



**Regional Tournament
Planning Guide
(rev. 3/23)**

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Introduction

Welcome to the Regional Tournament Planning Guide. The material in this guide has been designed to assist a Tournament Chair in planning and running a successful tournament.

Here you will find tips for regionals, ideas for bringing new players to your tournament, guidelines for the Tournament Chair and other appointed committee chairs, resources for current tournament information and much more. Check the Table of Contents for a full listing of all the information in this booklet.

If you have questions please email tournaments@acbl.org or call 662-796-7222 and they will be happy to help you get the answers you need.

Tournament Chair

As the Tournament Chair, you are the official goodwill representative for your unit and/or district. Your availability throughout the tournament is essential to the success of the tournament. You will play many roles as Tournament Chair, but being an understanding, cooperative and hospitable host is paramount. Your availability will allow you to:

- Effectively oversee facility staff to perform agreed duties.
- Confirm that subcommittees have completed assigned tasks.
- Ensure proper announcements are made.
- Act as a troubleshooter for unexpected problems.

For all Regional Tournaments, it is recommended that the Tournament Chair have a Co-chair or a Vice-Chair.

Roles and Responsibilities of Tournament Organizers and DICs

The following is a list of areas requiring pre-discussion between a DIC and the tournament organizer. When they are new to each other, these topics should be covered before the tournament in order to ensure a smooth and cohesive operation.

While the final option on many of these decisions rests with the organizer, they should recognize the professional expertise of the DIC and make all efforts to reach a collaborative conclusion.

In unusual or unexpected circumstances (e.g. fire, power failure, impending severe weather, etc.) the DIC is responsible for making decisions in everyone's best interest.

Two Years Out

Sanction Application with TourneyTRAX

Once the date and tournament site are selected, you are ready to sanction your tournament. Regional Tournament applications are submitted using TourneyTrax. The person making the application does not need to be the TC. A new TourneyTRAX user will need to create an account (MyACBL login information will not work in TourneyTRAX). Go to <http://tournaments.acbl.org/UserLogin> and click on the “Click here to register” next to “New User?”.

One Year Out

Submit final schedule of events to the ACBL Tournament Department. Timely completion of a regional’s schedule is critical in this process as staffing, advertising, online partnership desk and other parts of the tournament process require the submission of the flier.

Meet with the facility management to discuss the necessary arrangements for the tournament.

The items on the following checklist should be discussed and agreed upon at that time.

Tournament Site Checklist

- Playing space
ACBL requires at least 81 square feet per table with extra room for director’s tables, water stands, book vendors, etc. as needed. A copy of the projected playing area should be sent to the DIC. If there are any changes, a revised copy of the floor plan should be sent to the DIC of the tournament.
- Parking
Parking options should be evaluated. Cost, distance, handicap accessibility, etc.
- Lighting
Adequate lighting is required. (At least 20-foot candles of illumination 30 inches above the floor are needed for all tables). Additional lighting may be necessary, particularly at the director’s table.
- Tables and chairs
Arrange for table and/or chair rentals if necessary.
- Smoking
Areas for smoking must conform to local and state law.
- Extra tables
Six-foot and eight-foot tables are required for directors, partnership desk, welcome desk, beverage stations, etc.
- Director’s office
A room that can be locked is needed for supplies and the director’s office. This room could also be used for board

duplication.

Microphones

May be needed, especially in large rooms.

Coat racks

Either coat racks or a check room must be available, especially in cold weather.

Mirrors

Any mirrors in the playing room must be covered.

Power

There needs to be power outlets for the director's table and for time clocks.

Trash

Large trash containers need to be plentiful throughout the playing rooms.

Wall space

If the facility does not allow for hanging recaps and posters on the walls, easels or push-pin boards must be provided.

Vendors

If the tournament has vendors, space needs to be provided.

Tournament desks

Determine where the desks for prizes, welcome, partnerships, I/N (Intermediate/Newcomers) and information will be located.

Signage

Signage will be required for the functional areas of the tournament: e.g. Welcome Desks, Partnership, pair and team entries and stanchions (the stands that support the alphabetical letters that designate playing areas).

Bathrooms

Must be close, plentiful, and clean.

Pre-paid Entry and Cashless Entry Program

The DIC and TC need to discuss payment options such as checks, cash, etc.

Ten Months Out

To run a successful tournament, the Tournament Chair must have an effective team of volunteers for committees. Now is the time to appoint Tournament Committee Chairs.

Increasingly, tournaments are seeking sponsors for tournaments and individual events. The chair, the publicity and promotion committee or a special sub-committee may handle sponsorship. All committee chairs should report to whoever is in charge of sponsorship before seeking donations or giveaways from local businesses so that these efforts aren't duplicated.

At smaller tournaments the Tournament Chair may serve in more than one capacity, but should not try to do everything. The following committees are suggested for regionals:

- ♣ Welcome/Information
- ♣ Publicity and Promotion
- ♣ Partnership
- ♣ Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N)
- ♣ Conduct and Ethics and Tournament Appeals
- ♣ Caddies
- ♣ Prizes
- ♣ Daily Bulletin

The following pages contain guidelines for the committees listed above.

See Appendix for specific duties of the above-mentioned committees.

Six Months to One Day Out

Six Months Out

- Hold a meeting with the subcommittee chairs for a progress report.
- Arrangements for the tournament should be reconfirmed with the management of the tournament site and host hotel.

Five Months Out

Tournament Supplies

- If you are not providing your own supplies, check with the DIC to make an arrangement for ordering.
- If the unit/district is providing its own supplies, an inventory should be taken at this time. Order any additional supplies needed from the supply company of your choice.
- Hand records. Normally, the DIC or another supply-carrying director will bring the required hand records and printouts to the tournament.
- Time clocks, bidding boxes, and Bridgemates must be provided by the sponsoring organization.

Four Months Out

- The Tournament Chair is notified by the DIC of the staff assigned for the tournament, their sessions and lodging requirements. Reservations should be made for the specific staff members and committee members who will be staying at the host hotel. If the hotel has provided any free rooms, it is often a good idea to assign these rooms to staff members rather than committee members since the staff will generally spend more nights at the hotel.

Three Months Out

- Check with tournament site management. It is important to reconfirm all arrangements. All sectional and regional tournaments for which the ACBL issues a sanction are covered under a general liability and property damage policy. A certificate of coverage can be obtained by completing this [form](https://fs3.formsite.com/acbl/form632296545/index.html) (https://fs3.formsite.com/acbl/form632296545/index.html). (recommended to obtain this certificate and have it on hand)
- The Tournament Chair should schedule a meeting with subcommittee chairs for an official progress report.
- Discuss entry selling with DIC (credit cards/checks/cash/etc.)

Two Weeks Out

- Get names of committee members who will be working during the tournament and arrange to have badges made for everyone.

Twelve Days Out

- Make sure all supplies are on hand and available to take to the tournament site.
- If any items are to be shipped to the site, check with the site for storage and delivery fees.

Five Days Out

- Meet with subcommittees to receive progress reports and press for action on anything behind schedule.
- Contact the management of your tournament site to review all arrangements. See that the hotel desk and switchboard have a program for your tournament so that they can answer questions accurately and put proper information on hotel bulletin boards. Stress the need for ice water and numerous trash receptacles in the playing area.
- Discuss all items again that were originally on the one-year-out checklist.

One Day Out

- The DIC and some of the staff will arrive the day before the tournament begins.
- Arrange a meeting to discuss any problems, ideas or just to get to know each other.
- Confirm conditions of contest with DIC.
- Review room setup and location of the various tournament desks and bookstore. The DIC can give instructions to the management of the site for any necessary changes and adjustments.
- Review the tournament program and advertised conditions.
- Introduce the site management team to the DIC. Since the DIC will now be working with you, it will be very helpful if he or she knows the hotel personnel. It is recommended that only the DIC or TC can authorize changes.
 - For a larger tournament, the hotel management will normally generate an internal memorandum that states special instructions for their staff for the tournament and specifies all details of special arrangements. It would be helpful for the DIC to have a copy of this information.

Tournament Checklist

Daily Tournament Checklist

Here is a list of the things the Tournament Chair should check each day of the tournament. You may want to print and date a new checklist for each day of the tournament to assure nothing gets missed.

- See that the bulletin boards have the proper information concerning events and starting times.
- Ask for a listing if the property has a closed-circuit TV channel for daily activities.
- Inspect the tournament site (well before game time) for proper setup of tables.
- See that the Welcome Desk (Registration) and Partnership Desk are properly staffed.
- Check daily arrangements with the facility concerning refreshments and other items.
- Trash receptacles are available.
- Check drinking water supply and stations, cups, etc.
- Be a host, talk with the players (especially in the I/N area), see if they are pleased, try to accommodate specific requests and correct specific complaints.
- Inspect restrooms for cleanliness and maintenance.
- Ask the DIC to make proper announcements concerning Zero Tolerance, cellphones, hospitality services, (parking discounts, aspirins, menus, etc.)

Final Session of the Tournament Checklist

- Review the final financial report with the DIC.
- Have cash available for gratuities for site personnel.

After Tournament Checklist

- Settle finances with the tournament site. Be certain to get a receipt.
- Collect your lists of winners from the DIC.
- Hold a post-tournament meeting with subcommittee chairs for evaluation and reports.
- Write a final report on the tournament to be presented to the unit/district board with recommendations and comments.
- Remember to say "thank you" to your helpers. Be generous with appreciation and pass along compliments to your workers. If you can, drop a brief thank-you note to everyone who helped. These people volunteered their time, just as you did. Knowing that their efforts were appreciated will mean a great deal to them.
- Help the I/N Committee follow up with mailings to the new players who have participated in the tournament. (If you can, send a free play to a unit game or a club newcomer game as a "thank you" for attending the tournament.)

Appendices

Welcome Committee (Registration, Greeters, Hospitality, Info)

The main responsibility of the Welcome Committee is to welcome the players to the tournament and to staff the reception/information table at the tournament.

Ask local bridge teachers and club owners to assist the welcoming committee. Newcomers like to see a familiar face, and the opportunity to sign up new members can be a nice perk for a club manager who has closed a club for the duration of the tournament.

The Welcome desk should provide local information about bridge lessons, club games, hotels and restaurants. It's a good idea to have membership forms available.

The people staffing the welcome desk at the tournament need to be able to answer all types of questions. If they can't answer a player's question, they need to find the answer and get back to the player as soon as possible.

This committee must start by determining its specific duties.

- ♥ Provide a space for fliers from local clubs, teachers and upcoming tournaments.
- ♥ Validate parking tickets.
- ♥ Act as a center for lost and found items (especially misplaced convention cards).

Publicity Committee

The main responsibility of the Publicity Committee is to get the word out about the tournament and to encourage as many people as possible to attend.

No tournament publicity should occur until the tournament is sanctioned and the schedule is approved by ACBL.

Funding for publicity for newcomer activities may be available through the ACBL Cooperative Advertising Program (CAP).

Take advantage of the discount at Office Max and Office Depot for fliers and other copying by creating an Abenity account through your ACBL Membership.

Ways to Publicize Your Tournament

- ♠ Make arrangements for fliers to be printed and distributed locally and sent to nearby clubs in other units.
- ♠ Place an ad in the ACBL Bridge Bulletin or other bridge-related publications.
- ♠ Coordinate committee assignments to ensure that all local clubs are visited and urged to support the tournament.
- ♠ Coordinate with the Chair of the I/N Committee. Special inserts or fliers should be sent to the I/N players to inform them of events and activities especially for them. This group is more likely to attend if you offer a full schedule of limited games.

Partnership Committee

The main responsibility of the Partnership Committee is to find a partner or teammates for anyone attending the tournament. Finding a compatible partner can make all of the difference in someone playing at your tournament and attending future tournaments.

All tournament advertising should contain the name, phone number and email address of the Partnership Committee Chair. Many out-of-town players will contact the chair well in advance of the tournament to arrange partnerships and teammates.

ACBL's online Partnership Desk is available to all ACBL members for all tournaments and clubs. The ACBL Partnership Desk allows individuals to post requests and respond to the requests of others via a messaging system.

The Partnership Committee can take advantage of the online Partnership Desk by viewing the requests that have been posted for their tournament and matching those individuals with players who have contacted the Partnership Committee directly; however, the tournament can benefit from the matches made on the online Partnership Desk even without the involvement of the Partnership Committee.

On-site Partnership Desk

- ♣ Arrange for staffing of the Partnership Desk. One or more people need to be available at the Partnership Desk one hour before all sessions. It is especially important to have someone staff the desk prior to the start of any event.
- ♣ Make sure the desk is stocked with player information cards. The card should include the player's name, phone number, number of masterpoints, system and events for which a partner is needed. Since you are collecting information, it wouldn't hurt to ask for an email address in case you want to do some follow-up work.
- ♣ Arrange for standbys at a range of masterpoint levels who are willing to fill in. Such a standby should not be charged an entry fee.
- ♣ Maintain a separate Partnership Desk for I/N players at a large tournament.
- ♣ Always **guarantee** partners for newcomers who check in one hour before the game. It is an incentive for new players to attend your tournament when they know that you will help them get a partner. Be sure to put this information in your tournament advertising and deliver!

Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) Committee

The main responsibility of this committee is to work with the area teachers and club managers to bring newer (and first-time duplicate) players to the tournament.

Work with the Tournament Chair

- ♥ Offer a full schedule of events for I/N players, with strata appropriate for your tournament.
- ♥ Obtain a separate playing room (or specific area of the main room) for the I/N games.

Prize — New players may appreciate trophies.

Partnership — New players may be shy. Set up a Partnership Desk in the area where they are going to play. Guarantee partners for players who arrive one hour before game time.

Promotion — Send fliers to the I/N players in the unit and surrounding area. All advertising should include the fact that partners will be guaranteed. Contact teachers and club managers. Plan an I/N reception or party to welcome the newer players (budget permitting).

Welcome — Consider adding ACBL publications (Welcome to the World of Duplicate and Bridge Life). Print out the online SAYC booklet, a free play to a local club.

Have instant membership applications on hand. (Check with your DIC.)

It is a good idea to provide each new player with a name badge. These will help your newcomers meet each other.

At the Tournament

- ♣ Set up a separate I/N Registration Desk and Partnership Desk in the I/N area.
- ♣ Confirm that the area set aside for the Celebrity Speaker Program is appropriate. This works best when it is in a separate room that has a mike, whiteboard and a podium.
- ♣ Take photos of the I/N winners. Use them to celebrate the winners. Display them on a winner board.

Tournament Appeals and Conduct and Ethics Committee

The Tournament Organizer is responsible for letting the DIC know the process for handling appeals, who the recorder is, and who will convene a Conduct and Ethics Committee if necessary.

Caddies

The Tournament Chair shall discuss with the DIC, in advance, the number of caddies required for each session.

The Bulletin Editor is responsible for:

Bulletin Editor

Contacting Fast Results at least four weeks before the tournament to prepare for the mailing of the pre-tournament electronic bulletin. Hard copies of this bulletin can be made available on the first day of the tournament.

A daily online newsletter is published at most regional tournaments. It contains the names of the winners of each day's events, the tournament schedule, special meetings and social activities of the day and special achievements, such as new Life Masters. Some bulletins present interesting hands and stories. Photos of winners. General tournament information.

- Ensure the Daily Bulletins are delivered before the first games each day.
- Treat the Daily Bulleting as your family album – keep it attractive, timely, and interesting.

Prize Committee

The main responsibility of the Prize Committee is to determine the prize structure for the tournament and purchase the prizes that will be awarded, keeping the budget in mind.

- ♥ Will there be prizes for the overall winners in each event?
- ♥ Will there be section-top prizes?
- ♥ Will there be drawings for door prizes?

Here are some suggestions for prizes:

SECTION TOPS

- ♥ T-shirts with the tournament name and/or logo. ♥ Coffee cups. ♥ Bridge books. ♥ Mouse pads. ♥ Decks of cards.
- ♥ Convention card holders. ♥ A novelty exclusive to your tournament (\$2 bills are a Gatlinburg TN tradition).
- ♥ Check the internet. There are many companies that produce imaginative promotional products.

DOOR PRIZES

- ♥ Free dinner at an area restaurant. ♥ Coupon for refreshments at the host hotel (cocktails, buffet, etc.).
- ♥ Signed bridge book. ♥ Free play.

Will any prizes be donated? Often a local person or club is interested in donating a permanent trophy named after a person they would like to honor as the prize for an event. Ask around and see if there is any interest in this.

Some units/districts arrange for prize or trophy donations in exchange for free advertising in the daily bulletin for the tournament.

Contact local companies to see what they might offer. Be sure to coordinate with the person handling sponsorship activities.

Awarding the Prizes

- ♥ There should be a prize room or a prize desk where the prizes can be picked up. Place and hours should be published in the daily bulletin.
- ♥ In the I/N Program, the tournament representative like to award the prizes over the mic and in the playing area whenever possible.
- ♥ A complete list of overall and section-top winners can be provided for the Prize Committee shortly after the end of each session, but it is a good idea to wait 24 hours until the correction period has expired.

Contracts

This is a sample contract. It is recommended that an attorney look over your contract before signing.

_____, hereafter called Hotel, mutually agree with _____, hereafter called ACBL Unit _____, agree that Hotel shall make available a total of _____ rooms at a reduced room rate of \$_____ per night for the period _____ Month, Dates _____ through _____, 20____. In consideration of Hotel serving as an ancillary hotel facility to the tournament being conducted at _____ during the period _____ through _____. Hotel's reduced room rates, for the period of games conducted shall be made available for reservations made by Players up until _____ (whatever date hotel indicates) _____. In consideration of Hotel making available rooms at a reduced rate as specified above, ACBL Unit _____ will include Hotel's name, address and room rate on all appropriate electronic or printed material released after the date of this agreement at no cost to Hotel though _____ (start of Tour.) _____. Should bridge players elect not to utilize Hotel's facility, ACBL Unit _____ shall not be held liable for any lost income incurred by Hotel. ACBL Unit _____ last similar tournament in this area resulted in a total of _____ bridge players attending the games. Players utilized a total of _____ rooms at the Host Tournament hotel.

By: ACBL Unit _____

By: Hotel

Date: _____

Hotel rooms

Book enough rooms for staff and volunteers and a hospitality suite at the host or nearby hotels. A room block should be reserved for players who wish to stay at the tournament site. A cutoff date for cancellations should be established and publicized so players know the penalties for late cancellations.

Refreshments

A provision for coffee, water, and other beverages must be made.

Cleanup

If cleanup is not provided by the facility, other arrangements must be made.

Food service

Always inform food service of the time that games end and restart as this is a very busy time to get the players fed and back to the game.

Reading carefully is a must - especially with hotels where there are often large room number commitments and large cancellation fees. Key points to look for:

- How many rooms will you need to commit to in order to get the playing space required.
- Would it be beneficial to commit to less rooms and some rental payment for the space?
- Rooms are usually allocated based on the busiest days of the tournament. A matrix is usually provided. (Experienced directors can really help here).
- In resort towns like Las Vegas, it is often difficult to get a flat fee throughout the week. Make sure this gets communicated to players.
- Usually you can set a date, often a month in advance of the tournament, to release unsold rooms
- Usually, you can get an agreement to have no "attrition" costs if you come within 80% of your target number of room sales. If this is not met, make sure you know the cost for unsold rooms. You need to know the penalties if this is not met.

Bottom line is to make sure you know what your financial exposure is – if you fall short on room sales.

In addition to the rooms - there is usually a commitment to food and beverage sales. Make sure you know what that number is – it is usually quoted and a plus plus is added. This means a service charge – often above 20% and a tax charge usually below 9%. Check the bottom line and know how this will be accounted for – receptions, kiosk lunch sales etc.

Then there is the Covid Factor.

Most contracts come with a force majeure clause. Simply put, if the event is cancelled due to what can be considered an "act of God," neither side is liable.

Some other pitfalls that must be considered:

- Is there an additional resort fee charged at the venue? You can often get this waived or reduced.
- Will our players be charged internet fees?
- Is there a parking cost? Is there valet parking? (important for less mobile players)
- Make sure to inspect the venue prior to signing the contract. Make sure there is reliable internet access for the directors.

Lessons Learned and Other ideas

The DIC is essential to a successful tournament.

There are expert resources across the country (put links to them).

Tournament chairs in Mexico, Canada, and Bermuda should be aware of issues pertaining to tournaments in their respective countries.

- If you give the hotel an ultimatum, you better have an alternate venue – we are gone!
- If you give the unit (or district) board an ultimatum – you are gone!
- If you expect to grow in attendance every year, you are headed for some disappointment.
- If you scrimp on hospitality, you show little respect for your players.
- Do not expect players to understand room rates must go up each year or two.
- Do not expect players to understand you did the best you could on parking.
- Do not try to justify your session starting times to a militant player.
- Do not expect players who are too hot to agree with those who are too cold.
- If you don't invite your players, they won't come – advertise and publicize.
- The best advertisement for next year is a happy customer this year.
- Keep announcements down during the game times – nobody cares, they came to play.
- The hotel will never believe you about how much water and ice we use.
- The hotel will not believe you about the people jams we have at every session end and when food is being served.
- Keep things moving, insist on starting on time, no delays or long lines if possible.
- Be on call at all times or have a qualified assistant available to cover for you.
- Check with the DIC often to hear complaints relayed to the floor directors.
- Publish firm policies on no smoking, parking, hospitality, and lunch breaks, etc.
- Have a dependable conduct and ethics person ready in case of committee needs.
- Do not, under any circumstances, argue with the hotel in public (rarely in private).
- Discuss all player problems with your head director before acting on them.
- At tournaments end, give the hotel a list of players who played. Save room nights.
- Prepare a final report for your board – one you have updated daily, right?
- Present a final budget, with receipts, which you have updated throughout.