



# Club Manager's Handbook



6575 Windchase Blvd.  
Horn Lake MS 38637-1523  
[www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)

**Rev. 2015**

## **Club Manager's Handbook**

This handbook contains many ideas as well as the rules and guidelines the ACBL provides for starting and maintaining your club.

We welcome your suggestions for future versions of this handbook.

American Contract Bridge League 2015

# Table of Contents

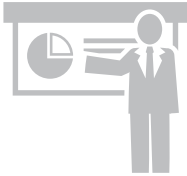
<b>Getting Started</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The Sanctioned Club Bridge Game</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Types of Masterpoint Games: Something for Everyone</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Incentive Programs for Clubs</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Tips for a Successful Club</b>	<b>15</b>
Make Newcomers Welcome and Help Them Play Often	15
Teach Bridge	18
Publicize Your Club	20
Market Your Club	24
Recruit and Retain ACBL Members	27
Don't Neglect the Social Side of the Game	30
Help Your Players Learn and Improve	32
Make It Easy for Your Players to Play	34
Make It Easy for Your Players to Find You	35
Be Creative!	35
<b>Zero Tolerance Policy</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Masterpoints</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Masterpoint Ranks</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Masterpoint Races</b>	<b>42</b>

# Getting Started

Whether you are opening a club, moving your club or evaluating your program, the following lists 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?
- How many sessions will you hold?
- How many players do you expect?
- How much must you charge to recoup expenses?
- Will your club have a separate membership fee?

## Club Location

Evaluate your site on the following points.



- What is the proximity to established or potential base of players?
- Do you have space for at least 20 tables (with expansion room for special games)?
- Does your site have two rooms, one suitable for teaching or newcomer games?
- Is it in a safe location with secure, lighted parking area?
- Is there a storage area (for duplicate boards, cards, etc.)?
- Is there an equipped kitchen or sink area and access to water?
- Is there access to clean, stocked restrooms?
- Is it accessible for players with disabilities?
- Does it have adequate air-conditioning and heat?
- Is the lighting good?
- Is there space for coats and personal items?
- Is it clean with an inviting appearance at all times?
- Do you have a bulletin board or other means to post notices?
- Do you have Internet access?

## Marketing and Publicity



- Create a facebook page or a website and link to your unit, district and ACBL.
- Advertise in community newspapers and other media.
- Visit [www.acbl.org/resourcecenter](http://www.acbl.org/resourcecenter).
- Design a flier and distribute to community centers and other potential sources of members.
- Obtain ACBL mailing lists to send information to members in your area.
- Obtain listings in yellow pages and other community directories.
- Consult special sections in this booklet — “Publicize Your Club” and “Market Your Club.”



## Getting Started *Cont.*

### Club Director(s)

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 must:



- Pass the ACBL Club Director Exam.
- Be familiar with the Zero Tolerance Policy and enforce it or the club's version of it.
- Keep up-to-date with the Laws of Duplicate Bridge.
- Make your players feel welcome.
- Be proficient in using ACBLscore and post results promptly to the ACBL website or your own site.
- Have current copies of the Laws of Duplicate 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 on time.
- Be familiar with your club rules, any convention restrictions, the appeal process, etc.

### Games at Your Club



- Be familiar with all the special games that offer additional masterpoints and schedule them often! Information about all special games can be located here: [http://www.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/special-events/](http://www.acbl.org/clubs_page/special-events/)
- Schedule your Fund Club Championship Games.
- 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 a voice message to provide game times and directions to your club for new players when you are not there.
- Guarantee partners for players who call ahead.

### Licenses and Laws

When you decide to conduct a club game, you are going into a new business. These are some of the business aspects of this venture that you need to be familiar with.



- ACBL sanction, renewed annually.
- City, county 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.



## Getting Started *Cont.*

### Supplies

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

Basic Supplies	ACBL Bridge Supplies:
Card tables and chairs	Playing cards
Computer with ACBLscore and printer	Duplicate boards
Telephone	Bidding boxes
Coffee and/or tea maker	Electronic scoring devices
Refrigerator	Instant scorers
Vending machine(s)	Pencils with erasers and a pencil sharpener
Coat rack	Table mats/Howell movement table mats
Bookcase	Entry slips
Trash cans	Pick-up slips
	Travelers
<b>Other Supplies:</b>	Swiss Team score sheets
Blackboard, easel or other item for announcements	Convention Cards (Standard, "Fat Free," Standard American Yellow Card)
Printer paper	
Bulletin board and tacks	<b>Kitchen Supplies:</b>
Tape	Paper goods: coffee and drink cups, plates, napkins, paper towels
Cleaning supplies	Plastic utensils
Restroom supplies	Creamer
	Sugar and artificial sweetener



## Getting Started *Cont.*

### www.acbl.org

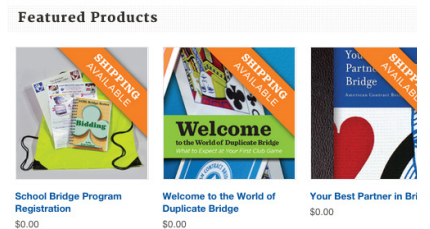
Resources for clubs are available through the ACBL Resource Center and the ACBL website. Here are some things you will find:

- The Club Manager Newsletter
- Information to update your online club listing and post websites
- Sanction applications and renewals
- 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 Bridge
- Duplicate Decisions
- Contact information to answer your questions
- Handbook for the Intermediate/Newcomer Coordinators
- Information to help build a new player program
- Posting club game results on ACBL website
- Print advertising templates
- The Bridge Teachers Handbook



### ACBL Email Addresses

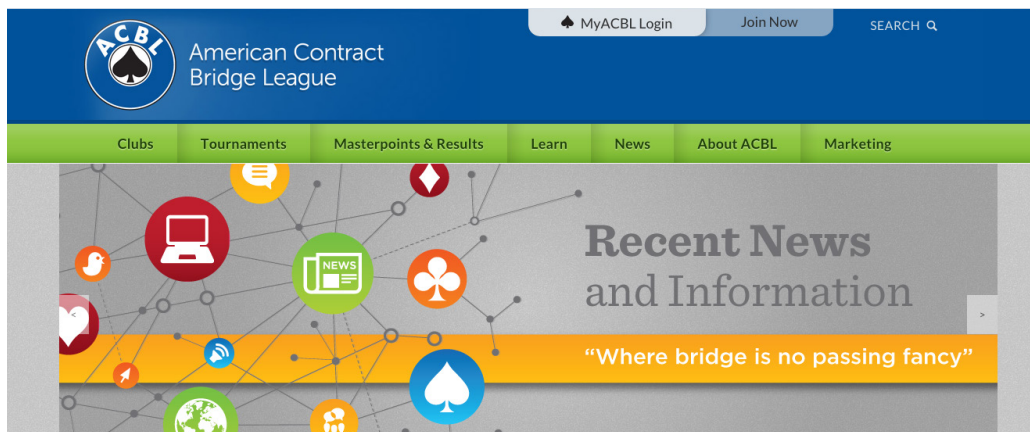
<http://www.acbl.org/about-acbl/contact-us/>



### ACBLscore

ACBLscore is software used by clubs to score duplicate bridge and report results to the ACBL. ACBLscore will handle almost any variation of movement, including individual. It can rank a stratified game with up to three strata and can score by matchpoints, IMPs or Swiss Teams. It supports a database of players so that it will compute handicaps, print mailing labels, etc.

The ACBL website 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. Visit [http://www.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/acblscore](http://www.acbl.org/clubs_page/acblscore) to learn more about ACBLscore.



# 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. The club manager also accepts the responsibility of complying with all local, state and federal laws.

The club manager supervises the following:

- Preparation and electronic filing of the monthly masterpoint and financial reports.
- Any correspondence with ACBL on club game matters.
- The application for sanction renewals and the reporting of changes.

## ACBL Club Sanctioned Game

Applications for a Club Game Sanction may be downloaded from the ACBL website at [http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/ClubSanctionRenew08\\_01.pdf](http://web2.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.

Your regularly scheduled game can be conducted under the same 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.

## 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 Association 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.





## **The Sanctioned Club Bridge Game** *Cont.*

### **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 month-end report. 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 subject to cancellation.

### **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 \$0.74 for each table in play. (Check the website 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 email.

### **Identification Numbers**

Each club holding ACBL sanctioned games receives a six-digit 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.



## Types of Masterpoint Games: Something for Everyone

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-a-half tables (unless it is a two-table individual or team game), and at least six 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 month-end report.



## Types of Masterpoint Games: Something for Everyone *Cont.*

### 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 that may be conducted by bridge teachers, club managers or ACBL club directors 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 fewer than five masterpoints participate in the game,
- If a minimum of six boards are played,
- If a month-end 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 only tables in that strat receive masterpoints.



## **Types of Masterpoint Games:** Something for Everyone *Cont.*

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 on the website at:  
<http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/stratified.pdf>

### **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.

Online masterpoints are called "net" points and have no pigmentation. 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.

### **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.

### **Special Fund Games**

**January** is designated as Junior Fund Month

**April** is designated as Charity Month

**May** is Grass Roots FUNd month

**September** is designated as International Fund Month

In the remaining eight months of the year (February, March, June, July, August, October, November and December) a club may choose from the above fund/ foundation games to hold only one of these games per month per sanctioned session.

A regularly scheduled club game held at a frequency other than weekly, may hold one special "fund" game every fourth game.

### **Junior Fund Games**

All regularly scheduled sanctioned sessions during the month of January can be a Junior Fund Game. The cost is an extra \$1 per person. Junior Fund games cannot be held during the months of April, May or September. ACBL's Juniors depend on our clubs to keep the youth programs going!



## **Types of Masterpoint Games: Something for Everyone** *Cont.*

### **Charity Club Championships**

Your club can help by hosting a charity club championship game during all of the regularly sanctioned sessions for the entire month of April. The cost is an extra \$1 per person. Clubs may not hold more games to benefit a local charity than they hold to benefit the ACBL Charity Foundation or the Canadian Bridge Federation Charity Foundation. Charity games cannot be held during the months of January, May or September. For more information, contact the ACBL Charity Desk at 662-253-3129 or [charityfdn@acbl.org](mailto:charityfdn@acbl.org).

### **International Fund Club Championships**

September is International Fund month. All regularly scheduled sanctioned sessions during September can be an International Fund game. The cost is an extra \$1 per person. International Fund games cannot be held during the months of January, May or April.

### **Educational Foundation Games**

Special games to benefit the ACBL Educational Foundation may be held in lieu of or in addition to the above special fund games. Educational Foundation games cannot be held during the other special fund game months (January, April, May and September).

## **Additional Games Available**

### **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 10 games a week, it may hold 10 membership games per year.) If a club is eligible for more than one game, those games must be held on different game sessions. Only Life Members and paid ACBL members are eligible to win masterpoints in these games.

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 one upgraded club championship awarding sectional-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.

### **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.



## Types of Masterpoint Games: Something for Everyone *Cont.*

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

- International Fund Game #1 (Saturday before the Super Bowl®)
- ACBL Senior Game (March)
- ACBL-wide Charity Game (March)
- Worldwide Bridge Contest (June)
- International Fund Game #2 (July)
- ACBL Instant Matchpoint Game (October)
- ACBL-Wide Charity Game (November)
- International Fund Game #3 (December)

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

### **Jane Johnson Club Appreciation Games**

October has been designated as Jane Johnson 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. A club that holds one game a week is allocated one pair and one team game. The team game pays 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. Club directors may run the game, but there must also be an approved ACBL director-in-charge. All STaC masterpoints are silver 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 receipts. Each game must have at least three tables and each player must complete a minimum of six 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 games. There are a number of ways that this can be done. Consult the ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations, Chapter 4 or the Club Director's Handbook. Masterpoints can be awarded by splitting them or by offering 100% awards for scratch winners and 50% awards for handicap winners. Clubs should indicate all handicap games on the month-end report form and on the club masterpoint receipts.

A pamphlet entitled "Handicaps" is available from the ACBL website at: <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/HandicapGames.pdf>



## Types of Masterpoint Games: Something for Everyone *Cont.*

### Easybridge!

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@comcast.net](mailto:mronemus@comcast.net) for more information or go to [www.easybridge.com](http://www.easybridge.com).

### Homestyle Games

This game is easy to run and fun. Clubs must apply to the ACBL Club and Member Services Department to conduct homestyle 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. Homestyle 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.

A printable convention card, designed especially for this game, and a Homestyle Bridge pamphlet are available on the ACBL website at:

<http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/homestyleBridge.pdf>

<http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/Home-Style-Score-Card.pdf>

### 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 month-end report to the Club and Member Services Department by the sixth of the following month on the game activity.

### School Games

The ACBL offers 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 [http://www.acbl.org/learn\\_page/school-bridge-program/](http://www.acbl.org/learn_page/school-bridge-program/) 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 teachers, if the game is accompanied by lessons for at least 45 minutes and if at least six 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 month-end 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.

## Types of Masterpoint Games: Something for Everyone *Cont.*

### 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 per ship 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:

- There are no table and session fees.
- No monthly financial report is required.
- All games must have a club or higher-rated director.
- Masterpoint awards are 50% of the award for an open club game.
- No specific number of boards must be played during a session.
- Masterpoint awards are the same as for a complete game.
- A one-or two-session cruise championship may be held every 14 days. Masterpoint awards for cruise championships are 50% of an open game championship.
- A club masterpoint report must be submitted electronically to ACBL at the end of the cruise. Reports can be submitted at [cruisereports@acbl.org](mailto:cruisereports@acbl.org).

### Single Cruise Ship and Land Cruise Games

Cruise ships may hold ACBL sanctioned games by paying a fee to the 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 - \$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 mission is to promote, grow and sustain the game of bridge and serve the bridge-related interests of our members. ACBL offers the following incentives to encourage clubs to pursue the same goals.

## Club Championships

Clubs can earn an upgraded club championship (sectional-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. These games are not to be scheduled or held until you receive the notification from ACBL.

## 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 redeemable through Baron Barclay Bridge Supply. 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 requires the Social Security Number or Tax Identification Number of the recruiter.

# Tips for a Successful Club

## 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/email from the club owner or director
- Unit calendar of events; club calendar of events
- An upcoming tournament flier
- A free play
- An invitation to a welcome party (special bridge game and luncheon)
- Flier 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**

Suggestions for creating a basic policy for your club:

- Welcome and introduce all newcomers to the group.
- 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**

Establish a routine for assuring that newcomers leave knowing that your club is the friendliest club in town. Welcome all new players and ask them to call you if they have questions or concerns. Introduce them to the players and give them name badges. Ask regular players to introduce themselves each round and to make the visitors feel welcome. Check back with newcomers at the end of the game to make certain they had a good time and to extend an invitation to come again.

See the [Club Director's Handbook](#) for tips on running games for new players.

## Recognize that you need newcomer games to be successful

58% of all ACBL members have fewer than 300 masterpoints, 70% of those members have fewer than 100 masterpoints. 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, 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

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

You can get some funding for this program through ACBL's [Cooperative Advertising Program](#).

## Advertise your bridge games with appealing names

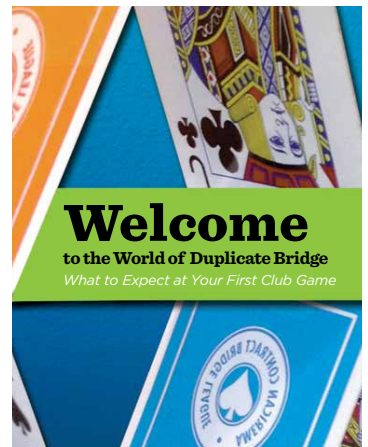
Games advertised as “Not so serious duplicate” and “No stress, no frills bridge” have a lot of appeal for newer players and will help attract customers.

## 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 [Homestyle 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.
- 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 “[Welcome to the World of Duplicate 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 in the 21st Century (The Club Series), Play of the Hand in the 21st Century (The Diamond Series), and Defense in the 21st Century courses. There are two four-week courses for use after the Defense in the 21st Century (The Heart Series) course (Play Course for the Advancing Player I and II), and one course on conventions — Modern Notrump Bidding — that work with the Commonly Used Conventions and More Commonly Used Convention courses. There are two additional four-week courses available which cover raising partners major with hands of all strength. (Major Suit Raises I and Major Suit Raises II). 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 pocket-sized, spiral bound booklets make excellent security blankets and they are quite inexpensive. These “[flippers](#)” can be purchased from Baron Barclay.)

## **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. 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 flier/free play, or you could volunteer to help the unit give these players a “call-back.”

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



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, 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 in the 21st Century (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.

### **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!"
- "When you earn any money, you just go out and spend it. When you earn masterpoints, you have them forever."

### **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 in a scored game with masterpoint awards. (Call the Club and Member Services Department for a pupil game sanction.) Note that you can use the booklets for the Advancing Player I and II Play courses to teach your students all about duplicate bridge.

### **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 bring 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. 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).

## Prepare your students for duplicate

Let them know that they have to develop slightly thicker skins.

- Tell them to leave their fears at home.
- Warn them that they will feel like they are making fools of themselves.
- Tell them bridge is a game designed to keep them humble.
- Say bridge is a game of mistakes, but they will learn from their mistakes.
- Remind them no one starts out a good player.
- Tell 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 in the resources for teachers at [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org).

## Publicize Your Club

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

### 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 50% of eligible advertising costs with a maximum reimbursement of \$500. Qualifying advertisements are date-specific ad campaigns\* for beginner bridge lessons, newcomer programs, social bridge recruitment events and ACBL member recruitment.

ACBL reserves the right to refuse reimbursement for any reason for CAP submissions.

Submissions by a person who has any ownership, management or conflict of interest in the media outlet in which they are advertising (e.g. personal websites, online and print publications) will not be approved for CAP reimbursement.

\* A Date-Specific Ad Campaign means that there must be a start date within the ad, lesson, social recruiting event or other announcement. (Example of start date can be - "Beginning May 2017", "Beginning May 1-15, 2017", "May - September 2017" or "Year of 2017")

### CAP Guidelines & Requirements

**NOTE:** ACBL recommends that all ads and/or collateral be submitted for pre-approval to ensure they meet the reimbursement requirements.

1. The advertisement must be for date-specific newcomer programs, beginner bridge lessons, social bridge recruitment events or ACBL membership recruitment.
2. All advertisements must contain an ACBL approved logo. All ACBL approved logos are located in the marketing section of the ACBL website. No exceptions. We encourage but do not require you to use the advertising templates.

## Publicize Your Club *Cont.*

- Reimbursements are made on a per date-specific ad campaign basis. A “date-specific ad campaign” for purposes of this program is defined as follows: A planned program that uses an advertising message (or a combination of multiple advertisements, commercials, and related promotional materials and activities) that may or may not be communicated across multiple media channels (newspaper, radio, TV, etc.) and are designed to be used during the same period of time as part of a coordinated advertising plan to meet a specified objective.
- The cost of a date-specific ad campaign is defined as being the total advertisement placement costs for all mediums used (radio, newspaper, flyers, etc.) for a specifically dated set of beginning bridge lessons, or specifically dated newcomer program, social bridge recruitment event or a specifically dated ACBL membership recruitment drive. The maximum dollar amount you would be reimbursed is \$500. Reimbursements will be in US Dollars.

### Eligible Media:

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Direct mail pieces (excluding postage)
- Catalogs
- Posters/fliers for public distribution
- Billboards
- Television
- Radio
- Online commercial websites

### Items NOT Eligible for Reimbursement

- Ads placed in the Bridge Bulletin
- Calendars
- Tournament schedules and fliers
- Teacher, club, unit or district newsletters
- Postage
- Club, unit or district directories
- Supplies (i.e., labels, envelopes, etc.)
- Building signage
- Promotional or specialty items (i.e., pens, pencils, coffee mugs, T-shirts, etc.)
- Business cards and letterhead

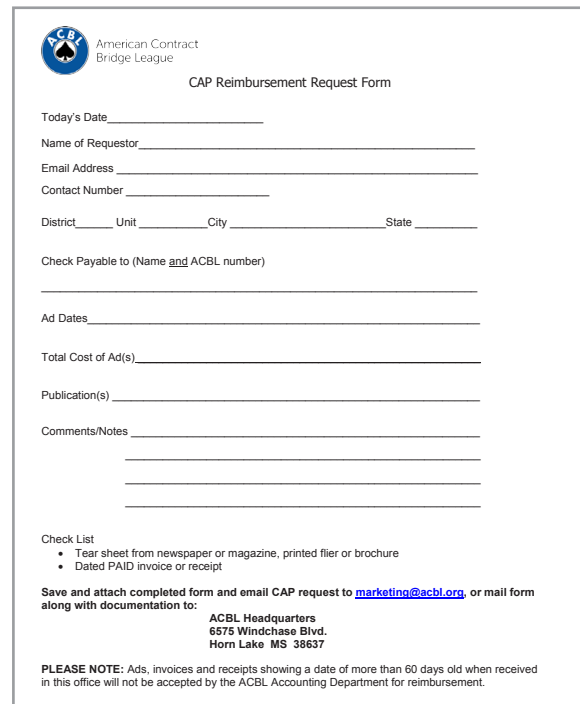
### How to Submit Reimbursement Documentation:

Complete CAP reimbursement form located here: <http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/marketing/CAPrequestform.pdf>

Send a copy of the dated paid invoice(s) and/or receipt(s) along with the following to the ACBL Marketing Department:

- The advertisement tear sheet(s) for newspaper ads. Do not cut out the ad or make a copy of the ad. We require the entire actual page(s) from the newspaper, magazine or other media containing the ad. PDF versions of tear sheets may be submitted via email.
- The actual brochure or flier that was printed.

### Example of CAP Request Form



The image shows a sample of the CAP Reimbursement Request Form. At the top left is the ACBL logo (American Contract Bridge League). The form title is "CAP Reimbursement Request Form". It contains several fields for information: "Today's Date", "Name of Requestor", "Email Address", "Contact Number", "District", "Unit", "City", and "State". There is a section for "Check Payable to (Name and ACBL number)", "Ad Dates", "Total Cost of Ad(s)", "Publication(s)", and "Comments/Notes". A "Check List" section includes items like "Tear sheet from newspaper or magazine, printed flier or brochure" and "Dated PAID invoice or receipt". At the bottom, it says "Save and attach completed form and email CAP request to [marketing@acbl.org](mailto:marketing@acbl.org), or mail form along with documentation to: ACBL Headquarters, 6575 Windchase Blvd., Horn Lake MS 38637". A "PLEASE NOTE" section states that ads, invoices, and receipts showing a date of more than 60 days old when received in the office will not be accepted for reimbursement.



## Publicize Your Club *Cont.*

- A copy of the script for radio (from the station) and a DVD if for television.
- A copy of the link or insertion order for online commercial websites.
- Your name, ACBL member, club, unit or district number and daytime phone number or email address where you may be contacted and to whom the reimbursement check should be made payable. Remember, the check that is made payable to a club, unit or district will only be mailed to the person who is profiled in the ACBL database under that club, unit or district — no exceptions.

### **Send the above items to:**

*Attn:* Cooperative Advertising Program  
Marketing Department  
6575 Windchase Blvd  
Horn Lake, MS 38637  
662-253-3112  
662-253-3187 (fax)  
[marketing@acbl.org](mailto:marketing@acbl.org)

Be sure to include your name and a daytime phone number or email address where we may contact you. You may expect to receive your reimbursement in six to eight weeks, or you will be contacted if your materials do not meet CAP requirements.

## **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 50% of the cost of the ad for each program up to \$500 per campaign. The ACBL makes it even easier by providing templates to download at the resource center. Visit <http://www.acbl.org/marketing/cooperative-advertising-program/> for more information.

## **Send postcards**

To get the word out quickly, invest in 1000 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 email message.

Visit <http://www.acbl.org/marketing/publicity/> 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.

## Use ACBL's pre-recorded radio ads

ACBL has developed radio advertisements that can be personalized to include a five second “tag” with your club or bridge class contact information at the end of the radio ad. Currently, there are two radio ads available—one targeting the “recently retired” and another one targeting the “empty nesters.”

Additionally, a portion of the money you spend to place these radio ads on a radio station will qualify for reimbursement through the ACBL Cooperative Advertising Program (Restrictions apply). For details visit the ACBL website at <http://www.acbl.org/marketing/cooperative-advertising-program/radio-ads/>.

## 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 flier

Advertising templates are available on the ACBL website at <http://acbl.mybigcommerce.com/club-templates/>. This format can be downloaded and filled in with your information. Or create your own on your computer.



Places where you can distribute fliers:

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	

## Publicize Your Club *Cont.*

### Put old Bridge Bulletins to good use

Several units collect old Bulletins (without the member's information visible), add a label and distribute the magazines to professional offices, etc. The label reads:

FREE! TAKE ME HOME!  
Compliments of Unit XXX  
American Contract Bridge League  
For Information about Lessons, Easybridge! or Duplicate Games  
Call "The Bridge Club"  
123-4567 or 765-4321

### Publicize what's special about your club

Identify what is special about your club and advertise it —customers can take lessons at the same location, they can 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.

### Use Social Media



Chances are that you already have a personal facebook page, so why shouldn't your club? You can post big games. You can use your page to announce winners and special events, post pictures of your club and reach out to other bridge communities.

Twitter is also an easy to use social media platform. Using 140 characters or fewer, you can tweet all the happenings at your club to the world.

### Participate in The Longest Day®

The Longest Day is a sunrise-to-sunset event to raise funds for the care, support and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association. Held on or near June 21, the longest day of the year, this event asks participants to push themselves to complete approximately 16 hours of a consecutive activity — such as playing bridge. It's one day to honor the strength and courage displayed by people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers every day. For information on how to participate visit <http://www.acbl.org/clubs/page/special-events/the-longest-day/>.



## **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 email addresses of your players, you can save postage costs by delivering your newsletter by email. You can also use email 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 website**

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



Click here to find clubs, teachers and tournaments...

## **Free weekly bridge articles**

The ACBL offers free weekly bridge articles, Bridge Bites, to any news publication willing to print them. We allow clubs and teachers the opportunity to insert their own contact information at the bottom of each article. If you are able to get your local newspaper to publish the articles, then readers will see your club or class contact information. You may also post the articles on your website or use them as material in educational workshops. The articles are written for the newcomer/intermediate audience. Bridge Bites can be found on the ACBL website at <http://www.acbl.org/marketing/publicity/bridge-bites/>.

## **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 a lot of promotional material (especially a flier 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. Make sure to have lots of material available on your club classes and newcomer activities. Visit the resource center for additional materials.

### **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 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**

Post the names of all players who have 60% or better games an Honor Board each Monday. 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**

Many establishments offer discounts on weeknights. Try lowering your entry fees and see what happens on least popular nights.

## **Recruit and Retain ACBL Members**

The ACBL’s mission is 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.

## Recruit and Retain ACBL Members *Cont.*

- You earn a \$100 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**

Perhaps, select January as club membership sign-up month and February as ACBL membership sign-up month.

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

Send a welcome packet to all new members. Included in that packet are coupon(s) good for either free play at any club in the state or two higher-priced 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 the Bridge Bulletin magazine**

The Bridge Bulletin is produced every month and contains a special 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 five 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.

## **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. Recognize the achievement of new players when they complete their first bridge course. Since these students are potential new members, provide them with a copy of 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**

Club managers may receive ACBL member information, provided that such information is: limited to the respective club; used only for legitimate bridge purposes approved by the ACBL; maintained as confidential; and is not used for private, personal or commercial use.

## **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.

## **Hassle-free**

At some clubs, 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**

Keep track of the masterpoints won by non-members during the year. As points accumulate, encourage players to join the ACBL so they don't lose their points.

## **Discover the benefits of email**

If you have the email addresses of your players, you can email the results of games and you can send reminders of upcoming special events, interesting hands, newcomer activities, lessons and game results. Emails 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 chairman 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. Purchase inexpensive convention card holders and give 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. Offer a free play that session to those who joined ACBL.

### **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**

Decorate your bridge room according to a monthly theme. It is inexpensive if you collect the decorations slowly over time.

**January** — New Year, **February** — Valentines, **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**

Form a group of people to help plan parties. They plan the event, decorate and clean up. The group of volunteers will love 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 and 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. One club keeps records of worst set, worst game, etc. – for example, the record for tricks set is "down 10, doubled and vulnerable, for 2900;" for worst game, it's 22%. When the records are broken, they host a party to honor the new "worst" 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! Motivational signs are a must, not only for new players, but also for the regular customer. They "plant the seed." Examples:

- "Everyone who walks through this door brings us joy, some by coming and some by leaving."
- "Opinions are like toothbrushes. Everyone has his own so there's no need to share!"
- "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!"

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

The Greater Charleston DBC divided their club members into four teams – Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs. They 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 show up 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 website here: <http://www.acbl.org/helpfuldocuments/>).

## **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).

## **Help your players brush-up on their game**

If your players want to brush up, refer them to the free Learn to Play Bridge web application software at: <http://learn.acbl.org/>.

## **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 "oldtimers."

### **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 is used to determine 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 was developed by the club managers 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.

## Consider having a partnership chairman for each of your games

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.

## Help with tournament partnerships

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

## Use the Partnership Desk on the ACBL website

This is a great way to help your players find partners from the comfort of their own homes.

## Help your members become Life Masters

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 points.

## 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 affectionately known as the “Fat Free” card. (Download it from the ACBL’s website (<http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/play/ss4.pdf>) for free and copy it at your local copy store.)

The image shows a standard ACBL convention card form. It is divided into several sections for recording bidding and playing agreements. Key sections include: 'SPECIAL DOUBLES', 'NOTRUMP OVERCALLS', 'GENERAL APPROACH', 'STANDARD AMERICAN', 'DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP', 'NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS', 'JUMP OVERCALL', 'OVER OPFS T/O DOUBLE', 'MAJOR OPENING', 'MINOR OPENING', 'SLAM CONVENTIONS', 'LEADS', 'DEFENSIVE CARDING', 'LEADS LEADS', 'SPECIAL CARDING', and 'PLEASE ASK'. The card contains numerous checkboxes and lines for entering specific conventions and agreements.

Make It Easy for Your Players to Play *Cont.*

### **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 Your Players to Find You**

List your club contact information wherever you can.

### **Create a Facebook page**

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/help/104002523024878> for information on setting up your page.

### **List your club on the ACBL website**

### **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.

### **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. 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**

A good way to increase attendance and encourage newcomers to play is to have members join the Wheel Club. The wheel club is where everyone plays 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**

Create a special “First Masterpoint Award” certificate and present it to players as they earn it. Players love it. The certificate should say something like, “\_\_\_\_\_ Bridge Club is honored to present you with a memento of your first masterpoint award. Congratulations on a good game.” Leave space for the name, date and masterpoints earned.

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

Recognize your club’s Golden Age Masters (ACBL members 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.

### **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.” 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 mic 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**

Encourage players to wear name tags for the entire game. Remember that name tags help the newer players get to know everyone at the club. Call Bingo at the beginning of each game. (This gets the people in their seats when you 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**

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 4th of July where the players dress in the colors of the American flag.

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

Encourage players to be audacious (within the limits of sanity) and 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, offer a prize 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**

Let players predict their total score for the game on the first round. If they guess it “dead-on,” give them a prize of some sort (free play, T-shirt, etc.).

### **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.

### **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.

### **Win with a deuce**

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



# Zero Tolerance Policy - 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 website at: [http://www.acbl.org/clubs\\_page/club-administration/club-managers/acbl-handbook-of-rules-and-regulations/](http://www.acbl.org/clubs_page/club-administration/club-managers/acbl-handbook-of-rules-and-regulations/)

To Download and print Zero Tolerance posters for your club, visit: [http://www.acbl.org/acbl-content/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ZT\\_Poster-8.5-by-11.pdf](http://www.acbl.org/acbl-content/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ZT_Poster-8.5-by-11.pdf)






To order copies of the Zero Tolerance poster visit: <http://acbl.mybigcommerce.com/zero-tolerance-poster/>



# 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 six types of 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. 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 national-rated senior and women's events with no upper masterpoint limit, but they are not awarded for Junior, Flight B or other restricted events.

## Masterpoint 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.

These rules apply to you if you joined the ACBL prior to January 1, 2010 and maintained continuous membership after that date.

Title	Masterpoints Earned*
<b>Rookie</b>	Fewer than 5
<b>Junior Master</b>	5
<b>Club Master</b>	20
<b>Sectional Master</b>	50 (5 must be silver)
<b>Regional Master</b>	100 (15 silver, 5 red or gold/platinum)
<b>NABC Master</b>	200 (with at least 5 gold/platinum, 15 red or gold/platinum and 25 silver)
<b>Life Master</b>	300 (50 silver, 25 gold/platinum and 25 red or gold/platinum)*
<b>Bronze Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 500
<b>Silver Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 1000 (at least 200 silver, red, gold or platinum)
<b>Ruby Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 1500 (at least 300 silver, red, gold or platinum)
<b>Gold Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 2500 (at least 500 silver, red, gold or platinum)
<b>Sapphire Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 3500 (at least 700 silver, red, gold or platinum or which at least 350 must be gold or platinum)
<b>Diamond Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 5000 (at least 1000 silver, red or gold/platinum, of which at least 500 must be gold or platinum)
<b>Emerald Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 7500 (at least 1500 silver, red or gold/platinum, of which at least 750 must be gold or platinum)
<b>Platinum Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 10,000 (at least 2000 silver, red or gold/platinum, of which at least 1000 must be gold/platinum, with a minimum of 100 platinum)
<b>Grand Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 10,000 (at least 2000 silver, red or gold/platinum, of which at least 1000 must be gold/platinum, with a minimum of 100 platinum)**

\* A member who had red masterpoints or a fraction thereof prior to Jan. 1, 1969, is required to possess at least 50 red or gold/platinum masterpoints in any combination. Any new member or player in an unpaid status for six months or more after Jan. 1, 1999, will be required to earn 50 black points to become a Life Master.

\*\* This is the highest rank in the ACBL. It requires 10,000 masterpoints and one victory in a North American Bridge Championship with no upper masterpoint restriction or an Open Team Trials (includes CNTC) or its equivalent or a Women's Team Trials (includes CWTC) 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, WBF Senior Pairs event, WBF World Swiss Teams, WBF World Mixed Teams, and WBF Senior Teams.

## MASTERPOINT RANKS—EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2010

These rules apply to you if you joined the ACBL after January 1, 2010 or reinstated your membership after that date.

Title	Masterpoints Earned
<b>Rookie</b>	Fewer than 5
<b>Junior Master</b>	5
<b>Club Master</b>	20 (at least 5 black)
<b>Sectional Master</b>	50 (at least 10 black, 5 silver)
<b>Regional Master</b>	100 (at least 15 black, 15 silver, 5 red or gold/platinum)
<b>NABC Master</b>	200 (at least 20 black, 25 silver, 15 red or gold/platinum, 5 gold/platinum)
<b>Advanced NABC Master</b>	300 (at least 50 black, 50 silver, 25 red or gold/platinum, 25 gold/platinum)
<b>Life Master</b>	500 (at least 75 black, 75 silver, 50 red or gold/platinum, 50 gold/platinum)
<b>Silver Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 1000 (at least 200 silver, red, gold or platinum)
<b>Ruby Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 1500 (at least 300 silver, red, gold or platinum)
<b>Gold Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 2500 (at least 500 silver, red, gold or platinum)
<b>Sapphire Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 3500 (at least 700 silver, red, gold or platinum or which at least 350 must be gold or platinum)
<b>Diamond Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 5000 (at least 1000 silver, red or gold/platinum, of which at least 500 must be gold or platinum)
<b>Emerald Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 7500 (at least 1500 silver, red or gold/platinum, of which at least 750 must be gold or platinum)
<b>Platinum Life Master</b>	A Life Master with 10,000 (at least 2000 silver, red or gold/platinum, of which at least 1000 must be gold/platinum, with a minimum of 100 platinum)
<b>Grand Life Master*</b>	A Life Master with 10,000 (at least 2000 silver, red or gold/platinum, of which at least 1000 must be gold/platinum, with a minimum of 100 platinum)

\* This is the highest rank in the ACBL. It requires 10,000 masterpoints and one victory in a North American Bridge Championship with no upper masterpoint restriction or an Open Team Trials (includes CNTC) or its equivalent or a Women's Team Trials (includes CWTC) 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, WBF Senior Pairs event, WBF World Swiss Teams, WBF World Mixed Teams, and WBF Senior Teams.

## 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 and Gold, Emerald and Platinum Life Master categories.