

Intermediate/Newcomer Guide to Regional Events



Game Types Made Simple

Join the Fun!



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Introduction

Regional tournaments offer a wide variety of games, and knowing the differences can help you choose events that match your goals—whether you're aiming for gold points or just looking for the best fit for your masterpoint level.

This guide breaks down the most common game types you'll find at a Regional tournament. It is designed to give intermediate players a clearer picture of the options available and help you get the most out of your tournament experience.

Tournament Terminology

Bridge tournaments can feel overwhelming at first — not because of the cards, but because of the lingo! Terms may sound confusing, but they're just ways to describe how games are organized and how awards are given.

This guide is here to help you make sense of some of the most common terms.

- Stratified – “Strats” – Stratification

A scoring group based on masterpoints. Everyone of different levels plays together, but your score is only compared to others in your strata — A, B, or C.

- Bracketed

Players are grouped into brackets based on average masterpoints and compete only within that bracket.

- Flights

Flights define specific types of games defined by masterpoints. For example, "Mid-Flight Pairs" is usually limited to players <3000 masterpoints. "Top-Flight" or A/X ("A" is a term used for top players and "X" is a term used for those wanting to compete against top players. Anyone can join the event as an "X").

- Sections

A physical grouping of tables in the same event, often due to space or size limits. Scores are compared within the section regardless of experience.

- Section Top

The highest score within your section, regardless of overall standings. Section tops are given to the top N/S pair as well as the top E/W pair.

- Overall Standing

Where you place relative to the entire field, not just within your section or strat.

- Round Robin

A format where each team plays every other team within their group once.

- Head-to-Head

A format where two teams compete directly with each other.

- Soloway or Mini Soloway

The Mini-Soloway Knockout (KO) Teams, also referred to as “Soloway-style KO” is a two-day event which consists of a two-session round-robin on the first day, followed by a four-team, two-session knockout phase on the second day. Teams will be placed into brackets based on the average masterpoint holding of each team. The top four teams in each bracket qualify to the knockout phase on day two.

1 PAIR GAMES

In a pair game, you and your partner play together throughout the event against a series of opponents.

Your bridge scores are compared with the bridge scores of those other pairs playing the same boards and your total matchpoint score is determined by adding together the matchpoints you earn on each deal.

Everyone plays the same hands, and you get points for doing better than others. This is called matchpoint scoring.

Regional tournaments offer a variety of pair events for various levels of play.

► STRATIFIED PAIRS

In a stratified event, all players play in the same group. The field is divided into two or three strata, each with a predetermined minimum and maximum masterpoint limitation. The pair who does better than all the other C's in the group will place first in C, even if they don't do very well relative to the A's and B's in the group. However, if a C pair does well, they can also place in B or even in A.

- **Grouping:** One field divided into several strats
- **Awards:** Each pair eligible for their own & higher strat
- **MP Color:** Top pair in each section is awarded gold.
Other eligible placings receive red. Overall final awards in gold are based on number of pairs in the event.
- **Benefit:** Ranked within your own strat

► FLIGHTED PAIRS

When flighting is used, the field is divided by masterpoints into separate competitions. The Top Flight is open to all players regardless of their masterpoint holdings. The remaining flights are limited to players with a certain number of masterpoints. In flighted events, a pair may play up but not down.

- Grouping: Players are split into different competitions
- Awards: Separate awards for each flight
- MP Color: Gold for Overalls in each competition so long as the lowest flight is up to 750 mps
- Benefit: Play against others of similar skill level

► BRACKETED PAIRS

In a bracketed event, all players are grouped into brackets based on the average masterpoints of the partnership. You compete only against pairs within your bracket, not the entire field. All brackets are designed to be roughly equal in size, creating more balanced and fair competition.

- Grouping: One field divided into several brackets
- Awards: Each pair eligible in their bracket
- MP Color: Gold for winners in every bracket
- Benefit: More even playing field. Greater chance for gold especially in lower brackets.

► GOLD RUSH PAIRS

This event is a stratified 2-session pairs game that is limited to players with 750 masterpoints. The pairs are stratified Your average masterpoints determines what strat you're ranked in but both players must have fewer than 750 masterpoints.

- Grouping: Divided into strats
- Awards: Each pair eligible for overall and section tops
- MP Color: Gold for overall winner
- Benefit: Good for intermediate players looking to win gold without facing experts

► SIDE GAME SERIES PAIRS

This is a series of one-session games open to all players. Participants may enter as many sessions as they wish and play with the same or different partners. People generally play in a side game if they have time for only one session or if they are knocked out of their knockout game. Only pairs who play in at least two sessions in a series are eligible for Gold Points.

- Grouping: Typically divided into strats
- Awards: Each pair eligible overall and section tops
- MP Color: Red points for single section winners
Gold points overall winners playing two sessions
- Benefit: Good for players wanting to play in one session

2 TEAM GAMES

In team events, groups of four, five or six players (with only four playing at a time) compete against other similar groups. The key feature is that two partnerships on each team play the same boards as their opponents, but from opposite directions and at different tables.

At the end of a round, you rejoin your teammates and compare the N-S scores to the E-W scores and tally the difference. Then the team uses a scale called “IMPs” (International Match Points) to assign a value for each score. The IMPs are then converted to Victory Points according to another scale also found on the score cards.

At the end of the day after both morning and afternoon sessions are complete, the winning team is determined by the most Victory Points.

It's a good idea to have at least one experienced player on your team to be the “Captain”. The captain oversees the checking and reporting of scores as well as keeps the team on track as to where they are playing and against which team.

► Bracketed Round Robin Teams

A team event where all entered teams are grouped into brackets based on their combined masterpoint averages. Each team then competes in a round-robin format, where each team plays against every other team in their bracket.

- Grouping: Divided into brackets based on MP average
- Awards: MPs awarded within each bracket
- MP Color: Gold for overalls in each bracket.
Red for match wins
- Scoring: IMPs then converted to Victory Points
- Benefit: Fairer competition playing only similar teams

► Swiss Teams

Swiss Teams is a team event where teams play a series of matches against other teams. The directors set up new matches between teams based on their results in earlier rounds aiming for evenly matched teams.

- Grouping: All teams in one field – no brackets
- Awards: MPs based on overall and section strats
- MP Color: Gold for overall winners and top strats
- Benefit: Can accommodate any number of teams

► Knockout Teams

A team of four to six players (with four playing at a time) plays another team. The results are compared and scored by International Matchpoints (IMPs).

The losers are eliminated or “knocked out” while the winners play other winners until only one winning team remains. These are not bracketed teams.

- Grouping: One field divided into several brackets if enough teams
- Awards: Each win gets red points
- MP Color: Gold for overall winners
- Benefit: Playing against better players improves your game

► Soloway Style Knockout Teams

A 2-day event with qualifying on Day 1 where all teams play round robin matches to determine rankings. Only the top four teams advance to the Knockout phase on Day 2. The teams then play head-to-head elimination matches to determine first through fourth.

- Grouping: Teams are stratified by Avg MP for Day 1
- Awards: Red for each round robin win
- MP Color: Gold for KO qualifiers which will end up as 1 through 4
- Benefit: Playing against your peers offers a better chance for an overall win

► Bracketed Round Robin Teams

In this team event, teams are bracketed based on the MP holdings of the entire team.

- **Grouping:** One field divided into several brackets if enough teams
- **Awards:** Gold for Overall Winners
- **MP Color:** Red for each individual win
- **Benefit:** Playing against better players improves your game

3 LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Besides playing at your local club, you can also play in ACBL tournaments. As you probably know, tournaments are Sectional Tournaments at Clubs (STaCs), regular Sectional Tournaments, Regional Tournaments and three North American Bridge Championships (NABCs) per year. The NABCs contain many of the same types of games as at regional tournaments but also have many more pair and team competitions. These include the North American Pair (NAP) event and the Grand National Team (GNT) event.

► NAP

Nap is a grass roots pair competition in which pairs in each ACBL district compete to earn the right to represent their district in the annual Spring NABC NAP finals. This competition begins in June and ends in August where you play at your regular club and qualify via NAP games to play at the district level. If you and your partner qualify and enter the district event, you can earn a place to represent your district at the NABC. The great thing about this event is that players are divided into four flights based on their masterpoint holding as of May 7th. The flights are Championship Flight 6000+, Flight A is 3001-6000, Flight B is 751-3000 and Flight C is Non-Life Master with less than 750 masterpoints. The flights give even our newest players a chance to compete in a prestigious pair game at the NABC representing their district. Qualifying for NAP at NABC comes with a few perks, namely a stipend from the NABC for most qualifiers and a stipend from our district. The NAP is played at the Spring NABC.

► GNT

The GNT is a grass roots team competition in which teams in each ACBL district compete to earn the right to represent their district in the annual summer NABC GNT finals. The event is flighted with four flights competing. The flights are based on masterpoint holdings as of August 7th. Championship Flight is unlimited, Flight A is 0-6000, Flight B is 0-3000 and Flight C is Non-Life Master with less than 750 masterpoints. No club or unit qualifying game is required. The district finals for all four flights are held in person either at a Houston or Dallas spring sectional depending on the flight. Again, these qualifications come with a few perks, namely a stipend from the NABC for most qualifiers and a stipend from your district.

What Games Should I Play?

STEP 1 What is your goal?

- I want gold points! → Go to [Step 2](#)

STEP 2 Do you and your partner have < 750 MPs?

- ✓ Yes -- Play [GOLD RUSH PAIRS](#)
- ❓ No -- Go to [Step 3](#)

STEP 3 Do you prefer to play Pairs?

- ✓ Yes -- Choose from:
 - ❓ Bracketed Pairs
 - ❓ Open Pairs (Stratified)
 - ❓ Flighted Pairs
- No -- Go to [Step 4](#)

STEP 4 Are you okay with a multi-day commitment?

- ✓ Yes -- Play in Mini-Soloway Knockout Teams
- ❓ No -- Go to [Step 5](#)

STEP 5 Can you commit to a 2-session Event?

- ✓ Yes -- Play in Bracketed Round Robin Teams
- ❓ No -- Play in Single-session Side Games

FAQ

What is a Double Session event?

An event where a partnership commits to play in and pays for two sessions in advance. Also known as a 2-Session event.

What is an Overall Winner ?

The Overall Winner is the pair or individual that has the highest cumulative score across multiple sessions, not just a single session or section.

Do I have to play in both morning and afternoon games?

If you want to be eligible for overall awards for Gold Points, you must play in both sessions of a 2-session event.

You could still play in one session but you won't be eligible for overall awards or Gold Points.

Can I play with a different partner in each Side Game?

Yes! You can play with different partners in different Side Games. When the Overall awards are determined, your own two best games are used to determine your placing.

Should I play in Teams or Pairs??

Teams are fun and a relaxed environment - especially if you're chasing gold. If you're going for gold, the odds are actually better in teams for winning gold. In Gold Rush Pairs, you generally need to place in the top to win gold.