

2018 District 14 GNT Champions

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Twenty-five teams competed this year: 3 Open, 4 A, 12 B, and 6 C teams. Sectional games were held on Friday night (Pair/Team) game and a two-session Sunday regionally rated Swiss for the benefit of the Grass Roots Fund. The 14 table Pair/Team game was healthy, the 7 team Swiss was disappointing.

Jade Barrett's team did not survive to the Open KO final. Bob & Cindy Balderson, Paul Meerschaert, and Carole Miner bested Terry Beckman, John Koch, Rob Schachter and Mike Cassel in the 56 board final.



Bob

Cindy

Carole Paul

In Flight A teams played a round-robin Saturday to eliminate 1. Last year's winners, Mark Patton & Joe Pieper from Iowa, and Vern Swing and Bruce Boje from the Twin Cities faced off against most of last year's second place squad: Kerry Holloway, Kurt Schaeffer, Harry Sapienza and Mark Krusemeyer.



Joe Pieper

Mark Patton

Bruce Boje

Vern Swing

Twelve teams, including last year's winners from Iowa City played an 8-round, 6-board Swiss to qualify four teams for a 28-board KO semifinal. A Minnesota team with two of last year's second place finishers, Joe Koester and Paul Nesvig now playing with Irwin Heisler and Gary Knippenberg roared with nearly 70VPs in the second half to come back from below average to capture the top spot in the Swiss.

A Nebraska squad led by Jamie Radcliffe finished second on Saturday. A Twin City team captained by Diane Henson lay in third and last year's winners, Eli Jolley, Scott Spitze, Eric & Elizabeth Mckee, were fourth overall, the last KO semifinalist. Koester beat Henson in one semifinal and the two out-of-state teams battled with Iowans winning. Koester had a decent lead at the half that was eroded but not eliminated by the Iowans. The winners disappeared before a picture could be taken.

Six Flight C teams played 5 10-board matches over two sessions to determine the Flight C GNT championship. There were two teams from the Twin Cities, one from Rochester, MN, won from St. Cloud, MN and one from Bismarck, ND. The sixth squad included three students from Carleton College and one from the University of Minnesota. Their 69VPs on a 50 average will have them on their way to Atlanta this summer with a \$2,000 travel subsidy.



Jeffrey Boitnott

Thomas Scruggs

Alexander Frieden

Sean McNally

Congratulations to all of our champions who will be competing this July in Atlanta. There will be a couple of subs and augmentees, so that the ACBL website will not necessarily have the final rosters until June.

District 14 took a leap in 2015 by guaranteeing a significant bump in awards to the champions of the grass roots events, the NAPs and GNTs. Our annual obligation to our district champions is about \$13,000. The funds that support these awards include NAP district final profit, all GNT related activity, and Grass Roots Funds.

The District board also granted the GNT district finals a regular weekend into the future at its last meeting: the first weekend in May. My motion to use Grass Roots Funds to offset travel costs failed.

The host units, 103 and 178, are contributing a total of \$1,000 to supplement district final income which will again be below \$2,000. It is a significant advantage for players not to travel, book hotels, find restaurants etc. I've no indication that any other unit is willing to step up to support the event.

What strategies can we employ to increase the pool of funds for our champions. If GNT activity can only raise ~\$6,000, Grass Roots Funds can be designated to education, and our Grass Roots Fund raise lags behind the league average we may have to continually dip into the D14 treasury to make up shortfalls.

A September STAC was authorized to support our district's special events was held last year, but I'm not yet aware of how much was raised. The D14 Board will have some thorny issues to mull over at the end of the month.