

CONTRACT BRIDGE

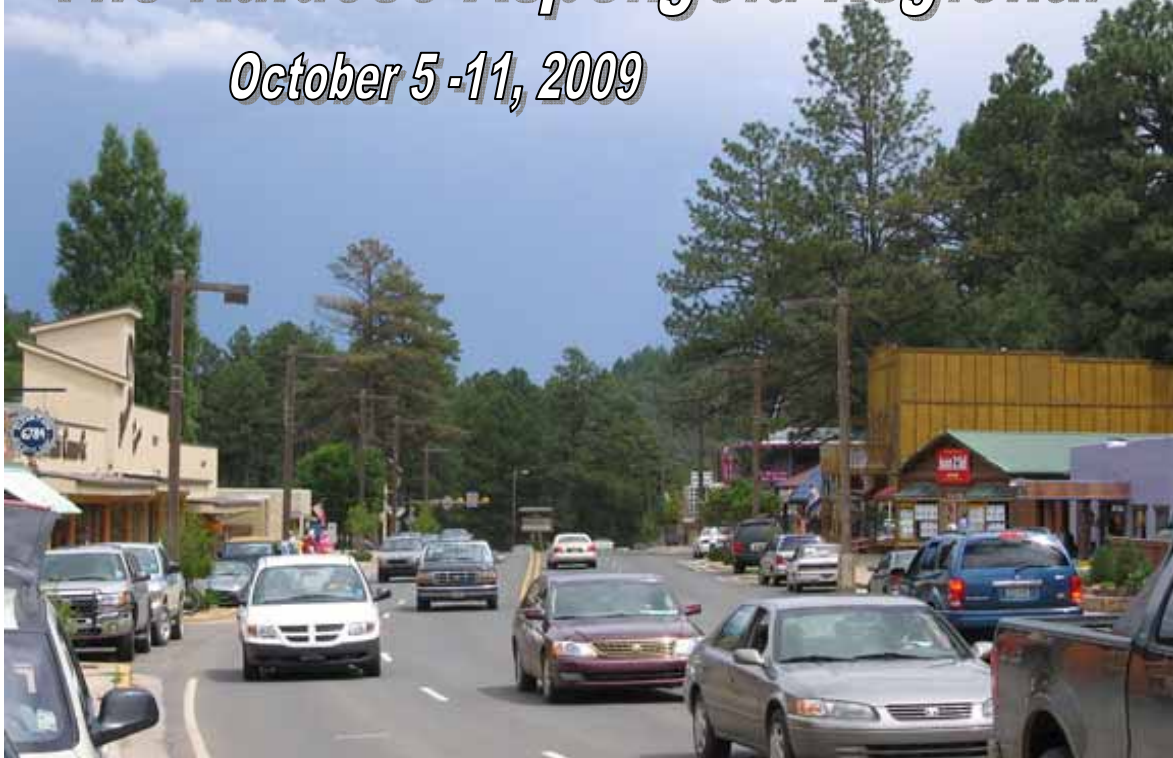
Forum



Volume 84 Issue 9—September 2009

The Ruidoso Aspengold Regional

October 5-11, 2009



The Ruidoso Aspengold Regional is scheduled October 5-11 at the Ruidoso

Convention Center in Ruidoso, New Mexico. Host hotel is The Lodge at Sierra Blanca, right next to the tournament site.

The tournament web site at www.ruidosobridge.com has more information. And please check out the half page ad elsewhere this issue. The schedule is chock full with plenty of choices - pairs games and teams games (and naturally, plenty of Knockouts).

This is a different atmosphere for a bridge tournament, compared to most regionals. The Internet Wikipedia encyclopedia even

describes Ruidoso as a "village," although also noting that it has experienced explosive growth in the last decade, currently being one of the three fastest growing communities in New Mexico.

There are plenty of interesting attractions in the area (one to three hours driving time). There is Carlsbad (caves), Roswell (aliens), and Alamogordo (White Sands National Monument and Space Center) if you need a day off from the competition, or on your way to or from the tournament. Make your plans now.

North American Pairs 2009-2010



By Dale Sweetwood
D17 NAP
Coordinator

Well, it is over! Qualification for the North American Pairs (NAP) competition, that is. Like most of you, I have played in a number of qualification games and I was lucky enough to qualify the first time and several others as well. You might say I am over qualified. And now for the tenth time in the last 12 years I am preparing for the district finals which will be held in Ruidoso on October 9 and 10.

While I have never qualified for the nationals, hope springs eternal and I am sure my partner and I will win it all this year. One year we led the competition at the half, but unfortunately a shoddy defense on a hand or two led to our downfall and we finished out of the money (top two for the money and number three for an invite to the big show).

For those of you that have never played in the district finals, it is a lot of fun. The competition is fierce, the play intense, and you'll never experience a greater thrill

than when you snooker the field with outstanding play and get those top boards. You will meet old friends and competitors from other tournaments and make new friends as you meet the challenges good competition creates.

Remember, "You can't win a national NAP title in Reno unless you play at Ruidoso."

Now for a little administrative business. Last year four of the nine pairs that ended up qualifying for the nationals could have been prevented from even playing in the District 17 finals. How, you ask? They were not on the qualification lists submitted by the unit NAP coordinators. That list is checked at the start of the finals competition. If you are not on that list it is possible you might not be able to play, even if you know you are qualified. In the past while many unit NAP coordinators (Tucson, Colorado Springs and Mesa, among others) provided superb reports, others were incomplete, shoddy and difficult to read.

Check with your unit president and your NAP coordinator and make sure he or she has done his or her job. Don't be left out. Unit NAP coordinators and unit presidents have been asked to file their reports no later than September 21.

¿Qué Pasa?

By Jerry Fleming
D17 National Board Representative
2009 ACBL President

¿What's happening?

As you receive this, the Phoenix Regional and the Western Conference Summer Fun STAC have just concluded. The final District 17 tournament of the year is the Ruidoso Aspengold Regional, slated for October 5-11 at the Convention Center. This has become a very popular tournament site, despite the fact that we rarely hold tournaments there. Besides the regional, Ruidoso is also the site of the North American Pairs district finals, where the winners will have the opportunity to advance to the national finals in Reno next March.

The San Diego NABC is scheduled for November 26-December 6, and the Great Western Holiday STAC is December 7-13.

Significant Rulings

During the recent Washington NABC, two issues worthy of note occurred. First, in a fairly early round of the Spingold KO Teams, a cell phone rang in the playing area. Unlike the "Please turn it off" that we're used to hearing, the offender's team was assessed a 12 IMP penalty, and it cost them the match! Second, a slow play complaint was lodged against a pair in the semifinals of the Spingold. A committee heard the complaint at 1:15 a.m., and both players were placed on probation.

Perhaps these are isolated decisions that will soon be forgotten, but I remain an optimist, and hope that these actions are a sign that finally, finally the ACBL, the directing staff and the players will start paying heed to the rules we have on the books. The cell phone rule has been on the books for some time now. Yet you hear a phone almost every session of a regional and at most sectionals. At NABCs, there are announcements made, and for the major events, signs are conspicuously posted indicating that electronic devices are not even permitted in the playing areas.

Slow play affects most of us. It's annoying being pushed past the time limit by an opponent who takes forever to bid or play, especially when the director comes by and admonishes everyone at the table! But until the rules are rigidly enforced, we won't see these problems go away. The cell phone issue was written up in the daily bulletin. I hope both decisions get appropriate publicity.

Future Issues?

My understanding is that the ACBL Competitions and Conventions committee will do a study of the present state of the "alert" procedure, and update it by adding or deleting understandings that must be alerted. A simple memo of clarification of this issue would be extremely helpful. In my experience, many, many players don't really know what is alertable and what is not.

Convention cards have changed over the years, and the latest ones downloadable from ACBL are current, but Grandpa Jones and Aunt Mabel have been a partnership for decades, and still use convention cards they filled out many years ago, maintained in nice plastic envelopes adorned with stickers. People still alert announcements and vice versa.

Another area deserving of a review is the skip bid warning. Some people use the "stop" card, but many don't. And few people pause when a skip bid is made, whether or not the "stop" card is used, unless the bid made gives them a real problem.

If you have other issues like this you feel we should address, please let me know.

ACBL Board Meeting

The ACBL Board of Directors met July 20-23 at the Washington NABC. Richard DeMartino from Connecticut (District 25) was elected 2010 ACBL President. A motion to implement I/N STACs was resoundingly defeated. The board voted to establish ACBL-wide races for masterpoints won in Internet bridge competition, voted not to devote a page in the *Bridge Bulletin* to Internet activities, but agreed to consider putting Internet bridge activities on the ACBL web site.

Former members who haven't paid dues for over 90 days can pay to get their points earned in an unpaid status recorded. Such members who purchase a 3-year membership will have the points recorded free of charge. If the lapse is less than 90 days, payment will be effective the day payment was originally due, as though there is no break, and points earned in the interim will be recorded.

Remember, the new Life Master regulations are effective on January 1, 2010 not only for players who first join ACBL after that date, but also for any Non-Life Master whose dues are not current on that date!

Please pass this on to players in your area who are in this category. Thanks to a suggestion from a District 17 player, ACBL financials will now be posted on the ACBL web site on a regular basis. The

(See ¿Qué Pasa on page 9)

New Deadline for October ScoreCard

Attention unit publicity people: The deadline for the October issue of *ScoreCard* has been moved up from the normal September 5 deadline to August 25.

Please plan to have all ad copy and stories in by that date for the October issue of *ScoreCard*.

Ad copy, e-mailed only, to the publisher (see right hand column, page two) with a copy to the editor and all stories (regular e-mail, no attachment) to the *ScoreCard* editor at:

jaredjohnsonco@aol.com
Thank you for your help.