

American Contract Bridge League District 20

2015-2016 Grand National Teams

Conditions of Contest

A. *General*

1. **National Conditions**: The Grand National Teams (GNT) 2015-2016 ACBL Special Conditions of Contest as published by the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) on its website (National Conditions) govern and are incorporated into these Conditions.
2. **Participation**: Any person may play at a club level qualification game unless he or she is under disciplinary suspension imposed either by the ACBL or any other recognized bridge organization. However, to advance beyond the club level, a player must be a member in good standing of both the ACBL and District 20 (D20). Exceptions may be allowed for students, military, and others; but pre-approval is required, which approval will not be unreasonably denied. Requests should be sent to D20's North American Events Coordinator, currently Hal Montgomery, 1928 SE 60th Avenue, Portland, OR 97215; e-mail: dewitt@imaginata.com; telephone no. (503) 583-3717 (Coordinator).
3. **Flight Restrictions**: Subject to §A2 above, the Championship Flight is open to all players; Flight A is open only to players who have fewer than 6000 ACBL masterpoints; Flight B is open only to players who have fewer than 2500 ACBL masterpoints; and Flight C is open only to non-Life Masters who have fewer than 500 ACBL masterpoints. Masterpoint holdings to determine flight eligibility will be considered as of the ACBL's September masterpoint cycle. Masterpoints won after this cycle will not impact flight eligibility. Masterpoints won in any other bridge organizations must be taken into account for placement in the appropriate flights.
4. **Unit Responsibilities**: Each Unit will promote the club-level play in their own Unit and will sponsor a qualifying session as in §C should no club in their jurisdiction do so.
5. **Team Formation**: Teams may consist of four, five, or six players. New teams may be formed at the District Finals from players who have qualified at the local level or who are exempt from qualifying pursuant to §B6.

B. *Club Level*

1. **Qualifying Period**: The qualifying stage at the club level will be held during the period September 1, 2015 through February 29, 2016. Clubs may hold up to two (2) club qualifying games in each of the six months (September, October, November, December, January, and February) for each weekly sanctioned session held that month. This applies to each flight.
2. **Table Fees**: Clubs may charge additional fees to offset costs above the normal club entry fees. In addition to the regular monthly report to ACBL that includes a \$1.00 per table fee, clubs must remit \$7.00 per table to the D20 Treasurer with a copy of the ACBLscore GNT report form. The per table fee and game report shall be sent to the D20's Business Manager, currently Marie Ashton, 6512 SW Midmar Pl, Portland, OR 97223-7517. These fees will be used to help defray the administrative costs associated with the event and the travel subsidies D20 pays to the winners of each Flight.

3. **Reporting:** In addition to the report with the above fee, Clubs and Units must send their qualifying game file created by ACBLscore (e.g. 1240106.ACE) via e-mail to the Coordinator.
4. **Club Qualification Format:** Clubs may either run separate qualifying games for one or more Flights, or a combined stratified team event. Each Club or Unit may choose its own format for its Club GNT qualification events.
5. **Qualification for Advancement:** To qualify for the Championship Flight, a player must be on a team that either finishes within the top 50% of the top flight or that wins at least 50% of its matches. To qualify for Flight A, B, or C, a player must be on a team that plays in a qualifying game. All players that qualify in a Club or Unit Qualifying Game will be eligible to play in the D20 GNT Finals in as many flights as they are eligible for in accordance with §A3. A D20 player may qualify to advance from a club qualification game even if he plays with a player who is not a member of D20.
6. **Exemptions from Club Qualification:** Provided they apply in writing to the Coordinator two weeks prior to the D20 GNT Finals, D20 members can request exemption from club-qualification provided:
 - a. No Club or Unit qualifying event was scheduled within 40 miles of their home; or
 - b. A significant business or personal reason prevents or prevented them from participating in any of the Club qualifying events within 50 miles of their home; and
 - c. They submit a \$25 per person special dispensation fee to the D20 Business Manager at least one week prior to the Finals.

C. Unit Level

Any Unit may choose to hold a Unit Final to either supplement or replace club-qualifying games in the Unit's area. To do so, a Unit must secure an ACBL sanction. Qualification period, District fees, reporting, game format, and eligibility for advancement will be the same as for clubs stated in §B1-5 above.

D. District Finals for Championship Flight

1. **Championship Final:** Qualified players (*see* §B5, §B6 and §C above) may form teams to compete in the Championship Flight Finals to be held on-line at multiple sites across the District on the weekend of May 21-22, 2016. See §H for on-line conditions.
2. **Advance Entries:** In accordance with the National Conditions that govern online events, participating teams will be required to preregister for the Championship Flight Finals. A completed registration form (a copy of which will be published on the D-20 web site) together with the entry fee for two sessions (\$104) and, legible PDF copies of convention cards to be used by each of the team's partnerships must be submitted to the Coordinator (*see* §A2 above) by April 30, 2016. The Coordinator may accept late registrations provided they do not weaken the event format. Primary considerations in making this determination will include (i) securing an even number of entrants for the Finals and (ii) assuring adequate disclosure of the late registrants' partnership methods to all other participants. In addition, the Coordinator may, for good cause, extend the deadline for the receipt of a team's convention cards.

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3. **Event Format:** The Championship Flight Finals will be conducted over the course of one weekend over four sessions consisting primarily of a round robin to qualify two teams to be followed by a Knockout (KO). The exact format will depend on the number of teams participating and will be as set forth in the chart that follows. In the KO stage of the Championship Flight the finalist who prevailed against the other in the head-to-head Round Robin match receives as carryover from the head-to-head match, 50% of the IMP margin from the head-to-head match if the finalist won the Round Robin stage and 25% if they did not. In any event, however, the carryover shall not exceed 25 IMP's. To determine placings in the RR for this or any other purpose, all match IMP scores will be converted to World Bridge Federation Victory Points.

Teams	Total Sat Boards	Saturday (RR/KO) Format	Sunday Format (KO)
2	---	---	60-board KO
3	60	Saturday RR consisting of 30-board matches against each of the other teams broken into 10-board segments.	60-board KO
4	60	Saturday a RR consisting of 20-board matches against each of the other teams broken into 10-board segments.	60-board KO
5	64	Saturday a RR consisting of 16-board matches against each other team broken into 8-board segments.	60-board KO
6	60	Saturday a RR consisting of 12-board matches against each other team broken into 6-board segments.	60-board KO
7	60	Saturday a RR consisting of 10-board matches against each other team broken into 5-board segments.	60-board KO
8	63	Saturday RR of 9 board matches.	60-board KO
9	64	RR of 8-board matches	60-board KO
10	63	Saturday RR of 7 board matches	60-board KO
11+	~60-64	Depending on the turnout the DIC may split the field into two or 4 seeded groups and play RR matches to bring the field to 4 by the end of Saturday. Carryover to Sunday as in D.3.	RR of 20 board matches to bring the field to 2 teams. The coordinator shall add an additional session in which the top two teams at the end of the

			Sunday RR will play a final 30 board match with carryover from the Sunday results per D.3.
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4. **Starting times:** Sessions are scheduled to commence as shown in the table below. Second sessions will start approximately one hour after the first session is concluded.

Saturday		Sunday	
Session 1 11 AM PDT (8 AM in HI; noon in ID)	Session 2 TBA	Session 3 11 AM PDT (8 AM in HI; noon in ID)	Session 4 TBA

5. **Format Changes:** The Tournament Director may modify the starting times, number of boards per match, and sessions to be played to accommodate unanticipated circumstances.
6. **Seeding:** If there is more than one bracket during the RR stage the director will seed the round robin brackets according to the seeding formula outlined below.
- Previous Year's Winner – If the previous team winner in the Flight returns with at least 60% of its members, that team will be seeded first. Thereafter, the teams will be seeded according to their seeding value.
 - Life Master – Each team receives one point for each Life Master.
 - Master Points – Each team member receives 1/10 point for every 100 master points as of the February computer cycle. Masterpoints from other National Bridge Organizations will be considered in seeding on an equitable basis to be established by the NA Teams Coordinator. Each player is limited to six seeding points based on total masterpoints from all sources.
 - Past GNT Performance – Each team member receives seeding points for past GNT performances for the flight or higher ranking flight that they are competing in according to the following schedule:
 - ⇒ Each team receives four points for any member who has placed first in a District NA Team Finals within the last five years.

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- ⇒ Each team receives two points for any member who has placed second in a District NA Team Finals within the last five years.
- ⇒ Each team receives one point for any member who has placed third/fourth in a District NA Team Finals within the last five years.
- ⇒ Each team receives 10 points for any member who has placed first in the National NA Team Finals within the last five years.
- ⇒ Each team receives six points for any member who has placed second in the National NA Team Finals within the last five years.
- ⇒ Each team receives four points for any member who has placed third/fourth in the National NA Team Finals within the last five years.
- ⇒ Each team receives two points for any member who has placed fifth through eighth in the National NA Team Finals within the last five years.

In the case where there is 1 RR match advancing 2 teams to the finals the next highest teams will receive the third and fourth place seeding points. If there is a tie for third place involving more than two teams there will be no seeding points awarded. In the case where there are 2 RR matches each advancing one team to the finals, the second place teams from each bracket will receive the 3-4 place seeding points. In the case of ties for second place within either of these RR brackets there will be no seeding points awarded from that bracket. In order to win seeding points a team must win masterpoints.

To calculate the value that will determine its seeding position, a team's total seeding points will be divided by the number of its team members. Any team shall have the right to appeal the number of seeding points credited to its members to the Tournament Director, whose decision concerning such appeals shall be final.

E. District Finals for Flights A, B, and C

1. **Final Tournaments:** Qualified players (*see* §B5, §B6 and §C above) may form teams to compete in the Flight A, B and C Finals for which they are eligible (*see* §A3 above). These three Finals will be held on-line at multiple sites across the District as follows: Flight B on Sunday, May 22, 2016; Flight A on Saturday/Sunday, May 28/29, 2016; and Flight C on Sunday, May 29, 2016. See §H for on-line conditions. The Flight B Finals and Flight C Finals are on Sunday. The Flight A finals are on Saturday but when there are 6 or more teams the top two teams from Saturday play will play a KO match Sunday.
2. **Advance Entries:** Participating teams will be required to preregister for this event. The completed registration form (located on the D-20 web site) and the entry fee for two sessions (\$104; \$96 for Flight C) must be completed and submitted to the Coordinator (*see* §A2 above) by April 30, 2016 for Flight B and by May 7, 2016 for Flights A and C.

3. **Event Format – Flight A:** Except if only two teams enter (in which circumstance they will play a one-day KO), Flight A will be conducted as a one-day, two-session Round Robin or Swiss movement followed (if necessary) by a one-day, two-session knockout. Only the top two teams advance to Sunday play. In the KO stage of Flight A the finalist who prevailed against the other in the head-to-head Round Robin match receives as carryover from the head-to-head match, 50% of the IMP margin from the head-to-head match if the finalist won the Round Robin stage and 25% if they did not. In any event, however, the carryover shall not exceed 20 IMP's. To determine placings in the RR for this or any other purpose, all match IMP scores will be converted to World Bridge Federation Victory Points.
4. **Seeding:** If there is more than one bracket during the RR stage the director will seed the round robin brackets according to the seeding formula outlined in D 6.

Teams	Total Boards	Saturday Format (RR/KO)	Sunday Format (KO)
2	56	56-board knockout	None
3	60	RR of 30-board matches	None
4	60	RR of 20-board matches	None
5	60	RR of 15-board matches	None
6	60	RR of 12-board matches	56-board KO
7	60	RR of 10-board matches	56-board KO
8	63	RR of 9-board matches	56-board KO
9	64	RR of 8-board matches	56-board KO
10	63	RR of 7 board matches	56-board KO
11 or more	Varies ~60-64	The Tournament Director will divide the field into two seeded brackets, each of which will be reduced to one team using the above format for the number of teams.	56-board KO

4. **Event Format – Flights B and C:** The finals of Flights B and C will be conducted at the Tournament Director's option either as a one-day Round Robin or Swiss movement. Scoring will be by IMP's converted to victory points based on the World Bridge Federation Victory Point Scale. The format to be used and the total boards to be played will be determined by the Tournament Director, to be not less than 48 or more than 64.
5. **Starting times:** Sessions are scheduled to commence at 11:00 AM PDT (8:00 in HI and noon in ID). The second session will be scheduled by the Tournament Director to start approximately one hour after the first session is concluded to allow a sufficient dinner break.

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6. **Format Changes:** The Tournament Director may modify the starting times, number of boards per match, and sessions to be played to accommodate unanticipated circumstances.

F. Conditions of Play for All Flights

1. **Seating Rights:** In three-way or round-robin matches, there will be no seating rights. Team pairings in knockout matches will be determined by placings in the Round Robin/Swiss with the higher-placing team entitled to choose seating in either the first and fourth or second and third quarters. If the team holding seating rights fails to declare otherwise, it will be deemed to have exercised its rights for the first and fourth quarters. Any disputes as to seating positions will be resolved by having each team's captain submit a lineup to the Tournament Director.
2. **Lateness:** Penalty for failure to seat a complete team at announced game time will be:
 - a. First 10 minutes – no penalty
 - b. More than 10 minutes, up to 15 minutes – 2 IMP's
 - c. More than 15 minutes, up to 20 minutes – 6 IMP's
 - d. More than 20 minutes, up to 25 minutes – 12 IMP's
 - e. More than 25 minutes, up to 30 minutes – 18 IMP's
 - f. More than 30 minutes, up to 35 minutes – 24 IMP's
 - g. More than 35 minutes, up to 40 minutes – 30 IMP's

In addition, the match will be curtailed one board, up to a maximum of four boards, for each 7½ minutes or fraction thereof of tardiness after the first ten minutes. Three IMPS' per board curtailed will be awarded to the non-offending team in addition to the penalty above. If play has not commenced (with or without a substitute) forty minutes after announced game time, the match will be declared a forfeit.

3. **Slow Play:** Time for play to be completed will be 7.5 minutes per board. Any boards not completed within five (5) minutes of the completion of the applicable time allotments will not be scored. The Tournament Director will monitor slow play to determine comparative fault and where play exceeds the applicable time allotment may, if appropriate, assess slow-play penalties to at-fault pairs if appropriate. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Tournament Director shall neither penalize players nor decline to score boards to the extent the slow play is caused by a mechanical or other issue caused by the online format.
4. **Substitutes:** The Tournament Director may allow a team to add an emergency substitute for any segment or segments, provided that so doing does not materially strengthen the team.
5. **Per Person Play Requirements:** Exclusive of playoffs required to break a tie, each player on a team must play at least 50% of all boards played by his team in each of the round-robin, Swiss, or knockout rounds. Players are not required to play 50% of any particular match. No player may continue to play in the Finals where it is impossible for him to satisfy this requirement. Per person play requirements shall not affect a team's rights under §J to add members prior to advancing to the National Finals.
6. **Sportsmanship:** Participants' bidding and play decisions must be motivated only by a desire to secure qualification for their team and not to affect which other teams qualify for further play. Teams whose results make qualification effectively either impossible or certain must continue to play their best, without changing their customary bidding or card play strategy.

7. **Breaking Ties:**

- a. In the event of a tie for advancement, two tying teams will play a four-board playoff match, except in the last knockout round the final two teams will play an eight-board playoff. If three or more teams are tied, they will play a four-board round-robin match to reduce to one or two teams as necessary based on win-loss record if possible; and otherwise based on IMP quotient.
 - b. Succeeding ties will be broken by four-board playoffs or round-robin matches. Tiebreakers will continue until one team scores a 1 IMP or greater lead at the conclusion of a playoff match.
 - c. Tie-breaking sessions will be scheduled by the director to best suit the players' convenience and may be deferred to another day.
8. **Team Withdrawals:** Teams may not withdraw from the Final without permission of the Tournament Director, who may allow the withdrawal if it will not damage the movement or unfairly prejudice some other team. If a team pulls out, its round-robin results will be calculated based on the results achieved thus far, unless the team has not played the same number of boards against each other team, in which case the withdrawing team's results will be disregarded in their entirety. Entry fees are not refundable to teams that withdraw.
9. **Kibitzing:** Kibitzers will be permitted at all stages of District GNT events, both on-line and at the physical venues. When in person, kibitzers must observe only one player during a particular segment of a match. A fifth or sixth member of a team may not in person kibitz a player on, or in competition with, his own team. Each player/partnership has the right to bar one kibitzer without assigning cause, or an unlimited number of kibitzers for cause. The Tournament Director may bar any kibitzer for cause. Kibitzers must comport themselves in accordance with ACBL guidelines.
10. **Correction and Appeal Period:** The team captain must notify the Tournament Director of scoring errors and/or submit in writing an appeal of a ruling prior to the start of the next playing session, or within 24 hours of the last session.

G. Other Considerations

1. **Changes:** The dates and times for the Finals are subject to change by the Coordinator for good cause. The location for playing sites will be published on the D20 website not later than May 14, 2016.
2. **Round-Robin Matches:** The Tournament Director will order the round-robin matches to achieve maximum fairness and to minimize the possibility of unsportsmanlike conduct. Where practical, the matches will be split into two sessions of 1/2 match each.
3. **Duplication of Boards:** Deals will be created randomly by BBO for this event and, to the extent possible, duplicated for the matches in each session.

H. On-Line Competition

1. **Provisions for On-line Competition:** It is intended that all matches be played on-line even if all players of the competing teams are playing at the same venue.

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2. **Special Conditions for On-Line Play**

The ACBL GNT 2015-2016 ACBL Special Conditions of Contest, Appendix II, Conditions of Contest For District GNT Finals Hosted Online,

<http://web2.acbl.org/coc/GNT2015-16.pdf> will govern each flight of the D20 GNT Finals, with the two following clarifications:

- a. This event will be conducted at a variety of playing sites, and hosted on-line by Bridge Base Online (BBO), an ACBL approved host.
- b. The use of electronic communication devices will be governed by the ACBL Conditions of Contest, Appendix J, Electronic Device Policy:
<http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/play/Conditions-of-Contest/Appendix-J.pdf>

I. **Conventions**

Conventions listed in the ACBL Mid-Chart may be used in the Championship Flight and Flight A only. Championship flight pairs using mid-chart conventions must, not later than April 30, 2016, submit a written description of the method(s) plus suggested defenses to the Coordinator. Flight A pairs using mid-chart conventions must, not later than May 7, 2016, submit a written description of the method(s) plus suggested defenses to the Coordinator. Such submission may be sent via email or delivered in person. The Coordinator will post the descriptions and the convention cards for Championship Flight participants on-line. Willful failure to comply with the mid-chart disclosure or convention card requirements may, in the Coordinator's discretion, result in disallowing the offending pairs from using some or all non-yellow card conventions.

J. **Changes to Team Makeup**

1. **Adding or Dropping Team Members:** A team may add or drop members prior to advancing from the District Finals to the National Finals subject to the following:
 - a. A team may drop members, but no team may continue unless at least a majority of the original team members remain (3 of 4 or 5; 4 of 6). This provision may be waived if a player withdraws because of a personal emergency close to the National Finals and there is not time to reschedule with the next team in line.
 - b. A team may add members subject to the following restrictions:
 - An advancing team may add any player from the second, third, and fourth place teams in their flight for the current year; or
 - An advancing team may add any player from the District if approved by the District Director; and
 - c. All changes must be submitted in writing to the Coordinator in a timely manner but at least two weeks prior to the Nationals Finals to facilitate seating there.
2. **Replacing Teams:** If the winner of a Flight declines to play at the Nationals, the second place team will be eligible to advance. If that team also declines to advance, then the third place team will be eligible to advance and so forth. If two teams are tied for a place eligible to advance and both teams desire to advance, then the replacement team will be chosen by lot.

K. Subsidies

1. **Travel Expenses**: The District will subsidize the travel expenses to the National Finals incurred by the winners of each Flight, with \$1,800 going to each winning team. Participants in any Flight may conduct fund-raisers, all proceeds of which will be used to supplement the District's subsidy of that Flight.
2. **Request Form**: Team members may submit a subsidy request form once they have made travel and hotel arrangements to attend the National Finals. The form is available from the Business Manager and must be completed and returned not sooner than one month prior to the event.
3. **Repayment**: Subsidy moneys disbursed must be repaid to the District if the player or team does not compete in the National Finals.

L. Publicity

1. **Winner Actions**: The District's champions of each Flight will reasonably cooperate in promoting the event including by, if requested, (i) supplying a short written tournament report of the District and/or National GNT Finals for publication in the District's newspaper; and, (ii) making public appearances.
2. **Coordinator Duties**: The Coordinator will promote the event by providing separate, advance e-mail notifications to the captain of each team that entered the previous GNT Finals of the period for Club Qualification, and of the dates, times and locations for the District Finals. The Coordinator will arrange to publish both this information and the tournament reports referenced in this paragraph in the District's newspaper.

M. Contingencies

1. The Coordinator will resolve all contingencies or ambiguities relating to Club Qualifying Events, Unit Level Qualifying Events, seeding point calculations, publicity, augmentation, playing sites and dates, and subsidies that are not specifically addressed by these conditions.
2. Unless they directly involve his or her team (in which event the Coordinator will defer to a NA Events Committee member to act in his or her stead), the Coordinator will resolve all contingencies or ambiguities relating to the format or playing conditions of the Finals that are not specifically addressed by these Conditions and which arise on or before May 1, 2016. Where feasible, the Coordinator will consult with the NA Events Committee before exercising this authority.
3. The Tournament Director will resolve all contingencies or ambiguities relating to the format or playing conditions of the Finals that are not specifically addressed by these conditions and which arise after May 1, 2016.