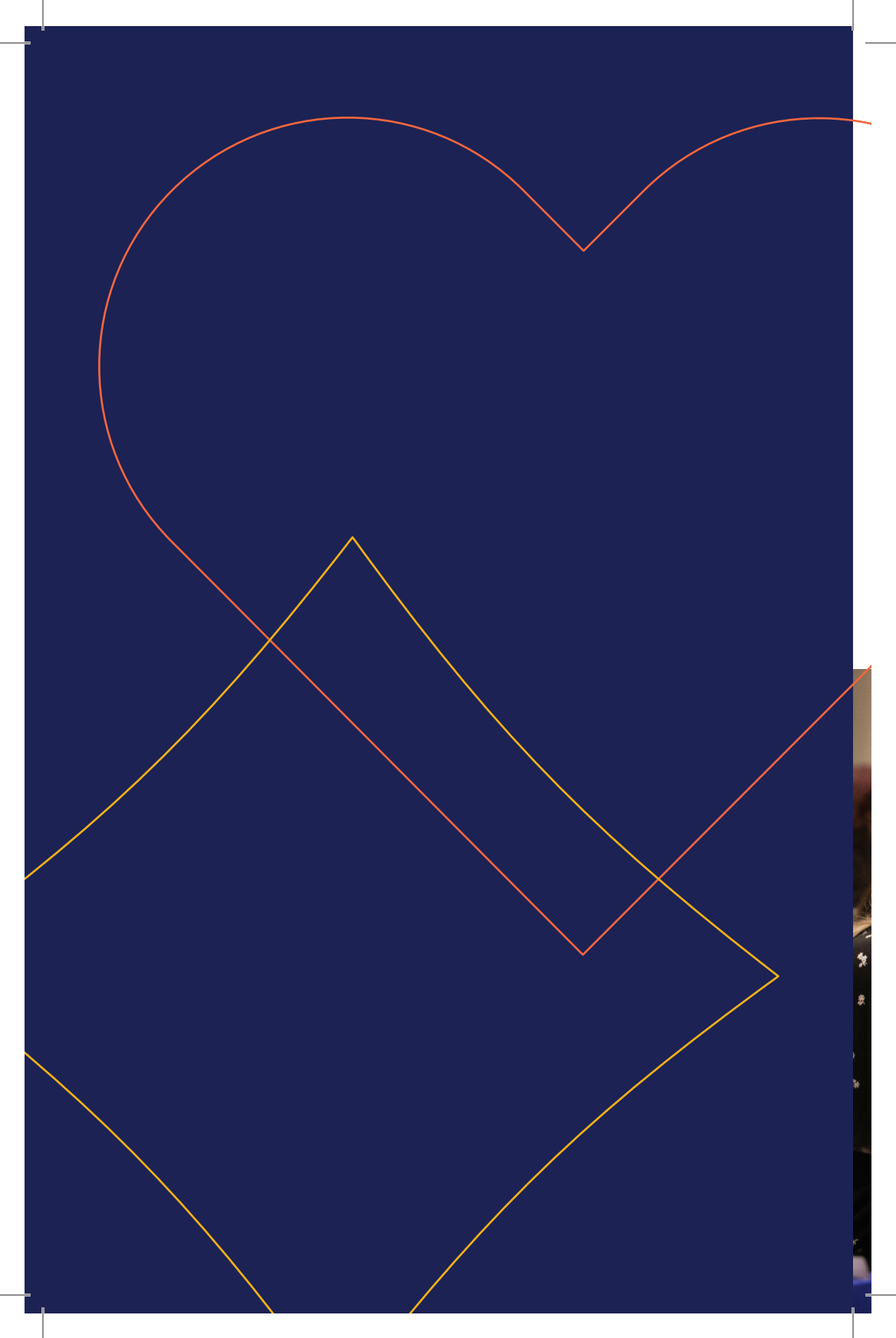




# Welcome to your first tournament

[acbl.org/playbridge](https://acbl.org/playbridge)





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# Introduction

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## What is a duplicate bridge tournament?

The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) sanctions bridge tournaments across the continent all year long. The style of bridge played at each tournament is called duplicate bridge. That means you play the same deals as other participants so that your score is determined by how well you play, not luck of the draw.

This booklet is a guide to the typical events and activities you'll find at a tournament. While each has its own personality, they all have several things in common – that's what this guide is for!

## What kinds of duplicate bridge tournaments are there?

The ACBL sanctions three kinds of tournaments: sectional, regional and NABC. They differ in terms of scale and what kind of masterpoint they award (more about masterpoints are at the end of this guide).

A sectional is the smallest tournament, and it awards silver points. A regional tournament is somewhat larger and awards gold and red points. NABC stands for North American Bridge Championships. These fun events are spread over 11 days with games for players at all skill levels, plus extra activities, like lessons and evening entertainment. You can win platinum, gold and red points during an NABC.

## How can I play?

You must be an ACBL member to play in an ACBL-sanctioned game at a tournament. Membership provides you with a member number needed to purchase entries.

If you are not yet a member, you can sign up for the free Guest Membership, which will provide you with a member number and other unique benefits, like emailed bridge tips and online access to the Bridge Bulletin, the ACBL's monthly magazine. Guest members can play in sectional and regional events; full membership is required for national-rated events.

A volunteer at the Welcome Desk or a Tournament Director can help you sign up for a guest membership.

## What is the I/N Area?

At most tournaments, you'll find special games and lessons for players with under 300 masterpoints. This is called the I/N Area – I/N stands for Intermediate / Newcomer.

# Duplicate Tips

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Duplicate bridge is the style of bridge played in ACBL-sanctioned events. Unlike more casual or social bridge, there are certain guidelines that must be observed.

- No speaking at the table once the cards have been taken.
- Use cards from the bidding box to make your calls.
- The Dummy has limited rights. You must stay in your seat and only play a card once the Declarer has chosen.
- Don't write down the contract in your convention card until there have been three consecutive passes.
- Make your opening lead face down on the table. At the same time, you should say, "Questions, partner?"
- Always treat your partner and opponents with respect.
- Play up to speed. You are given seven and a half minutes per board.
- Bid and play in tempo. Acting too fast or too slow could send unauthorized messages to your partner.
- Don't be afraid to call the director. The director's job is to alleviate any strain there is or may develop, making the game more fun.

# Policies, Procedures & Regulations

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## Zero Tolerance

To preserve the enjoyment of all, the ACBL has a Zero Tolerance Policy for abusive, rude or intolerant behavior.

Below are some examples of commendable behavior, which will significantly contribute to a pleasant atmosphere:

- Greeting others in a friendly manner.
- Praising the bidding and/or play of the opponents.
- Having two clear and complete convention cards readily available to the opponents.

The following are some examples of behavior that will not be tolerated:

- Badgering, rudeness, insinuations, 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.

If a player behaves in an unacceptable manner, the director should be called immediately. Directors have the authority to assess disciplinary penalties.

## Bidding Boxes

You should find four bidding boxes (one per player) at each card table in the tournament area. The cards in these devices allow for silent bidding.

When it's your turn to make a call, pick your desired bid, while grabbing all cards behind that bid at the same time, and place it in front of you on the table. (If your bid is Pass, Double or Redouble, just place the corresponding card on the table.)

All bidding cards remain on the table until the auction is over.

## Convention Cards

Before you play, you and your partner will have filled out a convention card. This card shows the conventions you use as well as your general approach to bidding.

A convention card serves two purposes: one, it tells your opponents the style of bridge you play (e.g., your high card point range for a specific bid), and two, as you fill out your card with your partner, you'll ensure that you're in agreement.

During the game, the convention card is for the opponents' benefit; only they may consult your convention card during a hand.



## Kibitzing

A non-playing spectator of a game of bridge is called a kibitzer. Kibitzing is a fun and interesting way to learn from the experts, but there are rules that must be followed.

- Only look at the hand of one player.
- Don't display any reaction to bidding or play.
- Don't make any remarks of any kind.
- Be considerate of other players.



# Types of Pair Games

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In a pair game, you and your partner play together throughout the event against a series of opponents. Your “real” opponents, however, are the partnerships sitting in the same direction as you (North-South or East-West). They are the players who hold the same cards as you in each hand, and you are trying to outperform them.

So that you are competing with others at about the same skill level as you, pair events are typically set up in one of the following ways.

## Stratified Pairs

For this kind of event, the director will seed a field of players so that they are divided into two or three strata, each with a predetermined minimum/maximum level of masterpoints the players are allowed to have. All pairs will still play one another; the strata are used for scoring purposes.

After the event, all pairs are ranked within their own strata. Masterpoints are awarded for all three strata, but a pair is only eligible for a single masterpoint award.

This is the most common setup you’ll see in I/N games.

## Flighted Pairs

When flighting is used, the field is divided by expertise/experience into separate competitions.

Flight A – unlimited masterpoints – is open to all players regardless of their masterpoint holdings. The remaining flights, usually Flight B and Flight C, are limited to players with a certain number of masterpoints. Flight B may be 0 to 750 masterpoints or 0 to 1500 masterpoints, while Flight C may be limited to players with 0 to 300 or 0 to 500 masterpoints.

Each flight is scored individually with masterpoints awarded separately for each flight.

The flight in which a partnership plays is decided by the member of the pair who has the most masterpoints. A partnership may “play up” (meaning they qualify for Flight C but play in Flight A) but not play down.



## Strati-flighted Pairs

For this event, the top masterpoint holders play in a game of their own as Flight A. The rest of the field is divided into strata like a stratified pair event.

## Side Game Series Pairs

This is a series of one-session games open to all players over multiple days. Participants may enter as many sessions as they wish and play with the same or different partners.

Overall ranking is done on an individual basis by computing the sum of each player's two best games.

# Types of Team Games

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In team events, groups of four, five or six players (with only four players playing at a time) compete against other similar groups.

## Knockout (KO) Teams

This event is structured so that one team plays another team, and the loser of the match is eliminated or “knocked out” from the broader competition while the winners compete against other winning teams until only one team remains. The length of a KO may vary from a single session to a full day to a multi-day event.

## Bracketed Knockout (KO) Teams

The teams are divided into groups of varying sizes based on their average masterpoint holdings. Each group competes in a separate event with its own set of winners.

## Swiss Teams

Teams play other teams in six-, seven- or eight-board matches. Pairings for the first round are random with succeeding rounds determined by a team's win-loss record. These events may be stratified, flighted, strati-flighted or bracketed.

## Board-a-Match (BAM) Teams

Each team plays a variety of opponents with the only possible scores being 1, ½ or 0 (win, tie, loss) on each hand.

# Scoring & Results

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## Scoring

Scoring is based on how successful your partnership was in completing a contract in comparison with other partnerships for the same deals. This is typically done electronically with a device at the table, though it may be done by hand.

Here is the process: After the auction, North enters the contract into the scoring device; when play is completed, North enters the result and then hands the device to an opponent who verifies the score. After the score is verified, it is digitally sent to the ACBL's scoring program, called ACBLscore

There are multiple scoring systems:

- Matchpoints: This is the most common unit of scoring. You will receive one matchpoint for each pair whose result you have beaten and one-half matchpoint for each pair you have tied.
- International Matchpoints (IMPs): This is more common in a team event. The difference in trick and bonus scores of the North-South pair and the East-West pair on the same team is compared to a chart.
- Victory Points (VPs): A score converted from IMPs in accordance to a predetermined scale.

## Results

Directors will post results of the event online through ACBL Live. You may access results through your ACBL Live portal to see how you and the rest of the field performed. Additionally, most tournaments post a printed-out recap sheet.

The recap sheet will include event-specific information, including the average and highest score for each board, along with a list of contestants and their results. Don't hesitate to ask the director for help reading the recap sheet. They will be happy to assist you!

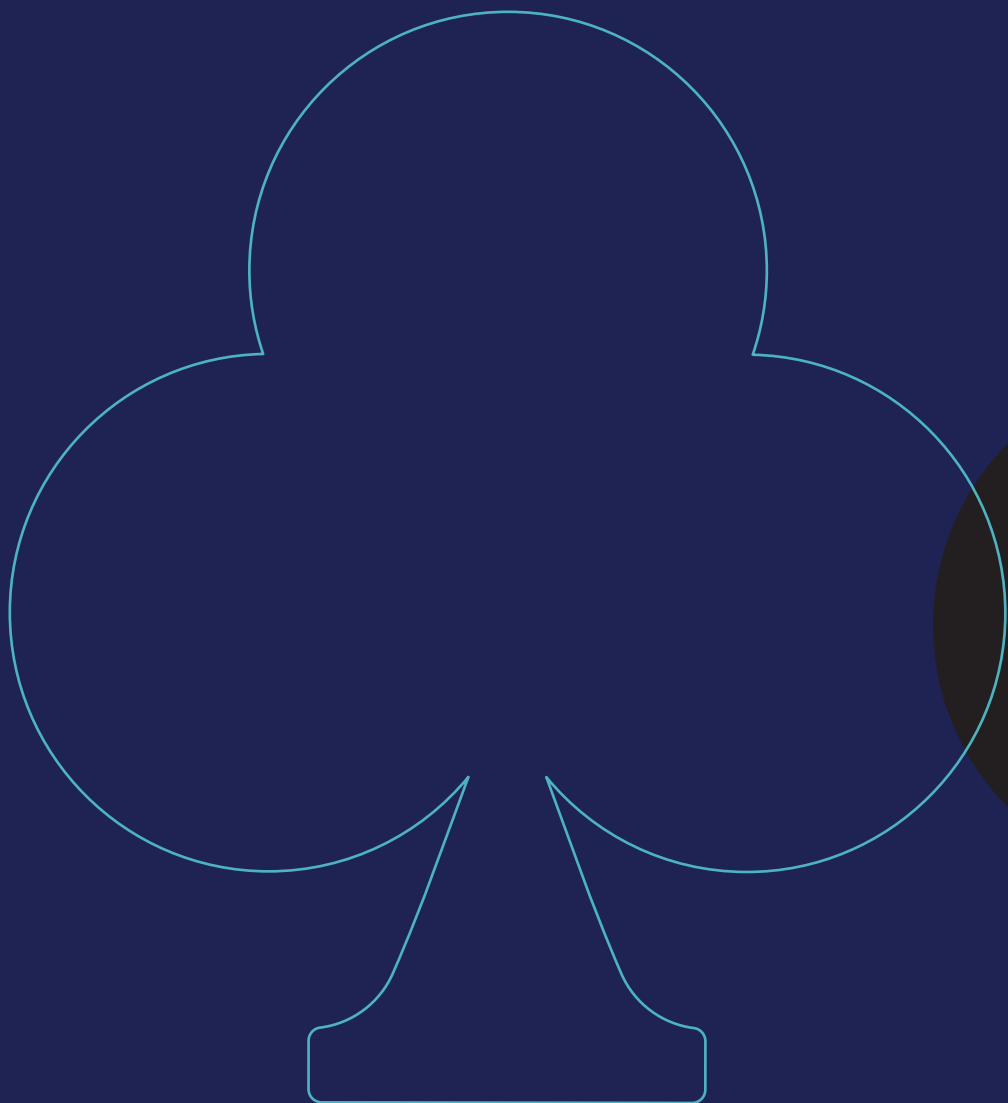
# Masterpoints

Masterpoints are the ACBL's exclusive measurement for success in an event, whether winning or placing. They come in a variety of pigments that are awarded for specific events.

Generally, these are the pigments awarded:

- ◆ Black points for a club event
- ◆ Silver points for a sectional event
- ◆ Red points for a single-session regional or national event
- ◆ Gold points for a two-session regional or national event
- ◆ Platinum points for an NABC+ national event





# AMERICAN CONTRACT BRIDGE LEAGUE

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —

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