

DISTRICT 19 GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS 2019-2020 CONDITIONS OF CONTEST

INTRODUCTION

The Grand National Teams (GNT) is a grass-roots event that begins at the club level, continues with the District Finals competition in the spring, and concludes at the Summer North American Bridge Championships. Players qualify as individuals at the club level and may form new partnerships and/or teams for the District Finals stage. There are four flights: Open Championship Flight, Flight A, Flight B, and Flight C. The winning team in each flight at the District Finals is invited to participate in the national finals of the GNT at the Summer NABC. (See below a new provision for qualification of second Flight B and C teams to the national finals.) District 19 awards the teams representing the District a subsidy to assist with transportation and lodging expenses, provided they meet conditions discussed herein. Qualifying teams are expected to represent the District in the national finals or, if they cannot, to immediately so inform the District GNT Coordinator. Captains must verify that team members will play the entirety of the national finals; entering the national finals with the knowledge that one cannot compete throughout that event is a violation of ACBL ethics guidelines.

Subsidies. The winning team in each flight at the District Finals is eligible to receive a subsidy as follows: US-resident players will receive US\$2,000 (team total subsidy); BC-resident players will receive Cdn\$ equivalent. This subsidy is paid only if a team commits to play in the national finals to the point of their elimination (or event win) and in accordance with the ACBL Conditions of Contest (CoC). Otherwise, eligibility for the subsidy may transfer to a lower finishing team, as discussed under the section STAGE TWO – District Finals, **Eligibility for District Subsidies** below.

If eight or more teams compete in Flight B or Flight C of the District Finals, a second team in that (those) flight(s) will also be eligible to compete in the GNT National Finals. Second place teams representing the District in the GNT National Finals will receive a subsidy as follows: US-resident players will receive US\$1,200 (team total subsidy); BC-resident players will receive Cdn\$ equivalent.

Precedence. “ACBL SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF CONTEST GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS 2019-2020” and these 2019-20 District 19 GNT Conditions of Contest may be found at the link below. In the event of conflicts between the ACBL CoC and the District CoC, the ACBL CoC takes precedent.

http://www.acbl.org/tournaments_page/charts-rules-and-regulations/tournament-specific-regulations/conditions-of-contest/conditions-of-contest-grand-national-teams/

District 19 GNT Coordinator

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The District GNT Coordinator shall have discretion on all issues of player and team qualifications and interpretation of these Conditions of Contest. In any questions where the District GNT Coordinator is charged with discretionary responsibilities involving players in a flight in which the Coordinator is currently playing, the District Director (if available), in consultation with the event Director in Charge, will have discretion in lieu of the District GNT Coordinator; otherwise the Director in Charge will have discretion.

KEY DATES

September 1, 2019 through February 28, 2020 constitutes the time period for the club-level qualification stage (STAGE ONE) within District 19. Clubs may request from the District GNT Coordinator an exception in order to run a GNT qualification game after the February 28 deadline. In considering whether to grant the exception, the Coordinator will take into consideration the club's circumstances and the potential impact on completeness & timeliness of the GNT player qualification list to be used for the District's GNT Finals (STAGE TWO).

March 14 & 15, 2020: **District 19 Open Championship and Flight B Finals** in Everett, WA.

April 18 & 19, 2020: **District 19 Flight A Finals** in Vancouver, BC.

April 18, 2020: **District 19 Flight C Finals** in Vancouver, BC.

July 15 - 19, 2020: **GNT National Finals** at the Summer North American Bridge Championships in Montreal, QC. (Note: the national finals for all flights will begin on Wednesday afternoon, July 15, the day immediately preceding the beginning of other play in the NABC.)

FLIGHT MASTERPOINT LIMITS:

Open Championship Flight: unlimited masterpoints

Flight A: all members of the team under 6000 masterpoints

Flight B: all members of the team under 2500 masterpoints

Flight C: all members of the team under 500 masterpoints and Non-Life Masters

Flight eligibility is established by players' masterpoint totals as of the September 2019 masterpoint cycle, as reflected in the ACBL's masterpoint run produced in Horn Lake, MS on August 6, 2019. Masterpoints won after this cycle will not impact flight eligibility.

A player's masterpoints won and bridge experience in other organizations will be taken into account by the Director for placement in the flights. The Director is authorized to make decisions on a player's classification.

To encourage increased participation, individuals, pairs or teams are allowed to compete in more than one District Finals flight, see "STAGE TWO – District Finals, **Entry in More than One Flight**" below. Should a player or players prove victorious in more than one flight, he, she, or they must immediately declare to the District GNT Coordinator the flight in which they choose to represent the District in the national finals. This could potentially require that a 2nd place team be the District's representative in the national finals in a flight. That said, the mere presence of a player with victories in more than one flight does not "poison" the eligibility for other team members – augmentation and replacement provisions discussed herein would apply.

DISTRICT 19 FINALS DATES, VENUES, AND SESSION TIMES

Open Championship Flight and Flight B Finals:

Dates: March 14 & 15, 2020. (Note: this event will be co-located with the Everett Unit 437 Fun Sectional.)

Venue: Beautiful Savior Hall, 12810 35th Ave SE, Everett, WA 98208.

Session Times: Saturday March 14, 2020 at 12:30pm & 6:00pm and Sunday March 15, 2020 at 9:30am & TBA

Flight A Finals:

Dates: April 18 & 19, 2020

Venue: Vancouver Bridge Centre, 2177 W. 42nd Ave, Vancouver, BC. V6M 2B7

Session Times: Saturday April 18, 2020 at 12:00pm & 6:30pm and Sunday April 18, 2020 at 10:00am & TBA

Flight C Finals:

Dates: April 18, 2020

Venue: Vancouver Bridge Centre, 2177 W. 42nd Ave, Vancouver, BC. V6M 2B7

Session Times: Saturday April 18, 2020 at 12:00pm & 6:30pm

Note: (1) On day one, two full sessions of play are guaranteed for all entrants in all flights.

- (2) If eight or fewer teams enter in a flight, the losing teams in the day two semifinals may, at their mutual election, play off during the second session on Sunday for additional masterpoints.

Registration: There is no pre-registration. Players' qualification status, and thus whether they are subject to the BUY-IN fee discussed below, will be checked when they purchase their entry.

STAGES OF PLAY

The Grand National Teams are conducted in three stages: STAGE ONE is club-level qualification; STAGE TWO is the District Finals; the third stage is the national finals.

STAGE ONE – Club-level Qualification

Any sanctioned club may conduct STAGE ONE qualifying games during the qualifying period. No STAGE ONE game may be scheduled in conflict with any portion of the following:

- North American Bridge Championships
- District 19 Regional Tournaments
- The District Finals of the North American Pairs
- National championship events of the US Bridge Federation or the Canadian Bridge Federation

Participation Guidelines. Any of four to six players may form a team for STAGE ONE competition. This team need not compete together at future stages. Each member of a team that qualifies may play with a new partner and/or new teammates when participating in the District Finals (STAGE TWO), no matter how many players qualified at a particular club. The purposes of STAGE ONE competition are to provide for qualification to the District Finals by local event play. Anyone from anywhere, including a player who is not an ACBL member, is permitted to play in STAGE ONE club-level qualification games, however non-members will not earn qualification for the next stage.

Game Reports and Sanction Fees. GNT club qualification game reports and sanction fees are to be submitted to ACBL in accordance with ACBLscore®.

Note to club managers: Clubs MUST send the final results of all their STAGE ONE GNT qualification games, showing all players who qualified, to the District 19 GNT Coordinator (contact information above) as soon as their final GNT qualification game is complete. (See also the section Exception for Flight C below.)

District Surcharge. Effective beginning the 2019-20 GNT cycle, District 19 has terminated the surcharge that was formerly applied to club-level GNT qualification games.

Game Set-Up. The Grand National Teams is run in four flights, see masterpoint limits above. In STAGE ONE competition, clubs may combine the four flights into one stratified event. (STAGE ONE games are normally stratified into three stratifications with the Open Championship and A Flights together in the top stratification.) A club may also schedule games that are limited to one, two, or three of the four flights, as long as it offers at least one opportunity for players within each of the four GNT flights to qualify.

STAGE ONE games may be one-session or two-session games. In a one-session game, all teams must play at least 24 boards. In a two-session game, all teams must play at least 48 boards total (but the number of boards played by an individual may vary). The Director must be a club- or higher-rated Director, and may play if there are 17 teams or fewer. Clubs may decide which conventions to allow in STAGE ONE competition, however it is suggested that the ACBL Basic+ Chart be the limit, even in matches between two teams in Flight A or the Open Flight.

The format for a STAGE ONE qualifying game may be decided at game time, when the number of teams is known. Any of the following may be used:

- Swiss Teams scored by Victory Points or by Win-Loss
- Round Robin Teams scored by Victory Points, by net IMPs, or by Win-Loss
- Any other ACBL-acceptable team format

Qualification to District Finals. In STAGE ONE games, individuals qualify within a stratification for the next stage by being on a team that accomplishes any of the following:

- wins one-half or more of their matches in a Swiss Teams (a tie is one-half win)
- finishes average or higher in the scoring system used to rank teams (VP or win-loss)
- finishes "middle or higher" within a stratification in the scoring system used

Note to club directors: ACBLscore® does not always qualify every eligible team meeting one or more of the three specific criteria shown above. It might be necessary for the club to add manual qualifications before making the results official.

Exception for Flight C: If a team competes in a club-level GNT qualification game to completion, and all members of the team would be eligible for Flight C of the District Finals (all have less than 500 masterpoints and are non-life masters), then all members of the team will qualify for the Flight C District Finals – they need not accomplish any of the three qualification criteria shown above.

Note to club directors: For implementation of the “**Exception for Flight C**” provision above, please either (a) manually override ACBLscore® to qualify all players on teams comprised entirely of Flight C players, or alternatively (b) add the qualifier tag 0GC to all players on teams comprised entirely of Flight C players.

Note to Flight C players who qualify to the Districts Finals under the provisions of Exception for Flight C above: At the time of your purchase of your D19 GNT Flight C Finals entry, have in your possession evidence of your participation in a club-level GNT qualification game on a team comprised entirely of Flight C players. A hard or soft copy of the on-line game result showing your name as a participant on such a team will suffice for this evidence.

BUY-IN. In order to gain eligibility to play in the District Finals, any player who has not qualified in a STAGE ONE club-level qualification game, and who does not meet the criteria of the section **Exception for Flight C** above, may elect to pay a BUY-IN fee as described below under “STAGE TWO – District Finals.”

STAGE TWO – District Finals

Eligibility Requirements. A player must be a member of the ACBL to be eligible to participate in the District Finals and national finals. A player must be a member of a Unit within the District to be eligible to participate in the District Finals and to represent the District in the national finals. To be eligible for STAGE TWO, a player must have qualified in a STAGE ONE club-level qualification game, or must “BUY-IN” as provided for herein.

Residency Requirements. A member’s principal physical residence on record with ACBL HQ as of September 1 of the calendar year prior to the Grand National Teams national finals shall establish the District in which the member is eligible to participate beyond the club-level qualification stage. The ACBL’s Credentials Committee may request documentary evidence from a member whose eligibility is in question.

Players wishing an exception from these residency requirements must have the approval of the District Directors of both the District of the player’s residency of record and the District in which the player wishes to play. Both District Directors must agree

for the exception to be granted. For the Open Championship Flight, this written permission (email acceptable) from both District Directors will be forwarded to the ACBL's Credentials Committee for final review and approval/disapproval. If the District Directors do not provide their approval, the exception is not granted. There is no appeal from this decision.

Qualification. To qualify to play in the District Finals a player (a) must be a member of a qualifying team in a STAGE ONE competition, playing at least 50% of the boards that the team played, or (b) must meet the provisions of **Exception for Flight C** above, or (c) may alternatively may "BUY-IN" at the District Finals as provided for herein. Players qualify during STAGE ONE as individuals in the Flight(s) qualified for by their team(s) as well as any flight below the qualified flight for which the player is also eligible. Players may form new partnerships and teams with which to compete at the District Finals.

Entry in More than One Flight. The District conducts the Finals for each flight at a single location in a Saturday-Sunday event each spring, with the exception that Flight C commences and completes in a single day. Open Championship & Flight B Finals and Flight A & Flight C Finals are conducted on separate weekends at separate venues. Players, partnerships and teams thus may elect (and are encouraged) to play in more than one flight in the District Finals. However, if they do so and successfully qualify for the national finals in more than flight, they must – immediately upon completion of the later of the two separate District Finals flight competitions – declare to the District GNT Coordinator in which Flight they will represent the District in the national finals. In this way the District GNT Coordinator can then coordinate as necessary with captains of first place and lower finishing teams of affected flights to establish District representation in the national finals.

Session Entry Fees. Session entry fees will be the same as current D19 regional session entry fees as set by the D19 Board of Directors. At US-sited District Finals venues, entry fees are remitted in US dollars and at BC-sited District Finals venues entry fees are remitted in Canadian dollars. While there is no provision for credit card sales of entry fees, entry tickets purchased via credit card at a D19 regional in the same country will be accepted.

BUY-IN Fees. As discussed in the section STAGE ONE – Club-level Qualification above, to gain eligibility to play in the District Finals, players who have not qualified in a STAGE ONE club-level qualification game may elect to pay a BUY-IN fee. At US-sited District Finals venues, this fee is US\$25 for each unqualified player to a maximum of US\$100 per team. At BC-sited District Finals venues, the BUY-IN fee is Cdn\$30 for each unqualified player to a maximum of Cdn\$120 per team. The BUY-IN fee is paid at the time of entry at the District Finals and is in addition to session entry fees.

As players and teams are encouraged to enter the District Finals in more than one flight, a player is subject to the BUY-IN fee only once. A player who remits the BUY-IN fee is not subject to a second BUY-IN fee when entering a second flight finals in the same District Finals cycle.

Augmentation. Other than approved substitutions and approved replacements (see "**OTHER REGULATIONS**" below), no augmentation of a team is allowed during the District Finals once the event has begun.

Eligibility for District Subsidies. At the District Final, the winning team in each flight (and potentially second teams in Flights B and C as discussed on page 1 in the section **Subsidies** above) qualifies for a District subsidy to attend the national finals. At least three members of the winning team must agree to participate in the national finals, with augmentation permitted as provided for under “**OTHER REGULATIONS**” below. If a winning team cannot participate in the national finals under these conditions, the District subsidy will go to the 2nd place team if it can participate in the national finals as specified above. If both finalist teams are unable to participate in the national finals, the District GNT Coordinator will first attempt to combine the two finalist teams to form a team to represent the District in the national finals, and if that proves unsuccessful will then additionally engage the losing semifinal teams to form a national finals team (two teams in Flight B and C should the district qualify for two entrants to the national finals). If a team(s) cannot be formed in this fashion to represent the District, then no team will be sent to the national finals.

Permissible Conventions. Contestants are permitted to use only the following convention charts:

- Open Championship Flight: Open+
- Flight A: Open
- Flight B: Basic+
- Flight C: Basic+

Game Set-Up. The expected number of boards per session is set at 28 in the Open Championship and Flight A, and 24 in Flights B and C. It is the District’s objective to run all four flights of GNT Finals using pre-duplicated boards. The Director determines the format of the event for each flight depending on the number of teams entered.

All knockout matches are scored in IMPs. All round robin and Swiss Teams matches are scored in IMPs and each match is converted to Victory Points to decide the order of finish. Ties will be broken as described below. (Note: the day one 2nd place finishing team may elect to make itself available, in addition to the 3rd and 4th place teams, for selection by the 1st place finishing team as its semifinal opponent.)

Tie break formula involving teams surviving to the Knockout stage is follows:

- 1) Head-to-head result between the teams
- 2) Overall win-loss record
- 3) Total net IMPs in matches in common
- 4) Coin toss

If two semifinals teams are tied for one spot in the finals stage, a four-board match will be played between the teams. If a tie remains, two-board matches will be played until a winner is determined.

If the two finalist teams are tied at the conclusion of their match, a four-board match will be played between the teams to determine the winner. If a tie remains, two-board matches will be played until a winner is determined.

Carryover. When day one matches are played with pre-duplicated boards and comprise a complete round robin, there is carryover to day two. The team that won on

day one gets 1/2 of its IMP margin if it is the higher seed and 1/3 of its IMP margin if it is the lower seed.

Seating rights. For day two matches, the higher finishing team on day one shall have its choice of first-half or second-half seating rights.

Most likely formats for the event:

Two Teams: A two-session match on Saturday decides the championship.

Three Teams: The teams will play a two-session round robin knockout to eliminate one team on Saturday. The two finalists will play a two-session match on Sunday.

Applicable to Flight B only: If only three teams participate in Flight B, it will be a one-day event.

Four Teams: Teams will play a two-session full round robin on Saturday, with two teams advancing to play a two-session finals match on Sunday.

Five to Eleven Teams: Teams will play a two-session full round robin on Saturday to reduce the field to four teams.

Twelve or More Teams: Teams will play a two-session Swiss Teams on Saturday to reduce the field to four teams.

Electronic Device Policy. Except for health-related equipment, or by permission of the Director, cell phones, audible pagers or similar equipment may not be operated or operable in any manner in the playing area during a session of play. Any such equipment must not be visible during the session and must remain off at all times.

The above restrictions apply to all players and kibitzers and are in force throughout any playing session or segment of play.

A first violation of the above restrictions will result in immediate automatic discipline as follows:

- Ringing or vibrating only (so long as the device is not answered and is immediately turned off and put away): a warning
- Any other first violation: 6 IMPs / 2 VPs.

All subsequent violations: 12 IMPs / 4 VPs per violation.

Kibitzers violating this policy will be removed from the playing area for the remainder of the session.

OTHER REGULATIONS

Substitutes. At STAGE ONE, temporary substitutes are allowed at the discretion of the Director. A substitute player who plays at least 50% of the boards is eligible for qualification to the District Finals. For the District Finals (STAGE TWO), substitutes must be approved in advance by the District GNT Coordinator or the District Director. No substitute may be allowed to play more than 24 boards nor more than 50% of the total boards played in the District Finals. Substitutes at all levels may not appreciably

strengthen the team. No substitute may be used if four members of the team are available to participate.

Replacements. The permanent replacement of a player who, for cause, cannot continue in the event is permitted only with the permission of the District GNT Coordinator or, in his or her absence, the Director. (A team whose player is removed for cause shall NOT be eligible to continue to the next stage and shall be removed from the field by the Director at the first reasonable opportunity.) To be eligible to become a replacement, a player:

- must be a member of District 19
- must not have played beyond STAGE ONE, and
- must not appreciably strengthen the team

A replaced player permanently leaves the event with all masterpoints earned and the replacement earns masterpoints thereafter. A team cannot start the District Final competition with a non-qualified replacement. However, the proposed replacement player may follow the BUY-IN procedure. All team starting members must have qualified at STAGE ONE or "BUY-IN." Replacement players are not allowed if a team has four members available.

Minimum Participation Requirements. Members of teams are required to play at least 50% of boards in each session, except that a member may choose to play one full session of a two-session round robin or Swiss. A team becomes ineligible to continue in the event when fewer than three members of the original team can continue and meet the play percentage requirements.

Augmentation for National Finals. Teams advancing to represent the District in the national finals may apply to augment their teams. Augmentation does not relieve a team of the requirement that at least three of its members who participated in the District Finals must play in the national finals. Augmenting players are expected to be equal in strength to the other players on the team. It is District policy to exclude from the augmentation pool any player who has neither (a) qualified in a club-level GNT qualification game nor (b) played the District Finals (having either qualified at the club-level or having followed BUY-IN provisions). Augmentation requests must be submitted to the District GNT Coordinator for coordination and approval. Submission shall be via email and shall take place **no later than 45 days** prior to the starting date of the NABC at which the national finals will be held. If the District GNT Coordinator determines that the augmentation request is merited, he or she will approve and/or forward the request to ACBL Headquarters as applicable with a recommendation for approval. Final augmentation approval authority is with ACBL.