

**For the purpose of the following proposals, we define Bridge Service Providers (BSPs) as any individual or business providing a service that allows people to play bridge online.**

**What we want:** An open online market that enables all club managers to run online games without risk of monopoly/oligopoly, and the ability of all BSPs who meet minimum performance standards to compete for business.

#### **FUTURE ONLINE BRIDGE CONTRACTS**

- 1) **Eliminate/ban exclusive contracts** with any online BSP.
- 2) **Eliminate special status for online providers**, and eliminate the annual fees by which BSPs buy that status.
- 3) **Eliminate exclusivity regarding which any one BSP can run ACBL masterpoint games.** All under contract shall be able to do so.
- 4) **Eliminate exclusivity** regarding the running of ACBL robot games.
- 5) Require the Board of Directors to approve a complete set of **specifications and standards** that BSPs will deliver under contract with the ACBL
- 6) Define an **open contract** process by which the Board of Directors will allocate share of online games as defined by number of sanctions assigned.
  - a. The process must encourage competition among capable BSPs.
  - b. The process must encourage innovation and User Experience improvements by BSPs.
- 7) **Limit the duration** of online bridge contracts with BSPs to two years maximum.
  - a. All renewals are subject to open bidding.
  - b. Contracts will be bid and negotiated in advance of their termination to eliminate disruptions in service.
- 8) Any BSP meeting the ACBL standards can provide online ACBL sanctioned bridge by engaging a valid sanction holder or the ACBL.
- 9) Require the Board of Directors to **approve all online contracts** with BSPs
- 10) Encourage multiple BSPs to **compete for ACBL sanctioned club and tournament game business.**
  - a. Capable BSPs may be from any location.
  - b. Those not located within the ACBL will take the Central Time Zone as their operating benchmark.
- 11) **Limit all non-robot pairs and team online play to 3 sessions per day part** (Morning, Afternoon, Evening, Overnight)
  - a. Allowing a human-robot pair to play in a pair or team game does not constitute that game as a robot game.
  - b. A robot game as one person playing at a table with 3 robots.
  - c. The 3 sessions are limited to one open session, one limited session and one I/N session U200 or lower.
  - d. To deal with the current monopoly fairly, define a glide path over 3 years to bring online non-robot pairs and team games to the 3-session limit per day part.
- 12) Include the following **performance requirements** in the contract:
  - a. Indemnify costs from provider outages, whether the provider is the cause or not.
  - b. Make all ACBL games clearly identified by ACBL visual brand requirements - icons, images and color scheme.
    - i. The ACBL and not the BSP owns the visual identity seen by players in all ACBL sanctioned games.
  - c. Create a **web location outside the confines of any one BSP website where all online ACBL games are listed** and can be seen by all ACBL members.
    - i. Allow users to go to enroll directly in the game by clicking on the game title.
    - ii. Eliminate multiple clicks to find ACBL games on any platform.
    - iii. Clearly displays Sanction owner, game start time, MP limits, type (pairs/Teams), special event type, # Boards, approximate end time and number of tables subscribed.
  - d. **Conform the software to the Laws of Duplicate bridge and existing ACBL regulations.** Specifically:
    - i. Players without approved ACBL convention cards are banned from play online
    - ii. Players use real names in ACBL events

- iii. Players have the ability to interact with a director as they would in a face-to-face game. Time pressure does not foreshorten conversations about irregularities as is done today. Ruling the game is not affected by the game clock. Directors may pause the clock for up to 5 minutes to complete rulings.
- iv. Directors are enabled to impose procedural penalties according to ACBL regulations.
- v. Directors are listed by their real name.

#### **FUTURE VACB SANCTIONS**

- 13) Only VACB sanctions can award black points online.
- 14) **Any VACB owner will follow ACBL costs** for ACBL Sanctioned online games.
  - a. Sanction owners set their own table fees.
  - b. The cost structure is defined by the ACBL contract with the BSP.
- 15) **Prohibit ownership of any ACBL club or tournament sanction by any BSP**, their employees, investors, and individuals with financial interests in their business.
  - a. Require sanction owners to be eligible members (club owners and teachers) of the ACBL in good standing.
  - b. Neither the ACBL nor any BSP may run a club game for ACBL masterpoints.
  - c. Make a violation of this requirement subject to suspension of not less than 2 years and probation of an additional 5 years. A second offense denies the BSP and the individual involved the right to host ACBL masterpoint events.
- 16) **Run all ACBL community games through SYC profit sharing.**
  - a. Players who have a teacher sponsor should play in their teacher's/club's games and not in community games.
  - b. VACB games established by clubs or teachers for new players should be free (no table fees).
  - c. SYC profit sharing should be limited to new players Under 100 MPS.
- 17) Provide **training for new VACB sanction owners.**
- 18) Make **VACB management** part of the Club Director Certification test.

Submitted Respectfully,

The Advisory Council Teachers and Club Managers Committee

Jeff Bayone, Rich Carle, Ellis Feigenbaum, Steve Gaynor, Kathie McNab, Henry Meguid, Susan Miguel, Steve Moese, Sylvana Morici, Betty Starzec