



## Sun Valley Bridge at the YMCA

I am outraged, as a bridge teacher and director at Sun Valley Bridge Club # 266106, at the sudden policy forbidding people to play in a virtual club unless they have played in the club physically within the past 15 months.

The effect is to sacrifice friendships that spread across state lines and the financial ability of smaller clubs to survive. It will further isolate many people who already are isolated because of the pandemic.

If there are a few clubs “poaching” members from larger, more expensive clubs, surely ACBL can find a better way to deal with this. ACBL appears unconcerned about smaller clubs and the thousands of players who are affected by this one-sided policy.

The virtual club policy states, “The social aspects of bridge cannot be understated. ... a large majority of our players want to play with the people whom they know.” We do not view playing with friends who currently are in other geographic areas, all of whom have contacted us rather than vice versa, as “poaching” players.

Has the ACBL considered these factors?

- People want to partner with friends and relatives across the country at a time when the ways to keep in touch are limited. This is a key reason we have had so many guests. All of our “guests” are people who have a relationship with our club.
- Online students would like to play in games run by their teachers.

- It is stated that some members are choosing to play in less expensive clubs. Is this because they are facing personal financial hardships because of the pandemic? Also, what has gone wrong at the larger clubs that people must be coerced into playing there?

Sun Valley Bridge is located in Sun Valley, Idaho, which is both a world-renowned ski resort and summer haven.

Many of our players from all over the world, have vacation homes here, and are friends with local residents. They can and have stayed in Sun Valley for months, playing bridge at Sun Valley Bridge. These players and others are enraged at the ACBL's thoughtless policy of not permitting them to play at our virtual game, even though they have played many times at our club, just because they were not here during the specified time frame. We have one woman who may be unable to play with her husband because he was ill when they were in Sun Valley last summer.

In addition to the fact that the policy itself is outrageous, it was implemented with complete disrespect for both ACBL members and club managers. Club managers and directors were never notified. We only learned about it when we started receiving texts and phone calls from members who were irate at us because they were blocked. One member has told us that even the BBO help desk did not know what was happening.

Furthermore, ACBL keeps telling us that it has limited resources because of the pandemic. The amount of resources that have been devoted to this is mind-boggling. Why is ACBL creating obstacles for clubs, players and directors across the country? It should be helping ALL clubs and players, not just owners of big-city clubs.

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