

**HANDBOOK  
FOR  
INTERMEDIATE - NEWCOMER  
COORDINATORS**

AMERICAN CONTRACT BRIDGE LEAGUE  
2990 AIRWAYS BLVD.  
MEMPHIS TN 38116  
[www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)

## CONTENTS

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The ACBL IN Program.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>What Is an IN Program? .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>What Is an IN Tournament or an IN Program at a Tournament? .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What Kind of IN Program May Be Run with Unit/Club Games? .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Role of the Unit Intermediate-Newcomer (IN) Coordinator .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What Is an IN Coordinator? .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What Is the Specific Focus of an IN Coordinator? .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>How Does the Role of IN Coordinator Differ from Ed Liaison? .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>IN Coordinators in Large and Small Units.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Getting Started --- Part I .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>What Is the Status of IN Activity in the Unit? .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Getting Started --- Part II.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Step 1 --- Education Liaison.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Step 2 --- Teachers.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Step 3 --- Clubs .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Step 4 --- New Player Services (NPS).....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>What is a New Player Services Program.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Should your unit establish a NPS program? .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>How does NPS work? .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Do NPS committee members work only at unit functions? .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Step 5 --- Mentoring Programs .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Is your unit ready for a mentoring program?.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>How do we get started? .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>What are new players looking for? .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The most important benefits of a mentoring program.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Marketing Ideas for Your Unit .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Standards for Unit IN Activities .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Standards for New Player Activities at the Unit Level .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Standards for New Player Activities at the Club Level .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Standards for IN Activities at Sectional Tournaments.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Materials Available for IN Coordinators .....</b>	<b>20</b>



# ACBL Intermediate-Newcomer Program

## What Is an IN Program?

An Intermediate-Newcomer Program is the name given to selected bridge activities organized and run by a group (unit, district, club) that wants to encourage newer bridge players to participate. IN activities can be restricted to any group(s) of non-Life Master players (0 to 300).

There are ten basic ingredients of a newcomer program for sectional and regional tournaments or IN Sectionals. A booklet entitled Planning and Organizing Your IN Tournament or Program is available through the ACBL Education Department (ext. 1262).

Games for 199er, 99er, 49er, 0 to 20, and 0 to 5 players each session  
Offer all of these events. A notation, may be stratified at the director's discretion, should appear on all advertising. This allows the director to set up strats that will best balance the players in attendance and will award the most masterpoints possible. (A game may be stratified, but any group of three or more newcomer tables should be run as a separate event.)

### **Trophies for overall wins**

New players love to win trophies. The trophies may be regular trophies, glasses, mugs, etc. New players like prizes that say, First Place Winner.

### **A special area/room for the IN games**

A special room is desirable but often not available. IN Coordinators may make a corner of the room the special area for new players. This allows the players to maximum benefits from participating in an IN Program. If a separate room is used, the games should be close to the rest of the tournament so the new players will feel like a part of the whole.

### **Directors who are experienced in working with newcomers**

Running games for new players requires a combination of public relations and directing skills. ACBL has trained a number of tournament directors to work with new players. They are referred to as IN Specialists. ACBL will assign one of these directors to your tournament on request. Any club director will gain more experience in working with new players by spending one or more sessions with the directors of the IN Program at any NABC. They may sign up by contacting the Education Department (ext. 1264).

### **Celebrity speakers give Bridge Tips before the games**

Start each session with a special speaker lecturing for 20 to 30 minutes. Speakers who can entertain and give bridge tips on the level of the new players are best for this program. If the topic is too advanced, the speaker will do more harm than good.

### **Social events**

Social events give the players a better chance to get to know each other and to find partners for future events. Bridge bingo, jukebox dancing, a wine and cheese party, a between-sessions dinner buffet, a hospitality room where new players can meet the local "stars" and bridge officials, a panel show and a pizza party are ideas that have worked.

### **Pictures of the winners**

Take Polaroid pictures of the winners and display them. Players love to see who has won in the Winner's Circle.

### **Flyers to invite the players and guarantee partners**

Mail flyers to the eligible players in the area inviting them to attend. Advertise that partners are guaranteed for anyone who arrives one hour before game time. Arrange for a standby pair. (Mailing labels can be ordered from the ACBL or produced from your unit's own database.)

### **New Players Services (NPS)**

Have a volunteer sit at the hospitality desk to assist the new players as needed with questions and information. Have committee members walk around the IN room/area to visit with the players, pass out candy, go from table to table wishing the players good luck in the game to follow. Have volunteers available after each session to help the players interpret the scores. These are services that would be performed by the committee members of a unit New Player Services program. (See Page 16.)

### **Newcomer hand records with analysis sheets**

ACBL can provide these packages for the under 20 masterpoint players. This material provides an opportunity for the new players to re-examine and discuss the hands after the game.

## **What Is an IN Tournament or an IN Program at a Tournament?**

IN sectionals, IN regionals and IN programs are planned for players who are either new to duplicate or new to bridge. IN sectionals and IN regionals stand alone; IN programs run as part of a regular sectional or regional tournament.

IN sectionals, IN regionals and IN programs are held as a means of creating a new player program or expanding one that is already in place. They are unlikely to be successful unless the host unit, local clubs and surrounding units have already made an effort to develop an active group of bridge students and new players.

IN tournaments/programs offer a pool of congenial partners, a suitable place to play, events in every session that Intermediate and Newcomer players may win, and a lot of fun. The format of each is the 10-point IN Program defined on Page 2.

A unit may hold an unlimited number of IN sectionals (unless limited by the District) and may delegate the sponsorship of these activities to clubs within its jurisdiction. IN sectionals may run from one to five days and require a sanction from the ACBL Tournament Department. An IN program may be held in conjunction with any sectional or regional tournament and does not require a separate sanction. The IN program schedule would be advertised along with the events for the sectional or regional tournament.

Planning and running IN tournaments/programs tends to infuse unit members with new vitality by giving them an exciting project to work on as a team.

## **What Kind of IN Program May Be Run with Unit and/or Club Games?**

Many of the 10 IN Program activities can be offered in conjunction with a local unit or club game.

### **Scheduling games**

It's most important to advertise the game as limited to a certain number of masterpoints (0 to 5, 0 to 20, 0 to 50, 0 to 100, 0 to 200) so the newcomers will feel welcome and know there is a game for them. Newer players won't come if you don't invite them. Advertise all of these levels and stratify if necessary.

### **Encourage learning**

Arrange for local bridge "stars" and teachers to give a bridge tip before the start of all games.

### **Give prizes**

If the games are small, offer an opportunity to collect points (or credits or Bridge Bucks) that can be redeemed for prizes when a certain number have been earned. The awards don't have to be fancy. They have to be something that shows the player is a "winner."

### **Guarantee partners**

In order to guarantee a partner for anyone who arrives an hour before game time, give a free play to any player who stands by and doesn't get to play. Organize a partnership committee to call the regular newcomers and arrange partnerships.

### **Help your players get to know each other**

Your social activities don't have to be fancy, just fun. Anything that will help the players get to know each other better will result in their making partnerships and having a good time.

### **Help your players bond**

Holding the newcomer game on a night when there isn't an open game will give the players a better chance to bond and get to know one another.

running IN sectionals that have been delegated to them by the unit and work with the unit's tournament chairman to offer IN programs at all of the unit's sectional tournaments (and regional tournaments within the unit's jurisdiction).

**How does the position of IN Coordinator differ from that of an Education Liaison?**

The Education Liaison is involved with the big picture of making the unit aware of programs ACBL has made available to encourage participation and membership, and the EL works with the unit to establish some or all of those programs (*e.g.*, TAP, Mentoring, New Player Services, etc.). The IN Coordinator focuses on creating and expanding the unit's IN Program.

If the unit has an Ed Liaison, an Ed Committee, bridge teachers offering lessons, a New Player Services program, a mentoring program, etc., the IN Coordinator will find it much easier to offer IN sectionals and programs and for them to be successful. If these pieces of the puzzle are NOT in place or if the IN Coordinator and the Education Liaison are the same person, the job of the IN Coordinator becomes more difficult and more complicated. (The IN Coordinator should always be a member of the Unit's Ed Committee.)

**How does the job of the IN Coordinator differ in a small unit and in a large unit?**

In a small unit, the IN Coordinator can do most of the organizational work alone. The IN Coordinator would work with the Ed Liaison, teachers, club managers, sectional tournament chairmen, the New Player Services Committee and the Education Committee. The IN Coordinator reports directly to the unit Board.

In a large unit, the IN Coordinator must have a group of volunteers to do the footwork in the cities/areas where they each live and report back to the unit IN Coordinator. Again the IN Coordinator would work with the Ed Liaison, teachers, club managers, sectional tournament chairmen, the New Player Services Committee, and the unit's Education Committee.

In both small and large units where nothing is in place, start by meeting with the Education Liaison to make a plan. (If the unit doesn't have an Ed Liaison, you may want to request that the unit president appoint one.) See page 9 for tips on getting started.

## **GETTING STARTED C PART I**

**What is the current status of the unit's IN activity?**

You should meet with the unit's previous IN Coordinator to discuss what has been done and what has been tried prior to your taking over the job. Here is a checklist to use to determine what IN activities are in place within the unit. If your unit includes a number of different areas or major cities, use the checklist for each.

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the unit have an Education Liaison?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are there teachers regularly offering bridge classes?

## **What Kind of IN Program May Be Run with Unit and/or Club Games?**

**Many of the 10 IN Program activities can be offered in conjunction with a local unit or club game.**

### **Scheduling games**

**It's most important to advertise the game as limited to a certain number of masterpoints (0 to 5, 0 to 20, 0 to 50, 0 to 100, 0 to 200) so the newcomers will feel welcome and know there is a game for them. Newer players won't come if you don't invite them. Advertise all of these levels and stratify if necessary.**

### **Encourage learning**

**Arrange for local bridge Astars@ and teachers to give a bridge tip before the start of all games.**

### **Give prizes**

**If the games are small, offer an opportunity to collect points (or credits or Bridge Bucks) that can be redeemed for prizes when a certain number have been earned. The awards don't have to be fancy. They have to be something that shows the player is a Winner.®**

### **Guarantee partners**

**In order to guarantee a partner for anyone who arrives an hour before game time, give a free play to any player who stands by and doesn't get to play. Organize a partnership committee to call the regular newcomers and arrange partnerships.**

### **Help your players get to know each other**

**Your social activities don't have to be fancy, just fun. Anything that will help the players get to know each other better will result in their making partnerships and having a good time.**

### **Help your players bond**

**Holding the newcomer game on a night when there isn't an open game will give the players a better chance to bond and get to know one another.**

## **Role of the Intermediate-Newcomer Coordinator**

**What is an IN Coordinator?**

**The Unit Intermediate-Newcomer (IN) Coordinator position was created by the ACBL Board of Directors to assist units in making new players a part of the local bridge family and to increase the participation of these new players by providing newcomer games and activities.**

**What is the specific focus of an IN Coordinator?**

**The IN Coordinator should be available to assist clubs that want to establish an IN Program. The coordinator should serve as tournament chairman for the unit's IN sectionals, work with clubs**

**If the Ed Liaison has an Ed Committee in place, you should be a member of that committee, and the other committee members would be available to assist you in your duties as well. No one person can effectively implement the ideas that will benefit your unit through new player growth.**

**If the unit doesn't have an Ed Liaison, meet with the unit board to consider appointing one.**

## **STEP 2 --- TEACHERS**

**There aren't regular lessons available in your area**

**If there aren't teachers regularly offering bridge classes, talk with the Ed Liaison about asking the unit to sponsor a TAP. In a small unit, it might be more practical to subsidize one or more people to attend a TAP at a nearby location. Teachers are the main source of new players, and your unit can't be regularly infused with new members without this resource.**

**There are teachers offering lessons regularly in your area**

**Schedule a meeting with the teachers to find out how you can help them get their students playing in local games. The teacher knows that students who play and practice what they have learned are more likely to want to take more lessons, and they should be happy to meet with you.**

**Here are some questions to explore:**

- 1. Would one or more of the teachers be interested in running a Bridge Plus+ game?**

**Do they need an inexpensive site to do this, or is a local club site available?**

- 2. Would the teachers be receptive to some of the ways the unit can help....**
  - a. Send students a congratulatory letter and certificate after completing a course to introduce the unit and the ACBL,**
  - b. Establish a limited masterpoint game to run concurrently with the unit game,**
  - c. Give graduates a free play to a limited masterpoint game,**
  - d. Host a party once a year to welcome new players,**
  - e. Develop a mentoring program,**
  - f. Run an IN Sectional to introduce new players to the special activities for people who are new to duplicate bridge,**
  - g. Offer an IN Program at a regular unit sectional tournament.**
- 3. Ask for other ideas on how the unit can work with and help the teachers.**

**NOTE: Other than the IN sectional, IN program at a sectional or regional, or newcomer game along with the unit game, these other areas would be handled primarily by the unit's Ed Liaison.**

### **STEP 3 --- CLUBS**

**Although you work for the unit, clubs may be happy to have you help them set up an IN program and to work with them to get teachers to bring their students in to play. It is probably best to meet individually with each person who runs a club game to see how the unit can help expand each club manager's business.**

**Clubs run the gambit from full-time (games every afternoon and evening during the week) to single sessions run in rented rooms in a variety of facilities. Many features of an IN program can be offered in conjunction with local club games to encourage participation.**

**Let the club managers know about what ACBL suggests as minimum standards for new player activities at clubs (see Page 18) and work with the clubs to put these standards in place.**

**If your area has a full-time club or a clubhouse where a number of different club managers run their games, you should probably focus your attention there.**

**Here are a few selected tips from ACBL's AClub Managers= Tips for Running a Successful Club@ booklet that you can present to your club managers....**

### **Remember to get the word out**

**The world's greatest club is worthless if prospective players don't know about it. Consequently, promotion makes things happen and produces fast results**

### **Free plays for teachers to give to graduating students**

**Ask teachers to bring their students with them to the club and provide free plays for the students. During the game, publically thank the teachers for bringing the new players. The students will appreciate hearing their teacher get praise.**

### **Offer limited masterpoint games**

**Recognize that the area needs newcomer games to prosper. 60% of all ACBL members have under 300 masterpoints; 40% have under 100 points. To successfully serve the bridge playing population in your area, you need to offer games for new players and players who are new to duplicate.**

### **Give a 15 minute pre-game bridge tip**

**Start your beginner games with a tip. This will warm the students up and be an incentive to come out to play. Organize a group of teachers and local bridge celebrities to offer a Bridge Tip prior to any limited masterpoint game.**

### **Offer a variety of newcomer games**

**New players and players new-to-duplicate need venues to play in that are NOT the open game. Provide as many avenues for growth, or *stepping stones*, as you can. Each game offers a greater challenge for the new player.**

**Advertise games for 199ers, 99ers, 49er, 0 to 20, and 0 to 5 players . A newcomer game can be stratified when there aren't enough players, but the newer players won't come to play if they don't feel there is a place for them.**

**Run Bridge Plus+ with a teacher.**

**Offer a supervised play session to help get students used to coming to the club to play.**

### **Host an IN sectional, with the permission of the unit**

**The booklet *Planning and Organizing Your IN Program/Tournament* is available through the ACBL Tournament Department to help with this project.**

### **Start a mentoring program**

**A mentoring program can be implemented in conjunction with the unit (Ed Liaison). Mentoring programs can help new players and students discover how much fun duplicate bridge can be. These programs also help club/unit members bond together in a project designed to benefit everyone. Mentors will remember what it was like to be a beginner; the mentees will be made more comfortable and welcome. In general, the goodwill created by these programs will make the**

games at local clubs more pleasant. One type of mentor program has three tiers (expert, intermediate, new). You must mentor the level below you to be eligible to be mentored by the upper group. (See the section on mentoring programs on Page 18.)

#### **Start an Easybridge! game**

Easybridge! is an outstanding marketing device designed to attract new players to the club and to get them playing in a game that carries them through the learning stages into Areal® duplicate bridge. For more information, use the Easybridge! link at [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org).

#### **Offer lessons at the same time as a newcomer game**

Invite a teacher to give a series of lessons at the clubhouse. If you offer a newcomer game at the same time, the students can move to the game the week following the end of the classes. They will already be accustomed to coming to the club at this time. Get them started with a free play for their first session, and then make certain they have a good time.

#### **Call new players and make partnerships**

Once a new player has come to the club, organize a committee to contact them and make partnerships for future games. A phone call will let the caller know if the playing experience was a good one or if a problem could be resolved.

#### **Guarantee partners**

Guarantee partners for your players, especially the newcomers. Set up a program where you have a club member stand by at each game in case you pair up all but one person. Reward the club member when that person doesn't get to play with a free play® for another game. New players are more likely to come to your games if they are certain they will get a partner and get to play.

#### **Give trophies**

Newcomers like to win trophies. If the games are small and it isn't cost effective to give a trophy for each game, a point system can be established whereby a trophy can be won by accumulating points, or give small prizes like decks of cards. (The unit might contribute prizes or solicit prizes from local businesses.)

#### **Make the Simplified Convention Card available**

A simplified version of the regular ACBL convention card is now available. This card is similar to the regular card but less cluttered and easier to fill out. Make certain it is on hand for newer players (and unit members who play less complicated systems). The simplified convention card is ACBL product #SS4 and is affectionately known as the AFat Free® card. (Note that AThe Exciting World of Bridge® is an outstanding brochure for students attending their first game and it has as a centerpiece a simplified convention card filled in and ready to go.)

#### **Have a volunteer host**

Have a game hostess (perhaps the teacher of some of the participating newcomers) to help welcome the players and to answer questions. If the unit has a New Player Services program, a member of this committee would welcome the opportunity. Ask the club manager to reward the volunteer host with a free play.

#### Use travelers and pickup slips

Many clubs find using a combination of traveling scoreslips and pickup slips better than just using one or the other. Here are some ideas:

1. Use travelers through round 12 and pickup slips for round 13.
2. Use travelers that stay with the boards and pickup slips that the players put into a basket on your desk as they finish play.
3. Have North score the pickup slip; have South score the traveler.

#### Provide social activities for the new players

Have a social activity along with a game to allow the newer players to get to know each other. (Bridge bingo, pot luck supper, wine and cheese party, etc.)

#### Use ABridge Bingo® to entertain your players

Bridge players love to play bingo C especially ABridge Bingo.® You may play bridge bingo® at the start of a game to get the players there on time or at the end of a game to keep the players busy until the scores are posted. Giving the winner a prize only adds to the fun and excitement. Here's how it works...

1. Each player gets a hand of 13 cards (in a game it would be the last hand of the session).
2. One person goes to the mike with a full deck of *shuffled* cards and calls them out one at a time.
3. As they are called, the players turn down the cards they have in their hands.
4. The first person to turn all 13 cards is the winner.

#### Host a party for unit recognition of newcomer achievements

Houston, Texas started a program that your unit might want to duplicate. The unit recognizes the achievement of new players when they complete their first bridge course. Since these students are potential new unit members, the unit provides an excellent new player guide booklet called *Adventures in Duplicate* (available to units from ACBL for \$2 each) and a congratulatory letter. If your unit will adopt this program (check with your unit membership chairman), you may invite a unit official to make these presentations at a local club and follow the festivities with a special introductory game for masterpoints. Include refreshments and be sure to give out masterpoint receipts to all of the winners. This type of event will bring new players into a club. If they are made to feel welcome and comfortable, they will return.

#### Print masterpoint receipts for non-members

Be sure you give every non-member who wins masterpoints a receipt. Most new players who win a piece of a masterpoint will want to start collecting them. This is a perfect opportunity to capitalize on the lure of the masterpoint and to get them to join ACBL and/or the club. Players joining the ACBL for the first time may claim up to a maximum of 20 MPS earned during the year prior to joining. Masterpoint receipts may be printed on ACBLscore or a more decorative variety may be ordered from the ACBL Club Membership Department.

**Create a new players welcome packet**

Once new players start going to club games, make them excited about the club and eager to return. Create a Welcome Packet for newcomers. It could include the following information:

A welcome letter from the club owner or director

Unit calendar of events; club calendar of events; info on your mentoring program..

An upcoming tournament flyer

A free play and an ACBL duplicate instant scorer

An invitation to a welcome party (special bridge game and luncheon)

Flier on an upcoming NAB

Pamphlets on bidding, defense or bridge etiquette

List of players at your club (or club or unit directory)

A booklet on the basics of duplicate bridge (or a copy of *Adventures in Duplicate*)

## **STEP 4 --- NEW PLAYER SERVICES PROGRAM**

**What is the New Player Services program?**

One of the 10 points of a successful newcomer program is to establish a New Player Services program. This is an idea that was originated in District 7 by Anita Humfleet. It is a PR program designed to promote hospitality and to make the new players feel welcome at all levels of play. It is a program that can infuse your established unit members with enthusiasm about working with new players.

**Should your unit establish a New Player Services (NPS) program?**

NPS is one of the 10 features of an outstanding IN program. The unit IN Coordinator should appoint a committee head and work with that person to implement the program.

New Player Services has proven to be so valuable in units that have put it into practice, that we urge you to put this project at the top of your priority list.

**How does the program work?**

After the unit Board has agreed to establish a New Player Services program, a budget is created and the committee members are appointed, inducted and receive special heart shaped pins (or other distinctive badges).

The program coordinator, usually appointed by the IN Coordinator, determines when and where the committee will serve C club games, unit games, sectionals, regionals. At any event where the

**unit is the immediate sponsor, committee members are given specific assignments to make certain that someone is always available in the playing area.**

**Committee members, wearing their badges, make themselves available to offer a helping hand to new players by answering questions, helping to fill out convention cards, giving directions and informing the players of special activities such as the celebrity speaker program, etc.**

**At a tournament, committee members should be available at the hospitality desk to answer questions and should man a special partnership desk for new players. They can mingle in the playing room and pass out candy, go from table to table to meet the new players and wish them luck, be available during the session for moral support and help to explain the scores when they are posted. Any and all activities that will help to make the new players more comfortable may be adopted as part of this program (goodie bags, welcome to your first tournament packets, door prizes, refreshments).**

**Do New Player Services (NPS) committee members work only at unit functions?**

**Since the committee is established by the unit, its main focus is to serve at unit games and activities. Clubs within the unit's jurisdiction should be delighted to have the assistance of the committee members at their games as well.**

**NPS committee members are expected to offer their services to the local committee at any ACBL functions in and outside of their district where new players are participating. In other words, members who attend the district's regional tournaments should volunteer their services by presenting themselves in the IN program area of the tournament and checking in with the IN tournament directors to see how they can be helpful. If the District has adopted the NPS program, the district NPS Program Coordinator, usually the District Education Liaison, will make up a schedule of assignments.**

**When NPS committee members attend an NABC, they are always welcome in the IN program area. Again, they would check in with the IN program tournament directors to find out how they can best be of service to the new players..**

**NOTE: More information to help you establish this program is available at ACBL's home page ([www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)).**

## **STEP 5 --- MENTORING PROGRAMS**

**Is your unit ready for a mentoring program?**

**If your unit has teachers, newcomer games and a start on an IN program, the next logical step is to provide a mentoring program which is sometimes called an Adopt-a-newcomer® program. Again, work with your unit Ed Liaison, who should be the coordinator of this project.**

**How do we get started?**

**ACBL provides implementation information which is available at ACBL's web site, [www@acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org),**

**What are new players looking for?**

**Surveys of new players beginning their duplicate experience show they are motivated by three things C all of which a mentoring program can provide.**

**First, they are looking for fun**

**Second, they want to meet new people**

**Third, they like competition**

**What are the most important benefits of a mentoring program?**

***Experience is the best teacher for a newer player* C**

**A new player will appreciate the opportunity to learn the game from someone who is an expert.**

**Remember expert is a relative term and a new player may view someone with 100 masterpoints as**

an expert. This perception allows you to design your program at whatever level or levels your unit (or club) desires.

*Social opportunities developed* C

Mentoring provides the opportunity for both newcomers and mentors to meet and get to know each other on a basis other than as opponents at the bridge table. This relieves some of the fear the newer players have when a more experienced player comes to their table.

*Provides opportunity for mentors to give back to the game* C

Very often successful players want to give something back to the game. Mentoring provides a wonderful opportunity for the mentors to do that.

*Mentored players are more likely to stay with the game and become mentors themselves* C Mentors can be one key component for instilling the confidence and motivation that is so necessary for achieving success. The simple fact is that mentored newcomers are more likely to stay with bridge as they are more easily able to deal with the frustrations and complexities of the game with the assistance of a mentor. In addition, players who have been mentored will most likely want to mentor. In this manner, the whole process perpetuates itself.

*Increased table counts* C

Whether a mentoring program exists on a unit or club level, involves tournament or weekly games, table counts will definitely increase. The more advertising and promotion that are done in support of the program, the greater the benefits.

## **MARKETING IDEAS FOR THE UNIT**

### **Overview ---**

**More than 60% of ACBL's membership consists of players with fewer than 300 masterpoints and 40% of ACBL's membership consists of players with fewer than 100 masterpoints. In order to serve our members, units need to make these members a priority. It is a fact that the proper care and feeding of new players and students will increase the odds of these players becoming long term happy and participating members of ACBL and the unit.**

**Here are some marketing practices that were designed to grow the unit's membership, improve the retention of current members and to increase participation at local duplicate games.**

**ACBL encourages each unit to considering instituting these marketing practices.**

*Most of the following activities have been discussed in the previous pages of this booklet. They represent the elements of the ideal prototype which each unit, under the direction of its IN Coordinator, Education Liaison and Education Committee should strive to create.*

### **Standards for Unit IN Activities ---**

#### **A. BRIDGE LESSONS**

**Bridge lessons will be available in each greater metropolitan area of the unit with a population of 100,000 or more.**

#### **B. TEACHER ACCREDITATION PROGRAM**

- 1. A unit will sponsor or co-sponsor a TAP at least once every five years\*, or**

2. Have a sponsorship program to enable interested unit members to attend a TAP in another area. This member-sponsorship program should include at the very least subsidizing the TAP fee.

**\*NOTE:** A unit could elect to advertise, promote and finance a single TAP or could work with other units or the district on a group TAP in the area.

### **C. STANDARDS FOR NEW PLAYER ACTIVITIES AT UNIT GAMES**

Games should be advertised for 199er, 99er, 49er, 0 to 20 and 0 to 5 newcomers. A game may be stratified with up to three strats. Any group of three or more newcomer tables should be run as a separate event.

### **D. BASIC STANDARDS FOR NEW PLAYER ACTIVITIES AT THE CLUB LEVEL**

The unit should work with the area clubs to help the clubs set their own standards for new players. Ideally these standards should include:

1. Weekly games advertised for 199er, 99er, 49er, 0 to 20 and 0 to 5  
A game may be stratified but any group of three or more newcomer tables should be run as a separate event.
2. Special starter games --- supervised play, Bridge Plus+, appendix tables
3. Sociability and courtesy
4. Guaranteed partners
5. Ongoing regular communication with new players (*e.g.*, a column in a district newsletter, a bulletin board at the club, a Bridge Tip before a newcomer game where upcoming unit activities would be announced)
6. A mentor program whereby unit members help new players integrate into the group and improve their play.

### **E. NEW PLAYER SERVICES**

Each unit should establish a New Player Services (NPS) program to help welcome new players and to ease them into the local bridge family.

### **F. STANDARDS FOR IN ACTIVITES AT SECTIONAL TOURNAMENTS**

All sectional tournaments should have an IN program. If you can't offer all 10 points of the package, offer as many of these activities as possible.

1. Advertise and offer games for 199er, 99er, 49er, 0 to 20 and 0 to 5 newcomers every session
2. Award trophies to overall winners of newcomer events

- 3. Have a New Player Services (NPS) committee or welcoming committee on duty each session to visit with newcomers, answer questions, and make the newer players feel comfortable.**
- 4. Advertise and offer a celebrity speaker prior to the afternoon IN events on Friday and Saturday. Offer a full schedule of speakers if possible.**
- 5. Select an appropriate area for the newcomer events (*e.g.*, a section of the main playing room or a room separate from the championship games), and decorate this area with flyers, information and materials designed to help new players enjoy and understand the tournament**
- 6. Invite the 0--100 players to attend and guarantee partners**
- 7. Request through the ACBL Tournament Department a director for the IN program who has been trained to work with new players. This IN director may train a local person, such as a club director, to work with the IN Program at future tournaments**
- 8. Arrange social events to allow newer players to meet each other (*e.g.*, panel shows; coffee and donuts before the morning session/lesson; wine and cheese party; bridge bingo)**
- 9. Provide newcomer (0 to 20) hand records with analysis sheets**
- 10. Take pictures of the winners of the Intermediate-Newcomer events and display them in a Winner's Circle® area.**

**NOTE: Some funding for your IN program may be available through ACBL's Co-op Advertising Program. Check the ACBL web site [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org) for more information.**

#### **G. INTERMEDIATE-NEWCOMER (IN) SECTIONALS**

**Units are encouraged to advertise, promote and run IN sectionals for players with either 0B100 or 0B200 points. The unit may offer a club within the unit's jurisdiction the opportunity to run an IN sectional if the unit prefers.**

## **MATERIALS AVAILABLE FOR IN COORDINATORS**

### **Adventures in Duplicate (#310572)**

**Colorful, fun-to-read, full-size, four-color process booklet. Keeps newcomers active and playing more. For social, rubber and up to second year duplicate players. Explains nuances of the game, and talks about bridge activities and products that will interest newer players. This is an excellent booklet to use as a giveaway at IN programs. Club owners, ACBL accredited teachers, unit and district officers --- \$2.00 each.**

### **Planning and Organizing an Intermediate-Newcomer Tournament/Program**

**This guidebook takes you step by step through the planning and organizing stages of sponsoring an IN sectional or an IN program at a regular sectional or regional tournament. Available free on request from the Education Department.**

### **Instant Scorers (#560249)**

**Shows all possible duplicate scores. Bridge clubs, bridge teachers and units may order 100 free. Each additional 100 scorers C \$5.00. One copy free to individuals.**

### **Join the Fun (#560420)**

**Colorful brochure with interesting statistics about ACBL in addition to landmark dates in the history of bridge. Includes membership application. Up to 10 copies free to club managers and tournament chairmen. 20 copies C \$1.50. Each additional 100 copies C \$6.00.**

### **The Exciting World of Bridge (#560347)**

**Newly revised colorful brochure introduces players to duplicate bridge, gives tips on how the game works, scoring, duplicate etiquette and how to fill out a convention card. A must for new players! Up to 10 copies free. 20 copies C \$1.50. 100 copies C \$15.00.**

### **ACBL Simplified Convention Card (Private Score B Form SS4) (#170316)**

**This new simplified convention card is streamlined and perfect for both newer players and members who play less complicated systems. 100 cards for \$4.95.**

