

UNITED STATES BRIDGE FEDERATION CONDITIONS OF CONTEST FOR THE 2024 OPEN UNITED STATES BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS

*Adopted by the Board of Directors of the
United States Bridge Federation*

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2024 Open USBC Conditions of Contest

I. AUTHORITY AND OVERVIEW

These Conditions of Contest may not be changed after commencement of play except for emergency changes. The General Conditions of Contest for USBF events apply to this event but are subject to these Conditions of Contest.

The 2024 Open United States Bridge Championship (USBC) is held under the authority of the United States Bridge Federation (USBF). The USBF has agreed, unless special conditions arise, to nominate the winning team for the 2024 World Bridge Games. This World Championship is scheduled to take place October 21-Nov. 3, 2024, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Under current USBF procedures, if the USBF Board of Directors believes there is any reason not to nominate all of the players on the winning team for the World Bridge Games, the Board will submit the name(s) of any players about whom the Board has questions to the Credentials Committee for its review. The Credentials Committee review shall be limited to the players' ethics, conduct, deportment and hygiene and shall not take into consideration their bridge ability. Normally, the USBF Board will only follow this procedure based on behavior at or after the USBC or information received after the USBC.

A team with a player who is later not invited or approved by the WBF and/or the USBF for any reason (such as residency, conduct, ethics, hygiene, etc.) may be disqualified should it win the 2024 Open USBC.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Registration

Teams enter the event by registering online on the USBF.org website. This link will only work if you are logged in to the USBF site.

1. Guaranteed Entry Date

To assure entry in the 2024 Open USBC, teams must enter on or before 11:59 pm EDT on Tuesday, March 26, 2024.

2. Late Entry Date

Teams may continue to enter until 11:59 EDT on Sunday, April 7, 2024, but only if fewer than 16 teams (counting a team with a bye to the Semifinal as 4 teams and a team with a bye to the Quarterfinal as 2 teams) have entered by March 26.

Entries after March 26, 2024 will be accepted on a provisional basis, and only until 16 teams have entered. If all late entries cannot be accepted, later entries will be rejected before earlier ones.

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B. Roster Changes

1. Before Play Starts

Registered teams may add or subtract players as they wish, (advising the USBF by [sending an email to the USBF Secretary](#)), until April 15, 2024 if there is an online stage, or until April 28, 2024 if there is not an online stage.

2. Between Online and Face-to-Face

After completion of the online stage, teams that are qualified for the Knockout stages of play may make roster changes only subject to the rules set forth in the General Conditions of Contest with the addition that if the change is to a team that qualified based on Positioning Points and the team would still qualify based on Positioning Points after the change, the change is allowed

3. During the KO Stages

No roster changes are allowed after the KO has commenced. Substitutes may be allowed subject to the provisions of the General Conditions of Contest.

C. Date, Schedule, and Length of Matches

1. Online Stages of Play

If more than 16 teams have entered (counting a team with a bye to the Quarterfinal as 2 teams), there will be an online stage to reduce the field to 16 teams. See Section V.B for the format of the online stage.

2. Face-to-Face Stages of Play

If 9 or more teams (counting each team with a bye to the quarterfinal as 2, and each team with a bye to the semifinal as 4) have entered the event, there will be 4 face-to-face 2-day stages of play: Round of 16, Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final. See Section V.C for format of the Round of 16 with 9-15 teams.

D. Prepaid Entry and Fees

The advance entry fee for the 2024 Open USBC is \$500 per team, which covers any online stages as well as the start up costs for the face-to-face stages. The advance entry fee is due by March 26, 2024 and is fully refundable if a team withdraws before March 26, 2024 or if a team withdraws after March 26, 2024 and is replaced, or if a team withdraws after March 26, 2024 and that improves the format.

There will be a \$450 per team per day entry fee for the face-to-face Round of 16 and Quarterfinal stages of the event.

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There will be a \$600 per team per day entry fee for the face-to-face Semifinal and Final stages of the event.

E. Site and Hotel Reservations

The site of the 2024 Open USBC is the Hyatt Regency located in Schaumburg, IL. The room rate is \$141 plus tax per night and includes internet access. There is no charge for early departure. Reservation website is linked from the usbf.org website

F. Captain's Meeting(s)

The Director In Charge (DIC) or DIC's designee may convene a captain's meeting before the online stage, the Round of 16 stage, and any other stage. Topics may include: use of electronic devices, conditions clarifications, seed selection, seating, system summary form, convention cards, tampering, reporting of scores, score corrections and slow play procedures. All Captain's Meetings will be held on Zoom.

III. POSITIONING POINTS

Positioning Points (PPs) are used to rank the teams for the purpose of obtaining byes to the Semifinal, Quarterfinal, and Round of 16, as well as seeding the K/O bracket.

A. Positioning Points from Regular Cycle Events

PPs for the qualifying events will be as follows:

| Place | Spingold, Vanderbilt, & Soloway | Reisinger | USBC | Explanations |
|-------|---------------------------------|-----------|-------|--|
| 1st | 100 | 85 | 18*** | *** The winner of the 2022 & 2023 Open USBCs receive USBC Positioning Points for the 2024 USBC. ** Positioning points for the USBC are awarded for winning a K/O match. Thus, the team that wins its final match receives 18 PPs, in addition to any PPs it may have received for winning an earlier match; each team that wins its Semifinal match receives 14 PPs; a team that wins its quarter final match receives 11 PPs; a team that wins its Round of 16 match receives 8 PPs. A team without a bye that wins the USBC receives a total of 51 PPs. PPs earned in a prior USBC will not count when determining byes to the Quarterfinal or Semifinal. * Positioning points for the Reisinger are awarded only to teams that qualify for the Final |
| 2nd | 70 | 60 | 14** | |
| 3rd | 46 | 42 | 11** | |
| 4th | 46 | 29 | 11** | |
| 5th | 27 | 21 | 8** | |
| 6th | 27 | 17 | 8** | |
| 7th | 27 | 14 | 8** | |
| 8th | 27 | 12 | 8** | |
| 9th | 12 | 11* | | |
| 10th | 12 | 10* | | |
| 11th | 12 | 9* | | |

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| | | | |
|------|----|----|--|
| 12th | 12 | 8* | |
| 13th | 12 | 7* | |
| 14th | 12 | 6* | |
| 15th | 12 | 5* | |
| 16th | 12 | 4* | |

B. Eligibility for Positioning Points

A team may earn PPs for the 2024 USBC based on its performance in the 2022 (first place only) and 2023 USBCs, 2023 Spingold, 2023 Soloway, 2023 Reisinger, and 2024 Vanderbilt. To earn PPs from any of these “cycle” events, at least 4 members of the 2024 USBC team must have played on the cycle-event team, and must be Eligible Players who were USBF Active or Resident Members on a date no later than 2 weeks after conclusion of the event for which PPs were awarded. For example, if players ABCD played together on a 2023 USBC team, and players ABEF played together on a 2023 Spingold team, and players CDEF played together on a 2023 Reisinger team, then a 6-person 2024 USBC team of ABCDEF could use PPs earned in all three events to count towards earning a bye.

An Eligible Player is a player who is eligible to compete for the USA in the WBF championship for which the USBC is a selection trial and who has not already qualified for the WBF event for which the USBC is the selection trial. In addition to being subject to Section III., paragraphs D., E. and F., below, to be counted as a member of a team in an event that awards PPs, a player must fulfill the ACBL minimum-play requirements for the overall rank for which PPs are awarded. For example, if a team with eligible players A, B, C & D and ineligible player E wins an event, and player A did not fulfill the minimum play requirement in the Final, but did fulfill the minimum play requirement through the Semifinal, the team earns PPs for winning its Semifinal match (finishing 2nd), but does not earn PPs for winning the Final. The Credentials Committee determines Eligibility.

C. Dilution of PPs

Teams normally earn full PPs for any event in which at least four Eligible Players who are also USBF Active Members compete on the same team. There are two exceptions:

1) Effect of Ineligible Players

A team with one or two Ineligible Players will earn diluted PPs according to the following schedule:

- 75% of PPs earned if there is 1 Ineligible Player
- 50% of PPs earned if there are 2 Ineligible Players
- No PPs if there are 3 or more Ineligible Players

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In addition, PPs earned on a team with 1 or 2 ineligible players will not count when determining byes to the Quarterfinal or Semifinal.

2) Effect of Bridge Expertise

When a player has been added to a team that earned PPs without that player, the Credentials Committee shall first determine whether the team added the player in order to improve its chances of winning at the table. If the Credentials Committee determines that is the case, the team's PPs shall not be reduced under this section. In all other situations, based on criteria described in this section, the Credentials Committee may determine, for PPs purposes, that any team member of a team entered in the 2024 USBC has expertise that is significantly less than that of the majority of the team.

- a) If such a team member did not play in a Major Event (USBC, Spingold, Soloway, Reisinger, or Vanderbilt) in which his or her teammates earned PPs, the team will receive 50% of the PPs for the team's finishing position in the event.
- b) If such a team member earned some PPs and then did not play the required percentage of boards to qualify for that team's final position in a Major Event, the team will receive the greater of the PPs earned up to the point such team member did not play the required percentage of boards, or, 50% of the PPs for the team's finishing positioning position in the event.

In making the determination as to whether a player has expertise significantly below the majority of the team, the Credentials Committee shall examine many criteria and any special circumstances necessitating the augmentation. A player who has both regularly played more than the minimum required boards and regularly played the last segment in meaningful match situations when the player was not required to do so on this or comparable teams in recent years is considered to have expertise not significantly below the majority of the team.

If a team member's bridge expertise is determined to be significantly less than that of the majority of the team, that member must be a member of the team before any PPs are won (See Pre-registration, below). If such a member does not play in a Major Event with his team, his team may earn PPs only in the first Major Event he does not play in. In that first event, the team earns the lesser of one half the PPs earned or the largest number of PPs earned in any event in which such a player played.

D. Pre-Registration

In order to receive PPs for bye considerations, a team containing a player who did not play in the 2023 USBC, Spingold, Soloway, or Reisinger who then joins the team for play in a later Major event and whose bridge expertise is determined to be significantly less than that of the remainder of the team, must have submitted a USBC entry to the USBF prior to the first Major event that the team played in without such player. ("Pre-registered").

In the event a Pre-registered team wishes to make changes to its roster, such team is subject to all other terms of these conditions.

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E. Requirement to be an Active or Resident Member of USBF.

Players entering the USBC must be dues paying 2024 Active or Resident Members of the USBF. For a team to be credited with Positioning Points (PPs) for bye purposes for the 2024 USBC, at least 4 Eligible Players on the team must have paid their USBF Active or Resident Member dues prior to the start of the event in which they earned PPs or (for an additional fee) within two weeks after the event in which they earned PPs.

USBF Active and Resident Member Dues cover a calendar year.

USBF Active and Resident Member Dues are \$50 (\$25 for players under age 26 and \$15 for players under age 21 on January 1 of the year for which dues are paid), or \$150 when paid within two weeks after an event in which PPs were earned, or \$130 for 3 years. Dues may be paid by sending a check made payable to the USBF to Max Schireson, 2882 Sand Hill Road, suite 280, Menlo Park, CA 94025

F. Ties

Ties shall be broken first by most PPs won in the Spingold, then if still tied, most PPs won in the Vanderbilt, then if still tied, most PPs won in the Soloway, then if still tied, most PPs won in the Reisinger, then if still tied, a coin flip.

IV. BYES

In order to determine the number of teams needed to emerge from the early stages of the event, it is necessary to focus on the number of “slots” taken up in the Round of 16 (if held). When counting “slots” in the Round of 16, teams with byes to the Semifinal count as four slots, teams with byes to the Quarterfinal count as two slots and teams with byes to the Round of 16 count as one slot. At most 12 slots can be taken up by teams with byes. At least four slots in the Round of 16 are reserved for teams without byes. (If no Round of 16 is held, then the focus is on the teams in the Quarterfinal, counting the teams receiving byes to the Semifinal as two slots in the Quarterfinal.) Byes are given in rank order by PPs. The team with the highest number of PPs is placed ahead of teams with fewer PPs. PP's earned with ineligible player(s) on the team and PPs earned in the USBC cannot be used for Quarterfinal or Semifinal byes.

A. Byes to the Semifinal

There are two PP thresholds to earn a bye to the Semifinal: 186 PPs for one bye and at least 198 each for two byes. In addition a team needs a win in the 2023 Spingold, the 2023 Soloway, the 2023 Reisinger, the 2024 Vanderbilt, or the 2023 Bermuda Bowl. At most two teams may earn a bye to the Semifinal. If three teams have won an event and each has PPs equaling or exceeding 198, the two teams with the highest PP totals shall earn byes to the Semifinal.

Example: There are three teams with the following PPs: 186, 189 and 199 and each team has won one of the events listed above. Only the team with 199 PPs gets a bye to

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the Semifinal, because in order for two teams to earn a bye, each would need to have at least 198 PPs. The other two teams would have byes to the Quarterfinal.

B. Byes to the Quarterfinal

There are six PP thresholds to earn a bye to the Quarterfinal: 94, 95, 97, 101, 106, 112. Each slot taken up by a Semifinal bye removes the two lowest threshold numbers.

If no team has a bye to the Semifinal, up to six teams may earn a bye to the Quarterfinal. The six PP thresholds to earn a bye to the Quarterfinal are: at least 94 PPs for one bye, at least 95 PPs each for two byes, at least 97 PPs each for three byes, at least 101 PPs each for four byes, at least 106 PPs each for five byes and at least 112 PPs each for six byes.

If one team has a bye to the Semifinal, up to four teams may earn a bye to the Quarterfinal. The four PPs thresholds to earn a bye to the Quarterfinal are: at least 97 PPs for one bye, at least 101 PPs each for two byes, at least 106 PPs each for three byes and at least 112 PPs each for four byes.

If two teams have a bye to the Semifinal, only one or two teams may earn a bye to the Quarterfinal. The two PPs thresholds to earn a bye to the Quarterfinal are at least 106 PPs for one bye and 112 PPs each for two byes.

Teams that did not receive a bye to the Quarterfinal will usually be eligible to receive a bye to the Round of 16. See C. below.

Examples: There are six teams with the following PPs: 80, 85, 94, 96, 100, and 106.

If there are 6 slots available (no bye to the Semifinal), the teams with 106 PPs and 101 PPs would have a bye to the Quarterfinal. The team with 96 PPs could not earn a bye because giving three byes require each team to have at least 106 PPs.

If there are 4 slots available, (one bye to the Semifinal), only the team with 106 PPs would have a bye to the Quarterfinal. The team with 100 PPs could not earn a bye because the fourth slot, 101 PPs, would apply.

If there are two slots available, (two byes to the Semifinal), none of these teams would receive a QF bye, as 112 would become the first threshold.

C. Byes to the Round of 16

If there is a Round of 16, at most 12 slots can be taken up by teams with byes. There are 12 PP thresholds to earn a bye to the Round of 16: 48, 48, 48, 50, 53, 55, 58, 60, 62, 65, 68, 72. Slots taken up by Semifinal byes and/or Quarterfinal byes remove the lowest threshold numbers above.

Example: there are five teams with the following PPs: 52, 58, 67, 72 and 75 and four slots are already taken up by Semifinal or Quarterfinal byes.

The first four PP thresholds for byes to the Round of 16 are removed (48, 48, 48, 50) because of the four slots are taken up by the Semifinal and/or Quarterfinal byes. The eight remaining PP thresholds for byes to the Round of 16 are at least 53 for one bye, at

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least 55 PPs each for two byes, at least 58 PPs each for three byes, at least 60 PPs each for four byes, at least 62 PPs each for five byes, etc. In this example, there are three teams with at least 58 PPs, but there are not four teams with at least 60 PPs. So the three teams with 75, 72, and 67 PPs would earn a bye to the Round of 16.

V. FORMAT

A. Number of Teams Playing in Early Stages

3) Quarterfinal

The Quarterfinal shall consist of four teams if there are two Semifinal byes, six teams if there is one Semifinal bye, and eight teams if there are no Semifinal byes.

4) Round of 16

The number of teams in the Round of 16 shall be 16 reduced by four times the number of Semifinal byes plus twice the number of Quarterfinal byes. The resulting number reduced by the number of teams with byes to the Round of 16 is referred to as "Slots in Round of 16."

B. Format of Online Stages

The stages of the 2024 Open USBC before the Round of 16 will be played online, and will reduce the field to the number of slots in the Round of 16. Online Stages of Play

If more than 16 teams have entered (counting a team with a bye to the Semifinal as 4 teams and a team with a bye to the Quarterfinal as 2 teams), there will be an online stage to reduce the field to 16 teams. The online stage will be as follows, based on the number of teams to be eliminated:

If 1 team is to be eliminated, the bottom 2 teams based on seeding points will play a 64-board KO match between March 28 and April 7, 2024. If the teams cannot agree on a date, the match will be played on April 2nd.

If 2 teams are to be eliminated, the bottom 4 teams will play a double elimination KO with 60 board matches between March 28 and April 7. If the teams cannot agree on dates, the matches will be played on April 2, 3, and 4.

If more than 2 teams are to be eliminated, the bottom 10 teams will play a Round Robin to eliminate enough teams to leave 16.

C. Format of Face to Face Stages

If 14 or more teams have entered the event, and no more than 2 of them have a bye to the Quarterfinal, starting on May 1, 2024, there will be face-to-face 2-day, 120-board Round of 16, Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final matches. With 14 or 15 teams entered, the top 1 or 2 teams will have a bye to the Quarterfinal, even if they had not earned it based on PPs.

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If 9-13 teams have entered the event, and no team has earned a bye to the Quarterfinal, the first 2 days will be a complete Round Robin to qualify the top 8 teams for the Quarterfinal. If 9-13 teams have entered the event and one team has earned a bye to the Quarterfinal, the first 2 days will be a complete Round Robin to qualify 7 teams for the Quarterfinal. If 9-13 teams have entered the event and two teams have earned byes to the Quarterfinal, the first 2 days will be a complete Round Robin to qualify 6 teams for the Quarterfinal.

The format of the Round Robin will be:

7 or 8 teams, 14 matches of 7 boards each, with each team playing each other team twice, once on May 1 and once on May 2. Each player on each team must play at least one of the two matches against each other team. With 7 teams, each team will have a sit out match each day.

9 or 10 teams, 9 matches of 11 boards each. With 9 teams, each team will have one sit out match;

11 or 12 teams, 11 matches of 9 boards each. With 11 teams, each team will have one sit out match;

13 teams, 12 matches of 8 boards each, scheduled as 13 matches, each team will have one sit out match;

In all cases, the 2024 Open USBC will end on May 8, 2024.

D. Setting the Bracket for Knockout Rounds

The bracket is set before the start of the first knockout round. The bracket is determined based on the procedures set forth in the USBC General Conditions of Contest with the additional provision that the winner of the Round Robin has the right to reshuffle as follows:

Seeding the Round of 16 - Reshuffle

After the bracket is set and the shuffling is done as provided in the General Conditions of Contest, the team that won the Round Robin can refuse its drawn opponent by asking for a re-shuffle. If such reshuffle is requested, the Round Robin winner will randomly choose from among its team number and its bracket mate's number. The number chosen by the Round Robin winner will be swapped with its original number. If the Round Robin winner chooses its own number again, it keeps it.

A team with a bye in a bracket group with the Round Robin winner is exempt from inclusion in a reshuffle (even though it was included in the initial bracket shuffle). In such a case, the reshuffle is among only those teams who do not have byes.

If the Round Robin winner does not have a bracket mate to reshuffle with, because its bracket-mates have byes or are empty bye slots, then the team may reshuffle with the next highest bracketed team below the Round Robin winner that is an even number of bracket slots below the Round Robin winner. (i.e. 2 slots below, or 4 slots below, if 2 does not exist, etc.).

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VI. INTERPRETATION

A. Interpretation of Conditions

On matters involving the interpretation of these conditions or treatments of matters not included in these conditions:

1. Prior to March 25, 2024, the Conditions of Contest Committee and ITTC Technical & Advisory Committee (TAC) shall make determinations.
2. After March 25, 2024 but before May 1, 2024, the DIC shall make determinations after consulting with the TAC. Appeals from the DIC's decision may be made to the Tournament Appeals Committee.
3. Beginning May 1, 2024, the DIC shall make such determinations. Appeals from the DIC's decision may be made to the Tournament Appeals Committee.