

American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) and Unit 390 Membership

Here is some information on the many ways your membership in the ACBL works for you.

The ACBL

The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), formed in 1937, is the largest bridge organization in the world with 164,000 members (including you!) and authorizing 2 million club tables of bridge annually, another 420,000 tournament tables of bridge plus over 1 million online tables per year. The ACBL supports 3000 bridge clubs and 1100 tournaments annually. It certifies bridge directors and bridge teachers as well as player achievements.

The ACBL serves you directly in many ways:

- sends you the monthly Bridge Bulletin with a wide range of articles of interest to all levels of players (this publication is also available to members online at the acbl.org website),
- keeps track of your masterpoints,
- organizes three 10-day North American Bridge Championship (NABC) tournaments annually, each attracting up to 5000 players. These tournaments are a thrill for all at some time in their bridge career (Did you know that you can access the Daily Bulletins for these fabulous tournaments at <https://nabc.acbl.org/past-nabcs/> where you can link to past NABCs?).

The ACBL has a wide range of additional services – explore the website to find out more.

Unit 390

In many respects the primary service provision from your ACBL membership is at the Unit level. Unit 390 includes Calgary and extends west to the BC border and east to the Saskatchewan border. West of Highway 2 the Unit is demarcated by Didsbury at the north and High River to the South. East of Highway 2 Unit 390 is Castor and Coronation at the north and Vulcan at the south (excluding the Bassano/Brooks corridor on Highway 1).

Units receive funding from the membership payments of their Unit (11% of your annual fee paid to ACBL is reimbursed to the Unit). Units do not receive monies from club games but do retain any proceeds from Sectional (weekend) tournaments they organize - in the case of Unit 390, four per year (usually January, March, September, and November).

In addition to Sectional tournaments, Unit 390 provides an excellent welcome program for new members, a mentorship program, Kibitzer newsletter (published 2 times a year), and a website (<http://acblunit390.org>) with lots of information and links.

Unit 390 currently enjoys over 1020 members. For the last five years the Unit has been growing steadily and over the last 12 months, membership growth has been over 6%.

District 18

The ACBL is organized into 25 'Districts'. Alberta is in District 18 which covers a massive geographic area (in addition to Alberta, it includes Saskatchewan, Northern Manitoba, Montana, Idaho, Utah and Wyoming – the first letter of each results in 'WASUMI'). District 18 is one of two ACBL Districts that span the 49th parallel.

The primary role of a District is to, in collaboration with the local Unit, organize Regional (week long) tournaments of which there is always at least one in Alberta each year (Calgary, then Red Deer, then Edmonton, then back to Calgary - plus one in Lethbridge every fourth year). The next Regional in Alberta will be April 2020 in Lethbridge. The next full Regional in Calgary will be August of 2021. The District has recently begun hosting I/N Regionals, for players with fewer than 750 masterpoints. These typically last three days and award gold points.

Districts receive their funding from Regional surpluses and fees from Grass Roots events and STaCs (Sectional Tournaments at Clubs). District 18 also provides the initiative to hold, in collaboration with each Unit, the North American Pairs (NAPs) and Grand National Teams (GNTs) competitions and provides financial support for the winners in each flight of both competitions to play in the final at an NABC. A District also provides a second level of appeal for any bridge-related disciplinary matter. The District 18 website is at www.wasumi.org.

ACBL Zero Tolerance Policy

It is important to have a non-intimidating place for people to learn and play the wonderful game of bridge. ACBL developed a 'zero tolerance' policy many years ago to provide a more nurturing environment for all bridge players. Unit 390 endorses the zero tolerance policy.

Fees for Bridge

Bridge continues to be one of the best hobby values available. Most clubs charge \$8 to \$10 per game. Of that charge, a portion (that varies between regular club games, championship games, STaC games, etc.) goes to the ACBL. On average, about 35 cents for each game you play goes to the ACBL to track your masterpoints, assure quality directing and teaching, and for ACBL general administration. The remaining portion goes to the club. Considering that the Director gets to the game an hour or so early to make sure the coffee is on and the room is ready, and that after the game, the results must be posted and the tables cleaned and put away, your per-hour game fee is probably something like \$2 per hour -- a bargain for such a marvelous hobby!

Succession Planning

Clubs have evolved and will continue to do so. Perhaps the most important factor in bridge evolution in Unit 390 is the need for new directors to run the wide array of games. Please consider taking the Director's course as there always seems to be shortage of Directors. If interested, please contact any Unit 390 Board member for information.

Bridge Clubs

Bridge can include both sanctioned and non-sanctioned games, the former being games recognized by the ACBL. Sanctioned games typically have a higher entry fee than non-sanctioned games since a portion of the fee goes to the ACBL. Unit 390 currently includes 15 clubs which offer one or more sanctioned games per week. There are three clubs that offer non-sanctioned duplicate games. The Glencoe Club also provides sanctioned games but these are restricted to members and their guests.

Youth Bridge

A high priority for all levels of bridge organization is bridge for youth. In recent years the ACBL has introduced a number of strategies to draw younger players into bridge, for example the School Bridge Lesson Series Program for more than 4000 children annually (300 programs). In 2018 Unit 390 launched its own School Bridge Program, attracting more than 80 players in its first year. Volunteers with ideas to enhance Unit 390 efforts to bring young players into bridge should contact the Unit President.

Canadian Bridge Federation (CBF)

The CBF is a Canadian organization whose mission statement is:

"The mission of the Canadian Bridge Federation is to promote bridge within Canada and protect and advance the national interests of Canadian Bridge, including the selection and support of Canadian bridge teams and players for International bridge competition."

It has a membership structure separate from ACBL although your annual CBF membership fee can be paid when you renew your ACBL membership. Structured as six 'zones', Alberta, Saskatchewan and Northern Manitoba are in Zone V. The CBF organizes and runs several multi-level national events, including the Canadian National Team Championship (CNTC) – Flight A (open) and Flight B (under 2500) and Flight C (under 1000). These events begin at the grassroots level with club games and culminate at the Canadian Bridge Championship (CBC) where National winners are declared in each event. At the Canadian Bridge Championship, National Finals are also held in the Canadian Women's Team Championship (CWTC), Canadian

Senior Team Championship (CSTC), Canadian Mixed Team Championship (CMTC), Canadian Open Pairs Championship (COPC) and Canadian IMP Pairs Championship (CIPC). The CBF also organizes a fundraising Regional tournament each year, two of which have been held in Calgary.

To help promote bridge in Canada, the CBF runs two Rookie-Master games each year – the Helen Shields game in April and the Erin Berry game in October. The CBF also runs an annual Canada-wide STaC and an Online Team Championship. The CBF administers the Canadian Junior Development Fund, the CBF Charitable Foundation and also the Erin Berry Memorial Trust Fund. The CBF publishes a magazine for members (Bridge Canada) six times a year. Its website is <https://www.cbf.ca>.

Volunteerism

It takes a great many volunteers to assure the successful operation of our bridge organization. No doubt the membership is aware of how hard everyone is working on their behalf. The enthusiasm and efforts of all volunteers, in whatever their bridge interest, is appreciated and encouraged. Talk to any Board Member about ways to volunteer.

Many thanks to everyone who takes the time to provide comments and ask questions about your Unit. The members of the Board of Directors value any feedback.

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