

Blue Book 2023 – effective from 7 August 2023

Many people sensibly suggest that the fewer changes are made, the better. On the other hand there are a number of reasons why we make changes and hope they stand the test of time. These are:

1. Feedback – after the Blue Book was published in 2022 we received 47 suggestions for change from 16 members. In addition, 13 requests for clarification, mostly around the regulations for opening two bids. Following the publication of the draft in June 2023, we received a further 118 suggestions for change from 11 members. The Blue Book subcommittee of the L&EC considered each one.
2. System Development – the methods players use change and the Blue Book should move accordingly e.g. many more people play short club and transfers, hence the widening of the use of announcements to reflect that.
3. Clarity – regulations can be very complex, trying to find a path between allowing flexibility in methods while protecting opponents from having to find defences “on the hoof”, as well as finding the best way to encourage disclosure of methods during play.

The main changes are as follows:

a) Section 4 – Announcements.

The use of Announcements has been widened, with clarity that they only apply on the first round of bidding e.g., we now name the suit for all transfers or “proxies”; we state whether bids are forcing or not; we extend the announcement with full disclosure where appropriate such as “forcing, may include a weak raise”.

It is important, particularly while these changes bed in, that we are all understanding of mis-alerts or mis-announcements while we get used to them.

b) Section 4B2 – Doubles

The meanings of doubles later in the auction have a greater tendency for misunderstanding and can create issues of unauthorised information. We have removed the need to alert (or announce) any takeout or penalty doubles after the first round of bidding. Later, only alert if the double (or redouble) has an unexpected specific message e.g. I bid hearts and the opponents then make a bid in hearts, if I double to say “try and find another lead” then this is unexpected and should be alerted.

c) Section 7C – Opening Bids above the 1 level

This has always been a challenging area to find the balance between flexibility and regulation and its complexity has resulted in several requests for clarification. We have made two changes:

- i. The presentation of the regulations. We hope the tables help clarify.
- ii. Widened the ability to open 4 card suits using the Rule of 20

d) Glossary – with links in the body of the text to it

Finally, we hope the revised two-page [Announcement & Alert Summary](#) document provides a succinct explanation of what to communicate when.