

Bridge Victoria

Tournament Regulations

Date: January 2024

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General Tournament Regulations

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. These Regulations (the "Regulations") shall apply to all tournaments conducted by Bridge Victoria (BV) in co-operation with affiliated clubs or other bodies.
- 1.2. BV tournaments shall be played under The Laws of Duplicate Bridge - 2017 (the "Code") as supplemented by these Regulations.
- 1.3. Each BV tournament may have Supplementary Regulations which shall be deemed to be part of these Regulations. In the case of conflict, the event's Supplementary Regulations shall apply. In any session at a club affiliated with BV or at any Congress conducted by such a club under the auspices of BV, the Tournament Regulations of that club shall apply. Where no such Tournament Regulations exist, these Regulations shall apply.
- 1.4. No claim shall lie against BV by reason of the conduct of any tournament pursuant to the Regulations.
- 1.5. Competitive integrity requires that every competitor in a BV tournament try to do as well as possible on each board played and play accordingly. This Regulation is directed to intention. Examples of a breach of this regulation would be:
 - a) To lose a match deliberately during a preliminary stage in order to improve a team's chance of winning the title by having an "easier opponent" to play in a final;
 - b) To deliberately engineer a poor result during a pairs event in order to assist the opponents or to impede the chance of some other pair.

A breach of this Regulation will result in disciplinary action by BV and the offence will be treated as a serious one. Intention will, for the purpose of assessing whether a breach has occurred, be inferred by BV from the result actually obtained having due regard to all factors reasonably explicatory of such results. The criterion used will be "balance of probabilities".

2. COMMITTEES

2.1. The BV operations committee annually appoints a Chairman of the Match & Tournament Committee (MTC) and a Chairman of the Discipline and Ethics Committee (DEC). The roles of these committees are as follows:

2.2. The Match & Tournament Committee (MTC)

The function of the MTC is (consistent with the Code and these Regulations) to oversee the efficient conduct of the BV tournaments. It shall also discharge duties as required that are not specified by the Code or the Regulations, or are the responsibility of the Director or the Appeals Committee, including in an emergency or unforeseen circumstances the duty to promulgate (after the fact, if necessary) any further Regulation that may be required for the proper conduct of any tournament. Any question as to the jurisdiction of the MTC either generally or vis-a-vis the Appeals Committee shall be determined by the BV operations committee whose decision shall be final. The MTC is not necessarily an appellate body and generally takes action of its own motion or initiative.

The Committee is charged with (but not limited to):

- i) Overseeing the efficient conduct of Bridge Victoria tournaments (face to face and/or online)
- ii) Administering Bridge Victoria tournament regulations (including, but not limited to, formulating regulations, determining tournament formats, and managing appeals under bridge law)
- iii) Managing the (regulated) process for selecting Victorian representatives, including ad hoc rulings if necessary to facilitate equitable tournament progression
- iv) Co-ordinating congress competition scheduling
- v) Communicating with and monitoring output of similar and related bodies in order to ensure, where practicable, Bridge Victoria practice is current and consistent with ABF and WBF practice
- vi) Advising the Bridge Victoria Operations Committee on tournament and tournament-related matters.

2.3. The Discipline and Ethics Committee

The Discipline and Ethics Committee is empowered by the BV Operations Committee to exercise certain disciplinary powers for BV, but nothing herein shall negate the powers of the Director under Law 91 of the Code.

Its regulations charge it to investigate a complaint occurring at or relating to:

- a) Congresses conducted by affiliated clubs under the auspices of Bridge Victoria whether played at the club's regular venue or some other location;
- b) Victorian State events and any associated side events;
- c) Regional finals of GNOT qualifying events.

These regulations do not apply to:

- a) Regular club duplicate sessions and club events (including but not limited to qualifying events of the GNOT);
- b) ABF licensed events (e.g., Victor Champion Cup); Bridge Holidays and Cruises, whether conducted by an affiliated club or an independent operator.

3. CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

3.1. Subject to the rights of its members under its Articles of Association:

- a) BV reserves the right in its discretion to reject the entry of any player, pair or team to a BV tournament or to any session or stage thereof;
- b) As a consequence of incidents which may occur in a BV tournament or in any international, interstate, interclub or other event at which the BV is represented, BV reserves the right in its discretion to reject the entry of any player, pair or team for any future tournament conducted by BV or otherwise under its auspices whether for a limited or unlimited time and without assigning any reason for such rejection.

3.2. As well as exercising

- a) any power under the Code as modified by the Regulations and
- b) any other power referred to in these Regulations, BV reserves the right to request a Club affiliated with BV to take disciplinary action against any member of that club as a consequence of events which may occur in a BV tournament or in any international, interstate, interclub or other event where official representatives of the BV are playing.

3.3. It shall be a condition of entry to BV selection events that:

- a) unless otherwise specified in the Supplementary Regulations of such an event only members of BV and its affiliated clubs will be eligible to represent Victoria;

- b) selection as a Victorian representative depends upon subsequent ratification by the BV Operations Committee notwithstanding the results of a selection tournament. Such ratification may be refused by the BV Operations Committee without any reason being provided. However, BV's official refusal of ratification shall not be enacted until a meeting of the BV Operations committee is held where the player or players concerned are first given an opportunity to be heard by the BV Operations Committee either in person or by written statement.

In addition, for BV selection events leading to selection of a Victorian *team*:

- c) unless otherwise specified in the Supplementary Regulations of such an event, continuation beyond the first qualifying stage of an event leading to selection of a Victorian team by players eligible to represent Victoria constitutes a declaration of availability to represent the BV in the target event.

3.4. "Unauthorised withdrawal from a tournament" occurs when a player's withdrawal for a period of one deal or longer has not been not approved in advance by the Director or the MTC, or ratified thereafter by either of them in the case of accident or emergency. For all purposes under this clause a pair may be deemed to have withdrawn from a tournament if both members of the partnership are not in attendance and ready to play every deal for which they are scheduled to play at the time set down. Players that make an unauthorised withdrawal must pay all entry and table fees for the tournament that would otherwise have been due. In addition, they may be excluded from the corresponding event the following year.

3.5. "Breaching availability" is,

- a) having made an explicit or implicit declaration of availability (such as per 3.3) but failing to progress to the next stage of the competition having qualified to do or
- b) failing to represent Victoria having been selected without gaining prior approval from the MTC and BV's Operations Committee. Players who breach availability must refund all subsidies paid. In addition, they may be excluded from any or all selection events the following year.

4. SUBSTITUTION, AUGMENTATION, ELIGIBILITY & LATE ENTRIES

- 4.1. The number of substitutions allowed in any tournament shall be as provided in the Substitution Rules of the BV as set out hereunder. Emergency substitutions not covered by the Regulations may be allowed for substantial cause by a special ruling of the Director subject in such cases to such terms as the Director may impose. In the last resort, the Director may take whatever action necessary to keep the tournament in motion. See also clause 13.4.
- 4.2. The Director shall report to the MTC any instance where s/he is of the opinion that the substitution did not conform to these Regulations. The MTC may treat a substitution without reasonable cause that was outside of the Regulations as an unauthorised withdrawal.
- 4.3. Where an event or sections of an event are restricted to a particular category (e.g., Mixed Teams, Seniors, Youth and so on) or where prizes are available to the best performances by players in a restricted masterpoint category, the pair or team in question must play throughout the event so that at all times the members of the pair or team (including substitutes) actually competing fall within the particular category in question.

4.4. Substitution Rules

4.4.1. Terminology

Unit means the original team, pair or individual, but includes augmented players (in the case of teams events), and players who become permanent (see clause 4.5.5). For a teams event, a unit shall consist of four, five or six members. For a pairs event, a unit shall consist of two members.

Substitute means a non-unit player who represents that unit for one session or a part thereof.

Substitution means the replacement of a unit member by a substitute for one session or a part thereof.

Stage of competition means those successive sessions where the field that is eligible to win the competition is not reduced in size (e.g., a preliminary stage that precedes a final stage, but not a reduction of the field due to disqualification or an authorised withdrawal). In partial knock-out events, all successive knock-out sessions shall constitute the one stage.

Equivalent standard means that degree of equivalence where the ability of the substitute is neither significantly higher nor lower than that of the player whom the substitute is replacing. Masterpoint rank need not be a determining factor and the relative experience of the two partnerships may be taken into account.

Overweight Substitute means a substitute of significantly greater ability than the player whom the substitute is replacing. Similarly, an *Underweight Substitute* is one of significantly lesser

ability than the substituted player. To evaluate whether a substitute is of a comparable standard to the absent player, the following factors will be considered:

- (a) The playing records of both the absent player and the substitute (i.e., their performance in events) both separately and in various partnerships,
- (b) Each player's recent form as an individual. Longer term form may also be used, especially in the absence of recent activity,
- (c) The respective experience levels of both partnerships.

Ineligible substitutes include players who have contested the same stage of the competition, those who would not have been eligible to enter the competition, and those still competing in the competition.

4.4.2. It is a condition of entry to all BV events that each entrant is obliged to play in all sessions, or arrange a substitute if unable to play. The Director should be notified of this substitution at least 24 hours before the relevant session. The entrant shall make every effort to find a substitute of equivalent standard, as defined in 4.4.1 above.

4.4.3. A disqualified unit shall be obliged to play in the remaining sessions of that stage of the event, unless the Director, in conjunction with the MTC, expels the unit from the event. The unit is responsible for the payment of all table money, notwithstanding the use of a substitute.

4.4.4. Notification of the need to use a substitute should be sent to the Match and Tournament Committee or the Director well in advance of the session in question. Substitutions that have been notified in a timely manner will be considered by the full MTC panel. Late notifications pertaining to the final session of an event will still require the concurrence of at least two MTC members prior to any action being taken (with the proviso that the affected contestant may subsequently appeal to the full MTC).

4.5. Substitution

4.5.1. Limits on substitution are calculated in terms of *Sets*. A Set is a significant and distinct unit of play:

- a) A match of at least 8 boards is a set;
- b) Segments of at least 8 boards comprising a longer match are each sets;
- c) Otherwise, a distinct session of play of at least 16 boards is s a set (matchpoint pairs is the typical example)

4.5.2. A substitute (or substitutes) may be employed for no more than half of the sets.

- 4.5.3. Each member of the unit must play at least half the sets of an event ($n/2$ where n = the number of sets). When there is an odd number of sets, the requirement varies between teams events and pairs events (both those that are scored at IMPS and those scored at matchpoints). In a teams event, all players must play $n/2$ (rounded down) sets; in a pairs event, each player must play $n/2$ (rounded up) sets. Thus, in a pairs event, each player must play at least half the sets (e.g., 2 of 3, 6 of 11, 3 of 6 etc); in a teams event a player can play just under half the sets but only if there is an odd number of sets in the event (e.g., 4 out of 9, 7 out of 15).
- 4.5.4. If playing in a pairs competition, a player must play at least half the sets with the partner with whom they entered the event. For example, in a 4-week competition, one player cannot be away for 2 weeks and their partner for another different week.
- 4.5.5. Any unit which does not comply with the preceding clauses in respect of a competition will be disqualified except as provided under clause 4.6.4.
- 4.5.6. A unit with more players than is required for a given set (such as a team of 5 or 6) is not further constrained in its use of substitutes.
- 4.5.7. The unit shall receive the actual score for the session(s) in which the substitute(s) played if the substitute is deemed of reasonably equivalent standard. If the substitute is deemed to be overweight, an adjustment will be applied to modify the actual score obtained for the session as described in 4.5.8.
- 4.5.8. A pair or team employing an "overweight" substitute will have the result for the session in question adjusted to be the lesser of:
- (a) the actual score earned at the table, or
 - (b) the average of the scores obtained by the original contestant.
- Any such adjustment will be calculated at the conclusion of the event hence it will not impact upon the draw.
- 4.5.9. At the conclusion of the event, the opponents of the unit containing the overweight substitute will receive, in lieu of their result for that specific encounter, the greater of either:
- a) their actual table score, or
 - b) the complement of the offender's capped result.
- 4.5.10. Upon application by the unit to the MTC, a substitute may become a permanent member of a unit by replacing a player of equivalent standard. Such application must be made before the commencement of the next stage of the event. In such circumstances the replaced player will be deemed to have been a substitute. The reconstituted unit must comply with clauses 4.5.2 through 4.5.4.
- 4.5.11. If a player substitutes for a small number of boards, the Director may rule that a substitution has not taken place.

4.6. Procedures and Miscellaneous

4.6.1. Masterpoints. Substitutes earn sessional masterpoints which are calculated before any alteration to scores. Outright awards are shared between unit members after any alteration of scores, provided the unit has not been disqualified.

4.6.2. A unit may appeal to the MTC against a ruling that a substitute is overweight or ineligible.

4.7. Augmentation

4.7.1. *Augmentation* is the addition of players to a team. The resultant team may have up to six players. The augmented players become permanent members of the team.

4.7.2. Teams that fall below three members (including approved additions, such as provided for in 4.5.10) are considered to have disbanded and are not eligible to augment.

4.7.3. Permission to augment must be obtained from the Director and the MTC.

4.7.4. No augmentation will be permitted after the start of play of the penultimate session of stage 1 of any event, and may need to occur earlier so that the augmented player or pair meets the required number of boards or sets rule (see 4.5.3 and 4.7.5).

4.7.5. Augmented players must play the same number of Minimum Sets (see 4.5.3) as that required for all original team members.

4.7.6. Augmented players must:

- a) not have entered the event and
- b) be eligible to enter the event.

4.8. Ineligible Entry

If permitted by the Supplementary Regulations, a non-eligible unit may enter an event which has restricted entry provided it pays all the entry fees and table monies as though it was eligible.

4.8.1. The MTC may approve additional substitutions under Section 4 in special circumstances. In particular, absence while representing Australia or Victoria may be considered a special circumstance, provided approval is obtained in advance.

4.8.2. Ineligible units which enter an event under the provisions of clause 4.8.1:

- a) are not entitled to any prizes or titles associated with the event;
- b) may not qualify to any subsequent stage of the event;
- c) are not entitled to any outright masterpoints, but are entitled to sessional masterpoints.

4.9. Late Entry

4.9.1. Units may be accepted into a field, after the completion of the first session, provided they obtain the Director's permission and pay the full entry fee for the event.

4.9.2. Units which enter an event under the provisions of clause 4.9.1 will be awarded a score of 40% (or the 40th percentile score. for any session they have missed. In a knock-out event with repechage section, such units will be accepted into the repechage section only.

5. SYSTEMS

5.1. System Cards

Except for events where the Director determines that a system card is not required, each pair shall have on the table during the periods of play a legible system card properly identified with their names. The system card shall be one approved by BV; that is, one supplied by BV or the Australian Bridge Federation (ABF). The onus is on the pair to prepare an accurate and reasonably comprehensive system card. System cards should remain on the table during play. For on-line events, players must provide a summary of their major methods for viewing by their opponents.

At the commencement of each round, it is highly recommended that a pair should consult the system card of the opponents to determine their general system, strength of 1NT opening, length of opening suit bids and level of negative doubles. The purpose of this Regulation is to reduce the possibility of unauthorized information being conveyed by questions asked during the auction or play. This Regulation in no way reduces a pair's obligation to alert its opponents to any special partnership understandings under Law 40 of the Code, or under Regulation 7 hereunder.

5.2. System Classifications

For the purposes of these Regulations, the current classification of systems as adopted by the ABF (June, 2008) and as amended by the ABF from time to time shall be adopted also by the BV. This classification corresponds closely to the WBF classification.

5.2.1 Green (Natural) Systems

- a) All one-level opening bids are natural and non-forcing
- b) An opening bid of one of a suit guarantees length (3+ cards) in the denomination named (Exception: 4-4-3-2 and (4-3)-4-2 shaped hands may be opened 1C)
- c) 1NT should be balanced or semi-balanced (Note: this does not preclude individual assessment of some hands, e.g., a hand with a singleton honour or a weak longer suit. The subsequent bidding methods however, should not be able to identify such hand types)
- d) All one-level opening bids, must by agreement, promise at least 8 HCP.

5.2.2. Blue (Strong Club/Strong Diamond) Systems

This category includes systems that satisfy all of the following criteria:

- a) One club/one diamond is artificial, forcing and always strong
- b) One of a major is natural and non-forcing
- c) 1NT is non-conventional
- d) The one-level opening in the other minor may be artificial with various possibilities not covered by the other opening bids
- e) All one-level opening bids, must by agreement, promise at least 8 HCP.

5.2.3. Red Systems

This category includes:

- a) All systems employing one-level openings that do not fall under the definition of Yellow (HUM) systems [see 5.2.4], other than Strong Club/Strong Diamond (Blue) systems.
- b) Any system in which the basic 1-level opening structure (other than the length of natural suit bids or the point range of openings) varies according to position and/or vulnerability.
- c) Written defences to Red, Blue or Green systems will not be allowed on the table.

5.2.4. Yellow (HUM) Systems

For the purpose of these Regulations, a Highly Unusual Method (HUM) means any System that has, as a matter of partnership agreement, one or more of the following features:

- a) A Pass in the opening position that shows at least the values generally accepted for an opening bid of one, even if there are alternative weak possibilities.
- b) An opening bid at the one level that may be made on high card strength a king or more below that of an average hand (i.e., ~ 0-7 HCP and insufficient compensating distributional values).
- c) An opening bid of one of a major with alternative possible meanings that the hand may be long or short in a specified suit (i.e., the use of 'wonder' style bids).
- d) An opening bid of one of a major with alternative possibilities that show length in one specified suit or length in another specified suit.
- e) Any pair wishing to play a Yellow system must submit an appropriate system summary to the MTC at least seven days before the session in which it wishes to play the system. On submission, the system summary will be dated and the pair will be required to enter a copy in the Systems File kept for the purpose of advising potential opponents of Yellow systems. Copies of system summaries may not be removed from the Systems File except with the permission of the Chairman of the MTC or his representative.
- f) Pairs playing a Yellow system must supply their opponents with two copies of a written defence. Such defence must include actions and subsequent continuations over any and all opening calls that make the system Yellow. It must be concise (so that the opponents can use it with no prior discussion), yet detailed enough to be an effective defence. The written defence must be approved by the Chairman of the MTC before approval to play the Yellow system will be granted. Upon approval of the written defence, two copies of it will be placed in the Systems File.
- g) Written defences to Yellow systems will be allowed on the table.

5.2.5. Brown Sticker Conventions and Treatments

Certain types of conventional calls or treatments are considered to place demands upon the opponents' defensive preparations. The conventions/ treatments in question are categorized as 'Brown Sticker' (BS).

Any one of the following characteristics qualifies a convention/treatment as BS if it is a matter of partnership agreement:

- a) Any opening bid of two clubs through three spades that could be weak and does not promise at least four cards in a known suit.

Exceptions:

- i) Where all the weak meanings guarantee at least four cards in one known suit and only the strong options do not.
 - ii) A two level opening bid in a minor may show a weak hand with 5+ cards in either major only, or as an option among any number of strong hand types.
- b) An overcall of a natural opening bid of one of a suit that does not promise at least four cards in a known suit.

Exceptions:

- (i) A natural overcall in no trumps.
 - (ii) Any cue bid that shows a strong hand.
 - (iii) A cue bid in an opponent's known suit that asks partner to bid 3NT with a stopper in that suit.
- c) Any weak two-suited bid (whether it be an overcall, an opening bid or a response) at the two or three level that may by agreement be made with three cards or fewer in one of the suits.

Notes:

- i) Restriction (b) also applies to overcalls after an opening bid of one of a minor which is ostensibly natural and non-forcing, even if it might be made on a doubleton or a singleton.
- ii) None of the foregoing restrictions (a-c) pertain to conventional defences against strong, forcing artificial opening bids, or defences against 'Brown Sticker' or HUM conventions. Conventional defences to 1NT are also unrestricted.
- iii) Additional to the classification of system, any partnership using one or more 'Brown Sticker' conventions must individually list them on their system cards and/or supplementary sheets.

5.3 Protected Status

A pair, playing a Green system throughout an event, which has both of its players below Life Master or one player below State Master, may designate itself as a "protected pair". (A "protected pair" will be identified by means of an orange sticker attached to the front of its system card, in addition to the green sticker showing they are playing a green system.) In events where the Regulations allow pairs to claim "protected pair" status, such a pair will be required to inform their opponents before the start of each round of their "Protected" status. The opposing pair must then not employ any Yellow methods nor any Brown Sticker convention or treatment during the round in question.

5.4 System Restrictions

- a) Unless otherwise stipulated in the Supplementary Regulations of the event, all IMP scored events which have the status of State Championships shall not be restricted to any of the classifications described in 5.2.
- b) Yellow systems will not be allowed in any match-pointed pairs event.

- c) At other BV club sessions receiving Red Masterpoints, all systems will be permitted, but pairs satisfying the conditions outlined in clause 5.3 may designate themselves as "protected".
- d) At all other face-to-face sessions as well as on-line sessions run by BV, Yellow systems will not be permitted.
- e) The MTC may further regulate the use of systems for any session as it deems appropriate.
- f) The systems permitted in Victorian Congress events, shall be determined by the host Club and published in the Congress entry brochure.
- g) Both members of a partnership must use the same bidding system and play conventions.
- h) No more than two discrete systems may be played by a pair in a session. For the purposes of this regulation, a simple change in the high card points required for a specific opening depending on vulnerability or position will not constitute a change in system. Pairs playing two systems, one or both of which are Yellow, who are required to revert to a non-Yellow system by a "protected pair", will be deemed to be playing a separate session against the "protected pair".
- i) It is implicit that a partnership should know its own system. The Director may require a pair to cease playing a particular system and revert to a more natural system if, in the Director's opinion, the bidding and/or explanations of the partnership demonstrate that it does not have an adequate knowledge of its system. The Director shall report such a ruling to the MTC. The MTC may prohibit the pair from playing such system until it is able to demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of the system.

6. BIDDING AND PLAY PROCEDURES

Face-to-face bridge events

6.1. Written bidding

6.1.1 The written bidding record sheet ('bidding slip') to be used is as determined by the tournament director.

6.1.2. It is not necessary to mark the dealer and vulnerability on the written bidding record sheet unless screens are in operation.

6.1.3. When a player elects to mark the written bidding record sheet, a circle at the appropriate compass position designates the Dealer and a single or double line through N & S and/or E & W denotes the vulnerability.

6.1.4. The Director may apply a procedural penalty to a player who marks the written bidding sheet incorrectly. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of all players to know and to use the dealer and vulnerability marked on the board: players who take action based on a written bidding sheet that is marked incorrectly have no recourse.

6.1.5. A call is not made until the player has written the appropriate numeral, if necessary, with the appropriate symbol. Each call should be written in the next vacant box working from left to right of that player's segment of the bidding slip. The symbols are:

C for clubs	the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
D for diamonds	/ for pass
H for hearts	either / or // for the concluding pass of the auction
S for spades	X for double
NT for no trumps	XX for redouble

6.1.6. Calls must be made in a consistent manner without any emphasis or additional notations such as punctuation marks.

6.1.7. Once a player has made an alertable call, their partner should immediately audibly say "alert" and circle the alertable call on the bidding slip. This provides prima-facie evidence that the call has been alerted.

6.1.8. All calls must be made in neat, legible, handwriting. Where there is any doubt about what is written players should seek verbal clarification.

6.1.9 The Director is the sole judge and final arbiter in respect to the legibility of any written call. A player has no redress if he has made a call based on his own misunderstanding (Law 21A). If, however, in the opinion of the Director, a player has made a mistaken call as a result of an opponent's illegible handwriting, then Law 21B may be applied.

6.1.10. The written bidding sheet remains on the table until the third player (partner of the opening leader) has played to the first trick, whereupon it should be removed from view.

6.1.11. The stationary pair, or N/S if both pairs are moving, must ensure that used bidding slips are not available to players who have yet to play that board.

6.2. Bidding Boxes

6.2.1. Bidding boxes must be used:

- a) when specified by the tournament Supplementary Regulations, or
- b) when specified by the Director of the session.

6.2.2. When used, bidding boxes must be used by all four players at the table.

6.2.3. A call is made by the player selecting the appropriate card from the bidding box and placing it on the table (no screens) or on the bidding tray (with screens). Players should not touch any bidding cards before they have determined their call. (Law 73E2 may apply and also, when there are no screens, Law 16B1).

6.2.4. Starting with the dealer, players place the bidding cards on the table in front of them. When a bidding tray is used, the first call is placed at the extreme left-hand edge of the player's segment of the tray. Subsequent calls should then overlap neatly and evenly so that every call is visible and faced towards partner.

6.2.5. Should a call be cancelled following an irregularity, then the bidding card that represents the withdrawn call shall be restored to the player's bidding box.

6.2.6. Alerts are made by the partner of the player who made an alertable call. The partner says "Alert" audibly and places the alert card across the bidding card designating the alertable call. The alerted player must acknowledge the alert before calling.

6.2.7. A call is considered made (without screens) when a bidding card is removed from the bidding box and held face up, touching or nearly touching the table; or maintained in such a position as to indicate that the call has been made.

6.2.8. A call selected may be changed if:

- i) it is determined by the Director that the call was selected unintentionally; or
- ii) it is required by rectification following an irregularity; or
- iii) the Director consents to the change following the correction of an opponent's irregularity

6.2.9. When screens are in use the bidding cards are restored to their boxes prior to the opening lead.

6.2.10. A player who removes his bidding cards from the table with the intention of passing is deemed to have passed.

6.2.11. When screens are not in use, all the bidding cards should remain on the table until after the opening lead has been faced.

6.2.12. Until they are removed from the table, a player can review the auction by inspecting the bidding cards. After the bidding cards are restored to their boxes a player may, at his first turn to play, require all previous calls to be restated (Law 20C2). Only an opponent shall respond to this request and when screens are in use it shall be written.

6.2.13 The MTC may prescribe the use of screens for any stage of any event. If this occurs the MTC will set out procedures for the use of the screens in the Supplementary Regulations.

On-line BV events

6.3 Mis-clicks and Undo's

Law 25A

- i) A change of call will be permitted via "Undo" for a mis-click where the Director is satisfied that the original call made was unintended.
- ii) i A call may be changed under (i) provided partner has not subsequently called.
- iii) In the case of an unintended call by either of the last two players to call in the auction, the call may be changed under (i) provided the opening lead has not been made.
- iv) When a board has been passed in and the Director is satisfied that a pass made by the third or fourth player to call was unintended, the Director may award an artificial adjusted score under the provisions of Law 12C2, treating both sides as non-offending. Law 86B may be applicable.

Law 45C4b

- i) A change of a played card will be permitted via "Undo" for a mis-click where the Director is satisfied that the original card played was unintended.
- ii) A play may be changed under (i) provided partner has not subsequently played.

6.4 Principles for allowing or not allowing unintended calls or plays

Unless the player is able to convince the Director otherwise, a call made or card played will be assumed to be intended. In particular, the following instances should be treated as prima facie evidence that the action taken was not unintended:

- i) The call or card which the player wishes to substitute is not immediately adjacent to the call or card originally clicked;
- ii) The call or card which was originally clicked is a potential logical action given the preceding bidding or play;

- iii) The call or card which was originally clicked is consistent with a careless play or a failure to give full attention to previous actions in the bidding or play.

If a player types an explanation of their call before they make it, sends it to the opponents and then makes a different call, this should be treated as prima facie evidence that the call was a mis-click and therefore unintended.

6.5 Claims and Concessions

Laws 68 to 71 will be applied as appropriate, subject to the following qualifications:

- i) In the case of a concession by a defender, where the platform does not allow for objection by the other defender, the Director will apply Law 71;
- ii) If there has been a claim that the opponents have rejected (so the claiming side's cards are visible to the other side) and then a subsequent claim/concession which requires a Director ruling, determination of 'likely' and 'normal' will take into account that one side can see all the cards.

6.6 Alerts and Explanations

In modes where partner of the player making the call alerts and gives explanations, Laws and ABF Regulations applicable in face-to-face bridge will stand. In modes where players alert and explain their own calls and plays, ABF Screen Regulations shall apply, subject to the following qualifications:

- i) Explanations of calls are delivered to both members of the opposing side;
- ii) Requests for clarification should be addressed to the player who gave the original explanation;
- iii) The Self-alerting provisions of the Alerting Regulations do not apply. Players are required to alert any call the meaning of which may not be readily understood by the opponents.

6.7 Systems and System cards

If allowed for within the platform, pairs should post a system card online, which will be available to opponents during the round. In the absence of the ability to post a system card online, at the start of each round, each pair must provide the opponents with a simple summary of their system and carding agreements, paying particular attention to highlighting any agreements which would require a pre-alert in a face-to-face game.

Players may not consult their own system card or other system notes while any hand is in progress.

Players may not make notes during the auction and play.

YELLOW systems are not permitted in any online game.

7. ALERTS

The BV alerting regulations adopt in full the ABF Alerting Regulations published by the ABF on 1 June 2008 and updated on 1 August 2017. Additionally, as specified by the ABF regulations, partnerships are required to pre-alert their opponents to any unusual agreement which might surprise them, or to which they may need to arrange a defence. Examples: transfer pre-empts, transfer responses to 1♣, unusual two-level openings, canapé style bidding, very unusual doubles, unusual methods over the opponents' 1NT or strong club openings, unusual cue bids of the opponents' suit, etc. Pre-alerts should be provided in both face-to-face and on-line events.

It is an essential principle of the game of bridge that players not have secret agreements with their partners, either in bidding or card play. All agreements must be fully available and disclosed to the opponents. These Regulations set principles and guidelines for the approved alerting procedures.

The purpose of an alert is to draw the opponents' attention to any call that has a special meaning, or a meaning the opponents may not expect. The fact that the system card explains the meaning of a call does not remove the obligation to alert it.

Players should adhere to the principle of full disclosure (as required by the Laws) in following these Regulations and in explanations of calls. The principle is to disclose, not as little as you must, but as much as you can, and as comprehensibly as you can. A careless failure to follow this policy may result in an adjusted score, and possibly procedural penalties, where opponents have been damaged. If a player makes a positive effort to meet their obligations under full disclosure, they will rarely if ever fall foul of these regulations.

The methods of a partnership include not only the specific agreements appearing on the system card but also partnership understandings which have arisen through partnership discussion or experience. The opponents are entitled to know about these understandings. General bridge inferences, like those a new partner could make when there has been no prior discussion, are not alertable, but any inferences that can be drawn from partnership experience must be disclosed.

There are five different types of self-alerting calls that carry their own alert and should not be alerted:

- i) Doubles
- ii) Redoubles
- iii) Cue bids of an opponent's denomination/suit
- iv) All calls at the four-level or higher, except conventional opening bids
- v) Any 2♣ response to a 1NT opening bid in an uncontested auction.

Alerts are compulsory - the opponents cannot be asked not to alert.

The full ABF Alerting Regulations may be found in the ABF General Tournament Regulations (2021) which is available from the ABF web site.

8. PUNCTUALITY AND SLOW PLAY

- 8.1. Failure to complete a session on time is not the only index of slow play. The Director may penalise a partnership at any time if he considers its slow play disruptive of the movement.
- 8.2. Players should be seated 5 minutes before the start of play.
- 8.3. Any unit not seated and ready to play within 5 minutes after the start of a session may, at the discretion of the Director, be penalised as follows:

Lateness	In a WBF VP scale match (20VP)	In a matchpoint pairs event
5 to 10 minutes	1 VP	25% of a top
11 to 15 minutes	2 VP	50% of a top
16 to 20 minutes	3 VP	75% of a top
21 to 30 minutes	5 VP	125% of a top

and in other cases, on a basis which the MTC deems to be equivalent to such scale. For delays of over 30 minutes in matches, the Director may assess a more severe penalty, including default of the match and disqualification from the event. A substitute pair or player may be used by the Director to complete the movement. It is the responsibility of the players to know when sessions are due to commence.

- 8.4. Where a round, session or match is not completed in the time allotted, both pairs at the offending table may, at the discretion of the Director, (subject as hereinafter provided) be penalised as follows:

	In a WBF VP scale match (20VP)	In a matchpoint pairs event
First offence	Warning	warning
Second offence	1 VP	25% of a top
Third offence	2 VP	50% of a top
Further offences	3 VP	75% of a top

If the period of time between any two consecutive offences by the same pair exceeds six (6) calendar months, the later offence will be deemed to be a first offence.

- 8.5. Both pairs at the table shall be penalised unless the Director has been called to the table during the session and has ruled one pair to be innocent of slow play or unless the Director has sufficiently observed the table to rule that one pair be exempted from penalty. The Director may in his absolute discretion (and whether or not he has been requested to do so by any player or players) appoint a monitor or monitors to observe play at any table and to report to the Director on the time taken by each pair or its conduct or any other relevant matter and the Director may act on the report of a monitor as if he himself had observed the play.
- 8.6. Where a pair is penalised for a late start, the starting time shall run from the official commencement time of the session. The Director may in his absolute discretion alter the length of a session (including changing the number of boards to be played) at one or more tables to facilitate or maintain the orderly progress of an event. The Director may make time calls or call attention to delays in completing individual matches, but competitors should not rely upon him to do so.
- 8.7. Except as provided in clause 8.8, warnings and fines will carry over from session to session, irrespective of a change of event.
- 8.8. In knockout teams or pairs events, a fine of 1 VP is deemed to be the equivalent of 3 IMPs. Where both sides are judged to be at fault, the winning team or pair will carry-over the fine into the next match.

9. FOULED BOARDS

9.1. Most computer scoring programs include methods to deal with fouled boards. However, these may be complex and manual methods may be preferred, as follows:

9.2. Where a board is fouled as defined under Law 87, in Butler or other events in which the scoring method involves an IMP conversion of the difference between the score obtained and some datum score, the Director shall:

- a) Providing that the hand has been played by sufficient pairs in the identical faulty form (by four tables or one third of the field (with fractions being rounded up), whichever is less but a minimum of three tables), treat it as a separate deal determining a separate datum for the changed board and calculate scores for that part of the field from this datum. If the Director proceeds in this way, he shall, after calculating all scores, determine the average of all the scores (in IMPs) obtained by those pairs who played the true board and, separately, the corresponding average for those who played the fouled board; or
- b) Otherwise award an adjusted score of Average Plus to those pairs who played the fouled board.

9.3 Where a board is fouled as defined under Law 87, in an event where the scoring method is matchpoints:

- a) Providing that the hand has been played by at least three pairs in the identical faulty form, the Director determines as closely as possible which scores were made on the board in its correct form and which in the changed form. He then awards each player or pair the matchpoints as determined by the following (Neuberg) formula:

$$\text{Match Points} = \frac{(M \times E) + (E - A)}{A}$$

Where

- i) M is the match points allotted by considering the two groups of scores in isolation.
 - ii) E is the expected number of scores
 - iii) A is the actual number of scores
- b) Otherwise, an adjusted score of Average Plus is awarded to those pairs who played the fouled board.

9.4 Whenever the Director finds it necessary to act in any of the above ways, he shall publish along with the results of the session a clear statement explaining his actions.

9.5 A board turned through 90 degrees shall not be regarded as a fouled board in individual, matchpoint pairs or IMP scored pairs events.

9.6 A board is not necessarily fouled merely because it does not accord with the hand record.

10 SPECTATORS, CAPTAINS, AND CLOSED ROOMS

- 10.1. Spectators will be allowed to watch play (at one table only) in the open room(s) but there shall be no spectators in the closed room(s). A spectator may not watch play at more than one table and should, if possible, be seated and should refrain from looking into more than one hand or moving round the table during the bidding or play. Spectators must remain silent unless spoken to by a player or official. Provided that a spectator observes these conditions and matters of general etiquette, a player has no right to object to his/her presence at the table.
- 10.2. Captains are entitled to watch only the table in the closed room at which their team is playing, but are not entitled to leave the closed room while that table is still in play (except as allowed by the Director).
- 10.3. No person other than players, captains, working officials or Directors are entitled to access the closed room except with the express permission of the Director.
- 10.4. A player may not watch at any table at which his own team is playing, including times when he is not playing in that session. A player, having completed play in a session, may not watch at any table where boards are being played which he himself has previously played.

11. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- 11.1. At the conclusion of any session of any tournament conducted by BV, the Director may complete and provide to the MTC a report of all incidents occurring during that session and must do so if required by the MTC.

12. DRESS, SMOKING, MOBILE PHONES AND BEHAVIOUR

- 12.1. Contestants in BV tournaments shall adhere to the standard of dress required by the Council of the BV for members and visitors to its club rooms.
- 12.2. Good manners are considered an essential part of bridge and the Director is specifically empowered to require players to adhere to a high standard of manners and decorum. The Director shall in his report inform the MTC of any departure from these standards by any player. The MTC may at its discretion refer any such matter to the Discipline and Ethics Committee for its consideration.
- 12.3. Smoking is prohibited at all times in the playing area of any tournament conducted by BV. Failure to observe such prohibition shall be a breach of good manners entitling the Director to exercise his disciplinary powers under the Laws and shall be reported to the MTC in the Director's report.

12.4. Mobile phones

12.4.1. Mobile phones must be turned off during session time. If a player's mobile phone rings during session time, that player's unit will be penalised as follows:

	In a WBF VP scale match (20VP)	In a matchpoint pairs event
First offence	1 VP	25% of a top
Second offence	2 VP	50% of a top
Third offence	3 VP	75% of a top

The above scales are applicable to all Weekend Finals and the latter stages of Victorian Selection Events. A first offence in any other State or Club competition shall only attract a warning, while the penalties for subsequent offences remain as per above.

12.4.2. Players, for professional or medical reasons, may apply in writing to the BV Operations Committee to be exempted from the penalties provided in Regulation 12.4.1.

13. TIE-BREAKS, REPLACEMENT OF UNAVAILABLE PAIRS OR TEAMS

13.1. Differences of fractions of a matchpoint, percentage, IMP or Victory Point will be sufficient to determine placings. Fractions shall be calculated or displayed to one decimal place only, by rounding.

13.2. Ties shall be broken by successively applying the following procedures until a winner is determined:

13.2.1. For Swiss Teams, Swiss IMP Pairs and Butler Pairs

- a) the total score of all opponents shall be determined. The team or pair with the highest total shall be deemed to have had the most difficult draw and shall be ranked highest;
- b) the pair or team with the greatest number of wins in VPs (a draw is equal to ½ win) shall be ranked highest;
- c) the total scores shall be recalculated by successively deleting the worst result, then second worst result, etc. of each of the tying pairs or teams;
- d) the pair or team with the greatest positive or least negative IMP difference shall be ranked highest;
- e) in the case of two-way ties, the winner of the match between the two equally scoring pairs or teams (if such a match occurred) shall be ranked higher;

f) ranking shall be determined by lot.

13.2.2. For Knock-out Teams or for qualification to the next stage of a teams event:

Four board playoffs to be played immediately the tie is agreed. (Scoring errors made in the original match, or qualifying matches, may be corrected up until the time limits set out in Regulation 14, hereunder. Where the original match is no longer tied after the correction of such scoring errors, the result of the tie-break will be immaterial.) If the four-board playoff is tied, two-board playoffs will be played until a conclusion is reached.

13.2.3. Round Robins

Apply the procedures per 13.2.1, excepting (1).

13.2.4. For Matchpoints:

- a) The total matchpoints of all the tying pairs' opponents shall be determined. The pair with the highest total shall be ranked highest;
- b) The scores of each of the tying pairs shall be compared on all boards which they played in the same direction. Each pair shall be awarded two matchpoints for each (tying) pair whose score they have beaten, and one matchpoint for each (tying) pair whose score they have equalled;
- c) On boards where the pairs played in opposite directions or only one pair played the board, they shall be awarded two matchpoints for a score above the average on the board, one matchpoint for an average score, and zero otherwise;
- d) The scores obtained by means of (a) and (b) shall be added, with the highest scoring pair ranked highest;
- e) In the case of two-way ties, the pair scoring higher in the encounter between the two pairs (should it have occurred) shall be ranked higher;
- f) The pair with the best score against the highest placed pair in the field shall be ranked highest, then successively to the second-highest placed pair, etc.

13.3. Should a pair or team be unavailable for the next stage of a competition, that pair or team shall be replaced by the next ranked pair or team who remain eligible to progress. In cases where there are multiple fields, the (N+1)th ranked unit that progresses will be the one closest to the Nth unit of the same field. Additional places that become available due to qualification of non-contenders will be selected considering each field alternatively. Note however that non-contenders remain within each field for the purpose of determining the initial rank N.

- 13.4. Should the Tournament Director permit a non-qualified unit to play in one or more sessions of an event (see clause 4.1), that unit shall be charged no table money or entry fees. The unit shall not be entitled to qualify for any final of the event and shall not be entitled to win any prizes or reward leading from the event.

14. SCORING CORRECTIONS

- 14.1. In multi-session pairs events, errors in scoring made by the players may be corrected within 30 minutes of the posting of scores for the session, or up to 30 minutes before the start of the next session, whichever is later.
- 14.2. Errors made by the official scorer may be corrected up to the start of the next stage of the event.
- 14.3. At the conclusion of an event, the results will become official 30 minutes after the posting of scores, after which time no further corrections may be made.
- 14.4. After posting the official scores, the Director must contact all players who were shown as having qualified for any further stage of the event in any posting of provisional scores, but who have no longer so qualified.

15. APPEALS COMMITTEE AND PROCEDURES PENDING APPEALS

15.1. The Appeals Committee

The function of the Appeals Committee is to adjudicate all appeals from rulings of the Tournament Director(s) (the "Director") directing a BV event.

- 15.1.1. On receiving a properly made appeal, the Director shall convene an Appeals Committee and appoint an Appeals Chairman from their number. The Director may consult with a member of MTC.
- 15.1.2. The Appeals Committee must follow the procedures set out in the BV Appeals Rules (section 15.4).

- 15.1.3. No person interested in an appeal or who was consulted by an appellant shall be a member of the Committee that adjudicates it. "Interested" as used in this clause shall mean a person who in the opinion of the Chairman of the Committee should reasonably be thought to be likely to obtain some benefit from the adjudication. Should this clause disqualify the Chairman he shall appoint an Acting Chairman.
- 15.1.4. Tournament Supplementary Regulations may specify the appointment of an Appeals Chairman. The Supplementary Regulations may further specify a pool of people from whom to draw Appeals Committees for the duration of the tournament. This is only expected to occur for high-level tournaments such as state selection events. In this case, appeals are lodged with the Director but the Appeals Chairman is responsible for selecting and convening Appeals Committees.
- 15.1.5. MTC may from time to time determine a "deposit" which must accompany appeals. This deposit may be in the form of score or money. Tournament Supplementary Regulations may specify a different deposit. The deposit or any portion of it may be forfeited if, in the opinion of the Appeals Committee, the appeal is frivolous.
- 15.1.6. All questions of bridge judgement and/or of fact, involved in appeals from Directors' rulings or otherwise arising pursuant to these Regulations shall be appealable to the Committee. There shall be no appeal from any decision of the Appeals Committee where duly constituted in accordance with these Regulations except as provided under Law 93C of the Code. Any question raised in writing as to the due constitution of the Committee (no other form of question shall be permitted) shall be determined by the BV Operations Committee whose decision shall be final. If a Committee is found not to have been duly constituted its determinations shall be null and void and the appeal or reference shall be heard by a duly constituted Appeals Committee.
- 15.2. Draws for Swiss Pairs or Swiss Teams events will be made immediately following the scoring of all matches in any session. No alterations will be made to the draw following an appeal which results in a change of score.
- 15.3. In Butler events where all scores are taken into account in determining the datum score (including cases where some number of extreme scores are eliminated), provisional datums and results will be determined when appeals are pending. Subsequent draws will be made on the basis of these results up until the result of the appeal is known. Should any appeal result in a change of score, the datums and results for that session will be altered accordingly.
- 15.4. In hand-scored Butler events where only a selected number of scores are used in calculating the datum, scores pending appeal will not be included in calculating the datum on a board. (The Director may in his absolute discretion include an equivalent number of scores to calculate a valid datum for a board). Should any appeal result in a change of score, the only alteration in result will be in that match which involved the appeal.

16. BV APPEALS RULES

- 16.1 In these Regulations a representative of the Appeals Committee Chairman shall mean the Convener of the event or, in his absence, any Deputy appointed by the Convener, or if there is no such Deputy, any member of the Council who is present, or otherwise the Director.
- 16.2 All appeals must be submitted through the Director on the prescribed form within 30 minutes of the official score being made available for inspection. The grounds of the appeal must be clearly stated.
- 16.3 All appeals shall be submitted to the Appeals Committee Chairman (or his representative) by the Director as soon as possible after being informed of the appeal.
- 16.4 All submissions from the Director shall be in writing setting out:
- a) the facts including all relevant hand records;
 - b) the players identified by name and pair or team number;
 - c) the grounds of the appeal and any other submissions of the players concerned;
 - d) the law or laws which the Director considers applicable;
 - e) the Director's decision.
- 16.5 The Director shall supply one copy of his submission to each of the parties concerned in the appeal and shall specify a time within which they may make any further submissions in writing.
- 16.6 The Appeals Committee Chairman (or the Convener of the event if notified of the appeal) shall forthwith constitute a committee of not less than three members from among available experienced players, appoint a Chairman (usually himself) and designate a time for hearing the appeal. No person having an interest in the outcome of the appeal shall sit on the Committee. As far as possible the appeal shall be heard prior to the next session of the Tournament in question, but in any event after the time limited for further submissions.
- 16.7 The Appeals Committee Chairman (or his representative) shall be responsible for ensuring that each member of the Appeals Committee receives a copy of the appeal, notice of the time and place of the meeting and any other necessary facts.
- 16.8 In cases where there is a serious dispute as to the facts, the Appeals Committee Chairman (or his representative) may arrange for the immediate taking of oral evidence if this is likely to assist in clarifying the facts for the Appeals Committee.
- 16.9 The Appeals Committee may seek further evidence from any of the players involved, or any other party as it thinks fit.
- 16.10 The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be by majority and, in the case of equality of votes; the Chairman shall have a casting vote.

- 16.11 One copy of the decision of the Appeals Committee shall also be filed in the Appeals file. This copy of the decision is for record purposes only.
- 16.12 These rules may be departed from by the Director or Appeals Committee Chairman (or representative) where circumstances dictate such a departure and in particular where justice requires a speedier resolution of the appeal than these rules allow. In such cases the conduct of the appeal shall be in the hands of the Chairman of the Appeals Committee, but as far as possible the following shall apply:
- a) An oral hearing shall be held with the Director appearing before the Appeals Committee in the presence of a representative of each party to explain the facts and ruling given.
 - b) Each party shall have the right through one of its members to address the Appeals Committee after the Director's report, to dispute any facts or to make any submissions.
 - c) The Appeals Committee, once it has heard the Director's report and all submissions and any other evidence it deems necessary, shall retire to consider its decision.
 - d) The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be communicated to the parties through the Director and a written record thereof shall be filed in the Appeals file.