

# GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS 2024-2025

## ACBL SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF CONTEST

Lack of knowledge does not constitute cause for exception to these Conditions of Contest. These Conditions of Contest may not be changed at any level of play during the course of this event. The General Conditions of Contest for Swiss Team and Knockout Team events will apply to this event subject to the following special conditions of contest.

It is the spirit of these Conditions that the Grand National Teams be a "grass roots" event, with each participant competing in his/her District of membership. Please see Appendix I to these Conditions of Contest.

Each participant in the GNT, beyond the Club qualifying level, must be an ACBL member in good standing. **Only paid members, including life masters with life member status, whose dues or fees are current prior to the Unit stage, may participate beyond the club level.**

### I. REGIONAL DIRECTOR AUTHORITY

All ACBL tournament regulations, though not specifically included in these conditions, apply throughout this event. Prior to the National final, the Regional Director, or his designee, has final authority on any item not specified in the Conditions of Contest.

### II. GENERAL

- 1) This is a team event in which each ACBL District will name a District champion in each category by means of a fair competition that is not necessarily the same from District to District. In Districts in which there are at least eight teams competing in a B or C flight in the District Final, a second team in that flight will also be considered eligible to compete in the National Final of their respective flight.
  - a. If the District Final is conducted at a single site or online, the second-place team will be eligible to compete at the NABC.
  - b. If the District Final is conducted at two separate sites, the winner of each site will be eligible.
- 2) A player may represent the District in only one flight at the National Final. All subsidies for teams participating in the National Final are at District discretion. (No subsidies are provided by ACBL.)
- 3) A District may elect not to name a District champion in Flight A (0-6000).

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4) The flights are as follows:

FLIGHT	MASTERPOINT LIMITS
Open Championship Flight	Unlimited
Flight A	Under 6000 Masterpoints
Flight B	Under 2500 Masterpoints
Flight C	Non-Life Master under 500 Masterpoints

**Flight eligibility will be established by ACBL's September masterpoint cycle. This information was produced on August 6, 2024 in Horn Lake, MS. Masterpoints won after this cycle will not impact flight eligibility for these events.**

- 5) At District option, each flight may be played at one or more levels. (Club, Unit, or District) The District level must be flighted, but at the Club and Unit levels the events may be flighted or stratified. In a stratified event the Open Championship and Flight A must be combined for play and masterpoint awards. In a stratified field at the Club or Unit level:
  - a. All teams are eligible for qualification to the Open Championship Flight.
  - b. All teams are eligible for Flight A qualification with the exception of a team with a member over 6000 masterpoints.
  - c. All teams are eligible for Flight B qualification with the exception of a team with a member over 2500 masterpoints.
  - d. All teams are eligible for Flight C qualification with the exception of a team with a member over 500 masterpoints or one who has achieved the rank of Life Master.
- 6) Qualification at the Club and Unit level is by player, not by team. In other words, a player need not have the same teammates in the District Final as in Club or Unit qualifying.
- 7) Players may qualify at the club level by playing in any District, but only earn qualification in their home District.
- 8) Club qualifying games (if required) may be run between September 1 and February 28; no exceptions or extensions to this date will be granted. Unit qualifying games (if required) may be run any time after September 1 and prior to the District Final.
- 9) ACBL rules and regulations govern play at every level of the event and supersede District Conditions in cases of conflict.

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## III. CONVENTIONS

At the Club and Unit qualifying level, the ACBL Open Convention Chart will apply for stratified games. For flighted games at all levels including the NABC, the Basic+ Chart applies to Flights B and C, the Open Chart applies to Flight A, and the Open+ Chart applies to the Championship Flight. The foregoing may change based on changes in the Usage section of the Convention Charts.

## IV. DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS

Each District shall determine the nature of the event by which it declares its District champions and file its Conditions of Contest via email to [tournaments@acbl.org](mailto:tournaments@acbl.org) no later than September 1, 2024. **Failure to submit Conditions prior to this deadline may jeopardize the District's ability to set its own Conditions including dates and formats of District finals.** Those conditions must include the following:

- 1) Name and contact information of the person to whom questions should be directed. In most cases this will be the District GNT Coordinator.
- 2) Requirements, if any, for club-level qualification. Districts may waive club-level qualification altogether, require only participation (players must merely play in a club qualifier regardless of result), or require that players finish in the top half of the field. **Failure to specify these requirements will result in rejection of the District's submitted Conditions.**
- 3) Proposed dates and sites for the District Final. District Finals may be held between January 1 and June 30
- 4) Format of the District Final, including contingencies for any number of teams in each flight, and the number of boards to be played.
- 5) Rules regarding the augmentation of teams qualifying for the National Final, if such augmentation is permitted by the District.
- 6) Requirements for Unit qualifying, if any. (Unit qualification has become a rarity in recent years.) If a District does not require Club- or Unit-level qualification for participation in the District Final, it may nonetheless permit "qualifier" games as a fundraiser; such games must be team games.

No level or stage may be scheduled which would prevent a player from attending one or more days of a North American Bridge Championship. The National Final for all flights will begin on the Wednesday afternoon prior to the Summer NABC. ACBL

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expects the National Final to be played in-person at the Philadelphia NABC starting on July 23, 2025.

## V. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Only ACBL members in good standing may participate beyond Club level. Ineligible players (non-members, unpaid members, or members not in good standing) playing at Club level will receive any session awards (no overall awards) won but may not qualify to the next stage of the event.

- 1) The Championship Flight is open to any player.
- 2) Flight A is open only to players who have fewer than 6000 masterpoints recorded as of the September (2024) cycle.

**NOTE: If the event is stratified at the Club or Unit Levels, the Open Championship Flight and Flight A are combined (in compliance with ACBL Regulations) to create only three strata.**

- 3) Flight B is open only to players who have fewer than 2500 masterpoints as of the September (2024) cycle.
- 4) Flight C is open only to players with fewer than 500 masterpoints who have not attained the rank of Life Master as of the September (2024) cycle.
- 5) Teams may consist of four, five or six eligible players.
- 6) A player's bridge experience, including masterpoint-equivalents won in other bridge organizations, will be taken into account to determine their proper flight.
- 7) At every level, the Director-in-Charge (DIC) is authorized to make the decision on the player's classification. At the District Final, eligibility questions should be addressed prior to the start of play.

The first-place finishers in the Championship Flight, Flight A, Flight B, and the second-place finisher in the Championship Flight of the District Final earn Blue Ribbon Pairs qualifications. The first-place finishers in Flight C in a District Final earn Red Ribbon Pairs qualification. The top four finishers in the Championship Flight, and the first and second place finishers in the A and B Flights at the National Final will earn Blue Ribbon qualification. The first and second place finishers in Flight C at the National Final will earn Red Ribbon qualification.

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## **VI. REPLACEMENTS AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

- 1) Issues regarding replacements and/or substitutions not addressed by the District Conditions of Contest are resolved as follows: At the District and NABC level, in knockout play every team member must play at least half of the boards of each match (exclusive of play-offs) in order to continue participating on that team for the remainder of the event. In Swiss or round-robin play, every team member must play in at least half of the matches. For the National final, the team captain may submit an application for exemption from the requirements of this paragraph to the District GNT Coordinator who will then submit the request to the DIC of the NABC but must do so (other than for emergencies) prior to arrival at the NABC for the GNTs.
- 2) A team member granted an exemption under the previous paragraph must still play at least 40% of the boards, (excluding play-off boards), for as long as the team survived to qualify for overall masterpoint awards and other privileges. No contestant may play any match after it has become mathematically impossible to play at least 40% of the boards (excluding play-off boards) played by the team.
- 3) If an ineligible player is disqualified, the ineligible player's team will be disqualified unless the DIC determines that teammates were unaware of the deficiency of the disqualified member. Any team reduced to fewer than three original members due to disqualification of ineligible players is disqualified.
  - a) Substitutes will be permitted at the discretion of the DIC. No more than two substitutes at a time will be permitted on a team.
- 4) A team reduced to three members for cause at the site of the NABC will be permitted a replacement at the discretion of the DIC. A replacement for the Finals receives match awards only. In no case is a team permitted to replace more than one player at the site of the NABC.
- 5) When a team is disqualified after the correction period, the disqualified team's rank remains vacant. In ongoing events, teams move up one qualifying position as appropriate.

## **VII. MASTERPOINTS**

- 1) If stratified, the Championship and Flight A will be combined as one flight at the Unit and Club levels. Size and depth of overall awards below the District Final are based on the number of teams entered in each game.

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- 2) Masterpoints for Unit Finals will be as in regular flighted team events even if all flights are not held concurrently. (NOTE: Higher flights will receive the table count of all lower flights even though they are not playing concurrently.)
- 3) Club level games shall award half red and half black points as a Club Special Game – Rating 9. An invitational Club game shall award only black points, at 80% of an Open Club for the Championship/Flight A, 65% for Flight B, and 48% for Flight C. Qualifying games at online virtual (VACB) clubs should be flighted if possible. It may or may not be possible to set the correct GNT strats in a stratified game; ACBL Live for Clubs will assign qualification status based on the correct strats.
- 4) One-session Unit Finals will award red points with a Sectional rating. Overall masterpoints awarded at two or more session Unit Finals are 20% gold, 80% red for the Open Championship and Flight A. Flight B awards are 10% gold, 90% red; and Flight C shall award 5% gold, 95% red at Sectional rating. Match awards are red with a Sectional rating. Consolations of these games award black points at Sectional consolation rating.
- 5) A game at any level or stage may give overall awards only if qualifying teams from that game will join teams from another site or other sites at a further level or stage. The size and depth of overall awards at any stage below the District stage in which teams play Swiss matches to qualify into a knockout will be as follows:
  - a) If two teams qualify into the KO, the award for first will be based on four teams with two overall positions.
  - b) If four teams qualify, the award will be based on eight teams, with four overall positions.
  - c) If eight teams qualify, the award will be based on 16 teams with four overall positions.
  - d) If 16 or more teams qualify, awards are based on 32 teams with eight overall positions.
  - e) In no case will any stage pay overalls based on more than the eligible teams in actual competition.
  - f) The qualifying phase will pay match awards only. Teams entering the KO phase will be entitled only to the sum of all (Swiss and KO) match awards or the overall award, whichever is greater.
- 6) Silver points will be available at any Unit level game played in conjunction with and at the site of an open Sectional tournament.
- 7) Points awarded at the stage in which the District champion is declared are gold for overalls and red for match awards at Regional rating. Swiss team events that qualify to a knockout are considered to be a part of the District Finals whether they are conducted at the same site or not and do NOT award overall

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masterpoints. Consolations of these games award half red and half black points at Regional consolation rating.

FLIGHT	RATING
Championship (Open) Flight	100% of Open Rating
Flight A - (0-6000)	90% of Open Rating
Flight B - (0-2500)	70% of Open Rating
Flight C - (NLM, 0-500)	50% of Open Rating

The following rules apply for all District Finals of the GNTs.

# of Teams entered / flight in District Finals	% of Max Award /flight available for games of unlimited size	# of Overall Places
1	as awarded	None
2	50.00%	1
3 - 4	66.67%	1
5+	100% if 3+ sessions played in District Final; 67% if 2 sessions.	As specified for the type of event, if any phase is a KO, the depth of awards is as specified for a KO event of the same size as the original number of District Final entries.

The award for first place overall for the District champion is arbitrary and is based on the number of sessions in the District Final as follows:

- a) Championship Flight:
  - 2 sessions - 32.00 masterpoints
  - 3 sessions - 40.00 masterpoints
  - Longer events - 48.00 masterpoints
  - Overall awards are Gold. Match awards are 100% Regional rated Red.
- b) Flight A:
  - 2 sessions - 27.00 masterpoints
  - 3 sessions - 33.00 masterpoints
  - Longer events - 40.00 masterpoints
  - Overall awards are Gold. Match awards are Red and 90% of Regional rating.
- c) Flight B:
  - 2 sessions - 22.50 masterpoints
  - 3 sessions - 28.00 masterpoints
  - Longer events - 33.50 masterpoints

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- Overall awards are Gold. Match awards are Red and 70% Regional rated.
  - d) Flight C:
    - 2 sessions - 15.00 masterpoints
    - 3 sessions - 17.50 masterpoints
    - Longer events - 20.00 masterpoints
    - Overall awards are 50% gold and 50% red. Match awards are red and 50% Regional rated.

For all events which are played over at least three sessions, a minimum masterpoint award of 1/3 of the first-place award will be given to any team that advances through 2 sessions to the second day of an event where there was a 50% or greater reduction in teams from the first day (e.g., from 4 to 2).

The winners of the Championship Flight at the NABC final will receive 120.00 masterpoints; the winners of Flight A at the final will receive 85.00 masterpoints, the Flight B winners 70.00; Flight C winners 45.00. For the Championship Flight all awards are Platinum; in the Flight A and Flight B events, overalls will be Gold and will extend to the top eight teams if the entry is 16 or more teams and to the top four teams with an entry of eight to 15 teams. Match awards in Flights A, B and C will be Red at National rating. Flight C awards will be 1/3 Gold and 2/3 Red for the NABC final overall.

For any event played online, the masterpoint awards are 80% of the values listed above. If the National Final is played online, the Championship Flight will award Gold rather than Platinum masterpoints and will not confer eligibility for Grand Life Master status.

## **VIII. SANCTIONS, DIRECTORS AND FEES**

Dates and sites for District Finals should be determined six months prior to the event. These details must be communicated to ACBL (by email to [tournaments@acbl.org](mailto:tournaments@acbl.org)) by September 1, 2024 (along with the District COC) or six months prior to the event, whichever is later.

The director must be a Club- or higher-rated director to run games at the Club and Unit level. A non-playing director is recommended by ACBL, but a Club qualifying event with 17 or fewer teams may have a playing director. At the Unit level, a non-playing director is required. A tournament director will be assigned by ACBL to officiate at each District Final, and at any Unit Final played online. ACBL will attempt to assign your preferred director; late determination of dates and sites may jeopardize the availability of your preference. Game reports for Unit games are to be submitted on the official ACBL GNT report forms, which will be available from the District GNT coordinator. A sanction fee of \$2.40 per table per session must accompany the game report for all games at all levels. A District may add a surcharge for games run by its Clubs and/or Units.



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Club qualifier games must be team games. ACBLscore gamefiles must be submitted via ACBL Live for Clubs. The appropriate sanction fee, as well as any District surcharge, will be charged and billed through Live for Clubs in the usual way.

## **IX. NABC FINAL**

In the NABC final for all flights, teams will play a one-day Swiss event to qualify into a seeded KO bracket. Each Swiss event will be 8 7-board matches. The NABC Continuous Victory Point scale will be used. There may be playbacks at the bottom of the field.

The bracket seeding will be:

Top eight Swiss finishers are seeds 1 through 8 (no shuffling)

Seed #16 will be selected by seed #1 from Swiss finishers 9-16

Seed #15 will be selected by seed #2 from Swiss finishers 9-16

Seed #14 will be selected by seed #3 from Swiss finishers 9-16

Seed #13 will be selected by seed #4 from Swiss finishers 9-16

The remaining 4 teams will be randomly assigned seeds 9 -12

Ensuing knock-out matches will be 60 boards in length in the Championship flight; 56 boards in length in Flights A & B, and 52 boards in Flight C. These events will be governed by the Knockout General Conditions of Contest.

For the first two days for Flights A, B, and C of the GNT National Final, the entry fee is waived.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **2024-2025 Grand National Teams Conditions of Contest**

#### **District Membership:**

The Grand National Teams were created initially with the expectation that players would play in and represent the District in which they lived.

For the GNTs, a member's principal physical residence as of September 1 of the year prior to the National Final shall establish the District in which said member is eligible to participate beyond the Club qualifying stage. Changes in residence after such date shall not change the District in which the player is eligible to participate.

The expectation is that exceptions to this rule will be rare, especially in the Championship Flight. Exceptions must fall into the categories listed below in the "Guidelines for Exceptions". Further, any exceptions in the Championship Flight must also be approved by the ACBL Credentials Committee (CC), as defined in the Codification Chapter XI, Section 1.5.2. There is no appeal from the CC decision.

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All residency requirements and requests for exceptions shall also apply to players augmented onto GNT teams.

The CC is also responsible for clarifying which District a player is allowed to play in when said player's eligibility is in question. When a challenge to one's eligibility from a Unit Final stage or later stage has been made, the CC may request documentary evidence from the member whose eligibility is in question. If a member is unable to verify to the CC's satisfaction that he or she is playing in the District of the member's principal residence, the CC shall automatically disqualify the member and his or her partner and teammates. When a member is disqualified by the CC, the matter will be referred to the ACBL President who may choose to make charges to the ACBL Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations.

## **Guidelines for Exceptions:**

As noted above, the expectation is that exceptions will be rare. Following are three situations where an exception may be considered:

- “Snowbird”. A member with seasonal residences who spends more than half of the GNT qualifying period (September 1 – February 28) in a District other than the District of his principal physical residence may play beyond the Club qualifying stage in the District of seasonal residence. If he chooses to do so, he may only play in the District Final of one District. He must play in that District's District Final to be eligible to play in the National Final. Such a player will not be eligible to be added to a team from his other District. All necessary approvals must be obtained before play begins at the District level.
- A player with multiple domiciles should apply to the CC for a one-time choice of District in which he wishes to play. This application must be made before the start of the event's qualifying period. This player may be asked to document his time in each of his residences. The player must spend at least three months each year in a District in order to have it considered as a domicile possibility. Once a player chooses a District in which to play, he must play only in that District until he no longer has a domicile in that District.
- A participant who is a full-time student, a member of the armed forces or whose employment requires temporary relocation may play in the District in which he temporarily resides.
- In rare cases, a player who is a member of a Unit in a District in which he does not reside may seek permission to play in the District in which he has a Unit membership. Such an exception will be considered only if all of the conditions below are met:

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Lives sufficiently close to the District borders

Has been a member of the Unit in which he wishes to play for at least 5 years continuously prior to the start of the competition in the year for which the exception is being requested.

Must not have played in the GNT or NAP in another District for that period of time.

Must have been actively involved as a volunteer in the Unit or District in which he wishes to play for at least two years. Possibilities include but are not limited to: Unit or District Board Member, Chair of NABC or major NABC Committee, District or Unit Recorder, Tournament Chair, or Club Manager.

Note: Simply playing bridge in the other District/Unit or having a regular partner who resides in the other District is not considered sufficient reason for an exception to the “play where you live” rule.

Any player seeking an exception for this reason must document the reasons why an exception should be considered and send it to both District Directors involved, as described above. This application must be made before the start of the event's qualifying period. The District Director of the District in which the player is a member must confirm the fact that the player has been an active volunteer in the District (or Unit) where the player does not live before forwarding such requests to the CC (Championship flight only).

Should an exception be granted for this reason, the player is eligible to play only in that District and may not change Unit affiliation unless the player's principal physical residence changes.

- The CC may consider exceptions under unusual circumstances for otherwise eligible players who change their District through a change in their physical domicile after September 1. Request shall be made at least 30 days before the appropriate District Level Final.

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## Appendix II

### Conditions of Contest For District GNT Finals Hosted Online

#### **I - General Conditions**

- 1) The event will be hosted online by Bridge Base Online.
- 2) Regarding any of the below, the decision of the DIC will be final. The DIC is empowered to remedy any omissions in these Conditions of Contest.
- 3) Unless specifically noted below, the Laws of Duplicate Bridge, the ACBL Convention Charts, the ACBL Alert Procedures, the Conditions of Contest for the 2024-2025 GNT, General Conditions of Contest for team play and ACBL Zero Tolerance Policy shall govern this event. Additionally, Appendix O for Online Play applies and supersedes any conditions in this document in case of conflict.
- 4) The DIC must be an ACBL Director, hold the rank of Tournament Director or higher, and shall have the authority to assign his own staff.
- 5) The Tournament Organizer will provide a format for the event which includes contingencies for any number of teams in each flight.
- 6) If feasible and except in #10, below: Contestants in each flight will play the same deals as others within their flight, and no two flights shall play the same deals.
- 7) Each Contestant shall have access to these Conditions of Contest, and the event's format (#5 above). Failure to have reviewed these Conditions, or lack of proficiency with computers or the software used by the online host does not excuse any irregularity, or violation of these Conditions.
- 8) Each Team must pre-register by two weeks prior to the announced date of the contest. Late entrants may be accepted for the convenience of the movement and only at the discretion of the DIC. At the time of pre-registration, Teams are required to submit funds for participation and the following information for each team member:
  - a) Name
  - b) ACBL Number
  - c) BBO User ID
  - d) Any special needs addressed by these Conditions of Contest.
- 9) In the event a Contestant is physically challenged, where he is unable to use a computer, and in all cases where a Contestant does not have the requisite computer skills, said Contestants may utilize an Operator to relay calls, plays and explanations thereof. Communication between the Contestant and his Operator is to be conducted in writing if possible. Any notes from a Contestant/Operator

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interaction may be used to settle disputes. The Operator must be named in preregistration and is subject to the approval of the DIC.

- 10) Should a technical difficulty arise, which delays play for one or more matches, play in all unaffected matches shall continue, and 15 minutes will be allotted to resolve the issue before play is suspended. If play is suspended for one or more matches, and in the DIC's opinion, the rest of the contest is unaffected (as in the final match of a Swiss), the affected matches will continue at a later time with different hands than those played during the main competition.

## **II - Security**

The following paragraph represents the minimum security requirement for online play. Districts may impose additional, more stringent requirements (including the use of proctored sites) at their discretion.

During team matches, players will have an ongoing video or audio chat session with their screenmate (North and East are screenmates; South and West are screenmates). These sessions are required for all KO matches and recommended for Swiss matches. This chat can be done in software of the players' choice, or by telephone call; if none can be agreed, the default choice is Zoom. The Director in Charge will mediate any issue regarding these connections, or may waive, at his or her sole discretion, any security provision should this be necessary due to technological or other issues.

Alerts will be given in the online playing environment (and NOT verbally or visually to the screenmate) in order to have a record of these explanations. (See Appendix O.)

Kibitzing will not be allowed other than by tournament staff.

## **III - The Play**

- 1) Contestants are required to post a complete convention card, in ACBL format, inclusive of any supplemental notes.
- 2) The ACBL Open Convention Chart applies to Flight A and the Open+ Convention Chart applies for the Championship Flight. Pairs playing methods requiring a written defense must pre-alert their opponents and post a written description of the method(s) along with their convention card. Contestants opposing a pair playing such methods are permitted to access the ACBL's defense database and keep said defenses open in their internet browser.
- 3) The ACBL Basic+ Convention Chart applies to Flights B and C.

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- 4) The Director must be summoned electronically for any irregularity which occurs during play. Once the Director has been summoned, all play and bidding shall cease until the Director authorizes its continuation.
- 5) Contestants are required to alert and explain their own calls (not their partner's). When one makes an Alertable call, the bidder must give a full explanation of the agreement to his opponents (and only his opponents). Stating the common or popular name of the convention is not sufficient.
- 6) Any Contestant may request, but only at his turn to call or play, information concerning an opponent's methods. Such inquiries may be asked of either or both opponents but must be asked in a private chat. Replies to these inquiries must be given in a private chat.
- 7) Violations of conditions, which make available to one's partner extraneous information by a remark, a question, a reply to a question, an unexpected alert, failure to alert, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism shall be rectified under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge and are subject to procedural penalties. The Contestants must report any such violations to the DIC.
- 8) Any deviation in tempo does convey extraneous information and is subject to rectification under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge. Any Contestant experiencing technical difficulties which may be construed as conveying extraneous information should immediately inform the Director.
- 9) Claims, concessions, agreement thereto and contention or cancellation thereof will be rectified under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge.
- 10) Unintended calls or plays will be rectified under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge. If a Contestant makes an unintended call or play he should summon the Director immediately. As in live play, "undos" are permitted only upon instruction of the Director.