

## Advisory Council – Club/Teacher Committee - Spring/Summer 2025 Report

Steven Grzegorzewski (chair) – Jeff Bayone – Bruce Blakely – Richard Carle – Henry Meguid – Susan Miguel

### **INTRODUCTION**

This recently formed committee (spring 2025) is focusing on development and support for Face-to-Face Clubs through educational outreach as a primary goal.

As a first step on this path, a survey to investigate the extent of educational opportunity among all of the ACBL proxies (Districts/Unit/Sanctioned Clubs) was devised and distributed (April – May) totaling 2,498 points of contact. The request for feedback was conducted by email using the Survey Monkey online data collection tool and was facilitated by ACBL staff.

The data below provide a snapshot (a broad view) of educational programing available to provide bridge education and outreach among the existing community of bridge players, as well as the general public in North America. The reported percentages are relative to the current active participants in each category.

The ACBL has been mired in a general decline that spans from 1990 to today (available ACBL membership data researched in fall 2023 limits the historical perspective). Active ACBL membership has declined steadily from a peak of 191K in 1991 at a rate of about 1% per year. The number of active clubs reporting tables in play and sanctioned for operation (at least 2 months per year) is 2,173 (public and private). Clubs and Units actively reporting tables (in play) is 1,857 (YTD).

Districts are currently stable entities but both Units and Clubs are experiencing a general decline that follows the decline in ACBL player membership. Units are slowly being dissolved with their geographical areas reapportioned to adjoining Units, sometimes altering both Unit and District boundaries. Inactive previously sanctioned Clubs total 7,086 while inactive sanctioned Unit games total 93 (ACBL historical dataset).

Certainly, some of these raw data numbers are skewed by renamed active entities and/or alternate reporting methods for unit games of Clubs (by association).

Regardless, the data supports the ongoing trend of general decline that the game bridge is experiencing at this point.

### **DATA**

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### Survey Participation

All Reporting Contacts	9.53 %
Districts	(Undetermined)
Units	33.11 %
Clubs	7.23 %

### Active Educational Programs

All ACBL Potential Providers	6.69 %
(for survey responders only)	70.76 %
Beginner Level	72.29 %
Intermediate Level	63.64 %
Advanced Level	16.88 %

### Resources Provided by Active Programs

Financing	31.03 %
Advertising	32.33 %
Materials (all)	45.69 %
Physical Space	57.76 %
Staffing (teachers)	51.29 %
1	25.26 %
2	20.78 %
3	10.39 %
4	10.39 %
5+	18.18 %

### Educ. Program Presentation

In-Person Only	97.87 %
On-Line Only	1.60 %
Both In-Person & On-Line	13.83 %

### Additional Educational Components (for active programs)

Novice Games	55.50 %
Pro-Am Events	29.32 %
4 or 8 Is Enough Events	21.99 %
Supervised Play	52.36 %
Mentoring Programs	61.78 %
Barometer Games (real-time)	3.66 %

Contact Information Shared (Respondents) 50.42 %

Constructive Commentary (Respondents) 76.81 %

## **ANALYSIS**

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Survey responding entities (Districts/Units/Clubs) appear to enjoy a moderately robust effort to provide educational programming and resources to support activities that promote club growth and thereby, growth for the game of bridge in North America.

However, the responding entities represent a tiny fraction of the ACBL stakeholders (6.69 % in aggregate). Procurement, development and growth of players must surely be the avenue for the broader goal of growing clubs that is necessary to sustain organized bridge at a desirable scale in North America (ACBL).

The overwhelming lack of broad participation in this survey and educational outreach by ACBL stakeholders certainly has a multitude of factors i.e. club size, lack of teachers, market size, access to funding, etc. Many of these factors were shared by survey participants when asked for open-ended responses regarding their needs to facilitate offering educational outreach.

While some inherent skewing of the data is likely due to missed communication, apathy, and other factors, the data likely say that the representative outcome is consistent with the general decline for the popularity of bridge and participation among the population of North America.