



Procedural Guide to the EBU National Grading System (NGS)

1 WHICH SESSIONS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED FOR GRADING?

Affiliated clubs and organisations submit all the sessions played to the EBU as part of the Universal Membership and Licensing systems.

NGS will process all pairs events, including Swiss Pairs, whether they are scored using Match Points, using cross or Butler IMPs, or aggregate scoring. Some events will not be graded - those which involve too few pairs or where an insufficient number of pairs are both EBU members (see the note below for the precise rules). In addition various teaching or novice sessions are not graded, currently those with the following player session rate codes:

- 04 Novice session without magazine points (not chargeable)
- 22 Novice session with magazine points (charged at half standard submission rate)

In addition Teams events where the boards have been played by several pairs can sometimes be graded, as described in section 3.

For events which are played over an extended period of time, it is usual to submit each session as it is played and NGS will process this as a separate event. However, if all the sessions of the event are submitted in a single file, NGS will process the results in the same way, taking account of the boards played in each session, but will report the grading as a single event. If each session has been submitted separately and used for grading, it may also be necessary to submit a final file with the overall results and which contains the Master Points awarded. So that this file is recognised as not an additional session and is neither charged for nor graded, it should be entered as P2P code 02 (Null Session).

Note about gradable sessions.

To be graded a session must have at least 6 pairs. Only pairs with both players being EBU members are gradable, and more than 2/3 of all the pairs in the session must be gradable for the session to be graded. For two-winner sessions the NS and EW pairs form separate fields and are graded separately. There must be at least 3 gradable pairs in a field for the field to be graded. Thus sometimes the NS pairs may be graded but the EW pairs not graded.

2 ENTERING PLAYERS' EBU NUMBERS

Both players of a pair must be EBU members for that pair's results in a session to be graded. It is therefore important to ensure that the correct EBU number for a player is supplied. This is particularly important if a player visits a club and is already an EBU member. If the club submits the session with them down as a "Guest" the system will assume they are not an EBU member and will not grade them or their partner. Therefore visitors to a club should be reminded to supply their EBU number, not only for the benefit of their own grading but that of all the other players, including their partner.



3 WHAT DATA DOES THE SCORING SYSTEM HAVE TO INCLUDE?

Most scoring systems automatically include the data that will be needed by NGS, but note the following points.

For Swiss events, it is essential that the traveller line data for each board are included, as NGS needs to know what opponents each pair played against.

For Teams events, NGS will try to grade Swiss Teams and Multiple Teams and this will be done by looking at the cross-imps (or butler imps) that the scoring program produces for the individual pairs. To do this correctly the scoring system needs to know which players were in each pair of a team and where they were sitting (NS or EW). It will not always be practical for a scoring system to collect this information, but for Multiple Teams of Four where pairs follow a defined movement this should be possible.

In summary, NGS will grade Swiss or Multiple Teams of Four events if three conditions apply.

- 1) Which players of a team were NS and which were EW for every board has been recorded in the scoring system somehow, and confirmed as accurate by the TD. This could be because:
 - a) the seating for round 1 was input accurately and the players followed a defined movement, or
 - b) any changes from round/session/stanza to round were reported and input manually, or
 - c) changes were reported electronically (BridgeMates do NOT yet support this for Swiss Teams, but have it in their future plans)
- 2) The board level results are input to the scoring system and the scoring system is capable of computing pair-wise IMPs (cross-IMPs or Butler-IMPs) for each pair.
- 3) The scoring outputs these pair-wise imps in an XML file (used for uploading to EBU) in the format defined in the USEBIO 1.1 (2014) specification.

If a Swiss Teams event is to be graded, using the current versions of wireless bridge recording systems, there will be some discipline necessary in Swiss Teams, such that if the orientation of a pair changes the TD will have to make some changes before the round is scored. This additional task for TDs is NOT mandatory but if the orientation of players for each match cannot be confirmed, then NGS will not process the results of the event.

Pivot Teams events involve changes of partners for all teams. It is in principle possible to input all the data about which players were at which table for each round, but in practice we assume that pivot team events will not be able to provide this data reliably, and if so they will not be graded.

4 WHEN CAN A PERSON CHOOSE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM GRADING? WHAT ACTION SHOULD THEY TAKE?

NGS allows one player (or one pair) in an event to choose in advance not to be graded for that event. This was introduced to allow hosts or mentors to opt-out when partnering a particularly weak or unfamiliar player. This is limited to a maximum of one pair in a session, though either or both players in the pair can opt-out.

The use of this facility is not encouraged, as a player's NGS grade is not adversely affected just by



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playing with a weaker partner and our analysis has shown that the negative effect of playing with an unfamiliar partner is very small. However if a host or mentor does wish to exclude the session from their grade, it is recommended that their partner's results are still graded as this will allow a new member gradually to get enough graded boards to have an official grade.

To use the exemption the host **must** use a form on each member's My EBU members area which, in addition to selecting the appropriate option in the scoring program, must be filled on each occasion that they wish to be exempt. This has to be done as soon as the host knows they will be playing and in any case no more than 30 minutes after the start of the game (this 30-minute leeway is only offered for the benefit of hosts who are not confirmed to be playing until the end of the first round of the game). The use of this form becomes mandatory on 1st August 2017.

Note that as from March 2018 the partner of a new player, playing their first 150 boards, will not be graded.

5 HOW TO CORRECT ERRORS THAT HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO EBU

Sometimes errors in the results – either incorrect scores or a player being given the wrong EBU number – will only be noticed after the data has been sent to the EBU. These errors can be corrected in one of two ways by the club that entered the data:

1. If the error only involves a small number of players (for example if the wrong EBU number was given) you can edit the result in the Members Area for Clubs by clicking on the session in question, clicking on the player you want to amend and following the instructions on screen.
2. If the error is more involved, such as rescoring the entire event, following (1) would be too laborious. We instead recommend that you delete the session (click on it in the Members Area and press the 'Delete' button at the top) and resubmit a new one.

Please note that you will be unable to amend a session if it has been processed for Master Points and payment. This happens one week into the month after it was submitted. In this case you can contact the EBU as it may be possible for EBU staff to correct the data, though this a time consuming process and you should try to avoid this.

A club can check whether NGS has successfully processed a session by looking at the sessions list in the Members Area for Clubs. It will either display a Strength of Field value for the session, or an icon will describe what went wrong. Mouse-hover over the icon to see more details.

6 MAKING YOUR GRADE PRIVATE

NGS calculates grades for all EBU members. A member can choose that their current grade is not made visible to other people searching the EBU website. This can be done through the 'My Details' page in My EBU on the EBU website.

7 HOW TO SEE THE OUTPUT OF NGS

The NGS page on the EBU website allows you to search for graded players by name or by county. Note that only members who have played over 150 graded boards in the last 3 years will be shown.

Members can also see details about their own grade and the partnership grades with each of their partners in My EBU on the EBU website. There is currently (October 2016) information in both the "Sessions" and "NGS" tabs. A player's latest grade is always that shown in the NGS tab, which also includes the partnership grades and how their grade has changed over time. The Sessions tab shows how their NGS has changed as a result of each recent session.