



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EBU LAWS & ETHICS COMMITTEE
HELD AT MCALPINES, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON WC1
ON THURSDAY JUNE 5TH 2008**

Present:	Martin Pool	Chairman and Elected Member
	Mike Amos	Elected Member
	Sally Bugden	EBU Vice Chairman
	David Burn	Elected Member
	Max Bavin	Chief Tournament Director
	Jeremy Dhondy	Vice Chairman and Elected Member
	Frances Hinden	Elected Member
	David Stevenson	Elected Member
	Peter Stocken	EBU Chairman
	Grattan Endicott	Vice-President
	John Pain	Secretary

The Chairman opened the meeting by noting the recent death of National TD Ian Spoons. Mr Pool said it was a sad loss and extended the Committee's sympathy to Ian's family.

- 1. Apologies for Absence** Barry Capal EBU General Manager
Gerard Faulkner Vice-President

2. The EBU Chairman (unscheduled item)

The EBU Chairman addressed the Committee before considering the rest of the agenda. Mr Stocken reported that at the EGM on June 4th the Pay to Play proposals had been accepted by 52 votes to 31. He also reported that a new sub-committee would be set up – the Club Committee, one of the terms of reference to be to 'identify issues important to club players'. Any activity likely to affect clubs would be referred to the new committee to effect proper consultation. The Board desired to move the centre of gravity of the union's activity down to club level. In particular the Chairman requested that any proposed changes to the alerting of doubles be referred to the new committee for its consideration.

In view of the time scale involved in forming the new Club Committee this would inevitably delay implementation of any such changes until after August 1st 2008.

Mr Dhondy said there was a serious expectation amongst the membership that the alerting of doubles would be addressed in time for an August 1st implementation. There would need to be a convincing argument for delaying. Mrs Bugden said that, in her opinion, the formation of the new Club Committee and the reasons behind its formation together with the need to consult it on the matter was a convincing reason for a delay.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (April 24th 2008)

3.1 Accuracy

There were no corrections.

The minutes of the meeting of April 24th were approved and signed.

3.2 Matters arising

3.2.1 Suspended Members and Simultaneous Pairs events

The secretary reported on correspondence he had received from Honorary Counsel. This confirmed the view from the previous meeting. That was that player members suspended from membership are not eligible to take part in Simultaneous Pairs events organised by the EBU or other home union, BGB, EBL or WBF. In situations where a member is suspended the letter will make it clear that this is the case. The organiser of the simultaneous pairs would be informed so that in the event of a suspended member playing his results would be cancelled.

3.2.2 The Laws of Duplicate Bridge 2007

The Secretary reported that copies of the laws were now available.

3.2.3 Psyche Record of a Member – county report

Mr Dhondy reported that his County did not at present keep psyche records from its own county events, although a proposal to do so would be put to the County committee meeting in a few weeks time. Consequently it was not able to provide any psyche records for the member in question.

3.2.4 Gold Cup Regulations

The Chairman reported on discussions he had had with Mrs Claridge, the BGB Secretary. It was confirmed that the BGB Committee had considered the matter of alerting at its annual meeting and was minded to use WBF regulations throughout. It was agreed that WBF regulations would frighten some people playing in either the Gold Cup or Silver Plate for the first time.

The Committee asked the Board to mandate our BGB representative to lobby for a rule change.

The Committee also asked that the disciplinary rules for BGB events be clearly written down. The Secretary was asked to contact Mrs Claridge with a view to pursuing this. Mr Endicott understood that in disciplinary matters between members of more than one country the home union of the member whose behaviour was being questioned would action the enquiry.

3.2.5 Possible reclassification of a psyche

The Committee considered the responses by the members of the partnership and accepted their reasons for not taking action. The psyche was confirmed as AMBER and the papers were put to file.

3.2.6 Disciplinary Case 'Wetterhorn'

Although the Committee considered the matter closed, the member clearly did not as there had been further correspondence. The Secretary was asked to write to the complainant asking him to provide evidence for his latest remarks or to withdraw them.

3.2.7 Disciplinary Case – 'Vesuvius'

The Secretary reported that he had had continuing correspondence with various parties. There was one further line of enquiry to make before a decision on how to proceed could be made. The Secretary would report back as soon as he had the required information.

4 Appeals to the National Authority

4.1 Appeal from the EBU Simultaneous Pairs May 14th 2008

Mr Pool and Mrs Bugden withdrew for this item.

The Committee considered the four grounds for hearing an appeal to the national authority and after discussion concluded that it did not meet at least one of the requirements. Consequently the appeal was dismissed and the deposit forfeited.

4.2 Appeal from the Bournemouth Spring Congress

The Committee considered a request for an appeal to the national authority following a ruling and appeal at the Spring Bank Holiday congress. The detailed appeal had only arrived the day before, so the Committee deferred it until the next meeting by which time the other side would have had the chance to respond.

5 Disciplinary Cases

5.1 New case – ‘Blackfriars’

The Committee considered a report following incidents at the Spring Bank Holiday Congress. The Chairman would report back following discussions with the Honorary Counsel.

6 Technical Matters

6.1 Correspondence

Dealt with under other headings.

6.2 Orange Book update

6.2.1 The Committee confirmed the following changes:

Orange Book Page 46:

Currently 11 C 13 is allowed at Level 4 and reads

11 C 13 Either/or [Two-way] Club

A 1♣ opening may be played as up to three meanings from:

- (a) a balanced or semi-balanced hand with 9+ HCP
- (b) an unbalanced hand with no suit longer than Clubs
- (c) a 4-4-4-1 hand with any singleton

together with

- (d) Strong: any combination of meanings which promises a minimum of ‘Extended Rule of 25’ (see 10 B 4).

This will be amended at Level 4 to

11 C 13 Either/or [Two-way] Club

A 1♣ opening may be played as both of:

- (a) Any meaning as long as this does not include unbalanced hands with 5+ Hearts or 5+ Spades (unless there is a minor suit of equal length or longer).

together with

- (b) Strong: any combination of meanings which promises a minimum of ‘Extended Rule of 25’ (see 10 B 4).

Two new sections are included at Level 4, namely

11 C 15 Strong Major

A 1♥ or 1♠ opening may have any combination of meanings if it is forcing and promises a minimum of ‘Extended Rule of 25’ (see 10 B 4).

11 C 16 *Balanced Major*

A 1♥ or 1♠ opening may have a defined range, a minimum of 9 HCP and must not be forcing. The HCP range may be varied according to position and/or vulnerability. One of the following may be played:

- (a) a balanced hand
- (b) a balanced or semi-balanced hand

Players are free to agree more restrictive distributional constraints (eg no four card major).

The current 11 C 15 and 11 C 16 would be renumbered 11 C 17 and 11 C 18. These changes will take effect from August 1st 2008.

6.2.2 2♣ Fert

The Committee considered the current regulation 11G10(b)(2) at Level 4

2♣ opening shows 0-5 HCP with 4+ cards in either diamonds, hearts or spades. There was concern that players were using this method to show a two-suiter which also included longer clubs.

It was the Committee's wish to forbid the method where a second longer suit that is the bid suit could be included.

The revised wording is as follows:

11 G 10 is allowed at Level 4 and is replaced with

11 G 10 *General*

Two of a Suit openings may be played as any one or two of the following:

- (a) Strong: Any combination of meanings provided that it promises a minimum strength of 'Extended Rule of 25' (see 10 B 4).
- (b) Any combination of meanings which either:
 - (1) includes one specified suit of at least four cards; or
 - (2) has a specification which does not include holding at least four cards in the suit bid, and does not include two-suiters where the bid suit is the longer suit

Notes: (i) (ii) and (iii) are unchanged.

This change will take effect from August 1st 2008.

6.2.3 Revised regulations for the alerting of doubles.

It was agreed that any recommendation regarding the alerting of doubles would be referred to the new Club Committee (see item 2). Consequently any changes would be deferred from August 1st to a later date.

The Committee was conscious of the need to have clear proposals that the membership would feel happy with. The Committee considered three proposals:

Proposal 1

Keep the present rules up until opener's rebid, after that make only very strange doubles, redoubles or passes alertable.

Proposal 2

Alert strange doubles only at any level. Any double that is take-out, penalties or somewhere between the two is not alerted.

Proposal 3

No doubles to be alerted at all. All doubles are considered 'self-alerting'.

After a discussion Committee members were asked for their preference. After a poll of committee members it was agreed to put proposal 2 to the Club Committee. The appropriate wording would be presented to the L and E at its next meeting.

6.2.4 Rewording of section 3E

The Committee confirmed the following rewording of section 3E in the Orange Book. (Law refs changed to 2007 code)

3 E Asking Questions: Unauthorised Information and the Potential to Mislead

3 E 1 A player has the right to ask questions at his turn, but should be aware that exercising this right has consequences. If a player shows unusual interest in one or more calls of the auction, then this is unauthorised information to partner. Partner must carefully avoid taking advantage, which may constrain the actions partner is permitted to take during the remainder of the auction or when on lead during the play. (Law 16C, 73C). Asking about a call of 3NT or below which has not been alerted may cause more problems than asking about an alerted call, as may asking repeated or leading questions. Asking about alerted calls in a (potentially) competitive auction is less likely to have adverse consequences, although it is not risk free.

If, therefore, at a player's turn to call, he does not need to have a call explained, it may be in his interests to defer all questions until either he is about to make the opening lead or his partner's lead is face-down on the table.

3 E 2 Questions asked during the auction about the meaning of an opponent's double shall usually **not** be considered to pass Unauthorised Information, nor to have the potential to mislead declarer about the questioner's shape or values. However, the TD may still use his discretion to give an adjusted score if the nature of the questioning clearly provides partner with unauthorised information.

3 E 3 A player may use only information he has received from legitimate sources, such as calls, plays, opponents' convention cards, their answers to questions and their mannerisms. A player may not use information gained from his partner's explanation, uncertainty, tempo or mannerisms. (Law 73B1)

3 E 4 Perhaps an example would help. A player opens 1♣ which is not alerted, and the next player, before passing, asks the meaning of the 1♣, or even worse says "Is that natural?". If 3NT is reached, and the questioner's partner leads a Club from two or three small cards the questioner must expect that the TD will not allow the result to stand, but will adjust it.

What reason has this player to ask? The questioner knows it is a natural bid because it was not alerted. Experience shows the questioner often happens to have several Clubs.

Players sometimes say "I always ask whether I intend to bid or not". This is not recommended.

3 E 5 When a player does wish to ask a question, it is recommended to phrase this neutrally and ask simply for an explanation of the auction, or of a particular call. For example when asking about a 3♣ response to 2NT it is recommended to say "What does 3♣ mean?", rather than "Is that Stayman?" This helps to avoid confusion or misleading opponents. Only if further clarification is needed should specific questions be asked.

3 E 6 As well as giving unauthorised information to partner, questions about bidding may mislead opponents, in which case they may be entitled to redress. Similarly, declarer's questions about leads, signals and discards could illegally mislead the defenders. (Law 73F)

6.2.5 The Committee considered sequences that had given problems regarding the regulation of not alerting calls over 3NT:

e.g. 2♥ 4♣ (sometimes described as 'Leaping Michaels') or 3♥ 4♣ (where 4♣ is artificial)

but decided against making any changes in this area.

6.3 Admonishments

Mr Stevenson enquired about the request for more information on why admonishment has been removed from the disciplinary sanctions. The Secretary confirmed that reprimand and sanction were in the disciplinary rules but admonish was not. Mr Faulkner was attempting to find out the reason for the change, but in his absence there was nothing to report.

7. Applications for new permitted methods

There were no additional requests this time.

8. Reports from Tournament Directors

The Committee made a plea that forms be completed legibly by both TDs and Appeal Committee chairmen. Some forms are almost impossible to read, whereas the occasional form word processed are a joy to read.

Only two reports were considered this time and the Committee had no comments, save for the one regarding legibility.

9 Date of next meeting

Thursday 4th September 2008 at 1.15pm. The Dorchester Room, McAlpine's, 40 Bernard Street, London W1.

The meeting closed at 5.15pm.