

GNTs are heading.....
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GNTs Recap, Review, Resolve

The District 14 GNT finals, held two weeks ago in New Brighton, were a rousing?! success on a number of fronts:

1. Event profits exceeded \$3000 which means over \$750 for each winning team from this event alone. Last year each team received only \$624 from the entire GNT cycle.
2. Arne Garvander, who reached the finals of the Flight C event, became a Life Master
3. 33 teams entered in the GNT competition compared to 10 teams last year. This bodes well for the Metro area to host the event next year. Tony Ames deserves many, many thanks for helping put teams together, including some that reached the knockouts and finals.
4. Exciting upsets occurred on Sunday morning in both Flights A and B which reinforce the power of "grass roots" competition: if you play well you have a chance to earn a trip to the Nationals.
5. Great hospitality coordinated by Judy Nassar, and Sunday breakfast/coffee hosted by units 103/ & 178.

The event was not without some challenges to be addressed before the next District finals:

1. The Houston Nationals began right after our event and I've yet to be able to get our full results posted either on the ACBL website. or the Minnesota Bridge blog until now.
2. The large increase in teams delayed the event start, particularly in Flights B & C, which pinched the available time for a leisurely supper break.
3. 4 board matches in B & C led to a long delay in posting winners, and have VP issues.
4. The Sunday Swiss had only 8 teams.
5. There was significant confusion regarding the \$11 surcharge for those who didn't play in a Unit Final (Only one or two players, both from Iowa, did play in a Unit Final). As the Unit 178 GNT coordinator I will work to have a Unit, or preferably joint 103/178 Unit GNT final next year so that we have something to win for the \$11 we are charged.

I have just been appointed to replace Bruce Burns as the new District 14 GNT coordinator. Here are my goals and plans for the competition:

1. Unlike the North American Pairs, the ACBL does not subsidize the GNTs. The GNTs may be a dying event, but I want to breathe life into the subsidy for our winning teams, enough to cover airfare and a couple of hotel nights. My goal, which I believe is attainable: **subsidize each team at least \$1600** or \$400/player (4-person teams).
2. The cut from double digit-sized fields in **Flights B & C** to 4 teams is too severe. A full **Round Robin Swiss Final** with pre-duplicated hands for these two flights on Sunday would be a more fair competition.
3. The Swiss Team Sectional concept, intertwined with GNT finals, has to be rethought. Can we get a **15-team Sunday Swiss** for those who did not reach the GNT finals?
4. We'll start the event on Saturday earlier with **pre-registration required** at least 30 minutes before game time. Directors can get a movement determined and a more efficient start to ensure plenty of time for a relaxed dinner.
5. Let's **encourage Units to hold GNT Unit finals** and incentivize play in them beyond the gold points received for overall finishes.
6. Updated & comprehensive **Conditions of Contest**. A draft of new CofCs has been done. Look for them online soon. Email me if you are eager to provide comments. I welcome assistance in making the GNTs the best event possible.

There are vexing issues, venue and date being the most difficult. Next year's **district finals** will be **later in the Spring** when weather is less of an issue...when is the big problem. Look for a survey re. attendance consequences of scheduling the event over Mother's Day weekend.

District 14 covers a lot of territory in nine units. Determining a venue for the GNTs is no easy task. The potential of online play should be explored. Comparing the waning participation at Fort Dodge over the last number of years to this year's attendance in New Brighton was striking.

Please email me if you have feedback about this year's event. Please let me know what you think, and how I can help make GNTs even more fun, fair, and the kind of event you want to play in.