

Changes to the GNOT Format

Following review and endorsement by the ABF Board, I am writing to confirm that the Tournament Committee's recommendation for the **2026 GNOT format** has been approved.

The changes are designed to:

1. Strengthen the face-to-face National Final,
2. Improve the overall player experience, and
3. Support the financial sustainability of the event.

Please find the confirmed structure and arrangements below.

2026 GNOT FORMAT

Phase 1 – Club & State Qualifying Events

Clubs and states will continue to conduct qualifying events under existing arrangements.

Phase 2 – Online National Qualifying Final

Dates: Friday 18 September – Sunday 20 September 2026

Format: Online

Field: 64 teams

Duration: 2.5 days (0.5 days less than previously)

From Phase 2:

1. **8 Open teams** qualify for the F2F National Final
2. **12 Non-Metro teams** qualify for the F2F National Final

(Previously: 4 Open and 8 Non-Metro teams)

Phase 3 – Face-to-Face National Final

Dates: Friday 27 November – Sunday 29 November 2026

Venue: Queensland Contract Bridge Club (QCBC), Brisbane

Tournament Organisers: Kim and Ray Ellaway

Open Final (8 teams):

Quarter Final → Semi Final → Final and playoff for 3rd place

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Non-Metro Final (12 teams):

Format: 12 x 14 board matches with a round-robin for the first 11 matches and then first plays second, third plays fourth through to eleventh plays 12th.

NEW EVENT: GNOT PLATE

A new open-entry gold point teams event will be run alongside the National Final.

Event: Grand National Open Teams Plate

Dates: Saturday 28 & Sunday 29 November

Venue: QCBC, Brisbane

Format: Teams, 8 x 14 board matches

Masterpoints: Gold (Grade A2 – same level as major gold congresses)

Entry Fee: \$100 per player (2 days)

Additional feature:

Teams eliminated from the quarter finals of the National Final will be required to play in the Plate.

Losing semi-finalists will play off for third.

Quarter finalists playing in the Plate will do so at **no additional charge**.

The purpose of this event is to:

1. Improve the atmosphere of the Finals weekend,
2. Increase participation,
3. Provide additional gold-point opportunities, and
4. Help offset the cost of running the larger Phase 3 national finals.

FEES AND FINANCIAL SETTINGS

The following fee changes for 2026 will apply:

1. **Club qualifying entry fee:** increasing from \$10 to \$14 per team**
2. **National Final entry fee:** increasing from \$300 to \$400 per team

This increase in the club qualifying fee is the first increase in many years. The national final entry fee will remain significantly below the historical F2F entry level of \$750.

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** Note for pairs based qualifying events the entry fee is \$7 per pair and the ABF only requires one payment per player irrespective of the number of qualifying events they participate in.

POINTS OF CONTACT

1. **Phase 1 & Phase 2 (Qualifying and Online Final):** Fraser Rew
2. **Phase 3 & Plate Event:** Kim and Ray Ellaway
3. **Entry Fee Administration:** Margaret Cusack

Supplementary regulations will be circulated in due course.

NEXT STEPS FOR STATES & TERRITORIES

Please:

1. Include the confirmed dates in your 2026 calendars, and
2. Begin advising clubs of the updated structure and qualifying fee.