

SECTIONAL TOURNAMENT CHAIR GUIDELINES

Revised January 2025

Sectional tournaments are held four times a year. The dates are set well in advance through ACBL. Tournaments take place over 3 days in the morning and afternoon. They are either Wednesday thru Friday or Thursday thru Saturday, depending on the particular tournament and time of year. Swiss events are usually the first day (if the tournament begins on a Wednesday) or the last day (if the tournament concludes on a Saturday).

There are usually two co-chairs for a sectional tournament. Tournament co-chairs and the Partnership Chair for each tournament should be determined as least two months prior to the tournament for publicity purposes. Tournament flyers should be posted in the club and distributed to other clubs two months in advance of the event. The co-chairs are not expected to appoint a partnership chair nor to handle tournament publicity.

As a token of appreciation, co-chairs have the privilege of playing free during the tournament for the Pair games. They should remind the director of their eligibility for free play. If there are more than two co-chairs, the free plays should be shared (one for each co-chair or day captain, no more than eight total free plays in any tournament).

The co-chairs may establish supplemental committees, such as asking one person to captain a day and handle all food arrangements, etc. for a particular day. Note: Day captains/co-chairs should not play in the morning session when they have responsibility for the day's hospitality. They may consider setting up committees to recruit specific types of donations (such as desserts, soft drinks/ice, etc.) They may also recruit clean up assistance, particularly for the Swiss Teams sessions (the club pays for tournament assistance in the kitchen on the pairs days but there is less support on the Swiss Teams day since that person also has a number of duties for that game).

The total food budget for a tournament is \$1,000- \$1,500. This is reviewed periodically in conjunction with tournament attendance and increased food costs. Donations are encouraged and solicited to help keep costs as low as possible. The goal is to hold a fun tournament with sufficient food to draw players back to the club in the future. Bridge players love to eat. It is better to plan for more players and extra food. Shortages are disastrous and stressful. Hungry bridge players are grumpy bridge players. Leftovers can be used on a subsequent day of the tournament, frozen for future use., or donated to a shelter

Approximately two weeks prior to the tournament:

- Review attendance for that tournament in the previous year as well as the last several tournaments to determine the approximate number of players expected on any given day. At the tournaments held in 2024, we averaged approx. 100 people for lunch in the pairs games and 60-70 people for the meal on Swiss Teams day. A review of post-tournament reports should include the attendance at any particular tournament.

The January 2025 tournament had 28 tables each morning for the pair games (112 persons) with over 50 tables each day including the afternoon session. The Swiss Team attendance was 19 teams (76 players). You are also feeding the director, co-chairs, and kitchen helpers.

- Determine a lunch menu for each day and arrange for a caterer as needed (meal suggestions included later in this document). Many caterers now use delivery services which are unreliable as to delivery time so picking up catering orders is recommended. Plan for pickup 30-45 minutes prior to the expected serving time of 1:00 to 1:15 PM (i.e., 12:15 to 12:30 based on a 10 AM game start time).
- Request specific donations from players for a specific date; sign-up sheets are generally ignored. Requested donations usually include breakfast foods (donuts, fruit, hard boiled/deviled eggs, muffins), snacks (chips/ dips, cheese crackers, nuts) salads, starches, desserts, ice and/or soft drinks.
- Become familiar with the kitchen and its contents; the club owns several large salad bowls and has trays, bowls, plates, utensils, zip lock bags, foil, etc. If additional utensils are needed (these tend to disappear), you may purchase at a dollar store and request reimbursement. Inventory paper products to determine if large and small plates, silverware, cups, napkins, need to be ordered; if you need something specific (bowls?), you should purchase yourself and request reimbursement.
- Purchase disposable tablecloths or plastic rolls of table lining if we have none on site.
- Put signs on the refrigerator for players to remove any personal items 48 hours prior to the start of the tournament.
- Request the person in charge of maintenance to determine the next dumpster pickup date and request a special pick up prior to or during the tournament.
- Arrange for keys to the front door and supply closet from a board member or the club manager.

Purchasing food:

- Sam's or Costco's is the best place to buy food in bulk; you may need to make a second trip during the tournament depending on consumption, etc.
- Food items typically purchased for morning pre-game and the hospitality break include mini-muffins, loaf breads, fruit, cheese assortment and crackers, chips, dips, nuts, pretzels or snack mix. You can usually get 2 dozen donuts donated each day (cut them in half).
- Food items may be purchased for the actual meal or to supplement the meal. Those items may include the makings for one or more large salads, potato salad, rolls and assorted desserts to supplement donations if needed.

During the tournament:

- At least one co-chair should be onsite by 8:45 AM to make coffee (turn on warmer for 15 min before making coffee), and put out breakfast foods which should be replenished for the hospitality break.
- Set up the food tables for lunch with utensils, napkins, large plates; put small plates and forks on the dessert table.
- To move players quickly down food lines, create two serving lines. However, if you need to stretch food or are worried about quantities, have someone serve food. In this case, you need only one serving line.
- At least one co-chair should be onsite until after lunch has been cleaned up and afternoon hospitality snacks are out.
- Obtain and keep receipts for all purchases. Receipts should be given to the Treasurer after the tournament for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses.

After the tournament:

- After the tournament the kitchen should be left clean. All food in refrigerator should be taken home, frozen, or disposed of, as appropriate. We often donate large leftover quantities to homeless shelters (such as Ozanam Inn). Or leftovers may be used on a subsequent day or frozen for future use. Dishtowels and tablecloths should be taken home to be washed and dried.
- The Treasurer should be reminded to pay Theresa for her assistance in the kitchen and with caddying (\$150 per day).
- **IMPORTANT:** The tournament chair should prepare a brief report on the menu/food served, quantities needed, members who donated (particularly those who could be asked to donate again) and any other information that would be helpful to future tournament chairs. The final report from ACBL should also be requested from the Club Manager to determine if the tournament was profitable and to what extent. This post-tournament report may be posted on the website and stored in the cloud with other club documents.

Menu and Beverage Suggestions :

(based on approx. 100 players to be fed on pairs days and 60-70 on Swiss Teams days. Adjust as attendance warrants.)

Beverages

- You will need 10-12 two-liter drinks each day of the tournament and approximately 25-30 pounds of ice daily. It is recommended to put out drinks closer to lunch time (or you will need more of them). At least half should be diet coke with the remainder regular coke, 7 up or Sprite. Root beer or iced tea may be offered if you wish.

Main courses and sides

Hold food in reserve—do not put out all food at the beginning or you will run out.

- Hobnobber Café (504-734-8448) is a good choice for lasagna, jambalaya, chicken champagne pasta (chicken and mushrooms in a cream sauce with penne pasta). See their catering menu for other suggestions. Three large pans are adequate for 100 players. Not open on weekends.
- Catering options through Rouse's, Cansecos's Robert's, Zuppardos are often within budget. Canseco's has a good lasagna and good macaroni and cheese. Zuppardo's has great chicken tenders (not on Friday)—plan 1 ½-to 2 per person). Rouse's has been used for red beans (rice has been made by one of our members) and chicken tenders. Again, check catering offerings for other ideas. Pizza and salad- plan one pizza for four players depending on other items being served. Request that pizzas be cut in 10 slices. Vegetarian, sausage and pepperoni popular. Supplement with salad. Be sure to tip delivery person if used.
- Hot dogs and chili with fixins, baked beans, potato salad and/or coleslaw. Plan one hot dog per person and have one extra package of 24 (Nathan's hot dogs preferred-Sam's)
- We have experienced having a group of our members make the main course (pulled pork for sliders, red beans, etc.) Still in experimental stages.
- Boxed lunches are cost prohibitive now; items above are generally more economical than finger sandwiches and/or mini po-boys. If finger sandwiches are used, Canseco's has good ones at competitive prices. Probably need 400 to 500 finger sandwiches. Leftovers can be put out on a subsequent day. Separate trays-- meats and salads (egg salad, chicken salad, tuna salad optional). Request a mix of white and wheat breads.
- Potato salad is good and reasonable from Captains Sid's in Bucktown. Sam's also has an inexpensive potato salad. Any good and reasonably priced potato salad at the chair's discretion. Two gallons recommended.
- One of our members is able to make large batches of cole slaw (usually donated).
- One of our members generally makes a large mixed salad sufficient for two meals, sometimes three.

Desserts

Purchase assorted cakes, etc. from Sam's to supplement donations (which may or may not appear). Try to have some sugar-free items and be sure they are labelled as such—best selection of sugar-free items is at Dorignacs; Sam's does not carry that. Dessert table should have food for the afternoon hospitality break—you may also add chips, nuts, fruit.

Post tournament reports from prior chairs may be found in the book of club policies, procedures and documents kept at the director's station.