



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

Present:	David Burn (DBu)	Chairman & Elected Member
	Steve Green (SG)	Vice Chairman & Elected Member
	David Bakhshi (DBa)	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, Tony Russ and Tim Rees.
- 1.2 **Apologies for tardiness** – David Bakhshi.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the [17th January](#) were approved.
- 2.2 Matters Arising Not Otherwise on the Agenda
Action points from the previous meeting were completed.

3. DISCUSSION OF EBU BOARD STRATEGY FOR THE L&EC

3.1 Terms of Reference (ToR)

It was noted that the proposed ToR would refer all complaints that are not table related to GR rather than the L&EC. GR explained that the Board is looking to rewrite the [Articles of Association](#) and thus the updated ToRs were more of a stop gap. There was a discussion about where the line was being drawn for referral to GR vs the L&EC. The draft Board policy appears to separate infractions at the table (to TDs, then perhaps L&EC) vs all others (to GR).

Action: GR to seek clarification from the Board where the line is proposed being drawn e.g. abusive emails; behaviour referrals from counties; infraction in bridge event hotel/car park.

The [21 March Board Minutes](#) were referenced in a discussion about the future remit of the L&EC. It was noted that the Board is interested in separating out the laws/regulations function and the disciplinary function of the L&EC. Action: L&EC await further information from the Board.

4. APPEALS TO THE NATIONAL AUTHORITY

There was a review of the grounds for an Appeal to the National Authority ([White Book 1.7.2](#))

4.1 *Langridge v Scutter* - Norfolk & Norwich Bridge Club Spring League (26.01.24)

It was agreed that there was a sufficiently clear error of tournament direction and thus it was decided to hear it. There was a discussion about the submissions. The difficulty of directing whilst playing was noted.

Action: GR/RB/JL to contact the parties to gather further information required before hearing the appeal.

4.2 *Bell vs Moran* - Spring Foursomes (05.05.24)

DBu gave a summary of the timeline and the case. He noted that it proved impossible to make a decision on whether to hear the case before the start of play the next morning. The appellant subsequently decided to proceed with the appeal to the National Authority. There was a discussion on whether there were grounds to hear the appeal. It was unanimously agreed to not hear the case and to retain the deposit.

Action: HS to write to the appellant.

GR and RB were present but took no part in the discussion on the merits of the case. GR was questioned about and subsequently asked to raise the issue of a policy on what volunteers can do (i.e. driving) whilst dealing with EBU matters.

Action: GR to raise issue with the Board as a wider policy.

There was a discussion about where the line should be drawn for an appeal to the National Authority. It was proposed that the number of grounds for an appeal be reduced. JD noted that even though you cannot appeal in EBL/WBF events, you can ask for a review on misapplication of the law. GR suggested combining error of tournament direction and misapplication of law.

SG proposed that a template for appeals be created for appellants to complete. It was agreed and set aside for a subcommittee to action.

There was a discussion about when it is appropriate to play extra boards if there is a pending appeal. JD noted that for private matches if there is an area of doubt, you play the extra boards. When there is a TD, it the default is to decide the appeal before playing the extra boards but ultimately the timings are at the discretion of the tournament staff.

5. DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

5.1 Code of Conduct Update

The Code of Conduct agreed at the January L&EC meeting is still waiting for approval by the Board. **Action:** GR to raise it with the Board.

5.2 Cheating Investigation Presentation Update

SG reported on his presentation for the Disciplinary Committee, Prosecution Committee and EBU Board. All feedback received was positive. The App developer has a few further updates to be completed but the finished product will not require an external assistant to run. The App will allow for statistically robust findings and ease the workload of investigations. SG reported that a written agreement had been reached with RealBridge for the collection of their data for cheating investigations.

5.3 ACBL's Approach to Probation

SG reported that there has been an increase in ACBL convictions. He noted that EDGAR provide ongoing surveillance of ACBL games and alert the ACBL to potential cheating players. SG noted that, by acting only upon receiving a complaint, the EBU may be a NBO outlier. He also noted that the ACBL added a probationary period to all sentences. SG proposed and it was agreed that the L&EC ask the Disciplinary Committee to add a probationary period as part of sentencing.

Action: SG to contact Geoff Smith to consider adding a probationary period of monitoring to sanctions.

At the 17 January meeting, it was agreed that once a sanction is completed that the L&EC Secretary will write to players advising them that their online play would be monitored. It was noted that the length of monitoring had not been agreed. It was proposed and agreed that the L&EC will monitor players for the equivalent length of the sentence after their sanction is complete.

5.4 Deleting News Items Reporting Convictions

It was reported that a number of players requested that the EBU delete all references to their conviction. JD commented that the “latest news goes back into the mists of time.” It was also noted that convictions were reported in English Bridge which is available online. It was agreed that convictions were matters of fact and should not be deleted.

5.5 Status of Disciplinary Cases

HS reported that the new App proved useful for analysing over 2,000 deals involving a pair of non-members. The pair were subsequently banned from EBU online games and reported to BBO. HS further reported on the status of three ongoing cases where the defendants had not been charged.

There was a discussion about abuse of the host system. It was agreed that clubs should be reminded to highlight the rules for exempting players from the NGS.

Action: JL to review a list of players with numerous exemptions and check if they had filled out the required forms in advance of the exempted sessions.

6. TECHNICAL MATTERS

6.1 [Appeals](#) Booklets

PG reported that he produced draft appeals booklets for 2017, 2018 and 2019. All of the appeals mentioned in past L&EC minutes were included as well as some of the comments made in the minutes. Once the proofreading and formatting are complete, the booklets will be published on the EBU website and then PG will start on 2020 possibly combining years depending on the number of appeals.

6.2 [Blue Book](#)

RB provided a list of changes and a draft Blue Book for consideration. In response to multiple inquiries from members, GR made a further suggestion that in 6c3, regarding Level Two understandings, the word “weak” be deleted. There was a discussion whether artificial responses to 1L openings should be allowed. It was agreed that the intention for Level Two events was that players could not play transfer responses to a club or Bergen raises in response to 1M openings. However, it was agreed that Blackwood and Splinters should be allowed. It was proposed that artificial responses which show primary support for the opener’s suit and are game forcing are allowed but otherwise artificial responses are not allowed. **Action:** Blue Book subcommittee to discuss exact wording via email and/or online meeting.

SG reported on a Blue Book subcommittee meeting and subsequent proposed changes. Most of the changes were clarifications made in response to members’ inquiries. Examples of methods that will be permitted, which were previously either unclear or not permitted:

- i) 2D opener showing spades and a minor
- ii) 2D opener showing a 3 suiter including both majors
- iii) A 4441 shape with 11HCP (Rule of 20 changed to Rule of 19)

Action: RB will send the draft Blue Book to some people for their comments.

6.3 [White Book](#)

RB noted that earlier in the meeting it was agreed to consider further redrafting the sections on Appeals to National Authority.

There was a discussion about what should be done about assigning regulating authority to clubs and counties whilst retaining the powers to investigate/prosecute/convict in cases of 'illegal communication' under (new) Law 89 for all events under the auspices of the EBU.

Action: RB to circulate something further re the regulating authority to be dealt with by a new appeals subcommittee.

GR raised an issue about a regulation that assigns 60:40 weighted scores. The Chief WBF TD noted that was an illegal regulation. GR stated that the TD should first follow Law 12 and then sometimes 12c1d will apply.

RB to draft a paper on claims on RealBridge and circulate it.

6.4 Proposed Terms of Reference for a new Appeals subcommittee

It was agreed that it would be more productive for a subcommittee to look at appeals for precedents, review appeals' processes, publish appeals booklets, and propose changes to the White Book. JD volunteered to chair the subcommittee and PG, RB and GR agreed to participate.

6.5 An application for a new method for a weak 2C or 2D opening to have nine cards in the suit mentioned and a major was considered It was discussed and rejected because we want to ensure natural and weak opening bids contain at least 5 cards in the suit opened (unless a second suit is also named).

Action: D Bu to write response.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Cleaning [up Laws & Ethics webpages](#)

Action: JD has made a start on cleaning up the website and will take a look at getting rid of the outdated sections of the L&EC.

Action: RB to send JD a brief note about TD forms and guidance on appeals.

8. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed to aim for a face-to-face meeting in September or October.

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