

# Club Managers Handbook

Almost Everything  
You Ever Needed to Know  
to Manage a Successful Bridge Club



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# **Club Managers Handbook**

## **Almost Everything You Ever Needed to Know to Manage a Successful Bridge Club**

Why *almost* everything you ever needed? Because we know one size doesn't fit all. Many of you have your own methods that have made your club successful for your players.

This handbook contains a potpourri of ideas—we will have been successful if you find just one that's right for you. It also contains the rules and guidelines the ACBL provides for starting and maintaining your club.

We welcome your suggestions for future versions of this handbook and for our newsletters and education programs.

American Contract Bridge League  
2005

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# GETTING STARTED CHECKLISTS

Whether you are opening a club, moving your club or evaluating your program, these checklists will give you a good idea of what's involved.

## Create a Business Plan

Be realistic about your expenses and income and write out a plan to cover a year.

- \_\_\_ What are your start-up expenses?
  
- \_\_\_ What is your goal for income?
  - \_\_\_ Number of sessions
  - \_\_\_ Number of players
  
- \_\_\_ How much must you charge to recoup expenses?
  
- \_\_\_ Will your club have a separate membership fee?

## Your Club Site

Evaluate your site on the following points.

- \_\_\_ Proximity to established or potential base of players.
- \_\_\_ Space for at least 20 tables (with expansion room for special games).
- \_\_\_ Two rooms, one suitable for teaching or newcomer games.
- \_\_\_ Safe location with secure, lighted parking area.
- \_\_\_ Storage area (for duplicate boards, cards, etc.).
- \_\_\_ Clean, equipped kitchen or sink area and access to water.
- \_\_\_ Access to clean, stocked restrooms.
- \_\_\_ Access for players with disabilities.
- \_\_\_ Adequate air-conditioning and heat.
- \_\_\_ Good lighting.
- \_\_\_ Phone line with answering service.
- \_\_\_ Space for coats and personal items.
- \_\_\_ Clean, inviting appearance at all times.
- \_\_\_ Bulletin board or other means to post notices.

TIP – If you are in a rented space where you can't post information on the walls, store a few nice bulletin boards that you can lean against counters to promote your players, advertise special events and make other announcements.

## **Marketing and Publicity**

- \_\_\_ Obtain listings in yellow pages and other community directories.
- \_\_\_ Create a web page and link to your unit, district and ACBL web sites.
- \_\_\_ Advertise in community newspapers and other media.
- \_\_\_ Design a flyer and distribute to community centers and other potential sources of members.
- \_\_\_ Obtain ACBL mailing lists to send information to members in your area.
- \_\_\_ Consult special sections in this booklet – “Publicize Your Club” and “Market Your Club.”

## **Your Directors**

Are you the director or do you plan to hire directors? Either way, the people who run your games should be an asset to your club. Directors should:

- \_\_\_ Have passed the ACBL Club Director Exam.
- \_\_\_ Keep up to date with the *Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge*.
- \_\_\_ Make your players feel welcome.
- \_\_\_ Be proficient in using ACBLscore and post results promptly to the ACBL.
- \_\_\_ Have current copies of the *Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge* and *Duplicate Decisions*.
- \_\_\_ Be willing to review difficult rulings and contact the ACBL Tournament Department if necessary.
- \_\_\_ Have a list of fill-ins to accommodate walk-ins.
- \_\_\_ Start games on time and keep them running on time.
- \_\_\_ Be familiar with the Zero Tolerance Policy and enforce it.
- \_\_\_ Be familiar with your club rules, any convention restrictions, appeal process, etc.

## **Your Games**

- \_\_\_ Be familiar with all the special games that offer additional masterpoints and schedule them often! (See pages 12-17.)
- \_\_\_ Schedule your Charity Club Championship Game.
- \_\_\_ Be familiar with special types of games your players may enjoy, such as individuals and barometers.
- \_\_\_ Consider running 18-board (or even 12-board) games for players short on time.
- \_\_\_ Have appropriate starting times. Be flexible and willing to change.
- \_\_\_ Use an answering machine to provide game times and directions to your club for new players when you are not there.
- \_\_\_ Guarantee partners for players who call ahead.
- \_\_\_ If you have a web site, post game results.

## **Licenses and Laws**

When you decide to conduct a club game, you are going into a new business. Here are some of the business aspects of this venture that you need to check out.

- \_\_\_ ACBL sanction, renewed annually.
- \_\_\_ City or state business license. (You may save significantly if you are able to obtain an education license rather than a recreational license.)
- \_\_\_ Zoning approval: are you certain you can run a game for profit?
- \_\_\_ Electrical and fire code approval.
- \_\_\_ Guaranteed parking rights.
- \_\_\_ Vending machine licenses.
- \_\_\_ Food and liquor licenses.
- \_\_\_ Health Department approval to serve food.
- \_\_\_ Liability insurance.

## **Supplies**

Your club needs basic supplies and bridge supplies. You may be surprised at the number of things you need to get started. Check out these suggestions.

### **Basic Supplies**

- Card tables and chairs
- Cup holders for tables
- Coffee and/or tea maker
- Refrigerator
- Vending machine(s)
- Computer and printer
- Coat rack
- Bookcase
- Telephone and answering service
- Trash cans

### **ACBL Bridge Supplies**

- Computer with ACBLscore and printer
- Playing cards
- Duplicate boards
- Bid boxes
- Table mats
- Entry blanks
- Instant scorers
- Pick-up slips
- Travelers
- Convention Cards (Standard, "Fat Free," Standard American Yellow Card)
- Swiss Team score sheets
- Howell movement table mats

### **Other Supplies**

Pencils with erasers and a pencil sharpener  
Computer paper  
Blackboard, easel or other item for announcements  
Bulletin board and tacks  
Tape  
Cleaning supplies  
Restroom supplies

### **Kitchen Supplies**

Paper goods: coffee and drink cups, plates, napkins, paper towels  
Plastic utensils  
Creamer  
Sugar and artificial sweetener

## **WWW.ACBL.ORG**

Many resources for clubs are available on the ACBL web site with more added regularly. Here are some things you will find.

- Club news
- The Club Manager Newsletter
- This handbook!
- The Bridge Teachers Handbook
- Information to update your online club listing and post web sites
- Sanction applications
- Special event schedules and results
- ACBL Handbook (reference for Club Rules and Regulations)
- Club director education information
- Convention cards and charts
- The Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge
- Duplicate Decisions
- An Introduction to Duplicate Bridge (Exciting World of Bridge) brochure
- Contact information to answer your questions

## ACBL E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Use these addresses to correspond with the Club and Member Services Department. (list pertinent addresses)

Club@acbl.org

Debbie.Nichol@acbl.org ..... New club sanctioning

Nancy.Hale@acbl.org ..... Club game sanction changes

Margaret.Bloodworth@acbl.org..... Club charity games

SpecialEvents@acbl.org

ACBLscore@acbl.org

club.report@mail1.acbl.org

## ACBLSCORE!

ACBLscore has revolutionized the club game and reduces time and expense greatly for both the club director and the ACBL.

ACBLscore will handle almost any variation of movement, including an individual. Bystands? No problem? It can rank a stratified game with up to three strats and can score by matchpoints or IMPs.

It supports a database of players so that it will compute handicaps, print mailing labels and more. You also can print slips for players with their matchpoints from each board and masterpoints won (especially good for players who are not yet ACBL members).

The ACBL web site includes specifications and downloads, as well as special instructions to submit a club report, update your club database, report special games and post your game results on the Internet. There's also a listing of frequently asked questions. New versions are issued regularly with the latest updates.

**Don't start a club without it!**

# **THE SANCTIONED CLUB BRIDGE GAME**

## **The ACBL's Role**

ACBL issues sanctions to club managers authorizing them to run duplicate games at regularly scheduled times and locations and to award masterpoints at those games in accordance with ACBL rules and regulations.

It also is the ACBL's responsibility to provide clubs with prompt and efficient customer service and to assist them in marketing and promoting the game of bridge.

## **The Club Manager's Role**

Every ACBL-sanctioned masterpoint club game must designate an active ACBL member as its manager. If the club manager is the club owner, the club manager is free to operate the club as he or she sees fit, as long as the operation of ACBL sanctioned games falls within the limits prescribed by the ACBL. The club's success is in your hands. Club managers who have been elected, appointed or hired will want to work closely with their sponsoring organizations. The club manager also accepts the responsibility of complying with all local, state and federal laws.

The club manager supervises the following:

- Issuing of club masterpoints.
- Preparation and filing of the Monthly Report Form.
- Any correspondence with ACBL on club game matters.
- The application for sanction renewals and the reporting of changes.

## **ACBL Club Sanctioned Bridge Game**

Applications for a Club Game Sanction may be downloaded from the ACBL web site at [www.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/clubsanctionrenew08\\_01.pdf](http://www.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/clubsanctionrenew08_01.pdf) or requested from the ACBL Club and Member Services Department. A game may be sanctioned at any time during the year.

One or more regularly scheduled games can be conducted under one sanction at varying sites. The club manager must list all games that will award masterpoints and locations on the sanction application. Sanctions are granted for the calendar year, following a 30-day probationary period, and are renewed annually.

ACBL sanctions are not exclusive. The ACBL will sanction two or more club games simultaneously in the same community but not usually at the same location.

### **Sanction Application Signatures**

There are two types of clubs: proprietary and sponsored. A proprietary club is a club owned by one or more individuals. The club manager and the club owner(s) must sign the sanction application. A sponsored club is a club that has a governing body such as a board of directors. Clubs can be sponsored by churches, businesses, fraternal orders, etc. The club manager and either the president or secretary of the sponsoring organization must sign the application.

### **Arbitration Agreement**

The following arbitration agreement is included on the sanction application and must be signed by the club manager or responsible party:

“Should any dispute, of whatever kind or nature, arise between ACBL, other clubs, units or districts and the undersigned club, it is agreed that such dispute shall be resolved by binding arbitration pursuant to the rules of the American Arbitration Society or other method of binding arbitration as may be agreed mutually by the parties.”

### **Making Changes to the Sanction**

Once granted, game sessions on a sanction may be added or changed any time during the year, provided that the club manager notifies the ACBL Club and Member Services Department. Some changes may require a sanction fee. Any specific session may be canceled without penalty, but no annual sanction fees are returned.

### **Cancellation of a Regular Game Session**

There are no game or table fees for sessions canceled for an approved reason (unusual weather, conflict with a higher-rated event, holidays, not enough tables). The club must note the reason for a cancellation on the monthly report form. A club may not make up canceled games.

### **Sanction Renewal**

In September, ACBL sends every club holding ACBL sanctioned masterpoint games a renewal application. The club should indicate corrections, additions or changes and return the application with the appropriate fees to ACBL headquarters. The changes become effective January of the year for which the sanction is granted. If the application for sanction renewal is not received by Jan. 31, the sanction is canceled.

Upon receipt of the sanction renewal, the ACBL will send supplies for the new year.

### **Game Fees**

The ACBL charges \$11.50 per session (game) sanctioned per year. In addition, there is a fee for each sanctioned game session held plus a fee of \$0.65 for each table in play. (Check the web site to verify current fees.)

Note that table and session sanction fees are waived for any game that is scheduled to recruit new members and for which no entry fee is charged.

### **Club Reports**

Every club is required to submit a monthly report form for each sanctioned session to the ACBL. The ACBLscore program allows the club manager to report by e-mail.

### **Identification Numbers**

Each club holding ACBL sanctioned games receives an identification number, which should be included on all correspondence with ACBL. All game sessions are assigned identifying numbers that relate to the day and time they are held.

## **CLUB GAMES: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE**

### **Types of Masterpoint Games**

There are four types of regular club games: open, invitational/restricted, newcomer and Bridge Plus+.

#### **Open Game (Class 4 Game)**

This game is open to all ACBL members. Prohibiting or allowing non-members of ACBL to play does not affect open game status.

In an open game, a club may not bar players because of their bridge proficiency, religious or political affiliations, sexual orientation, race or national origin, nor may it prohibit partnership formation because of the skill of the pair. The club may not place the majority of strong pairs in one direction, nor may it otherwise segregate entries into strong and weak groups. (Directors are encouraged to seed the games much like at a tournament, dividing the strongest pairs or strats evenly between N-S and E-W.)

An open game must have a minimum of two-and-a-half tables. Every contestant must play at least 18 boards to receive full masterpoint awards. (Shorter games — a minimum of 12 boards — are allowed and are awarded at 80% of the masterpoint award for open games.)

### **Invitational/Restricted Game (Class 3 Game)**

An invitational/restricted game limits or places restrictions on who may participate, provided the restrictions do not violate ACBL bylaws. These games are commonly limited to:

- Members and guests of the organization holding the sanction
- Players with fewer than a certain number of masterpoints (the sanction form must state the masterpoint limitations)
- Sections or directions separated according to weak and strong pairs
- Strong players forbidden to play as partners
- Husbands and wives only
- Life Masters are not allowed to play together
- Members of one sex only

An invitational/restricted game may have no fewer than two-and-a-half tables (except in the case of a one-winner two-table individual), and every contestant must play at least 18 boards.

### **Newcomer Games (Class 2 Game)**

A newcomer game is limited to players with fewer than 20 masterpoints, but clubs may set a lower minimum if it so desires. The goal of a newcomer game is to ease new players into the local bridge family and establish partnerships.

A newcomer game must consist of two and one-half tables (unless it is a two-table individual or team game), and at least 10 boards must be played by all participants.

Any club with a sanctioned game may conduct a newcomer game session. It can be run anytime (even concurrently with another regular club game). List newcomer games on the sanction application and include them in the Monthly Report.

## **Special Situations in Newcomer Games**

### **INELIGIBLE PLAYERS**

Under certain circumstances (to eliminate a half table or to accommodate a new player), up to two non-newcomers may fill in as a partner to a newcomer.

- They must sit in opposite directions (if there are two ineligible players).
- They (and their partners) are not eligible for masterpoints and will not be ranked.
- They may play only the conventions allowed in this game.
- Two ineligible players may not, under any circumstances, play as a partnership.
- They do count in table totals on which the masterpoint awards are based.

### **THREE-MEMBER PAIRS**

The club manager can allow three-member pairs of eligible players to participate in a newcomer game. Earned masterpoints will be in a ratio approximating the number of boards each played.

NOTE: The ACBL recognizes that some relatively skilled players, through failure to register their club masterpoints, retain masterpoint eligibility to participate in newcomer games inappropriate to their skill and/or experience. The director or club manager should refuse entry to a newcomer event to players in that category and encourage the more experienced players to participate in appropriate club games. (ACBLscore will allow a club to keep track of points won, even if not recorded with ACBL, so that a player will “graduate” to the next level.)

### **Bridge Plus+ Game (Class 1 Game)**

Bridge Plus+ is one of many kinds of games designed to ease students and new players into the game. It is a transition game conducted by ACBL Accredited Teachers where students are encouraged to consult with the teacher during the game. (The teacher will attempt to lead the students in the right direction without providing direct answers.)

Bridge Plus+ game sanctions are issued free under the following conditions.

- If the applicant is not an ACBL accredited teacher, he or she must be a club manager working in conjunction with an accredited teacher,
- If only students with less than 5 masterpoints participate in the game,
- If a minimum of 10 boards are played,
- If the game is run weekly and lasts between two and two-and-a-half hours,
- If a monthly report is sent to the ACBL Club and Member Services Department.

## **Stratified Games**

The benefit of stratifying your game is to allow players to win in their own category while giving them experience playing against stronger competition. Stratified games may be conducted with two or three strats (short for “strata” or “stratums”). The lowest strat must have at least five pairs for overall awards to be issued and at least three pairs in a comparison group for section awards to be issued.

There should be approximately the same number of pairs sitting N-S and E-W in each strat, so that the section awards will be equal.

1. The game is first scored on the total number of tables in play with masterpoints computed from the Open/Individual point award chart.
2. The second strat is scored on the tables in the remainder of the game (*i.e.*, all but the top strat).
3. In a third strat (newcomer), only tables in that strat receive masterpoints.

The club issues masterpoints to each player based on the place of finish. If the player places in more than one stratum, the player receives the higher of the two awards, not both.

A pamphlet, “Stratifying Your Club Game,” is available from the Club and Member Services Department or on the web site.

## **Sanctioned Online Games**

Online games give your players an opportunity to practice in the convenience of their own homes. You can even set up practice games on certain sites. Online games award masterpoints if sanctioned through the ACBL Club and Member Services Department.

Online masterpoints are called “net” points and have no pigmentation. No more than 1/3 of the masterpoints needed to achieve established ACBL status levels can be from online play. Online clubs must have a rated director available at all times, must be able to transfer masterpoint information to the ACBL electronically and have a link to the ACBL for membership. They also must provide a mechanism for players to file complaints about ethical violations to the network and for the network to forward the results of the investigation to the ACBL Recorder.

## **Special Games in Clubs**

The ACBL offers many special games that provide additional masterpoints for your players and often support worthy efforts. Be sure to schedule as many sessions as you can.

### **Club Championships**

Each regularly scheduled weekly club game is entitled to four Club Championship Games per year. These may be scheduled as four one-session, two one-session and one two-session, or two two-session championships.

Each Club Championship (one or two sessions) must be scheduled in a different quarter of the year and may not be scheduled in conflict with a sectional or higher-rated event in progress within 25 miles of the playing site.

The overall awards for Club Championship Games in open clubs are computed at 65% of sectional rating.

### **Charity Club Championships**

The month of April is designated as Charity Month. During this month, each sanctioned club game is authorized to run its regularly scheduled sessions as sectionally rated black point Charity Games. All clubs may run as many charity games as they have games scheduled. Games benefiting the ACBL Charity Foundation may be run in any other month except February and September. An extra \$1 per person is contributed to the ACBL Charity Foundation in the United States and the CBF Charity Foundation in Canada.

Charity Club Championship Game awards for open games are computed at 100% of sectional rating.

### **International Fund Club Championships**

The month of September is designated as International Fund Month. During this month, each sanctioned club game is authorized to run its regularly scheduled sessions as sectionally rated black point International Fund Games. All clubs may run as many fund games as they have games scheduled. International Fund Games may be run in any other month except February and April. An extra \$1 per person is contributed to the International Fund in the United States and the CBF International Fund in Canada.

Masterpoint awards for this game are 100% of sectional rating.

### **Membership Games**

The number of one-session Membership Games a club is allotted is proportionate to the overall club activity. A club may hold one membership game per year for each regularly sanctioned session. (If a club runs one game a week, it may hold one membership game per year; if a club runs ten games a week, it may hold ten membership games per year.) Only Life Masters and paid ACBL members are eligible to win masterpoints in these games.

The point awards for an open game are 100% sectional rating and the session designated for the game must be one for which the club is sanctioned.

### **Additional Club Championships**

A club manager who recruits 10 new members earns an upgraded club championship awarding sectionally rated black points in addition to regularly allowed club championships. Your club game sanction number must be on every new member application for your club to get credit for recruitment.

### **Junior Fund Games**

February is designated as Junior Month. During this month, each sanctioned club game is authorized to run its regularly scheduled sessions as sectionally rated black-point Junior Fund Games. All clubs may run as many fund games as they have games scheduled. Junior Fund Games may be run in any other month except April and September. An extra \$1 per person is contributed to the ACBL Junior Fund in the United States and the CBF Junior Fund in Canada.

### **ACBL-wide Events**

ACBL sponsors a number of contests that are held throughout the organization on specific days of the year. Any club session already scheduled for the time and date of an ACBL-wide event may be converted to that special event. Any club session that isn't scheduled at the time and date of the special event may host the event at that time with the permission of the unit. That session would replace the regular session for that week.

All of these ACBL-wide events award masterpoints on a higher level than the regular club masterpoint awards. They provide special deals for the participants to play and require that club managers apply to ACBL for a sanction.

The ACBL-wide events that fall in this category are:

- International Fund Game #1 (Saturday before the Super Bowl)
- ACBL Senior Game (February)
- ACBL-wide Charity Game (March)
- International Fund Game #2 (May)
- Worldwide Bridge Contest (June)
- International Fund Game #3 (July or August)
- ACBL Instant Matchpoint Game (September)
- ACBL-wide Charity Game (November)

Clubs receive special notifications of these events that include the masterpoint awards.

### **Club Appreciation Games**

October has been designated as Club Appreciation Month. During this month, club managers may run one Club Appreciation Pair Game and one Club Appreciation Team Game in place of a regularly scheduled session.

The pair game pays 85% of sectional rating (all black), and the team game pays sectional Swiss rating with 5% gold. (A player can win a max of .25 gold.)

### **Sectional Tournaments at Clubs (STaCs)**

Any number of STaCs may be conducted by each unit. Any club wishing to participate in a STaC at its regularly scheduled time may do so. The director in charge of the tournament must be an approved ACBL employee. All STaC masterpoints are silver points.

### **North American 49er Pairs**

This event is conducted in September of each year. It is open to ACBL members with fewer than 50 masterpoints. Appropriate forms and conditions of contest are sent to every club. Club managers may run as many games as they wish, whether or not they have regularly sanctioned games of any type scheduled during the period set aside for the 49er games, provided they don't conflict with regularly held sanctioned 0-50 games in the local area.

Masterpoints are based on 45% of sectional open pair rating (black points).

## Other Special Games

The ACBL has designed other special games to stimulate bridge activity. As a club manager, you should be familiar with these options. If these games do not meet your needs, contact the ACBL Club and Member Services Department to see if a special program can be designed for you.

### ACBL Introductory Games

Introductory games may be held without a sanction but need ACBL approval. These games are usually organized by bridge teachers, club managers or enthusiastic individual members for groups such as luncheon clubs, religious organizations or industries interested in the social or promotional possibilities. The individuals who direct these games should have reasonable qualifications. The director can issue club masterpoint certificates. Each game must have at least three tables and each player must complete a minimum of 10 boards.

### Handicap (by number of masterpoints or expertise) Games

Handicap games encourage players with limited experience to attend the regularly sanctioned club games by giving them a better opportunity to win masterpoints. Stronger players may be challenged by having to play better to win. A handicap game must be held during one of the club's regularly scheduled sanctioned sessions. There are a number of ways that this can be done. Consult the *ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations* (Chapter 4) or the *Handbook for Club Directors*. Masterpoints can be awarded by splitting them or by offering 100% awards for scratch winners and 50% awards for handicap winners. Clubs should indicate on the monthly report form and on the club masterpoint receipts those game that are handicap games. A pamphlet entitled "Handicaps" is available upon request from the ACBL Club and Member Services Department or on the web site.

### Easybridge!

Easybridge! is a proven marketing device designed to attract and develop new duplicate bridge players and games. For more information contact the program director at [mronemus@suscom.net](mailto:mronemus@suscom.net) or go to [www.easybridge.com](http://www.easybridge.com).

### Home-Style Games

This game is easy to run and fun. Clubs must apply to the ACBL Club and Member Services Department to conduct home-style bridge games that will issue masterpoints. Cards are shuffled and dealt for each hand making it easy for social and rubber bridge players to adapt to it. The Swiss pairs format is the most popular version of this game. The Alert procedure and skip bid warning are not encouraged for this type of event. Home-style bridge may be used in club championships and charity club championships but not for ACBL-wide events, district-wide events or any other special events.

An inexpensive convention card, designed especially for this game, and a “Home-style Bridge” pamphlet are available from the Club and Member Services Department or on the web site.

### **College Club Games**

A sanction application can be obtained from the Club and Member Services Department by a student or faculty member interested in operating a sanctioned bridge game on campus. The game must comply with ACBL regulations, and a faculty advisor must co-sign the sanction application and agree to serve as the official ACBL contact. Games are to be open to students, faculty members and their significant others. The college game is not required to run on a regular schedule. There is an annual fee for each college game sanction (Jan 1 through Dec 31). A fee for each game plus a fee for each table must be sent with the report form.

The college game is rated as an invitational game. One session with club championship rating is allotted for each 12 regular sessions played. Each game must submit a monthly report to the Club and Member Services Department by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month on the game activity for the month.

### **School Games**

The ACBL and the ACBL Educational Foundation offer the funded School Bridge Lesson program designed to teach bridge at all school levels. Teachers are encouraged to establish school bridge clubs in order to offer games for these students. Go to the ACBL web site under Resources for Teachers for more information.

### **Pupil Games**

The ACBL issues free special sanctions to teachers for pupil games if the teacher is an ACBL member, if the game is restricted to students of the teacher, if the game is accompanied by lessons for at least 45 minutes and if at least nine boards are played. Eight participating students are needed to make a game. With two tables, the game must be run as a team event, individual event or Swiss pairs. No monthly report is required since there are no table or sanction fees. The game may be run at a different time and in a different place from the lessons.

### **Penal/Mental Institution Games**

The ACBL will sanction games held in institutions when run by a club or higher-rated director.

## **Cruise Ship Games**

A person can obtain a sanction to run bridge games for a calendar year on a cruise ship with a letter of permission from the cruise line authorizing the bridge program and by paying an annual fee of \$200 to the ACBL. Cruise ships need not hold club masterpoint games at regularly scheduled intervals.

The technical operation of the games must follow ACBL regulations with the following exceptions:

1. There are no table and session fees.
2. No monthly report is required.
3. All games must have a club or higher-rated director.
4. Masterpoint awards are 50% of the award for an open club game.
5. No specific number of boards must be played during a session.
6. Masterpoint awards are the same as for a complete game.
7. A one-or two-session cruise championship may be held every 14 days.
8. Masterpoint awards for cruise championships are 50% of an open game championship.
9. A club masterpoint report must be submitted to ACBL at the end of the cruise.

## **Single Cruise Ship and Land Cruise Games**

Cruise ships may hold ACBL sanctioned games by paying a fee to ACBL. This fee is based on the length of the cruise. The ACBL defines the duration of a single ship cruise as the period from the time the ship leaves the port of embarkation until it either returns to that port or terminates the advertised cruise at a different port. Sanction fees for single ship cruises are: Up to 3 days – \$30.00; 4 to 7 days – \$50.00; 8 to 30 days – \$100.00.

Land cruises held in an ACBL country that are open to all ACBL members can award masterpoints at full open club value (*e.g.*, a game held over a weekend at a vacation resort would be considered a single land cruise). Sanction fees for land cruises are: Up to 3 days – \$30.00; 4 to 7 days – \$50.00; 8 to 30 days – \$100.00. Land cruises that operate at a single site in an ACBL country for more than 14 days are sanctioned as a club game and report as one.

## **INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR CLUBS**

The ACBL's primary interests are to serve the bridge needs of its players and to recruit new players to the game and to membership. ACBL offers the following incentives to encourage clubs to pursue the same goals.

### **Club Championships**

Clubs can earn an upgraded club championship (sectionally rated black points) for recruiting 10 new members (no restrictions on the time period). The club manager will be notified when the club has recruited 10 new members. A maximum of two upgraded club championship games can be held per year per sanctioned session.

### **Newcomer Game Incentives**

Clubs that hold newcomer games (with an upper masterpoint limit of not more than 20) at the same time as an open, invitational or restricted game may include the newcomer table count when computing awards for the open, invitational or restricted game. Clubs that hold a flighted game may add the tables in any restricted section(s) when computing masterpoints for any unrestricted section in play at that club at the same time. The usual restriction of the maximum award being 1.50 does apply.

### **Recruitment Gift Certificates**

For every 25 new members recruited by a club official (or teacher) in a calendar year, the recruiter receives a \$100 gift certificate to shop in the ACBL Product Guide. For every 100 new members recruited by a club official (or teacher), the recruiter receives a \$500 bonus check. (There are no time restrictions for this award.) To send out the cash rewards, the ACBL needs the Social Security number or TAP Teacher Identification Number for the recruiter.

## TEN TOP TIPS FROM SUCCESSFUL CLUB MANAGERS

### **1. Make Newcomers Welcome and Help Them Play Often**

Every club needs a steady stream of new players to keep it healthy. Welcome newcomers (students, social players, new members), make them comfortable at your club and help them to play often. (See page 20.)

### **2. Teach Bridge**

One of the best sources of new players is through a teaching program. Lessons generate potential new customers. If you are a club manager and don't want to teach, work with the teachers in your area to benefit each other. (See page 24.)

### **3. Publicize Your Club**

Take advantage of local media opportunities and ACBL's Cooperative Advertising Program. (See page 27.)

### **4. Market Your Club**

Make sure ACBL members and non-members are aware of your lessons and games through free advertising, community directories and more. (See page 29.)

### **5. Recruit and Retain ACBL Members**

The ACBL needs new members to sustain our game for generations to come. Get your players hooked on earning and collecting masterpoints and enjoying your club and its members, and they will want to join and play more frequently. (See page 33.)

### **6. Don't Neglect the Social Side of the Game**

Understand why people play bridge and work to help them achieve their goals – to have fun, to meet people, to enjoy competition. (See page 37.)

### **7. Help Your Players Learn and Improve**

This was rated as one of the top reasons why our members play in the ACBL Membership Survey. (See page 41.)

### **8. Make It Easy for Your Players to Play**

Establishing partnerships is one of the key components of a successful club. (See page 44.)

### **9. Make It Easy for Players to Find You**

List your club contact information wherever you can. (See page 46.)

### **10. Be Creative!**

Fun tips and ideas from other clubs. (See page 47.)

## **MAKE NEWCOMERS WELCOME AND HELP THEM PLAY OFTEN**

Every club needs a steady stream of new players to keep it healthy. Welcome newcomers (students, social players, new members), make them comfortable at your club and help them to play often.

### **Create a new players' welcome packet.**

Now that you have a new player, you want to make that person excited about your club and eager to return. Create a *Welcome Packet* for newcomers to help make them feel comfortable at your club. This could include the following information:

- A welcome letter from the club owner or director.
- Unit calendar of events; club calendar of events.
- An upcoming tournament flyer.
- A free play.
- An invitation to a welcome party (special bridge game and luncheon).
- Flyer on an upcoming NABC.
- ACBL duplicate instant score.
- Pamphlets on bidding, defense or bridge etiquette.
- Information on your mentor program.
- 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*, which is a good intro to the ACBL and bridge).
- Bios of the directors and teachers working at the club so the new people know something about the people behind the scenes.

### **Establish a newcomer policy for your club.**

Lynn Berg of DeLand, FL suggests the following basic policy for your club.

- Welcome and introduce all newcomers to the group.
- Post the names and phone numbers of the new players.
- Ask your regulars to put their first and last names on their convention cards so they can be read by the newcomers.
- Match newcomers who need partners to get started with at least a fair-to-decent player who is also personable. There's nothing like placing to get a new player to return.
- Offer newcomers a free play for the second visit to the club.
- Make certain newcomers are provided with a schedule of upcoming games, a calendar of events and a member phone list (see welcome packet).
- If you have a newsletter, put in short profiles of new players.

**The friendliest club around.**

The Kennebunk DBC has a regular routine for assuring that newcomers leave knowing that it's the friendliest club in town. The club manager welcomes all new players and asks them to call her if there's any sort of problem. She introduces them to the players and gives them name badges. The regular players are asked to introduce themselves each round and to make the visitors feel welcome. And, the club manager checks back with them at the end of the game to make certain they had a good time and to extend an invitation to come again. Sounds like a winning formula!

NOTE: See the *Handbook for Club Directors* for tips on running games for new players.

**Newcomers are always right.**

Have a club policy that says that the director will side with newcomers if there is a dispute. (Lindsey Butler, Charleston SC)

**Recognize that you need newcomer games to be successful.**

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.

**Offer a variety of newcomer games.**

Students, new players and players who are new-to-duplicate need venues to play in that are NOT the open game. Offer a variety of games such as Bridge Plus+ and Supervised Play, then 0 to 5 games, then 0 to 20, etc., Pro-Am, Bridge with Guidance (see below), Pupil Games, etc. Provide as many avenues for getting started, growing or "stepping stones" to increased skill levels as you can.

**Bridge with Guidance Games**

Created by Susan Freeman of Dayton OH. No sanction, no masterpoints. Uses volunteer guides (experienced players) who sit at each table and answer questions, make suggestions about bidding, play and defense, and offer general information about the mechanics of duplicate play. (Guides may play when there aren't enough participants.) Boards are pre-duplicated to demonstrate and provide practice for certain techniques such as transfers, negative doubles, weak twos, etc. A brief overview of a concept is provided at the start of the session; specifics are addressed during play. A session consists of about eight boards on the selected technique. Suggest two sessions a week (one daytime, one at night). A small fee is charged to defray costs of materials and to encourage commitment.

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

Easybridge! is the invention of Edith McMullin. It is a 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 “real” duplicate bridge. Contact Marti Ronemus, program director, at [mronemus@suscom.net](mailto:mronemus@suscom.net) for more information. You can get some funding for this program through ACBL’s Cooperative Advertising Program. (See the Appendix.)

### **Advertise your bridge games with appealing names.**

Games advertised as “Not So serious duplicate” and “No stress, no frills bridge” have a lot of appeal for newer players and will help attract customers.

### **Host an end-of-classes party.**

Invite the teachers in your area to an end-of-classes party at your club. Offer an introductory game for masterpoints and include refreshments. Be sure to give out masterpoint receipts to all of the winners. This type of event will bring new players into your club. If they are made to feel welcome and comfortable, they will return.

### **Invite social players to your club for a social game.**

- Run a “Home-style Rubber Bridge Swiss Pairs” for social bridge players to introduce them to your club and to masterpoints. This is a fun, easy-to-run game. Call the ACBL Club and Member Services Department to have them send you a “Home-style Bridge” brochure.
- Ask your regular players to invite a social-bridge-playing friend to try duplicate. It’s a good way to promote your club, masterpoints and the fun of organized competitive bridge. (Order the “Exciting World of Bridge” brochure to give to the newcomers to make them more comfortable with the game.)

### **Offer supervised play sessions for students.**

Work with a teacher to offer supervised play sessions for students between regular classes. The ACBL has three four-week courses designed to be used between the *Bidding (The Club Series)*, *Play of the Hand (The Diamond Series)* and *Defense (The Heart Series)* courses. There are two four-week courses for use after the *Defense (The Heart Series)* course (*Play Course for the Advancing Player 1 and 2*), and one course on conventions — *Modern Notrump Bidding* — that work with the Commonly Used Conventions and More Commonly Used Conventions courses. Provide students with an opportunity to practice what they’ve learned and you will create new duplicate players — and students who want to take more lessons in order to improve.

**Offer free entries in supervised play sessions.**

Allow students who are currently enrolled in classes to play free in your supervised play sessions. Provide a “Cheat Sheet” (a great security blanket) for them to use so they can peek at all of the answers. (ACBL’s E-Z Guide Booklets make excellent security blankets and they are quite inexpensive.)

**Encourage newcomers to play with “freebies.”**

- Let newcomers play free their first time.
- Offer free plays to graduates of bridge classes not held at the club.
- Give a free play to a new player for their next visit.

**Have the eighth (last) lesson at the club.**

Contact teachers who aren’t teaching at your club and arrange to have them teach the last lesson in their series at your club. Carol Mathews of Coram, NY finds this gives you a chance to introduce the students to the location of future games that you want them to play in. Consider giving the students a free play to return.

**Work with teachers to bring students to your club.**

Offer a “Free Play” to any teacher who brings four students to your club to play.

**Contact relocating ACBL members.**

A good source of new players for your club are ACBL members who have moved into the area. Get your unit’s membership chair to give you a list and welcome them to the area by giving them a call or by sending them a brochure about your club. A free play included with your brochure will give them a reason to try your club. Your unit may already be contacting these players. If so, you can ask to “piggyback” on the unit’s mailing and include your own flyer/free play, or you could volunteer to help the unit give these players a “call-back.”

**Reward your new players for frequent play.**

The Maritime Cards and Games Bridge Club gives a copy of *Adventures in Duplicate* to new players who have attended at least three duplicate games.

**Reward members who bring you a new player.**

Thank them by doing something special. You could consider something fanciful like a Bulletin Board where you post Angel cut-outs with the member’s name on it. You can add points to their “frequent player card,” give them a discount card or a T-shirt, or even a free play when a club member brings in a new member.

## TEACH BRIDGE

One of the best sources of new players is through a teaching program. Lessons generate potential new customers. If you are a club manager and don't want to teach, work with the teachers in your area to benefit each other.

### **Offer free space to a local teacher for lessons.**

If a teacher holds lessons at your club site, it is much easier to get those students playing in your games. Work with the teacher to offer a Bridge Plus+ game following each lesson to get the students started.

### **Offer the first lesson(s) free.**

Keep new players coming into your club by offering the first of a series of bridge lessons for free so participants can get a taste of the program and the teacher's style before they commit to more. The first lesson of the *Bidding (The Club Series)* course was written with this promotional idea in mind.

### **Ask teachers to sell discounted entries.**

As teachers finish their classes, ask them to sell discounted entries to your beginner games. (Be certain to ask teachers who are not affiliated with other clubs.) Let the teachers keep the money they receive for the entries (and make certain you stress that they cannot give the entries away). This promotion gives the students a bargain, the teacher a fee and you a new player. Any new players who come to play in your game get a free entry for a second visit – to encourage them to return. Also, remember to thank the teachers who sent students during the game while the newcomers are playing. New players like to hear their teacher praised. (Audrey Grant – Toronto ON)

### **Recognize the importance of getting students to play.**

For club managers who are also teachers, your goal is to get students playing at your club. It is assumed that you are already teaching at your club and getting the students used to coming to that site. Next, give them free plays to your beginner games and motivate them with these two slogans:

- “Practice may not make perfect, but it sure does improve your game!”  
(Floneta Gilmore - Orlando, FL)
- “When you earn any money, you just go out and spend it. When you earn masterpoints, you have them forever.”  
(Jerry Helms - Charlotte, NC)

### **Offer a full duplicate game as one of your course lessons.**

Make your students eager to play the game by staging a duplicate session as one of your lessons. The students play and the game is scored and

masterpoints are awarded. (Call the Club and Member Services Department for a pupil game sanction.) Note that you can use the original *Spade Series* teacher manual with the E-Z Deal cards and booklets for the Advancing Player I and II Play courses to teach your students all about duplicate bridge. Order materials from Shop ACBL at the ACBL web site.

**Offer a variety of bridge classes.**

Just as you need to offer a variety of types of games at your club, you need to have bridge lessons for players from beginner to advanced. To learn this game, players need information presented in more than one way. Offer Club, Diamond, Heart lessons and Easybridge!

**Remember the value of play and practice sessions.**

Offer four-week seminars on more advanced topics or subjects that weren't covered in your regular lessons. Do this in an off-peak period when you aren't planning to teach. Participants may sign up for one week or for all four weeks. The more your students play, the more likely it is that they will take more lessons.

**Look for alternate lesson sites.**

Think about teaching at other locations besides your club — community centers, senior centers, country clubs. These locations are always looking for teachers to offer classes and they put you in contact with potential new players for your club.

**Give discounts for students who repeat a class.**

Offer to let participants repeat a bridge lesson series for free or at a discount. You can use repeating students to help new students and you can allow a customer to become comfortable with the material before moving on.

**Team teaching.**

Offer to team-teach with other teachers in order to expand your teaching program and to increase your skills. Working together, you can find new ways to help your students learn and enjoy their classes.

**Don't forget to focus on the social aspect of bridge lessons.**

Advertise *friendly* lessons — stress that participants can meet new people and have fun!

**Offer family and quantity discounts.**

Stimulate business by offering family discounts for your classes as well as quantity discounts for individuals who sign up for more than one class at a time.

**Introduce students to duplicate at graduation parties.**

End a lesson series with a graduation party. The students all play duplicate, have refreshments, compete for lucky draws and prizes and masterpoints! Invite local teachers to bring their students to this party at your club to join your students. It will encourage all of these beginners to continue to play in the special new player games you offer.

**Use a convention card holder to start a new class.**

When your students complete a set of lessons, give them a graduation present of a convention card holder (about \$.35). This can be an incentive to sign up for a new course you offer on “Filling Out the Convention Card” (use the new simplified “Fat Free” card — product # SS4).

**Prepare your students for duplicate.**

Barbara Seagram of Toronto, ON sends her students out to play duplicate, she lets them know that they have to develop slightly thicker skins and she ...

- Tells them to leave their fears at home.
- Warns them that they will feel like they are making fools of themselves.
- Tells them bridge is a game designed to keep them humble.
- Says bridge is a game of mistakes, but they will learn from their mistakes.
- Reminds them no one starts out a good player.
- Tells them that for each cranky player in a room of 40 players, there are 39 who are wonderful.

**Refer to the ACBL Handbook for Bridge Teachers**

Many more ideas and programs are in the handbook, available from the Education Department or on the web.

# **PUBLICIZE YOUR CLUB**

Take advantage of local media opportunities and ACBL's Cooperative Advertising Program.

## **Newspaper ads do work.**

Use small local and neighborhood papers (start with shoppers, tabloids and other newspapers that are distributed free in your area), and remember that newspaper inserts may be cheaper than larger display ads. Take advantage of the ACBL's Cooperative Advertising Program for reimbursements for advertising lessons, newcomer games and membership. You receive 75% of the cost of the ad for each program. The ACBL makes it even easier by providing templates to download. Visit the ACBL web site/Resources for Marketing for more.

## **Send postcards.**

To get the word out quickly, invest in 1,000 labels for local players and a postcard mailing. You can generate the postcard on your computer and print on card stock. You can order the labels from ACBL inexpensively through your unit.

## **Get free news publicity.**

News stories about your club can produce new players at the fraction of the cost of advertising — and you also gain credibility and respect. There are three basic steps for creating publicity:

1. Find a story idea that is unique,
2. Prepare and send a short news release to a reporter,
3. Follow up with a call or e-mail message.

See the ACBL web site/Resources for Marketing for more information on working with the media and sample press releases.

## **Advertise in special interest media.**

Every community has special interest newspapers aimed at senior citizens, social organizations and business organizations. Look for them in racks at your local library. Also find specialty publications for your area, such as Chamber of Commerce guides, tourism guides and city magazines.

## **Use school publications to reach parents.**

Try offering a free class to the students at the school and in return ask for space for an ad about your club in the school newspaper. Parents do read school publications.

### **Advertise on school and community calendars.**

Advertising that is displayed on a calendar is a low-cost way of building awareness and goodwill in specific communities and school markets. Remember, parents read school calendars as well.

### **Make a TV infomercial.**

Do an infomercial about your club for your local cable station. Independent cable stations often offer these opportunities for free.

### **Logos help build recognition with local bridge players.**

Develop a logo for your club and use it on everything! Design your logo to say something special about yourself or your club.

### **Create a brochure or flyer.**

“Bridge in Your Neighborhood” templates are available on the ACBL web site under Resources for Marketing. This format can be downloaded and filled in with your information. You can also create flyers from the advertising templates in Resources for Marketing. Or create your own on your computer.

Places where you can distribute flyers:

- Libraries
- Visitor centers or Chambers of Commerce
- Real estate offices
- Welcome Wagon or similar new resident organizations
- Senior centers
- College student unions
- Community centers
- Customer Service departments at shopping malls
- Tournaments
- Apartment complexes
- Supermarkets

### **Put old *Bridge Bulletins* to good use.**

Unit 529 (Modesto CA) collects old Bulletins (without the member’s masterpoint page), adds a label and distributes the magazines to professional offices, etc. The label reads:

FREE! TAKE ME HOME!

Compliments of the Modesto Bridge Unit

American Contract Bridge League

For Information about Lessons, Easybridge! or Duplicate Games

Call “Bridge Center of Modesto” 575-4489 or 537-7546

### **Publicize what’s special about your club.**

Identify what is special about your club and advertise it — can your customers take lessons at the same location, can they earn free plays by bringing in new players, etc.

## **MARKET YOUR CLUB**

Make sure ACBL members and non-members are aware of your lessons and games through free advertising, community directories and more.

### **Get the word out.**

The world's best club is worthless if prospective players don't know about it. Promotion makes things happen and produces fast results.

### **Try a newsletter or e-newsletter.**

It's easy to publish a newsletter that can be picked up at the club (or mailed to members you haven't seen in a while with a note). In addition to listing your game times and upcoming special games, include a "mini-lesson." You can list class times, game winners and personal tidbits. This reminder will help keep your players coming back. Publish monthly. Celebrate not only the bridge accomplishments of your players but also the personal ones. It will help your players feel a sense of ownership and family.

If you collect the e-mail addresses of your players, you can save postage costs by delivering your newsletter by e-mail. You can also use e-mail to invite players to special events, ask their choices for special dinners, send quizzes along with lesson information or send results with comments to newer players.

### **Publish a web site.**

Existing and new players will benefit from a web site that has all the components of a newsletter – and more. You even can post game results, lessons and set up a chat room for players to discuss the hands. Be sure to contact the ACBL web master to post your site in the "Find a Club" section of the ACBL web site and post your club on unit and district sites as well.

### **Write a local bridge column.**

Start a bridge column. Some smaller papers can't always find enough news on their own. The column could include your club name and a phone number for more information.

### **Get your game results published in the paper.**

Whether it's your main local newspaper or a neighborhood weekly, get your game results published. This lets the readers know about your game and provides information for new players to find you.

**Use your local celebrities or visiting celebrities.**

Anytime you can get a local celebrity (bridge or otherwise) to visit your club, the chances of getting publicity increase. You want the name of your club to be seen and heard whenever possible. If bridge celebrities are in town for a tournament, host a reception where they might give a bridge tip before one of your newcomer games. If there are bridge authors in town, organize a book-signing party.

**Be a public speaker.**

Offer to give a talk on the history of bridge or give a quick lesson (MiniBridge is easy) as part of the program for organizations such as *Welcome Wagon* or *Junior League*. Bring lots of promotional material (especially a flyer advertising your club's games and special features) and offer discounts.

**Hold exhibit games.**

Consider holding exhibit games in public places such as libraries, bookstores, senior centers, shopping malls, schools, exercise clubs (stress mental fitness) or even art galleries. Use MiniBridge, supervised play or a challenge match to attract attention and have lots of material available on your club classes and newcomer activities.

**Work with local bookstores.**

Contact local bookstores and offer information on what bridge books they should stock. In return, ask to post your club information in the area where the bridge books are located.

**Piggyback on community events and holidays.**

Plan promotions, lesson series, activities to capitalize on upcoming local events and holidays. Offer your club as a collection point for Christmas donations for the needy and you may receive free media attention.

**Host a charity game for a local charity.**

Contact a local chapter to see if you can work together to raise money and promote bridge (and your club!). Note that the ACBL Charity Foundation now funds charities to certain districts each year. Check with your district board for more information.

**Don't forget to market your club to current players with recognition for achievements.**

At Diana Schuld's club, the names of all players who have 60% or better games are posted on the club's Honor Board each Monday. At Alan LeBendig's club, 70% games are celebrated in the club's newsletter. Many clubs also offer free plays for various achievements.

**Appoint a calling committee.**

Have a calling committee contact players who haven't been to the club in a while. You will discover valuable information from talking with your clients. They may be ill and you'll want to send a card; they may need partners; they may have a problem with the club that you will want to explore. (One such committee found that players weren't coming back because a game was running too slowly. A *fast pairs* game retrieved them.)

**Contact local radio and TV stations.**

Local stations are always looking for interesting programming topics. Call them and offer yourself as a guest. Look for a newsworthy angle in what you do. Consider having a friend make the call to avoid looking like a publicity seeker.

**Donate a free set of lessons for the church bazaar.**

Many churches have bridge groups as well as bingo. Consider donating a free set of beginning or brush-up lessons for the next bazaar rather than cash. You'll get advertising and new business.

**Frequent play incentives.**

- Sell monthly play booklets.  
Offer a "play all you want for one fee" booklet. These sales will provide monthly income early, help you pay the bills and keep your customers coming.
- Sell customer discount cards.  
Discount cards are intended for repeated use until completed or expired. They will build player loyalty. You can sell or give away discount cards or award them as prizes.
- Start a frequent player program.  
Celebrate the people who play often at your club. This practice will encourage others to be frequent players. Develop a simple point system that results in free prizes or allows frequent players to play for a lesser fee. Publicize your winners.

**Incentive categories.**

Establish various categories of incentives – monthly player, seasonal player, annual player in each masterpoint category. Post the winners each month and host an annual party to celebrate. Make this a big deal and invite everyone to come and join the festivities.

**Use “freebies” to promote attendance.**

- Free play on the week of the player’s birthday.
- Weekly winners play free at the next game.
- Offer extra-point events for no extra cost as often as possible.

**Use discounts as an incentive for your least popular nights.**

George Retek, ACBL Board Member from District 1, observed that movie theaters in Montreal offer discounted tickets on Tuesday nights, traditionally the night with the smallest crowds, to encourage people to attend. The same principle should work for bridge clubs with a slow night. Try lowering your entry fees and see what happens.

## **RECRUIT AND RETAIN ACBL MEMBERS**

The ACBL needs new members to sustain our game for generations to come. Get your players hooked on earning and collecting masterpoints and enjoying your club and its members, and they will want to join and play more frequently.

### **Value membership.**

Imagine how much less exciting and fun your bridge life would have been without the ACBL. No tournaments, no special events, no masterpoints, no recognition, no bridge magazine, no global bridge family! When you realize how much the existence of the ACBL has added to your enjoyment of the game — spread the word and get your players involved.

### **Motivate yourself to sell memberships.**

Club managers can earn wonderful perks for selling ACBL memberships. Declare one month at your club as the one where you make a special effort to get players to join the ACBL and reap the rewards.

- You earn a \$100 ACBL gift certificate when you sell 25 new memberships within a calendar year,
- You receive an upgraded club championship by recruiting 10 new members (within any time period),
- You earn a \$500 dollar bonus check for recruiting a total of 100 new members (within any time period).

### **Select one month to focus on a membership drive.**

Maggie Sparrow of Hillsdale, ON has been very successful with the idea of January as club membership sign-up month and February as ACBL membership sign-up month.

### **Increase the up-front value of an ACBL membership.**

Unit 175 (Vermont) sends a welcome packet to all new members. Included in that packet are two coupons good for either free plays at any club in the state or two higher-priced Vermont sectionals. These free coupons make a first time membership free — which makes membership a pretty easy sell.

### **Ask your players to sell memberships for you.**

It is very effective for a player-member to ask a newcomer to join the ACBL. Your club can earn special games that pay extra masterpoints by recruiting new members. Everyone benefits when the players join the ACBL.

### **Introduce newcomers to ACBL's magazine.**

*The Bridge Bulletin* is produced every month and contains a special *Play Bridge* section developed especially for newer duplicate players and social bridge players. This magazine offers something for all levels of ACBL members and is a good incentive to join. Have some back issues of the magazine on hand to show to potential members.

### **Get referrals from your players.**

Call the regular players at your club and find out if they know anyone who might want to join your game. Inviting them to play and finding them a partner might be all it takes to enhance your nucleus of players and to lead them to membership.

### **Capitalize on the lure of masterpoints.**

When students win their first piece of a masterpoint in a game you are running, they gain a lot of self-confidence. If you explain that they can become a Junior Master by earning just 5 masterpoints, you may well hook them into buying a membership. They can claim the points won during the year preceding the date on which they join ACBL to a maximum of 20 masterpoints.

### **Maximize the appeal of masterpoints.**

Make certain your non-members always get a masterpoint receipt to let them know they have won points. They will want to collect their points — one of the best reasons to join your club and the ACBL. Masterpoint receipts (PCON slips) can be printed from ACBLscore or you can order a more attractive receipt format from the ACBL Club and Member Services Department.

### **Provide end of series specials.**

On completion of courses taught at your club, consider giving each of the students who join ACBL a gift of five free plays for the newcomer game. By the time they have used all of them, they will be hooked. The Houston unit recognizes the achievement of new players when they complete their first bridge course. Since these students are potential new members, the unit provides an excellent new player guide booklet called *Adventures in Duplicate* and a congratulatory letter. Host a party for the players or have them stay for a free duplicate game.

### **Invite new players in your area to visit your club.**

Each September with your club renewal notice, ACBL sends each club manager a roster-request form to fill out for one free list of your choice (unit members, area players with a certain number of masterpoints, etc., on disk or hardcopy). If you find new names on this list (people who haven't played at your club), send out information letters and invite them to your club.

**Create a membership bulletin board.**

A club membership bulletin board can be used to feature new members, advancement in rank changes and to highlight special volunteers.

**Contests for members.**

Hold "Player of the Month" races for each level of player and post the winners' pictures on your wall. Players must be members to participate. This is an honor that anyone can achieve. It is an incentive to join ACBL in order to become eligible and an incentive to play in more sessions.

**Membership posters.**

The Maritime Cards and Games Bridge Club has poster boards with all ACBL members listed with their specific rankings. New players want to join the ACBL to acquire a number and have their name on the posters.

**Hassle-free.**

At the DeLand Bridge Club, the members do the paperwork for new members and renewals and pay the postage. It is clear to anyone in their games that they think ACBL membership is worthwhile.

**Save up those masterpoints.**

At the South Bay Club in Torrance, the club manager keeps track of the masterpoints won by non-members during the year. As points accumulate, players are encouraged to join the ACBL so they don't lose their points. The club is very successful with this service.

**Discover the benefits of e-mail.**

If you have the e-mail addresses of your players, you can e-mail the results of games and you can send reminders of upcoming special events, interesting hands, newcomer activities, lessons and game results. E-mails will motivate your players to participate more.

**Contact inactive members.**

A good source of new members and new players are people who have dropped out for one reason or another. Get the inactive list from your unit membership chair and contact them. Find out why they aren't playing, and see if you can recruit them by solving problems like no partner, no transportation, a misunderstanding, etc. At the Helams Angels Bridge Club, the club purchases inexpensive convention card holders and gives them as an added incentive to new or reinstating members.

**Give newcomers a membership fee break.**

If new pairs pay to play at your club, allow them to put their entry fee up as part of their ACBL membership fee as an incentive to join right away.

In Pat Peterson's Easybridge! game, he offered a free play session to those who joined ACBL. To his surprise almost everyone joined! They got a \$3 game free and Pat got credit for a lot of new members.

**Ask for the sale.**

Newcomers want to be a part of the bridge family. Sometimes getting them to join ACBL and to join your club (if you have a membership club) is as simple as asking them.

## **DON'T NEGLECT THE SOCIAL SIDE OF THE GAME**

Understand why people play bridge and work to help them achieve their goals – to have fun, to meet people, to enjoy competition.

### **Entice your players with food and bridge.**

Having a social period before the game helps the newcomers create friendships and minimizes tension when play begins. Food and bridge are a natural partnership. Try pot luck suppers once a month; a lunch break in a 10 a.m. or 11 a.m. game; refreshments after a session, etc.

### **Thank your club members.**

You want your players to know how much you appreciate them. Hold customer appreciation parties at regular intervals. These can range from free pizza on Fridays to cookies on Monday to more elaborate affairs. Say “thank you” with a card on the club’s anniversary date or to introduce new games or classes. Consider doing this in October and combine it with an invitation to play in the club appreciation game. October is ACBL’s Club Appreciation Month.

### **Decorate with a monthly theme.**

Chuck and Carolyn Hodel of Chico, CA decorate their bridge room according to a monthly theme. It is inexpensive if you collect the decorations slowly over time. January – New Year's Day, February – Valentine's Day, March – St. Patrick's Day, April/May – Kites, June/July – Flags, August/Sept – Use your imagination, October – Halloween, November – Thanksgiving, December – Christmas.

### **Party planning committee.**

Bev and Brian Nelson of Fort Myers, FL have about 30 people who contribute their time to help plan neat parties. They plan the event, decorate and clean up. This group of volunteers loves being involved.

### **Hold parties to honor winners, losers, special members.**

Don't overlook the opportunity to hold a party to celebrate bridge events. Here are some of the special occasions you can enjoy.

- Challenge another club to a match and celebrate the winners.
- Host an end-of-the-year party and recognize all new levels of achievement within the ACBL ranks: Junior Masters on up are announced and applauded.
- Hold your own “Ace of Clubs” competition at your club. Give out awards early in the year to the players who earned the most points in the previous year.

- Use humor whenever possible.
- Celebrate failure. At Lindsey Butler’s club, the record for tricks set is “down 10, doubled and vulnerable, for 2900;” for worst game, it’s 22%. They plan to have a party when these records are broken, to honor the new record holders.
- Host parties for new Life Masters. Have a master of ceremonies recount how the LM won his/her last points and credit those who helped. The most recent LM can perform a pinning ceremony and present a card of congratulations signed by all club members.
- Honor your members – long-standing, deceased, etc.

### **Give birthday parties.**

Have monthly birthday games to celebrate the club members with birthdays. Make special name tags for these players or let them sit N-S and tie a balloon with their names (in magic marker) on their chairs for a very festive look.

### **Spruce up your windows and walls.**

Don’t discount the advantages of good signs and displays on the outside and inside of your club. A welcome sign with the logo on the front door makes a difference. A fun, friendly atmosphere is your goal. Create a place where your players want to be!

Bev and Brian Nelson (Fort Myers, FL) feel that motivational signs are a must not only for new players but also for the regular customer. They “plant the seed.” One of their signs says, “Everyone who walks through this door brings us joy, some by coming and some by leaving.” Barbara Seagram of Toronto, ON added these ideas: “Opinions are like toothbrushes, everyone has his own so there’s no need to share!” and “Always remember you are unique, just like everyone else!”

### **Help your club members become a family.**

Set up a bulletin board at your club where you can list special information about your members — marriages, births, deaths, illness, anniversaries, etc. Post the names of these players along with addresses (or hospital information for those who are ill). Call missing members. Cards, notes or flowers should be sent to members who are ill or unable to attend games. Let them know they are missed.

### **“Mixers” capitalize on the social interests of your players.**

Advertise a mixer for new players who want to meet more new players (or non-players who want to make instant friends through bridge). Most people take up the game of bridge because they want to meet new people. Stress this in your club advertising. A good tag line is, “Meet new people *and* have fun!”

**Start a special game with a mixer.**

Help your players meet each other and learn something about each other. Start with a pre-game mixer. There are books in the library that will give you all sorts of ideas. Here are some to get you started:

**Pass out sheets of paper with Bingo Card grids to play People Bingo.**

The object would be to find nine (or the number of spaces you provide) different people who do the things listed in each space. Fill in the spaces with things like: “plays bridge on Tuesday nights,” “sings in a choir,” “loves football,” “shops on the Internet,” etc. A person may sign a card only one time.

**Pin a playing card on the back of each person as they arrive.**

By talking to the other people in the room and asking questions, they have to find out what card they are displaying.

**Give each player a sheet with three columns labeled name, alike and different.**

Find something you have in common *and* something you disagree with for as many people as you can (Janie Smith: we both like movies, she loves to cook and I don't.)

**Club teams spark competition and add fun.**

Lindsey Butler of the Greater Charleston DBC divided her club members into four teams – Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs. She made up the teams with a look at ability, frequency of play, travel time, etc. and appointed team captains who were responsible for getting their team's masterpoint totals at the end of each month. (Use the ACBLscore printouts.) There are monthly team and individual winners and at the end of the year, the winning team gets the Butler Cup. This generated a lot of FUN, excitement and enthusiasm at the club. People played more often, encouraged team members to participate and checked up on each other — a real social plus. If one team gets way ahead, there are rules for drafting players from the leading team — but every team has some franchise players who can't be drafted. The team captains have spreadsheets for their players.

**Remember everyone needs to be needed.**

Find ways for your players to help. If you don't have a new player services committee, try appointing a host or hostess of the day to help you welcome people. Organize a pot luck lunch or dinner and have people bring their special dishes, etc., or appoint a committee to organize the activity. Again, working together will help build relationships and friendships and give your players “ownership” in the club.

**Encourage your players to come early to socialize.**

Give your players every opportunity to get to know each other and to become friends. Provide an area where players who want to come early can play cribbage, hearts, spades, etc. or can gather to eat lunch or have a snack. If your situation makes it easy to do, you might be able to have sandwiches made on the premises and sold prior to some games. (Clubs with full kitchens are very popular, but require extra staff and lots of work.)

## **HELP YOUR PLAYERS LEARN AND IMPROVE**

This was rated as one of the top reasons why our members play in the ACBL Membership Survey.

### **Set up a club library.**

Establish a club lending library. Ask members to donate books (bridge books and others) they have read and enjoyed. Appoint a club librarian to set up a system for checking the books in and out. Establish an area in the club (if you have the space) where the books can be enjoyed before and after your games.

### **Special sessions to discuss problem hands/rulings.**

Offer a pre-game discussion (30 minutes) of problem hands from the week before. This could be hosted by a teacher or director and will be an incentive for players to return in order to ask questions.

### **Offer mini-lessons, chalk-talks, tips.**

Offer mini-lessons, chalk-talks and tips, all pre-game and all free. They are a wonderful incentive for players to participate in your games. You can gear these toward newcomers, or advancing students, or both. When offered to players of all levels, at different times, they help the stepping stone principle to work and the questions flow on a regular basis.

### **Establish mentor programs.**

Mentor programs can help new players and students discover how much fun duplicate bridge can be. These programs also help club 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 has made 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. (More information on mentor programs is available at the ACBL web site in the Resources/Clubs section.)

### **Use your experts to set up a special newcomer event.**

Have a table of experts play some hands and duplicate these hands into a set of boards for your newcomers to play. (You can use them for a game or a class.) Be sure to have a teacher or expert go over the hands at the end of the game using hand records (from your computer) or transparencies.

### **Help your players brush-up their games.**

If your players want to brush up, refer them to the free Learn to Play Bridge software on the ACBL web site, particularly part 2, which focuses on defense.

### **Schedule Pro-Ams**

Newcomers learn from more experienced players, and the experienced players enjoy these opportunities to mentor newcomers. Schedule a game once a month with a sign-up sheet, post names of experienced players willing to play, or just match up players at the game.

### **Try Jolley's Follies Pro-Am in your town.**

Once a year for more than 25 years, the Butte, MT unit has held a Pro-Am Team game known as Jolley's Follies (named after the originator of the event, Marie Jolley) to help the newer players get acquainted with the "old-timers."

Here's how it works:

Divide the players into four categories according to masterpoints/expertise. The LMs draw a team number first and they are the team captains. The second group draws to see what team they are on, then the third group, then the fourth group. For the first two matches, the LMs are partnered with the fourth group and groups 2 and 3 play together. On the third match, the LM plays with the Group 3 player and the Group 2 and Group 4 players are partners. On the fourth match, the LM plays with the Group 2 player and the Group 3 and Group 4 players are partners. If there is a tie, a four-board playoff determines which teams will win the trophies.

### **Try an Early-Bird Pro-Am.**

Can you imagine 10 or more LMs getting up early enough to play in a 9 a.m. game with new bridge players? And liking it! Well, that's exactly what happened at the Vista Bridge Center (Vista, CA). This brainchild of the club's former owner, Jane Horgan, was developed by the club managers, Frank Lukowicz and Dennis Cleary, as a regular feature of the club. Both mentors and mentees agreed that the results were wonderful. The format is relaxed with much discussion and it includes the dreaded "talk across the table" not permitted in more serious games. A new player may ask any LM mentor questions about bidding or play at any time. The goal is to learn, not to win; although a friendly rivalry developed among several of the players. New players are encouraged to ask their mentor for other games and to "move up" into the regular games when they feel ready.

**Play boards from the open game in beginner games.**

Build confidence in new players by letting them play a set of duplicate boards from a regular club session. Adding their scores to those from the regular game will provide the effect of playing in a game and will encourage the students to play more.

**Introduce newer players to team play.**

Offer a “Friendship Swiss” prior to a local tournament to introduce the newer players to team play. After “learning the ropes,” the new players might have the confidence to play outside of the club. The more they play; the more they will want to play.

## **MAKE IT EASY FOR YOUR PLAYERS TO PLAY**

Establishing partnerships is one of the key components of a successful club.

### **Make partnerships.**

A club manager will sometimes feel like a matchmaker. Helping your players find partners is one of the most important services you can offer. Calling to see who is coming and who needs pairing up will increase the size of your games. Consider having a partnership chairman for each of your games.

### **Use a sign-up sheet to make partnerships.**

You can get a jump on your next game and the players who already have partners by using a sign-up sheet. Pass the sheet around (or take it around yourself) during the current game so people who already plan to play can sign up and those who need partners can let you know.

### **Help with tournament partnerships.**

As a service, your club can offer to assist in making partnerships and teams for tournament play. This will help your club members interact.

### **Post a partnership desk on your web site.**

This is a great way to help your players make partnerships in the comfort of their own homes. Check out other web sites that offer this service.

### **Help your members make LM.**

Identify near Life Masters. Get club members to help them go over the top. Organize a team of the best players at the club to accompany a near LM to a nearby tournament to help win those last few gold or silver point.

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

A simplified version of the regular ACBL convention card is available. This card is similar to the regular card, but less cluttered and easier to fill out. Make certain you have these on hand for your players. The simplified convention card is product #SS4 and is affectionately known as the "Fat Free" card. (Download it from the ACBL's web site for free and copy it at your local copy store.)

### **Make it easier for physically challenged players to participate.**

If you are running a game for players with severe arthritis or other problems that make it hard for them to sort the cards, ask all of the players to sort their hands after they have played each board. This gives them a chance to count the cards and make certain all are accounted for, and it makes it easier for the physically challenged person to pick up a ready hand. If you use bidding boxes and have players with poor eyesight, allow them to use out-loud bidding and the boxes at those tables.

**Carpool to club games with your students.**

To help students develop the habit of playing at your club, organize car pools or pick them up and take them home yourself. Once they get to know each other, they will make their own arrangements to come to the games.

## **MAKE IT EASY FOR PLAYERS TO FIND YOU**

List your club contact information wherever you can.

### **Be careful how you list your club in the telephone directory.**

Make your listing in the *white pages* stand out by listing your club under *Bridge*. If your club is called “The Fun and Games Bridge Club,” list it as the “Bridge Club of Fun and Games.” It’s easier to find.

### **Consider getting a listing in the telephone directory yellow pages.**

Try a listing under “Bridge.” Remember that you can apply to the ACBL Co-operative Advertising Program to help pay for a listing in the yellow pages. Although these listings are expensive, they are very effective and have two irresistible advantages:

- (1) Most homes have this book, and
- (2) people that look there are ready to commit.

### **Check out other community phone and web directories for listings.**

### **Have an answering service for your club.**

Even if you hold only one game a week, you need a phone line, a message that gives the details of your game and the ability for players to leave a message.

## **BE CREATIVE!**

Over the years ACBL has collected these fun tips and ideas from other successful clubs.

### **Run a “Lucky Score” series.**

Start the pot with \$25 and have each player put in \$.50 per game. Use your computer to run a program that will take the day’s average and produce a “lucky score” for that event. If no one wins the pot, the money is carried over until the next game. Kathie MacNab’s club in Halifax originated this idea. She said the club is always full once the pot goes over \$300! Select a new score for each game and don’t let the players know what the score is until the game is over. You don’t want players “shooting” for the prize and disrupting the scores.

### **Offer a “Wheel” series.**

Nan Watson of Mobile, Alabama came up with a good way to increase attendance and encourage newcomers to play. Have members join the Wheel Club where everyone will play one session with everyone else. At the end of the series, the person with the highest percentage score for three-fourths of the total games wins the series. If the assigned partner is unable to play, one may invite a substitute to play. Give money prizes for first and second place. If there are 20 or more players, award prizes at the halfway mark and again at the end. Wheel members pay \$.25 less for card fees than other players. They can put their \$.25 into a special jackpot to be divided among participating wheel members.

### **Use the Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney competitions.**

Work with the unit to use these two competitions to motivate new players to play more frequently. A committee could be formed to notify the winners, make up the certificates and plan a presentation ceremony (maybe at a spring tournament). The players will enjoy the attention.

### **First masterpoint award.**

Dini Romito of Dagsboro, DE creates a special award certificate she calls “First Masterpoint Award” and presents it to her players as they earn it. Her players love it. The certificate reads, “Shuffles Bridge Club is honored to present you with a memento of your first masterpoint award. Congratulations on a good game.” There is space for the name, date and masterpoints earned.

### **Celebrate special achievements like “Golden Age Masters.”**

Recognize your club’s *Golden Age Masters* (70 years of age with 300 points of any color; 80 years of age with 100 points of any color) by applying for these achievement certificates. Players love a party and this can be the draw.

### **More points, no more money.**

Offer as many extra-point events for no-extra cost as possible. This is the policy of the Banbury Bridge Club and it motivates players to participate more frequently.

### **Have a player of the month contest.**

Your players want to play in a friendly atmosphere. Use this competition to set a tone of good behavior at your club. The award goes to the person exhibiting the best sportsmanlike attitude — friendliest, most social, nice, thoughtful, etc. The award can be free plays, a banner at the club that hangs on the wall for the entire month, a certificate, a special parking space. Encourage a difficult player to make the effort to win!

### **Come early or stay late to Play “Bridge Bingo.”**

Bridge players love to play bingo — especially “Bridge Bingo.” Charlotte Blaiss of Memphis, TN found it can be an incentive to get students to class on time. You can also play “Bridge Bingo” at the end of a club game to keep your players busy until the scores are posted. Giving the winner a prize only adds to the fun and excitement. Here’s how Bridge Bingo works:

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

### **Bridge Bingo and club name tags.**

Bev and Brian Nelson of Fort Myers, FL encourage name tags to be worn during the entire game. Remember that name tags help the newer players get to know everyone at the club. They call Bingo at the beginning of each game. (This gets the people in their seats when they announce one minute until Bingo and the game starts on time.) The winner gets a discount coupon – two discount coupons if the winner is wearing a name tag and the person Bingos in 36 cards or less.

**Publicize theme games.**

Chuck and Carolyn Hodel of Chico, CA maximize the appeal of special games by offering a variety throughout the year such as: the “dress-up” game, “pizza party pairs,” a New Year’s Eve celebration, the “scary pairs” for Halloween with costumes welcomed, the Unit Memorial Pairs where the players are invited to write on a sheet of paper on the wall the names of deceased they want to remember, “red, white and blue pairs” for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July where the players dress in the colors of the flag.

**Turn “telephone number” sets into a good thing.**

Marti Ronemus of York, PA says that at her club, players are encouraged to be audacious (within the limits of sanity) and to find reasons to bid rather than to pass. Everyone knows this kind of behavior often results in contracts that don’t make. To keep the mood upbeat, a prize is offered to anyone who goes down a “telephone number.” At the end of the game, anyone with a four-digit minus score is awarded their prize right before the winners are announced. It’s kept light and funny, calling the prize the “Red Badge of Courage Award” or something similar. The players are reminded that they can’t succeed without a lot of strikeouts at bat, and that their willingness to dare is to be admired. A big round of applause always follows.

**Predict your score.**

Barbara Seagram of Toronto, ON lets her players predict their total score for the game on the first round. If they guess it “dead-on,” they win a free play or a lottery ticket, or whatever is being offered that night.

**Reward special groups.**

If your club hosts an individual game for a special bridge group, create an incentive for their members to participate. For example, if you plan on 15 tables for the game and the attendance is larger, agree to rebate \$1.00 a table to the group sponsoring the party. This is a way for the special group (PTA, Garden Club, etc.) to build its treasury.

**Megapoint Day.**

Marti Ronemus of York, PA designates one day a week as Mega Masterpoint day. She runs a Junior Fund game and absorbs the extra dollar per player that ACBL charges. It costs the club, but creates a lot of good will and has increased attendance. The players can win more points and pay the standard club fee.

**Free lunch makes a festive game.**

Six times a year, the Mountain View DBC offers a free lunch prior to an afternoon game and they do not charge extra for the special game.

**Champagne on ice.**

Whenever a player goes over their LM status AT THE CLUB, Bev and Brian Nelson always have champagne on ice and pop the cork to celebrate. Everyone joins in a toast and a picture is taken.

**Win with a deuce.**

Some clubs offer a free play to anyone who wins a trick with a deuce.

## DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PLAYERS

You want your bridge club to have a great reputation all around town. You want it to be a club where happy, friendly, well-mannered players are known to congregate to play bridge. You want to have a club where the environment is user-friendly to all levels of players. Your club should be one that even first-time players can feel is a second home.

We recommend that you strongly enforce the ACBL Zero Tolerance policy. Suspend and expel players who offend. The ultimate purpose of the Z-T policy is to create a much more pleasant atmosphere at ACBL sanctioned games. It's an attempt to eradicate unacceptable behavior in order to make the game of bridge more enjoyable for all.

Below are some examples of commendable behavior which, while not required, would significantly contribute to the improved atmosphere of our games:

- Being a good “host” or “guest” at the table.
- Greeting others in a friendly manner.
- Praising the bidding and/or play of the opponents.
- Having two clearly completed convention cards readily available to the opponents. (This is a regulation, not just a nicety.)

The following 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.

Z-T requires that when a player at a 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 74A. Law 91A gives the director the authority to assess disciplinary penalties.

More information on Z-T and handling behavior problems can be found in the ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations on the ACBL web site (look under Play: Charts, Rules and Regulations).

# MASTERPOINTS

Be sure to know the color of masterpoints you can award for various events and offer these events to your players whenever possible.

## **There are five types of colored masterpoints:**

**Net Points** are awarded for online play and are colorless.

**Black Points** are won in sanctioned club games and unit games and events not qualifying for red, silver or gold points.

**Silver Points** are awarded for events at sectional tournaments, including newcomer games and side events. Progressive Sectionals and Sectional Tournaments at Clubs also award silver points.

**Red Points** are awarded at regional tournaments and regional events at NABCs except for overall and section tops. Grand National Team (GNT) events and North American Pairs (NAP) events afford players the opportunity to earn red points at their local clubs.

**Gold Points** are awarded for placing overall and section tops in regional and NABC events where the top masterpoint limit is at least 750. Gold points may be given for special games such as the Instant Matchpoint Game, Grand National Team and North American Pair events.

**Platinum Points** are awarded for NABC+ events and include the nationally rated senior and women's events with no upper masterpoint limit, but they are not awarded for Junior, Flight B or other restricted events.

## PLAYER RANKS

Be sure to celebrate your players' rank achievements—especially those who become Life Masters, or any of your players who win annual masterpoint races.

<b>Rookie:</b>	Fewer than 5 full masterpoints.
<b>Junior Master:</b>	At least 5, but fewer than 20 masterpoints.
<b>Club Master:</b>	At least 20, but fewer than 50 masterpoints.
<b>Sectional Master:</b>	At least 50, but fewer than 100 masterpoints, of which 5 must be silver.
<b>Regional Master:</b>	At least 100 masterpoints, of which 15 must be silver, 5 must be red or gold.
<b>NABC Master:</b>	At least 200 masterpoints, of which 50 must be pigmented, with at least 5 gold, 15 red or gold and 25 silver.
<b>Life Master:</b>	300 or more masterpoints recorded by the ACBL, of which 100 must be pigmented, with 50 silver, 25 gold and 25 red or gold.
<b>Golden Age Master:</b>	A member who is age 70 or older and has at least 300 masterpoints of any color, or a member who is at least 80 years old and has at least 10 masterpoints of any color.
<b>Bronze Life Master:</b>	Life Master who has at least 500 masterpoints.
<b>Silver Life Master:</b>	Life Master who has at least 1000 masterpoints.
<b>Gold Life Master:</b>	Life Master who has at least 2500 masterpoints.
<b>Diamond Life Master:</b>	Life Master who has at least 5000 masterpoints.
<b>Emerald Life Master:</b>	Life Master who has at least 7500 masterpoints.
<b>Platinum Life Master:</b>	Life Master who has at least 10,000 masterpoints.
<b>Grand Life Master:</b>	Life Master who has at least 10,000 masterpoints and has won a North American Bridge Championship with no upper masterpoint restriction or an Open Team Trials or its equivalent, or a Women's Team Trials or its equivalent, or any of the following WBF events: Bermuda Bowl, Venice Cup, Rosenblum Cup, McConnell Cup, Open Pairs, Women's Pairs, Olympiad, Women's Team Olympiad, Mixed Pairs prior to 1990 or Mixed Teams prior to 1990.

## **MASTERPOINT RACES**

The ACBL gives official recognition to the winners (who are ACBL members) of the most masterpoints in a calendar year in several different categories.

### **Ace of Clubs**

Recognition is given to players through the rank of Grand Life Master who earn the most masterpoints in club games during the calendar year.

### **Mini-McKenney**

Recognition is given to players in each masterpoint category who win the most masterpoints during the calendar year. The home unit of each winner can purchase a Mini-McKenney medallion to award to the winners.

### **Other Races**

Senior Player of the Year; Youth Player of the Year; Junior Player of the Year; Sectional Player of the Year; Championship Player of the Year; Barry Crane Top 500; Annual Top 100 for each of the Bronze, Silver, Gold, Emerald and Platinum Life Master categories.

# COOPERATIVE ADVERTISING PROGRAM

You do the advertising. We'll help pay! The Cooperative Advertising Program (CAP) reimburses ACBL teachers, clubs, units and districts for advertising expenses for programs and lessons designed for newcomers and/or to recruit ACBL members.

CAP will refund you 75 percent of advertising costs up to \$1000 per program specifically for beginner bridge lessons, newcomer programs and ACBL recruitment. That's a \$750 reimbursement for \$1000 or more in advertising costs. We even supply you with ACBL logos and sample ad templates for a professional look.

## Program Information

- Advertising must be for newcomer programs, beginner bridge lessons or ACBL membership recruitment.
- The **ACBL logo** or the words American Contract Bridge League must appear in the advertisement. We encourage, but do not require you to use the **advertising templates** now available at the ACBL web site.
- Reimbursements are made by program. For example, if you spend \$1000 on newspaper advertising and \$500 for fliers for the same lesson series, your total reimbursement will be \$750, not \$1125. All reimbursements will be paid in U.S. dollars.

## Eligible Media

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Direct mail pieces
- Yellow page advertising
- Catalogs
- Posters/fliers for public distribution
- Billboards
- Television
- Radio
- Online commercial web sites\*

\*Online commercial web sites are those affiliated with a professional media organization such as The Washington Post online (mywashingtonpost.com), licensed business web sites such as Yahoo!® or community sites such as those for chambers of commerce. Personal, club, unit or district web sites are excluded.

## **Eligible Expenses**

- Cost of advertising placement
- Cost of advertising reproduction (e.g., copies of fliers)

## **Items not Eligible for Reimbursement**

- Ads placed in The Bridge Bulletin
- Calendars
- Tournament schedules
- Club, unit or district newsletters
- Postage
- Web publishing or maintenance
- Club, unit or district directories
- Supplies (e.g., labels, envelopes, etc.)
- Signage
- Promotional or specialty items (e.g., pens, pencils, coffee mugs, t-shirts, etc.)

## **How to Get Reimbursed**

Send a copy of the advertisement tear sheet with a copy of the invoice and/or receipt (for radio and television, send a copy of the script; for ads placed on an online commercial web site, send a copy of the link or insertion order) to:

Ruth Francis  
Marketing Department  
2990 Airways Blvd.  
Memphis TN 38116  
901-332-5586, ext.1368  
901-398-7754 (fax)  
ruth.francis@acbl.org

Be sure to include your name and a daytime phone number or e-mail address where we may contact you.

You may expect to receive your reimbursement in 6 to 8 weeks, or you will be contacted if your materials do not meet CAP requirements.