

ACBL MANAGEMENT REPORT

Summer 2020 – Montreal, QC

Bridge Services

Support Your Club Games and Virtual Club games raised more than \$2 million for our clubs in June. Virtual Club tables were up slightly over May (114,377 vs 113,834) despite competing with May's additional tables from the successful Silver Linings Week and attention drawn to the June tournament. There were 543 individual clubs running games as well as over 1,000 pooled clubs. The only special club event in June was the two-day The Longest Day event, which did not raise additional revenue for the ACBL since sanction fees were donated. July's Silver Linings Week should bring in strong earnings, similar to the May event.

NABC Services

Meeting Services has tentatively completed negotiations with the convention center and hotels in Tampa; a total of \$30k in cancellations fees is the most likely outcome. We have received an extension to the end of August for Memphis 2025, but the convention center is unwilling to grant any further extension. We will either move forward now or renegotiate down the road, assuming the space is still available.

Finance

Overall, May was a great month and much needed. It was headlined by the very successful regionally rated online tournament and the Silver Linings event that provided revenue of \$320K and \$226K, respectively. Revenues totaled \$1.4MM which exceeded the COVID-19 forecast revenue by \$605K or 80%. It even exceeded our original pre-virus budget and 2019 actual by 3% and 5%, respectively. Online play continued to increase, generating \$231K, which was \$114K over budget. May expenses exceeded COVID-19 forecast by \$74K or 9%. Majority was due to \$71K in BBO fees not forecasted and related to the online regionally rated tournament.

There was a \$14K gain on foreign exchange conversion. As per the codification, the rate was reviewed again on June 21, 2020. The rate was not in the range for adjustment and will remain at its current rate. For May 2020, the net gain from operations totaled \$495K as compared to the COVID-19 forecasted loss of (\$36K). Furloughing of staff that began in May helped tremendously in reducing expenses.

Year-to-date bottom line remains strong despite the effects of COVID-19 with YTD gain from operations of \$299K exceeding pre-COVID original budget by \$42K but still \$181K behind prior year.

The field work for the 2019 retirement plan audit is under way with an anticipated filing date of July 31, 2020 to meet the required deadline. All 2019 required tax filings for ACBL, ACBL Charity Foundation and the ACBL Educational Foundation have been completed and will be filed by the required deadline.

Human Resources

Headcount

Headquarters – 52 full time; 46 active, 6 furloughed
Field – 36 full time; 17 active, 19 furloughed
125 part time

New Hires

Mary Stratton, Director of Marketing, joined the ACBL in April. Mary serves on the executive team and brings to her role over 17 years' experience in marketing strategy, brand management, project management, event planning, and contract negotiation.

Benefits

Though furloughed employees are on an unpaid leave, they remain active in company-sponsored benefits by paying their portion of enrolled plans.

Furloughed employees are eligible for unemployment benefits.

Amendments have been made to our 401k plan per the CARES Act. Participants may suspend 401k loan repayments through December 2020 and may request a hardship withdrawal.

We have also amended our Flexible Spending Plan, per IRS guidelines. Participants may roll over \$550 of unused flexible spending funds from this plan year to next year.

Facilities

Headquarters remains closed. CDC recommendations and OSHA requirements will be followed when the building is reopened.

Information Technology

Field / Bridge Operations – Tournaments

Worked with the Field and Bridge Operations staff to the Supported "Endless Summer" Online Regionally Rated Event

- Automated Crossovers for multi-session games using AutoHotKey "bot" controlling ACBLscore
- Improved XML to BWS for faster processing of results at the end of each session
- Live for Tournaments sent emails and texts ACBLscore
- Completed assigning Masterpoints to club players from BBO username
- Updated Live for Tournaments (tournaments.acbl.org and live.acbl.org) architecture (load balancers, servers, etc.)

Masterpoints Engine

Efforts have been renewed to integrate masterpoint changes made for online. In addition, we are working with the Clubs & Membership, and Tournaments teams to prioritize the delivery of event codes. The timeline below is based on the motion to reducing the number of ratings, now being re-reviewed by the Board.

Milestones: (barring no unforeseen issues or allocations of resources). **This timeline has not changed; the dates have simply been pushed based on the reallocation of resources.*

Club Rating 1 Games – integrated and finalized for face-to-face (and online)	7/31/20
Club Championships and Pupil Games	8/30/20
Club Fund Games	9/15/20
ICC Overalls	10/15/20
ACBL Wide Club Level	11/15/20
Units & Districts	12/15/20
ACBL Wide Overalls	1/30/21
Canada & Other	1/28/21

Marketing & Membership

Worked with Marketing to ensure that **The Longest Day** tournament was successful.

- Added ability to schedule Special Events for online games - automatically changes the rating of incoming games based on date and time
- implemented 1.5x black points and \$3/table default donation for Rating 66 in Live for Clubs

Continued with more upgrades to our Employee Dashboard to better enable our support staff.

We continue work with **yourmembership (YM)**

- We are evaluating and working to understand the best way to deliver **Guest Membership**.
- Working with Marketing to determine the requirements and constraints of Guest Membership
- Worked on resolving technical issue with YM on API
- Worked on YM guest registration.

Milestones: (in phases)

Phase 1 - Guest Membership	8/15/20
• Additional membership types	9/15/20
Phase 2 - Employee/member inquiry processes	9/30/20
Phase 3 - Marketing email campaign capability	10/30/20
Phase 4 - Integration with our websites	12/31/20
Final phase - social networking capabilities, and other integration points	
This phase will be completely dependent upon how easily our membership team can be trained.	
	Q1/Q2/2021

Cashless Strategy

Square: Continued discussion with Kristin Frederick as to how to enable cashless transactions for the Ed Foundation. She will continue to use their current process “Stripe” for taking credit cards online. We will enable her ability to use Square face-to-face through Square via our current set-up, establishing a unique ‘code’ for them, once we return to face-to-face.

OnPay: Continuing to automate and refine the process for payouts to Clubs for Online games

- Continue work with the Accounting/Accounts Payable team and OnPay to ensure that the process is solidified, automated and working smoothly including the integrations into our systems.
- Sent email campaign to remaining clubs
- Merged OnPay accounts for Managers of multiple clubs
- Waiting on vendor to add fields to our Export so that we can automatically mark checks as paid in GP after payments go out

Business Intelligence

- Reporting and documentation for Online Club and Tournament games
- Working to ensure that clubs are accurately paid for their online games. Including assisting with providing data to OnPay.
- Removed the Charity system from the AS400. Reporting and created the process to come from the dashboard.
- Revised BBO masterpoint reporting to cater to multiple pigments for a member.
- Added information to membership renewal reporting to assist Accounting.

- Revised program for keeping up with online table counts to handle more than 10,000 tables in a month.
- Worked with Sol to provide more data for lapsed members playing in the online regionally rated tournament.
- Outstanding requests from the sub-committees on member data.

Infrastructure & Support

Supporting BOD/BOG online meetings

- Worked out the current process for the BOD meeting and had a successful voting event in June.
- Working with BOG for Zoom webinar on July 19 for 150 members. We've had one test meeting with another scheduled for July 8.

Infrastructure

- Ongoing support duties, including data backup, server/desktop/application patching, network and server performance troubleshooting and tuning.
- Assessing third-party contracts for current requirements, adjusting when advantageous.
- Rebuilt Windows update server for security and performance software patch releases.
- Supported Dev team, including deployment of virtual Windows machines for testing.

Service Desk

- Direct support to employees, HQ and field, remote and local. Also BOD, BOG and, occasionally, members – 78 documented service tickets.

Field Administration

The field staff has planned and executed two online regionally rated events hosted on Bridge Base Online. The first, held Apr 30 – May 3 with McKenzie Myers acting as DIC, generated 5,275 tables and netted \$230K in revenue. The second, held Jun 25 -28 with Ken Horwedel as DIC and Matt Koltnow as AIC, generated 13,007 tables and netted \$565K in revenue. We were fortunate to be able to utilize many of our part-time TDs in running the June event. There are three more regionally rated online tournaments planned for 2020. Ken and Matt will again team up to plan and run the next event in August.

We are planning a NABC-rated online team and pair event to be held online from Jul 23 – Aug 2. M^{rs}Kenzie Myers will DIC this event. This is the first event of this type ever held by ACBL, so we are looking to leverage the learnings from this event to enable more online team games.

The full-time TD staff continues to support setting-up and running Virtual Club games as well as working on several side projects.

Recorder

The Office of National Recorder team consists of National Recorder Robb Gordon and Compliance Coordinator Sabrina Goley. We recently added Debbie Vicknair to assist Sabrina. We continue to provide phone and email support to members and District Officials involved in the disciplinary process, and the national disciplinary committees.

When we entered a period with no “live” bridge, we expected to be concentrating on training and regulatory changes. But due to the explosion of online bridge and the ethical challenges attached, we are busier than ever with Player Memos and cheating investigations.

We have been inundated with Player Memos involving unethical behavior, particularly from the Online Regionally Rated Event. To assist in investigating Player Memos, in addition to Jess Stuart, we now have a total of 6 volunteers. We are grateful to Larry Cohen (D9), Jess Stuart (D4), Louis Glasthal (D4), Hendrik Sharples (D20), Patty Tucker (D7), and Marc Zwerling (D20).

Allan Falk (D12) has volunteered to act as Charging Party Advocate for some of the more complex Online Ethics cases. Allan has been valued in the role of Advisor to the Ethical Oversight Committee on many occasions. Tournament Director Scott Humphrey (D16) is also going to be Charging Party Advocate in some Online cases.

With the kind assistance of these volunteers, and some hard work on our parts, we have, I believe, increased confidence in our online contests.

One form of cheating has reared its ugly head in the privately held team events – self kibitzing. The ACBL has not allowed kibitzers in its pair games on BBO, and when we have team events, those too will not permit kibitzing. However, it is hoped that a delayed VuGraph presentation will be possible, and several people are working toward that end.

PLAYER MEMO REPORT AS OF JUNE 30, 2020

	2018 Spring	2018 Summer	2018 Fall	2018	2018	2019 Spring	2019 Summer	2019 Fall	2019	2019	2020
	NABC	NABC	NABC	Non-NABC	TOTAL	NABC	NABC	NABC	Non-NABC	Total	Non-NABC
Total Player Memos Reported*	41	40	32	212	325	38	34	22	184	278	166
Conduct	13	15	14	92	134	8	12	8	59	87	26
Bridge Related	17	14	9	37	77	17	19	7	56	99	31
Ethics	7	11	10	84	112	18	8	7	84	117	98
Other	6	0	2	8	16	2	1	0	13	16	11
Number of Player Memos Handled By:											
Unit Recorder	N/A	N/A	N/A	55	55	N/A	N/A	N/A	36	36	N/A
PM resulted in Charges brought by Uni	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	7	N/A
District Recorder	N/A	N/A	N/A	86	86	N/A	N/A	N/A	78	78	22
PM resulted in Charges brought by Dis	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	6	5
National Recorder	41	40	32	53	166	38	34	22	51	145	135
PM resulted in Charges brought by Mgr	0	4	0	2	6	2	1	0	12	15	14
PM resulted in Charges brought by DIC	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	N/A
Other (Filed or Club Matter)	N/A	N/A	N/A	18	18	N/A	N/A	N/A	19	19	9
Player Memo Sent to ACC	2	6	2	17	27	5	3	6	21	35	12
Key:											
PM = Player Memo											
* Player Memos reported may fall into more than one category											

DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS AS OF JUNE 30, 2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Appeals and Charges Committee	13	8	7	8	6
Automatic Review	6	5	2	3	1
Automatic Review and Appeal	2	0	0	1	0
Appeal	3	2	2	0	0
Request for CDR 9.2 Hearing	2	1	0	1	0
Negotiated Resolution	0	0	1	1	4
Request for Readmission	0	0	1	2	0
Violation of Discipline	0	0	1	0	0
National Committees	5	10	10	9	3
ACBL Disciplinary Committee	1	5	6 ^(a)	4 ^(b)	2
ACBL Management	0	4	4	0	0
Ethical Oversight Committee	3	0	0	3	1
NABC Tournament Conduct Committee	1	1	0	2	0
Online Ethical Oversight Committee	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
District Appellate Committee	6	0	1	1	0
District Disciplinary Committee	20	11	20	16	6
Unit Disciplinary Committee	16	8	14 ^(c)	8 ^(d)	N/A
District Disciplinary Committee	4	2	5	8	6 ^(e)
Tournament Disciplinary Committee	0	1	1	0	N/A

Endnotes:

^(a) Three were resolved by Negotiated Resolutions.

^(b) (2) Negotiated Resolution, (1) Review of Recommended Additional Discipline, (1) Standard Hearing

^(c) Two hearings were appeals of club barrings.

^(d) One hearing was appeal of club barring.

^(e) One resolved by Negotiated Resolution.

Cases in progress (Charge Letters, Notice of Hearing and/or Appeal Received):

ACBL Disciplinary Committee	0	
Appeals and Charges	2	1 OEOC Negotiated Resolution; 1 Automatic Review
District Appellate Committee	1	
District Disciplinary Committee	3	
Ethical Oversight Committee	0	
Online Ethical Oversight Committee	6	

Marketing

Digital Marketing

Our digital marketing efforts have focused on the communication of immediate news to membership and promotion of online bridge and tournaments through acbl.org. Our metrics are strong across the board, and there are many areas of opportunity to increase touch points with members and non-members heading into the fall. Parts of the site with high engagement and an increase in viewing include the Club Support/Online Events page as well as the BBO tutorial videos page.

Additionally, through metrics, we identified the popular Just Play Bridge page as an effective way to promote online events through banner ads around the playing area. For example, such banner ads on Just Play Bridge for the Silver Linings Event led to substantial engagement with more than 3.3K ad clicks, and 1.9K clicks for the NABC Robot Individual.

We are continuing to utilize front-page sliders on the home page of acbl.org. Our Endless Summer Event slider had 5,759 clicks--our most successful slider ever.



We will continue to focus on promoting the key economic drivers for the organization through the website in conjunction with email and social media marketing through the fall. Concurrently, we are working on a project to organize and clean-up the backend of the website to streamline and improve the user experience, upgrade the WordPress template and prepare to integrate to the YourMembership platform.

Email Marketing & Communications

As of July 6, 244 separate email campaigns targeting various member segments (e.g., all members, I/N members, club managers, unit/district officers, etc.) have been sent in 2020. Many are repeating campaigns, including Retro It's Your Call games (weekly), rank change announcements (monthly) and College Bridge Online tournament updates (bimonthly). This number doesn't include automated emails, such as ACBL Live results or renewal notifications.

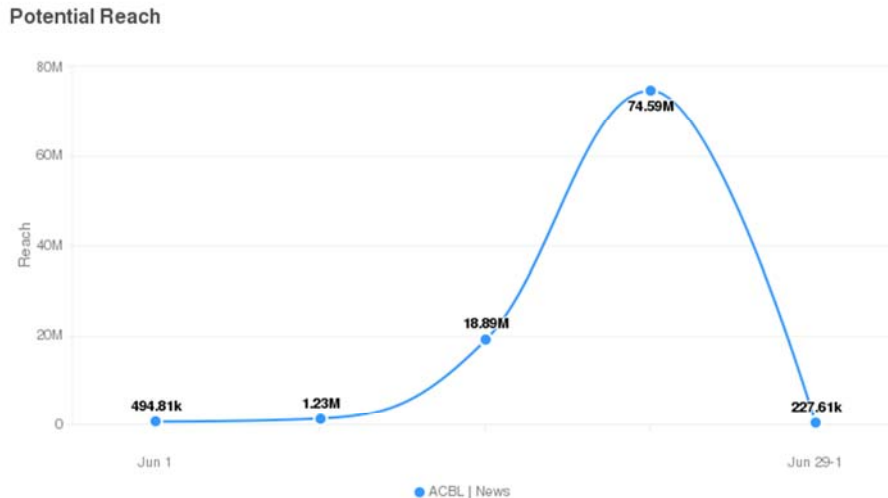
The open and click-through rates of ACBL emails remain well above industry average at 45% and 28% respectively. (Averages are 14% and 7%.) There has been a slight 5% drop in the open rate, likely due to the increase in emails from COVID-19 and special online event messaging. However, the content of these emails has also led to an uptick in the click-through rate, up 8%.

For emails sent to all members or emails sent to officers/club managers, ACBL staff and the Board of Directors are now being sent PDFs of the emails to be better aware of the content shared with membership.

Public Relations

Since mid-March, the focus of our Public Relations efforts has been on monitoring any negative media as it relates to COVID-19 in conjunction with bridge play and focusing on the positive impact of online bridge to our members and prospective new players. Major media placement was gained through a New York Times and AARP article on the benefits of learning and playing online bridge, as well as Andrew Chen's achievement of becoming our youngest Life Master.

We also received varied placement in support of our fundraising online for The Longest Day. Total media value of these efforts was over \$1.1 Million, with the potential reach at over 126 Million impressions for that time frame. These are astonishing numbers for zero actual marketing dollars spent. Marketing will continue to develop and foster relationships with these writers for additional possible placement. The team is also cross-training on the Meltwater platform to backfill the PR Coordinator position furloughed.



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Social Media

While we continue to utilize multiple social media platforms, Facebook is the primary platform due to its larger following. As of July 6, the page has 9657 followers. Regular content includes a variety of topics, like promotions for online events (including celebrity speakers), historic photographs, Hall of Fame trivia, bridge articles and It’s Your Call hands (the most popular posts). New types kinds of posts, like Teacher Feature, are planned for implementation soon.

Twitter posts are similar to Facebook posts with some adjustment to fit the platform. Additionally, the tool is used to promote the bridge to media outlets. As of July 6, our Twitter account has 2939 followers.

We have continued to grow the ACBL’s Instagram page, a rapidly growing social network. Posts range from submitted photos, promos for upcoming online events and beyond. Use of hashtags (such as #bridge or #cardgame) continues to be refined. As of July 6, the account has 1369 followers.

One of the most-viewed and most-shared posts on all of ACBL’s social media was the recent news coverage of Andrew Chen becoming the youngest-ever Life Master. The Facebook post with the link to the article reached 2545 viewers.

Guest Membership

The revised Guest Membership and Temporary Membership motions were reviewed and voted on at the June and July board meetings respectively. Marketing is working collaboratively with the Information Technology team to implement the Guest Membership in the new YourMembership platform as expediently as possible to capitalize on prospective new members from online club play as well as online lessons and recruitment through clubs. Marketing is working on an implementation plan and supporting collateral to launch the program.

Recruitment Incentives

First quarter's bonuses totaling almost \$6,490 were sent out in April, with the next round totaling \$3500 going out in July. Year to date bonuses total \$15,380, and since its start in October 2019, \$27,400 has been paid out to recruiters. We have an additional \$8800 waiting to be paid but are missing tax information for those recruiters. We are working cross-functionally with Finance to facilitate these payments.

The Longest Day/Alzheimer's Association Partnership

Despite the COVID-19 lockdown, ACBL members and clubs formed 275 fundraising teams to raise money for the Alzheimer's Association. So far more than \$631,000 has been raised, and the donations are still coming in. Included in that total is a donation of \$32,333.86 from Bridge

Base online, a portion of the fees they collected from ACBL games over the weekend.

Clubs were allowed to run Virtual Games on the weekend of The Longest Day, June 20 and 21, that awarded upgraded masterpoints. Sanction fees were increased to \$4 per table, 100% of which will be donated to the Alzheimer's Association for U.S. clubs and The Alzheimer Society of Canada for Canadian clubs.

Fundraising efforts of teams, along with how the game of bridge relates to brain health, were reported widely in local news outlets (see Public Relations above).

Cooperative Advertising Program

The Cooperative Advertising Program (CAP). CAP will reimburse 50% of the cost of an ad campaign up to a maximum of \$500 per reimbursement (for qualifying ads). As of July 6, we have reimbursed \$19,681 to 51 clubs and teachers. Average reimbursement in 2020 is \$385.90. Reimbursements are running about 28% lower than the same time in 2019, and with the lack of face-to-face classes, most advertising has ceased. We are still receiving submissions from some clubs and teachers promoting online lessons via traditional as well as targeted Facebook ads, but we expect to finish the year well under last year's total reimbursement of \$54,856.

Education

Best Practices Teacher Certification Program

The Best Practices Teacher Certification Program was rolled out in early 2018. This program has replaced the previous Teacher Accreditation Program and focuses on training teachers how to teach rather than what to teach.

Optional proficiency assessments are offered after each workshop to allow participants to earn the new Best Practices Teacher Certification. To date, 243 teachers have earned the certification. Best Practices teachers receive a gold pin, exclusive marketing materials and are highlighted in the Find-a-Teacher search results on ACBL's website.

All 2020 workshops were cancelled, but through a grant from the ACBL Educational Foundation, we are working with the original developer to create the ACBL Online Teacher Certification Workshop that focuses on how to use online tools in the most effective way to teach bridge as well as teaching best practices that will apply when face-to-face classes resume. Like the in-person workshop, the online program will be highly interactive for the participants and will stress active student participation.

School Bridge Program

Programs requesting supplies	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall
College	3	20	15	29	3	20	15	29	9	
High	11	29	20	11	11	29	20	11	6	
Middle	57	68	32	43	57	68	32	43	10	
Elementary	14	99	66	47	14	99	66	47	30	
Total	301		263		309		225		55	

Teacher Stipends	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
US	\$69,750	\$46,686	\$43,950	\$33,300	\$14,000
Canada	\$28,093	\$27,665	\$20,650	\$14,000	\$3,500
Total	\$97,843	\$74,351	\$64,600	\$47,300	\$17,500

For 2019 we sent supplies to support 2740 students taking bridge lessons in K-12. To date in 2020, we have sent supplies to support 827 students. COVID-19 closures hit right around spring break, and the majority of students did not return to their schools or bridge classes.

College Programs

For the 2019/2020 academic year, we worked with nearly 50 schools by supporting student bridge clubs and coaches with stipends and bridge supplies thanks to a generous grant from the ACBL Educational Foundation. Virtually all programs shut down due to COVID-19 after spring break, though some schools, such as Georgetown University, have continued lessons and games online via Zoom and Bridge Base Online (BBO).

In addition, through a partnership with BBO, college students have access to the College Bridge Online (CBO) Club, a free and exclusive online bridge club which offers daily individual practice tournaments, free robot rental and bimonthly special tournaments with masterpoints prizes. With over 94,000 individual entries since October 2017, these online games have become quite popular with college students.

Two online team tournaments and one pair event were held in the spring to award trips to the Bridge Bowl in Montreal, and six teams and eleven pairs won travel packages. Unfortunately, the event was cancelled due to COVID-19. Since then, several colleges have banded together and organized their own online team championship to be played this summer. ACBL will provide tournament directors for the semifinals and finals. Finals will award masterpoints, and we will announce the winners via email and social media. The 2021 Bridge Bowl is scheduled to be held in Providence RI, July 22-24, 2021. Online tournaments to award travel packages will begin in February 2021.

In late spring, we held a contest in which college students could submit potential designs for a college bridge bookbag. After review of entries by the department and a segment of the ACBL staff at large, a winner was selected. The winner will work with the Graphic Designer to fit the design for use on bookbags, which will be available to college bridge students in Fall 2020.

2020 Youth NABC

The Youth NABC in Montreal was cancelled due to COVID-19. We are planning on holding the 2021 event in Providence RI July 22-24, 2021. Registration information will be in January at acbl.org/ynabc. In the meantime, we will be holding a day of online youth events on Saturday, July 25. The free events will consist of a two-session open pairs event and two single-session cardroom games for newer players with fewer than 20 masterpoints.

Lifelong Learning

In 2019, more than 1100 students took bridge lessons through 57 programs at 37 college or university lifelong learning programs. To date in 2020, we have supported 16 classes. Due to COVID-19 lockdowns, many spring and summer classes did not occur, but we do have a few tentatively scheduled for fall if classes resume. In addition, a few schools are offering online classes.

ACBL is an officially recognized Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) curriculum resource. In addition to OLLI, we also support bridge through several other unassociated lifelong learning programs.