.
- The type of event, such as individual, pairs, Swiss teams, board-a-match teams, etc.
- The masterpoint awards for knockout teams are based on separate formulas.
- Awards for NABC championship events are either computed from the general formula or are predetermined awards set by the ACBL Board of Directors.

In addition special regulations apply to the following:

SPLIT REGIONAL TOURNAMENTS: Awards for first and second overall in gold point pair-type events held at split regionals are based on total attendance at both sites (either 80% of the

award based on combined attendance or 100% of the award based on attendance at the individual location, whichever is higher).

GENDER/AGE RESTRICTED EVENTS: Awards for gender or age restricted events are reduced to 80% of an open event. If there are two such restrictions for one event, such as a senior women's pairs, the awards will be reduced to 70% of an open pair event.

UNRESTRICTED EVENTS: Two-session events at regionals and sectionals which are unrestricted by masterpoint holding, gender or age will be credited with all tables in play in totally concurrent events for the purposes of computing overall masterpoint awards, up to a maximum total of three times the number of tables in play in the unrestricted event. Two or more concurrent unrestricted events share equally the available tables as above, but not each other's tables.

Unrestricted events of more than two sessions supersede two-session events held on the first day of the multi-session event, and will be credited with the totally concurrent first-day tables of any type, as above. An unrestricted event with a lower limit and no upper limit is treated as an open even when there is no concurrent open event.

At a sectional tournament, one-session events which are unrestricted as above and are not concurrent with any session of a two-session or longer event shall be credited with all tables in play in concurrent same type events as above for the purpose of computing overall awards, up to a maximum total of three times the number of tables in play in the unrestricted event.

Unrestricted events and not similarly restricted events held at restricted regionals or sectionals award black points only. If these events are part of a sanctioned open sectional, concurrent with a restricted regional, silver points are awarded.

For further information about the awarding of masterpoints, contact the ACBL Tournament Department.

SECTION FOUR: MASTERPOINT HONOR TITLES

To earn honor titles, such as NABC Master and Life Master, members must earn a specified number of masterpoints in various levels of competition.

I. MASTERPOINT PLAN

ACBL's masterpoint plan appeals to members because it permits members to know their approximate overall ranking relative to that of every other member. Although a complete listing of the large number of ACBL members is impractical, the honor titles that members earn as they achieve various plateaus of masterpoint holdings serve as close approximations of their overall standing. Lists of the top players in some categories and masterpoint races are published in the Bridge Bulletin each year.

II. WALLET CARDS

When members graduate from the rank of Rookie and are entitled to the honor title of Junior Master, they receive appropriate wallet cards from ACBL. The cards identify players as ACBL members with sufficient skill and experience to be titled Junior Master. Junior Master players may use this title as long as they are members in good standing or until they earn the right to a higher ranking title. When members who have earned the rank of Junior Master advance to the next plateau, they again receive wallet cards designating their new status. Members can print their own rank achievement certificates from the ACBL website under My ACBL (for ranks below Life Master). This step-by-step recognition continues until the members receive the title of Life Master. Then ACBL awards them Gold Cards (gold colored), which announce that they are Life Masters of the American Contract Bridge League. ACBL also sends these members Life Master Certificates.

III. HONOR TITLES

The honor titles and the masterpoints players must acquire to gain them for players who joined ACBL before January 1, 2010 and maintained continuous membership after that date:

- **ROOKIE** - an ACBL member who has fewer than 5 full masterpoints recorded by the ACBL.
- **JUNIOR MASTER** – a member who has at least 5 but fewer than 20 masterpoints recorded by ACBL. A Junior Master is eligible for most newcomer events.
- **CLUB MASTER** – a member who has at least 20 masterpoints recorded by ACBL, of which 5 must be black.
- **SECTIONAL MASTER** – a member who has at least 50 masterpoints recorded by ACBL, of which 10 must be black and 5 must be silver.
- **REGIONAL MASTER** – a member who has at least 100 masterpoints recorded by ACBL, of which 15 must be black, 15 must be silver and 5 must be red or gold.
- **NABC MASTER** – a member who has at least 200 masterpoints recorded by ACBL, of which 20 must be black, 20 must be silver, 20 must be red or gold with at least 5 gold.
- **LIFE MASTER** – a member who has 300 or more masterpoints recorded by the ACBL, of which 150 must be pigmented, with 25 gold or platinum, 25 red, gold or platinum, 50 silver and 50 black.

The honor titles and the masterpoints players must acquire to gain them for players who joined ACBL after January 1, 2010 or reinstated membership after that date:

- **ROOKIE** - an ACBL member who has fewer than 5 full masterpoints recorded by the ACBL.
- **JUNIOR MASTER** – a member who has at least 5 but fewer than 20 masterpoints recorded by ACBL. A Junior Master is eligible for most newcomer events.
- **CLUB MASTER** – a member who has at least 20 masterpoints recorded by ACBL, of which 5 must be black.
- **SECTIONAL MASTER** – a member who has at least 50 masterpoints recorded by ACBL, of which 10 must be black and 5 must be silver.
- **REGIONAL MASTER** – a member who has at least 100 masterpoints recorded by ACBL, of which 15 must be black, 15 must be silver and 5 must be red or gold.
- **NABC MASTER** – a member who has at least 200 masterpoints recorded by ACBL, of which 20 must be black, 20 must be silver, 20 must be red or gold with at least 5 gold.
- **ADVANCED NABC MASTER** – a member who has at least 300 masterpoints recorded by ACBL, of which 50 must be black, 50 silver, 25 red or gold/platinum, 25 gold/platinum, no more than 100 from online play.
- **LIFE MASTER** – a member who has 500 or more masterpoints recorded by the ACBL, of which 75 must be black, 75 silver, 50 red or gold/platinum, 50 gold/platinum, no more than 165 from online play.

Note: The black point requirement does not apply for members who joined prior to January 1, 1999 and maintained active status from that date forward.

- **GOLDEN AGE MASTER** – a member who is age 70 or older and has at least 300 masterpoints of any color recorded by ACBL, or a member who is at least 80 years old and has at least 100 masterpoints of any color recorded by ACBL. On application to ACBL, an eligible member will be designated Golden Age Master and sent an appropriate certificate and wallet card.
- **SILVER LIFE MASTER*** - A Life Master with (a) over 1000 masterpoints, including (b) no fewer than a combination of 200 silver, red, gold, or platinum points.
- **GOLD LIFE MASTER*** – A Life Master with (a) over 2500 masterpoints including (b) no fewer than a combination of 500 silver, red, gold, or platinum points.
- **DIAMOND LIFE MASTER*** – A Life Master with (a) over 5000 masterpoints, including (b) no fewer than a combination of 250 gold or platinum points and (c) no fewer than a combination of 1000 silver, red, gold or platinum points.
- **EMERALD LIFE MASTER*** – A Life Master with (a) over 7500 masterpoints, including (b) no fewer than a combination of 500 gold or platinum points and (c) no fewer than a combination of 1500 silver, red, gold or platinum points.
- **PLATINUM LIFE MASTER*** – A Life Master with (a) over 10 000 masterpoints, including (b) no fewer than 100 platinum points, (c) no fewer than a combination of 750 gold or platinum points, and (d) no fewer than a combination of 2000 silver, red, gold or platinum points.
- **GRAND LIFE MASTER*** – Win a North American Bridge Championship with no upper masterpoint restriction (excluding the Super Senior Pairs, the Wagar Women’s KO won after 2013 and the Machlin Women’s Swiss Teams won after 2013) or a United States Open or Women’s Bridge Championship or a Canadian Open or Women’s National Championship or any of the following WBF events: Bermuda Bowl, Venice Cup, Rosenblum Cup, McConnell Cup, Open Pairs, Women’s Pairs, Olympiad, Women’s Team Olympiad, WBF Mixed Pairs, WBF Senior Pairs, WBF World Swiss Teams, WBF World Mixed Teams or WBF Senior Teams.

* These colored point requirements apply to all players who attained the rank of Life Master after 1989.

NOTE: A member who had red points prior to January 1, 1969 is required to win red or gold/platinum points in any combination.

ACBL gives official recognition to the winner(s) of the most masterpoints in a calendar year by members in the various masterpoint categories. These masterpoint races include the Helen Shanbrom Ace of Clubs, where recognition is given to players through the masterpoint category of 10,000+ who earn the most masterpoints in club games, and the Mini-McKenney, where players in each masterpoint category who win the most masterpoints are recognized. ACBL also keeps a record of the Mini-McKenney winners for each unit.