



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EBU LAWS & ETHICS COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE 40 BERNARD STREET, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON WC1
ON MONDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2008**

Present:	Martin Pool	Chairman and Elected Member
	David Burn	Elected Member
	Max Bavin	Chief Tournament Director
	Barry Capal	EBU General Manager
	Frances Hinden	Elected Member
	David Stevenson	Elected Member
	Sally Bugden	EBU Vice Chairman
	Grattan Endicott	Vice-President
	Gerard Faulkner	Vice-President
	John Pain	Secretary

1.	<i>Apologies for Absence</i>	Mike Amos	Elected Member
		Jeremy Dhondy	VC and Elected Member
		David Martin	Elected Member
		Peter Stocken	EBU Chairman

The Chairman welcomed Frances Hinden who was attending her first meeting.

2. *Minutes of Previous Meeting (December 17th 2007)*

3.1 *Accuracy*

3.2.6 The score of 4♦ - 1 by North should be -100, not -140

7.7 Trick 6 in the play of the hand should be ♠, not ♣.

With those corrections, the minutes of the meeting of December 17th were approved and signed.

3.2 *Matters arising*

3.2.1 *Disciplinary case – ‘Logan’*

The Secretary reported that a hearing had been held. A statement will appear in English Bridge in due course.

3.2.2 *Disciplinary Case – ‘Matterhorn’*

The Secretary reported on the outcome of the case. A statement will appear in English Bridge in due course.

3.2.3 *Disciplinary Case – ‘Snowdon’*

The Committee considered the complaint and the reply from the member concerned. It was agreed to charge the defendant and the Secretary was instructed to proceed with the arrangements.

3.2.4 *Psyche Record of a Member*

The Committee considered the psyche record of a member. This followed consideration of a TD Report from the Riviera Summer Congress, but found no evidence of a pattern of systematic psyching.

3.2.5 *Alerting of Doubles*

This item was considered together with agenda items 6.1.1 Correspondence from R J Fleet and 6.1.3 Correspondence from J Allerton.

Mr Burn introduced his paper on the alerting of doubles, which is attached as Appendix A. He had been asked to consider a list of 'highly unusual doubles' but his paper had developed into something other than just a list. He admitted the task of defining 'unusual' and 'highly unusual' was difficult.

Many views were put forward by committee members amongst which were:

- The current arrangements are simpler, but club players do not agree
- The current Orange Book took a step forward. Alerting is to aid disclosure. We need something that is practical. There is a lack of belief that the current rules really are as simple as they are. The proposals in the paper would be a step backwards.
- The definition of 'double' is difficult, but the current OB is pretty good at it. However some doubles are so esoteric and used only by top players that perhaps they could be announced.
- There tend to be few arguments at the local club, where players tend to know what the doubles mean.
- The problem comes when they go into the big, wide world. The current regulations force people to do things that are unnatural and illogical. Even if they become natural for most players, foreigners would have difficulty understanding the concepts. Similarly, new players would have difficulty understanding the current concepts.
- The average player knows three types of double – take out, penalty and 'something else'. If you go for a logical list it will become too long a list.
- Even simple sequences were not universally agreed. For example 1♥ 2♣ double, which is usually played as sputnik or take out, but some committee members said the sequence was played for penalty in their local area.

Mrs Bugden suggested that a possible way forward would be to not alert take out or penalty doubles and that such a move would be popular with 80% of the members.

Mr Burn agreed to find out from countries that had no alerting of doubles at all how it had been received. Mr Bavin noted that in Belgium (who had no alerts of doubles at all), some people had been inventing unusual doubles.

Other points from Mr Allerton's letter, particularly alerting above 3NT in certain situations, was deferred until the next meeting.

3.2.6 *2007 Laws of Duplicate Bridge*

Mr Endicott reported that the issue of copyright between the Portland Club and the WBF had been resolved. This meant that the EBU could go ahead with the printing of the edition on behalf of the Portland Club.

Miss Hinden asked what would be the position regarding competitions which straddled the changeover date of August 1st 2008. The Committee confirmed that the new laws would take effect for all events on August 1st.

3.2.7 *2007 Laws of Duplicate Bridge – Regulating Authority options*

Mr Pool reported that the Board had accepted all the proposals from the Committee regarding the Regulating Authority options.

3.2.8 Status of BGB

Mr Pool confirmed that the Board had asked BGB to sort out the Gold Cup regulations. Mr Endicott observed that each home NBO could jointly and severally assign regulating authority status to BGB, but that would be a matter for the Board to resolve.

3.2.9 Cautions

Honorary Counsel would be asked to look again at the possibility of the introduction of cautions. Mr Faulkner suggested going back to the solicitors who drafted the present bye-laws to enquire why Admonishment had been removed as a sanction.

3.2.10 Digest of law changes

Mr Stevenson, in conjunction with Mr Amos offered to produce a digest of the law changes for TD, clubs and players.

4 Appeals to the National Authority

None this time

5 Disciplinary Matters

5.1 'Popocatapetl'

The Committee considered correspondence from a couple who had been barred from playing during a licensed holiday and other correspondence. The Committee proposed no action, but to keep the papers on file.

6 Technical matters

6.1.1 see 3.2.5

6.1.2 Simple System type competitions

The Committee considered correspondence from a member who had sought to allow youngsters he had been teaching to play 'three weak 2s' in a simple system competition. The Committee was clear that from the introduction of the new code of laws on August 1st that the county could regulate the methods allowed. However at the present time it was suggested that the member approach the county with a view to allowing his request. There was some sympathy with the request as more people moved towards a method using weak twos in some form or other. Mr Endicott offered to compose a reply to be forwarded to both the member and the county.

7 Applications for new permitted methods

7.1 Application to play a strong 1♥ or 1♠ opening.

Members of the committee remembered this being played in European Championships and thought there was some merit in pursuing the idea.

Any bid to show a balanced hand in a particular range

The applicant suggested bids that showed balanced hands such as 1♥ = 15 – 17; 1♠ = 10 – 13 and 2♦ = 12 – 14 might be permitted. The Committee did not like 2♦ to show 12 – 14 but thought that 1 of a major bids worthy of consideration.

Mr Stevenson agreed to draft a regulation for consideration at the next meeting.

7.2 The Grumpy 1♣ and Grumpy 2♣

The Committee considered an application to loosen the guidelines for opening 1♣ at Level 3. Mr Stevenson reminded the committee that the current regulation did not allow a 1♣ opening to show a long major at level 3. There was no enthusiasm to move from this. However, there was possible scope at level 4 to allow the weaker part of the either/or club to include diamonds.

Mr Stevenson agreed to draft a regulation for consideration at the next meeting.

The Committee also considered an application to allow a 2♣ opening to show a 'weak 2' in clubs, hearts or spades. The application was rejected at all levels.

7.3 1♦ opening to show 5431 any singleton

The Committee considered an application to allow a 1♦ opening to be made on 5431 hand shapes with the singleton in any suit. The application was rejected at all levels, but the possible modification to the either/or club at level 4 may go some way in this regard.

8 Reports from Tournament Directors

8.1 07.093

The Committee considered an appeal from the London Year End Congress, where a pair was fined ½VP by the TD for failing to complete their entries into the Bridgemate for a second time. The TD in charge of the floor had made several announcements reminding players of the need to complete their matches before leaving the table.

Appeals Committee's decision

The Appeal Committee upheld the fine and forfeited the deposit.

L&E comment:

The Committee agreed with both the decision to fine and to forfeit the deposit.

8.2 07.094

The Committee considered a hand from the London Year End Congress and asked that the member's bidding record be made available for the next meeting.

8.3 08.001

The Committee considered an appeal from the first weekend of the Women's Trials where no deposit had been taken, but might very well have been kept had there been one.

Mr Burn noted that at International level deposits for appeals were funded by the EBU so it might be considered that at trials the EBU would fund its own money and that deposits were therefore unnecessary. The Secretary was asked to consult the Secretary of the Selection Committee with a view to tidying up the expectation of whether deposits should be taken during trials.

9 Date of next meeting

Thursday 24th April 2008 at 1.15pm. The Fountain Room, Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London W1.

(Secretary's note: Bernard Street not available)

The meeting closed at 4.35pm

Appendix A to L&E Minutes Feb 11th 2008

Alerting doubles

*Still the world is wondrous large – seven seas from marge to marge –
And it holds a vast of various kinds of man,
And the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Kathmandu,
And the crimes of Clapham chaste in Martaban.*

Rudyard Kipling

At the last Laws and Ethics Committee meeting, I rashly undertook to set out some thoughts on the proposal that “only highly unusual doubles should be alerted”. What follows are those thoughts.

The purpose of an alert is not to comply with some set of regulations. The purpose of an alert is to inform the opponents that, in the words of Robert Zimmerman, “something is happening here but you don’t know what it is, do you, Mr Jones?” The recent changes to the alerting procedure were by and large in keeping with this purpose, but some – especially those relating to the alerting of doubles – were not.

Particularly in England, where the practice of asking “unnecessary” questions about the auction is discouraged, providing information to the opponents without their having to ask for it is of primary importance. That is why we should be reluctant to adopt the policy that no doubles are alertable. If, for example, South opens 1NT and West doubles to show spades and another suit, North should be told that the double is not for penalty, not least because his methods may very well vary depending on whether the double is for penalty or not. If he asks a question, he may be placed through no fault of his own in the invidious position of having conveyed unauthorised information should he then pass.

We should also be reluctant to continue with the policy that all penalty doubles of natural suit bids are alertable while all takeout doubles of natural suit bids are not. True, it has the advantage of simplicity. But it falls a very long way short of embodying the purpose of an alert expressed in my first paragraph. If the bidding proceeds

West	North	East	South
1♠	Double	Redouble	2♣
Pass	Pass	Double	

“everybody knows” that this double is for penalty, and not even Mr Jones needs telling so. When the double is for takeout, it is crucial to inform the opponents of the fact – indeed, it could be argued that West’s pass requires an alert if he could have a penalty double of clubs.

Whereas it is quite easy to say what we should not do, it is quite hard to say what we should do instead – or at least, to say it in few words. “All highly unusual doubles, and no others, should be alerted” is an admirably economical principle, but it is difficult to decide what doubles are “highly unusual” without compiling a lengthy, complex, and subjective list. As the opening words of this paper suggest, what is “usual” for me may be “highly unusual” for someone else.

For example, if the bidding proceeds:

West	North	East	South
1NT (12-14)	Pass	2♦ (hearts)	Double

there are those who would consider it “usual” for double to show diamonds without reference to the rest of the hand, while there are those who would consider it equally “usual” for double to show a hand that would have doubled a weak no trump without reference to diamonds. If we say “doubles of artificial bids usually show the suit doubled; any other meaning is highly unusual” we risk being ridiculed (perhaps rightly) by the substantial number of players who all their lives have played double of Stayman or a transfer following a weak no trump as a strong hand without reference to the suit artificially bid. Moreover, even a “simple” regulation such as the one above would mean that this:

West	North	East	South
1NT	2♣ (majors)	Double	

requires an alert unless double shows clubs. It would be highly unusual in my experience for double to show clubs; the “usual” meaning of such a double is that East is interested in penalising one or both of the majors. But my experience is not everyone’s. I am sure that a lot of players would have no agreement about the position at all and would simply double to show a club suit (one or two of them might preface this with “Oh, so it doesn’t show clubs then?”)

For that reason, I do not think that we should create regulations explicitly containing the words “unusual” or “unexpected”. We should of course explain that the purpose of our regulations is to give an idea of what is regarded as unexpected. We should also state quite clearly that players must feel free to depart from the letter of the regulations in order to fulfil the broader obligation of full disclosure. Directors and Appeals Committees should never penalise such departures, nor have any time for those who sneer at their opponents for not obeying the letter of the regulations.

I propose to set out a framework for what our regulations might be. I hope that the Laws and Ethics Committee will then be able to discuss this framework with a view to encapsulating it in terms that are as clear and as simple as possible, after making any amendments to it that are considered necessary.

Some definitions:

- A double of a natural bid is for **penalty** if the doubler expects that partner will pass it with most hands consistent with his bidding so far, if any .
- A double of a natural bid is for **takeout** if the doubler expects that partner will not pass it with most hands consistent with his bidding so far, if any.
- A double of a natural bid is **alertable** if it is for penalty when the opponents expect it to be for takeout, or for takeout when the opponents expect it to be for penalty. A double of a natural bid is **non-alertable** otherwise.
- A double of an artificial bid is **non-alertable** if it shows length or strength in the suit bid, or if it implies length or strength in one or more of the suits shown by the bid, or if it requests that partner lead the suit bid. A double of an artificial bid is **alertable** otherwise.

We will need to decide whether opening bids of 1♣ on 2+ cards, and 1♦ on 0+ cards in a strong club system, are natural or artificial in this context (a 2♥ opening that might be a 4=3=1=5 shape will also require consideration). We will also need to decide whether cue bids and long suit trial bids are natural or artificial in this context.

This means that:

West North East South
1NT 2♣ (majors) Double

is non-alertable if double shows clubs and if double shows a desire to penalise at least one major. South might want to know which it is before passing to suggest playing in clubs; if he does, he can ask. It also means that a double of a Multi 2♦ opening to show a weak no trump is alertable, even though that is “usual” these days.

We start with the obvious:

[1] A double of a natural opening bid in a suit is expected to be for takeout.

[2] A double of a natural opening bid in no trumps is expected to be for penalty.

Unfortunately, that is where “the obvious” ends, but we continue:

[3] A double of a natural response in a suit, or any response in no trumps, to an opening bid in a suit is expected to be for takeout.

This means that:

West North East South
1♥ Pass 1NT Double

is expected to be for takeout. I think that this is the “usual” expectation in tournament bridge these days even at levels below the highest, but I could be persuaded otherwise. It also means that:

West North East South
1♥ Pass 3NT Double

is expected to be for takeout. Since I’ve never heard this auction in all my years of playing bridge, I confess that I don’t know what it usually means, but I’d probably have a 4=0=5=4 shape rather than be able to beat 3NT in my own hand.

[4] When a side has made a natural opening bid in a suit, a double by that side of a natural overcall is expected to be for takeout.

[5] When a side has made a natural opening bid in no trumps, a double by that side of a natural overcall is expected to be for penalty.

[6] When a side has made a penalty double, or a redouble showing strength, any subsequent double by that side is expected to be for penalty.

[1] to [5] above refer to the first round of the auction only (where “the first round” begins with the first bid). I don’t think they contain anything particularly contentious apart from the reservations I have expressed regarding [3]. What follows may be contentious, but it does seem to me to have the effect of simplifying many situations that would otherwise require the creation of a detailed list of exceptions:

[7] A double of a natural bid in a suit by a member of a side that has earlier doubled the suit for takeout is expected to be for takeout.

[8] A double of a natural bid in a suit, or of a response to that bid in no trumps, by a player who has passed over an earlier natural bid in the suit is expected to be for penalty.

[9] Otherwise, a double of a natural bid in a suit by a player who has made a call other than pass, and whose partner has also made a call other than pass, is expected to be for penalty.

This means that, for example:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
Double			

is alertable if for takeout. The cool school will say that it is highly unusual for such a double to be for penalty; they should come and play in the £30 game at TGRs sometime (or even the £1 game).

I will leave it here for the moment. The above list may be daunting, but as far as I have been able to achieve it, the idea is that players will alert the doubles their opponents need to know about without actually having to read the list at all, let alone memorise it.

After finishing this paper, I have read correspondence (on an internet forum) from Belgium, where it is said that since Belgium adopted the regulation “no double is alertable”, players have been inventing peculiar meanings for doubles in an effort to trap unwary opponents. Whereas I am well aware that the reaction to this in certain circles may be “so that’s why we fought the War, eh?” I consider that it provides at least some reinforcement for the idea that we should not adopt such a regulation.

Again, I would stress that if we make new regulations, we should (as we did with the latest Orange Book) allow considerable leniency while they are absorbed. I would also urge once again that we abolish the stupid regulation discouraging people from exercising their legal right to ask questions during the auction. *Et ceterum censeo Carthaginem esse delendam.*

David Burn
29th January 2008

I have just spotted that my paper says:

[4] When a side has made a natural opening bid in a suit, a double by that side of a natural overcall is expected to be for takeout.

This means that if West opens 3H, North bids 3S and East doubles it, that is expected to be for takeout. Of course, this is rubbish. The position could be covered in a variety of ways, perhaps by adding “except that if the opening bid was pre-emptive, double by opener’s partner is expected to be for penalty”.

I have also spotted that in this auction:

West 2D (1)	North 2H	East Double	South
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(1) Multi

where the “usual” meaning is “pass with hearts, bid with spades, make your own arrangements with strong hands”, no real guidance is given as to whether the double is “takeout” or “penalty”. Of course, “most of the time” the opening bidder will have spades, and the doubler so expects, so this is a “takeout” double ex def. If the double means “pass even if you have spades”, it will therefore be alerted, which is a good thing, because the opponents won’t expect that to be what double means (and South will run when he should do, instead of hoping that West will remove). I don’t feel inclined specifically to include this kind of auction (at least, not at this time of night), but I thought I would mention it because there may be similar positions I have failed to consider carefully enough.

Best wishes

David