

# The Official Record

## A primer on the ACBL's formal disciplinary procedure at tournaments

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Many clubs and tournaments employ the ACBL's **Zero Tolerance Policy** to deal with instances of unacceptable behavior. Unfortunately, there are sometimes incidents of a more serious nature or patterns of offensive behavior that must be addressed in a more severe manner.

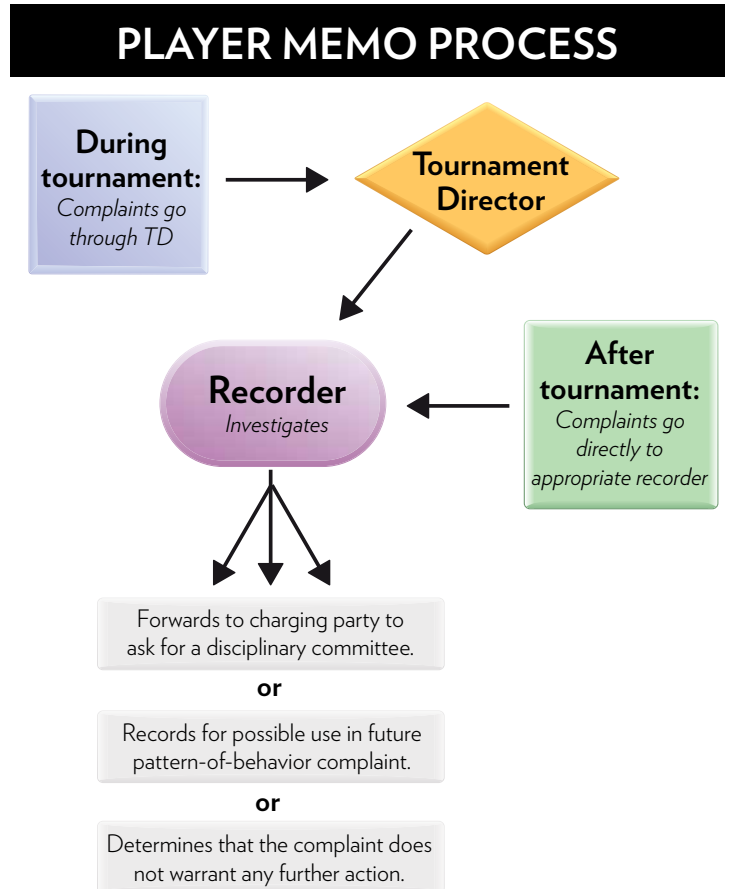
All ACBL units and districts are required to have a **recorder**. A recorder's responsibilities include receiving and investigating both reports of objectionable conduct and allegations of unethical behavior that occur within their jurisdiction. For example, a complaint regarding an incident that occurred during a sectional tournament should be sent to the sponsoring unit's recorder.

There is also a national recorder, Sam Whitten, who is a full-time employee of the ACBL.

Incidents can be reported using a **player memo**, also known as a **recorder form**. You can obtain one of these forms from a tournament director, but any written complaint (including email) that is sent to the recorder will be accepted in lieu of an actual player memo. The complaint should include your name and contact information, the name of your partner, the name of your opponents (noting if one or both are responsible for the incident in question), a complete description of what occurred and thorough documentation of the hand in question. Reporting any behavioral violation or questionable bridge action during a tournament should always go to a TD first. The TD will ensure that the complaint reaches the appropriate parties, including the recorder.

Once a recorder has received a complaint, he will investigate the complaint by talking to the individuals involved and any witnesses that can be located. Then the recorder will make one of three determinations. If the complaint and subsequent investigation uncovers a violation that the recorder believes is serious enough to bring before a disciplinary committee, he will present the complaint to the unit or district president, who will become the **charging party** and will ask the unit or district disciplinary chair to convene a **disciplinary committee** to hold a hearing. This process and the procedures followed by the disciplinary committee are outlined in the **ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR)**.

If, after completing the investigation, the recorder is unconvinced that the complaint warrants a disciplinary committee but feels the incident is still troubling, he will keep this complaint on file and forward a copy to the National Recorder's office. This complaint may then be used in a future disciplinary case as part of a **pattern of behavior**



demonstrated by the subject. This is known as recording the complaint.

Lastly, if the recorder does not feel that a violation has taken place, he can choose not to record the incident and the complaint will go no further. While recorder complaints and investigations are confidential, the recorder will notify the parties involved which of these three actions he has taken with the complaint.

Complaints fall into one of two general categories: **behavioral** and **bridge**. Behavioral complaints are fairly self-explanatory, and the recorder must simply decide if the behavior warrants a disciplinary committee or if it should simply be recorded in the event that more such complaints are presented about the same individual in the future.

Bridge complaints should include as much detail about the deal as possible, including the exact hands (hand records are very useful for this purpose). One should also include the bidding, the opening lead and, when relevant, the play of

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