



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EBU LAWS & ETHICS COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON WC1
ON FRIDAY 24TH MARCH 2006**

Present:	Martin Pool	Chairman
	Steve Barnfield	
	Max Bavin	Chief Tournament Director
	David Burn	(for the latter part of the meeting)
	David Martin	
	David Stevenson	
	Grattan Endicott	Vice-President
	Nick Doe	Secretary

1. Apologies for Absence	Jeremy Dhondy	
	Richard Fleet	Vice-Chairman
	Philip Mason	EBU Vice-Chairman
	Denis Robson	EBU Chairman
	Gerard Faulkner	Vice-President

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (25th January 2006)

2.1 Accuracy

Mr Doe drew attention to two typographical errors in item 4. In item 4.7 “2♥-2” (at the end of the TD’s ruling) should read “2♠-2”, and in item 4.11 “N/S –90” (at the end of the TD’s ruling) should read “N/S +90”.

Subject to these corrections the minutes were agreed to be a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2.2 Matters arising

2.2.1 White Book – index (item 2.2.1)

Mr Bavin reported that the proposed outside assistance had yet to come to anything.

2.2.2 Reports from Tournament Directors – 05.43 (item 4.4)

Mr Doe reported that no response had been received from the players, and the L&E agreed that a reminder should be sent.

2.2.3 Reports from Tournament Directors – 05.70/71 (item 4.9)

Mr Doe apologised that he appeared to have written to the players on the basis of the wrong standard letter, and the L&E agreed that an apology should be combined with a specific request for comments.

2.2.4 *Correspondence with players – 05.61 (item 6.2)*

Mr Doe reported that he had had no response from the player principally concerned, and the email address which was his only means of contacting him now appeared to be defunct. The L&E agreed to take no further action unless and until the players concerned resumed their lapsed memberships.

2.2.5 *Any other matters arising not featuring elsewhere on the agenda*

None.

3. Orange Book changes

3.1 Minimum opening strength – third in hand openings etc.

Mr Pool reminded L&E members that the subject had been raised in correspondence from a member of the Panel of Referees, who had expressed the view that the current regulations were contrary to good bridge and would be widely ignored. Considerable correspondence had passed between L&E members on the subject, but in the light of the fact that a proposal had been made to change a decision made by the L&E at a duly-convened meeting, it had been decided to call this meeting to discuss the matter instead of endeavouring to deal with it by email.

Following a discussion the matters requiring decision were broken down into a number of distinct proposals which were voted on separately. The net effect of these decisions is as follows:-

A. Level 4 – minimum strength for opening bids of one of a suit – basic standard

Unchanged at Rule of 18, but the qualification “or equivalent playing strength” to be removed.

B. Level 4 – special provision for opening bids of one of a suit in third and fourth positions

Openings in third and fourth positions which are weaker than the basic standard are permitted provided that they contain a minimum of 8 HCP.

C. Level 4 – scope of the new provisions

A and B above apply to natural and artificial opening bids of one of a suit (other than specifically strong openings, i.e. strong 1♣ and 1♦ openings, and openings with a strong artificial element, i.e. “either-or” 1♣ openings), and also to 1NT opening bids permitted under the heading “intermediate and artificial” and to the Stoker 1NT opening.

D. Level 3 – minimum strength for opening bids of one of a suit – basic standard

Rule of 18, with the qualification “or equivalent playing strength” removed.

E. Level 3 – special provision for opening bids of one of a suit in third and fourth positions

As Level 4 (see B above).

F. Level 3 – scope of the new provisions

D and E above apply to natural and artificial opening bids of one of a suit (other than specifically strong openings, i.e. strong 1♣ and 1♦ openings). Note – the only other artificial opening bids of one of a suit which are permitted at Level 3 are opening bids of one of a minor of the “natural or balanced or opposite minor” type.

G. Level 3 – minimum strength for natural 1NT openings

9 HCP.

H. Level 2 – minimum strength for opening bids of one of a suit

Unchanged at Rule of 19 or 11 HCP, but the qualification “or equivalent playing strength” to be removed. Note – there are to be no special provisions for third and fourth position openings at Level 2.

I. Application of the no conventions rule

Unchanged, i.e. applies to natural openings of one of a suit and 1NT which may be weaker than the specified standards. Note that the no conventions rule does not apply to sub-minimum artificial openings, nor, at Level 3, to any openings at the one level on 7 HCP or fewer, neither of which are permitted at all.

The L&E noted that it appears unusual for players to mention agreements to open light in (say) third position on their convention cards. It agreed that the changes agreed above provided an ideal opportunity to reinforce the message that such matters must be disclosed. Although many players recognised the possibility of light openings in third position, they were entitled to be informed of any agreements their opponents might have on the subject. Mr Doe was asked to make suggestions as to how the need to provide this information might best be reflected in the design of the EBU 20B convention card, and to refer them to Mr Pool for a decision.

4. Technical matters

4.1 Agreements after infractions

Mr Pool informed the L&E that Mr Endicott had raised some questions in relation to the decision at the last meeting, and he had agreed to a further discussion.

Following a discussion of various aspects of the matter the L&E agreed to introduce a regulation as follows in place of the more general provision minuted at the last meeting:-

Following a call out of turn or an insufficient bid, the non-offending side may have any agreement which would have been permitted in the absence of the infraction. This may involve assigning meanings to calls which differ from the meanings which would have applied in the absence of the infraction and/or assigning different meanings to calls depending on whether the infraction is condoned or not.

Example – N opens 1♠. E overcalls 1♦. N/S's normal method is to play takeout doubles of simple overcalls. N/S may agree that to accept the insufficient bid of 1♦ and to double is for takeout, but to decline to accept it and then to double 2♦, should E decide to substitute that call, is for penalties, or vice versa.

Any such agreements should be prominently disclosed on the convention card. Alerting rules would apply in accordance with the normal alerting status of the meaning of the call actually made by the non-offending side.

5. Disciplinary matters

5.1 Complaint from a club (“Hippopotamus”)

The L&E considered correspondence which it did not consider warranted any action under the Disciplinary Rules. Mr Doe was asked to draft a suitable letter to the member complained of for Mr Pool's approval.

6. Reports from Tournament Directors**6.1 06.07**

Dealer N
Game all
MP Pairs

North
♠ 8 7 4
♥ Q 9 6 4 3 2
♦ -
♣ 9 5 4 2

West
♠ A K Q J 2
♥ -
♦ J 9 7 6 4 3 2
♣ 7

East
♠ 10 6
♥ A 8 5
♦ A Q 8 5
♣ A K Q J

South
♠ 9 5 3
♥ K J 10 7
♦ K 10
♣ 10 8 6 3

Bidding:	West	North	East	South
		Pass	2NT ¹	Pass
	4♦ ²	Pass	4NT ³	Pass
	5♣ ⁴	Pass	5♦ ^{H5}	Pass
	5♠ ⁶	Pass	6♦	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

1	20-22	4	1 or 4 key cards
2	Natural slam try	5	Signoff
3	RKCB	6	Unknown

Result: 6♦= N/S –1370

Tournament Director's statement of facts & ruling

I was called to the table at the point of the 5♠ bid. N [was] concerned at the slow 5♦. I asked for the auction to continue. I was called back at the end of the hand.

W indicated that after 4NT he was never staying short of slam. E could have rejected the slam try with 5♦.

It was felt that at matchpoints and because of W's freakish distribution that it was a clearcut 6♦, and Pass was not a logical alternative. I allowed the score to stand.

Appeals Committee's decision

Uncertain as to the legitimacy of the 5♠ bid. Ruled that [there was a]* 50/50 chance of bidding.

**[The exact words used by the Appeals Committee are difficult to decipher, but the intent is clear].*

Score adjusted for both sides to:-

50% of 5♦ +1 N/S –620
plus 50% of 6♦ = N/S –1370

L&E comment:

It is not appropriate to give a weighted score incorporating an element of the table result in an unauthorised information case such as this. Either the 5♠ bid was an infraction, in which case it should have been disallowed and a pass substituted, or it was not, in which case the table result should have been allowed to stand. However close the Appeals Committee

thought its decision was, its responsibility was to decide whether there was an infraction. A weighted score cannot be awarded on the basis, effectively, that W was allowed to commit an infraction some percentage of the time.

6.2 06.12

Dealer W
N/S game
MP Pairs

North
♠ J 7 4
♥ 10 9 6 3
♦ A J 9
♣ Q 8 5

West
♠ 10 9 3
♥ A J
♦ 8 7 6 5 4 3
♣ J 3

East
♠ K
♥ Q 8 7 2
♦ K Q 10 2
♣ K 10 6 4

South
♠ A Q 8 6 5 2
♥ K 5 4
♦ -
♣ A 9 7 2

Bidding:	West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
	2♠ ¹	Dbl	Pass	4♠
	5♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

1 Explained as maximum pass looking for NT

Result: 5♦ -3 N/S +150

Statement of facts & ruling

The TD classified the psyche as Green. W commented that he considered the 2♠ bid (possibly mistakenly) as a tactical rather than a psychic bid.

Appeals Committee's decision

[There was no appeal.]

L&E comment:

The Tournament Director should have considered whether the 2♠ bid on a weak hand with support was in accordance with, or a departure from, E/W's real methods, bearing in mind that partnership experience creates implicit agreements which are to be considered part of a pair's methods. W's comment suggests that he had made such a bid before or might do so again on a similar hand, and that his partner might recognise the possibility.

Evidence suggests that the ploy of making ostensibly strong bids on weak hands with support is effectively part of the methods of a number of partnerships. If so, the use of such bids must be properly disclosed. Calling them "tactical bids" does not absolve players from the obligation fully and freely to disclose their real methods.

6.3 06.15

Dealer S
N/S game
Swiss Pairs

North
♠ A 5 3
♥ 10 9 4
♦ 9 7 6
♣ A J 9 3

West
♠ K 8
♥ J 7
♦ 8 3
♣ Q 8 7 6 5 4 2

East
♠ J 6 2
♥ K Q 8 5 3 2
♦ Q 10 5 2
♣ -

South
♠ Q 10 9 7 4
♥ A 6
♦ A K J 4
♣ K 10

Bidding:	West	North	East	South
				1♠
	4♣	Pass ^{H1}	Pass	4♦
	Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

1 N's pass was made after some thought, but N and S both aver that he always thinks for a while before calling. There were no earlier calls to compare.

Result: 4♠ = N/S +620

Tournament Director's statement of facts & ruling

I was called at the end of the auction. W reserved his right to call me back. I was told that the facts were agreed. However, it transpires that N/S are adamant that N's calling is always slow, and they claim that his pass was made in his normal tempo. W agreed that N was a slow caller. Nevertheless, W asked for a ruling because S had bid on.

It is my view that Pass is not a logical alternative on the S hand, and I consider 4♦ to be the action chosen by most players. I do not consider other actions sufficiently likely to merit a weighting. The score stands.

Appeals Committee's decision

In a pairs tournament, we feel that most reasonable players would take action and although close after the variation in tempo by N, we think the 4♦ a reasonable percentage 70%+ action. Director's ruling upheld.

L&E comment:

After a jump bid, the period during which the Stop card is (or should have been) displayed is "free" thinking time for the next player. When unauthorised information is alleged from slow tempo immediately following a Stop bid, the TD should take care to ascertain and record how much longer the player took than would be normal under the Stop procedure.

6.4 06.21

Dealer N
Love all
MP Pairs

North
♠ A Q J 10 7 3
♥ 7 3
♦ 5
♣ K 6 4 2

West
♠ 9 8 5 2
♥ Q
♦ 10 8 7 6 3
♣ A 9 5

East
♠ K 6
♥ A K J 6 5 2
♦ K 9 4
♣ 10 7

South
♠ 4
♥ 10 9 8 4
♦ A Q J 2
♣ Q J 8 3

Bidding:	West	North	East	South
		2♠ ^A	3♥	Pass ^{H?1}
	Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

1 Disputed hesitation

Result: 3♠ = N/S +140

Tournament Director's statement of facts & ruling

I was called at the end of the auction and recalled at the end of the hand. On looking at the hand I deemed that S had something to think about and this unauthorised information was used by N. I adjusted the score to 3♥ -2 by E, N/S +100.

Appeals Committee's decision

We think it is unlikely that a hesitation occurred given the South hand, therefore we allow the table result to stand.

L&E comment:

The way in which the TD recorded his actions suggests that he did not do enough when first called to ascertain as a matter of fact whether a hesitation had taken place. To make a ruling that a hesitation has or has not occurred by looking at the hand away from the table and judging whether the player concerned had anything to think about should be a last resort.

7. Any other business

7.1 Alerting

The L&E considered the alerting status of the 1♥/1♠ responses to 1♦ in the context of the following agreement:-

- ♦ Basic system – five card majors; 1♣ = 12-14 balanced or clubs; 1♦ = 18-19 balanced or diamonds (both 1♣ and 1♦ therefore show 2+ cards).
- ♦ 1♥/1♠ responses to 1♦ are natural, but may be made by agreement on no points at all if responder has sufficiently few diamonds not to want to risk playing in 1♦ on a non-existent fit opposite a potential 18-19 balanced.

The L&E considered that the responses were not alertable under the current rules (under which the test is whether they are affected by **other** agreements which opponents are unlikely to expect), but

would become alertable under the OB 2006 rules (under which the test is whether they have a potentially unexpected meaning).

The L&E considered that the agreement concerned should be prominently disclosed on the front of the convention card.

7.2 *Prejudice against female TDs*

Mr Doe drew attention to a comment from a TD arising out of the previous minutes (in which in just three of the Reports from Tournament Directors included in the minutes had the TD been referred to in gender-specific terms, but in all three cases the TD concerned had happened to be female). The TD who raised the matter had been concerned that there might be prejudice resulting in a disproportionate number of appeals from the decisions of female TDs. The L&E believed that there had always been a tendency on the part of some male players to belittle the bridge skills of females, whether players or TDs, but did not think that there was a serious problem to be addressed.