



ONLINE BRIDGE BOARD DISCUSSION

NOVEMBER 21, 2023

QUESTIONS FOR US TO CONSIDER

- Breakout Session 1:
 - How can we use our masterpoints to promote and retain membership?
 - What are VACB games doing to promote and retain membership?
 - What is BBO doing to promote and retain membership?
 - What are we trying to do with the pigmentation of masterpoints for different forms of bridge?
 - How does the current distribution of masterpoints affect our brand?
 - How do we use our brand to promote membership?
 - How do we protect our masterpoint brand?
 - Are we concerned about inflation eroding the value of our masterpoints?

- Breakout Session 2



PAST STRATEGIC COMMITTEE WORK

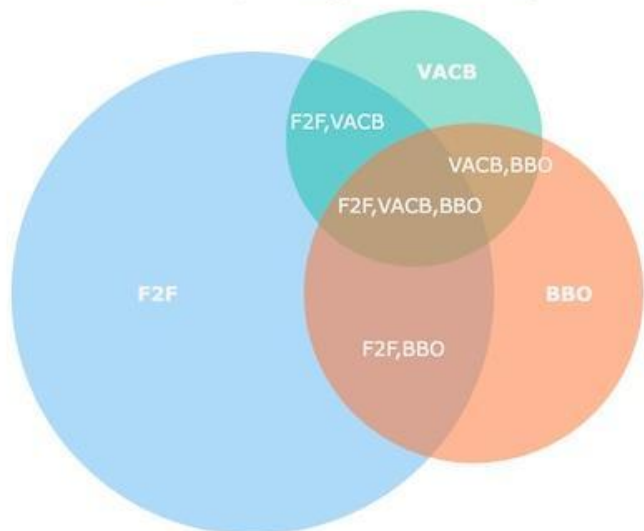
- We taught in excess of 50,000 members to play online during 2020 when tournaments and clubs were shuttered.
- Our membership has split on their preference for face-to-face and online sanctioned bridge
- We can not force players to return to F2F clubs and economically we can not shut down the VACBs
- Success will come from embracing both forms of the game and using all our talents and tools to attract and retain members



ACBL Player Preferred Club Venues

As of: 11/06/23 09:33:56 ET

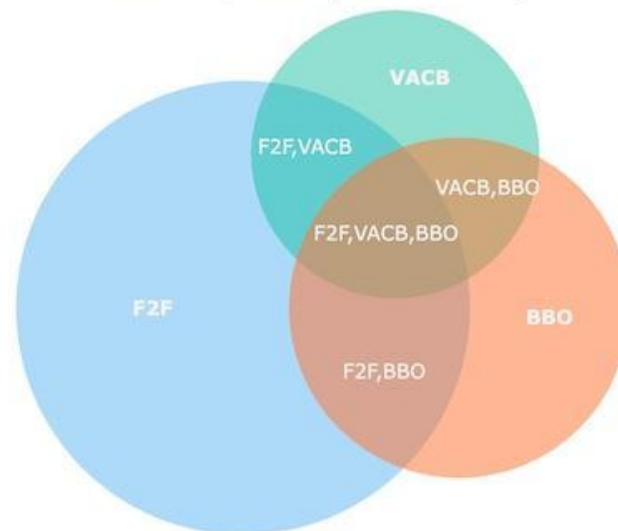
October , 2023 (Active: 82.9K)



■ F2F
 ■ VACB
 ■ BBO
 ■ F&V
 ■ V&B
 ■ F&B]
 ■ F2F,VACB,BBO
 AnyChart Trial Version

Total Members:	132,380
Active Club Players:	82,897
F2F Players:	62,691
VACB Players:	17,716
BBO ACBL Players:	31,077
BBO Only Players:	12,083
Tournament Only Players:	5,251

October , 2022 (Active: 80.9K)



■ F2F
 ■ VACB
 ■ BBO
 ■ F2F,VACB
 ■ V&B
 ■ F&B]
 ■ F2F,VACB,BBO
 AnyChart Trial Version

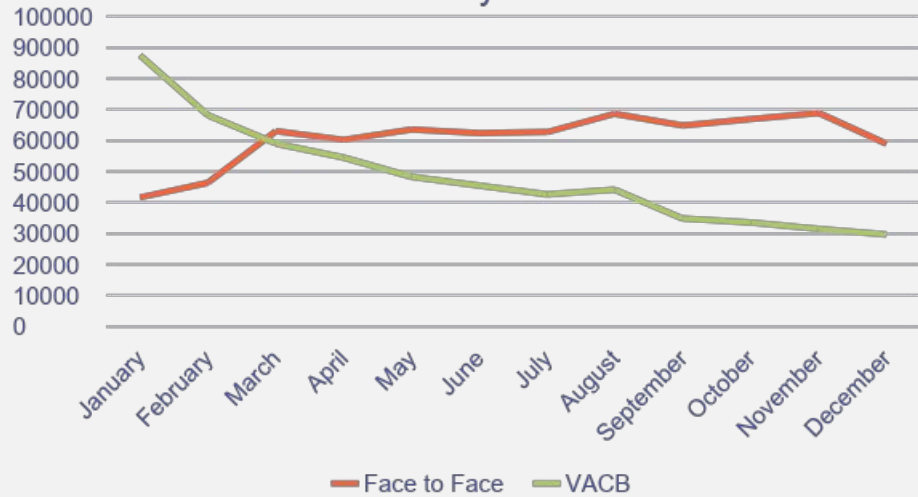
Total Members:	136,623
Active Club Players:	80,868
F2F Players:	56,801
VACB Players:	22,936
BBO ACBL Players:	31,952
BBO Only Players:	12,352
Tournament Only Players:	6,070



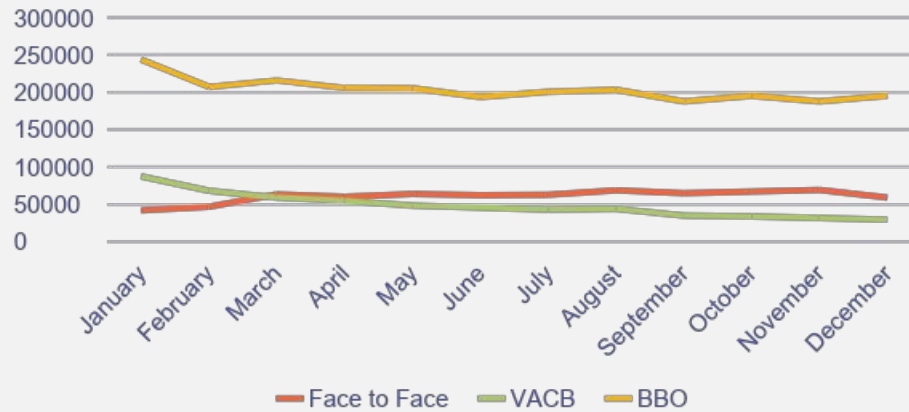
2022 TABLE COUNT DATA

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total
Face to Face	41699	46431	63075	60296	63640	62416	62760	68682	64852	67000	68936	58978	728765
VACB	87539	68197	59090	54554	48331	45497	42684	44159	34836	33608	31472	29672	579639
BBO	243769	207282	216019	205840	205496	193949	200810	203309	188018	195104	187683	195393	2442672

Monthly Club Tables



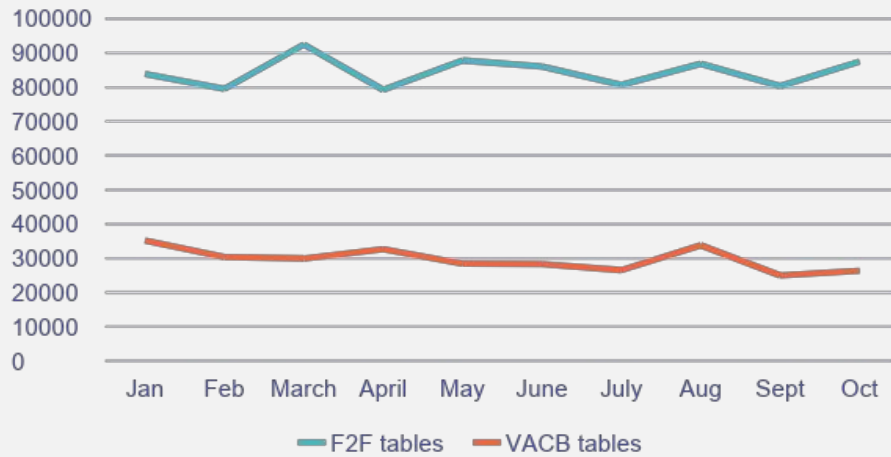
Monthly Club Tables



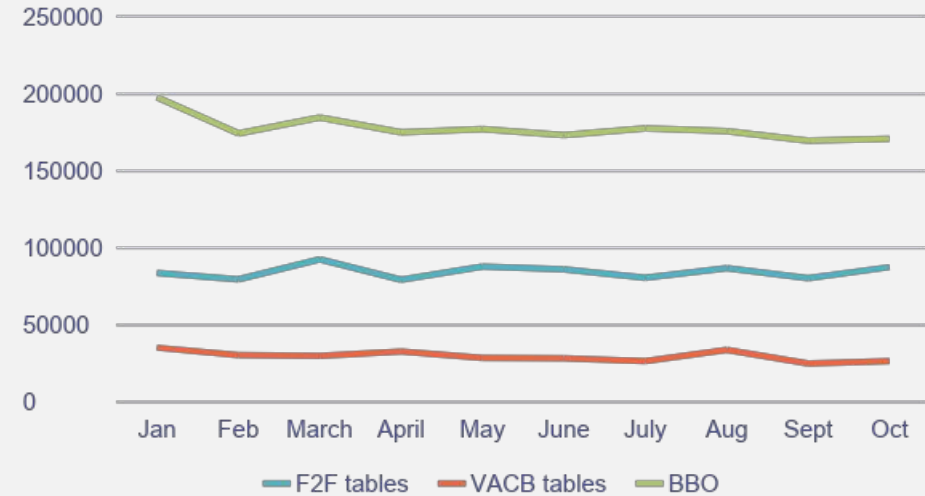
2023 TABLE COUNTS

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
F2F tables	83816	79538	92472	79220	87798	86053	80620	86856	80294	87453
VACB tables	35198	30335	29951	32630	28455	28343	26525	33806	25000	26399
BBO	197720	174243	184618	174915	177016	173178	177454	175750	169503	170757

Monthly Table Counts



2023



MASTERPOINT DISCUSSION

- Since 2000, the “baby boomer” generation has fueled ACBL’s growth. Masterpoints and rank achievement played a large part in membership retention. Members who enjoyed playing helped recruit friends and family. Annual recruitment averaged over 11,500 new members/yr.
- Average age of new members rose from 60 to 65 between 2000 and 2014
- New member recruitment and retention also declined, although slowly through the end of 2019. New member retention was at 60%
- The pandemic caused a major decline in both metrics and we now stand at new member gains of 6500/yr. and new member retention at 45.6%



MASTERPOINT DISCUSSION - BBO

Game Type	Pairs	Robot Ind.	Boards	Cost	Cap for top O/All MPs	Colorless
Speedball	X		12	1.99	2.40	X
Open Pairs	X		18	3.99	4.00	X
0-1500 Pairs	X		18	3.99	4.00	X
0-499 Pairs	X		18	3.99	4.00	X
Daylong		X	18	2.49	2.50	X
Daylong		X	12	1.79	1.50	X
Daylong 299er		X	12	1.69	1.20	X
Daylong 0-20		X	12	1.69	0.75	X
Daylong 0-5		X	12	FREE	0.45	X
Robot - no human declare - 60 min		X	12	1.69	1.50	X
Robot - with human declare - 60 min		X	12	1.69	1.50	X
Robot - Ind Express - w/human -58 min		X	12	1.19	1.50	X
ACBL SYC (robot)		X	18	6.00	2.50 BLACK	



MASTERPOINT DISCUSSION F2F AND VACB

Club Game Types:

	F2F	VACB
• Regular	4.0 max. with increase for N/18 to 6.0 with 27 boards	2.5
• Club and Unit Championship, Fund games, and VACB special events – Silver Linings, Longest Day etc.	6.0 max. with increase for N/18 to 9.0 with 27 boards	5.0
• NAP, Upgraded CC, Membership, NAP District Charity	No upper Limit, about 3 times regular club formula	5.0
• N/18 for F2F special games coming soon		



BREAKOUT SESSION I

- Break into 4 groups with a maximum of 5 people/group
- Select a Chair and a Scribe
- Discuss the questions for 40 minutes:
 - How can we use our masterpoints to promote and retain membership?
 - What are VACB games doing to promote and retain membership?
 - What is BBO doing to promote and retain membership?
 - What are we trying to do with the pigmentation of masterpoints for different forms of bridge?
 - How does the current distribution of masterpoints affect our brand?
 - How do we use our brand to promote membership?
 - How do we protect our masterpoint brand?



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE WITH VACBS AND ONLINE BRIDGE?

- While there are many online teachers, they have not produced many new members.
- VACBs have a strong majority of their tables in masterpoint limited games and are probably helping new member retention.
- BBO/ACBL initiatives contributed strongly in the 1st half of 2023 with both new members and renewals by lapsed members. BBO campaigns delivered 261 new regular members and 1094 reinstatements.
- Online bridge contributes significantly to ACBL; \$1.685 million estimated for 2023 plus \$550,000 from BBO in contractual payments for a total of \$2.235 million. This is 14.3% of ACBL's total projected income for 2023.
- BBO contract ends June 30, 2025 and we should anticipate renegotiating it in 2024.



2023 VACB ACTIONS

- Implemented the surcharge/rebate program which has netted ACBL over \$92,000 Thru October
- Implemented “Community Games” for 0-20 and 0-50, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at 5pm Eastern
 - Quite successful with 20 to 25 tables in each game
 - Getting requests for morning times.
 - Adding morning 0-20 and 99er games.
- Removed the “Visitor Policy” with the effect of better distributing tables across the VACBs.
Reductions in the largest clubs



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE WITH VACBS AND ONLINE BRIDGE?

- VACBs will have around 290,000 tables in 2023. At \$1.10/table that's \$297,000
- Surcharge/rebate program contributes \$123,000
- Special weeks such as Silver Linings and NAP contribute \$205,000
- Total contribution to operations in 2023 exceeds \$600,000
- VACBs also supported our Charities in excess of \$155,000 in 2023



BREAKOUT SESSION 2

- Break into 4 groups with a maximum of 5 people/group
- Select a Chair and a Scribe
- Discuss the questions for 30 minutes:
 - What are VACB games doing to promote and retain membership?
 - What is the future of VACBs?
- Report key conclusions



Online Strategy – Atlanta, GA

Discussion Topic: Plan for masterpoint distribution in face-to-face, VACB and BBO games that is consistent with our strategic focus of membership growth and retention.

Questions:

How can we use our masterpoints to promote and retain membership?

What are VACB games doing to promote and retain membership?

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What are we trying to do with the pigmentation of masterpoints for different forms of bridge?

How does the current distribution of masterpoints affect our brand?

How do we use our brand to promote membership?

How do we protect our masterpoint brand?

Are we concerned about inflation eroding the value of our masterpoints?

What is the future of VACBs?

History:

2020: VACB games were created on BBO Platform to keep face-to-face clubs viable and to give our members the ability to continue playing bridge.

August 2020: Item 20S3-02: Reducing Masterpoint Awards to reflect non-Face to Face Play - In all events conducted online in which ACBL gold, silver or red points are awarded, all masterpoint awards shall be 80% of the amount that would be awarded in a face-to-face game of the same structure, as calculated by the applicable formulas.

2021 Strategic Committee: The Strategic Committee recognized that our membership was split on their preferred type of play between Face-to-Face and online bridge. While encouraging a “robust return” to F2F bridge, the VACB environment would be necessary to support many F2F clubs as well as satisfy our membership.

May 2022: An initial version of n/18 was passed. The final version was passed in November of 2022, applying to face-to-face games only. The club formulas for masterpoint calculations shall be amended to provide that the awards reflect the number of deals played, with 18 deals (the current minimum number for a “full” game) to be considered the baseline. Any game in which more than 18 deals are played will pay the “full” award (as calculated using the current club formula) times a factor of n/18, where n is the number of deals played. This change is temporary; unless explicitly renewed it will expire after June 30, 2025.

May 2022:

The Board determined that the following will be implemented:

- No glitter points or special games will be offered online for the remainder of 2022 with two exceptions. NAP qualifying games may be held online in June, July, and August (paying double masterpoints, half-red and half-black) and the ACBL may schedule two online Regionals that are four days in length on September 15-18 and December 20-23, dates that will not conflict with any face-to-face Regional tournaments.
- There will be a reduction in the maximum virtual club award from 4.0 to 2.5 masterpoints. This change will be effective July 1, 2022.
- For four weeks – the last week of June, the first week in July, and the first two weeks of November – all face-to-face club games can be run as Upgraded Club Championships. Clubs can promote these as “get back to the club” weeks.
- At all Sectional and Regional tournaments, overall awards will be increased by 20% beginning May 30, 2022 and extending for one year to tournaments ending May 21, 2023. Section awards will not be increased.
- The Visitor Policy will no longer be enforced for virtual clubs that run fewer than 50 tables per week. This will be effective by June 1, 2022 and allow small clubs to grow their online games.

November 2022:

Discussion Item 223-ST01: Proposed increasing table fees for VACB games and offering rebates of those fees to clubs with F2F games and up to 2 additional clubs in their pools. This was implemented in January, 2023. Though declining VACB tables have reduced the income, \$92,334 has been collected thru September. Budget was \$125,000.

Item 223-BR04: Special Games for VACBs

Management shall designate one week in each of the Special Games months defined Virtual Clubs (VACBs) to hold special games for the designated charities. During the month of April, all VACB games held during the designated week shall be for the benefit of the ACBL Charity Foundation.

In the remaining eight months of the year, one game per month per sanctioned session may be a special game for any one of the Junior Fund, International Fund, ACBL Educational Foundation, Grass Roots Fund, or a charity, charity foundation or charity fund.

January 2023:

Membership Retention (23E1-03) – Awarding of small fractions of Masterpoints to 0-5 players who play in “Just Declare” Daylong Games on BBO.

March 2023:

Action Item 231-BR02: Online Regional with F2F Regional Effective immediately, the Board passed, by straw vote, an optional one-day online regional day of events that runs simultaneously with a district regional. It will accommodate players unable to attend a district face-to-face regional in person. Participation by the district is optional and the one-day regional would only be open to the players in the district holding the face-to-face regional. BBO will implement at no charge and restrict entries to district members. Revenue sharing will provide increased income for the sponsoring organization which may be directed to a unit if the unit is financially responsible for the tournament.

July 2023:

DI232-BR05: Virtual Online Calendar – The majority of the Board was in favor of allowing virtual clubs the opportunity to run Club Appreciation games in October 2023 just as F2F clubs do and allowing virtual and F2F clubs the opportunity to run an extra “giving” week of Charity games during November and December 2023 with the funds going to Charity Foundation.

The visitor policy was removed and all VACB restrictions were removed.

October 2023:

Minimum price permitted for VACB games changed to \$4.50. A response to the large VACB clubs price cutting to \$3.00.