

ADOPT A NOVICE PROGRAM AS ADOPTED BY HOUSTON UNIT 174

Getting Started

Houston Unit 174 tried to begin an Adopt a Novice Program in September 1994. At that time unit member Lenny Roberts submitted a proposal for establishing the program to the unit board of directors. The Board was in total agreement with the plan, which was basically to be implemented by the clubs. The Board submitted a “how to” plan to the clubs and nothing happened. It is our belief that club owners/managers are inundated with all the forms, paperwork and hassles of running a business. Therefore, although the program may have been viable, no one was willing to spend the time to try. Not one club attempted this program or even asked for more information.

Each year we hold a Pro Am Game that is very well attended. We decided to use the Pro Am Game as the launching pad to try to establish the program. In addition we added a financial incentive for the Life Masters and the board agreed to financially support some of the costs for the program. The Board agreed to provide the financial support on a six-month trial basis. This support was limited to the advertising materials needed and a subsidy of the playing fee for the Life Master plus 50 cents per entry handling fee for the clubs. We enlisted the aid of a very enthusiastic Lenny Roberts to help implement the program.

At the Pro Am Game there was an 18” x 24” sign announcing the program. Next to the sign we placed a “live body,” namely Lenny, along with information sheets and registration forms. With everyone in a fun mood for a Pro Am Game there was a lot of interest and talk about the program. We told everyone that this was program was a “work in progress.” During the breaks in the Pro Am Game we addressed specific questions and program rules. There were 55 tables in the Pro Am and at the end of the game over 40 people had signed up.

Establishing the Program

First and foremost, it is necessary to have someone committed to this program. This can be a board member or unit volunteer. Lenny was the obvious choice for us to be the Program Coordinator. Although the program began at the Pro Am Game, it was clear to everyone from the beginning that the partnerships could play at any participating club. Obviously, all clubs must be given the opportunity to participate.

Our Program Coordinator committed himself to a personal visit to every club in the unit to explain the Adopt a Novice Program. We knew from past experience that the club manager had to be shown the specific advantages of the program so a personal visit was obviously necessary. We listed the advantages to the club manager as increased attendance and the ability to implement the program without any cost. As of October 15, six clubs have had personal visits, five clubs have joined the program and we have 67 participants — it has been less than one month since the Pro Am Game has been held. More are virtually signing on daily.

One of the main concerns the Board had in establishing this program was the ability for misuse. The Board agreed to subsidize the club game entry fee for the Life Master by $\frac{1}{2}$ and the novice must agree to pay the other $\frac{1}{2}$. We did not want the pro husband to start to play with the novice wife just to get a subsidy; we did not want the pro to collect a “playing fee” from the novice in addition to the unit subsidy; and, we did not want to subsidize already existing partnerships. We established the ground rules by which the program would operate, which are listed on the “Club Information & Agreement Sheet.” Our main control for this program, however, is with the Adopt a Novice Program Coordinator. We created a job description that shows he is the focal point of information. Also, we created a brochure that replaced the flyers and created a smaller 8½” x 11” free standing sign that would be space efficient for each club to keep on display.

Another concern of the Board regarding the program deals with possible personality conflicts between the novice and the Life Master. When the partnerships are established each party receives a letter further defining their role in the program. In the Life Master letter we try to make the Life Master fully aware that teaching techniques must be utilized in a positive manner. We want to make sure that the novice is comfortable and can accept constructive comments. In the novice letter we again further define the program and request that the novice accept constructive criticism. We also tell the novice that any problems in their relationship with their mentor will be handled.

The pairing of the partnerships can be done either by the Mentoring Program Chairman or the local club manager. If the novice or the Life Master would like to play at more than one club, it may be advisable to have the Program Coordinator do the pairings. If only one club is involved, the club manager would be the obvious choice to do the pairings.

Refining the Program

After the program was in place for over a year, it experienced a slow down. The necessity to keep the program fresh by adding refinements was obvious. The latest innovation is to add a separate AANP section to Unit Championship games. This is traditionally the most competitive game in our unit and not very well attended by newer players. By focusing on AANP partnerships for this game, it is hoped that there will be increased table counts in addition to the other benefits of the program. At the first Unit Championship game, there were 12 newer players requiring mentors.

We still consider this program a “work in progress.” We have hopefully addressed through the flyer and “Club Information” sheet any major problems. At the moment we have more novices than Life Masters, which we believe is normal. Although we ideally want one life master with only one novice, we are willing to let the Life Masters work with a second novice. We decided to do this in order that the novice is not waiting without some type of commitment from the program. We are working toward the goal of having a “nucleus” of Life Masters from which a novice can choose.

Each club can also enhance the program if they desire. One of our clubs has starting a traveling trophy called “Carry Your Pro.” The best percentage game by a Life Master and novice for each month will be listed on the plaque on the front of the trophy. For that month the novice gets to keep the trophy at this home. At the end of the year the novice

with the best percentage game gets to keep the trophy. A new trophy will be created for the new year. Just this one addition has created a lot of positive feedback for the club. Basically, this program is limited by your imagination.

One of the most positive and important factors the clubs have recognized is the financial commitment of the Unit Board to this program. The Board is considering some sort of reception for all participants during our Regional as a show of support for the program. We wish you the best of luck in establishing your program.

We have included the following information to help get your unit started:

- Sample of the registration brochure. (Actual brochure is printed on cardstock.)
- Sample of the mentoring guidelines brochure. (Actual brochure is printed on cardstock.)
- Sample club information and agreement sheet
- Sample club reimbursement form
- Adopt a Novice Program Coordinator job description.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to write or call Lenny Roberts, Adopt a Novice Program Coordinator.

Lenny Roberts
10522 Hammerly
Houston, TX 77043-2504
713-343-8687
E-mail: lennyroberts@worldnet.att.net

ADOPT A NOVICE PROGRAM

CLUB INFORMATION & AGREEMENT SHEET

The purpose of this program is to mentor aspiring new bridge players and give them a window into the expansive sophistication of bridge and to improve their bridge skills.

Advantages to club owners & managers: Increased attendance and no cost to implement and continue the program.

Guidelines

- All participants must be current members of the ACBL.
- This program is open only to new partnerships. (The individual club managers will ensure that prior partnerships do not apply.)
- The novice's masterpoints will not exceed 200 in order to participate and continue their participation in this program.
- This program is only applicable at regularly scheduled club games.
- The mentor may tutor only one novice at a time under this program.
- Both the novice and the mentor can aid in the selection of the partnership. (The club manager will also aid in the selection of the partnership.)
- Only those participants (players) that have properly registered for the program are entitled to:
 1. Let the novice pay $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Life Master entry fee.
 2. Let the Unit pay $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Life Master entry fee.

Club Responsibilities

- Accept registrations for the program and aid in the selection of partnerships. Club may enlist the aid of Lenny Roberts, Coordinator of this program, for assistance.
- All registration forms will be kept on file for future reference. The club will send copies of all registrations to Lenny Roberts, 10522 Hammerly Blvd., Houston, TX 77043-2504, 713-467-3845.
- Validation of partnerships for purposes at playing at more than one participating club can be made through Lenny Roberts.
- All participating clubs will receive from the Unit a reimbursement of 50% of the mentor's playing fees plus a fifty cent handling fee for each entry. Reimbursement forms will be provided by Lenny Roberts and must be returned to him for validation. Lenny will forward these forms to the Unit for payment.

The Club owner/manager's signature upon this paper constitutes an agreement to be a part of this program. A copy of this agreement is to be kept on file with Lenny Roberts for verification purposes. Welcome to the program!

Lenny Roberts

Club Owner/Manager

ADOPT A NOVICE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Adopt a Novice Program Coordinator — Serve as the link between clubs and the Unit Board in the continuing operation and promotion of the Adopt a Novice Program with the assistance of the Education Liaison.

Specific Responsibilities

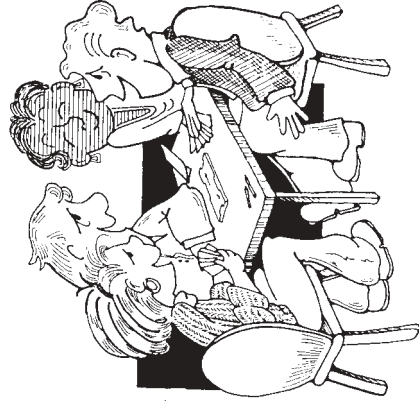
- Present the program to club managers/owners. Register all participating clubs via the “Club Information & Agreement Sheet” and maintain copies of same.
- Maintain a file of copies of all registration forms by novices and pros.
- Verify all partnerships created to ensure program compliance.
- Assist clubs as needed to help create partnerships, find more pros, etc.
- Validate “Reimbursement Form” from the club and forward same for payment to unit treasurer.
- Update the program as necessary with approval of the Unit Board.

This registration form can be given to a director at the club where you would like to participate. Please ask for a Mentoring Guidelines brochure which provides further information on mentoring.

The Club Owner/Manager will make partnership assignments.

If you have not received a partnership assignment within 10 days, please contact Lenny Roberts, the coordinator of the program.

**WELCOME
TO THE
CLUB!**



ADOPT A NEWCOMER PROGRAM

The Adopt a Newcomer program provides the following benefits to its participants:

- ♠ The ability to meet and get to know other players.
- ♥ The ability to give back to the game.
- ♦ The ability to have your game grow.
- ♣ The ability to participate in a program designed for growth at both the club and the tournament level.

**JOIN IN
ON THE
FUN!**



Adopt a Newcomer!

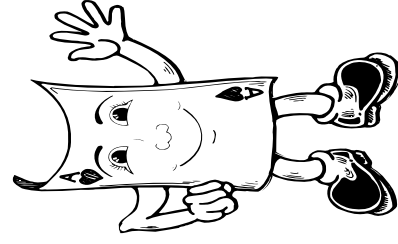
The purpose of this program is to mentor aspiring new bridge players. It will help ease them into the expansive sophistication of bridge and it will improve their bridge skills.

If you would like to be a *mentor*:

- We ask that you arrange to play at least twice a month with a newcomer at a club mutually agreed upon.
- Your playing fee at the club game will be paid for you in part by the newcomer and in part by a subsidy from your unit.
- If you agree to try this program, you will receive a letter with further details and the name of the newcomer player assigned to you. If you choose, you may select your own newcomer player.
- You may be a mentor to more than one newcomer at one time.
- Pick up the informational brochure on mentoring available at your participating club.

If you are a *newer player* with less than 200 points:

- You will be able to play with your mentor at least twice a month at a club mutually agreed upon.
- You are requested to agree to pay one-half of your mentor's club game entry fee.
- You will receive a detailed letter along with the name of the mentor assigned to you. If it is mutually agreeable, you may select your own mentor.
- Pick up the informational brochure on mentoring available at your participating club.



Play
at your
local club!

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

(Please print carefully)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

ACBL# _____ (Required)

Check one:

Mentor

Newcomer

Club/Clubs I prefer to play at:

Day/days I can play:

Unit Championship Game? Yes No

Time of day:

AM Afternoon Evening

Circle one

If you have any questions, please contact the Coordinator for the program.