District 18 Regionals: Planning Guidelines

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Overview
District 18 schedules, oversees, and funds Regional tournaments each year within its district. This document outlines the guidelines to follow when planning a Regional tournament.

Process
The District Tournament Coordinator (DTC), Tournament Chair(s), and District 18 Board member representing that jurisdiction (local D18 Board member) will use the following process to identify the dates and location of each Regional tournament.

1. The DTC will simultaneously contact Unit/Clubs (sponsors) and the local D18 Board member to identify the sponsor of each Regional tournament. That notification will include this document, the ACBL Regional Tournament Planning Guide and a cover note that reminds the sponsor that the District receives all net profits and absorbs all losses from Regional tournaments, as long as the sponsor keeps expenses within the budget approved by the local D18 Board member.

2. The sponsor will identify one or more Tournament Chair(s). The Tournament Chair(s) will then submit possible dates to the DTC for approval. The DTC will consider the dates and locations of other tournaments in District 18 and other nearby Districts in the approval process.

3. The Tournament Chair(s) will then identify a venue and get pricing. The location must be approved by the DTC, based on the expected table count. The location and budget must be approved by the local D18 Board member. At that time, the Tournament Chair will apply for a sanction number by contacting tournaments@acbl.org, as described in the ACBL Regional Tournament Planning Guide.

4. Once the dates and location have been identified, the Tournament Chair(s) will follow the guidelines described in the remainder of this document, including submission of a budget to the local D18 Board member.

5. The Tournament Chair(s) will assemble a Planning Committee to organize and execute the Regional.

Tournament Venue

The Tournament Chair(s) should work with the DTC to determine feasibility of space for running a Regional efficiently and effectively. The factors to consider are identified in the Tournament Site Checklist in the ACBL Regional Tournament Planning Guide. In addition, the Tournament Chair should

- Ensure that there is a supply room or other storage that can be locked
- Confirm that the cost of the site is reasonable in conjunction with the DTC and Local D18

Board member
- Evaluate player safety both in playing and parking areas.

No agreement may be made with a host hotel or venue until all the factors above have been adequately addressed.

Once an agreement has been finalized, the Tournament Chair(s) should build the relationship with the host hotel or venue by establishing a main point of contact and clear line of communication throughout the planning process.
Other matters to discuss with the site include:

- Arrangements for the playing site to be sufficiently secure when not in use.
- An emergency contact person for the host hotel or venue.
- If hotel, provide notice that their restaurants may be busier during peak hours (e.g., before and after sessions)

Only the local D18 Board member, the Tournament Chair (s), or DTC (after discussion with Tournament Chair (s)) have authority to provide direction to the host hotel or venue.

Tournament Structure and Schedule
The Tournament Chair(s) shall determine how many days the Regional should be held. A minimum of 3 days with a maximum of 7 days is required. Regional tournaments must be no more than 2 sessions per day.

The Tournament Chair(s) is/are responsible for getting the schedule approved by the local D18 Board member. Once it has been approved, the Tournament Chair(s) should send it to the DTC.

Session stratification will be determined based on the highest player's masterpoints or an average of the partnership or team's total masterpoints.

As of January 1, 2015, the stratifications for a Regional are as follows:

- Open events: 3000+ / 3000 / 1500
- Gold Rush events: 750 / 500 / 200
- Side games: 2000+ / 2000 / 750
- 199er games: 199 / 100 / 50

Hospitality
Hospitality and entertainment are exciting to both local and out-of-town residents during any Regional tournament. The key to success in this area is proper planning and budgeting. A hospitality budget is set based on the estimated number of tables expected and the per-table maximum shown in Appendix A. This budget can be used as the Planning Committee sees fit. Any increases to this budget must be reviewed and approved by the local D18 Board member.

Some suggestions for hospitality:

- Plan for bigger events (e.g., a BBQ) during peak attendance such as the end of the week of the Regional.
- Plan your food and refreshments carefully according to your budget.

The Tournament Chair(s) shall work with the local D18 Board member on financial decisions.

Publicity

Publicity is an important step for successfully marketing any Regional. The Tournament Chair(s) is/are responsible for creating a flyer that must be approved by the local D18 Board member. It must then be sent to the DTC at least one year prior to the Regional. The DTC will then send it to ACBL or ask the Tournament Chair(s) to do so.

Printed flyers are optional and can be made available at the playing site during the Regional or available throughout the host Unit leading up to the Regional (e.g., at local bridge clubs or at sectional tournaments).

The following details are required on the flyer, both printed and electronic:

- Location of the Regional (city, state/province, host hotel or venue name and address).
- Dates of the Regional
- ACBL sanction number
- Name of the Director-in-Charge (to be added when known)
- Name and email of Tournament Chair(s)
- Name and email of Partnership Chair
- Hotel room rates, if applicable, with the phone number to book
- Schedule of events (date, time, session specifics) in a clean, easy-to-read format
- Swiss team scoring method and stratifications (indicate whether based on highest player's masterpoints or an average of the partnership or team's total masterpoints)
- Entry fee per session. The flyer must state that fees can be paid only by debit or credit card. The flyer must also identify the Junior Player Entry Fees shown on the next page.
- Any tournament event (e.g., BBQ) should be highlighted on the flyer.
- Notice that all participants must be members of ACBL (paid members only starting January 1, 2027), other than for 0-20 MP events

Once approved by the local D18 Board member. a finalized copy is forwarded for posting to the ACBL website and to the Tournament Coordinator.

Advertising Regional tournaments is done around 9 months prior to the Regional and again around 1 month prior to the Regional. The Tournament Chair(s) should contact the District Secretary who will use Pianola to publicize the tournament.

Entry Fees

The Tournament Chair(s) will consult with the local D18 Board member to set the entry fee.

Junior player entry fees (under the age of 26) follow the ACBL policy for discounted play at NABCs:

> I/N Regional events: Free play
> All other events: Ages 21 to 26 full-time students are $5.00/session, under 21 plays for free.

Such players must identify as such to the Director each session.

Financial Guide

This guide assists with the financial decision-making process of a Regional tournament. All those involved in this process should fully understand their budget and financial situation before committing to any expense. The financial success of a Regional is determined by spending less than revenue received.

Revenue: Total amount of money received
Expenses: Total amount of money spent

The District's goal is to generate 10% more revenue than expenses.

The revenue of the Regional depends largely on the number of tables sold and the revenue per player. For example, 30 tables per session (2 sessions per day) over 6 days would be 360 tables. Each table is 4 players. The Regional entry fee in this example is $20.00 per player per session. This would result in the following calculation: 360 tables X 4 players X $20.00 = $28,800. This is your total revenue.

Other revenue could be donations provided by individuals or businesses or the host Unit. Any money received for the Regional is considered revenue.

The expenses of the Regional are harder to estimate but can be reasonably planned for. Consider the following:

- Cost of host hotel or venue: hotels tend to be more expensive than other venues such as community centers and churches. Always tour the space and discuss the feasibility of the space with the DTC and/or local D18 Board member prior to executing an agreement. In most situations, it is better to have too much space than not enough. That being said, if 30 tables are expected each day do not book a venue for 60 tables per day unless the venue cost is exceptionally good.
- Hospitality: hotels will require you to use their food/refreshments and their staff. Some community centers have unionized kitchens and therefore you are required to use their food/refreshments and staff. This will add to costs.
- Director costs: determined by the Director-in-Charge and based on the schedule and the venue. For example, running simultaneous games or running a Regional tournament with two or more rooms will increase the number of directors required. As an approximation, one director is generally needed for every 200 tables or portion thereof in the

tournament. The number of rooms, number of games played concurrently, and number of sessions per day may affect the final director count.

- ACBL sanction fees
- Advertising
- Supplies
- BridgeMate and dealer rentals
- Hand duplication
- Caddies
- Hand records
- Free plays: each free play is expensed at the cost of an entry fee.

The Tournament Chair(s), Planning Committee, and local D18 Board member should work together to develop and execute the budget. This will ensure the best chance at a successful Regional tournament.

Refer to Appendix A for expense limits.

Insurance

The ACBL has a Comprehensive Liability Insurance Policy that covers all Regionals (and Sectionals) it sanctions. Proof of insurance coverage is available from the District 18 Financial Representative.

General Information, Recognition, and Feedback

The Tournament Chair(s) is/are awarded one (1) free play per session of the Regional tournament to be used at their discretion. For example, free plays could be distributed to the Planning Committee members for their time and efforts. Please contact the local D18 Board member for the Regional for written vouchers. These vouchers must be turned in when registering for a session at the Regional tournament.

Smoking and perfumes are not permitted in the playing area and within 10 yards or meters beyond the area leading into the playing site.

The Tournament Chair(s), or delegate, should manage and maintain a board for posting information of interest to tournament players. This could include tournament results, rank achievements (e.g., reaching Life Master), upcoming special events, and any other information deemed appropriate. Tournament results are posted on ACBL Live.

Recognition is an important part of the Regional. Volunteers, from the Tournament Chair to the Planning Committee and all those who contributed to the success of the Regional should be recognized. Where possible, recognition should be given in-person as well as through a tournament wrap-up sent to members via Pianola.

If feasible, the Tournament Chair(s), or delegate, should take photos of new Life Masters and event winners and other major milestones. A set of photos should be emailed to your local D18 Board member for inclusion on our website.

Lastly, any feedback or recommendations for future Regional tournaments can be sent to the local D18 Board member.

Definitions

Director-in-Charge: Oversees other Directors and is largely responsible for the operation of each session of the Regional which may include scheduling, scoring, and addressing player concerns.
Local D18 Board member: the District 18 Board member from the State or Province that is hosting the Regional.
Partnership Chair: Appointed by the Planning Committee to arrange partnerships, as requested, and to operate the partnership desk.
Pianola: https://www.pianola.net/ - used to advertise Regionals and for other communications, as needed.
Planning Committee: The committee responsible for planning, organizing, and managing the Regional
Tournament Chair: Appointed by the local D18 Board member. Often this is a representative of the host Unit. This position is responsible for assisting in the selection of a host hotel or venue for the Regional, assembling a Planning Committee, and overseeing the Regional from start to finish.
District Tournament Coordinator: Appointed by the District 18 Board. They are responsible for obtaining sanction numbers for Regionals and working with the local D18 Board member, Tournament Chair, and Director-in-Charge, as needed.

Appendix A – Expense Limits

ACBL sanction fees: As set by the ACBL.

Advertising: $100.00 USD (Regionals in the US) and $100.00 CAD (for Regionals in Canada)

Bridgemate and dealer rentals: To be determined for each Regional

Caddies: $40.00 USD per session (Regionals in the US) and $50.00 CAD per session (for Regionals in Canada).

Director costs: As determined by the ACBL and the Director-in-Charge

Equipment and supplies: Variable amount, based on the location of Regional. The amount is per achieved table per session. This covers consumable supplies such as convention cards, entry slips, and pencils. The District will cover any overages where necessary.

Hand duplication: $10.00 USD per set (Regionals in the US) and $12.00 CAD per set (for Regionals in Canada). *The Director-in-Charge will often complete the hand duplication, which provides maximum security and integrity. Consulting with the Director-in-Charge to determine costs.*

Hand records: $180.00 USD ($250.00 CAD)

Hospitality: $7.00 USD per table (Regionals in the US) and $8.00 CAD per table (for Regionals in Canada). Hospitality funds will be advanced at 75%, based on the estimated table count.

Appendix B – Change Management

Review and Approval
The District 18 Regionals: Planning Policies & Guidelines shall be reviewed by the District 18 Board annually or whenever a major change is necessary.

First Approved: July 1, 2025
Last Reviewed:

Change Management

Version	Date of Change	Details of Change
1.0	July 1, 2025	Initial version
1.1	January 8, 2026	Referenced the change to cashless tournaments
1.2	February 12, 2026	Under the section 'Entry Fees' referred to change to non-current ACBL memberships effective 2027.
1.3	October 7, 2026	Changed title, reorganized, made substantial changes including eliminating overlaps with new Regional Tournament Policy and ACBL Regional Tournament Planning Guidelines
1.4	November 8, 2026	Eliminated DTC roles formerly assigned to the District DIC. Other minor edits.