

# GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP OF AUSTRALIA

## General Regulations - 2026

### 1. SCOPE

The Grand National Open Teams Championship of Australia (GNOT) is a national, Australia-wide bridge event administered by the Australian Bridge Federation (ABF). The twofold mandate of the GNOT is (i) to make a national bridge event and its associated benefits, e.g. the award of gold masterpoints, readily accessible to every bridge club in Australia irrespective of location and to every bridge player in Australia irrespective of domicile, and (ii) in so doing, to promote the game of bridge throughout the nation.

- 1.1. The GNOT is not intended to be a self-funded event. The ABF shall, where necessary, provide reasonable funding to support the mandate of the event.
- 1.2. With respect to participation in the GNOT, the ABF shall not discriminate (i) against any club on the grounds of the remoteness of its location, the ethnicity or aboriginality of its membership, or its perceived financial position; or (ii) against any player on the grounds of the remoteness of his (her) domicile, his (her) ethnicity or aboriginality, or his (her) non-membership of an affiliated bridge club or of the ABF Masterpoint Scheme (except as specified in paragraph 6.5).

### 2. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The GNOT is an ABF tournament and the ABF is responsible for all aspects of GNOT administration.

#### 2.1. National Coordinator

The GNOT National Coordinator is appointed by the ABF. The National Coordinator has overall responsibility for the smooth running of the tournament from its basic qualifying stages to the National Final. The duties of the National Coordinator include but are not limited to:

- 2.1.1. Promoting the game of bridge throughout Australia.
- 2.1.2. Making the GNOT readily accessible to every bridge club and every bridge player in Australia.
- 2.1.3. Encouraging regions and clubs to run GNOT qualifying events, and individuals to play in them.
- 2.1.4. Updating the GNOT General Regulations on a regular basis.

- 2.1.5. Compiling, in collaboration with the National Final Tournament Organiser where necessary, an annual report about all aspects of the GNOT and submitting it to the ABF Management Committee.

## **2.2. State Coordinators**

Each state body shall have overall responsibility for running GNOT qualifying events, at all levels, in its state. It may delegate this task to a state convenor, who in turn may delegate to local convenors, who may also delegate, and so on. Between them, these officials are responsible for the following:

- 2.2.1. Promoting the game of bridge throughout the state, and every Region thereof.
- 2.2.2. Making the GNOT readily accessible to every bridge club and every bridge player in every Region.
- 2.2.4. Setting suitable entry fees across all levels of qualifying.
- 2.2.5. Preparing Supplementary Regulations that augment these General Regulations and which are specific to the GNOT region in question.
- 2.2.6. Verifying masterpoint returns from Club and Regional Selection Events, and submitting them to the relevant Masterpoint Secretary.
- 2.2.7. Paying masterpoint charges generated from all Selection Events.
- 2.2.8. Notifying the National Coordinator of the names and ABF numbers of players that will represent the region in the National Final.
- 2.2.9. Making payment of entry fees for the GNOT National Final.
- 2.2.10. Making substitution regulations for each club and regional event. However, any substitutes must be eligible to represent the region, per clause 5 below.
- 2.2.10. Selecting a venue for each Regional Final.
- 2.2.11. Selecting a date for each Regional Final and, in so doing, avoiding clashes with congresses or with other important bridge activities scheduled for the Region or adjoining Regions.
- 2.2.12. Appointing tournament directors.
- 2.2.13. Advising all Clubs of the schedule for the Regional Final within their region, and urging them to participate.
- 2.2.14. Arranging pre-dealing of hands, preparation of hand records and printing of personal score books.
- 2.2.15. Setting fees levied from players and clubs for participation in Regional Final.
- 2.2.16. Providing refreshments for players.
- 2.2.17. Making all payments relating to the cost of staging the Regional Final.
- 2.2.18. Setting rules around which players and teams may play in the Regional Final. Such rules must be made available in advance, and must be in accordance with rule 5.1.2 below.
- 2.2.19. Promoting the GNOT within each Club.
- 2.2.20. Setting fees, if any, payable by participants in Club Selection Events. (Such fees belong to the Club, not to the Region or the ABF.)
- 2.2.21. Paying masterpoint charges generated from Club Selections.

**2.2.22.** Organising and running the Club Selection events.

**2.3. GNOT National Final Tournament Organiser**

The Tournament Organiser, otherwise known as GNOT National Final Convenor, shall be appointed by the ABF (In the event that multiple convenors be appointed, they shall be known as Co-Convenors.) The duties of GNOT National Final Convenor include but are not limited to:

**2.3.1.** All aspects of organising and running the GNOT National Final.

**2.3.2.** Keeping records of all monetary transactions and reporting them to the ABF Treasurer.

**2.3.3.** Compiling masterpoint awards from the National Final (and the GNOT Plate) and conveying them to the ABF Masterpoint Centre.

**2.3.4.** Compiling a comprehensive report of the tournament for the ABF Management Committee.

**3. GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE GNOT**

**3.1.** State coordinators, or those to whom they delegate, have jurisdiction to decide the format for each GNOT selection event without reference to the National Coordinator, provided that they are consistent with clause 5.1 below.

**3.2.** The maximum number of teams contesting the National Final shall be 64.

**3.3.** The National Final shall be played in knockout format. It shall include a repechage component to accommodate teams eliminated in early knockout rounds. Teams finishing in high places in the repechage component shall re-enter the later knockout rounds of the event.

**3.4.** In addition, the top-placed teams from regions nominated as Non-Metropolitan shall qualify for the Non-Metropolitan national final.

**4. REGIONAL STRUCTURE**

**4.1.** Australia shall be divided into regions that may overlap state boundaries. The GNOT National Coordinator shall be personally responsible for the designation of GNOT regions. Designation of regions shall be based on geographical considerations and shall take particular account of the GNOT mandate that the tournament be accessible to all clubs however remote their location and to all players however remote their place of domicile.

**4.2.** Each GNOT region shall be entitled to field at least one team in the National Final. Certain regions shall be entitled to field more than one team in the

National Final, such entitlement to be determined by the National Coordinator and ratified by the ABF MC.

- 4.3. Each GNOT region, through its delegated coordinator, shall conduct qualifying events that qualify its team(s) to contest the National Final. Such qualifying events should be conducted at two levels: (i) the Club level to qualify teams or pairs to contest a Regional Final, (ii) a Regional Final to qualify a team or teams to contest the National Final. The mechanics of qualifying events within a Region are matters for the discretion of the delegated coordinator except that: (i) the Regional Coordinator shall not merely nominate a team or teams to represent the region in the National Final — there **must** be a Regional Final, (ii) the Regional Final shall comprise not less than 50 boards.
- 4.4. All Regional Finals shall qualify at least one team to the National Final. Regions with multiple teams may hold multiple Regional Finals.
- 4.5. At the conclusion of a Regional Final, the regional convenor shall advise the GNOT National Coordinator of the composition of the team(s) to represent the region in the National Final. In turn, the National Coordinator shall acknowledge receipt of the said advice.
- 4.6. In exercising the responsibility to designate GNOT regions, the National Coordinator shall take particular note of the following “designation” guidelines:
  - 4.6.1. The GNOT shall be accessible to all clubs in Australia, however remote their location, and to all players in Australia, however remote their place of domicile.
  - 4.6.2. The designation shall be geographically feasible in the sense that all clubs and all players within a designated region are able, within reason, to access the location of the Regional Final.
  - 4.6.3. Before designating a new region, the National Coordinator shall consult as widely as feasible with relevant authorities within the proposed Region including, where appropriate, existing coordinators.
  - 4.6.4. Clubs within a new region shall be given, through notification by the state body or its delegates, not less than six months’ notice (before the commencement of the relevant GNOT year) of the formation of the region.
- 4.7. In exercising the responsibility to grant multiple places in the GNOT National Final to particular regions, the National Coordinator shall consider the number of teams entering Club and Regional Selection events and the number of teams from that region that have taken their places in the National Final in previous years.:

- 4.8. Before a variation, the National Coordinator shall consult with the relevant State Coordinator(s) or their local delegates. Advance notice of such variation is not required provided that the variation does not interfere with any schedule that the relevant Regional Coordinator has put in place.
- 4.9. The National Coordinator shall be aware that matters of governance may intrude on his responsibilities to designate new GNOT regions and to grant or to vary the entitlement of an existing GNOT region. Any such changes must be approved by the ABF Management Committee.

## 5. Selection Events

### 5.1. General

- 5.1.1. There are three types of Selection events: Club Selection events, Zonal Selection Events, and Regional Finals.
- 5.1.2. Selection events may be held online or face to face. Online events must satisfy the following criteria:
- Cameras and microphones must be enabled.
  - Players must not be able to turn their cameras off except under exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the director.
  - Only players eligible to represent the region are allowed to enter these events.
- 5.1.3. Clubs, regions, or states may, at their discretion, impose more stringent criteria than the below. However, players shall be prohibited from playing a qualifying event only on the basis of domicile, membership status, disciplinary reasons, or, for a Regional Final, entry to a Club or Zonal Selection Event. Nobody shall be prohibited from entering a GNOT event due to their age, gender, masterpoints, experience, or anything else.
- 5.1.4. Selection Events must be played with IMP scoring, with the exact format and form of scoring to be stipulated in advance. They may be pairs or teams; raw IMPs or IMPs converted to VPs, either on the standard or a modified scale; knockout, round-robin, Swiss, or some combination thereof.
- 5.1.5. Qualification for a GNOT Regional Final shall be via Club Selection Events, Zonal Selection Events, and Direct Entry.

### 5.2. Club Selection Events

- 5.2.1. Players may represent a region in which they are normally domiciled, or in which a club of which they are a bona fide member is located.
- 5.2.2. Every Club is entitled to stage a Club Selection Event (CSE) to choose team(s) for the Regional Final. The CSE is open to all those who are eligible to represent either that club's region, or a neighbouring region within the same state. The CSE is an event of not less than 2 sessions played in the club. It may be an ad hoc event, or it may be combined with regular sessions. (For instance, the Club Championship could double as a CSE.)

- 5.2.3. Clubs that normally have more than one session weekly may, if they wish, run one event for each session, up to 3 CSEs per club.
- 5.2.4. CSEs must comprise at least 2 sessions. For a club to award gold points, at least one team from the event must be sent to the relevant regional final. The winning team(s) and pair(s) shall be offered places, followed by other teams and pairs in finishing order should the winning teams be unable to compete. Should the club be unable field enough teams from teams or pairs entering the event, they may field a team of players who played in the event, or, failing that, club members.

### **5.3. Zonal Selection Event**

- 5.3.1. A Zonal Selection Event (ZSE) is a within-region competition that qualifies team(s) to play in the Regional Final. ZSEs are designed particularly for teams that, for any reason, find that they are unable to participate in a CSE.
- 5.3.3. The ZSE may be open to all players from a Region, or only to players from a particular zone within the Region. However, players should be allowed to enter only one ZSE.
- 5.3.3. The organisation of a ZSE rests with the state convenor, or that person's delegate.
- 5.3.4. A ZSE shall be played over not less than 50 boards, and should be at least 2 sessions in duration.

### **5.4. Regional Final**

- 5.4.1. A Regional Final shall be played over not less than 50 boards, and should be at least 2 sessions in duration.
- 5.4.2. Any players eligible to represent the region may enter the Regional Final. The convenor may impose additional restrictions around entry to, or performance in, a CSE.

### **5.5. Representation**

- 5.5.1. The top team(s) or pair(s) from the Regional Final will be invited to represent the region in the National Final. Should any team(s) be unavailable, the place will be offered to the next team in the rankings, and so on. If no teams or pairs are available to play, players who entered the Regional Final on different teams or pairs may form a team to contest the National Final.
- 5.5.2. If any region should be unable to fulfil its quota of teams in the National Final, the National Coordinator may offer the place to other regions within the same state or, should any be unavailable, to regions in other states.

## **6. NATIONAL FINAL**

- 6.1. These regulations should be read in conjunction with the supplementary regulations for the National Qualifying Final and the National Final.
- 6.2. The GNOT National Final will be held in two stages:

- National Qualifying, to be held on Realbridge, from Friday 18 to Sunday 20 November.
  - National Final, to be held at the Qld Contract Bridge Club, 67 Ipswich Rd, Woolloongabba from Friday 27 to Sunday 29 November.
- 6.3.** Placings in Regional Finals will qualify teams to compete in the National Final.
- 6.4.** The entry fee for the National Final is \$400 per team, plus \$14 for each team that enters a CSE (not including Regional Finals).
- 6.5. GNOT Plate**
- 6.5.1.** A total of 34 teams will play in the 2026 GNOT Plate, comprising four teams from the GNOT National Final and 30 teams that will enter on a first come, first served basis.
- 6.5.2.** Format. The event will be played as an 8-round Swiss, with 8 rounds of 14-board matches.
- 6.5.3.** Entry will be free for the four teams entering from the GNOT National Final. Players on teams entering directly will pay \$100 per player.

## **7. DIRECTORS**

Qualifications required of Tournament Directors for GNOT events are:

### **7.1. Club Selection Event**

Appointment by the Club Organiser.

### **7.2. Zonal Selection Event**

Qualified as a Club Director at least.

### **7.3. Regional Final**

Desirably qualified as Congress Director at least. However, (i) where there is no suitable Congress director available or (ii) where the cost of employing a Congress Director is prohibitive, a Club Director may be appointed.

### **7.4. National Final**

Appointments by the GNOT National Coordinator.

**7.4.1.** National Qualifying Final. There will be two directors. The Chief Tournament Director shall be a National Director (level 1). The other director shall be a National Director (level 1, level 2 or level 3). In addition, the GNOT National Coordinator may, at his sole discretion and upon advice to the National Directors' Accreditation Committee, appoint a Trainee Director.

**7.4.2.** Face to Face final. National Director (level 1).

**7.4.3.** GNOT Plate. National Director (level 1 or level 2 or level 3).

## **8. SUBSTITUTION AND AUGMENTATION**

Substitutions shall be allowed under the following circumstances:

- 8.1.** For Club, Zonal, and Regional events, the supplementary regulations drawn up specifically for the event(s); or, in the absence of such supplementary regulations, according to existing club or state regulations relating to substitution and augmentation.
- 8.2. For the GNOT National Final**
- 8.2.1.** Except in extreme circumstances as detailed below, substitution is not permitted in the GNOT National Final. Augmentation regulations relating to the National Final become applicable (i) from the time that a team is nominated by a Regional Coordinator as national finalist.
- 8.2.2.** Augmentation of a national finalist team of four players to a team of five or six may be done by adding one or two players domiciled anywhere within that team's region. Augmentation of a team of five players to a team of six may be done by adding one player domiciled anywhere within that team's region. It is permissible to add player(s) who have already played in earlier (preliminary) rounds of the GNOT. All augmentations are subject to approval by the National Coordinator in consultation with the relevant state coordinator.
- 8.2.3.** Should a player need to withdraw during the play of the National Final due to illness or some other extreme circumstance, the tournament director shall take whatever action is required, including allowing an emergency substitution, in order to keep the event in motion.

## APPENDIX

**GNOT regional structure for 2026, and the (classification) stratification (Metropolitan or Non-Metropolitan) of regions. Note that some regions, noted with a \* below, are open to players from both Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan players. These regions can compete in the Non-Metropolitan final only if all four players either live, or have a bona fide home club, outside the Metropolitan area.**

<b>Region</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Stratification</b>	<b>Teams for the GNOT National Final (2026)</b>
Brisbane	Queensland	Metropolitan	4
Far North Queensland		Non-Metro	1
North Queensland		Non-Metro	1
Whitsunday		Non-Metro	1
Capricornia		Non-Metro	1
Wide Bay		Non-Metro	1
Sunshine Coast		Non-Metro	3
Gold Coast		Metropolitan	3
Darling Downs		Non-Metro	2
Sydney	New South Wales	Metropolitan	7
Northern Rivers		Non-Metro	1
Mid North Coast		Non-Metro	2
Hunter		Non-Metro	3
Central Coast		Non-Metro	1
Tablelands-Illawarra		Non-Metro	2
Far South Coast		Non-Metro	1
Mountains		Non-Metro	2
Northern Inland		Non-Metro	1
Western NSW		Non-Metro	1
South West NSW		Non-Metro	1
ACT	ACT	Metropolitan	2
ACT Provincial		Non-Metro*	1
Melbourne	Victoria	Metropolitan	3
Gippsland		Non-Metro	1
Northern Victoria		Non-Metro	1
Geelong		Non-Metro	1
Western Victoria		Non-Metro	1
Southern Tasmania	Tasmania	Non-Metro	1
Northern Tasmania		Non-Metro	1
Tasmania		Non-Metro	1
Adelaide	South Australia	Metropolitan	3
SA Provincial		Non-Metro*	1
Northern Territory	Northern Territory	Non-Metro	2
Perth	Western Australia	Metropolitan	3
WA Country		Non-Metro*	2
WA Provincial		Non-Metro*	1