

# **ALL ABOUT MASTERPOINTS**

## **What is the CBAI's masterpoint scheme?**

The purpose of the masterpoint scheme is to provide an objective measure of the playing standard of the members of the CBAI, and to allow us to offer graded competitions, in which participants can expect to compete only against players of approximately the same standard as themselves. It is akin to the handicap system that operates in golf.

A key element of any such system is that its integrity is maintained. In particular, this means (a) that it is important that all of a player's good performances are reported for masterpoint purposes, and (b) that new entrants to the CBAI who have prior bridge experience, from overseas or in an unaffiliated club, need to have their standard assessed on entry. This is relatively straightforward in the cases of entrants from overseas, as most other countries have some similar system. For those migrating from unaffiliated clubs, our practice is to ask the local club or regional officers for an estimate of the player's standard.

## **How are masterpoints calculated?**

There are two categories of masterpoints, local points (LPs) and national points (NPs), with the latter being the more valuable. LPs convert to NPs at the rate of 5,000 to 1. Club, local, congress, and regional competitions award LPs to the top performers; CBAI and IBU national competitions (such as the Holmes Wilson Cup or the Burke Trophy) award NPs to the top performers. The precise number of masterpoints awarded to each participant will depend on a moderately complex calculation based upon the number of participants and the quality of the field. As a general rule, the top quarter of the rankings will earn masterpoints.

## **When are masterpoints adjusted?**

Clubs record their members' masterpoint earnings throughout the season (which runs from 1 September to 31 May), and report them to

CBAI headquarters over the summer months – no later than 31 July, and preferably before that, to allow sufficient time for processing. The same applies to regions and congresses, although as these events are more sporadic, it is common that the masterpoints are submitted immediately or shortly after the event; but even if that is the case, they are not processed until the summer months. If a club does not submit a masterpoint return, then all the members of that club are allocated a flat-rate masterpoint award, based on the approximate standard of its overall membership.

Masterpoints for national competitions are compiled at the conclusion of the relevant competition, and, on the grounds that these events offer the more significant NP awards, are accounted for twice during the season. At 31 December, points earned in competitions since 1 September are applied to the relevant members' accounts, and players and clubs informed of any upgrades that result. Competitions in the second half of the season are dealt with in the summer process, along with the club, regional, and congress returns, and masterpoints are applied prior to 1 September.

### **How are players informed of their masterpoint holdings?**

At the beginning of each season, the CBAI produces an annual membership card and an accompanying statement of masterpoints earned during the prior season. This statement will include the output of all the masterpoint reports received in headquarters – from clubs, regions, congresses, and national events. The card also includes the grade of the member.

## What are the masterpoint bands for the various grades?

Grade	Masterpoints
Novice N2	Up to 1,000 LPs, or 2 years playing, whichever comes first
Novice N1	Up to 2,000 LPs, or 5 years playing, whichever comes first
Intermediate B2	Not a Novice, but less than 1 NP
Intermediate B1	At least 1 NP, but less than 2 NPs
Intermediate A2	At least 2 NPs, but less than 5 NPs
Intermediate A1	At least 5 NPs, but less than 10 NPs
Area Master	At least 10 NPs, but less than 40 NPs
Regional Master	At least 40 NPs, but less than 100 NPs
National Master	At least 100 NPs, but less than 500 NPs
Life Master	At least 500 NPs, but less than 1,000 NPs
Grand Master	More than 1,000 NPs

When it comes to competitions, most are organised using a much simpler grade structure – generally there are events for Novices, for Intermediates, and for Masters. In most instances, players can choose to play at their grade or one grade higher, although a small number of competitions are open only to specific grades (e.g. the Master Pairs, which is confined strictly to Master grades, with no playing up permitted). You can never play in competitions for grades below your own.

## Are there any differences this year with everything being online?

Yes, things are a little different this season, with all the competitions taking place online. Firstly, many clubs have been open to non-members throughout the year, and we have also seen new amalgamations of previously separate clubs. And, because they haven't had to leave their houses, many players have "played out" much more widely than would have been possible in face-to-face bridge. So the club masterpoint manager will have a tougher task than usual trying to identify all the

non-members who have earned masterpoints from their events. This is the reason that you have been asked to supply your NBID (your unique CBAI identifier) when signing up with a new club or playing in open events. They will do their best, and the NBIDs will be a big help, but if you are very anxious to make sure you collect all the masterpoints you are entitled to, it may be advisable to contact the virtual clubs you have played in to make sure they have your records.

Secondly, we have seen a lot of the ubiquitous “robots” appearing in the online events, either as a pair to avoid a sitout or singly to partner a player whose intended partner was unable to play for some reason. It is clearly unfair to rank regular players against robots, for lots of reasons (among the most obvious being that unlike human players, robots never make simple mental errors like forgetting whether there are any trumps outstanding, or what the opening lead was, and also that there are no Novice or Intermediate robots), so our guidance to masterpoint compilers is that all robots should be excluded from the rankings, and that no masterpoints should be awarded to members where they were partnered throughout a competition by a robot (a temporary replacement due to connectivity issues is fine).

Finally, we realise that some clubs have not been active at all this year. As indicated earlier, in normal circumstances the members of any club not submitting a masterpoint return are allocated a flat-rate masterpoint award; for this season, we will regard any club not submitting a return as simply not having played bridge during the season. In respect of those clubs, members will receive only the annual 100 “bonus” LPs that are hard-wired into our processing system. Conversely, given that the clubs that are open are likely to keep their numbers up over the summer months in the current circumstances, we are encouraging them to award masterpoints even for summer bridge this year. So if you want to keep the masterpoint awards going for June, July, and August, you can do so; please include these months in your next season’s return if you do.

**Our club did not keep records of our competitions this year but the members would like masterpoints. Is there anything we can do?**

Yes. As you probably know, BBO runs its own masterpoint scheme, which, while it is not identical to the CBAI's, could be used in an emergency to give at least an indicative figure. As a once-off solution for cases such as this, we are offering clubs the facility to convert the masterpoints won by their members from the BBO model to the CBAI's by multiplying them by 100 and reporting them as LPs. There will be a bit of work to this, as each member's records will need to be looked up individually, by inputting their BBO name into [this screen](#).

The output will look like this – the figure to be converted is the one highlighted. So in this instance, the player would be awarded 1,321 LPs.

Next rank: **4+** 13.43 points to advance

Organization	Points
Bridge Business & Pros	8.36
Contract Bridge Association of Ireland	13.21
	21.57

This conversion process may be done for events up to the end of May 2021, to allow for the situation where records have not been kept; for periods after that, only official CBAI-based masterpoints will be accepted.

**As a player, what do I need to do about masterpoints?**

Nothing, other than, if you are very concerned about collecting all the masterpoints you have earned during the current season, making sure that any virtual club in which you have played has your NBID number. You should also get into the habit of checking your annual statement every year to make sure that no errors have occurred. The Association has multiple members named Paddy Murphy, or Mary Burke, and while all concerned make every effort to be accurate, occasionally points are attributed to the wrong person. As with most errors of this kind, it is

easier to correct them soon after they are made rather than many months later.

Also we are frequently asked “why did I not receive the masterpoints I was due from XYZ event?” The short answer is usually that we did not receive a masterpoint return for the event in question; with more than 550 affiliated clubs, more than 20 congresses per year, and 13 regions running their own competitions and leagues, it is not feasible for us chase up every single masterpoint record and we essentially have to rely on what we are sent.

We hope that this will answer any questions you may have about the operation of the CBAI’s masterpoint scheme. If you want to go into any further detail on anything, you’ll find a full explanatory document on the scheme on [our website](#).