



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EBU LAWS & ETHICS COMMITTEE
HELD ONLINE (BY ZOOM)
ON WEDNESDAY 17TH JANUARY 2024**

Present:	David Burn (DBu)	Chairman & Elected Member
	Steve Green (SG)	Vice Chairman & Elected Member
	David Bakhshi (DBa)	Elected Member
	Tim Rees (TR)	Elected Member
	Peter Grice (PG)	Elected Member
	Jeremy Dhondy (JD)	Elected Member
	Jane Jensen (JJ)	Elected Member
	Gordon Rainsford (GR)	Ex officio Member
	Robin Barker (RB)	Co-opted Member
	Jonathan Lillycrop (JL)	Observer
	Heather Sanderson (HS)	Secretary

1. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 **Apologies for absence** – Adrian Darnell and Tony Russ.

1.2 **Election of the Chair and Vice Chair for 2023/24**

HS called for nominations. DBu was nominated and there being no other nominations he was duly re-elected as Chair for the 2023/24 Committee.

SG was nominated and there being no other nominations was duly re-elected as Vice Chair for the 2023/24 Committee.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the 27th September were approved.

2.2 **Matters Arising Not Otherwise on the Agenda**
SG reported on a meeting with IT staff regarding the abuse of the host option.

SG raised proactive monitoring where members are returning after bans. After a discussion, SG proposed that when players complete their suspension/ban they are advised that their online play will be reviewed by the L&EC. A vote was taken, and the proposal was approved.

3. REPORTS FROM TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS

3.1 TD forms and comments

- i. There was a discussion about referees consulting another referee particularly when they are considering overruling a tournament director's ruling. GR noted that appeals committees have all of the powers that a TD has including the power to impose a procedural penalty and to remove one. They should not remove disciplinary penalty, but they may recommend that it is removed.
Action: DBu to write to the referee to advise that not only was the consensus that their ruling was incorrect, but it was approached from the wrong perspective. They were not giving a ruling in the first instance but amending the existing ruling. Moreover, amending a ruling should not be done on the basis that a referee disagrees with the laws.
- ii. It was agreed that it should be standard practise that if a referee overturns a ruling that the referee must consult at least one other referee and record it.
Action: GR to update the referee panel after the Minutes are published.
- iii. The L&EC reviewed the appeals where the deposit has been retained and agreed it was appropriate to retain them. GR noted that if a decision is quick, easy, and uncontroversial, the deposit should be retained.
- iv. SG proposed forming a subgroup to review appeals, produce appeals booklets, acknowledge precedent and offer advice to referees and directors.
Action: SG to draft a Terms of Reference
- v. An appeal from the Pachabo was reviewed where the Referee decided it was a misclick but TR queried how that can be when the player self-altered the bid and explained it. It was noted that the Blue Book regulations for two level openings were subsequently changed. It was decided that no further action was required.
- vi. Two Appeals from the Scarborough Swiss Pairs were discussed. DBu stated that, after a slow bid by partner, a player should ask themselves if they are making a call to which there is no logical alternative. It was agreed that tournament directors may consider the excuse of trying to recall the system for an out of tempo bid in an unusual situation. Directors and appeals committees will have to use their judgement to determine if that was the case.
There was a discussion about alerting procedures and unauthorised information (UI). Appeals committees, referees and directors should bear in mind that all alerts and non-alerts, whether they are correct or not, as well as questions asked are UI to the side making them.
Action: RB to write to director who did not fully consider UI.

It was agreed that if an infringement occurs that does not mean that the offending side is always punished.

- vii. If a player wakes up to a misunderstanding, they are allowed to wait until the auction is over before the lead is faced to inform the opposition. GR advised that the purpose of the change was to avoid players making doubles based solely on the knowledge that their opponents had a misunderstanding.
- viii. An appeal from the Premier League was discussed where the declarer argued that they misplayed a hand due to misinformation. There was a discussion about the relevance of careless play when ruling on cases where there was misinformation. If the infraction was unrelated to how to play the hand, then it should be considered.

3.2 Proposed Appeals Booklet

PG reported on his progress producing appeals booklets and asked for feedback. It was decided that it was not worth asking experts to comment on them as had been done in the past. As the numbers of appeals have decreased in recent years, PG noted that it would be possible to include most if not all appeals for some years.

Action: HS to help PG identify tournaments.

4. DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

4.1 SG reported on rule changes made to Disciplinary Rule 9.6 at the [AGM](#)

4.2 A Code of Conduct for representatives of defendants in disciplinary cases was approved. Action: GR to raise at the next Board Meeting.

It was noted that the existing [volunteer code](#) already covers prosecutors.

4.3 Disciplinary Cases

- i. It was noted that there was only one live case where the defendant had been charged.
- ii. DBu reported his efforts to resolve complaints by members about a club committee.
- iii. There were four cases of cheating online which were concluded. In one case, the members qualified as inexperienced players under the Section of 8 of the Disciplinary Rules. Thus, a formal warning was issued, and their online play is currently being monitored.
- iv. Three members had a two-thirds reduction in their sanction and avoided publication in English Bridge and on the EBU website by confessing when they received a letter for comment as per Disciplinary Rule 10.1(vii).
- v. The following case was concluded:

Players	Ian Hart and Richard Peate
Counties	Lancashire and Merseyside & Cheshire
Allegation	Unfair play online (collusion) which was initially denied
Plea	Guilty
Sanction	Two years Membership Suspension and Ten years ban from international representation

- 4.4 SG provided a demonstration of a new cheating detection application which automates statistical analysis of individual and partnership performance.

The App allows for analysis to be done quickly and for reports to be exported for the benefit of all parties. SG reported that the EBU has an agreement for sharing historical data with BBO and was in discussions with RealBridge for an agreement. HS reported that a lead analysis report was shared with defendants in a recent case who immediately admitted guilt.

5. TECHNICAL MATTERS

5.1 [Laws of Duplicate Bridge](#)

DBu updated the L&EC on World Bridge Federation (WBF) [Changes to the Laws of Duplicate Bridge](#) There was little substantive change but Law 89 was an attempt to update the law in view of online cheating. RB suggested that there should be a statement on the website that the changes apply in EBU events as of the 1st January 2024. It was noted that clubs are the regulating authority for regulations such as announcements and allowable conventions. However, the WBF change is a change of Law and not regulation. Therefore, clubs must adopt it. According to the [White Book](#), the EBU has assigned relating authority to counties and clubs. There was a discussion about changing the language in the White Book. Action: DBu & RB to work out what it means to be a regulating authority.

JD led a discussion regarding Law 25 and concerns that some laws apply online and some do not. For example, if three players pass despite the request for an undo, rewinding the auction is impossible when playing online. Ideally, there would be a way to rectify this online. Whilst players should not ignore undos, the reality was they were not always aware of the undo. There was a discussion regarding the usefulness of double click settings on online platforms.

Action: JD to review [Blue Book](#) 9c and propose changes.

It was agreed to postpone discussions about changes to the Blue Book and White Book as well as a request for a new method. It was also agreed to schedule a meeting of the Blue Book subcommittee.

6. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It was initially agreed that the next meeting would be held in two weeks' time on Zoom to address Blue Book and White Book issues. [It was later decided that the next meeting of the whole committee would be scheduled for 17th May on Zoom]

Heather Sanderson
Secretary to the Laws & Ethics Committee
1 May 2024