

2020 JUNE ACBL BOARD NEWS

A.J. Stephani, District 11 Director@acbl.org

Update on ACBL Developments

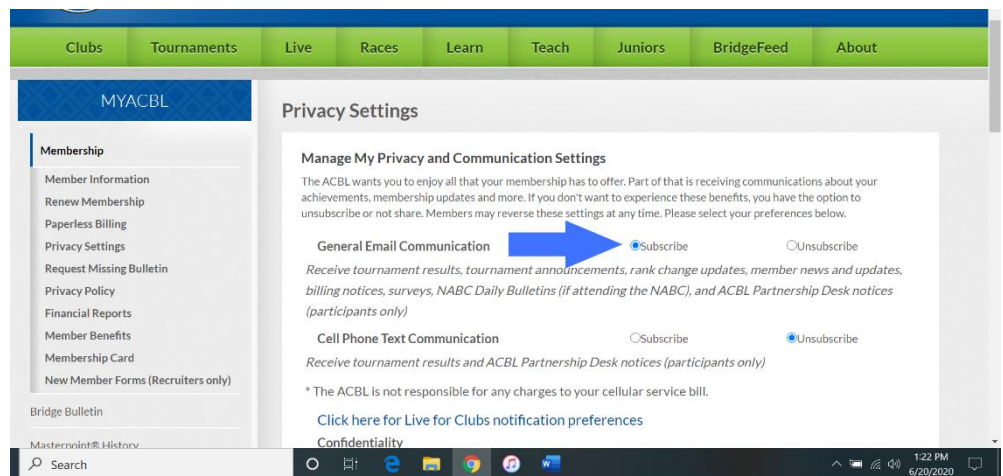
I've been providing more updates than usual, which shouldn't be surprising given the rate at which the ACBL is making on-the-fly adjustments to news in the world around us. It's certainly a period in our lives that we won't easily forget, unfortunately so, and I hope you're making the best of it.

I want to put in a plug here for making sure you can receive email communications from the ACBL. This is the best way to receive news about what's going on in the bridge universe, and not just for the ACBL. Our District, your Unit, and even some of your clubs use your ACBL preferences and contact information to notify you of developments. If you don't currently receive these messages, here's what you can do:

- Go to "ACBL.org", then click the
- "MyACBL" button (you'll need to register if you haven't done so already), then click
- "Privacy Settings" in left hand menu, then click
- "Subscribe" under "General Email Communication", (make sure your current email address is correct under "Member Information" and correct if necessary), then click the
- "Update" button

Of course, if you're reading this newsletter, you're probably already subscribed, but feel free to forward this note to your bridge friends who tell you they aren't getting bridge-related email.

I'll continue to communicate important information about our bridge universe, both large and small, and try to anticipate some of your questions. You can always email me at AJStephani@gmail.com or my ACBL email listed up top.



ACBL Tournaments Cancelled Through End of 2020

As many of you have heard, the ACBL Board voted to cancel all remaining tournaments through the end of 2020. This includes our Dayton/Columbus and Louisville/Lexington Regionals, all Unit Sectionals, and the Fall 2020 NABC in Tampa. I joined the vote with a heavy heart, as, like most of you, I miss seeing you in person and playing face-to-face (FTF) bridge terribly. I wanted to say a few things about the reasons for the decision.

First, for me, this decision was not a judgment about our current social and public health landscape. To be honest, I don't know if this was the "right" decision or not. Conditions in some parts of the ACBL are unquestionably different from others, and regulatory environments vary considerably. What might be considered "safe" or "prudent" in New Jersey is different from that same judgment in Kansas.

Instead, this was purely a practical decision: we simply could not commit to staffing an event with tournament directors. As some of you may have heard, Regionals in South Carolina and Georgia had announced they were proceeding this summer, and the first 8 tournament directors we approached refused to work those tournaments. We clearly could not force our employees to take on health risks they were not willing to assume. Accordingly, we felt we had no choice but to cancel our tournaments.

I would have preferred that we looked out for a more limited period of time, say 3 months, in making the decision to cancel. This creates contractual headaches for many tournaments, however, and the ACBL Board ended up going with management’s recommendation.

Decisions about your local club (except for Unit-controlled clubs) remain in the hands of your club manager. I trust that they will make decisions about playing conditions and timetables that strike the appropriate balance between the safety of our players, our need for community, and a desire to return to some sense of normalcy.

Finally, expect to see significant changes in our tournaments when we can hold them again. Certainly, all FTF bridge, from the club level on up, will look different. But tournaments may be shorter, or run on a different schedule or with altered event formats. We find ourselves needing to rethink what bridge looks like when we emerge from this crisis, and there are a lot of people behind the scenes looking at possible adjustments in our FTF bridge environments.

Online Special Event Calendar

All this doesn’t mean you don’t have options to win those precious colored points! Those of you who have migrated to online ACBL games on Bridge Base Online (kudos!) know of the tremendous diversity of offerings: Robot tournaments, daylong tournaments, Speedball games, “Support Your Club” games, your Virtual Club game – online play has really taken off!

And we’ve tried to replace our missing tournaments with a schedule of Special Events (chart included to the right) for the rest of the year where you can earn silver, red, or gold points. These events are tentative, so make sure you check ACBL.org for the latest updates.

Our online Endless Summer Regional is starting next Thursday, so make your plans now! A full schedule and details can be found [here](#).

Those players looking for high-level competition should stay tuned for an announcement in the next few weeks about a “Spinderbilt”-style long match KO event in July. I’m really excited about this event, and hope to see you join me and Isaac in testing our mettle against the best in the world.

ACBL Financial State

As you can imagine, the COVID-19 crisis has wreaked havoc with the ACBL budget. Tournament-related revenue for all FTF ACBL tournaments, which represent a lion’s share of the budget, has been reduced to zero for the remainder of the year. We will lose some \$8 Million in FTF tournament revenue – a staggering number.

Nevertheless, we’re thrilled at management’s response to the shortfall, and between significant expense reductions and the added revenue from online play, we’re currently projected to run an annual **surplus** of over \$500K. They’ve done an unbelievable job keeping us afloat and recognizing that circumstances may provide hidden opportunities to grow our beloved game.

American Contract Bridge League, Inc. Online Schedule - June thru Dec 2020

Assumption: No F2F Play anticipated for 2020, reserve the right to change to meet F2F conditions

	Event	Master Points Awarded	Fees
June	20 - 21 Longest Day	2x Black	Extra \$3 per table
	25 - 28 Regional Rated Event	80%, Regional Rating	\$15
	27 - 28 NABC Robot Practice	As is/No Change	Free
July	4 - 5 NABC Robot Practice	As is/No Change	Free
	11 - 13 NABC Robot Individual	As is/No Change	\$50
	12 - 18 Youth/Collegiate	TBD	Free
	19 - 25 Team Event- Top-flight players	80%, Discuss color of MP- gold, NABC title?/NABC Regionally rated?	TBD
	27 - Aug2 Upgraded Club Championship	2x, 25% Gold, 75% Black	Extra \$4 per table
August	27 - 30 Regional Rated Event	80%, Regional Rating	\$15
September	7 Labor Day 1 Day event	2x Black	No Extra
	21 - 27 Silver Linings Week	2x All Silver	Extra \$4 per table
October	15 -18 Regional Rated Event	80%, Regional Rating	\$15
	26 to Nov 1 Club Appreciation Week	2x Black	No Extra Charge
	7 - 8 NABC Robot Practice	As is/No Change	Free
November	14 - 15 NABC Robot Practice	As is/No Change	Free
	21 - 23 NABC Robot Individual	As is/No Change	\$50
	23 - 29 Upgraded Club Championship	2x, 25% Gold, 75% Black	Extra \$4 per table
	29 - Dec5 Team Event- Open	80%, Discuss color of MP- gold, NABC title?/NABC Regionally rated?	TBD
	December	18 - 21 Regional Rated Event	80%, Regional Rating
			Totals

What You Can Do to Help

I mentioned this in my last newsletter, but it's worth repeating – you can do a lot to keep bridge thriving during this crisis. We need your help!

- PLEASE renew your ACBL membership. About 35 % of the ACBL's budget comes from membership dues, and maintaining our membership base is probably the most important thing we can do. The ACBL Bridge Bulletin will continue to be published monthly, and it allows us to stay in touch with you when we come back to live bridge.
- Play in a Virtual Club game on BridgeBase.com! Our club owners have lost a lot of revenue over the last 2 months, and you can help support them most directly by playing in one of their games.
- Touch base with your partner or friend if you haven't heard from them already. Videochats are super-easy to set up, and we don't realize how much we miss those familiar faces. I live on Zoom between my classes and teleconferences – let me know if you want to chat sometime!
- Family and friends driving you crazy? Now's that chance you've always wanted to teach someone bridge! The internet has a ton of resources to help, but I'm partial to starting off with Minibridge. Have you ever heard of it? It's what I use for all beginner players, regardless of age. [Here are some](#) good websites (each word is a different website link) that explain how it works. You can have someone actually playing bridge in about 20 minutes. It takes a lot longer to learn to bid, but this gets people actually playing rather than listening to someone talk about rules, opening bids, etc.

Board of Directors Happenings

The ACBL Board of Directors has been meeting in full session monthly, with bi-weekly updates. Most of our actions have been related to Corona-related changes, like creating a special Online Ethics Oversight Committee to hear allegations of cheating online. We know it's out there, but it's actually easier to spot a large number of unusually successfully and eyebrow-raising bridge decisions when you're playing online. I'm pleased that none of the cases so far have included anyone from District 11, but I'm not surprised, as cheating just cuts against the grain of our aboveboard and honest-to-goodness Midwest ethic.

I find myself busier than ever with Board-related Committee and Task Force work. Likewise, I'm including a special shout-out here to our District President, Steve Moese, who has been instrumental in moving the work of several critical Committees forward. Thanks, Steve!

I am always available by phone (513-313-0488) or e-mail (AJStephani@gmail.com) with questions or concerns. Take care of yourselves, your partners, and your neighbors out there.

A.J.