

Today, our new normal consists of playing bridge and earning masterpoints online. But what will our next normal look like? How can we maintain a competitive edge, build membership and harness technology to position our organization for future success? Task forces and committees have been formed to address these questions.

Recently, the Online Bridge Task Force reported its findings to the ACBL Board of Directors. Its conclusions, recommendations and supporting information are attached. Its report, along with recommendations from committees, will form the basis for a proposal which Management will submit to the Board of Directors in September where further discussions and refinements will occur.

We will keep you informed as actions are taken.

Yours truly,  
Georgia Heth  
President, ACBL Board of Directors

**ONLINE TASK FORCE:  
KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

# ONLINE TASK FORCE

## Statement of Purpose

To make recommendations on the role of online bridge in the future\* (\*Original TF statement: To make recommendations on the future role of ACBL online pigmented master points games, particularly when F2F games resume.)

## Task Force Members

Members: Jay Whipple (Chair), Lamyra Agelidis, Donna Compton, Pete Misslin, David Moss, AJ Stephani, Nancy Strohmer, Silvana Morici

Staff Advisors: Greg Coles, Susie Cordell

Process Observer: Margot Hennings

# LONG TERM BRIDGE (LTB) SUB-COMMITTEE

## Process

- Initial mission statement defined  
*Determine the best approach for incorporating F2F and online bridge to ensure longevity of the competitiveness of bridge and awarding of masterpoints through the ACBL*
- Three Focus Groups held, with cross-section of stakeholders  
*(Clubs 7, Players 7, Units/Districts 7, TD 1)*
- SWOT analysis<sup>1</sup> and further evaluation of the findings supported a shift in vision
- Member & club surveys' most important take-aways supported our findings  
*Online bridge is here to stay*  
*Majority of membership will not return to F2F prior to a vaccine being available*

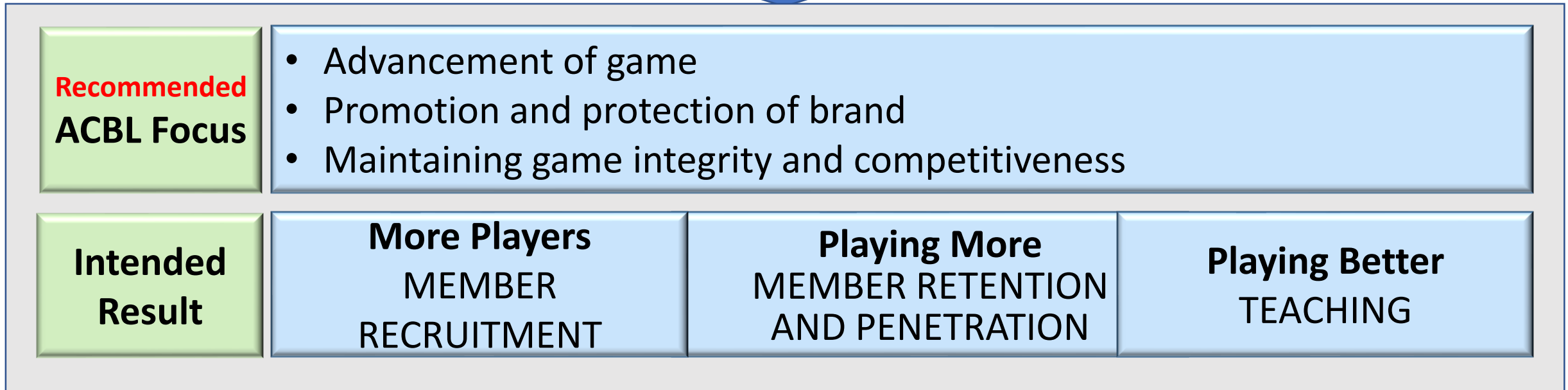
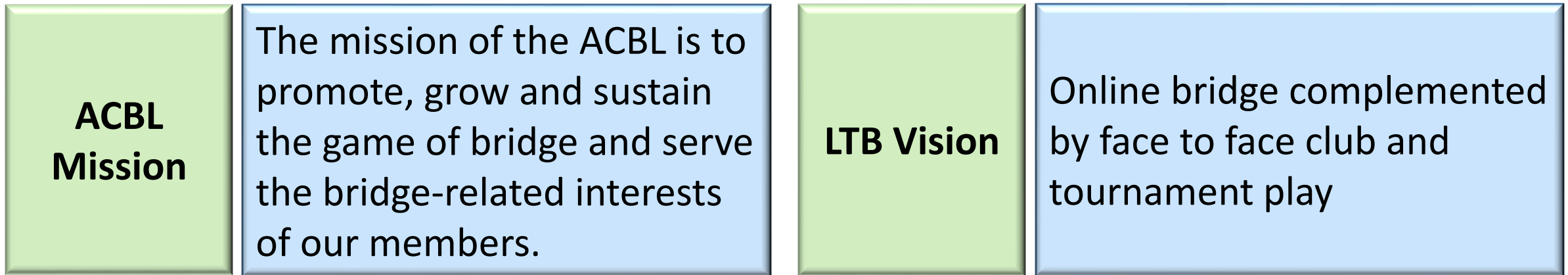
## Realizations

- There is no going back to the pre-COVID world of bridge
- Online bridge initially viewed as an effective stop gap, now seen as critical to the future

## Vision

**Online complemented by F2F club and tournament play**

# ACBL FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS



# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## Business Model

- Address key drivers of recruiting, retention, penetration and teaching by restructuring incentives for distribution channels:
  - Offer trailer interest for all bridge related activities including initial recruitment, and ongoing play in clubs and tournaments

## Teaching

- Transition primary responsibility of teaching programs and planning to the ABTA

## Branding

- Achieve a competitive advantage by:
  - Cutting back BBO pigmentless points from 100% to 10%-20% towards member rank advancements & masterpoint races
  - Cutting back VCs from 1.5X to 1X, on par with F2F, allowing the market to make its choice
- Assert control over our platform through prioritization of its configuration (e.g. player name in profile, remove the BBO number)

## Technology

- Accelerate delivery of product by allowing third party solutions to deliver much needed value while maintaining risk/reward tradeoffs

## Tournaments

- Complement regionally-rated online tournaments with fewer Zonal Regionals
- Transition back to F2F tournaments by limiting tournaments by geography and standardizing new policies and protocols.

# LONG TERM FUTURE OF BRIDGE

## ADDENDA

- LTB Sub-committee SWOT Analysis
- Task Force Biographies
- Other Contributing Members

## **LTB – SWOT ANALYSIS (page 1 of 5)**

LTB – Focus Group Summary

Focus Groups: 3

Participants: 22

Distribution: Clubs 7, Players 7, Units/Districts 7, TD 1

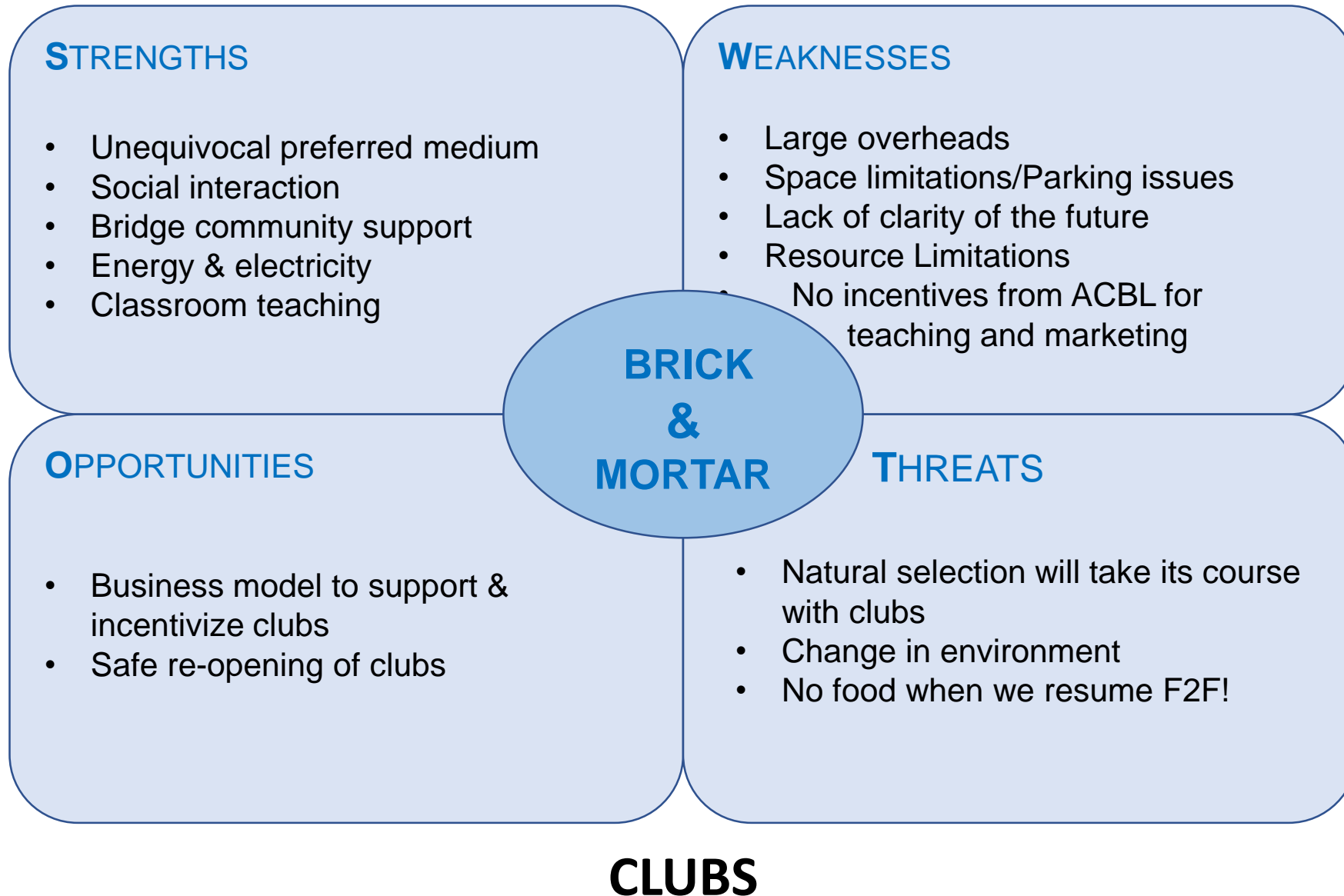
Questions:

- What do you miss the most about F2F bridge?
- What do you like about online bridge?
- Do you see your role as essential to bridge? Could it be accomplished in another way?
- How would you change the way bridge is organized and run?

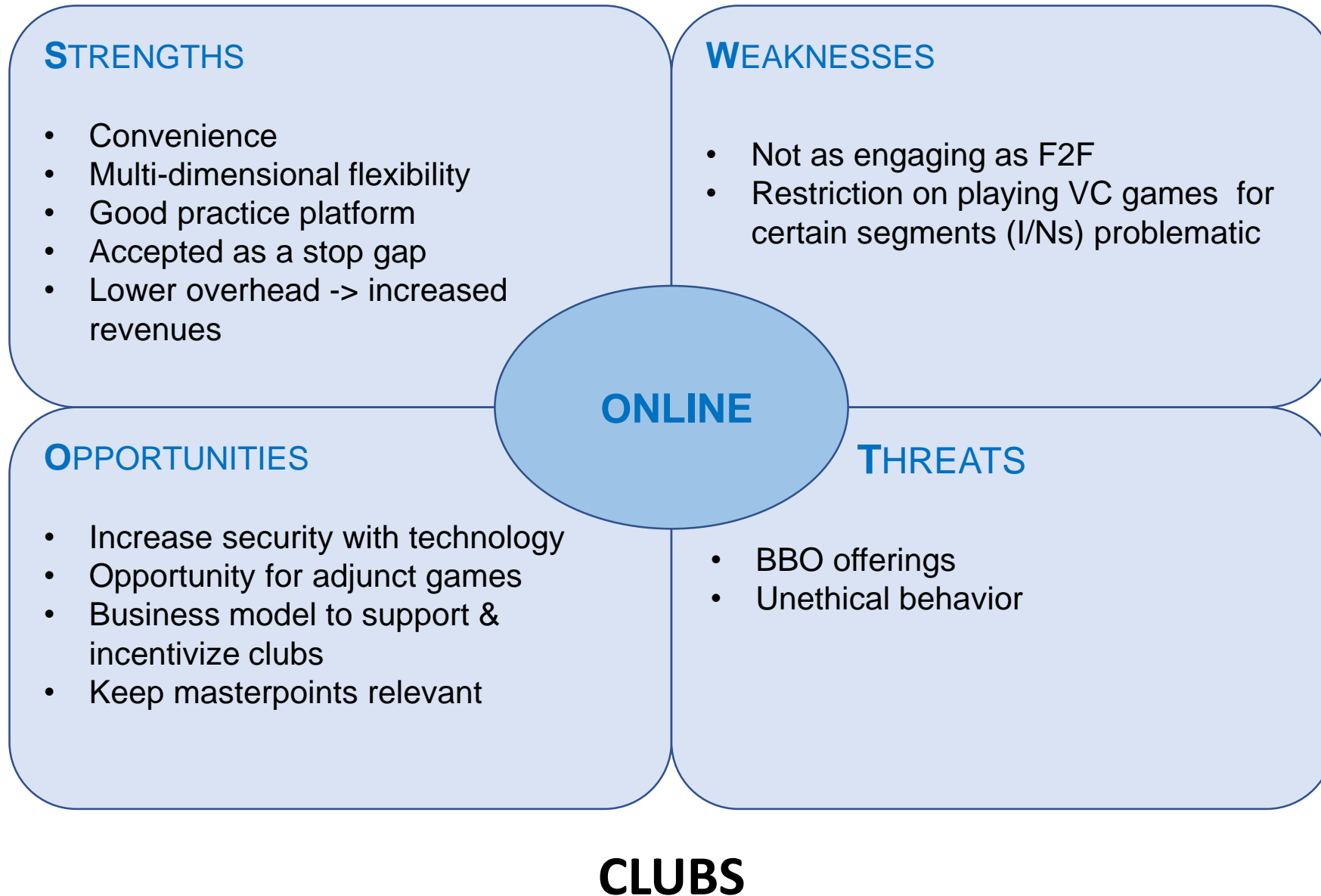
Using a SWOT analysis.....



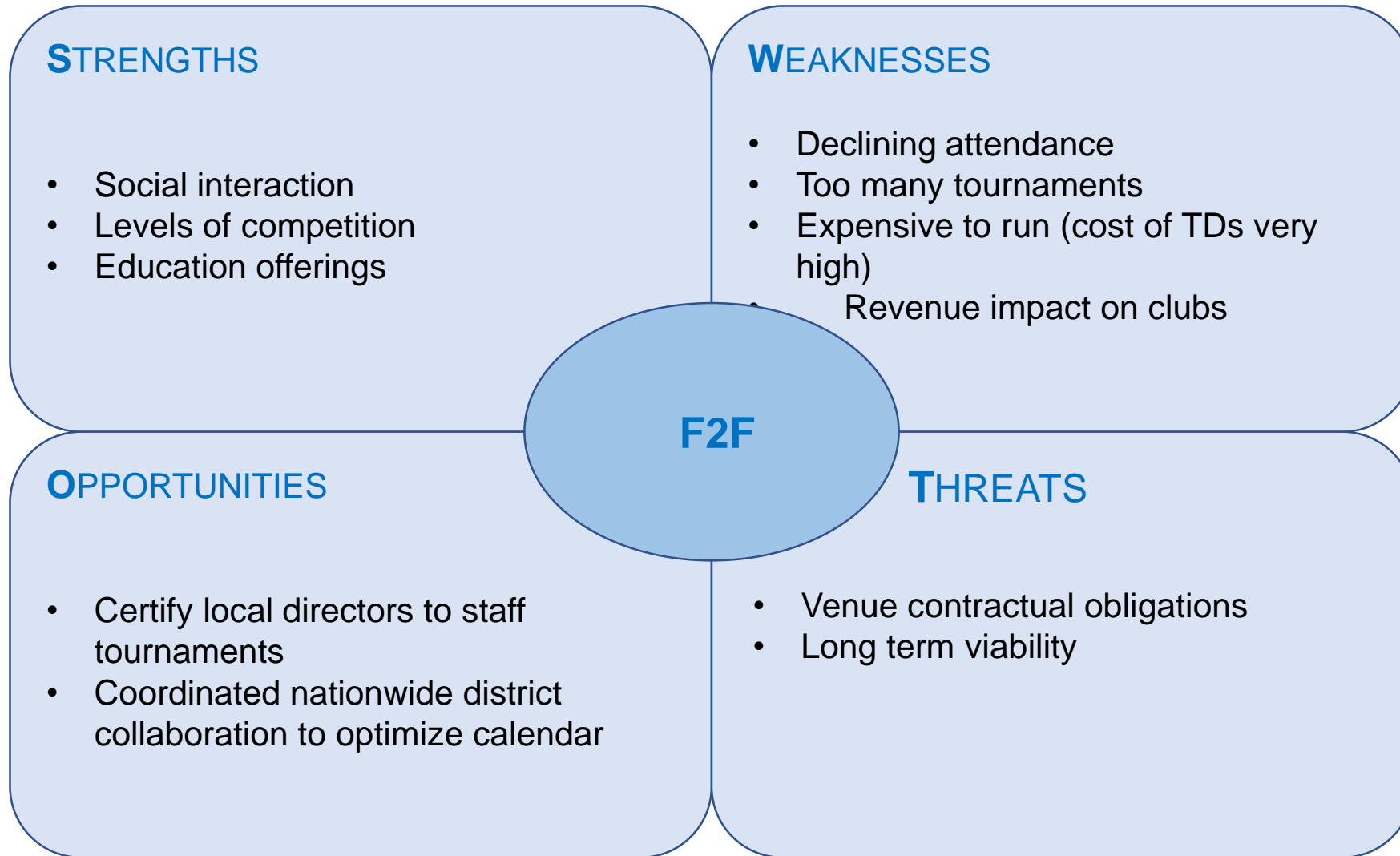
# LTB – SWOT ANALYSIS (page 2 of 5)



# LTB – SWOT ANALYSIS (page 3 of 5)

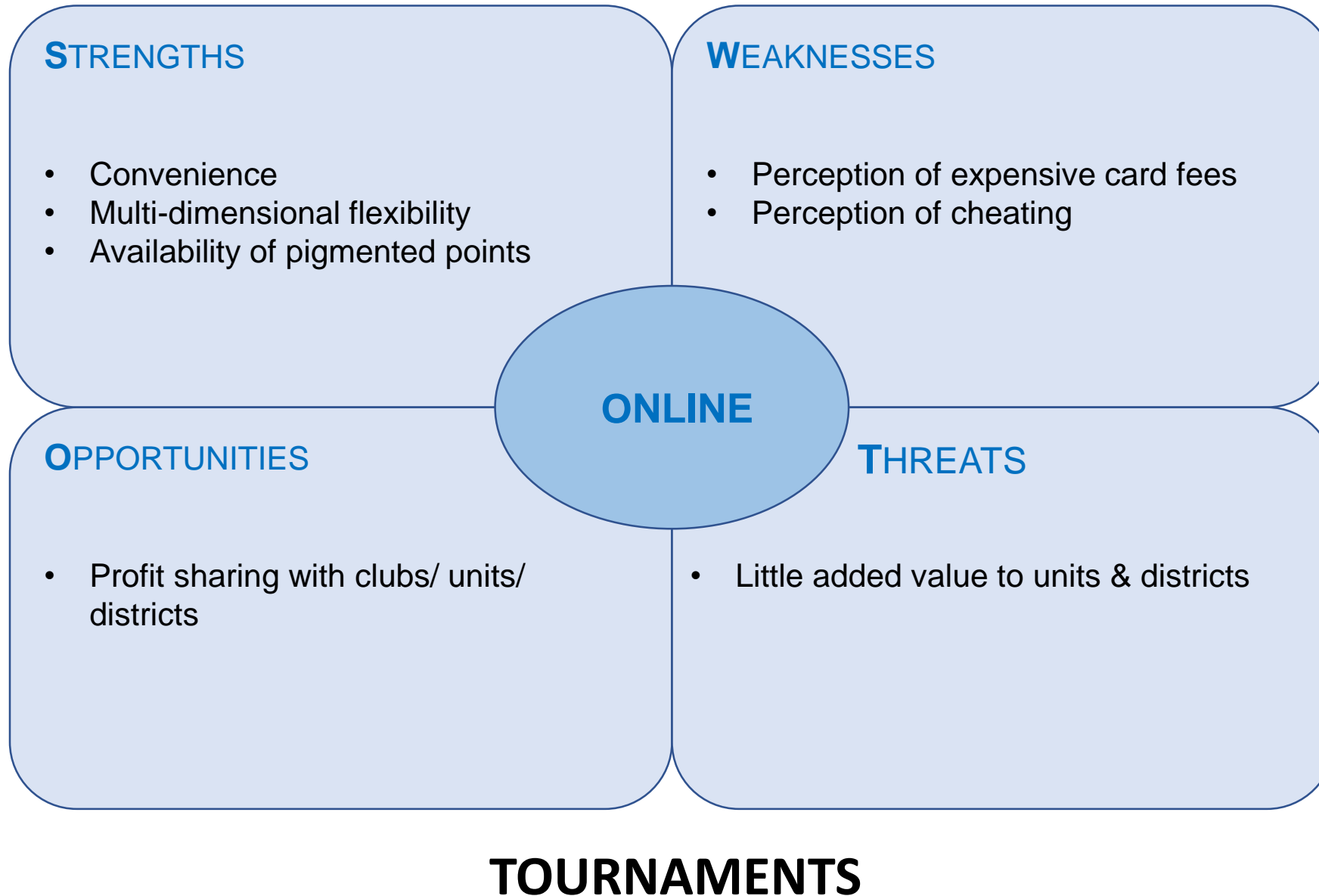


# LTB – SWOT ANALYSIS (page 4 of 5)



## TOURNAMENTS

## LTB – SWOT ANALYSIS (page 5 of 5)



# TASK FORCE BIOS (page 1 of 2)

## Jay Whipple, Chair - (D9)

- ACBL Board (2014-2019)
- ACBL President (2018)
- D9/Unit Boards (2010- Current)

## Lamy Agelidis - (D22)

- D22 Tournament Supervisor
- *D22Connection* Newsletter Editor
- Regional Tournament Chair (2016-Current, running 4-5 annual regionals including Palm Springs, #2 largest regional)
- San Diego Unit President (2014-Current)
- Sectional Tournament Chair (2014-Current)
- San Diego Liaison & Volunteer Coordinator for the Fall 2017 NABC in San Diego

## Donna Compton - (D16)

- ACBL Tournament Director, Club Owner, and Master Teacher (Current)
- Worked as a tournament director and bridge professional throughout college
- Graduated from law school (1996) and practiced law for several years
- Returned to previous bridge career full time in 2001
- World Mixed Pairs Champion (2010) and WBF World Life Master
- Awarded Journalist Award for the 2005 Defensive Hand of the Year (Estoril)
- Awarded Master Teacher by the American Bridge Teachers' Association (2007)
- Non-playing captain for Gold Medal team, 2013 Senior Bowl in Bali, Indonesia; Silver Medal team, 2011 Senior Bowl, Veldhoven, Netherlands; Silver Medal team, 2010 Rosenblum Cup, Philadelphia, PA; and Gold Medal team, 2009 Bermuda Bowl, Sao Paulo, Brazil

## Pete Misslin - (D7)

- Duplicate bridge player since 1998
- President D7 (2019-Current)
- D7 Vice-President and Chair, Tournament Operations Committee (2017-2019)
- Gatlinburg Regional Tournament Chair (2009-Current)
- Former Unit 165 President
- Member, ACBL Tournaments Task Force 2017

# TASK FORCE BIOS (page 2 of 2)

## Silvana Morici - (D24)

- Owner of Sagamore Bridge Club, one of the most successful teaching clubs in America
- Founder of the Alliance Virtual Bridge Club
- TAP-certified bridge teacher, teaching for 12 years
- Member of the American Bridge Teachers Association
- Recipient of the Gordon Duffy Award and the ACBL Nadine Wood Volunteer of the Year Award (2013)

## David Moss - (D24)

- ACBL Board of Directors (2020)
- Began playing bridge at a very young age
- Duplicate bridge player in New York since the mid-90s
- Active in the Greater New York Bridge Association (mid-90s-2019), serving as Unit President and Tournament Chair and President

## AJ Stephani - (D11)

- ACBL Board of Directors (2017-Current)
- Chair, ACBL Appeals & Charges Committee and the Bylaws Committee (2019-Current)
- Runs the largest bridge game in Cincinnati (one of the Cincinnati Bridge Center "clubs")
- Tournament Chair, Flying Pig Regional (2014-Current)
- D11 District Tournament Coordinator
- Teaches 6-8 weekly bridge classes
- Teaches at University of Cincinnati Law in his spare time

## Nancy Strohmer - (D16)

- ACBL Charity Foundation President (Current)
- District 16 President (Current)
- District 16 Board of Governors 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate (Current)
- District 16 and Unit 174 Charity Coordinator (Current)
- Two-time Unit 174 President
- Two-time Tournament Chair, 3000+-table Lone Star Regional
- Unit 174 *Events & Classes* newsletter Founder/Past Editor
- District 16 Jacoby Award (D16's premier Service Award)
- District 16 Star Award (D16's Service Award at the unit level)

## **OTHER CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS**

- David Rodney (LTB)
- Stephanie Threlkeld (LTB, Teaching)
- Doug Couchman (Pigmentation)
- Lee Lin (Pigmentation)