

## **EBU Competitions for Clubs**

One of the major functions of the EBU is to provide competitions, tournaments and congresses for members of all abilities. It organises events at different venues around the country on the majority of weekends and bank holidays throughout the year, as well as two 6-day overseas congresses a year, not to mention the prestigious summer Brighton Congress – a 10-day fiesta of bridge unequalled anywhere in the world. The complete listing of EBU competitions can be found in the EBU Diary-cum-Handbook which is sent out to all members with the August issue of *English Bridge*. You can also read about them in our online [Calendar of Events](#).

Among the competitions are several particularly suitable for the club player, either with heats held in the comfort of your own club, or run as knockout competitions held in players' homes:

### **The NICKO**

The National Inter-Club Knock-Out competition, affectionately known as the NICKO, is the premier and most popular event for club teams in England. It is open to teams-of-four from all EBU-affiliated clubs. Matches are mostly played in people's homes, and it is usual for the home team to provide refreshments thereby creating a sociable atmosphere. The early rounds are of 24 boards and are regionalised so that teams don't have too far to travel. Every team that enters is guaranteed at least two games since losing the first match qualifies the team for the parallel competition for the NICKO plate. Green points are awarded for all matches won. Why not enter one or more teams from your club? There is no limit to the number of teams from any one club, but all teams must consist of bona fide club members.

### **National Pairs**

This competition gives your club's pairs a chance to compete at local, regional and national levels. All EBU-affiliated clubs can hold heats of the National Pairs Competition, usually at any time between October and Mid-February, although they may require the prior approval of the relevant County Association. The heat can be combined with an ordinary club night. Masterpoints at Regional Scale, i.e. Club Scale x 3 (including green points if three or more tables), are awarded to those pairs coming in the top third of those participating in the heat. Those pairs also qualify for the Regional Finals, usually held in March at a number of venues around the country.

From the Regional Finals the top pairs qualify for the National Finals on a weekend in April. The "A" Final is open to the top 50 Regional qualifiers. The "B" Final is open to the top 50 pairs who have at most one Life Master (and no higher ranked players) in the partnership and no person in the top 60 of the Gold Point ranking list. Pairs qualifying for both the "A" and "B" Finals have the choice of which to play in.

There is only a modest charge for entering the heats, so why not try running a heat at your club? Who knows, one of your pairs might be the next National Champions.

## **Simultaneous Pairs**

The principle behind Simultaneous Pairs is very simple. In the same way that a club organises a duplicate such that all the pairs play the same boards, so that their results can be compared, in a Sim Pairs other clubs around the country are also playing the same boards as your club, so that a national result ranking can be determined according to who plays the hands best. The players who do very well will, of course, win far more master points than usual, because they will have done better than many more other pairs. A major attraction is the fact that Sims always have a commentary provided by a well-known expert, so that your pairs can see whether the expert was right, or perhaps learn something from the wise words. The results are published on the Internet as they come in from clubs, and this adds a measure of excitement with players seeing their results change as the number of comparison scores increases. If your club hasn't tried sim pairs before, why not give it a go?

Booking is online through the club's member area on the EBU website.

## **Stratified Simultaneous Pairs**

Stratified Sim Pairs are a new type of club competition which gives pairs of all abilities the chance to succeed at national level. Even if a pair never manages to come in the top half of your usual duplicate, they still may excel in their 'strat' (category) in this event and come near the top nationally to win a good number of master points. The EBU holds separate Stratified Sims with different hands and ranking lists on each day for several days, so a club can participate on more than one day. There is no extra work for the club since the EBU carries out the stratification.

As usual for Simultaneous Pairs, there are enhanced master point awards. In addition, national ranking lists and master points are produced each day in each of several categories, e.g.

1. Overall
2. For pairs both members of which are below the rank of Tournament Master.
3. For pairs both members of which are below the rank of Star Master.
4. For pairs both members of which are below the rank of District Master.

Pairs who feature in the master point awards in two or more of these categories receive the highest of the awards available to them. Hand records and commentaries specially written with the club player in mind are available online, so that your members can study them afterwards.

## **Booking and Further Information**

Bookings can be made online. Check the [Competitions section of the EBU website](#) for this and up-to-date details of the various competitions including dates and venues. Enquiries for the various events should be addressed to our Competitions Department at [comps@ebu.co.uk](mailto:comps@ebu.co.uk) or by phone on 01296 317 203/219.

## **Other Events**

The above are the main events where heats are played at clubs, but there are many other events suitable for players of all levels held both locally and nationally. These are often sociable, good fun and good mental exercise! Please consult the [EBU website](#) and the [website of your local County Association](#) for further details.