

Darling Downs Zone Regulations

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These regulations apply to the conduct of Club Selection Heats and Zone Finals in all events run under the authority of the Darling Downs Zone. QBA system and alert regulations apply. QBA regulations also apply in all matters where these Zone regulations are silent.

Convenors of particular events must ensure that Queensland residential requirements are met, and that the format of Club Selection Heats is appropriate (eg reasonable length, pre-dealt boards with hand records). A playing Director is permitted in all events, provided they are QBA Accredited at Club level or higher. A Congress level Director is required for the GNOT Area/Zone Final.

1. MEMBERSHIP

The Darling Downs Zone of the QBA consists of the following eight clubs:

- Dalby Bridge Club
- Darling Downs Bridge Club
- Goondiwindi Bridge Club
- Lockyer Bridge Club
- Roma Bridge Club
- Stanthorpe Bridge Club
- Toowoomba Bridge Club
- Warwick Bridge Club

Additional clubs may be added, as advised by the Manager of the QBA.

2. ZONE REPRESENTATIVE

Each club will nominate a person(s) to act as their Zone Representative(s) in Zone matters. These Zone Representatives will normally meet twice per year to discuss Zone matters (typically the first and last local open Congress of the year). Additional meetings may be called if necessary. Most Zone business must be completed by email because of the distance between the clubs. Each club must advise the Zone Secretary and the Manager of the QBA of a change in its Zone Representative(s). QBA Affiliation Notes allow one representative per 150 home members or part thereof.

3. ZONE SECRETARY

The Zone Representatives will elect one of their membership as the **Zone Secretary** for a fixed period, to coordinate its activities and liaise with the Manager of the QBA as required. The Zone Secretary, in conjunction with their local club, will operate an appropriate bank account and will present an annual financial statement of the Zone affairs to the clubs.

4. EVENTS

The Darling Downs Zone will conduct the following events each year:

1. Grand National Open Teams (GNOT) Area Final
2. Zone Qualifying Round of the Queensland Open Teams

3. Zone Qualifying Round of the Queensland Open Pairs

5. GRAND NATIONAL OPEN TEAMS (GNOT)

The Darling Downs Zone is entitled to field two teams in the GNOT National Final (effective 2024). The GNOT Organising Body provides limited financial support to assist with travel costs to the National Final. Remaining costs are the responsibility of the team members themselves.

The GNOT is comprised of three stages:

1. Club Qualifying Rounds – determining eligible competitors for the Area/Regional Final
2. Regional (Area/Zone) Final – determining the teams to represent the Darling Downs Zone
3. National Final – date and venue announced by the ABF.

It is noted that the terms “Area Final”, “Zone Final” and “Regional Final” are all used by the ABF and the QBA in their regulations to refer to the final within our zone.

5.1. GNOT ELIGIBILITY

5.1.1. Residential requirement

Any player who is a bona fide Queensland resident and is (and was prior to the commencement of the Club Selection Round) a member of any Darling Downs Zone club may play in the GNOT Qualifying Rounds. It is not necessary to be a home club member of a Zone club.

5.1.2. Playing in more than one event

Players from a team that has accepted the right to advance from one club Qualifying Round may play in further Club Qualifying Rounds, either as individuals, pairs or as a complete team; provided they announce prior to the start of play that they are not in contention to qualify for the Area Final. These players are termed “**non-contenders**” but remain eligible for any master point awards.

There is to be no situation in which an individual, pair or team can qualify for the Area Final in two or more teams (or in two or more areas). In any such situation, the first qualified team remains and all subsequent entries are disqualified.

However, there may be situations where a team initially failed to qualify but is belatedly offered a place because of a withdrawal, and they wish to accept. This is permitted provided they immediately announce this to the clubs involved and the Zone Secretary. They may not continue in the subsequent event “to see if they qualify there”, and then later make the decision to accept the place from the first event.

5.1.3. Team membership

1. A team may comprise 4, 5 or 6 players.
2. A player who has played zero boards for a team in which he entered may be dropped from the team at any time. It will be as though the player had never entered and the player may therefore play for another team in accordance with the conditions of augmentation and substitution.
3. A team may augment without restriction up to the commencement of play in the Area final. This augmentation is permissible up to the maximum team membership of 6.
4. Once play in the Area Final has commenced, augmentation shall only be permitted with the director's approval for cause, and only by player(s) of equal or lesser ranking than the player(s) being replaced.

5. Further to the clauses above, a team that does not retain at least half of the players entered on day one of the Club Qualifying Round shall be disqualified. Players so disqualified remain eligible to augment other teams and to play as substitutes.
6. Subject to the approval of the Director, teams are permitted one substitute during Club Qualifying Rounds and one substitute during the Area Final.

5.2. CLUB QUALIFYING ROUNDS

Each club will conduct a Club Qualifying Round to qualify teams to play in the GNOT Area Final.

5.2.1. Format

The Club Qualifying Round shall normally be conducted over 2, 3 or 4 sessions, with the length of each match determined by the club provided that it is at least 5 boards duration. A playing Director is permitted. Pre-dealt boards with hand records must be used.

The preferred movement for Club Qualifying Rounds is a Round Robin (or multiple stanzas of Whist or New England, as appropriate). If there are too many teams to achieve the necessary match duration with one of these movements, a Swiss Teams may be used (Approval was given by Richard Wallis, Chair of the QBA Tournament Subcommittee in 2010).

If a club plays multiple rounds/stanzas, then one of the following approaches may be used in determining wins and placings:

- (a) The total IMP's score against an opponent across all rounds/stanzas will be summed and used to determine VP's and win status; or
- (b) Each round may be scored separately and the appropriate VP scale applied to each. This may only be done if each match is of sufficient duration.

The club must display the scoring method in the written conditions of play, and make a verbal announcement of this prior to play commencing. If no prior announcement is made then condition (a) prevails.

In exceptional circumstances a small club may qualify one team to the Area Final by alternate means (eg pairs events, and extreme cases by nomination), provided this is approved by the Zone Secretary in advance.

5.2.2. Number of qualifying teams

One team qualifies for the Area Final out of every four entrants (or part thereof) in the Club Qualifying Round. For example, if there are 2-4 entrants then one team qualifies, if there are 5-8 entrants then two teams qualify, if there are 9-12 entrants then three teams qualify.

Winning teams from Club Qualifying Rounds are not obliged to take their place in the Area Final. In such a case, the next qualifier from that Club Qualifying Round will be invited to take their place. This process will continue until no teams are available from the top half of the field in the Club Qualifying Round (rounded up).

A player who has not already qualified for a place in the Area Final (or the final of another Zone) may play in more than one Club Qualifying Round provided they are eligible to do so.

5.2.3. Directors report

The Director of a Club Qualifying Round must provide a report to the Zone Secretary stating:

- The full names and ABF numbers of all members of every team;
- Their win-loss records;
- The movement used and number of boards and matches played;
- The teams qualifying for the Regional Final; and

- Any players and/or teams declining a position in the Area Final.

A copy of this report should also be sent to the State Masterpoint Secretary.

Each club conducting a Club Qualifying Round will be responsible for the cost of Gold masterpoints awarded in its own event, and will also pay a nomination fee to the Zone that will be used to pay the entry fee for the team at the National Final.

For 2026, this fee is \$40 per team that entered the Club Qualifying Round.

5.3. GNOT AREA FINAL

The Darling Downs Zone GNOT Area Final will be hosted by one of the member clubs, rotating amongst the membership. The Zone Secretary will maintain a register/roster of hosting rights.

The GNOT Area Final shall normally be a round robin format over 2 sessions played on one day or a two stanza Whist or New England Relay. The length of each match will then be determined by the Director ensuring that it is at least 5 boards duration. Pre-dealt boards with hand records must be used. The total IMP's score across all rounds will be summed and used to determine VP's and win status. If there are too many teams to achieve the necessary match duration, a Swiss Teams movement may be considered but prior approval must be obtained from the Chair of the QBA Tournament Committee. A playing Director is permitted. A QBA Accredited Club Director (or higher ranking) must be used.

All entrants in the Darling Downs Zone Area Final MUST be prepared to travel to and play in the National Final.

The Director of the GNOT Area Final must provide a report to the Zone Secretary stating:

- The full names and ABF numbers of all members of every team;
- Their win-loss records; and
- The movement used and number of boards and matches played.

A copy of this report should also be sent to the State Masterpoint Secretary, and to each of the Zone constituent clubs.

The entry fee for the GNOT Area Final will be \$48 per team. \$24/team will be provided to the host club to offset catering and venue costs. The GNOT entry fee will be paid from these funds and any excess will be provided to the winning team as a contribution to their travel or accommodation costs.

6. QUEENSLAND OPEN TEAMS – Zone Qualifying Round

The Darling Downs Zone receives a subsidy from the QBA to support an entry into the Queensland Open Teams event each year. The Zone supplements this subsidy by the table fees from the Zone Qualifying Round. Remaining costs are the responsibility of the team members themselves.

For 2026, the entry fee is \$80 per team. \$56/team is used to supplement the Zone Subsidy and \$24/team goes to the host club to offset catering and venue costs.

The normal expectation is that the Zone will support two teams to the State Final, although the Zone Delegates may choose to support a third team if there are sufficient entries and concomitant funds.

6.1. FORMAT

The format for the Zone teams' event is two sessions, played as Round Robin or two-session Whist or New England Relay for less than 10 entrants, and Swiss movement with either 7 or 9 board matches for 10 or more entrants. If the event is played over two stanzas, then the IMP's against both will be added to determine each match result. In all cases scoring is by VP using the appropriate new WBF VP-scale.

6.2. ELIGIBILITY

Any player who is a bona fide Queensland resident and is a member of any Darling Downs Zone club may play in the Darling Downs Zone Teams Qualifying Round.

6.2.1. Team membership

1. A team may comprise 4, 5 or 6 players.
2. A player who has played zero boards for a team in which he entered may be dropped from the team at any time. It will be as though the player had never entered.
3. A team may augment without restriction up to the commencement of play in the State final. This augmentation is permissible up to the maximum team membership of 6.

6.3. Directors report

The Director must provide a report to the Zone Representatives stating:

- The full names and ABF numbers of all members of every team;
- Their win-loss records and placing;
- The movement used and number of boards and matches played; and
- The teams qualifying for subsidy to play in the State Final

A copy of this report should also be sent to the State Master Point Secretary.

7. QUEENSLAND OPEN PAIRS – Zone Qualifying Round

The Darling Downs Zone receives a subsidy from the QBA to support an entry into the Queensland Open Pairs event each year. The Zone supplements this subsidy by the table fees from the Zone Qualifying Round. Remaining costs are the responsibility of the players themselves.

For 2026, the entry fee is \$40 per pair. \$28/pair is used to supplement the Zone Subsidy and \$12/pair goes to the host club to offset catering and venue costs.

The normal expectation is that the Zone will support two pairs to the State Final, although the Zone Delegates may choose to support a third pair (or a Novice Pair) if there are sufficient entries and concomitant funds.

7.1. FORMAT

The format for the Zone Pairs' event is two sessions, played as a Howell or Arrow-Switched Mitchell for less than 10 tables, and Swiss movement with nine 6-board rounds for more than 10 tables. In all cases double matchpoint scoring will be used.

7.2. ELIGIBILITY

Any player who is a bona fide Queensland resident and is a member of any Darling Downs Zone club may play in the Darling Downs Zone Pairs Qualifying Round.

7.3. Directors report

The Director must provide a report to the Zone Representatives stating:

- The full names and ABF numbers of all members of every pair;
- Their overall placing;
- The movement used and number of boards and rounds played; and
- The pairs qualifying for subsidy to play in the State Final

A copy of this report should also be sent to the State Master Point Secretary.