

District 18 GNT: Planning Policies & Guideline*

*Where 'Policy' the item is underlined and italicized; otherwise it's 'Guideline'

The Grand National Teams (GNT) is a grass-roots event that begins at the Club or Unit level, continues with District Finals in the spring, and concludes at the summer NABC. Players qualify as individuals at the club/unit level, and may form new teams for the District Final. There are four flights: Championship Flight, Flight A, Flight B, and Flight C. Each winning team at the District Final is invited to participate at the National Final of the GNT at the summer NABC. District 18 awards the winning team in each flight a \$1500.00 (US) team subsidy to assist in transportation and accommodation costs, provided that team plays in the GNT National Final. In the event a winning team in any flight declines to carry on to the National Final (and hence declines the subsidy) the team that placed next highest in that flight is offered the subsidy to represent District 18 at the National. If that team declines, then the subsidy is offered to the 3rd placing team and so on. In the event no team in a flight goes to the National, then the \$1500 is retained by D18.

District 18 schedules, organizes and funds the GNT District 18 Final each year, usually in mid May. About 1 year in advance of the event the Board identifies a host city for the event, with the location typically alternating between Canada and the US. In recent years most teams participating in the 'Championship' and 'A' Flights have been from Canada so to minimize travel, if the host city happens to be in the US locations closer to the US/Canadian border have been selected.

In terms of scheduling a GNT club qualifier, semi final, or D18 Final, without prior permission from the relevant authority, no stage may be scheduled which would prevent a player from attending one or more days of a North American Bridge Championship, or participating in the United States Bridge Championships, the United States Women's Bridge Championship or Senior Trials, or the Canadian Bridge Federation's Bridge Week.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. GNT Coordinator: Overall responsibility for the event other than identification of the host city. In response to an identified host city and recommended suitable dates from the D18 Board, secures a venue. Contacts and provides direction and support to a Local Coordinator. Contracts for equipment & supplies (the Local Coordinator can advise on suppliers based on sources for local Sectionals and/or most recent Regional). Achieves the ACBL sanction and published the Condition of Contest to the WASUMI website (and elsewhere as desirable). Advertises the GNT to Units that might be especially interested. Identifies possibilities for GNT enhancements. Arranges for caddies based upon pre registrations. Provides a summary report of each GNT to the D18 Board.

B. District 18 Board: Approves a host city and identifies suitable dates. Approves and finances the event. Sets the policies, provides 'up front' funds, and accepts and profit/shortfall.

C. Local Coordinator (usually a local Unit Board member with GNT or 'Special Events' responsibilities): Assists the GNT Coordinator in whatever ways possible serving as an official link to the local Unit Board. Often this means serving as a local contact with the host venue and promoting the event locally. The Local Coordinator decides on hospitality (within the budget) for the GNT and also whether or not to provide (scheduled at the same time as the final GNT session) a single session Swiss for teams eliminated and other interested teams.

D. Others: The Director in Charge helps with and has final approval for the design of the tournament program, size of facility, and numbers of caddies. The local D18 Board member serves as a resource person.

2. HOST FACILITY FOR DISTRICT FINAL:

The format for the program (and hence the size of the facility) is often dictated by the number of teams participating. In those flights having a large turnout there should be enough sessions to allow a qualifying round robin (2 or 3 sessions) as well as a semi-final and a final (a total of 4 or 5 sessions in most cases). For flights that have few entries (four or less), then 3 (or even 2) total sessions should suffice. The Conditions of Contest may determine the minimum number of sessions required. The starting time for later sessions may need to be determined by the number of teams entered and/or the cost to rent the space for an extra session.

The host facility needs to be large enough to accommodate the largest turnout - up to 45 tables, hence (using the ACBL Guideline of 64 to 81 sq. ft per table, plus Directors tables) approximately 4000 sq. ft. (405 sq. meters). Room rates, hospitality charges, lighting, parking and room space are all factors in selecting the most suitable host facility. If available, a community facility is probably better than a hotel as it will be lower cost and the hospitality budget will stretch further. Rent for the playing venue is paid directly by D18 and a deposit can be requested from the D18 Treasurer.

The GNT program (5 sessions for the largest Flights) is usually scheduled either:

- a) 3 sessions on Saturday and 2 on the Sunday, or
- b) 1 session Friday evening, 3 on Saturday, and (if needed) 1 on the Sunday.

The GNT is an elimination event so required space decreases as the event progresses. The following Table provides some historic information for estimate of required venue space.

| QUALIFYING SESSIONS | HIGH ESTIMATE | LOW ESTIMATE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Round 1 | | |
| Often Friday Evening* (say, 7:30 pm to 11:00pm) | 45 tables | 18 tables |
| Round 2 | | |
| Often Saturday Morning (say, 9:30am to 1:00pm) | 45 tables | 18 tables |
| Round 3 | | |
| Often Saturday Afternoon (say, 2:30 pm to 6:00pm) | 45 tables | 18 tables |
| PLAYOFF SESSIONS | | |
| Semi Final , maybe Sat. eve.) (Knock out: 1 st playing 4 th and 2 nd playing 3 rd) (typically, 7:30 pm start)** | 16 tables (about 40% of starting field) | 8 tables (about 40% of starting field) |
| Final , maybe Sunday morn. (Knock out: 1 st playing 4 th and 2 nd playing 3 rd) (typically, 10:30am) | 8 tables (about 20% of starting field) | 2 tables (about 20% of starting field) |
| CONSOLATION OPTION | | |
| To cater to teams eliminated on Saturday, organizers | 3+ | 3 |

might wish to schedule a single session Swiss team event Sunday

- * Since District 18 is geographically very large, starting the GNTs on a Friday evening might allow working players traveling time to get to the playing site. It also might enable all teams to be able to leave for home on or before Sunday afternoon
- ** Flights (such as ‘A’) with small numbers might hold their Final Saturday afternoon or evening

Arrangements must be made for the coffee, water, directors’ selling and scoring tables, microphones, trash cans in the playing area, supply room for directors and caddies, and clean up between sessions and after the games. Review the contract and if additional items are needed, in discussion with the D18 President or Treasurer, try to negotiate these into the rental contract. The facility (or nearby food outlets) should be advised to arrange for additional staff in their restaurants during peak hours, i.e., before and after sessions. In addition, arrangements should be made for the playing area to be locked and secured after the evening session to prevent theft of supplies, etc. The facility should provide the D18 GNT Coordinator with the name of a contact person to be available at all times in the event of an emergency. No one other than the D18 GNT Coordinator (or Director in Charge in discussion with the GNT Coordinator) should give further direction to the host facility.

For information, following is a typical registration scenario:

| FLIGHTS | HIGH ESTIMATE | LOW ESTIMATE |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Championship Flight* | 4 tables | 2 tables |
| Flight A | 8 tables | 2 tables |
| Flight B | 18 tables | 6 tables |
| Flight C | 15 tables | 8 tables |
| TOTAL | 45 TABLES | 18 TABLES |

* In recent years, all entries in this category have been from Canada. Because of this, to minimize travel distance (and maximize participation) for players in this Flight, where the main GNT has been held in the US, a separate convenient venue in Canada has been used for the Championship Flight.

District 18 has adopted the ACBL’s *zero tolerance policy* for all of its tournaments. In addition, smoking is not permitted in the playing area. In addition to this, a minimum area of 10 yards/metres beyond any doorway leading into the playing site should be designated, with signage if possible, as a Non-Smoking area.

3. BUDGET:

A. Facility Rental: Facility rent should be minimal, ideally close to \$1000 for the entire event. Anything over \$2500 for venue rent for the entire event requires approval of the D18 President or Treasurer.

B. Marketing and Hospitality: District 18 provides a \$1000 budget for marketing and hospitality. In some years the GNT is spread over two venues (typically the Championship and A flight being held in southern Canada) and in such case, the total budget remains at \$1000 – the GNT Coordinator will apportion the \$1000 budget across the two venues. The Local Coordinator is encouraged to enquire about the possibility of supplemental funding (perhaps \$250 to \$500) from the local Unit.

Marketing could include:

- ensuring the Conditions of Contest achieves good visibility on Unit websites and local club bulleting boards;
- phoning Managers of local clubs to encourage them to host as many GNT Qualifying games as possible;
- speaking at nearby C level restricted games to explain the GNT and encourage participation;
- deciding early if a Sunday single session Swiss is a fit, and if so, heavily promoting it, especially locally;
- creating a unique brochure that supplements the Conditions of Contest and getting it to local Clubs and Unit websites through the area Board Member.

Hospitality should include ice water and coffee/ tea at a minimum. Some examples of additional hospitality include:

- appetizers (perhaps something like chips and a keg of beer) for after the Friday evening game;
- a highly subsidized ‘make your own sub’ between the Saturday morning and afternoon game;
- sandwiches or desserts (for about 70 people) after the Saturday evening Semi Final;
- coffee and donuts (or residual cookies from the night before) for (about 25 people) the Sunday Final.

It can be helpful if the host facility can provide a retail type canteen with pop, chips, bars, etc.

C. Caddies: The D18 GNT Coordinator consults with the Director in Charge to determine how many caddies are needed and arranges for enough caddies for each session. The actual number depends on factors such as type of game, configuration of the room, caddy skill, etc. Notice that, because the GNT is an elimination event, table numbers for the final round will be small so a caddy is probably not needed for that session – but check with the Head Director to be sure. The Director in Charge pays (*in Canada \$40.00 CAN per session and in the US, \$35 US per session*) the caddies at the session they work. Caddies should be trained, be aware of their duties and responsibilities, and be appropriately dressed. It can be helpful if at least one caddy is a duplicate player as in the case of an emergency, that person can complete a partnership.

D. Entry Fees: Entry fees track the Regional entry fee established by the District 18 Board. (*Effective January 1, 2010, \$50.00 CAN (including GST) per team per GNT session in Canada or \$44.00 US per team per GNT session in the USA*). If the Local Coordinator chooses to schedule an optional Swiss consolation for teams eliminated the previous day (Sunday, parallel to the Final), the fee will be at the same rate.

Note: Total revenues for D18 GNT Final for 2000 through 2008 range from \$1920 to \$7868 with a 9 year average of \$3938. In two instances (2004 and 2001) the revenue line includes that for 3 tables in a Consolation Swiss)

Entry fees with a compulsory increment for prepaid lunches and the like shall not be provided. Opportunities for optional prepaid lunches and dinners may be included as part of the hospitality program.

The ACBL has a Comprehensive Liability Insurance Policy that covers all tournaments it sanctions. Where a host facility requires proof of insurance coverage, a certificate verifying the coverage is available.

The D18 GNT Coordinator will adhere to and not exceed the budget as outlined herein without prior approval from the D18 President or Treasurer. All expenses to be paid by the District must be accompanied by a receipt.

4. EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES:

Equipment and supplies such as tables (delivery, usage, pickup), table covers where needed, bidding boxes, boards, cards, table markers, pick up slips, convention cards, pencils, team entry forms, teams record cards, and teams reporting slips (screens are not needed for the GNT) will typically be contracted with the party that provides same for Sectionals organized by the Unit in the GNT host city. The Director in Charge will advise on the supplies required. District 18 provides a budget (calculated as \$3.00 US per achieved table per session, inclusive of all of the afore-mentioned items, including replacement of worn/torn cards, broken tables, and lost items).

5. PROGRAM DESIGN AND PUBLICITY:

A 'Conditions of Contest' brochure is created by the D18 GNT Coordinator and sent to designated contacts in each Unit least 6 months prior to the GNT District Final.

Once the District Final is organized, marketing the event is important, especially to potential participants of Flight C – designated hospitality and/or 'reach out' for that Flight might be useful in this regard. It is helpful to create a brochure for that event and post it on WASUMI and at each Unit in D18. Additional marketing in the immediate catchment area is also helpful, especially to encouragement to local clubs to host GNT Qualifying games. The brochures for every District 18 tournament should show the following: 'On the playing floor: No smoking, No cell phones, No pagers. Please no scented products such as perfume or after shave.'

In preparing a D18 brochure for the Final the following guidelines shall be used with respect to stratification:

- CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT*Unlimited Masterpoints*
- FLIGHT A.....*Under 5000 Masterpoints*
- FLIGHT B.....*Under 2000 Masterpoints*
- FLIGHT C*Non Life Masters with Fewer than 500 Masterpoints*

Other information to be on the flyer is location (city and venue), dates of GNT, Director in Charge, room rates and phone number of the host or nearby hotels, entry fee, stratifications, scoring method (normally, Victory points), contact persons (GNT Coordinator) email and phone. Final approval of the brochure is obtained from the Director in Charge.

The GNT Coordinator is responsible for forwarding the Conditions of Contest to the District 18 Webmaster for posting to the website. Contact information is available at www.WASUMI.org.

A. Qualifying Games Leading to the District GNT Final: Teams are eligible to play on the District GNT final by virtue of their finishing in the top 50% of any GNT Club Qualifying Game held prior to the GNT Final. Local Clubs (especially in the case of the city hosting the D18 GNT Final) are encouraged to hold as many as possible GNT Club Qualifying Games, both at the Open Level and especially some at a restricted level.

- encourage Club Owners to hold such games where they have an existing team game format;

- help club owners to promote their club qualifying event;
- the top 50% in every flight becomes eligible to play in the D18 District final;
- participating teams will be required to pay a fee incremented above their regular game fee. One part (currently \$1.25 US per team per session) goes to the ACBL for their work. A second part (currently \$5.00 US per team per session) goes to the GNT Coordinator to build the fund that subsidizes winning teams in each flight to move forward to the next level of competition.

Note: The \$1.25 US per team per session amount due to ACBL and \$5.00 US per team per session due the District 18 GNT Coordinator do not apply to the District 18 Final. Those fees only apply to qualifying games at the club level.

6. VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION:

Volunteers are critical to the future of bridge in District. Some suggestions for recognition include: display the name of every single person that volunteers at the GNT, and ask them to stand and be recognized in a game late in the tournament. Keep a list and be careful to not forget anyone.

7. RESULTS:

At the conclusion of a tournament, results are posted on www.WASUMI.org.

8. TOURNAMENT FEEDBACK:

Please send any feedback or recommendations that arise from your GNT to the D18 GNT Coordinator or D18 Board for discussion in planning the next year's GNT.

9. DATE OF APPROVAL:

This Guideline is effective May 7, 2009.