

# UNIT 430 IMP League - Conditions of Contest

## A. General Information

### Welcome IMP League Captains and Participants!

Unit 430's IMP League Conditions of Contest outlines the framework which governs IMP League matches and play. Various commissioners have written/compiled the Conditions of Contest and made changes over the years, and accordingly minor changes have been made for the 2019/2020 season.

The goal of the IMP League is to provide an opportunity to play long team matches in a non-tournament setting; that is, as an occasional alternative to club match-point games. The IMP League format is similar to a sports league — match results accumulate for an entire season to determine final standings and playoff matchups. Fair play, good sportsmanship and a positive attitude are the top priorities of IMP League organizers. As with all Unit 430 events, the Zero Tolerance Policy for Unacceptable Behavior applies to the IMP League. Inappropriate behavior (such as gamesmanship and abusive stretching of the rules) should be documented and reported to the IMP League Coordinator.

The IMP League is a competitive yet social event; subsequently, please be considerate when dealing with captains and players. Above all, have fun wherever you end up in the standings. The IMP League has survived for four decades because it is fun. Good luck, good cards, and good fun to all!

### Contacts:

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### Summary of Key Points and Dates:

Listed below are key dates for the IMP League season and a summary of important points from the Conditions of Contest. Recent changes instituted by the ACBL are also included in this section.

- 1. Location of Play:** Matches may be played at any venue agreed upon by team captains. If teams choose not to play at a bridge club, bidding boxes and duplicate boards are available free from the VBC (with a \$20 deposit). Team Captains must also arrange for a method to call a Director if needed.
- 2. Team Players:** Teams can have 4, 5 or 6 players. Additional players are considered substitutes. At the end of the season, only the 6 players who have played the most matches will receive masterpoints. When teams use a substitute or a recently added player for a match, the other team should be notified prior to the match.
- 3. Matches:** For the 2019/2020 season, match play begins in early October and all matches must be completed by April 15, 2020. Any remaining (un-played) matches must be set by April 1, 2020. If there are problems with match scheduling, team captains (or match arrangers) should contact the IMP League Commissioner.
- 4. Spectators:** We want to welcome spectators at IMP League games, but we do not want their presence to affect the results of a match. Law 76B governs the behavior of spectators. Any player may ask a spectator to

stop any action contrary to the Laws; once asked, a second infraction will result in the spectator not being allowed to remain at either table of the match. (Law 76B is covered on page 8 of this document.)

## **5. ACBL Convention Charts:**

**a) Conventions:** The Open and Open+ Convention Charts govern bidding and carding methods permitted, restricted or not permitted in Extended Team Events. **\*Note:** ACBL implemented changes to its General Convention Chart in November 2018. The Open and Open+ Charts are intended for events with no (or high) master-point limits. In contrast to the Basic and Basic+ Charts, methods are generally allowed unless they are expressly prohibited within the Chart.

See ACBL Link <http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/about/181AttachmentD.pdf>

**b) Non- Open and Open+ Conventions must be pre-disclosed:** Conventions not on the Open and Open+ Convention Charts can be used in Flight A/X with the following caveat: the team must pre-disclose the convention to the opponents 48 hours before the match, provide a link to the convention and its' defense, and bring a written defense to the match for opponents use. Even then, the DIC has the right to bar the convention if partnerships cannot give reasonable answers to questions about it.

**6. Playoffs:** To qualify to play in the playoffs, team members must have played in 40% of the season's matches. The final deadline for the playoff matches is May 6, 2020.

### **a) Playoff Schedule:**

**Flight A Playoffs:** The top four teams will make the Flight A playoffs. Games will be played as follows:

- Game One: The first-placed team (as of April 15) chooses one team to play (either the second-placed team, the third-placed team, or the fourth-placed team). The winner qualifies for the final. The loser is eliminated.
- Game Two: The remaining two teams play each other. The loser is eliminated.
- Final Game: The winner of Game One plays the winner of Game Two for first and second place.

**Flight X Playoffs:** The top three teams will make the Flight X playoffs. Games will be played as follows:

- Game One: The second- and third-placed team play. The loser is eliminated.
- Final Game: The first-placed team plays the winner of Game 1.

The higher-ranking teams from the IMP League season round robin will have seating rights in the playoff matches. All playoff matches are 32 boards. Ties are immediately broken with a four-board playoff, then two-board playoffs until a winner emerges. Please report results of the playoffs (and the players that played in the matches) to the IMP League Commissioner.

## **7. Masterpoints:**

**a) Playoffs:** The ACBL does not award the second stage of this particular two-stage event with masterpoints. Overall masterpoints and match awards will be only awarded for the regular season. The playoffs however will continue to determine the annual champion and the trophy winners for all stratifications.

**b) Reporting:** IMP League results will be reported to the ACBL by the September cycle (possibly before) following the end of the regular season. Any disputes regarding masterpoints must be initiated before the end of the calendar year.

## **8. Entry Fees:**

Entry fees must be paid by the end of October. IMP League fees cover ACBL sanction fees and the cost of maintaining the IMP League website. Remaining monies go toward the Unit 430 Subsidy Fund which provides financial assistance to players who travel to compete in national and international bridge events.

## B. Conditions of Contest

### 1. Hierarchy of Regulations

The IMP League will be governed by (in order of precedence) the Laws of Duplicate Bridge, ACBL Regulations, the Special Regulations governing each flight, the Conditions of Contest and the IMP League Commissioner. Where the Commissioner is a participant on a team, a Deputy Commissioner will be appointed to handle disputes for that flight only. **Appeals on the rules** or on a decision of the Commissioner (or a deputy) may be appealed in writing to the Unit 430 Board of Directors. No appeal will be considered if more than 30 days have passed since the incident happened or the Commissioner's ruling was announced. The Unit Board is at liberty to decide such appeals as it sees fit.

### 2. Dates and Schedule

IMP League play normally begins in October and the regular season concludes in mid-April (or earlier if the number of teams warrants fewer matches). Teams will play 8-13 matches in Flight A/X. The schedule is generally a complete round-robin in each flight, but if the required number of matches is undesirable, a flight may be split into divisions. A flight without enough teams to make a reasonable league may be combined with the flight above or below (after consultation with the team captains who are involved).

Approximately half of the teams in each flight will make the playoffs. All Flight A playoff matches will be 32 boards; all other matches will be 28 boards. The playoff schedule will be decided separately for each flight, based upon the final number of teams in each flight.

For Flight B/C, teams will play 5-12 matches. The number of boards played will depend upon the format outlined by the B/C IMP League Commissioner.

### 3. Team Rosters

**a) Players - Stratifications A/X:** No team may use more than six players during one match. Additional substitutes or "spares" are not allowed to play except in an emergency. No player may play on more than one team, even if the two teams are in different flights. A team's eligibility for the different stratifications is based on the team average of masterpoints on the September cycle for initial players, and current holdings for later additions. A team with more than 3000 masterpoints per player must play in Strat A. Any team signing up for Flight A with less than 3000 masterpoints per player will be placed in Strat X.

**Note:** Teams in Flight X can have team players with more than 3000 points; the team average however, must be less than 3000 per player. In addition, for Flight X, during any single match, the team members total number of masterpoints (averaged if more than 4 players) cannot exceed 12,000 points.

**b) Players - Stratifications B/C:** No team with more than 1000 masterpoints per player, or any single player above 1500 masterpoints, may play in flight B. Flight C teams must consist of non-Life Masters with less than 500 masterpoints only. Teams in limited flights must be careful not to add players to their teams that will make them ineligible for the flight. The Commissioner can set an artificial masterpoint holding for experienced players who are new or non ACBL members. The Commissioner may choose to change the number of flights within a division based on the number of teams signed up and their masterpoint levels. The Commissioner may also suggest to the team captains before the season that flight limits be adjusted to balance the number of teams in each flight.

**c) Team Configuration:** Teams can have 4, 5 or 6 players. (Seven players may be listed on the team roster; the seventh player however, is technically a "substitute.") One of the players must be designated as "match

arranger” (not necessarily the captain) and is responsible for contacting other match arrangers to arrange matches, and for contacting the Commissioner when problems arise. Each team must also designate an alternate contact and all teams should have at least one member with regular e-mail access. Teams whose contacts prove impossible to reach in a scheduling dispute will be deemed at fault. After the initial rosters have been submitted, roster moves will be limited to the following:

- Deleting a player: A player who has not yet played in any match but appears on a team's roster may be deleted from the roster at any time. A player who has played but is unable to continue playing due to an emergency or a residence move may be deleted.
- Adding a player: A player who has not yet played in any match for any other team may be added. (This person would be considered a substitute if there are already 6 people on the team.) No player may be added after the conclusion of the regular season.
- Using a non-roster player: If a captain is unable to field a team because an expected player has not arrived (or there are not enough available players on the team) and there is an available player who has not played in any match for any team, that player may be used as an emergency player (unless the other team feels that the emergency player materially strengthens the team). IMP League organizers recommend that only one emergency player be used by a team in a regular-season match, but in dire circumstances two may be used. Teams are asked to do their best to limit themselves to three emergency players per season and a maximum of two before and two after December 31. No emergency players are allowed to play in the playoffs.

**d) Substitutes:** As per the 2017 ACBL *Extended Team Championships Sanction and Reporting Guide*:

“teams can have four, five or six members. Substitutes and replacements are allowed at the discretion of the Event Coordinator or his/her designee, or of the DIC if the event ... but should not appreciably strengthen a team. In teams with more than four members, a substitute should come from within the team. Team members, by entering the event, are committing to participate throughout the event. As this event takes place over multiple sessions, they should be aware of the scheduled play dates and times, and make plans to attend. If they are aware of a scheduling conflict, they should notify both their team captain and the director to see what accommodations can be made. This includes arranging a substitute or replacement or arranging an alternate play date. Replacements may earn overall awards if they meet (ACBL) play requirements. Substitutes may receive only match awards. Up to two substitutes per match may be permitted even if the team already has six members, subject to the aforementioned provisions.”

Subsequently, ACBL guidelines indicates that any number of substitutes are allowed. Despite this, Unit 430 IMP League organizers would like to limit the number of substitutes used during the season. If your team is using a substitute, please inform your opponents in advance that someone unexpected will be on the team.

#### **4. Matches**

Active ethics and good sportsmanship will be the first priority in all matches. Matches will be scored in Victory Points using the Victory Point Scale shown at the end of this document. Matches will normally be played in two halves with a comparison of scores at halftime.

##### **a) Location of Play:**

Matches may be played at any venue agreed upon by team captains. If teams choose not to play at a bridge club, bidding boxes and duplicate boards are available free from the VBC (with a \$20 deposit). Team Captains must also arrange for a method to call a Director if needed.

### **b) Match Scheduling and Deadlines:**

Be sure to play matches in a timely manner within the parameters of the match deadlines. It is very important to get the final match completed before the last deadline since playoffs will begin soon after. Teams getting behind in their schedule will be penalized if they do not make a full effort to catch up, regardless of the potential for unfamiliar partnerships and pairings. If necessary, teams will be asked to quickly canvas their players for available dates, and a date will be imposed for a late match without regard to which partnerships might be unable to play. If multiple team members are leaving town for a few weeks, it is up to captains/match arrangers to anticipate this and try to get matches in prior to players travel dates.

Teams must play all scheduled matches regardless of whether they are eligible for the playoffs. Standings are adversely affected if teams' total VP's are skewed by a forfeit. With a six-month season, there is plenty of time to organize matches within the deadline dates.

**c) Seating rights** (the right to have your players take their seats last) will be given to each team for one of the two halves, which half to which team to be decided by the team captains before the match. Disputes will be resolved by a coin-toss. If the captains do not consult before the match and a dispute arises at halftime, the trailing team has seating rights for the second half. If the score is tied, seating rights are decided randomly (by a coin-toss). Seating rights do not include the right to choose your team's four players only after it is known which four from the opposing team are playing. If more than four players from both teams are available and a dispute results, captains will list their four players for the half simultaneously, reveal the lists, and then seat players. In regular-season matches only, at halftime, any one player on either team may object to a plan which has the same four players playing at a table. This rule is meant to encourage switching opponents at half time and is not applicable for playoff matches, where the higher-seeded team has seating rights throughout.

**d) Match Time:** Three and a half hours is the suggested time frame for a 28-board match.

- The first board of the second 14-board set must be started at both tables no later than two hours following the scheduled start time of the match. If this does not happen, the Director removes one board from each table (two, if more than 15 minutes late), and if one team is predominantly at fault, they receive a penalty of 3 IMPs for each board removed. If both teams are equally at fault, the missing boards are scored as no swing. Removed boards may not be played even if time permits.
- The Director should be notified if a match is running overtime. If one team is not the cause of the problem, the Director and Team Captain must report this to the Commissioner. Teams concerned about time wasting by the opponents will need to call the Director to point this out or both will be deemed at fault.
- There is no penalty for the first or second overtime match. A team that has three overtime matches in a season will be penalized in Victory Points, losing 5 VPs for the third overtime match, 10 additional VPs for the fourth overtime match, 15 additional VPs for the sixth, and so on.

## **5. Match Scheduling**

At the beginning of each season, the Commissioner will release a schedule of match periods in which the participants should complete their regular season matches. The length of each period will depend on the total number of matches required and the calendar schedule of other bridge events. Matches may be played before (or after) their scheduled completion date on the schedule, but captains must realize that teams scheduled for that period will expect to play a match during that period as well. It is the Captains/Match Arrangers responsibility to decide upon a date, a time, and a venue for each match. The deadline shown on the schedule is the last day to hold a match.

Captains should contact the Commissioner if there is difficulty in arranging a match. This might be due to insufficient dates available for both teams, or by lack of communication from the other captain. The Commissioner will attempt to get the match scheduled, but may give warnings or impose penalties on one or both sides if the captains are at fault (by leaving things to the last minute, by having unacceptably few open dates, or by appearing to jockey for favourable dates). Warnings and penalties will be more lenient at the beginning of the season, but penalties in Victory Points will be applied, possibly without prior warning, to any team that is for no apparent reason significantly behind by January.

The absolute deadline for all regular season matches is the final deadline date in April. Matches played after that date will not be counted under any circumstances (except for ACBL match awards). Similarly, the playoffs have strict deadlines.

## **6. Late Arrivals**

When a match begins later than the agreed upon time because of late arrivals, the non-offending side receives a penalty bonus of 3 IMPs per fifteen minutes of delay, up to a maximum of 18\* IMPs. (\* See note below.) The captain of the non-offending side may waive the penalties before the beginning of play. An emergency player may be used until the late player arrives (unless it is a playoff match). If thirty minutes have elapsed, the match must be:

**a) rescheduled** with the 18\* IMP penalty to the non-offending team (the captain may waive the penalties);  
**b) forfeited** to the non-offending team; or  
**c) completed** using the emergency player, if permission to complete the match was given by the non-offending team before any further boards are played. (This last option is not available in the playoffs.) The Director may remove boards from the first half (of the match) when a match starts more than fifteen minutes late, or may choose to give the players a chance to make up the time, removing boards from the second half if necessary.

\*NOTE: The 18 IMP penalty may be adjusted by the IMP League Commissioner based upon the average number of VP's earned by the offending team at the end of the season.

## **7. Standings**

The order of teams for playoff purposes is decided by Victory Points (VP's). Matches that are forfeited are scored as follows: Offending teams get zero VP's. A non-offending team gets the maximum of: (a) their average VP total in all of their non-forfeited matches; (b) the average VP total of the opponents of the offending side in all of the offending side's non-forfeited matches; or (c) 18 Victory Points. Any fraction awarded by this rule is sufficient to break a tie in the standings. The Commissioner will make the final decision regarding the penalty applied taking into consideration the average VP's earned per match by the non-offending team.

### **a) Tiebreaking Procedures**

In the case of a tie in VP's between two teams, or a tie among three or more teams which has been broken by the procedure in the next paragraph to leave two teams tied, the tiebreaking procedure is: most wins (a draw is ½ of a win), most VPs against common opponents (if not playing a round robin), most wins against common opponents (if not playing a round robin).

If there is a tie in VP's among three or more teams, the tiebreaking procedure is (in order of precedence): most wins (a draw is ½ of a win); highest average VPs against teams in the tied group; best win-loss record against teams in the tied group; most VPs against common opponents (if not playing a round robin).

If teams are still tied after the tiebreaking procedures are used, and a significant playoff ranking is at stake, the teams must play a seven-board playoff to decide the final positions. If such a playoff ends in a tie, further single boards are played until either team wins a board by 1 IMP or more.

**b) Forfeiting cannot disadvantage other teams.** If a team forfeits a match against another team, and because of the Victory Points received by the forfeit, the non-offending team finishes ahead of any uninvolved team, the Commissioner may, regardless of the Victory Point difference, reclassify the forfeiting team down enough positions so the forfeiting team finishes below the uninvolved team. This rule could cost an offending team four or five wins and a playoff spot. Subsequently, be sure to avoid forfeits! Teams are expected to play all of their matches, whether in contention for the playoffs or not.

## **8. Allowed Conventions**

As per November 2018 ACBL changes, the ACBL Open and Open+ Convention Charts govern bidding and carding methods permitted, restricted or not permitted in Extended Team Events. Conventions on the ACBL Open and Open+ Convention Charts are allowed in all flights of the IMP League. Other conventions must be disclosed to the opponents at least 48 hours before the match, with a clear explanation and a reasonable suggested defense (which must be supplied by the team using the convention at game time in written form), in order to be used in the match. The opponents may appeal to the Commissioner any such conventions, and the Commissioner will decide (based on the complexity of the convention, the level of the competition, and the quality of the explanation and suggested defense) whether the convention will be approved. Even previously-approved conventions must be disclosed to the opponents in subsequent matches in order to be used again. Defenses to many conventions can be found in the ACBL Defense Database at [www.acbl.org/play/defenseDataBase.html](http://www.acbl.org/play/defenseDataBase.html)

If a non- Open or Open+ Convention Chart is approved, the opponents must be presented with a written description and defense (or a number of possible defenses) at game time. When the convention is used, the opponents are free to consult the written defense for the remainder of the auction before they make a call. When there is a choice of defenses, the defenders may choose one in advance, or they may choose to play different options against different forms of the convention, or they may choose to wait until it comes up: the first player to act may choose one of the defenses on the sheet without consultation and may convey this decision to the table before he makes a call. Thereafter, that pair must use that defense each time it comes up. The game Director has the right to disallow a non-Open or Open+ Convention if it is clear that the partnership using it cannot adequately answer basic questions about what calls show and/or deny.

Boards on which unapproved conventions are used may be appealed in writing to the Commissioner within 24 hours of the match. The team who is making the written appeal must notify their opponents prior to the completion of the match. To appeal a board, write down a complete record of the deal identifying the cards held by each player, the dealer and vulnerability, the result of the deal (including the contract and result at the other table), and the complete auction, indicating all conventional calls with their explanations. Indicate the disputed calls and have one player from each team sign the report. Indicate whether one or more boards is under appeal. NOTE: The proper way to appeal is to inform the opponents that you are doing so and collect the facts quietly—and once this is done to continue playing without comment.

If a disallowed convention is used and the non-offending side wins less than three IMPs on the board, the result of the board will be thrown out and the non-offending side will be awarded three IMPs on the board. If it is found that the disputed convention was allowed (or the Commissioner judges that its use is not unreasonable), the appealing side will face a penalty from a simple warning to a severe penalty in Victory Points for repeat offenders.

## 9. Spectators

Any player may disallow any idle member of the opposing team from kibitzing his team's match. Any player may request that any one spectator be removed from his table without cause. Spectators are expected to observe the limitations set out in Law 76B, and multiple violations of Law 76B noted by any player will result in the removal of the spectator from either table of a match. Any player may ask a spectator to stop any action contrary to the Laws; once asked, a second infraction will result in the spectator not being allowed to remain at either table of the match. Law 76B states:

- A spectator may not look at the hand of more than one player.
- A spectator must not show any reaction to the bidding or play when a deal is in progress.
- During a round, a spectator must refrain from mannerisms or remarks of any kind and must have no conversation with a player. ("During a round" means no opinions between deals.)
- A spectator must not disturb a player.
- A spectator shall not draw attention to any aspect of the game. (This includes irregularities and misplays.)

## 10. Playoffs

Approximately half of the teams in each flight will make the playoffs. All Flight A playoff matches will be 32 boards; all other matches will be 28 boards. The playoff schedule will be decided separately for each flight, based upon the final number of teams in each flight.

To play in a playoff match, team members must have played in at least 40% of the seasons' matches. Participation is counted according to the number of half-matches for each player. In the rare case that a playoff-bound team has less than four players playoff-eligible, or if a player is unavailable for a significant portion of the season but has played nearly 40% of the boards, the Commissioner may declare a player that has played less than 40% of his team's regular season matches eligible for the playoffs. Teams that stretch the roster rules may be penalized.

## 11. Victory Point Scale and Reporting

Each team must record match results including half time results and a list of players for each half. A member of the winning team (or a team player on one of the teams as agreed upon by team captains or representatives) reports results on the "foobart" website (shown below).

<https://www.foobart.com/impleague/league.php?league=1&event=11>

IMP League Victory Point Scale (Flight A/X only)							
IMP Margin	VPs	IMP Margin	VPs	IMP Margin	VPs	IMP Margin	VPs
tie	15 - 15	7 - 10	19 - 11	27 - 33	23 - 7	61 - 71	27 - 3
1	16 - 14	11 - 15	20 - 10	34 - 41	24 - 6	72 - 83	28 - 2
2	17 - 13	16 - 20	21 - 9	42 - 50	25 - 5	84 - 95	29 - 1
3 - 6	18 - 12	21 - 26	22 - 8	51 - 60	26 - 4	96 or more	30