

# GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS 2013-2014

## ACBL SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF CONTEST

Lack of knowledge does not constitute cause for exception to these conditions of contest. These CoC may not be changed during the course of this event. The general CoC for Swiss team and knockout teams events will apply to this event subject to the following special CoC.

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 a dues paying or service fee paid up ACBL member.

### I. DISTRICT DIRECTOR AUTHORITY

All ACBL tournament regulations, though not specifically included in these conditions, apply throughout this event. The District Director has final authority on any item not specified in the CoC.

### 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. These district champions then may compete in the national final of their respective category.
- 2) A player may represent the district in only one flight at the national final. Teams in the national final will not be subsidized in any way by the ACBL.
- 3) The flights are as follows:

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

**Flight eligibility will be established by ACBL's September masterpoint cycle. This information will be produced on August 6, 2013 in Horn Lake, MS. Masterpoints won after this cycle will not impact flight eligibility for these events.**

- 4) 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 with more than 6000 masterpoints.
  - c. All teams are eligible for Flight B qualification with the exception of a team with a member with more than 2500 masterpoints.
  - d. All teams are eligible for Flight C qualification with the exception of a team with a member with more than 500 masterpoints or one who has achieved the rank of Life Master.
- 5) ACBL rules and regulations govern play at every level of the event, and supersede district conditions in cases of conflict.

### **III. CONVENTIONS**

At district option, the ACBL Midchart may apply at the district level of the GNT - Open Championship and Flight A provided that this has been included in the district CoC.

### **IV. DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS**

Each district shall determine the nature of the event by which it declares its district champions, and file its CoC with ACBL Special Events no later than September 1, 2013. Those conditions must include the following:

- 1) Name and contact information of the person to whom questions should be directed.
- 2) Proposed dates for the District Final
- 3) Format of the District Final, including contingencies for any number of teams in each flight, and the number of boards to be played.
- 4) District Finals may be scheduled any time after September 1, 2013.
- 5) No level or stage may be scheduled which would prevent a player from attending one or more days of a North American Bridge Championships or participating in the United States Bridge Championships, the United States Women's Bridge Championships, the United States Senior Bridge Championships, or the United States Junior Bridge Championships. The national final for all flights will begin on the Wednesday afternoon prior to the Summer NABC.

6) Only ACBL members in good standing may participate. Ineligible pairs playing to fill out the movement will receive any session awards (no overall awards) won but may not qualify to the next stage of the event. If the ineligible pair includes one or two players with more MP than permitted in the flight they are filling in, duplicate MP awards will be issued by ACBL.

## **V. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

- 1) The Championship Flight is open to any player, except as previously noted.
- 2) Flight A is open only to a player who has no more than 6000 masterpoints recorded as of the September 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 no more than 2500 masterpoints as of the September cycle.
- 4) Flight C is open only to players with no more than 500 masterpoints who have not attained the rank of Life Master as of the September cycle.
- 5) Teams may consist of four, five or six eligible players.
- 6) Masterpoints won in other bridge organizations, either domestic or foreign, must be taken into account for placement in the flights.
- 7) A player's bridge experience will be taken into account to determine the proper flight.
- 8) The DIC is authorized to make the decision on the player's classification.

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 the Non-Life Master Flight in a district final earn Red Ribbon Pairs qualification. The first-place finishers in the Championship, A and B flights, and the second place finishers in the Championship at the NABC final will earn Blue Ribbon qualification. These teams will earn qualifying points, if applicable, for international competition on the same scale as in the Blue Ribbon Pairs and the LM Pairs. The first and second place finishers in the Non-LM Flight at the National Final will earn Red Ribbon qualification.

Overall awards will be based on the participation of each member (see page 7).

## **VI. REPLACEMENTS AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

- 1) Issues regarding replacements and/or substitutions not addressed by the District CoC are resolved as follows: 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. The team captain may submit an application for exemption from the requirements of this paragraph to the District 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 GNT's.
- 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 survives to qualify for overall MP 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 of the NABC. 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. SANCTIONS, DIRECTORS AND FEES**

Requests for rated ACBL TDs should be received in ACBL headquarters in Horn Lake six months before the event.

The director must be a club rated or higher-rated director to run games at the club and intermediate level. A non-playing director is recommended by ACBL, but a club qualifying event with 17 or fewer teams may have a playing director. A TD will be assigned by the Tournament Department to officiate at each district final. ACBL will attempt to assign your preferred director. Game reports are to be submitted on the official ACBL GNT report forms, which will be available from the district GNT coordinator. A sanction fee of \$1.25 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.

## **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+ VP scale will be used. There may be playbacks at the bottom of the field.

The bracket seeding will be:

Swiss winner #1 seed

Swiss runner-up #2 seed

Swiss finishers 3rd and 4th will draw into seed positions 3 & 4

Swiss finishers 5th – 8th will draw into seed positions 5 – 8

Seed #16 will be selected by seed #1

Seed #15 will be selected by seed #2

Seed #14 will be selected by seed #3

Seed #13 will be selected by seed #4

The remaining 4 teams will draw into seed positions 9 – 12

Ensuing knock-out matches will be 64 boards in length in the Championship flight; 56 boards in length in all other flights. These events will be governed by the Knockout General CoC.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **2013-2014 North American CoC**

#### **District Membership**

The North American Pairs and Grand National Teams were created initially with the expectation that players would play in and represent the districts 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. For the NAPs: 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. In both events, 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 top flight of each event. Exceptions must fall into the categories listed below in the "Guidelines for Exceptions". A player seeking an exception must obtain

permission in writing from the ACBL District Director representing the district in which the member has a principal residence and from the ACBL District Director representing the district in which the member wishes to play. Both District Directors must approve the request for the exception to be granted. Further, any exceptions in the highest flight of the event must also be approved by a BOD Credentials Committee. The expectation is that District Directors will approve and forward requests to the Credentials Committee only in very special cases. There is no appeal from the Credentials Committee decision.

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

The Credentials Committee (CC) is also responsible for clarifying in which district a player is allowed to play 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 (in cases of the GNT). 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 section 2.2.3 (d) of the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations.

The BOD and the Credentials Committee both recognize that implementation of these measures may inconvenience some members who were granted exceptions in previous years. Nevertheless, the general consensus is that implementation and strict interpretation of these measures is necessary to restore the integrity of these events.

#### 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 (September 1 – February 28) or NAP (June 1 – August 31) qualifying period 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 level final of one district. He must play in that district's district finals to be eligible to play in the national finals. 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 Credentials Committee 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:

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.

Has not played in the GNT or NAP in another district for that period of time.

Has 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 Credentials Committee (highest 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 Credentials Committee may consider exceptions under unusual circumstances for otherwise eligible players who change their District through a change in their physical domicile after September 1 (GNT) and June 1 (NAP). Request shall be made at least 30 days before the appropriate District Level final.

## **Appendix II**

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

#### **I. General Conditions**

- 1) This event will be conducted at a variety of playing sites, and hosted online by an ACBL approved host. (See Appendix III)
- 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 Chart, the Conditions of Contest for the 2013/2014 GNT, General Conditions of Contest for team play and ACBL Zero Tolerance Policy shall govern this event.
- 4) The DIC must be an ACBL Director, hold the rank of TD 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 CoC, 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 three 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) User ID for online host
  - d) Site of participation
  - e) Any special needs addressed by these CoC.
- 9) In the event a Contestant is handicapped, 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 bring an Operator to relay calls, plays and explanations thereof. Communication between the Contestant and his Operator is to be conducted in writing. Any notes from a Contestant/Operator 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**

- 1) Each Contestant must preregister to participate at a particular site, and no Contestant may participate from a physical location other than a site designated by the Tournament Organizer, and approved by the DIC. The DIC shall be informed, no later than 2 Days after the close of registration, of each designated site.
- 2) The Tournament Organizer will designate at least one Monitor for each playing site. The DIC shall be informed, no later than 2 Days after the close of registration, of the proposed Monitor for each site, and their contact information. The proposed Monitor is subject to approval by the DIC.
- 3) Monitors shall ensure the enforcement of these conditions of contest, and will be primarily responsible for the enforcement of any security related issues at their designated location.

- 4) Monitors need not be Directors, and may not rule on any irregularity occurring during play, nor penalize a Contestant for any violation of these conditions. Monitors must immediately inform the DIC of any irregularity or violation of which they become aware in any manner.
- 5) Contestants are not permitted to be in possession of any electronic communication devices while they are competing. VIOLATION OF THIS CONDITION WILL RESULT IN A MANDATORY PENALTY OF 12 IMPS, AND A SECOND VIOLATION WILL RESULT IN THE TEAM'S DISQUALIFICATION.
- 6) Chatter at each physical location shall be kept to a minimum. No discussion of hands is permitted at any given location until all bridge play at that location has concluded.
- 7) Contestants must connect to the internet through a designated on site router.
- 8) Contestants may only run the following applications during the play period:
  - a. Online Host Software or
  - b. An internet browser for the purpose of accessing the Online Host and/or (in the Championship and A Flights only) for the purpose of accessing the ACBL's defense database.
- 9) Monitors shall ensure that Contestants cannot view the Computer Screens of other Contestants with in their own flight.
- 10) Monitors shall ensure that Contestants, competing at the same site as members of their own team, are seated in positions which obscure their view of one another.
- 11) Contestants must not relay, through chat visible to partner, any extraneous information.

### **III. The Play**

- 1) Contestants are required to post a complete convention card, in ACBL format, inclusive of any supplemental notes.
- 2) The ACBL Mid-Chart applies to Flight 'A' and 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.  
<http://www.acbl.org/play/defenseDataBase.html>

- 3) The ACBL General Convention Chart applies to Flights B & C.
- 4) The TD must be summoned electronically for any irregularity which occurs during play. Once the TD has been summoned, all play and bidding shall cease until the TD 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 (Security 9-11 & The Play 5 & 6), shall be rectified under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge, and are subject to procedural penalties. The Monitors and 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 Monitor or TD.
- 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 TD immediately. As in live play, undoes are permitted only upon instruction of the TD.

**Appendix III**  
**Requirements for ACBL approved Online Host**

- 1) Online hosts must be accessible to all of the events participants.
- 2) The host must have the ability to run four separate flights.

- 3) The host must have the capability to run distinct sets of deals for each match, as well as distinct sets of deals for each flight.
- 4) The host must ensure the conditions of each deal are consistent with the Laws of Duplicate Bridge (Laws 1, 2, 4-6)
- 5) The host shall ensure that each participant may chat with either or both of his opponents, and with all of the contestants at his table, but not privately with partner.
- 6) All deals, auctions, play and chat shall be recorded and available for review, in real time, by the director.
- 7) If feasible, the auction should appear for each contestant three bids at a time.
- 8) The host must have the capability of running a Swiss, Knockout and/or Round Robin movement. Specific movements are listed below.
  - a. Three table Round Robin in 2 rounds with distinct sets of deals for each match.
  - b. Four Table Round Robin: Three rounds with identical deals for both matches of each round.
  - c. Five table BAM movement. Four rounds with comparison after round four.
  - d. Five table Swiss Round Robin: Four rounds with comparisons after rounds two and four
  - e. Five table Round Robin: Five rounds with a sit out and identical deals for both matches of each round. Comparisons after each round.
  - f. Six table Round Robin: Five Rounds with identical deals for all three matches of each round. Comparisons after each round.
  - g. Seven table BAM: Six rounds with comparison after round six.
  - h. Seven table Swiss Round Robin: Six rounds with comparisons after rounds two, four and six.
  - i. Seven Table Swiss Round Robin: Seven Rounds with a sit out and identical deals for all three matches of each round. Comparisons after each match.
  - j. Eight table Round Robin: Seven rounds with identical deals for all four matches of each round. Comparisons after each match.
  - k. Nine table BAM: Eight rounds with comparison after round eight.
  - l. Nine table Swiss Round Robin: Eight rounds with comparisons after rounds two, four, six, and eight.
  - m. Nine table Swiss Round Robin: Nine rounds with a sit out and identical deals for all four matches of each round. Comparisons after each match.

- n. Ten table Round Robin: Nine rounds with identical deals for all five matches of each round. Comparisons after each match.
- o. Any odd number table Swiss Team movement with 11 or more teams, consisting of a three table round robin and 4 or more head to head matches. Pairing to be based upon the aggregate VP results of each team.
- p. Any even number table Swiss Team movement with 12 or more teams. Pairing to be based upon the aggregate VP results of each team.
- q. Any KO movement from 9-16 teams, to be completed in four rounds, with no sit outs.
- r. Any KO movement from 6-8 teams, to be completed in 3 rounds, with no sit outs.
- s. Any KO movement from 2-4 teams, to be completed in one or two rounds.