

# **General Conditions of Contest**

## **All Events**

ACBL events are conducted in accordance with the current version of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge as promulgated in the Western Hemisphere by the ACBL.

Conditions of Contest (CoC) for an event may not be changed at any level of play during the course of that event. Lack of knowledge does not constitute cause for exemption.

These conditions apply to all events, and are available on the ACBL website ([www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)). There are general conditions of contest for specific event types that also apply and there may be additional specific conditions for specific events. In cases where there is disagreement between these general conditions and more specific ones, the more specific conditions will take precedence.

Sponsoring organizations may, with ACBL approval only, amend these conditions for a specific event. Such amendments must appear in all printed and/or online tournament schedules and must be available to the players at the playing site.

The Director-in-Charge (DIC) shall make the final decision on a question of any item in these conditions. Furthermore, the DIC will resolve any issue not specifically covered by these conditions.

### **ENTRY AND PARTICIPATION**

- 1) ACBL events are open to all players unless otherwise restricted or the player is under ACBL discipline that prohibits participation.
  - Non-members, unpaid/inactive members and Life Members whose service fees are unpaid may not enter NABC+- or NABC- rated events.
  - In flighted or bracketed events at any level, foreign players who have represented their country in international competition shall be permitted to play only in the highest flight or bracket. They may, however, apply for relief for cause from this requirement.
  - Players with bridge experience from non-ACBL events must check with the DIC to ensure that they are placed in the proper category and/or seeded correctly.
  - Unless otherwise specified, a member's eligibility for an ACBL event is determined by his masterpoint total (including eligibility points) as of the monthly cycle prior to the event.
  
- 2) Unless prior arrangement has been made with the DIC, upon entry into an event a player is expected to complete that event.
  - Any pair or team may withdraw between sessions of a multi-session event if it has the permission of the DIC, who may allow the withdrawal if there is no damage to the seeding or the movement. Any entry fees paid shall be retained. Such contestants are allowed to play only in side games (no gold points) until the completion of the event from which they withdrew.
  - A five or six-person team may enter a Knockout (KO) at a tournament with one or two of its members not having the intent to complete the event (as

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long as there are at least four members continuing) with the following restrictions: in a seeded KO, the player(s) intending to withdraw must not appreciably affect the seeding or strength of the team and, in a random draw, the player(s) intending to withdraw must not appreciably affect the strength of the team.

- 3) Conformity to generally acceptable standards of decency and cleanliness is expected. Tournament Directors (TDs) may, subject to consultation with the DIC, refuse to sell an entry to a person or persons inappropriately dressed or not conforming to the above standards. Subject to consultation with the DIC, TDs may remove from the tournament area anyone who is inappropriately dressed or not conforming to the above standards.
- 4) Betting at tournaments or wagering on the results of an ACBL event is prohibited.
- 5) Each contestant agrees that all, or portions, of any event may be filmed, recorded or otherwise documented or publicized at the discretion of the ACBL, and that this documentation may be used without charge by any news medium or the ACBL. Contestants may at times be required to play on Vugraph. Each contestant consents to participate in publicity photo sessions and/or have photographs taken to publicize the contestant's standing in the event.
- 6) TDs shall make every commercially reasonable effort to accommodate players with special needs. The DIC shall ensure that no such accommodation provides a special advantage to such a player or significantly impedes the orderly progress of the event. TDs, in providing an accommodation, shall be reasonably consistent with the intent of the CoC for the event. Except for minor accommodations (e.g. stationary positions), the DIC must be notified in advance in order to ensure that an accommodation can be provided.
- 7) ACBL playing cards use the traditional playing card design. Any deck in which the faces of the cards do not significantly differ from the ACBL deck may be approved for use by the DIC. Use of specially designed cards (to accommodate players with a disability), which do not approximate the design of ACBL or similar traditional playing cards, must be approved by ACBL management. ACBL management will determine if and how these alternate decks can be used to ensure that other participants are not placed at an unreasonable disadvantage. Decks which have received prior approval are: Braille cards which have traditional-type faces, jumbo decks which have altered the traditional design by enlarging all pips, numbers and letters or those which use a single large traditional marking in the center of each card. Other decks which vary from traditional markings and or colors must be submitted to ACBL (attention: Tournament Department) for approval at least 30 days prior to intended use.

### **DEPARTMENT**

- 1) While it is recognized that tournament bridge is a very competitive endeavor, all

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players are expected to maintain proper decorum. The ACBL Zero Tolerance (ZT) policy outlines what is expected of all players during ACBL tournaments as well as in the playing area before and after each session.

- 2) English is the international language of bridge. All conversations, calls, questions and plays shall be in English. Exceptions may be made if both captains, in a teams event, or all four players at the table, in a pairs event, agree to use some common language understood by all four players.

### PLAY

- 1) Any margin in score between contestants breaks a tie for qualification purposes. A margin of a least 0.01 breaks a tie for purposes of rank and masterpoints. *NOTE:* This applies to all forms of scoring.
- 2) A player may enter and earn masterpoints in as many sessions as possible while not entered in a concurrent or over-lapping event. Exception: Players on teams with more than four members, or teams with byes, may play in concurrent one-session events. For this purpose, Side Game Series are considered one-session events, with no access to gold points for that session, and that session's score may not be used to determine overall rank. In such cases masterpoints may not be earned in both events. The higher award shall be retained, the lower award deleted.
  - A player who is on a team that has received a bye is considered entered in that event when that event begins.
  - Morning and evening KO events are not overlapping, or conflicting, events regardless of times scheduled.
- 3) Players are required to play each deal to win at all times.
- 4) A pair must have a carding agreement listed on their convention cards.
- 5) The refusal of a player, pair or team in an ACBL event to play against another player, pair or team shall require their disqualification from further participation in the event and the forfeiture of any masterpoints earned by the player, pairs or team in the event.
- 6) Face-down opening leads are required at all ACBL events.
- 7) A member of each partnership must be seated before cards are removed from a board.
- 8) For Barometer-style events, the TD shall, before the start of each round, advise all players to be seated. No cards shall be removed until the TD announces that play shall begin.

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### **KIBITZING**

- 1) Each player may bar one individual (excluding tournament officials, the recorder or his designee(s), or officially approved members of the press) from kibitzing play at his table during a session without assigning cause. Any kibitzer may be barred for cause by the TD.
- 2) A kibitzer must sit at least three tables away from his team. A kibitzer may not kibitz at any table playing boards also being played by his team.

### **ALERTS**

- 1) The ACBL Alert Chart, Alert Procedures, and ACBL Convention Charts are incorporated into this document.
- 2) Players must disclose all agreements according to ACBL procedures. A full explanation must be provided. All relevant disclosures should be given automatically. The proper way to ask for information is "please explain".
- 3) A player who remembers that a call requires an alert, but who cannot remember the meaning must still alert.
- 4) Players who, by experience or expertise, recognize that their opponents have neglected to alert a special agreement will be expected to protect themselves.

### **CONVENTIONS AND CONVENTION CARDS**

- 1) The appropriate ACBL Convention Chart will govern bidding and play methods, as defined by the Chart Usage parameters for the level of the event.
- 2) A partnership is responsible for knowing its methods.
- 3) In cases of misinformation, it is the obligation of the offending side to prove their actual agreement.
- 4) ACBL convention cards or convention cards that are similar must be used at all ACBL Sectional or higher-rated events. The color red on the convention card indicates that the agreement must be alerted but the ACBL Alert Chart is the final authority in disputed cases. Similarly, blue indicates a call requiring an announcement.
- 5) Each member of a partnership must have a completed convention card available.
  - Both cards of a partnership must be identical.
  - If a TD determines that neither player has a substantially completed card, the partnership may only play the ACBL Standard American Yellow Card (SAYC), if available, or other basic methods approved by the TD and may only use standard carding. This restriction may only be lifted at the

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beginning of a subsequent round after convention cards have been properly prepared and approved by the TD. Further, the partnership will receive a 1/6 board match point penalty for each board played, commencing with the next round and continuing until the restriction is lifted. In IMP-scored team games, penalties shall be at the discretion of the TD.

- If the TD determines the partnership has at least one substantially completed Convention Card but has not fully complied with ACBL regulations, then the TD may give warnings or, if the deficiency is not corrected in a timely manner given the circumstances, assign such penalties as he deems appropriate.

### **TIMING**

- 1) Players are generally allowed seven and a half (7 1/2) minutes to bid and play each bridge deal.
- 2) When a pair has fallen behind, it is up to them to make up the time as quickly as possible whether at fault or not.

### **PENALTIES**

- 1) In individual, pairs and BAM events, penalties for fouling a board will apply any time the offense causes the board to be scored as fouled.
- 2) In regional and sectional events, a one quarter (1/4) board penalty for a foul during duplication will apply to all players at the table at which the board was "made" unless the TD determines that there were mitigating circumstances.
- 3) In all events, a full board penalty for a foul during play will be imposed on the pair or pairs responsible.
- 4) Slow play, especially habitual slow play, is subject to penalty.
- 5) No comparison of scores, or discussion of results, is permitted during the course of a session. Violation carries a penalty of one full board.

### **TARDINESS & SUBSTITUTIONS**

- 1) Substitutes are subject to the discretion of the DIC and may not appreciably strengthen the partnership or team.
- 2) A qualified pair not seated within 10 minutes after the announced starting time of a final session will be replaced by the highest available alternate qualifier.

### **CORRECTION AND APPEAL PERIODS**

- 1) The score correction period for player errors expires at the completion of play of

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the session following the one in which the error occurred or 30 minutes after completion of the last event of the tournament, whichever is earlier.

- 2) For TD errors, the correction period expires 24 hours after the completion of the event or 30 minutes after completion of the last event of the tournament, whichever is earlier. The DIC, in consultation with ACBL management, however, may in unusual circumstances elect to make a correction of a director error at a later time.
- 3) For qualifying events the score correction period for both player and director errors expires one hour before the first session following qualification. The carryover score for qualifiers may be corrected up until the end of the first session following qualification.
- 4) The appeal period for a TD's ruling expires 30 minutes after the completion of a session or at the start time of the next session, whichever is earlier.