



WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION CODE OF PRACTICE

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FOREWORD TO THE FIFTH EDITION

As my predecessor, José Damiani has already stated, this Code of Practice has proved its worth time and again since its inception in 1999. Such has been its value that the use of the Code in a modified form, published as the fifth edition, enables the WBF to dispense with the need for Appeals Committees at its Championships. Instead a Reviewer will be appointed, who will consult with high level players and senior Tournament Directors to advise when Directors' rulings are disputed.

Gianarrigo Rona
President July 2014

FOREWORD TO THE FOURTH EDITION

There can be little doubt that in the 11 years the Code of Practice has been in place Appeals Committees all over the world have raised their standards.

It is a tribute to the work of the original committee that there has as yet been no need for any significant changes to the Code despite continuous reviews.

Nevertheless the World Bridge Federation still invites opinions arising from the application of the Code and hopes that Appeals Committees everywhere will continue to be guided by its principles.

José Damiani
President October 2010

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION (published 1999)

It has become widely apparent that there are inconsistencies in the handling of appeals at the various levels of our game. This has concerned the World Bridge Federation and, after much effort and sober discussion on the part of a number of leading personalities, the Federation has now produced its first Code of Practice for Appeals Committees. I hope this will quickly be adopted, worldwide, for the conduct of appeals. No-one suggests that the attempt will not be improved upon, but we believe that we should learn something of its operation over a period of time before eventually it is the subject of a review.

In the meanwhile the Federation extends an invitation to all, and especially to players, (a) to submit to the Federation opinions arising from practical experience of the effects where the Code is adopted, and (b) to restrain any tendency to blame appeals committees for players' lack of success. The time and energies devoted by the authors to this determined effort to raise the standards of appeal committee work deserve a generous response from players, who will be only too well aware that the great rarity in Bridge is the partnership that loses more points in front of the appeal committee than it has thrown away in the course of not winning the tournament.

José Damiani President

The participants in the group discussion in Lausanne, 21st-23rd September 1999, were as shown below. This Code of Practice was the product of their meetings.

Under the Presidency of

Mr. José Damiani

Chairman for the Working Meetings

Mr. John Wignall

Participants:

Mr. Jens Auken

Mr. Ernesto d'Orsi

Mrs. Joan Gerard

Mr. Grattan Endicott

Mr. Mazhar Jafri

Mr. Ton Kooijman

Mr. Jeffrey Polisner

Mr. William Schoder

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The World Bridge Federation ('WBF') adopts the following standards as regulations for the conduct of reviews following the decisions of Tournament Directors and recommends their adoption to each affiliated Organization. After issue the WBF Appendix to the 2007 Laws will stand part of this Code.

Most players are reasonably aware of the process that takes place when there has been a potential infraction of the laws. The Tournament Director ("TD") is called and told why a player believes that there may have been an infraction. The TD will ascertain what has occurred. Simple problems such as revokes, leads out of turn and similar are dealt with immediately and the game continues.

Occasionally there may be some hesitation which can constitute unauthorised information and now the spotlight will focus on the actions of the player who may have been in receipt of that unauthorised information. Inevitably the question arises as to whether that player might have been influenced in some way and in some circumstances whether *PASS* was a logical alternative. A slow *DOUBLE* could suggest doubt and if the partner then successfully bids on questions will be asked and a ruling sought. Incorrect explanations and failure to *ALERT* may also lead to a ruling being sought from the TD.

The TD who is called to the table will collect the evidence of what occurred. The TDs then discuss the matter between themselves before deciding if an infraction has taken place and that it resulted in damage to the non-offending side. Where the matter involves bridge judgment the TD will consult 5 players of an appropriate standard and typically ask "What would you do/bid on the following hand after the bidding has gone . . . ?" The answers given by the players then assists the TDs to determine what the ruling should be. Sometimes this may lead to a weighted ruling where one result may be obtained one third of the time and another result two-thirds of the time.

The ruling is then notified to the players who have previously been told that they have the right to appeal the ruling to an Appeals Committee. The Appeal Committee, generally made up of about 5 people, hear the facts of the case and the basis why the Appellants say that the TD's ruling was wrong and should be overturned or varied to some extent. The burden of proof lies with the Appellants who must convince the Appeal Committee that the TD's ruling was incorrect. Appeals that are without merit are subject to financial penalty.

The level of Tournament Directing and the calibre of TDs in WBF Championships is regarded as amongst the best in the World. The TDs undergo rigorous training and testing and are part of a process of continuous development. The process by which rulings are determined is one that will provide a fair determination in circumstances where there cannot be a perfect solution.

The World Bridge Federation has decided that in these Championships there will be no Appeal Committee. Instead the recipients of a ruling will be entitled to ask for the matter to be reviewed by a person who was not involved in the original decision. The Reviewer will check that the TD has gathered the necessary evidence of what occurred when the infraction arose. The Reviewer will then need to be satisfied that the correct law was applied and that other TDs were consulted where appropriate. In matters involving the judgement that was exercised by a player following unauthorised information, incorrect explanation or failure to alert, the Reviewer will clarify that suitable players have been asked appropriate questions to enable a judgmental view to be obtained. Finally the Reviewer will check that ruling that was issued based upon all the information available to the TDs was within the bounds of reasonableness. The fact that the Reviewer might have determined a slightly different ruling would not be good reason for the ruling to be varied. In the event that the process had not been followed properly in some material way, the Reviewer will ask the Chief TD to correct the failings and issue a new ruling.

What is the method by which a review can be sought? When the TD notifies the players of a ruling, they will be told of their right to seek a review. The usual time limits for appealing a ruling will apply to seeking a review of a ruling. If a review is sought the matter will be referred to the Reviewer who will consider the matter in accordance with the protocol outlined above. The player challenging the ruling may write a simple statement as to which part of the process they believe was

flawed and how that would have affected the ruling. The Reviewer has the power to impose a sanction in the event that a request for a review was without merit. The sanction will be quantified in IMPs or VPs as appropriate to the type of event being played.

TDs have been made aware of the importance of following the approved process before delivering a ruling. Players must also be conscious of the need to notify the TD of relevant information when the evidence is being gathered.

It is hoped that players will accept that rulings that are given by TDs are arrived at following a proper consideration of all relevant facts and consultation between TDs and the polling of appropriate players. It is expected that requests for a review of the TD ruling will be rare but it provides a safeguard to avoid failures in the process.

Appeal to Regulating Authority

No appeal to the Regulating Authority should be entertained if the prior stages of ruling and review have not been pursued and exhausted. It is legitimate for the Regulating Authority to set some limitation on matters that it will hear (but see the Law 93 C footnote above); it is a widespread practice, commended by the WBF, that the Regulating Authority will not review value judgements except where the reviewer has made a judgement that can have no basis in its findings of the facts of a case. However, the Regulating Authority is responsible for compliance with any national law that may affect its action (Law 93 footnote). Debatable matters of law and/or regulation are valid questions for the Regulating Authority. Under Law 93 C 2 the Director in charge may refer a matter to the Regulating Authority.

At international level the WBF urges that arrangements be instituted for an appeal to be considered against the decision of a reviewer. However, the nature of international tournaments is such that appeals of this category should be restricted; it is suggested that to be heard such an appeal should be certified by one of a small number of nominated senior and expert individuals to be worthy of consideration. If this certificate is obtained it is recommended that the appeal be heard by a joint meeting of, say, the Rules and Regulations Committee with the Laws Committee under the chairmanship of the President or of his nominee for the purpose. Where this procedure applies, as for its own tournaments is henceforward the case with the WBF, the certifying individual is empowered to dismiss the appeal if he/she does not find its content appropriate for the attention of the joint committees.

Score adjustment

The award of an assigned adjusted score (see Law 12 C 1) is appropriate when a violation of law causes damage to an innocent side (although the extent of redress to this side may be affected, see below, if it has contributed to its own damage by wild or gambling action subsequent to the infraction). Damage exists when, because of an infraction, an innocent side obtains a table result less favourable than would have been the expectation had the infraction not occurred (see Law 12 B 1).

If the damaged side has wholly or partly caused its own damage by wild or gambling action, it does not receive relief in the adjustment for such part of the damage as is self-inflicted. The offending side, however, should be awarded the score that it would have been allotted as the normal consequence of its infraction. A revoke by the innocent side subsequent to the infraction will affect its own score but again the infractor's score is to be adjusted as before without regard to the revoke. See Law 12 C 1 (b).

Law 12 C 1 (c)

Law 12 C 1 (c) states:

In order to do equity, and unless the Regulating Authority forbids it, an assigned adjusted score may be weighted to reflect the probabilities of a number of potential results.

Law 12 C 1 (c) operates unless the Regulating Authority elects otherwise. It applies in WBF tournaments. (The Regulating Authority may elect to apply all or part of Law 12 C 1 (e) to replace all or part of Law 12 C 1 (c).) The purpose of this law is to enable the Director to form a view as to what is an equitable outcome in the score, and to implement that outcome. It makes the Reviewer the final arbiter of equity.

Law 25

Using bidding boxes a call is made when a bidding card is placed on the tray and released. When screens are in use Law 25 applies as written. A purposeful correction is not allowed.

Director's judgement after consultation

It is the function of the Director to make a ruling in a judgemental matter, having consulted appropriately, that executes most accurately the intention of the laws. The desire is that the Director shall not rule automatically in favour of the non-offending side when he is in no doubt that a true judgement requires him to rule otherwise.

Inclination of committee

The expectation is that the Reviewer will presume initially that the Director's ruling is correct. The ruling is overturned only on the basis of evidence presented. For this reason the Director must inform the Reviewer if a ruling in favour of the non-offending side reflects a margin of doubt that continues to exist after the appropriate consultation procedure.

Ethics

A contestant may be penalized only for a lapse of ethics where a player is in breach of the provisions of the laws in respect of conduct. A player who has conformed to the laws and regulations is not subject to criticism. This does not preclude encouragement of a generous attitude to opponents, especially in the exchange of information behind screens.

'Unauthorized information'

See Law 16.

Any information used as a basis for a call or play must be 'authorized'. For information to be deemed authorized there must be an indication from the laws or regulations that the use of that information is intended. Authorization does not follow automatically from a lack of prohibition.

Unless there is an express prohibition it is lawful to use information that is given to the players for the procedures of the game, as described in the laws. Also, information is 'authorized' when the laws state it to be so. A player is permitted to make and use judgements about the abilities and tendencies of opponents and about the inclinations ('style') of his partner in matters where the partner's decisions are spontaneous rather than habitual or systemic. A player's habitual practices form part of his method and his partner's awareness of them is legitimate information; but such method is subject to any regulations governing partnership agreements and to the requisite disclosure. Habit is to be identified when an occurrence is so frequent that it may be anticipated. Not to disclose knowledge of partner's habits and practices is a violation of Law 40 (and thus illegal) when the call is made.

Use of unauthorized information

If a player has knowledge that it is illegal or improper to use in choosing a call or play this knowledge is referred to as 'unauthorized information'. Such information may be obtained in any one of a number of ways. If it does not come from the player's partner the Director is instructed how to deal with it in Laws 16 C and 16 D. Law 16 D deals with information from withdrawn calls and plays; these include calls and plays withdrawn by partner. Other information received from partner is the kind that is most likely to be the subject of an appeal.

It is legal for a player to base a call or play on information from prior legal calls in the auction or from plays on the hand, from mannerisms of opponents, or from any other source authorized as already stated (see Laws 16 A 1 and 16 A 2). Any information obtained from partner otherwise is unauthorized and it is illegal to use it if it suggests a call or play. This includes any information that eases the choice of a call or play. (See Law 16 B.)

Examples of partner's actions that may convey unauthorized information are:

- a remark or question;
- the answer to a question;
- special emphasis or tone of voice, or a gesture;
- attention to an opponent's convention card at a
- significant moment when it is not partner's turn to call or play;

- examining opponent's convention card when dummy;
- a significant hesitation or undue haste when calling or
- playing a card;

but these are not the only ways in which unauthorized information may be transmitted and there are various other means that are not lawful.

When use of unauthorized information is alleged there are four key questions for the Reviewer:

1. Does the player have unauthorized information in consequence of an action by his partner or otherwise as the Laws provide?
2. Could the unauthorized information suggest demonstrably the action that was taken by the player who possessed it?
3. Were there logical alternatives (or was there a logical alternative) that the player could have selected in place of the action that is questioned?

Law 16 B 1 (b) defines:

A logical alternative action is one that, among the class of players in question and using the methods of the partnership, would be given serious consideration by a significant proportion of such players, of whom it is judged some might select it.

4. Have opponents been damaged in consequence of the player's action when he was in possession of the unauthorized information? For example, did the offending side gain a better score in consequence of the infraction?

Damage is assessed in terms of the score obtained.

If the answer to each and every one of these four questions is 'yes' it is appropriate to adjust the score but not otherwise. It is important to keep in mind which member of the partnership has the unauthorized information and to consider only that player's actions when following the path to a judgement. A player who, without design, makes unauthorized information available to his partner does not commit an infraction of law or propriety; it is the use of that information that is a breach of the laws.

If it is shown beyond reasonable doubt that a player has intended to act in a way that will give unauthorized information to his partner, the Director in charge should be consulted as to the provisions of Law 73 B 1. If it is proven that such action has been prearranged with partner the committee consults the Director in charge concerning Law 73 B 2.

Discrepancies between explanations given and the related hands

Where the same explanation of a call is given to both members of the opposing side, it being subsequently confirmed that both members of the side giving the explanation agree this is its correct meaning (and there is no conflict with information on the convention card), if the hand to which the explanation relates is materially different from the explanation the matter should be dealt with under the laws and regulations concerned with psychic action.

If the members of a partnership offer differing explanations, or if a conflicting statement on the system card has caused an opponent to be confused, a procedural penalty for violation of Law 40 may be applied. As a separate issue, the score will be adjusted if opponents are damaged and the conditions for score adjustment are deemed to exist. (See earlier statement on score adjustment and also later statement on procedural penalties.)

Psychic calls

Definition of Psychic Call: "A deliberate and gross misstatement of honour strength and/or of suit length".

A psychic call is lawful if not based upon a partnership understanding (a Regulating Authority may use Law 40 B 2 (d) to restrict the use of psychic artificial calls). No penalty or score adjustment may be awarded against such lawful action. A partnership understanding exists if it is explicitly agreed by the partnership; alternatively it may exist because it is the implicit consequence of one of a number of circumstances. To deem that such an implicit understanding exists it must be determined that the partner of the player who psyches has a heightened awareness that in the given situation the call may be psychic. This will be the case only if in the opinion of the committee one of the following circumstances is established:

- (a) similar psychic action has occurred in the partnership on several occasions in the past, and not so long ago that the memory of the actions has faded in the

partner's mind — habit is to be identified when an occurrence is so frequent that it may be anticipated; or

(b) in the recent past a similar psychic call has occurred in the partnership and it is considered the memory of it is so fresh that it cannot have faded from mind; or

(c) psychic calls of various kinds have occurred in the partnership with such frequency, and sufficiently recently, that the partner is clearly aware of the tendency for such psychic calls to occur; or

(d) the members of the partnership are mutually aware of some significant external matter that may help recognition of the psychic call.

A psychic call which is found on the above basis to be a matter of partnership understanding is disallowed and a score adjustment may be awarded, together with a procedural penalty to the offending side if deemed appropriate. Players who are found to have any explicit agreement concerning psychic calls, or an implicit agreement concerning a particular kind of psychic call, are to be reminded that they have a partnership agreement that is subject to the regulations established under the authority of Law 40. In particular, see Law 40 C 1.

Disclosure of psychic tendencies

A partnership may not defend itself against an allegation that its psychic action is based upon an understanding by claiming that, although the partner had an awareness of the possibility of a psychic in the given situation, the partner's actions subsequent to the psychic have been entirely normal. The opponents are entitled to an equal and timely awareness of any agreement, explicit or implicit, since it may affect their choice of action and for this reason the understanding must be disclosed.

False carding by defenders

Always provided that a true disclosure is made of the agreed meanings and expectations of card plays by defenders, intermittent false carding by defenders is lawful. Declarer then relies at his own risk upon his reading of the fall of the cards.

(See 'Unauthorized Information'.)

Action behind screens

The intention of screens is to reduce to the minimum circumstances in which the members of a partnership are mutually aware of any matter not part of the legal auction. Players on the other side of a screen are not to be made aware of an irregularity if it is rectified before the tray is passed under the screen. All consequences of an irregularity so rectified are null save in relation to the possibility that the screenmate of an offender may be misled by a conclusion drawn from the occurrence. The offender may avert this consequence by a helpful and adequate explanation to the screenmate.

The WBF considers it desirable that players should vary the tempo randomly when returning the tray under the screen. Where North and South are the players with next turn to call after the tray is received, these are the players who are to be responsible for the movement of the tray. It is considered there can be no implications if a tray returns after 15 seconds or less. This period may be extended in the later stages of a complicated or competitive auction without necessarily creating implications.

Attention is drawn to the distinction to be made in the tempo expected when players encounter highly unusual situations generated by unfamiliar conventions or treatments. Directors and appeal committees should be sympathetic to the player who has to contend with such a situation.

Procedural penalties

A procedural penalty may only be applied where there is a violation of the laws or of a regulation made under the laws. If a procedural penalty is awarded by the reviewer it should specify what law or regulation has been violated.

In particular the WBF wishes to stress that a player who forgets his convention, misbids or misuses it, is not subject to automatic penalty. It is envisaged that a procedural penalty will only be applied in aggravated circumstances, as for example misuse several times repeated. Score adjustment is the way to redress damage.