



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EBU LAWS & ETHICS COMMITTEE HELD ONLINE (ZOOM) ON THURSDAY 3RD FEBRUARY 2022

Present:	David Burn (DBu) Chairman & Elected Member
	Steve Green (SG) Vice Chairman & Elected Member
	David Bakhshi (DBa) Elected Member
	Robin Barker (RB) Deputy Chief TD
	William Clennell (WC) Elected Member
	Peter Hasenson (PH) Elected Member
	Ian Payn (IP) EBU Chairman
	Gordon Rainsford (GR) EBU Chief Executive
	Tim Rees (TR) Elected Member
	Gayle Webb (GW) Appointed Member
	Jeremy Dhondy (JD) Deputy Secretary

1. **Procedural Matters**

1.1 Apologies for Absence: Heather Sanderson, Secretary

1.2 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman:

- Chairman: David Burn, proposed by Ian Payn and seconded by Steve Green.
- Vice Chairman: Steve Green, proposed by Peter Hasenson and seconded by Tim Rees.

2. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting of 25th October 2021 were approved and signed. There were no points of accuracy.

2.2 Matters Arising not otherwise on the agenda

- With reference to 5.2, *Interpreting the WBF Alerting Policy*, in the October minutes, GR reported that the WBF responded positively redefining “convention”.
- With reference to 7.1, *Reports from Tournament Directors*, in the October minutes, there was an error. A tournament director may appeal their own ruling. Gordon pointed out Rule 81(C)(7) and 83 refer to TD appealing a ruling.

3. Appeals to the National Authority

None at this time.

4. Disciplinary Matters

Cases that were discussed in the meeting involved unfair play online, other dishonesty and rude behaviour.

4.1 Live Cases where the defendant has been charged were discussed

4.2 Cases where a charge was to be brought were discussed

4.3 Other concluded matters where the defendant was charged were discussed

Players	Ken Richardson & Linda Greenland
Allegation	Unfair or Dishonest Play
Plea	Not Guilty
Outcome	Guilty
Sanction	Suspension of EBU membership for a period of three years

Players	Anne and Jane Hawkins
Allegation	Unfair or Dishonest Play
Plea	Not Guilty
Outcome	Guilty
Sanction	Suspension of EBU membership for a period of three years.

4.4 Cases not proceeded with

Reasons why cases were dropped were discussed. It was noted that the reduction in the number of live cases means it is easier to proceed from now on.

5. Disciplinary Procedures

5.1 Background re Online Cheating

The L&E has been reasonably successful with disciplinary cases. There are currently fewer than ten ongoing cases compared to nearly 50 a year ago. However, there have been some issues with a number of recent cases which need dealing with.

- Cases have become much more adversarial with legal representation. It has led to a number of resignations. The workload has increased substantially and the anonymity of the OEIG members has been threatened.
- Personal abuse has been directed at staff members and members of panels. This makes it a difficult environment to work in. Adopting better processes may be one way to reduce this.
- Too many errors have been made leading to flawed hearings and subsequent appeals.
- The analysis currently needed (hundreds of hands) is burdensome.
- Not many expert witnesses are available. Committee members and prosecutors are not legally trained. More legal support is needed for the prosecution.

5.2 Suggested Changes

A number of possible changes to the disciplinary process were discussed. One approach considered was treating less experienced players differently from more experienced players. It was noted that most cases by inexperienced players consisted of collusion by

players living in the same household. Other topics for possible change included reduced sentencing for confessions, adopting new statistical methods, taking more legal advice, clarifying membership criteria for panels and updating the Bye-laws.

6. Technical Matters

6.1 White Book

6.1.1/6.1.2 Changes to accommodate online regulations and correction periods. Change to the appeal period should be considered as a consequence of shortening breaks online. Questions about when non playing time starts also need addressing. Other correction periods need to be clarified for example with respect to a revoke. RB will produce wording.

6.1.3 Strong Club Opening. Suggestions were made regarding the minimum for a strong club opening. It was recommended to replace the current requirements for a forcing 1 ♣ or 1 ♦ with “at least 13HCP”. Also suggested that replacing 7C1(a) with “Forcing, with any meaning or meanings as long as they all show at least 16HCP or 13-15HCP with 8 playing tricks” 13+ might be suitable for both. It is the WBF standard. It was agreed to delete 7C2(1) paragraph that refers to Benji 2s

Discussion followed. You can’t currently “upgrade” if it has been disallowed by regulation.

6.1.4 Clarifying Amber Psyches. RB will provide something to be considered re scoring changes/ relating to Amber Psyches

6.2 Blue Book

6.2.1 RB volunteered as editor

6.2.2 Blue Book Changes agreed 25 Oct. These were lost after previous vice chair’s resignation; DBu will follow-up. One issue was related to online announcing/alerting. There is a list of changes that have been delayed by the lack of will to make changes with the move online. Announced 2/1 as game forcing, responder’s forcing 1N and opening 2N point were discussed. Some catching up needs to be done in advance of making decisions at the May meeting.

6.2.3 Wording of Level 2 permissions. It was agreed that a typographical error needs to be fixed and a re-writing to say any system commonly played in England (as opposed to English System) may be played. Blue Club and Nottingham Club should be removed as examples. A strong club system is permitted and standard responses are permitted. Artificial responses: remove the word weak. Only 1D neg allowed. Control showing responses are fine but should not be in nine high games.

6.2.4 Simplifying strong hand regulations. This was dealt with in 6.1.3. Discussions included 2 ♣ strong openings as well as one level artificial strong openings.

6.2.5 Correspondence

A number of technical issues were raised via correspondence from players. One member appeared to be confused as to what the current regulations said, in some cases proposing a change from the ACBL regs to ones that already apply in the EBU. Nevertheless, all the suggestions in the correspondence were discussed.

- Re canape overcalls over short club. It was agreed no change to current regulations.

- If you play low from doubleton, you must put this on the front of your card. Approved by the committee.
- Extending announcements to jump shifts was considered. It was noted that players have become more accustomed to announcements.
- The suggestion that Michaels should be not alerted was rejected.
- Continuing to announce Stayman was consistent with the EBU general philosophy and no change was contemplated.
- Announcing/alerting will be reviewed in time for next edition of Blue Book. There was a view that this year was the time for this. A paper will be needed for the May meeting as this is a sizeable topic.
- It was agreed to add announcing 2S as clubs and 2NT as diamonds over partner's 1NT opening to the list of changes.
- The L&E have previously said that pre-alerting will not be introduced but the front of a system card is the place for this type of information.
- Delayed alerts are not to be introduced.
- Having announcements regarding length of opening suits was discussed and will be included for consideration.
- Step forward to be accomplished by taking existing possible changes and adding ones from this meeting for a proposal for the next meeting. Action Chairman/RB to do this in time for May meeting.

6.3 Sky Blue Book

To be incorporated by RB into existing books for August 2022

7. Applications for new permitted methods

None at this time

8. Reports from Tournament Directors

Tim Rees and David Bakhshi will be the screeners of the report hands and appeals from now on. Two appeals and on report of hand were discussed.

8.1.1 Amber Psyche Report from the Premier League. The form was completed by the wrong player (and was self-serving). It was reviewed because of this and because the action had happened before. It was not a red psyche as the other player had not fielded it (which is one test). There was some discussion about the terminology of "red psyche" etc, because it is not the psyche itself, but the response to it, that determines whether or not it has been fielded. Discussion as to whether this fell under the systemic psyche category because the player claimed that partner was not free to take action (although this hand did not merit it in any case). Letter to be sent about this.

8.1.2 The report of hand was discussed that occurred on RealBridge. Problems with cards played when people have had connection problems has been reported to RealBridge. It was agreed that system malfunction could be taken into account as long as the ruling was in accordance with the laws of the game. If players had the double click option on, many of these problems would be avoided.

8.1.3 Although the hand in question was face to face behind screens, online regulations were discussed. Should a change in regulations re announcements be made? Should a mini-NT be self-alerted?

Although it did not apply to this case, the point was made that committee members with potential conflicts of interest e.g., a committee member who has been involved in a decision, should be muted during conversations about a decision.

8.2 BB&B Forms: none considered this time

9. Date of next meeting

To be decided. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held online sometime in late May. As this was his last meeting, the Chair offered thanks to JD for his work for the L&E.