

**HANDBOOK
FOR THE
UNIT GAME, SPECIAL EVENTS
AND
TOURNAMENT COORDINATORS**



American Contract Bridge League

6575 Windchase Blvd.

Horn Lake, MS 38637-1523

662-253-3100

www.acbl.org

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Annual Unit Game Allocations	
Overview	4
Types of Unit Bridge Game Coordinators	
Unit Game Coordinator	5
Special Events Coordinator	5
North American Pairs (NAP)	
Grand National Teams (GNT)	
Tournament Coordinator.....	5
IN (Intermediate-Newcomer) Coordinator.....	6
Conclusion.....	6
Unit Game Coordinator	
Overview	7
Duties of the Unit Game Coordinator	7
Game Allocations	
Unit Championships	7
Unit Foundation/Fund Events	8
Annual Extended Team Games	8
Unit-wide Championships	9
ACBL-wide Events	9
NAP (North American Pairs) Coordinator	
Overview	10
Description of the Event.....	10
Stage One	10
Stage Two.....	11
Grand National Teams (GNT) Coordinator	
Overview	12
Description of the Event.....	12
Grand National Team Fund-raiser Events	13

Introduction

Congratulations, you've just been selected by either the president of your ACBL unit or your unit's board of directors to handle a very important job ... the scheduling and sanctioning of the bridge events your unit is entitled to hold during the year.

We've gathered some guidelines and helpful hints to help you get started.

First, let's determine if you will handle all of the unit games, special events, charity games and tournaments (open, senior and IN sectionals). A large unit may want to have someone handle each area of responsibility separately; a smaller unit may elect to have one person do it all. (See page 2.)

You will want to have on hand a copy of the *ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations* to use as a reference. Chapters 3 and 5 will be invaluable to you and may be accessed at: www.acbl.org/about/handbook.html.

Continuity is important for your unit, so please take notes. It would be helpful for you to plan now to pass on notes and information to your successor regarding the unit activities you have been involved in during your tenure.

Remember ACBL's headquarters staff is available to assist you in performing your duties. Whenever you need additional information or assistance, check the ACBL contact list in the Bridge Bulletin for the extension numbers for departments and ACBL personnel you may want to contact at headquarters. ACBL also has a web site – www.acbl.org – where you will find information that might be of interest to you.

You can reach the ACBL by calling Customer Service at 662-253-3191, by e-mail at ACBL@acbl.org or by calling 662-253-3100. Please don't hesitate to contact the ACBL if and when you need help. **Good luck!**

Annual Unit Game Allocations

OVERVIEW

Each unit is allocated a certain number of various events each year. Some of these are restricted in number by ACBL and/or by the district. Scheduling, organizing, running and reporting all of these bridge activities is a big job. Depending on the size of your unit and the territory involved (some units are small cities and others encompass a full state), you might not be able to do this job effectively alone.

Every unit is required to appoint a tournament coordinator. The job of approving and sanctioning all of the unit's sectional tournaments is done by the person filling this position. This person may also be the one who keeps a calendar of all unit events and/or submit the applications (for unit championships and higher) in an effort to avoid conflicts.

Every unit is also asked to appoint an IN (Intermediate-Newcomer) coordinator. This person will generally plan the unit's IN sectionals and work with clubs holding these tournaments when the unit has delegated sanctions to them.

In most units, the unit game coordinator will assume responsibility for unit games, unit championships, club-type games, ACBLwide events and charity events. Often the unit game coordinator also handles ACBL's two grass roots events: the North American Pairs (NAP) and the Grand National Teams (GNT), or these two events may be delegated to a special events coordinator.

Check with your unit president if you are not clear about the responsibilities of the job you are being asked to do.

Types of Unit Bridge Game Coordinators

The responsibilities of scheduling, organizing, running and reporting all of the games held annually by the unit could be divided into the following volunteer positions — or they can be handled by one unit game coordinator.

UNIT GAME COORDINATOR

Each unit is allocated a certain number of the following types of games. They are usually handled by a volunteer known as the unit game coordinator although a larger unit may appoint a separate individual to handle the Charity games and their related responsibilities.

1. Unit championships
2. Unit Foundation/Fund events
3. Annual extended team games
4. Unit-wide championships
5. ACBL-wide events
6. Club-type games

SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR

This person may handle both of the ACBL grass roots events (the NAP, North American Pairs and the GNT, Grand National Teams) or the unit may appoint a volunteer to individually handle each competition.

NAP (North American Pairs) — This is a major ACBL championship (an annual grass roots event) which has club, unit and district qualifying stages for the different levels. The final is held in conjunction with the Spring NABC.

GNT (Grand National Teams) — This event is a major ACBL team championship conducted with district (and club and unit level at district option) qualifying rounds that lead to a final round held in conjunction with the Summer NABC.

TOURNAMENT COORDINATOR

This person is responsible for approving and sanctioning the unit's sectional tournaments. All proposed tournament dates are submitted to the district tournament coordinator for approval before the unit's sectional tournament sanction applications are sent to the ACBL Tournament Department for final approval and processing. Please note this person must have internet access.

IN (INTERMEDIATE-NEWCOMER) COORDINATOR

This person would work with the unit's tournament coordinator and education liaison. Applications for stand alone IN sectionals must be approved by the unit's tournament coordinator and the district tournament coordinator before the dates are submitted to the ACBL Tournament Department for final approval.

A handbook to outline the duties of the IN Coordinator can be found at:
web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/units/INHandbook.pdf .

A guide to planning an IN sectional can be found at:
web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/units/PlanningAndOrganizingAnINTournamentorProgram.pdf .

CONCLUSION

When more than one person is involved in the scheduling of the unit's bridge activities, all must work together in selecting dates that will assure the most participation for each of the unit's games, championships, charity events, special events and sectionals. Each of the volunteers in the above positions must strive to select dates that will avoid conflicts with higher-rated events. They must each submit selected dates to the unit tournament coordinator before finalizing commitments and preparing advertising. Unit game dates become official when added to the unit's game calendar of events.

Unit Game Coordinator

OVERVIEW

The unit is allocated a number of unit championship events and unit charity events each year. Due to the complexity of the tournament schedule and the necessity to avoid conflicts with higher-rated events, the unit needs a unit game coordinator.

This person will obtain approval for all championship, charity and special event dates from the unit's tournament coordinator and will then handle the sanctioning process for those activities that require a sanction number from ACBL. In addition, when no local club is holding an ACBL-wide event, the unit itself may conduct the game. Those activities would also be handled by the unit game coordinator, including applying for the sanction.

Note: As noted earlier, in a small unit, the unit game coordinator may also be the NAP and GNT coordinator although these special events are handled separately in this booklet.

DUTIES OF THE UNIT GAME COORDINATOR

The unit game coordinator supervises all preparations for the unit events which include:

- (1) getting approval of dates for the unit events from the tournament coordinator,
- (2) applying for any necessary sanctions for unit games,
- (3) providing the staff,
- (4) furnishing the necessary electronic computer-dealt hands (provided by the ACBL Club and Member Services Department) as required,
- (5) arranging for the game site,
- (6) submitting complete game reports and fees to the ACBL.

GAME ALLOCATIONS:

Unit Championships — Each unit is allocated 24 unit championship sessions per year. It is suggested that these sessions be spread throughout the year to offer a well-rounded annual program. Any schedule that does not interfere with higher-rated championships scheduled nearby is acceptable.

Units are expected to offer bridge competitions that are suitable for their membership size and for the size and location availability of their playing areas. (See Chapter 5 of the ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations for event types.)

Clubs that may participate in these unit championships are those that conform with ACBL regulations, have proven reliable in submitting monthly report forms and fees and have an adequate number of tables . Clubs not sanctioned to meet at the times of unit events may be allowed to participate in these events with unit approval.

Units may not compete with existing club sessions. A unit may sponsor a club session or sessions when no existing club session(s) is in operation in a given area. Exception: A unit operating a club-type session prior to a new session receiving a sanction may continue to do so.

Unit Foundation/Fund Events — ACBL allocates to each unit up to four sessions of sectional-rated Foundation/Fund games per year. The units may operate these events as single-session or multiple-session games. Included are Charity Championships, Junior Fund, International Fund and Educational Fund games.

Types of Events — Units may hold any type of event that can be completed during the allotted sessions. In general, one or two-session open pairs or two-session Swiss teams attract the most participants.

Charity Game Beneficiaries — A unit must conduct its first and third (if any) charity event of the year on behalf of the ACBL Charity Foundation or the Canadian Bridge Federation (CBF) Charitable Fund. Also, it may conduct its second and fourth (if any) unit charity event on behalf of one of these two beneficiaries or on behalf of a local IRS approved tax exempt charitable organization. The number of sessions a unit holds per year on behalf of local charities cannot exceed the number it holds for the ACBL Charity Foundation or the CBF Charitable Fund. All events that units conduct on behalf of ACBL's Charity program carry full sectional rating. (See Chapter 8 of the handbook).

Annual Extended Team Games — Each unit has the right to a maximum of three annual, sectional-rated, extended round-robin or knockout team-of-four events.

Each unit must submit proposed conditions of contest to ACBL for approval together with the sanction application. (Dates must be approved by the unit's tournament coordinator.) These events must be three or more sessions to qualify as extended. Sanctions for these events must be submitted to the Club and Member Services Department at least 45 days in advance of the events.

A unit may use two of its three extended team game sanctions to run a 2-stage event, with a Round Robin phase of at least 4 matches to qualify teams to a KO bracket.

Unit-wide Championships — A unit-wide championship is a game with unit championship rating held simultaneously at three or more locations within the unit with a minimum of five tables at each site.

The unit must use electronic computer-dealt hands purchased from or authorized for use by ACBL. ACBL issues all masterpoint awards for these events.

A unit must submit the sanction application for a unit-wide championship (after verifying dates with the unit's tournament coordinator) at least 60 days prior to the event and must specify on the application the number of game sites it intends to use.

ACBL-wide Events – There are eight ACBL-wide games per year, most of which are held at club sites.

Three ACBL-wide events are conducted to benefit the ACBL International Fund. The first is on the Saturday afternoon of the Super Bowl weekend, the second in May and the last in July.

Two ACBL-wide events are conducted to benefit charity in March and November. They are separate and distinct from unit charity championships. Conducting an ACBL-wide charity game does not qualify a unit or a club to run a charity championship for a local beneficiary.

Three other ACBL-wide events are held each year:

- a.) Senior Pairs – February
- b.) World-wide Pairs – June
- c.) ACBL Instant Matchpoint Game – September

When no local club is holding one of these special games, the unit itself may conduct the game. The unit must apply to the ACBL Club and Member Services Department for a sanction.

In the members' interest, a unit may request that two or more clubs jointly sponsor an ACBL-wide event. However, no club may be forced to cooperate in such a joint venture. When joint sponsorship is undertaken, the unit must obtain the sanction and is responsible for forwarding the receipts and tournament report to the ACBL.

Note: Please refer to Chapter 5 of the ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations for the specifics of running the above championships and events.

Note: Large units may wish to appoint a charity game coordinator to take over the scheduling, organizing and running of the charity games and to submit the reports as listed above.

NAP (North American Pairs) Unit Coordinator

OVERVIEW

Although stage two (the unit qualifying rounds) of this grass roots event is the main responsibility of the NAP unit coordinator, this person performs many duties to enable the unit members to participate in stage one (at local clubs). These two qualifying rounds lead to a district final and then a national final held at the Spring NABC. The first and second place winners of the district competition are awarded a subsidy and the third place pair is invited to the finals with no subsidy.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

Unit members compete in three masterpoint restricted flights. The championship flight, Flight A, is unlimited and open to all members. Flight B is for players with under 2000 masterpoints and Flight C is for non-Life Masters with fewer than 500 masterpoints. Masterpoint determination is as of June 1 of the year in which the qualifying stages begin.

The format of the NAP varies from district to district, but the following is a general guideline. Competitors must be members in good standing of the district in which they participate after the stage one phase. The Life Master service fee or membership dues must be current at stage two onward. Please be certain to check the conditions of contest every year for improved variations approved by the ACBL Board of Directors.

STAGE ONE

It is important that the unit NAP coordinator contacts the clubs within the unit's jurisdiction to encourage them to hold NAP qualifying sessions which are a benefit for their players.

Stage one is played at local clubs during June, July and August.

(Note: Club NAP games may not be scheduled during a higher-rated tournament in the area. Check all of your proposed dates with the unit's tournament coordinator who will be keeping a calendar of events.)

Most clubs stratify their games in order to accommodate all players.

There are NO restrictions at the club level concerning membership or residency.

Masterpoints are awarded at sectional open rating and are 1/2 red, 1/2 black. A club having a “stand-alone” section for Flight C may stratify the event with the only possible strats being 0-20, 20-100, 100-NLM< 500. This format allows the newer player an opportunity to compete and experience tournament play.

Note: The lower strats of Flight C award black points only.

The club director of a stage-one NAP must send the unit NAP coordinator a list of the names of the players who qualify for the unit qualifying event.

Note: A unit may sponsor a stage-one qualifying event for players. Units may combine and jointly sponsor a unit qualifying session(s).

STAGE TWO

Stage two is the unit NAP coordinator’s main responsibility. It must be held after September 1st and prior to the district final. The game may not conflict with a regional in the district or during the North American Bridge Championships. Select the date, location, starting times and director before the stage-one sessions commence (and verify the dates with the unit’s tournament coordinator), so that the unit final can be advertised at the time of the stage-one games.

The NAP unit coordinator must complete an application online. The application will be forwarded to the NAP district coordinator. The NAP unit coordinator will receive a sanction number by e-mail. The sanctioning must be completed in time for the NAP unit coordinator to promote the event at the club level and encourage contestants to compete in the unit qualifying games.

Two-session unit qualifying events award a percentage of gold points to overall placers. This event is followed by the district NAP finals.* The unit NAP coordinator will issue qualifying slips to the eligible players and send a copy of the qualifiers (with flights) to the district NAP coordinator.

* Some districts have district semifinals where the unit qualifiers will meet to reduce the final field.

Grand National Teams (GNT) Coordinator

OVERVIEW

The coordinator of this event is responsible for securing available dates for unit qualifying rounds from the unit's tournament coordinator and for arranging for playing space and supplies for each stage of the event.

Clubs should send a list of qualifiers to the GNT coordinator. These lists should include name, ACBL number, address and phone numbers. It is imperative that these items be supplied by club managers so qualifiers can be verified.

The GNT coordinator will submit a budget for the annual event to the unit board for approval.

After the unit qualifying rounds, the GNT coordinator sends a list of the qualifiers to the district GNT coordinator and sends out notices of qualification to all qualifiers.

In districts where there are unit and district GNT events, the district GNT coordinator relies on the unit GNT coordinator to promote the event.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

This event is a major ACBL team championship conducted with district (and sometimes unit) qualifying rounds that lead to a final round held in conjunction with the Summer NABC.

The Grand National Teams (GNT) is a district event. The conditions of contest for each of the districts are unique and adapted to meet the needs of their constituents. Some districts have a full program of club and unit qualifying events followed by a district final. Some districts have a two-session unit-level qualifying followed by a two-session district final. Some districts have district semifinals where combined units qualify teams to meet in KO matches to determine district representatives. Some districts have only district level events.

The district conditions of contest for the GNT may request units to combine and jointly sponsor unit qualifying sessions.

Therefore, this program varies from district to district. The unit president will need to check with the district GNT coordinator to see if it is necessary to have a unit GNT coordinator.

The ACBL does not offer any subsidies to the Grand National Team district finalists. Some districts and units offer financial support to their district team representatives.

GRAND NATIONAL TEAM FUND-RAISER EVENTS

Units are urged to encourage their clubs to support the idea of raising financial aid for GNT qualifiers by running Grand National Team fund-raiser events. A portion of the money raised is used to assist players with expenses associated with attending the national finals at the Summer NABC.

The unit GNT coordinator should encourage clubs to run as many of these games as it has sanctioned sessions.

The GNT fund-raiser event can be run as a pair game, team game or can use any special format that will encourage players to participate. The masterpoints for the fund-raisers are sectional rated and the sanction fee is regular club game and table fees. An additional fee will be donated to the district (maximum of \$6 per table) to defray team expenses.

Call the Special Events Department at ACBL headquarters if you have questions about scheduling and running this event.



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