

# DISTRICT 19 CONDITIONS OF CONTEST FOR GNT (GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS)

## **BASICS**

The Grand National Teams is a grass-roots event that begins at the club or unit level, continues with District Finals in the spring, and concludes at the Summer NABC. Players qualify as individuals at the club/unit level, and may form new teams for the District Final. There are four flights: Championship Flight, Flight A, Flight B, and Flight C. Each winning team at the District Final is invited to participate at the National Final of the GNT at the Summer NABC. District 19 awards the winning teams in each flight a subsidy to assist in transportation and accommodation costs, provided they play in the GNT National Final. Players who win should expect to represent the District at the North American National Championship. Captains should verify that all team members expect to play the entire event. Entering the event with the knowledge that one cannot compete throughout is a violation of ACBL ethics guidelines.

## **THE 2009-2010 EVENT**

All information specific to this year's event, referred to in the Conditions of Contest, is on this page:

### **THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR FOR THE GNT IS:**

**Tom Hansen**, 24700 NE 126th St, Duvall WA, USA 98019.

He can be reached at 425/485-8616 (days), 425/788-0647 (evenings), and by email at [thansen2@mindspring.com](mailto:thansen2@mindspring.com)

### **THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF DISTRICT NINETEEN IS:**

**Don Mamula**, 15329 14th Drive SE, Mill Creek WA, USA 98012.

He can be reached at 425/357-1964 (home), 425/269-7936 (mobile), and by email at [don@d19director.net](mailto:don@d19director.net)

### **STRAT LIMITS FOR THE 2009-2010 EVENT ARE:**

**Open Championship Flight:** unlimited

**Flight A:** all members of the team under 5000 masterpoints

**Flight B:** all members of the team under 2000 masterpoints

**Flight C:** all members of the team under 500 masterpoints and non-Life Masters

(Limits are based on the September 2009 masterpoint cycle, usually run in the first or second week of August. A player who moves up a level over the course of the event is still eligible to compete at the original level.)

### **IMPORTANT DATES FOR THIS YEAR'S EVENT:**

**Tuesday, July 1, 2009:** Deadline for applying for an exception from the residency requirements for the GNT, for players wishing to qualify in a different district than that of their primary physical residence

**Monday, September 1, 2009:** STAGE ONE (club qualifying) period begins

**Friday, April 30, 2010 (extended from March 31):** STAGE ONE (club qualifying) period ends

**May 15-16, 2010:** District Semifinals and Finals at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 2913 W Marine View Dr, Everett WA . Participating teams should pre-register with the District Coordinator. Registration closes at 12:30 pm.

**July 22-August 1, 2010:** Summer NABC in New Orleans, LA, where the National Final of the GNT will be held. (Different flights may be held on different dates.)

**STAGE ONE CLUB/UNIT SURCHARGE** for 2009-10: \$6.00 US per team, whether a one-session or two-session event is held. The surcharge enables District 19 to provide subsidies for teams that win the District Final. An additional ACBL sanction fee of \$1.25 US per table per session is automatically paid with the club's monthly ACBL report.

**SUBSIDY** for each winning team (in each of the four flights) at the District Final is \$1400.00 US. This subsidy is paid only if they play in the National Final according to the conditions below and the ACBL conditions of contest.

**BUY-IN FEE** at the District Semifinals, for players or full teams who have not qualified at a club or unit level event, is \$25.00 US for each unqualified player, to a maximum of \$100.00 US per team.

## CONDITIONS OF CONTEST

**1. THE FOUR STAGES OF PLAY.** The Grand National Teams is conducted in four stages: club and/or unit qualifying games (referred to here as STAGE ONE), the District Semifinals and Finals (conducted together as a two-day event), and the National Finals. The ACBL GNT Conditions of Contest specify that each District determines the method by which its champions are determined. This document covers the first three stages of play in the GNT (club and/or unit qualifying, District Semifinals, and District Finals). The ACBL conditions cover the National Finals.

**2. THE FOUR LEVELS OF PLAY.** The Grand National Teams is run in four flights. The masterpoint limits for each flight are listed on page 1. In STAGE ONE competition, clubs and/or units may combine the four flights into one stratified event. (STAGE ONE games are normally stratified into three strats, with the Championship and A Flight together in the top strat.) A club or unit may also schedule games that are limited to one, two or three of the four flights, as long as there is at least one chance for players in all four flights to qualify. The final three stages of the event, the District Semifinal, the District Final, and the National Final, shall be conducted separately for each flight.

**3. RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT.** A member's principal physical residence as of September 1 of the calendar year prior to the Grand National Teams National Finals shall establish the District in which the member is eligible to participate beyond the qualifying stage. The ACBL's GNT Credentials Committee may request documentary evidence from the member whose eligibility is in question. Players wishing an exception from these requirements must, by July 1, seek permission in writing from the District Directors of both the District in which the player lives *and* the District in which the player wishes to play. Both District Directors must agree for the exception to be granted. For the Open Championship Flight, this written permission from both District Directors will be forwarded to the ACBL's GNT Credentials Committee for final approval. If the District Directors do not agree, the exception is not granted. There is no appeal from this decision.

**4. QUALIFICATION AND SUBSIDIES.** To qualify to play in the District Semifinal you must be a playing member of a team at a STAGE ONE competition, playing at least 50% of the boards that your team played, or "buy in" at the District Semifinals. Players qualify from STAGE ONE as individuals, in the flight(s) qualified for by their team and any flight below the qualified flight in which the player is also eligible.

At the District Semifinal, the number of teams entering each flight will be reduced to two finalists by the process described in section 6 below.

At the District Final, the winning team in each flight will qualify for District subsidy to attend the National Final. Three members of the winning team must agree to participate in the National Final, with possible augmentations. Augmented players are expected to be equal in strength to the other players on the team. In particular, it is our policy to exclude from the augmentation pool any player who does not play in any part of the event, expecting and or hoping to join the winning team via augmentation. If a team winning the District final cannot attend the National Final under these conditions, the District subsidy will go to the second place team if they can attend the National Final. If both finalists cannot attend the National Final, the District Coordinator and the District Director will combine the two to form a team. If a team cannot be formed in this fashion to represent the District, then no team will be sent to the National Final.

**5. STAGE ONE.** Any sanctioned club or ACBL unit may conduct STAGE ONE qualifying games during the qualifying period listed on page 1. No STAGE ONE game may be scheduled to conflict with any portion of the following:

- North American Bridge Championships
- District 19 Regionals
- The District Finals or local Unit Final of the North American Pairs
- National championship events of the USBF or CBF

Any four to six players may form a team for STAGE ONE competition. This team need not compete together at future stages. Each member of a team that qualifies can play with any team participating at the District Semifinal and District Final Events, no matter how many players there are from any particular unit or club. The purposes of STAGE ONE Competition are to provide for qualification to the District Semifinals by local match play, and to raise money through surcharges to support the four District 19 teams at the National Finals. The current surcharge for STAGE ONE events is at the top of this document.

STAGE ONE games may be one-session or two-session games. In a one-session game, all teams must play at least 24 boards. In a two-session game, all teams must play at least 48 boards total (but the number of boards played in individual sessions may vary). The Director must be a club or higher rated Director, but may play if there are 17 teams or fewer. Clubs and units may decide which conventions to allow in STAGE ONE competition, but it is suggested that the ACBL General Convention Chart be the limit. In Flight A and the championship flight, contestants will be allowed to use ACBL Mid-Chart conventions in the District Semifinal and Final, but at club level games, especially stratified games, all participants should be limited to the General Convention Chart, even in matches between two teams in Flight A or the Championship Flight.

The format for a STAGE ONE qualifying game may be decided at game time, when the number of teams is known. Any of the following can be used:

- Swiss Teams scored by Victory Points or by Win-Loss
- Round-Robin Teams scored by Victory Points, by net IMPs or by Win-Loss
- any ACBL-acceptable team format

In STAGE ONE games, individuals qualify for the next stage in a strat by being on a team that accomplishes any of the following:

- wins one-half or more of their matches in a Swiss Teams (a tie is one-half of a win)
- finishes average or higher in the scoring system used to rank teams (VP or win-loss)
- finishes “middle or higher” within a strat in the scoring system used

Note to club Directors: ACBLScore does not always qualify every team eligible by the above rules. It might be necessary to add manual qualifications before making the results official.

The final results of each STAGE ONE game MUST be sent to the District Coordinator (contact information on page 1) along with the surcharge for the game (see page 1), as soon as the results are finalized.

Players who have not qualified in a STAGE ONE game may choose to pay the additional BUY-IN fee (listed on page 1) in order to gain eligibility to the District Semifinals.

**6. DISTRICT SEMIFINALS AND FINALS.** ACBL District Nineteen conducts the Semifinals and Finals in all flights at one location in a Saturday-Sunday event each spring (see dates and locations on page 1). Players qualified to play in more than one flight must decide, as they enter the Semifinals, which flight to play in for the rest of the event. Entry fees at the District Semifinals and Finals are at the most recently established District Regional rates. The expected number of boards per session is set at 32 in the Championship Flight and Flight A, 28 in Flight B, and 24 in Flight C. The Director determines the format of the event for that flight depending on the number of teams entered. Most likely formats for the event are:

**Two teams:** A two-session match on Saturday decides the championship.

**Three teams:** The teams will play a two-session round-robin to eliminate one team on Saturday, and the finalists will play a two-session match on Sunday.

**Four teams:** Teams will be seeded based on the current masterpoint holdings of the top four members for two-session semifinal matches (1st-4th, 2nd-3rd). The finalists will play a two-session match Sunday.

**Five to eight teams:** A two-session round-robin will be played Saturday afternoon and evening to reduce the field to four teams. The top team from the round-robin will pick its semi-final opponent from the bottom half. The semifinals and the finals will be single-session matches on Sunday.

**Nine, ten or eleven teams:** Teams will play a two-session Swiss Teams to reduce the field to four teams on Saturday. The top team from the round-robin will pick its semi-final opponent from the bottom half. In the event of a tie for seeding occurs it will be broke by the number of matches won. If still a tie then the team that won when playing head to head will be the top seed. If still a tie then by net imps. The semifinals and the finals will be single-session matches on Sunday.

**Twelve, thirteen, fourteen or fifteen teams:** Teams will play a two-session Swiss Teams to reduce the field to six teams on Saturday. In the first half of the first Sunday session, groups of three teams (1st, 4th and 6th from the round-robin in one group, and 2nd, 3rd and 5th in the other) will play a round robin to eliminate one team from each group. A half-session semifinal (highest-ranked survivor in one group against the lowest-ranked survivor in the other) will complete the first Sunday session. The two survivors will meet for a single session final.

**Sixteen or more teams:** Teams will play a one-session Swiss Teams on Saturday afternoon with the top eight qualifying. Quarterfinals (1st-8th, 4th-5th in one bracket and 2nd-7th, 3rd-6th in the other bracket) will be held on Saturday evening. Semifinals and finals will be held on Sunday.

All knockout matches are scored in IMPs. All Swiss Teams and Round Robin matches are scored in IMPs and each match is converted to Victory Points to decide the order of finish. Ties in the qualifying round-robin or Swiss Teams, affecting only the seeding for the knockout stage, will be broken at random by the Director. Ties affecting the teams surviving to the knockout stage will be broken with additional boards scored in IMPs as follows:

— If two teams are tied for one spot in the next stage, a four-board match will be played between the tied teams. If this is tied, two-board matches will be played until a winner is determined.

— If more than two teams are tied, the Director will determine the nature of the tie-breaking procedure: a short round-robin or knockout round or rounds may be required. The Director may also postpone the start time of the survivor's match to allow for a reasonable break after the tie-breaking procedure.

Teams that are eliminated in the first session on Saturday will be entered into a Saturday Evening Stratified Swiss Teams, open to all players, even those not originally entered on a GNT team. This event will award half-red and half-black points, the same as a Regional consolation event.

**7. SUBSTITUTES, REPLACEMENTS, MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS.** At STAGE ONE, temporary substitutes are allowed at the discretion of the Director. A substitute player who plays more than 50% of the boards is eligible for qualification to the District Semifinal. At the District Semifinal and Final, substitutes must be approved by the District Coordinator or the District Director. No substitute may be allowed to play more than 24 boards, or more than 50% of the total boards played in the District Final or District Semifinal. Substitutes at all levels may not appreciably strengthen the team. No substitute may be used at any level if four members of the team are available to participate.

The permanent replacement of a player who, for cause, cannot continue in the event is permitted only with the permission of the GNT Coordinator or, in his or her absence, the Tournament Director. A team whose player is removed for cause shall NOT be eligible to continue to the next stage and shall be removed from the field by the director at the first reasonable opportunity. Prior to replacement, the replacement need not have played in the event but must:

- be a member of District 19, and
- not have played in the event beyond STAGE ONE, and
- not appreciably strengthen the team.

A replaced player permanently leaves the event with all master points earned and the replacement earns master points thereafter. A team cannot start the District Semifinal competition with a non-qualified replacement. However, the proposed member may follow the buy-in procedure. All team starting members must have qualified at STAGE ONE or buy-in. Replacement players are not allowed if a team has four members available.

Other than approved substitutions and approved replacements, no augmentation of a team is allowed after the District Semifinals begin. Teams can be augmented to play in the National Finals (see 'Qualification' above).

Members of teams are required to play at least 50% of each session, except that a member may choose to play one full session of a two-session Swiss. A team becomes ineligible to continue in the event when fewer than three members of the original team can continue and meet the play percentage requirements.

**8. INTERPRETATION OF REGULATIONS.** The GNT District Coordinator (contact information on page 1) shall have discretion on all issues of qualifications and interpretation of these rules. In any questions where the District GNT Coordinator is charged with discretionary responsibilities involving players in a flight in which the Coordinator is currently playing, the Director in Charge is substituted for the GNT Coordinator, in consultation with the District's National Director if available.