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International Players May Attend the Fall 2021 NABC

September 29, 2021, Horn Lake, MS

The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) has been working hard to receive approval for international bridge players to attend the Fall 2021 NABC being held in Austin, TX. Over the past two years, a series of Presidential Proclamations have restricted entry from travelers who were physically present in certain countries within the 14 days prior to travel (**China, Iran, Schengen Area, Ireland, U.K., and Brazil**) based on public health and economic considerations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of these Presidential Proclamations prohibiting U.S. entry included an exception when a traveler's entry would be in the national interest.

The ACBL is pleased to announce that the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) Coronavirus Coordination Cell approved an exception to the ACBL for the Fall NABC. This allows players, who would otherwise be restricted from entering the United States, to travel to the United States to compete at the Fall NABC under certain circumstances.

As part of this approval, the ACBL has agreed that it will follow all CDC guidelines for international travelers.

As we were preparing this press release, the Biden Administration announced it plans to rescind the COVID-19 Travel Bans in November. As of this writing, the CBP has advised the ACBL that the current policies (detailed below) must remain in effect despite this announcement. CBP did indicate that they may permit modifications in the future when the new travel policies are finalized.

While some of the details and logistics are being worked out, here are some of the relevant details to assist with your planning:

- Only fully vaccinated players will be allowed to attend. This is true for both foreign and domestic participants. There will be no exceptions.
- Prior to boarding an international flight to the United States, travelers will need to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result no more than 1 day before travel.
- Upon arrival, international travelers will need to quarantine for at least 3 days, and then provide another negative COVID-19 test after quarantining.
- Please plan on arriving at least 4 days prior to the first day you intend on playing.
 - Travelers will need to wear a mask over their nose and mouth on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation while traveling.
 - If the travel restrictions are not lifted, then the ACBL will need to receive the names and certain biographical information in advance from international players wishing to play in Austin. This information may be submitted [here](#).



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- This policy will apply specifically to travelers from China, Iran, Schengen Area, Ireland, U.K., and Brazil. After receiving the requisite biographical information, the ACBL through its immigration counsel on this matter, Jason Feldman, will submit the relevant information through a special Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) channel to obtain pre-approval.
 - The CBP should then grant an exception to the travel restrictions authorizing these players to travel internationally and compete in the Fall 2021 NABC.

The ACBL appreciates everyone's understanding and cooperation with these precautions in order to keep all participants at the tournament safe.

As the COVID-19 cases continue to decline, the ACBL is cautiously optimistic that the Fall 2021 NABC will proceed as planned. However, it is not guaranteed that the ACBL will be able to hold this tournament. A final decision on whether the NABC will proceed is expected no later than October 15th.