

American Contract Bridge League District 20

2011-2012 Grand National Teams Conditions of Contest

A. *General*

1. **National Conditions**: The Grand National Teams (GNT) 2011-2012 ACBL Special Conditions of Contest as published by the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) and available on its website govern and are incorporated into these Conditions.
2. **Participation**: Anyone from anywhere is permitted to play at the club level unless the player is under disciplinary suspension imposed either by the ACBL, the World Bridge Federation or any zone thereof, or by any National Bridge Organization that is a member of the World Bridge Federation. To advance beyond the club level, a player must be a member in good standing of both the ACBL and District 20. Exceptions may be allowed for students, military, and others; but pre-approval is required, which approval will not be unreasonably denied. Requests should be sent to District 20's North American Events Coordinator, currently Rich Carle, 2547 Northlake Avenue, Longview, WA 98632; e-mail: rhcarle@msn.com; telephone no. (360) 425-0981 (hereafter "Coordinator").
3. **Flight Restrictions**: Subject to §A2 above, the Championship Flight is open to all players; Flight A is open only to players who have fewer than 5000 ACBL masterpoints; Flight B is open only to players who have fewer than 2000 ACBL masterpoints; and Flight C is open only to non-Life Masters who have fewer than 500 ACBL masterpoints. Flight eligibility will be established by ACBL's September masterpoint cycle. This information will be produced on August 6, 2011 by ACBL. Masterpoints won after this cycle will not impact flight eligibility for these events.
4. **Unit Responsibilities**: Each Unit will promote the club-level play in their own Unit and shall sponsor a qualifying session as in §C should no club in their jurisdiction do so.
5. **Team Formation**: Teams consist of four, five, or six players. New teams may be formed at the District Finals from qualified players of the previous level.

B. *Club Level*

1. **Qualifying Period**: The qualifying stage at the club level will be held during the six months beginning September 1, 2011 through February 28, 2012.
2. **Table Fees**: Clubs may charge additional fees to offset costs above the normal club entry fees. In addition to the regular monthly report to ACBL that includes a \$1.25 per table fee, clubs must remit \$7.00 per table to the District with a copy of the ACBLscore GNT report form. The per table fee and game report shall be sent to the District 20's Secretary/Treasurer, currently Marie Ashton, 6512 SW Midmar Pl, Portland, OR 97223-7517 (hereafter "Secretary/Treasurer"). These fees will be used to help defray the administrative costs associated with the event and the travel subsidies District 20 pays to the winners of each Flight.
3. **Reporting**: In addition to the report with the fee above, Clubs must send the game file created by ACBLscore (e.g. 111206.ACE) via e-mail to the Coordinator.

American Contract Bridge League District 20

4. **Club Qualification Format:** Clubs may either run separate games for one or more Flights, or a combined stratified team event. Subject to the approval of the Coordinator, each Club may choose its own format for the Club qualification event.
5. **Club Qualification for Advancement:** Individuals that enter a club or Unit qualification event will qualify for the District Finals in the Championship Flight and all other Flights for which they are eligible in accordance with §A3 above, if:
 - a. They finish in the top 60% (including ties) of the teams that play in their Flight;
 - b. They win at least half of the available victory points; or
 - c. They win at least half of the matches they play.

In addition, all Flight C players who participate in the event will automatically qualify for the District Final. A District 20 player may qualify to advance from a club qualification even if he plays with a player from another district that is not eligible to advance in District 20.

6. **Exemptions from Club Qualification:** Provided they apply in writing to the Coordinator before the end of the club-qualifying period, D20 members will be exempt from qualifying for the District 20 Finals provided:
 - a. No club or Unit qualifying event was scheduled within 50 miles of their home; and they submit a \$15 per person special dispensation fee to the Secretary/Treasurer at least one week prior to the Finals.
 - b. A significant business or personal reason prevents them from participating in any of the Club qualifying events within 50 miles of their home; and they submit a \$50 per person special dispensation fee to the Secretary/Treasurer at least one week prior to the Finals.

C. Unit Level

Any Unit may choose to hold a Unit Final to either supplement or replace club-qualifying games in the Unit's area. To do so, a Unit must secure an ACBL sanction. Qualification period, District fees, reporting, game format, and eligibility for advancement will be the same as for clubs stated in §B1-5 above.

D. District Finals for Championship Flight

1. **Championship Final:** Qualified players (*see* §B4, §B5 and §C above) may form teams to compete in the Championship Flight Finals to be held online at multiple sites across the District on **May 12/13**, 2012. See §D6 for online conditions.
2. **Starting times:** Sessions are scheduled to commence as follows:

1	12:00 PM	3	11:00 AM	(Pacific Daylight Time)
2	6:00 PM	4	4:00 PM	

3. **Advance Entries:** Participating teams will be required to preregister for this event. The registration form (on web site) must be completed and mailed with the fee for two sessions (\$96) to the NA Events Coordinator (*see* §A2 above) by April **28**, 2012.

American Contract Bridge League District 20

4. Event Format:

- a. 2 - 4 Teams: With two to four teams, the Championship Finals will be conducted as a two-day knockout tournament. (§D5 covers seeding process with four teams.)

Teams	Total Boards	First Day Format	Second Day Format
2	112	112 board knockout (two 56-board sessions)	
3	120	2 – 30-board matches	60-board knockout (two survivors)
4	120	60-board knockout	60-board knockout

- b. 5 or More Teams: With five or more teams, the Championship Finals will be conducted as a one-day, two-session Round Robin (RR) or Swiss followed by a one-day, two-session Knockout (KO) round. The top two teams advance from the RR to the KO with less than eight teams; with eight or more teams the top four advance. Scoring for the RR or Swiss will be by IMP's converted to victory points based on the ACBL 20-point scale. The team that places first in the RR or Swiss may choose its round of four opponent from the teams that finish 3rd and 4th. The teams will start the KO with full IMP carry-over, to a maximum of 28 IMPs, from the first day match with their opponent.

Teams	Total Boards	First Day Format (Round Robin/Swiss)	Second Day Format (Knockout)
5	116	4 – 14-board matches	60-board knockout with the two surviving teams
6	120	5 – 12-board matches	
7	114	6 – 9-board matches	
8	116	7 – 8-board matches	30-board knockout among the four surviving teams
9	116	8 – 7-board matches	
10 or more	116	8 – 7-board matches	

- c. In all cases, the Tournament Director may modify the number of boards and sessions to be played to accommodate unanticipated circumstances. The minimum and maximum number of boards scheduled will be 100 to 120.

5. One-Stage Knockouts: When just four teams enter the Championship Flight Finals, it will be conducted as in §D4.a) above with the teams seeded to start as follows:

- a. Previous Year's Winner – If the previous D20 Championship Flight team winner returns with at least three of its players, that team will be seeded first. Thereafter, the teams will be seeded according to their "seeding value."
- b. Seeding Value - a number calculated from the following elements:

American Contract Bridge League District 20

- 1) Life Master – Each team receives one seeding point for each Life Master.
 - 2) Masterpoints – Team members receive 1/10 seeding point for every 100 masterpoints as of the ACBL March computer cycle issued on February 6, 2012. Masterpoints from other National Bridge Organizations will be considered in seeding on an equitable basis to be established by the Coordinator. Each player is limited to six seeding points based on total masterpoints from all sources.
 - 3) Past GNT Performance – Team members receive seeding points for their GNT accomplishments during the prior 5-year period according to the following schedule:
 - Four (4) points for placing first in a D20 GNT Final
 - Two (2) points for placing second in a D20 GNT Final
 - One (1) point for placing third/fourth in a D20 GNT Final
 - Ten (10) points for placing first in a National GNT Finals
 - Six (6) points for placing second in a National GNT Finals
 - Four (4) points for placing third/fourth in a National GNT Finals
 - Two (2) points for placing fifth through eighth in a National GNT Finals
 - c. Seeding Position: To calculate the number that will determine a team's seeding position, the total seeding points of all its team members will be divided by the number of members. Any team shall have the right to appeal its seeding position to the Tournament Director, whose decision concerning such appeals shall be final.
6. **Provisions for Online Competition**: The following conditions apply to the online contest and take precedence over other conditions herein for face-to-face competition.
- a. General Conditions
 - 1) Regarding any of the below, the decision of the Director in Charge (DiC) will be final. The DiC is empowered to remedy any errors or omissions in these Conditions of Contest.
 - 2) Unless specifically noted below, the Laws of Duplicate Bridge, the ACBL Convention Charts, the ACBL Alert Chart, the Conditions of Contest for the 2012 GNT, General Conditions of Contest for team play and ACBL Zero Tolerance Policy shall govern this event.
 - 3) The DiC must be an ACBL Director, hold the rank of Tournament Director or higher, and shall have the authority to assign his own staff.
 - 4) This event will be conducted at a variety of playing sites, and hosted online by an Bridge Base Online (BBO), an ACBL approved host.
 - 5) The Tournament Organizer will provide a format for the event which includes contingencies for any number of teams in each flight. [See §D4 above.]
 - 6) Except in #9, below, Contestants in each flight will play the same deals as others within their flight and no two flights shall play the same deals.
 - 7) Each Contestant shall have access to these conditions of contest, and the event's format (#5 and §D4 above). Failure to have reviewed these conditions, or lack of

American Contract Bridge League District 20

proficiency with computers or the software used does not excuse any irregularity, or violation of these conditions.

- 8) In the event a Contestant is handicapped, where he is unable to use a computer, and in all cases where a Contestant does not have the requisite computer skills, said Contestants may bring an Operator to relay calls, plays and explanations thereof. If possible Communication between the Contestant and his Operator is to be conducted in writing. Any notes from a Contestant/Operator interaction may be used to settle disputes. The Operator must be named in preregistration, and is subject to the approval of the DiC.
- 9) Should a technical difficulty arise, which delays play for one or more matches, play in all unaffected matches shall continue, and 15 minutes will be allotted to resolve the issue before play is suspended. If play is suspended for one or more matches, and in the DiC's opinion, the rest of the contest is unaffected (as in the final match of a Swiss), the affected matches will continue at a later time with different hands than those played during the main competition.

b. Security

- 1) The Director must be summoned electronically for any irregularity which occurs during play. Once the Director has been summoned, all play and bidding shall cease until the Director authorizes its continuation.
- 2) Each Contestant must preregister to participate at a particular site, and no Contestant may participate from a physical location other than a site designated by the DiC or Tournament Organizer.
- 3) The DiC will designate at least one Monitor for each playing site.
- 4) Monitors shall ensure the enforcement of these conditions of contest, and will be primarily responsible for the enforcement of any security related issues at their designated location.
- 5) Monitors need not be Directors, and may not rule on any irregularity occurring during play, nor penalize a Contestant for any violation of these conditions. Monitors must immediately inform the DiC of any irregularity or violation of which they become aware in any manner.
- 6) Contestants are not permitted to be in possession of any electronic communication devices while they are competing. VIOLATION OF THIS CONDITION WILL RESULT IN A MANDATORY PENALTY OF 12 IMPS, AND A SECOND VIOLATION WILL RESULT IN THE TEAM'S DISQUALIFICATION.
- 7) Chatter at each physical location shall be kept to a minimum. No discussion of hands is permitted at any given location until all bridge play at that location has concluded.
- 8) Contestants must connect to the internet through a designated on site router.
- 9) Contestants may only run the following applications during the play period:
 - a. Approved host

American Contract Bridge League District 20

b. An internet browser for the purpose of accessing the host and/or for the purpose of accessing the ACBL's defense database.

10) Monitors shall ensure that Contestants cannot view the Computer Screens of other Contestants.

11) Monitors shall ensure that Contestants, competing at the same site as members of their own team, are seated in positions which obscure their view of one another.

12) Contestants should refrain from chatting with the entire table.

c. The Play

1) Contestants are required to post a complete convention card, in ACBL format, inclusive of any supplemental notes.

2) The ACBL Mid-Chart applies to the Championship Flight. Pairs playing methods requiring a written defense must pre-alert their opponents, and post a written description of the method(s) along with their convention card. Contestants opposing a pair playing such methods are permitted to access the ACBL's defense database and keep said defenses open in their internet browser. <http://www.acbl.org/play/defenseDataBase.html>

3) [N/A]

4) Contestants are required to alert and explain their own calls (not their partner's). When one makes an alertable call, the bidder must give a full explanation of the agreement to his opponents (and only his opponents). Stating the common or popular name of the convention is not sufficient.

5) Any Contestant may request, but only at his turn to call or play, information concerning an opponent's methods. Such inquiries may be asked of either or both opponents, but must be asked in a private chat. Replies to these inquiries must be given in a private chat.

6) It is presumed, though not guaranteed (see Security 10-12 & The Play 4 & 5), that players can not make available to their partner extraneous information by a remark, a question, a reply to a question, an unexpected alert, failure to alert, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism. The Monitor and Contestants alike, must be vigilant, and report any such violations to the DiC.

7) Any deviation in tempo does convey extraneous information, and is subject to rectification under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge. Any Contestant experiencing technical difficulties which may be construed as conveying extraneous information should immediately inform the Monitor or Director.

8) Claims, concessions, agreement thereto and contention or cancellation thereof will be rectified under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge.

9) Unintended calls or plays will be rectified under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge. If a Contestant makes an unintended call or play he should summon the Director immediately. As in live play, undos are permitted only upon instruction from the Director.

American Contract Bridge League District 20

E. District Finals for Flights A, B, and C

1. **Final Tournaments:** Qualified players (*see* §B4, §B5 and §C above) may form teams to compete in the Flight A, B and C Finals for which they are eligible (*see* §A3 above). These three Finals will be held in conjunction with the Medford Regional at the Red Lion Hotel in Medford, Oregon on May 19/20, 2012. The Flight C Finals are on Saturday, Flight B on Sunday, and Flight A on Saturday/Sunday.
2. **Starting times:** Sessions are scheduled to commence as follows:

	Flights A & C	Flights A & B
Session	Saturday	Sunday
1	10:00 PM	10:30 AM
2	3:00 PM	TBA

3. **Event Format – Flight A:** Flight A will be conducted as a one-day, two-session Round Robin or Swiss movement followed by a one-day, two-session knockout round.
 - a. **Round Robin/Swiss format:** The total boards played in the Round Robin/Swiss round will be not less than 54 nor more than 64. Scoring will be by IMP's converted to victory points based on the ACBL 20-point scale.
 - b. **Knockout round format:** The teams will start the KO with full IMP carry-over from the round-robin match with their opponent (up to a maximum of 28 IMPs).
 - 1) With less than eight teams, the two teams that place highest in the Swiss will play a knockout match of 56 boards.
 - 2) With eight or more teams, the four teams that place highest in the Swiss will play knockout matches of 28 boards. The team that places first in the Swiss may choose its round of four opponent from the teams that finish 3rd and 4th.
3. **Event Format – Flights B and C:** In Flights B and C, the Finals will be conducted as a one-day Round Robin or Swiss movement. Scoring will be by IMP's converted to victory points based on the ACBL 20-point scale. The total boards to be played will be not less than 48 nor more than 60.
4. **Format Changes:** The Tournament Director may, after consultation with the Coordinator, modify the format for any of the Finals as needed to accommodate unanticipated circumstances.

F. Conditions of Play

1. **Entry Fees:** The entry fees for each session of the District GNT Finals will be \$48 per team, regardless of the number of players, except in Flight C where the fee will be \$44 per team. The entire entry fee for all planned sessions other than knockout rounds will be collected at the start of the event.

American Contract Bridge League District 20

2. **Bidding Boxes/Screens**: Bidding boxes will be used during all sessions of each Flight and screens will be used in the Championship Finals if they are available. If available, screens may also be used in the Flight A knockout stage.
3. **Seating Rights**: In three-way or round-robin matches, there will be no seating rights. Team pairings in knockout matches will be determined by placings in the Round Robin/Swiss with the higher-placing team entitled to choose seating in either the first or second half. If the team holding seating rights fails to declare otherwise, it will be deemed to have exercised its rights in the first half. Any disputes as to seating positions will be resolved by having each team's captain submit a lineup to the Tournament Director.
4. **Seating Changes**: No change in seating may be made after the auction has started at either table except on instructions from the Tournament Director. Playbacks are permitted.
5. **Slow Play**: Hospitality breaks will be used to ameliorate the adverse effects of slow play on the other teams. The Tournament Director (TD) will take steps to monitor egregious slow play to determine who is at fault and may assess slow-play penalties if appropriate. At the discretion of the TD, slow play penalties will be deemed to be either disciplinary (and unappealable) or procedural. If the latter, the offending team may appeal the TD's ruling to the Tournament Appeals Committee. The burden is on the appellant to demonstrate that some unusual circumstance makes the penalty inappropriate.
6. **Lateness**: Penalty for failure to seat a complete team at announced game time will be:
 - a. First 10 minutes – no penalty
 - b. More than 10 minutes, up to 15 minutes – 2 IMP's
 - c. More than 15 minutes, up to 20 minutes – 6 IMP's
 - d. More than 20 minutes, up to 25 minutes – 12 IMP's
 - e. More than 25 minutes, up to 30 minutes – 18 IMP's
 - f. More than 30 minutes, up to 35 minutes – 24 IMP's
 - g. More than 35 minutes, up to 40 minutes – 30 IMP's

The match will be curtailed one board, up to a maximum of four boards, for each 7½ minutes or fraction thereof of tardiness after the first ten minutes. Three IMP's per board curtailed will be awarded to the non-offending team in addition to the penalty above. If play has not commenced (with or without a substitute) forty minutes after announced game time, the match will be declared forfeit.

7. **Substitutes**: In his discretion, the Tournament Director may allow a team to add an emergency substitute for any segment or segments, provided that so doing does not appreciably strengthen the team.
8. **Per Person Play Requirements**: Exclusive of playoffs required to break a tie, each player on a team must play at least 50% of all boards played by his team in each of the round-robin, Swiss, or knockout rounds. Players are not required to play 50% of any particular match. No player may continue to play in the Finals where it is impossible for him to satisfy this requirement. Per person play requirements shall not affect a team's rights under §I to add members prior to advancing to the National Finals.

American Contract Bridge League District 20

9. **Sportsmanship**: Participants' bidding and play decisions must be motivated only by a desire to secure qualification for their team and not to affect which other teams may qualify for further play. Teams whose results make qualification effectively either impossible or certain must continue to play their best, without implementing any dramatic changes in their bidding or play strategy.
10. **Breaking Ties**:
 - a) In the event of a tie for advancement, the two tying teams will play a four-board playoff match, except in the last knockout round where the final two teams will play an eight-board playoff. If three or more teams are tied, they will play a four-board round-robin match to reduce to one or two teams as necessary based on win-loss record if possible; otherwise based on IMP quotient.
 - b) Succeeding ties will be broken by four-board playoffs or round-robin matches. Tiebreakers will continue until one team scores a 1 IMP or greater lead at the conclusion of a playoff match.
 - c) Tie-breaking sessions will be scheduled by the director to best suit the players' convenience and may be deferred to another day.
11. **Team Withdrawals**: Teams may not withdraw from the Final without permission of the Tournament Director, who may allow the withdrawal if it will not damage the movement or unfairly prejudice some other team. If a team pulls out, its round-robin results will be calculated based on the results achieved thus far, unless the team has not played the same number of boards against each other team, in which case the withdrawing team's results will be disregarded in their entirety. Entry fees are not refundable to teams that withdraw.
12. **Kibitzing**: Kibitzers will be permitted at all stages of District GNT events but must remain at one table during a particular segment of a match. A fifth or sixth member of a team may kibitz at a table no closer than 2 tables away from tables at which his own team is playing. Each partnership has the right to bar one kibitzer without assigning cause, or an unlimited number of kibitzers for cause. The Tournament Director may bar any kibitzer for cause. Kibitzers will comport themselves appropriately.
11. **Correction and Appeal Period**: The team captain must notify the Tournament Director of scoring errors and/or submit in writing an appeal of a ruling prior to the start of the next playing session, or within 24 hours of the last session.

G. Other Considerations

1. **Changes**: The location, dates and times for the Finals are subject to change by the Coordinator for good cause.
2. **Round-Robin Matches**: The Tournament Director will order the round-robin matches to achieve maximum fairness and to minimize the possibility of unsportsmanlike conduct. If practical, the matches will be split into two sessions of 1/2 match each.
3. **Duplication of Boards**: The Tournament Director will make best efforts to supply duplicated boards at least for late round-robin matches involving contending teams.

American Contract Bridge League District 20

H. Conventions

Conventions listed in the ACBL midchart may be used in the Championship Flight and Flight A only. Players who wish to use midchart conventions must keep detailed written descriptions of the conventions and their common continuations separately from the convention card together with suggested defenses, if the latter are required by the mid-chart. Upon request, these materials must be made available to opponents at the start of each match.

In addition, upon request, each pair participating in the Championship Finals must provide the midchart materials identified in this paragraph plus a reasonably complete summary description of the bidding and play methods the pair uses to other participants in the Finals within two days of the request. Willful failure to comply with this requirement may, in the Tournament Director's discretion, result in disallowing the offending pairs' use of some or all non-yellow card conventions.

I. Changes to Team Makeup

1. **Adding or Dropping Team Members**: A team may add or drop members prior to advancing from the District Finals to the National Finals subject to the following:
 - a. A team may drop members, but no team may continue unless at least three (3) of the original team members remain.
 - b. A team may add members subject to the following restrictions:
 - 1) An advancing team may add any player from the second, third, and fourth place teams in their flight for the current year; or
 - 2) An advancing team may add any player from the District if approved by the District Director; and
 - c. All changes must be submitted in writing to the Coordinator in a timely manner but at least two weeks prior to the Nationals Finals to facilitate seating at the Nationals.
2. **Replacing Teams**: If a team is not qualified to advance by the above rules, or if a team withdraws for good reason, the following rules apply:
 - a. If a qualifying team declines to play in the District Finals knockout round, then the next placing team will advance. Should that team decline to continue, then the next placing team will be eligible, and so on. If only one team remains, it will be named champion by forfeit. If only three teams remain, the first session of the knockout round will be run to reduce to two teams based on win-loss record if possible; otherwise based on IMP quotient.
 - b. After the District Finals, if the winner of a Flight declines to play at the Nationals, the second place team will be eligible to advance. If the second place team declines to advance, then the third place team will be eligible to advance and so forth. If two teams are tied for a place eligible to advance and both teams desire to advance, then the replacement team will be chosen by lot.

American Contract Bridge League District 20

J. Subsidies

1. **Travel Expenses**: The District will subsidize the travel expenses to the National Finals incurred by the winners of each Flight, with \$1800 going to each winning team. Participants in any Flight may conduct fundraisers, all proceeds of which will be used to supplement the District's subsidy of that Flight.
2. **Request Form**: The team captain may submit a subsidy request form once it has made travel and hotel arrangements to attend the National Finals. The form is available from the Secretary/Treasurer and must be completed and returned not sooner than one month prior to the event.

K. Publicity

1. **Winner Actions**: The District's champions of each Flight will reasonably cooperate in promoting the event including by, if requested, (i) supplying a short written tournament report of the District and/or National GNT Finals for publication in the District's newspaper; and, (ii) making public appearances.
2. **Coordinator Duties**: The Coordinator will promote the event by providing separate, advance e-mail notifications to the captain of each team that entered the previous GNT Finals of the period for Club Qualification, and of the dates, times and locations for the District Finals. The Coordinator will arrange to publish both this information and the tournament reports referenced in this paragraph in the District's newspaper.

L. Contingencies

1. The Coordinator will resolve all contingencies or ambiguities relating to Club Qualifying Events, Unit Level Qualifying Events, seeding point calculations, publicity, augmentation, playing sites and dates, and subsidies that are not specifically addressed by these conditions.
2. The Tournament Director will resolve all contingencies or ambiguities relating to the format or playing conditions of the Finals that are not specifically addressed by these conditions and which arise after March 1, 2012.
3. Unless they directly involve his or her team (in which event the Coordinator will defer to a NA Events Committee member to act in his or her stead), the Coordinator will resolve all contingencies or ambiguities relating to the format or playing conditions of the Finals that are not specifically addressed by these Conditions and which arise on or before March 1, 2012. Where feasible, the Coordinator should consult with the NA Events Committee before exercising this authority.

[E N D]