

Sunny Skies! & Storm Clouds Grand National Teams Report May 2016

Mike Cassel, D14 GNT Coordinator **May 28, 2016**
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The 2015-2016 GNT cycle which has just concluded was the most profitable in this century. Club qualifying table count blossomed to \$5255. The Nebraska Units, led by Jonathan Cohn, dramatically increased their club qualifying games AND showed up, in numbers, for the district finals. This was the first year since 2009 that there were enough teams in both Flights B & C to hold a Swiss team event on Saturday (11+ teams). Flight count for Open, A, B, & C were 2, 6, 15, & 13. 36 teams is a record for my tenure (since 2009). Profit from the co-located special sectional for the GNTs neared 4,000. GNT activities will actually contribute to the Grass Roots pool this year rather than take from. The GNT cycle produced over \$9,000!

League Level Recent Developments:

A number of motions affecting the GNTs were recently passed at ACBL Board of Directors meetings. The decisions were highlighted on page 3 of Thursday's Gopher Bulletin:

1. District Champions in Flights A, B, & C will not have to pay entry fees for the first two days.
2. 20% of a district's Grass Roots Fund raise will be retained by the ACBL for redistribution based on a formula that includes the population of the district (large, medium, and small (D14 is small)), and how effective a district is in raising Grass Roots Fund. Districts whose GRF\$/District member are weakest stand to lose some of the funds raised. Conversely, a district whose fund raise is well above the league mean/member stand to gain handsomely from the 20% pool.

District Level Perspective

I began serving as the GNT Coordinator in the 2008-2009 cycle

D final venue	year	Dfinal Team #s	Dfinal sur-charges	Surch \$	Unit Final \$	Club Qual. Game income	Net GNT Revenue	Local Unit Contrib DFinal	NAP District Final Net	GNT Fund Raiser	Grass-roots Fund
Ft.Dodge	2008	8			0	2040	2700				
Mpls	2009	35	138	\$1,518	\$96	2820	5920	200			
Mpls	2010	31	85	\$935	\$522	3430	7000	566			
Clive	2011	23	31	\$341	\$444	3310	5640	0			
Mpls	2012	25	58	\$638	\$255	3358	6359	768	935	380	
Mpls	2013	20	46	\$506	\$204	3635	5786	520	1271	328*	1300
Gopher	2014	23	87	\$967	96	3525		lunch1,000	3125	170	1778
Rochester	2015	16	70	\$770	48	2860	1900	550	~1,000	312	788
Omaha	2016	36	146	\$1617	0	5255	3960	\$0 hospit.+	3,000	215	4100

A D14 Grass Roots Committee was established although it is moribund. Including the recently received \$4100 check the district has raised about \$8,000 since the Fund's inception in mid 2012. Grass Roots funds are designated for use in promoting the grass roots events: the GNTs and NAPs. This does not mean just boosting subsidies. It means developing programs and strategies to increase participation in Grass Roots events. **This committee must be reconstituted so that recommendations to the district board on future allocations can have some legitimacy.** Turning our newer players onto grass roots events will help club players become tournament players. If we don't source new tournament players it won't be long before tournaments wither.

Four clubs/units need to be honored for their club qualifying efforts this cycle:

The Bridge Center of St. Paul went from 20 tables in play to 170! Many thanks to Kim Hayward, the club, and U103's new GNT Coordinator, Keith Thompson.

The University DBC has become a teams only club it seems and went from 71 to 167 tables. WTG Bob Otto

The Lincoln club's table count popped from 7 to 72 tables

Unit 241 subsidized Friendly 16 and House of Cards by absorbing some of the table fees. The unit went from 39 tables to 109. Can this blooming boom hold in next year's cycle?

Issues Resolved and Yet to Be Resolved

RESOLVED: The first weekend in May is the D14 GNT District Final Weekend.

RESOLVED: The GNTs are no longer 'self-supporting'

Boosting GNT District final attendance via a concomitant sectional or regional makes sense and we are negotiating to locate in 2017 in the Clear Lake/Mason City area with a sectional to accompany the finals. Standalone district finals do not encourage travelers from out of the immediate area.

RESOLVED: The district board authorized a STAC for benefit of Grass Roots Activities during the second week of September, **but no one took the reins to get it going this year.** The district board has obligated itself to ~\$13,000 in NAP and GNT champion subsidies. I believe a STAC could help us meet this obligation without having to dip into district coffers. The September tournament schedule needs to be coordinated as Duluth has been holding it's sectional that weekend recently.

RESOLVED: D14 will match free entries for the first two days for our Open Flight GNT champs.

UNRESOLVED: Diligent employment of the Grass Roots Fund sanction.

Last year our raise/member was \$0.94. The league average was \$0.97. Had we been able to garner 30 additional tables of Grass Roots Fund games our share of the withheld dollars would have increased by \$538. We can move from the middle quintile to #2 (at or above the league mean) with a more concerted effort. When the Grass Roots Fund month was moved to May a week of GRFd potential club games was lost to the regional in the Twin Cities metro area. As well, the GNT district finals will soak up a few days at the start of the month. Although we cannot legislate how clubs run their games might we not make a push that all club games, districtwide, during the Gopher Regional week be scheduled across the district as Grass Roots Fund games? I have not been able to get a report on enhanced Grass Roots Fund games at our sectionals from the ACBL, but our club game participation seems low this year.

Ideas for further discussion:

A two-stage district GNT final for Flights B & C. Start at the unit level leading to KO quarterfinals at the district final?

A staggered district final that would allow Flight C teams to play in Flight B, and Flight A teams play in the Open flight.

Split site or online district finals

GNT Fund-Raiser events

The Fund Raiser sanction still lives, but is barely utilized. It's a full sectionally rated game at no increased sanction fee. \$4/table goes not to the ACBL but to D14. Similar to the October Club Appreciation games this sanction, if better utilized could make a significant contribution to the GNT annual cycle.

Shoehorning the GNT discussion to the final few minutes of the D14 Board meetings is unacceptable. I need input from the Board in making site decisions. We should require motions to be presented for distribution with supporting materials when the agenda is disseminated. A dinner meeting is probably insufficient. Will board attendees be willing to give up a session? On Saturday night?

SPRING 2016 MOTIONS

MOTION: Future D14 GNT finals shall, dependent upon affordability, be co-located with a special sectional hosted by U163 in the Clear Lake/Mason City area on the first weekend in May.

Discussion: single site vs. up & down the I35 corridor

MOTION: The district's grass roots committee will make recommendations at each Spring Board meeting on the allocation of funds raised from all GNT related activities, the previous NAP cycle net profit, and the funds raised via Grass Roots Fund games.

MOTION: District 14 policy requiring an \$11 surcharge for district final players who did not participate in a Unit final is rescinded.

This motion passed in Minnetonka this May.