



American Contract
Bridge League

ACBL Virtual Clubs

Pooling

The why, what and how of combining member lists

Before we begin to explore pooling of member lists, it is important that we first understand why each club has a member list and how it has been created.

With the sudden advent of the need to get our “brick and mortar” clubs playing online, we needed to find a way to allow clubs to be able to price their games accordingly. Some clubs have much higher fixed costs that they need to offset, higher rents, taxes etc. Without doing something to lock down where players could play, we’d have situations where price wars would begin, driving the profits down for all clubs. This is where the concept of creating an include list came from. Your club’s list comes from three sources. First, we added all players that won masterpoints at your club in 2019. This data came from club report data which, unfortunately, does not contain attendance information, only data on players who won masterpoints. We then added in attendance from Live for Clubs – all players who played in your games, whether they placed or not, were added from Live for Clubs data from January and February. Lastly, any new members that joined since the beginning of 2019 that put your club number on their form were added.

So now every club is a “private club”. Only club members can play there – members who are on the list compiled as outlined above.

From the beginning we realized that there would be a need to allow “pooling” of some sort. What is pooling? Pooling is the generic term for sharing private member lists between clubs. There are two ways to do it – more on that shortly.

The most common scenarios we envisioned were things like:

- a club owner that had multiple clubs
- clubs that shared a building
- smaller clubs in close geographical proximity

However, new ideas began to form and there are many different “alliances” happening. The bottom line is, it’s your private club but if another club wants to admit your members and you’re fine with that, then pooling is for you.

Primary/Secondary

This is by far our most common type of pooling. In this scenario there is one club that is actually running games but another club, or multiple clubs, decide they want their members to be allowed to play there. What we do in this case is add ALL of the members of the secondary club(s) to the primary club's list. The primary club runs the games and everyone from all the clubs can play. The entry fees (less BBO's 20%) are all sent to the primary club – just like would happen in real life. They run the game – they collect the money. Any sharing of revenue or profit is between the primary club and the secondary club(s), the ACBL will not be involved (this project and the finances are already complicated enough).

Peers

A peer relationship would be when two or more clubs all want to run games but they have all agreed that they want to allow their players to be able to play in each other's games. An example might be that three neighboring towns want to take turns holding games throughout the week. Club A will run games Monday, Club B on Tuesday and Club C on Thursday. When clubs are set up as peers, every player on every club's list is added to all the other club's lists. As with the primary/secondary scenario, it is the club that runs the game that gets the money from the entry fees.

If you wish to pool with another club here is the best way to go about it.

- Have an email exchange between the clubs, getting agreement that lists will be shared.
- Forward these approvals to poolmaster@acbl.org
- Make sure that the email includes club numbers, not just the names of the clubs.
- We will review your request, analyze its effects, and let you know if the request is approved.
- If the relationship is allowed, the pooling change will update your include list accordingly.