

Unit 142 Board Meeting

May 22, 2025 at Rodef Shalom

The Unit 142 Board Meeting will be held on May 22nd at Rodef Shalom after the game. The game begins at 11:00.

Attendance: Ron Franck (President), Mike Pascal (Treasurer), Maureen Loeb (Secretary), Robyn Fennel, Jim Gump, David Loeb, June Threlkeld

President's Remarks

Ron Franck expressed appreciation for the efforts to get students to clubs, and emphasized the importance of making sectionals and the regional welcoming to new players.

Secretary's Report

The minutes from the March 17th Board Meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report

Michael Pascal sent the Treasurer's Report to board members prior to the meeting. The unit is in good shape financially.

Committee Reports

- Education

Bill Holt submitted a written report.

Classes currently ongoing in Mt. Lebanon, Monroeville and North Hills.

Supervised play ongoing in Mt. Lebanon, Glenshaw, and now Sewickley

#1 Target: Evening classes at Rodef. Could catch this 15213/15217 geography and also enable marketing to the universities.

#2 Target: HS program teaching teachers ("Jump Start")

Target: Recruit players from unsanctioned senior center games

Target: Fox Chapel library

Target: Mon Valley

* I propose we Pay anyone \$50 per 2 hour class to be the Team Leader for these classes. 7 sessions, 3 semesters. Make \$1000!!!

* I proposed we offer Free Sectional entries for helpers?

We hope to offer Beginner classes this Fall on a weeknight in Sewickley, day TBD

A motion to offer one free Sectional entry to volunteer helpers was seconded and approved.

- Membership

Maureen Loeb reported the ACBL's "In-and-Out Transactions" report is being used to publicize rank changes on the Unit website. The report provides a list of new players and players who have moved into the Unit. Maureen suggested the Board welcome these new players to the Unit. Maureen's suggestion was viewed favorably.

- IN/Publicity/Marketing/Facebook

Terri Tunick was not able to attend the meeting and didn't provide a written report.

- Tournaments

Ron Franck reported that Robyn is running the Partnership Desk for the Summer Sectional. Bill Holt is working on the schedule. Hospitality will be catered one day of the tournament. The approach taken in the NLM Sectional will be used for the Summer Sectional's limited games. The Sectional will offer prizes. Need to investigate whether Alex needs help if there are 4 simultaneous events.

- Special Games

David Loeb reported that only 3 clubs had accepted the offer to host Unit Championships. Clubs wishing to host Unit Championships for their players will be given an opportunity to host more Unit Championships.

In Unit 142, only the South Pittsburgh Bridge Club and the Greensburg Morning Bridge Club have registered to hold a Longest Day game fundraiser for the Alzheimer's Association. The lack of participation from other clubs is disappointing considering the financial support the Unit provides to clubs.

We are reaching out clubs to encourage participation in STaC weeks, NAP, Longest Day, Instant Matchpoint games, Unit Championships, Go Local events, and other special games.

- Pro-Am

June Threlkeld provided a report on the Pro-Am which raised over \$12,000 for the Alzheimer's Association and reviewed lessons learned from the event. June's report is appended to these minutes.

- Club Liaison

Jim Gump reported on his outreach to Club Managers to better understand how they are using the Unit's financial support, and how the Unit can better support clubs.

- Website and Newsletter

David Loeb reported the website is operating smoothly. Work is focusing on promoting

tournaments and club events. Added forms for the partnership desk and mentoring. The website is well positioned to support calls to action from promotions on social media.

The focus of upcoming newsletters will be on the Summer Sectional and the RONI Regional, and welcoming new players to clubs. David asked the Board to submit articles for inclusion in the newsletter.

New Business

- Pittsburgh Regional Update

Due to D5 delays processing the date change, the date for submitting an ad in the Bridge Bulletin was missed. We are asking for an exception to be made. The Regional will be welcoming to new and intermediate players. The schedule includes a newcomer day with special events and prizes.

We are working with D5 to offer a breakfast coupon for bridge players staying at the DoubleTree. We are working to assume operational and financial responsibility for Pittsburgh Regionals. We will strategize before the June D5 Board Meetings in Cleveland.

- Recap of NLM Sectional

Maureen Loeb reported the NLM Sectional demonstrated that offering a 199er and an NLM event while giving the director the discretion to organize the game based on attendance reliably attracted new and intermediate players, allowing limited games to reliably make.

The NLM Sectional averaged 7.25 tables per session, as compared to the 5.9 tables per session average in the 2024 Sectionals (excluding the 5 sessions which were canceled).

Maureen's report is appended to these minutes.

- Club Support Funds:

Currently the Unit incentivizes the number of games which was critical after the Covid shutdown. The Unit Board discussed changing the incentive program to increase focus on new players and limited games.

A motion to change the Stipend Fund Criteria for Clubs Policy as follows:

The following changes take effect on July 1st.

- The Club Support payment for a limited game is \$12 per session held. This applies to any sanctioned game with an upper limit which is at or below 750 masterpoints.
- The Club Support payment for a sanctioned open game is \$12 per session held.

The motion was approved.

Next Board Meeting

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for July 8th before the South Pittsburgh Bridge Club game at Beth El.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the Board Meeting was made and approved.

2025 PBA Pro-Am Benefiting the Alzheimer's Association Event Recap

The Pro-Am Committee is pleased to report the event raised \$12,256.72 for the Alzheimer's Association, and that players enjoyed the event. The financial details are listed below. There are several opportunities to improve the event. These are discussed in the Lessons Learned section on page 2.

Tables	25	
Game Fees	\$1,325 (this is \$75 higher than it should be for 50 pairs).	
Expenses	\$673.28	
	Directing	\$185 (\$35 higher than quoted)
	Rent	\$225
	Food	\$203.28
	ACBL Fee	\$60
	Beverage	\$0 (\$50 donated by Ken Bergman)
Net from Game	+ \$651.72	
Silent Auction	\$1,100	
Donation Bowl	\$505	
Pledges	\$10,000	Thanks to the generosity of Philip Goulding & Paul O'Neill
Direct Donations Total		\$11,605
Donations including proceeds from the Pro-Am		\$12,256.72

Lessons Learned

1. Entry Sales: The process of selling entries was slow because the director pre-assigned tables and the provided table assignment list was sorted by table, not name. This forced the cashiers to have to look through the table list for each sale, resulting in a long line which blocked access to the Silent Auction table.

Recommend we assign tables to a strat, and then allow the cashiers to assign the tables based on masterpoints. Selling entries in advance would also help.

2. Announcements: A microphone was not available, making it difficult for the 100 players to hear the announcements.

Recommend we have a microphone available for large events.

3. Breaks: There was only one break during the event, and the announcement of the break was inaudible to many players. Breaks are important for comfort, opportunities for players to socialize, and to raise money in the silent auction>

Recommend we have 2 breaks which are properly announced.

4. Stratification: The stratification by the Am made the event more friendly to players with less than 100 points and players with less than 500 points, but isn't optimal for players with 500 to 2,000 points.

Recommend we follow the ACBL's recommendation of using a "4 is Enough" approach to balancing the field where players are divided into 3 groups. The top group can play only with players in the bottom group. The middle group can play with each other or the bottom group. The bottom group can play with anyone. 2000+ / 750-2000 / 0-750 may be the right groupings, but an analysis of this year's results may help determine the best ranges.

5. Game Setup and Operations: The setup of the game deviated from instructions:
 - Used a Mitchell movement instead of a web movement, leaving players 2 boards short of the 26 expected
 - Raised the ceiling of the C to 200 and the B strat to 800. Ceilings of 100 and 500 were specified in the setup instructions to make the event more friendly to 99ers & 499ers.
 - Obtained a Unit Grass Roots Fund sanction without Unit authorization using 1 of the 4 allowed for the Unit, costing an additional \$2.75 table which would otherwise be donated to the Alzheimer's Association.
 - Associating the game with the director's sanction rather than the Unit's sanction
 - Matchpointing the game within sections rather than across sections
 - Failure to control the noise levels and the pace of play
 - Failure to schedule 2 breaks and to properly announce the breaks

David Loeb was able to resolve the game setup problems with some post-game directing work on Sunday morning, but the error in the selection of the movement could not be fixed.

Recommend choosing a director who will follow the game setup instructions, manage pace of play and noise levels, and follow setup instructions. Ideally the director will donate their services, or at least not charge a fee which is above market.

2025 NLM Sectional Benefiting Bridge for Brain Health Event Recap

Bridge for Brain Health, a 501(c)(3) charity which uses bridge to promote cognitive health, thanks the Pittsburgh Bridge Association for sanctioning the Pittsburgh NLM Sectional held on May 7-8 which raised \$384.60 which the charity will use to promote bridge.

Background: 499er events didn't reliably make at the 2024 Summer and Fall Sectionals. See below for a list of 499er events which were scheduled, but not held. This forced 499ers to play in open events.

2024 Summer Sectional

- Thursday afternoon 499er pairs
- Friday afternoon 499er pairs
- Saturday 499er Swiss

2024 Fall Sectional

- Saturday afternoon 499er pairs
- Sunday 499er Swiss

When a player who wants to play in a limited game is forced to play in an open game, there is a risk the player will not make the effort to play in other limited games at the tournament.

Providing compelling events for newer players is critical to the future of bridge. The South Pittsburgh Bridge Club, which is owned by Bridge for Brain Health, requested a sanction for a NLM Sectional to test whether the following approach would be attractive to new and intermediate players:

- Guaranteeing that players would not be moved to an open game
- Offering a 199er game to attract newer players
- Offering an evening session to attract working and student players

Lessons Learned:

- The NLM Sectional demonstrated that offering a 199er and an NLM event while giving the director the discretion to organize the game based on attendance reliably attracted new and intermediate players, allowing limited games to reliably make.

The NLM Sectional averaged 7.25 tables per session, as compared to the 5.9 tables per session average in the 2024 Sectionals (excluding the 5 sessions which were canceled).

- The 199er events were attractive to newer players. Entries in the afternoon 199er games were higher (11.5 tables) than entries in the NLM afternoon games (7 tables). In the evening sessions, there were not enough NLM tables, the director combined the 199er game and NLM game, and changed the stratification to protect the 199ers. This

allowed all players to enjoy a fair game.

- The evening sessions didn't attract working players and students as hoped. Wednesday night drew 6 tables which is similar to the table counts at the supervised play games in Glenshaw and in Mt. Lebanon.

Evening attendance may have been better if we had less time between sessions and/or offered dinner rather than snacks between sessions. A morning and afternoon schedule may have drawn more players, but we continue to feel schedules which accommodate working players and students are vital to growing the bridge community.

- The 199er events motivated at least 5 players to register to ACBL Guest Memberships.
- The focus on making the Sectional more festive with welcoming gifts, raffles, free club game tickets, and a prize desk was well received. The free play tickets helped encourage play at our club games.
- Using a Local Director rather than an ACBL employee Tournament Director provided a substantial savings, especially when the Director donates their services. The Sectional would have lost money if an ACBL Director was hired.

Financial Summary:

Tables	29	
Masterpoints	63.58 earned by 40 players	
Game Fees	\$1,680	
Expenses	\$1,295.40	
	Directing	donated
	Prizes	donated
	Rent	\$683.76 (includes 8 table donation)
	Food	\$409.13
	ACBL Fee	\$91
	Printing	\$111.51
Net from Game	+ \$384.60	
Proceeds to Bridge for Brain Health		\$384.60