

American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) and Unit 390 Membership

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

The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL)

The American Contract Bridge League, formed in 1937, is the largest bridge organization in North America with approximately 117,000 members (including you!). The ACBL sanctions over 3.5 million tables of face-to-face bridge annually, plus over 1 million online tables per year. The ACBL supports more than 2,000 bridge clubs and 750 sectional and regional tournaments annually. It certifies bridge directors and bridge teachers and recognizes 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 website);
- keeps track of your masterpoints;
- provides you with access to the MyACBL portal, the official, secure online personal account system for members. MyACBL serves as a one-stop resource for members to manage membership details, update contact information, track masterpoint balances, history and rank advancements, and so on;
- maintains ACBL Live, the online service to publish, view, and manage bridge game results for tournaments and local club games. It offers near real-time results, personal score histories, and, through "Fast Results," sends notifications via email or text;
- organizes three 10-day North American Bridge Championship (NABC) tournaments annually, each attracting up to 5,000 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://www.acbl.org/past-nabcs/> where you will find links to past NABCs?).

The ACBL provides a wide range of additional services – explore the website at <https://www.acbl.org/> to find out more.

Calgary Unit 390 - the Calgary Duplicate Bridge Association

In many respects, it is at the Unit level that services associated with your ACBL membership are delivered. 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 you will find Castor and Coronation at the north and Vulcan at the south (excluding the Bassano/Brooks corridor on Highway 1). Click [HERE](#) to view a vintage map of the province with the boundaries of the five Alberta Units inscribed.

Units receive funding through revenue sharing of the membership payments made by Unit players to the ACBL. Under the current 5-5-5 Program, the Unit is reimbursed a base amount of 5% of the annual dues you pay to the ACBL, with the possibility of earning up to 10% more based on performance metrics associated with membership growth and retention. Units do not receive monies from club games nor from unit games hosted by clubs. Units do retain any proceeds from sectional (weekend) tournaments they organize - in the case of Unit 390, three per year (usually January, April and September).

In addition to organizing sectional tournaments for its members, Unit 390 provides an excellent welcome package for new members, new player development opportunities such as the Bid and Play program, the Kibitzer newsletter (published twice a year), and a vibrant website (<https://acblunit390.org>) full of news, information and links. Unit 390 also subscribes to an email service which it uses to send notices and news items to its members. Notices are also sent free of charge on behalf of clubs and teachers operating within the Unit

Unit 390 currently boasts over 895 members. Recovery from the COVID-19 lockdown has been slow but relatively steady. Since the return to face-to-face bridge in late 2022, the Unit membership has been stable, with a modest decline in recent months.

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 District 18 website is at www.wasumi.org.

The primary role of a District is, in collaboration with the local Units, to organize regional (week-long) tournaments of which there is at least one in Alberta each year (Calgary, then Red Deer, then Edmonton, then back to Calgary - plus one in Lethbridge every other year). The next open Regional in Alberta will be in Edmonton in August 2026. The next open Regional in Calgary will be in August of 2027. The District also hosts I/N Regionals, for non-Life Masters (NLM) with fewer than 750 masterpoints. These typically last three days and award gold points for two-session events. The next NLM Regional will be in Calgary in June 2026.

District 18 is responsible for organizing the North American Pairs (NAPs) and Grand National Teams (GNTs) competitions and provides modest financial support for the winners in each flight of both competitions to play in the final at an NABC.

Districts generate their funding from regional tournament surpluses, table fees from Grass Roots FUNd games (held every May) and STaCs (Sectional Tournaments at Clubs).

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. You can read more at <https://www.acbl.org/ethics/#active> (scroll to the bottom of the page).

Fees for Bridge

Bridge continues to be one of the best hobby values available. Most clubs charge around \$10 per person for a game, and a game typically lasts about 3 hours. What a bargain for such a marvelous pastime!

Clubs must remit a per-table charge to the ACBL (the exact amount varies for regular club games, championship games, STaC games, etc.). On average, about 45 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.

Succession Planning

Clubs have evolved and will continue to do so. Perhaps the most important factor in bridge evolution in Unit 390 is the ongoing need for new directors to run the wide array of games and to direct at sectional tournaments. Please consider taking the Director's course as there always seems to be shortage of qualified 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 and awarding masterpoints. Sanctioned games typically have a higher entry fee than non-sanctioned games since a portion of the fee must be sent to headquarters. Unit 390 currently includes 10 clubs which offer one or more sanctioned games per week. In addition, there is a weekly Bid and Play session and there are several clubs operating non-sanctioned duplicate games. The Glencoe Club also provides sanctioned games but these are invitational -- restricted to members and their guests.

Attracting New Players

Attracting new players of all ages to the game is essential if organized bridge is to survive. In recent years, the ACBL has particularly focused on this aspect of its operations. Some examples include:

- **Trickstarter**, a free, one-hour Zoom class for people who are curious about bridge but not ready to commit to a full lesson series.

- **Intro to Bridge**, an online course hosted by ACBL, comprised of highly interactive lessons, one each week.
- **BridgeBattle**, a fast-paced, simplified online card game designed by the ACBL to teach bridge basics without worrying about the bidding. Players aim to win seven or eight tricks first against a bot by choosing a "Hero Suit" (trump) to outmaneuver defenders. It is a free, 24/7, app-free browser game.

Visit <https://www.acbl.org/learn/> for links and more information.

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, **BridgeWhiz** is a free, online after-school program developed by the ACBL Educational Foundation, designed to teach children in grades 4 through 12 the fundamentals of bridge. It focuses on building strategy, logic, and math skills through live, interactive weekly, sessions.

Read more at <https://bridgewhiz.org/>

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 the ACBL although you can pay your annual CBF membership fee when you renew your ACBL membership. A one-year membership in the CBF costs just \$25. Please consider joining. The CBF cannot serve Canadian Bridge without you! As a CBF member, you are helping to ensure that Canada can build a strong national bridge voice.

For administrative purposes, Canada is divided into six Zones, with Alberta, Saskatchewan and Northern Manitoba comprising Zone V.

The CBF organizes several multi-level national events, including the Canadian National Team Championship (CNTC) – Flight A (open), Flight B (under 3500) and Flight C (under 1000). These events often begin at the grassroots level with club games and culminate at the Canadian Bridge Championship (CBC) where National winners are declared in each event. In recent years, preliminary rounds have been held online, with qualifiers advancing to the face-to-face championship finals. At the Canadian Bridge Championship, National Finals are also held in the Canadian Women's Team Championship (CWTC), Canadian Senior Team Championship (CSTC) and Canadian Mixed Team Championship (CMTC). A Canadian Open Pairs Championship (COPC) is held annually, usually as part of the CBC. In 2026, the COPC was held online.

To help promote bridge in Canada, the CBF hosts the Maple Leaf games on the RealBridge online platform. These games have become a Friday night tradition for players across Canada. Players from all countries are welcome.

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 (February) and Online Team Championships (winter and spring). The CBF administers the Canadian Junior Development Fund, the Erin Berry Memorial Trust Fund and the CBF Charitable Foundation (over \$1,250,000 has been donated to worthy Canadian charities). The CBF publishes the Bridge Canada digital magazine four times a year. You can read more on the CBF website at <https://www.cbf.ca>.

Volunteerism

It takes a great many volunteers to ensure the successful operation of our bridge organization. No doubt the members are aware of how hard everyone works on their behalf. The enthusiasm and efforts of all volunteers is appreciated and encouraged. Talk to any Board Member about ways you can volunteer and help keep bridge in Calgary strong.

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 all feedback. You will find contact information for the Board members at <https://acblunit390.org/unit-390-info/unit-390-directors/>

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