

## ACBL GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONTEST FOR ALL EVENTS

ACBL events are conducted in accordance with the current version of the "Laws of Duplicate Bridge" as promulgated in the Western Hemisphere by the ACBL. Conditions of Contest for an event may not be changed at any level of play during the course of that event. Lack of knowledge does not constitute cause for exemption.

These conditions apply to all events, and should be posted. There are General Conditions for specific event types that apply and there may be additional specific conditions for specific events. In cases where there is disagreement between these conditions and more specific ones, the more specific conditions will take precedence.

Sponsoring organizations may, with ACBL approval only, amend these conditions for a specific event. Such amendments should appear in all printed tournament schedules and be posted prior to the start of event.

The Director in Charge shall make the final decision on any item in these conditions. Furthermore, the Director in Charge will resolve any issue not specifically covered by these conditions.

## ENTRY AND PARTICIPATION

1. ACBL events are open to any bridge player unless otherwise restricted or the player is under discipline that prohibits participation.
  - Foreign Players (those who reside outside the geographical boundaries of the ACBL and who are not citizens of an ACBL country) who are not members of ACBL are not permitted to play in any North American Bridge Championship events.
  - Nonmembers, unpaid/inactive members and Life Members whose services fees are unpaid may not enter NABC+ events.
  - In flighted events at any level, foreign players who have represented their country in International competition shall be permitted to play only in Flight A. They may however apply for relief for cause from this requirement.
  - Players with bridge experience from non-ACBL venues (such as but not limited to play in other countries) must check with the DIC to insure that they are placed in the proper category and/or seeded correctly.
  - A current member's eligibility for participation in an ACBL sanctioned event is determined by his masterpoint total (including eligibility points) as of the monthly cycle (run at midnight on the 6<sup>th</sup> of each month) prior to the start of the event or for a tournament the start of the tournament (excluding events which are set per their conditions of contest).
2. Unless prior arrangement has been made with the DIC, upon entry into an event a player is expected to complete that event.
  - a. Any pair may withdraw between sessions of a multi-session pair event if it has the permission of the DIC, who may allow the withdrawal if there is no irreparable damage done to the seeding or the movement. Any entry fees already paid shall be kept by the sponsoring organization. Such contestants are allowed to play only in side games (no gold points) until the completion of the event from which they withdrew.
  - b. A five or six person team may enter a KO event at a tournament with one or two of its members not having the intent to complete the event (as long as there are at least four members continuing) with the following restrictions: in a seeded knockout, the player

intending to withdraw must not appreciably affect the seeding or strength of the team; in a random draw, the player intending to withdraw must not appreciably affect the strength of the team.

3. Informal or casual dress is usually acceptable and appropriate. Conformity to generally acceptable standards of decency and cleanliness is expected. Tournament Directors may, subject to consultation with the DIC, refuse to sell an entry to a person or persons inappropriately dressed or not conforming to the above standards. Subject to consultation with the DIC, Tournament Directors may remove from the tournament area anyone who is inappropriately dressed.
4. Betting at Tournaments - Wagering on the results of an ACBL-sanctioned event is specifically prohibited. Any member found guilty of any form of such betting in a game or tournament is liable to severe disciplinary action.
5. Each contestant agrees that all, or portions, of the event may be filmed, recorded or otherwise documented or publicized at the discretion of the ACBL, and that this documentation may be used without charge by any news medium or the ACBL. Contestants may at times be required to play on Vugraph. Each contestant consents to participate in publicity photo sessions and or have photograph taken to publicize the contestant's standing in the event.
6. The playing conditions at all tournaments shall be substantially equal for all players in one event in so far as possible given space and other considerations.
7. When exiting the room or on an errand within the room, a player must avoid wandering about within the room.
8. Tournament directors shall make every reasonable effort to accommodate players with special needs (such as but not limited to players with physical disabilities). The director in charge (DIC) shall, in his opinion, ensure that no such accommodation provides a special advantage to such a player or significantly impedes the orderly progress of the event. Tournament directors in providing an accommodation must do so in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the intent of the conditions of contest for the event. Except for minor accommodations (e.g. stationary positions), the DIC of the tournament or event must be notified in advance in order to ensure that an accommodation can be provided.
9. ACBL playing cards use the traditional playing card design. Any deck in which the faces of the cards do not significantly differ from the ACBL deck may be approved for use by the director in charge of the tournament. Use of specially designed cards (to accommodate players with a disability), which do not approximate the design of ACBL or similar traditional playing cards, must be approved by ACBL Management. Management will determine if and how these alternate decks can be used in order to insure that other participants are no placed at an unreasonable disadvantage. Decks which have received prior approval are: Braille cards which have traditional-type faces, jumbo decks which have altered the traditional design by enlarging all pips, numbers and letters or those which use a single large traditional marking in the center of each card. Other decks which vary from traditional markings and or colors must be submitted to ACBL (attention: Tournament Department) for approval at least 30 days prior to intended use.

## DEPARTMENT

1. While it is recognized that bridge, especially tournament bridge, is a very competitive endeavor, all players are expected to maintain proper decorum throughout. The ACBL Board of Directors and Management are committed to improving player behavior at all times. The ACBL "Zero Tolerance Policy" outlines what is expected of all players during ACBL sanctioned tournaments as well as in the playing area before and after each session.
2. The ultimate purpose of this Zero-Tolerance policy toward improper behavior is to create a much more

pleasant atmosphere at our tournaments. We are attempting to eradicate unacceptable behavior in order to make the game of bridge more enjoyable for all. Below are some examples of commendable behavior, which will significantly contribute to the improved atmosphere: Being a good 'host' or 'guest' at the table. Greeting others in a friendly manner. Praising the bidding and/or play of the opponents. In the following list are some examples of behavior that will not be tolerated: badgering, rudeness, insinuations, intimidation, profanity, threats, or violence; negative comments concerning opponents' or partner's play or bidding; constant and gratuitous lessons and analyses at the table; loud and disruptive arguing with a director's ruling. If a player at the table behaves in an unacceptable manner, the director should be called immediately. Annoying behavior, embarrassing remarks, or any other conduct that might interfere with the enjoyment of the game is specifically prohibited by Law. The tournament director has the authority to assess disciplinary penalties. If it is established that there was unacceptable behavior, an immediate quarter board disciplinary penalty (3 IMP or 1 VP in team games) may be assigned to all offenders. This may involve any one or all four players at the table irrespective of who initiated the unacceptable behavior.

3. English is the international language of bridge. The ACBL recognizes that its membership is multilingual. Every effort will be made to accommodate our membership. However, once hands are removed from the boards, all calls, questions and plays will be in English. Exceptions may be made if both captains, in a team event, or all four players at the table, in a pair event, agree to use some common language understood by all four players. Should problems arise please call for a Tournament Director.

## PLAY

1. Margin of Victory - Any margin of difference in score between contestants breaks a tie for qualification purposes. A margin of difference in score of a least 0.01 breaks a tie for purposes of rank and masterpoints. NOTE: This applies to all forms of scoring, including IMPs, even if a ruling awards fractions of an IMP.
2. A player may play and earn masterpoints in as many sessions of bridge as possible while not entered in a concurrent or over-lapping event, except that players on teams with more than four members or teams with byes may play in concurrent one-session events only (for this purpose Side Game Series (Continuous Pairs) are considered one session events, but no access to gold points for that session, nor may that session's score be used to determine overall rank. In such cases masterpoints may not be earned in both events. The higher award shall be retained, the lower award deleted.
  - a. A player who is on a team that has received a bye is considered entered in that event when that event begins.
  - Morning and evening knockout events are not considered overlapping or conflicting events regardless of times scheduled.
3. ACBL events at NABCs are non-smoking.
4. Except for health related equipment or by permission of the DIC, cell phones, pagers, and all similar communications equipment may not be operated or operable in the playing area during a session of play at NABCs. Violations of this policy may be penalized without warning. Minimum penalties of one-quarter board for matchpointed events and three IMPs or one Victory Point for other events will be assessed if a player's cell phone or pager is audible or if a cell phone is being used in the playing area. Sponsoring organizations of other ACBL sanctioned events are strongly encouraged to adopt this policy.
5. Players are expected to play each hand to win at all times. No dumping is permitted even if such dumping may be in the contestant's best long-term interest.

6. The percentage of the boards a player must play to receive masterpoints varies with the type of contest. Consult the general conditions for that type event and the specific event conditions, if any.
7. Carding Agreements: - A pair may not elect to have no agreement when it comes to carding. There have been pairs that say they just play random leads or that they lead the card closest to their thumb. They must decide on a carding agreement and mark their convention cards accordingly. Of course, some leeway needs to be given to fill-in pairs or very last minute partnerships.
8. The refusal of a player, pair or team in an ACBL sanctioned Sectional, Regional, NABC, Grand National or North American Pair event to play against another player, pair or team duly entered in the event shall require the disqualification of the player, pair or team refusing to play from further participation in the event and the forfeiture of any masterpoints earned by the player, pair or team in the event. Such refusal shall constitute conduct unbecoming a member of the ACBL and shall be referred to the disciplinary body having jurisdiction for appropriate disciplinary action.
9. Face Down Opening Leads - Face-down opening leads are required at all ACBL sanctioned events.
10. Unless instructed otherwise by a tournament director, a member of each side must be present and seated before cards are removed from a board.
11. For Barometer-style events, the Tournament Director shall, before the start of each round, advise all players to be seated. No cards shall be removed until the Tournament Director announces that play shall begin. Any player not seated in a timely fashion may be subject to a procedural penalty.

#### KIBITZING

1. Barring Kibitzers - No player has the right to bar all kibitzers from his table, but each player has the right to bar one individual (excluding tournament officials, the recorder or his designee(s), or officially approved members of the press) from kibitzing play at his table during a session without assigning cause. (A traveling player may bar only one individual during a session without assigning cause). Any kibitzer may be barred for cause by the Tournament Director.
2. Kibitzing Team Members - A kibitzing team member must sit at least two tables away from each table of his/her team's match and may not kibitz at any table playing duplicated boards also being played by his/her team.

#### ALERTS

1. While Alerts are generally noted in red on the convention card and Announcements in blue, refer to the ACBL Alert Chart and/or procedure for complete information.
2. All players have an obligation to disclose their agreements according to the procedures established by ACBL. When asked, a full explanation of the agreement must be provided. Stating the common or popular name of the convention is not sufficient. The opponents need not ask exactly the "right" question. Any request for information should be the trigger. Opponents need only indicate the desire for information -- all relevant disclosures should be given automatically. The proper way to ask for information is "Please Explain".
3. A player who remembers that a call requires an Alert but cannot remember the meaning must still alert.

4. Players who, by experience or expertise, recognize that their opponents have neglected to Alert a special agreement will be expected to protect themselves.
5. When an Alert is given, ASK! do not ASSUME.
6. Adjustments for violations are not automatic. There must have been damage, and an adjustment will be made only when the Alert violation was a direct cause of the damage. Note also that an opponent who actually knows or suspects what is happening, even though not properly informed, may not be entitled to redress if he or she chooses to proceed without clarifying the situation.
7. At the conclusion of the auction, if declarer or dummy is aware that partner has given misinformation to the opponents, he or she is required by law to correct the misinformation before the opening lead is made. Failure to do so may result in a procedural penalty as well as a score adjustment. A defender must announce the misinformation to his opponents at the conclusion of the play of the hand and the director should be summoned.

### CONVENTIONS AND CONVENTION CARDS

1. The ACBL General Convention Chart will govern bidding and playing methods unless the Sponsoring Organization has announced or published that the Mid-Chart and/or Super-Chart will be permitted.
2. A partnership is responsible for knowing when their methods apply in probable (to be expected) auctions. A pair may be entitled to redress if their opponents did not originally have a clear understanding of when and how to use a convention that was employed.
3. Players should review their own convention cards before the start of the session to make sure that they are current on the agreements with this particular partner. In cases of misinformation vs. misbids, it is the responsibility of the bidding side to prove beyond reasonable doubt that a misbid was made rather than misinformation given. The convention card and previous auctions are the most obvious ways to resolve any disagreements concerning misbid versus misinformation.
4. Official ACBL convention cards or convention cards which are similar must be used at all ACBL sectional or higher-rated events. Generally, the color red on the convention card indicates that the agreement must be Alerted but the Alert pamphlet is the final authority in cases of disputes on the Alertability of any conventional call. Similarly, the color blue on the convention card indicates a call requiring an "Announcement."
5. Each member of a partnership MUST have a completely filled out convention card available for the opponents.
  - Both cards of a partnership must be identical and include the first and last names of each member of the partnership.
  - If a Director determines that neither player has a substantially completed card, the partnership may only play the ACBL Standard American Yellow Card (SAYC) and may only use standard carding. This restriction may only be lifted at the beginning of a subsequent round after Convention Cards have been properly prepared and approved by the Director. Further, the partnership will receive a 1/6 Board Match Point Penalty for each Board played, commencing with the next round and continuing until the restriction is lifted. In IMP team games penalties shall be at the discretion of the Director.
  - If the Director determines the partnership has at least one substantially completed Convention Card but has not fully complied with ACBL regulations, then the director may give warnings or, if the deficiency is not corrected in a timely manner given the

circumstances, assign such penalties as he deems to be appropriate.

#### TIMING

1. Players are normally allowed 7.5 minutes to bid and play each bridge hand.
2. When a pair has fallen behind it is incumbent on them to make up the time lost as quickly as possible whether at fault or not. All players are expected to make a concerted effort to catch up when they have fallen behind, regardless of the reason for their lateness.

#### PENALTIES

1. Fouling or Misduplicating a Board - In Individual, Pair and B-A-M Team events, penalties for fouling a board will automatically apply any time the offense causes the board to be scored as a fouled board.
  - a. In NABC+ events, a full board penalty for a foul during duplication will apply to all contestants assigned to the table at which the board was "made" unless the director determines that there are mitigating circumstances.
  - In regional and sectional events, a ¼ board penalty for a foul during duplication will apply to all contestants assigned to the table at which the board was "made" unless the director determines that there were mitigating circumstances.
  - In all events, a full board penalty for a foul during play will be imposed on the pair or pairs responsible.
2. Slow play, especially habitual slow play, is subject to penalty.
3. Comparison of Scores - No comparison of scores or discussion of results is permitted during the course of a session. Violation of this regulation carries an automatic penalty of one full board of the session in progress.

#### TARDINESS & SUBSTITUTIONS

1. Substitutes are subject to the discretion of the Director in Charge or his designee and may not appreciably strengthen the partnership or team.
2. For qualifying events, a qualified pair which fails to seat both members of the partnership ten minutes after the announced starting time of a final session or the first final session in events of more than one will be replaced by the highest available alternate qualifier.

#### CORRECTION AND APPEAL PERIODS

1. The appeal period of or for a Director's ruling expires one half hour after the completion of a session or the starting time of the next session, whichever is earlier.
2. The correction period varies by type of event. See the General and Specific Conditions for the event.