
Chapter 5 - SPECIAL UNIT GAMES

In order to furnish ACBL members with a continuous program of interesting, competitive bridge events, ACBL has provided each unit with a variety of bridge activities for single or multiple sites.

SECTION ONE: UNIT CHAMPIONSHIPS

ACBL has allocated 24 unit championship sessions per year to each unit. Units may schedule these sessions at their discretion. Units prepare bridge competitions that are suitable for their membership size and for the size and location availability of their playing areas.

Clubs that conform with ACBL regulations that have proved reliable in submitting Monthly Report Forms and fees, and that have an adequate number of tables may participate in these unit championships. Clubs not sanctioned to meet at the times of unit events may be allowed to participate in these events with unit approval.

I. SCHEDULING

A. TYPES OF EVENTS

ACBL permits considerable latitude in scheduling unit championship sessions. For example, a unit could hold a one-session unit championship each month, thus utilizing 12 of its 24 sessions. The unit could hold a two-session game, such as an election party or a new members party, several times a year. Units could also schedule a portion of their unit championship allocation as four-session unit championships each calendar quarter. The various events may consist of any schedule of games that might appeal to the unit membership. For example, the events could be mixed pairs, master pairs, open pairs, or Swiss teams.

B. FREQUENCY

Any schedule that does not interfere with higher-rated championships scheduled nearby is acceptable. However, in order to offer a well-rounded annual schedule, ACBL recommends that the events be spread throughout the year.

C. CONFLICTS WITH HIGHER-RATED CHAMPIONSHIPS

Regional and sectional tournaments have priority for weekend dates. Therefore, if there is a schedule conflict with a tournament being held in the same or an adjacent unit area, the date of the unit championship must be changed. In areas where many sectionals are held, units often can avoid schedule conflicts by holding unit championships on weeknights in cooperation with regularly scheduled club games.

As soon as the regular tournament schedule is complete, unit officials should prepare a schedule of unit championships. Units should schedule these events early to help affected clubs avoid time conflicts when preparing their schedules.

D. GAME SITES

A unit may elect to hold its unit championships in one central location. This highlights the fact that the games are unit activities. It also gives the unit and its board of directors an identity insofar as newer members are concerned.

Alternatively, a unit may schedule one or more unit championship sessions to be played simultaneously in several different unit locations, with each game site scoring as a separate event. There is no unit-wide overall masterpoint award, but the entire game counts as only a single session of the unit's allocation. This is called a "split" unit championship.

II. SANCTION APPLICATION AND FEES

The unit must complete and submit the on-line application for ACBL sanction of a unit championship, to ACBL at least 45 days in advance of the event. On completion of the tournament, the unit must remit sanction fees with the Unit Championship Tournament Report.

III. DELEGATION OF SESSIONS

In some cases, cost or location considerations may make it necessary or advantageous for a unit to delegate some or all of its allocated unit championships to individual clubs or groups of clubs. A large unit, for example, which may include playing areas that are remote from the main concentration of its members, may allocate one or more of its championship sessions to various clubs throughout the unit. The unit would obtain the sanction, but the clubs would physically conduct the game. If such a cooperative plan is not feasible, the unit may allocate specific events to specific clubs, distributing them in such a way that every club desiring to participate may sponsor or co-sponsor at least one unit championship event annually. PRECAUTIONS MUST BE TAKEN TO INSURE THAT NO ONE CLUB IS TREATED EITHER MORE OR LESS FAVORABLY THAN ITS COMPETITORS.

IV. STAFFING

The unit must have a club or higher-rated director to run a unit game. A playing director is permitted for games of no more than 17 tables in one section.

V. SCORING

Scoring by ACBLscore computer program is preferable but not mandatory. Traveling scores or pickup slips may be used.

VI. MASTERPOINT AWARDS

Unless submitted with a club's month-end report, the director must report the results on the form provided as soon as possible. He or she must list the names, player numbers, and place of finish of all participants entitled to overall or session awards.

For information purposes only, masterpoint award charts appear on the Open Pairs Report Form. When championships are held simultaneously at

different sites, ACBL issues overall and section awards separately for each site.

VII. SYSTEMS AND CONVENTIONS

A unit must allow unit championship participants to use all conventions shown on the General Convention Chart. If other conventions are to be allowed, this information must be advertised prior to the event.

SECTION TWO: UNIT FOUNDATION/FUND GAMES

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.

I. 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.

II. 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).

III. SANCTION APPLICATIONS

The unit must complete and submit the on-line sanction application for charity events. The unit must specify beneficiaries on the sanction application.

SECTION THREE: ANNUAL EXTENDED TEAM GAMES

In order to foster International Matchpoint (IMP) play, ACBL grants each unit the right to hold a maximum of three annual sectional-rated, extended round-robin or knockout team-of-four events. These three games are included in the allotment of twenty-four unit games that each unit is allocated per calendar year. The events must run for three or more sessions.

I. MASTERPOINT AWARDS

An IMP event awards sectional-rated black points when the event is truly extended (no fewer than three sessions of 24 or more boards each). Otherwise, the event carries only unit championship rating.

II. SANCTION APPLICATION AND FEES

To apply for a sanction for an annual IMP game, the unit must complete and submit the on-line application for an extended team game at least 45 days in advance of the event.

There is a per table per session sanction fee, plus regular game and table fees which must be remitted with the tournament report.

III. CONDITIONS OF CONTEST

Units must submit proposed conditions of contest to ACBL for approval together with the sanction application.

SECTION FOUR: UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIPS

A unit-wide game can be held simultaneously in three or more locations, each site with a minimum of five tables in play, using a unit championship session. Morning and afternoon games are deemed to be the same session when there is not more than a three and one-half hour difference between the starting times of the games.

Two or more units may combine to hold a unit-wide game, also at three or more locations but within the joint area of the units conducting the game. This game is deducted from the unit-wide allocation of each unit.

I. SANCTION APPLICATIONS

The unit receives, collates, and forwards complete reports from all game sites along with appropriate fees. The reports and fees must be forwarded as soon as possible after conclusion of the game.

II. UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIP PLANNING AND COORDINATION

The unit supervises all preparations for unit-wide championships. It must provide for the staff to run the championship and, at sponsor option, furnish the necessary computer-dealt hands (provided by the ACBL Club and Member Services Department) and other supplies. The computer-dealt hands will only be sent electronically. The unit should arrange for the game sites to be in clubs. In every respect, the quality of the game must meet unit standards. The unit determines overall ranking and reports the results to ACBL.

All clubs within the unit area are eligible to participate in unit-wide championships that are scheduled on sessions for which the clubs are sanctioned if they meet the following criteria: (1) anticipate having at least five tables, and (2) conform to all ACBL regulations.

III. REPORTS AND SANCTION FEES

The unit receives, collates, and forwards complete reports from all game sites along with appropriate fees. The reports and fees must be forwarded as soon as possible after conclusion of the game.

IV. COMPUTER-DEALT HANDS

Units may use computer-dealt hands (sent electronically), purchased from or authorized for use by ACBL for play in unit-wide games. All sites must use identical hands.

V. MASTERPOINT AWARDS

In unit-wide championships ACBL issues all masterpoint awards. ACBL bases these awards on the total number of tables played throughout the unit. Section awards vary according to the number of tables in play in each section.

Each site director must list on the tournament report form the names, player numbers, and scores of all session winners and possible overall winners. The site director must then mail the completed form to the unit-designated chairman within 48 hours of the conclusion of the game.

The unit-wide championship game results can also be submitted using ACBLscore.

VI. TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

Generally, the same ACBL regulations apply to unit-wide championships that apply to other types of unit championships. If there are any differences, ACBL notes them and sends that information to the units along with the sanctions for the games.

SECTION FIVE: ACBL-WIDE EVENTS

An ACBL-wide event is a one-session game that has a sectional open pair rating. Most of these games utilize computer-generated hands. When computer-generated hands are used they are played simultaneously at numerous sites through out the entire ACBL territory. Non-participating bridge experts study these hands (but do not alter them) and predict the probable results from playing them. ACBL publishes these predictions and the analyses on which they are based. This information is available to all contestants upon completion of the game. All open games receive sectionally rated masterpoints.

I. TYPES OF GAMES

Currently there are eight ACBL-wide games per year, most of which are held at club sites.

A. INTERNATIONAL FUND GAMES

Three ACBL-wide events are conducted to benefit the ACBL International Fund. The proceeds of the International Fund games help defray the expenses of players who represent their countries in international competition.

The game will be reported with a club's monthly report with fees and masterpoints included.

B. CHARITY GAMES

Two ACBL-wide events are conducted to benefit the ACBL Charity Foundation, one in the spring and one in the fall. 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.

Proceeds from Canadian games are mailed directly to the Canadian Charitable Fund. Proceeds from all other ACBL-wide charity games go to the ACBL Charity Foundation.

C. SPECIAL GAMES

Three other ACBL-wide special events are held each year: the Senior Pairs game in February, the Worldwide Pairs game in June, and the ACBL Instant Matchpoint game in September. ACBL allocates all three of these events to the clubs. Additional information on these special events is available from the ACBL Special Events Department.

Overall masterpoints will be awarded in Continent-wide Charity Games and in Continent-wide International Fund Games that use hand records and for which National and District winners are determined and published in the ACBL Bulletin. In addition to District overall awards, Continent-wide overall winners will be determined and overall masterpoints awarded. Overall point awards will be red.

II. SANCTIONS

The ACBL Charity Department processes and approves sanctions for ACBL-wide charity and International Fund games. On approval, this department sends instructions for operating ACBL-wide games to the officials listed on the sanction applications.

A club need not be sanctioned for the night of an ACBL-wide game in order to participate. If it is not, the ACBL will automatically send a permission request to the unit secretary. ACBL will approve sanction applications for clubs already sanctioned to operate at the time the ACBL-wide games are scheduled, unless the clubs are delinquent in the submission of ACBL reports.

A. GAME CONDUCTED BY THE UNIT

When no local club is holding a special game, the unit may conduct the game. The unit must apply for the sanction.

B. JOINT SPONSORSHIP BY TWO OR MORE CLUBS

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 office.

III. GAME REGULATIONS

A. GAME SECURITY

HAND RECORDS: In addition to full instructions and a copy of the game regulations, the director receives copies of the hands to be played. The copies are enclosed in a sealed envelope, which must remain sealed until game time. At game time the director opens the envelope in the presence of a witness who verifies the envelope was not previously opened and it was opened at game time.

HAND ANALYSES: A second sealed envelope contains the hand analyses. This envelope is plainly marked and must remain sealed until the conclusion of the game. A witness must verify this opening.

B. DIRECTOR

The ACBL-wide game must be conducted by a club or higher-rated non-playing director. A playing director is allowed for games of one section with 17 or fewer tables.

C. NUMBER OF TABLES

For the participants to be eligible for district and ACBL-wide recognition, at least five full tables must be in play.

D. HALF TABLES

To help avoid half tables, each game should have a stand-by pair available. If necessary this stand-by pair may play free, but ACBL permits only one such free entry. It allows half-table games if the sponsoring club or unit submits a copy of the recap sheet with the report.

E. DONATIONS

ACBL requires a minimum donation per player to the appropriate ACBL Fund for whose benefit the ACBL-wide game is held.

F. NEWCOMER SECTIONS

A newcomer section (a newcomer is a player with 20 or fewer masterpoints) may be run in conjunction with open or invitational sections or as an independent section. Awards for newcomers are 40 percent of those issued in the open game. In newcomer sections of at least five tables, participants are eligible for district and ACBL-wide recognition. Other regulations, including minimum donations, are the same as for open games.

G. INVITATIONAL SECTIONS

Invitational sections may be conducted independently or in conjunction with the open sections in ACBL-wide games. Awards for invitational sections are 80% of sectional rating. In invitational sections of at least five tables, participants are eligible for district and ACBL-wide recognition. Other regulations, including minimum donations, are the same as they are for open games.

H. MASTERPOINT AWARDS

ACBL issues all masterpoint awards in accordance with the sectional formula for open pairs. It bases the awards on the class of the game and the number of tables in which the participants played. The game should be reported with a club's month end report. If ACBLscore is not being used, the game director must complete the report forms and return them to ACBL. He or she must include on the report form the scores and player numbers for all ranked pairs as well as the percentage score for the two highest ranking pairs.

IV. NON-PARTICIPATING CLUBS

A non-participating club may operate its regular club masterpoint game, even if an ACBL-wide game is being held elsewhere in its area. However, a club championship or a higher-rated game may not be scheduled for the same time as an ACBL-wide game being held within a 25-mile radius of that club.