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# WBF SYSTEMS POLICY

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## 1. OBJECTIVES

The objectives are to ensure that WBF Championships can be properly operated and adequately administered, with a fair and equal chance for all competitors, while at the same time affording proper consideration to progress and innovation; to ensure that players are in no doubt as to what is expected of them with regard to preparation and filing of systems material for WBF Championships.

Additions or amendments to this policy will normally be put into effect only after four months' notice.

## 2. DEFINITION

### 2.1. General

Average Hand	a hand containing 10 high card points (Milton Work) with no distributional values
Weak	high card strength below that of an average hand
Strong	high card strength a king or more greater than that of an average hand
Natural	a call or play that is not a convention (as defined in the Laws)
Length	three cards or more
Shortage	two cards or less
Long Match	A match of 17 or more deals
Short Match	a match of less than 17 deals

### 2.2 HUM Systems

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

1. A Pass in the opening position shows at least the values generally accepted for an opening bid of one, even if there are alternative weak possibilities.
2. By partnership agreement an opening bid at the one level may be weaker than pass.
3. By partnership agreement an opening bid at the one level may be made with values a king or more below average strength.
4. By partnership agreement an opening bid at the one level shows either length or shortage in a specified suit
5. By partnership agreement an opening bid at the one level shows either length in one specified suit or length in another.

**EXCEPTION:** one of a minor in a strong club or strong diamond system

## 2.3 Classification of Systems

In order to facilitate recognition and handling, systems material will be identified by one or more of the following:

1. A WBF coloured sticker;
2. The appropriate name (hand printed or typed) colour;
3. A check mark on a convention card next to the appropriate colour – in keeping with the following descriptions:

Green	Natural
Blue	Strong Club/Strong Diamond, where one club/one diamond is always strong
Red	Artificial: this category includes all artificial systems that do not fall under the definition of Highly Unusual Methods (HUM) systems [see definition below], other than Strong Club/Strong Diamond systems (see 'Blue').

Examples would be a system where one club shows one of three types - a natural club suit, a balanced hand of a specific range, or a Strong Club opener; or a system in which the basic methods (other than the no trump range) vary according to position, vulnerability and the like; or a system that uses conventional 'weak' or 'multi-meaning' bids (with or without some weak option) in potentially contestable auctions, other than those described in the main part of the WBF Convention Booklet

Yellow Highly Unusual Methods ('HUM') as defined above.

## 2.4 Brown Sticker Conventions and Treatments

The following conventions or treatments are categorised as 'Brown Sticker':

- a) Any opening bid of two clubs through three spades that:
  - i) could be weak (may by agreement be made with values below average strength) AND
  - ii) does not promise at least four cards in a known suit.

**EXCEPTION:** The bid always shows at least four cards in a known suit if it is weak. If the bid does not show a known four card suit it must show a hand a king or more over average strength. (Explanation: Where all the weak meanings show at least four cards in one known suit, and the strong meanings show a hand with a king or more above average strength, it is not a Brown Sticker Convention.)

**EXCEPTION:** A two level opening bid in a minor showing a weak two in either major, whether with or without the option of strong hand types, as described in the WBF Conventions Booklet.

- 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.

**EXCEPTION:** A natural overcall in no trumps.

**EXCEPTION:** any cue bid suit that shows a strong hand.

**EXCEPTION:** a jump cue bid in opponent's known suit that asks partner to bid 3NT with a stopper in that suit.

- c) Any 'weak' two-suited bids at the two or three level that may by agreement be made with three cards or fewer in one of the suits.
  - d) Psychic bids protected by system or required by system.
  - e) None of the foregoing restrictions pertain to conventional defences against strong, artificial opening bids or defences against 'Brown Sticker' or HUM conventions.
- Additional to the classification of systems in 2.3 above, any partnership using one or more 'Brown Sticker' conventions must indicate this alongside its system classification.

## 2.5 Encrypted Signals

Additional to the restrictions on bidding methods and conventions above, players may not use signalling methods by which the message or messages conveyed by the signals are hidden from the declarer because of some key available only to the defenders (i.e. encrypted signals are not allowed)

## 2.6 Random Openings

It is forbidden to open hands which, by agreement, may contain fewer than 8 high card points and for which no further definition is provided.

## 3. SYSTEMS ALLOWED AT WBF CHAMPIONSHIPS

In relation to the aspect of Systems to be allowed at WBF Championships, the events will be divided into three categories:

### *CATEGORY 1*

#### *Bermuda Bowl, Venice Cup*

For such events all classifications of systems will be permitted, subject to adequate disclosure, but teams using HUM systems must submit their Convention Cards in advance in accordance with the *Conditions of Contest* and will be subject to a reduction of seating rights, as follows:

Whenever a team with one or more pairs using a HUM system opposes a team that has no such pair, the HUM systems team will be the 'Away' team, and lines up first throughout. No special seating rights or line-up restrictions shall apply when two teams containing HUM systems pairs (regardless of line-up) oppose one another.

### *CATEGORY 2*

The Knock-Out matches of the *Olympiad*, and other Teams Championships as decided by the WBF Rules and Regulations Committee:

The use of HUM systems is prohibited.

**Brown sticker** conventions will be permitted, subject to adequate disclosure, but players using them must submit their Convention Cards & Brown Sticker Announcement Forms (appendix 1) in advance in accordance with the *Conditions of Contest*. At the same time a viable suggested defence to any Brown Sticker convention must be filed. This will be

deemed to be a part of the Convention Card and may be referred to by the opponents at the table.

### **CATEGORY 3**

All other WBF Tournaments & Championships and stages of such events not covered by Categories 1 & 2 above

The use of both **HUM** systems and **Brown Sticker** conventions is prohibited.

## **4. SYSTEMS ALLOWED AT WBF CHAMPIONSHIPS**

For all *Category 1* Teams events, where **Yellow** (HUM) systems are permitted, any pair using a **HUM** system is required (in addition to the normal timely filing of the Convention card and Supplementary Sheets) to submit the full system in English at the beginning of the Championship in accordance with the Conditions of Contest.

Pairs using **Green**, **Blue** or **Red** systems are *encouraged* to submit their **full system** in English at the beginning of any WBF Championship.

In decisions taken by Tournament Directors and by the Appeals Committee, pairs who have submitted their full system will be given the benefit of any support this provides for an explanation given at the table, as far as this goes.

## **5. CONVENTION CARDS / SUPPLEMENTARY SHEETS**

The principle of adequate disclosure requires that competitors fully disclose **all conventions and treatments requiring defensive preparation**. In addition to the *Convention cards*, pairs will use *Supplementary Sheets* to achieve this objective. The use of Supplementary Sheets is not strictly limited for all events, provided that the entries are *properly numbered* to correspond to appropriately cross-referenced numbers on the Convention card itself. The sheets must *readily legible* and the numbered entries must be separated by discernible heavy lines. While brevity is encouraged, particularly for *Category 2* and *Category 3* events, full disclosure must not be prejudiced in any way as a result.

**All conventions and treatments requiring defensive preparation** must be listed on the **front right part of the WBF Card**. They must be explained and fully developed (including competitive agreements) either in the appropriate section on the *outside* or *inside* of the card, or, where there is inadequate space there, in the first numbered entries on the Supplementary Sheets.

The **front right part** of the Convention Card must include:

1. All artificial openings (except strong one club/two club openings)
2. Response to natural openings which are weak and conventional
3. All conventional defensive bids used over natural openings of one of a suit (making sure that all two suited intervention is detailed precisely; the best way to do this is to write: '*Two Suiters*' and include a reference number to an early Supplementary Sheet entry, which will provide the particulars).

If a pair uses any bid which should have been listed here, but which has been left out, and

their opponents do not get to their best contract, there will be a strong presumption that the opponents have been damaged by not being able to prepare a defence. The offending pair may also be liable to incur a procedural penalty.

Any pair playing a **HUM** system or **Brown Sticker** convention has a special obligation to present a complete description of both their bids and subsequent developments (especially competitive developments). If a pair uses an auction that is not fully described, then the same presumption of lack of advance notice (with adjustments and penalties as described in the preceding paragraph) shall apply.

For each tournament, the *Conditions of Contest* will state the **date** by which, and the **address** at which, systems material and Convention Cards (together with telephone and fax number or email addresses of the individuals best equipped to deal with queries regarding the system) **must be received**. The onus is jointly on the pair, the non-playing captain (where relevant), the NCBO and the Zonal Organisation **to obtain the information** required to meet this deadline. Failure to meet this deadline will result in **automatic** penalties, which will be fully described in the *Conditions of Contest*. Problems with systems should be referred to the Chairman of the Systems Committee or his nominee in accordance with details given in the Conditions of Contest.

After the closing date for submission of systems, the following will be the policy governing any changes to the Convention Card and Supplementary Sheets:

1. Deletion of an item or a statement will be permitted upon application to the Chairman of the Systems Committee or his nominee
2. A change replacing an agreement with another or to introduce a fresh agreement, where the new material is not Brown Sticker, will normally be permitted. The permission to use the new agreement will operate at the discretion of the Chairman, but will normally be from the morning of the second day after notification of the change is issued to other contestants
3. Neither the replacement of a Brown Sticker convention with another Brown Sticker convention, nor the introduction of a new Brown Sticker convention will be permitted

It is strongly emphasised, and all contestants must note, that the policy stated above will be rigorously applied.

## **6. DEFENCE AGAINST **YELLOW** (HUM) SYSTEMS AND BROWN STICKER CONVENTIONS**

For Team events in Category 1, the following regulations will apply to defensive measures against HUM systems.

1. A pair opposing a **HUM** system pair will submit two (clearly legible) copies of their defence to the **HUM** system at an appropriate time and place prior to the start of that segment, to be specified in the Conditions of Contest. Such defences are deemed to be part of the opponents' convention card.
2. In preparing the defence against a **HUM** system, pairs using **Green**, **Blue** or **Red** systems are allowed to change their systems, including opening calls. Pairs using a **HUM** system are not allowed to change their opening calls.
3. The pair using a **HUM** system must inform the opponents in writing (two clearly legible copies) about their counter-defence at the table prior to the start of the session. In preparing their counter-defence, the pair using a **HUM** system is not permitted to

change any of the highly artificial aspects of its system.

For Teams events in *Category 1* and *Category 2*, the following regulations will apply in relation to defensive measures against Brown Sticker Conventions:

A pair may prepare written defences against the **Brown Sticker** elements of any system. Such defences will have to be given to the opponents (two clearly legible copies) at an appropriate time and place prior to the start of that segment, to be specified in the *Conditions of Contest*. Written defences against **Brown Sticker** conventions are deemed to be part of the opponents' convention card.

## 7. NUMBER OF SYSTEMS ALLOWED PER TEAM

For *Category 1* events, a maximum number of four **Red** or **Yellow** Systems, of which only three may be **Yellow**, will be permitted for each participating team. A System, for the purpose of this section, may include different methods for different vulnerabilities. Both members of the partnership must agree to use the same methods of bidding and card play.

- Appendix 1:** Brown Sticker Opening Bid Announcement Form
- Appendix 2:** Brown Sticker Overall Announcement Form
- Appendix 3:** WBF Alerting Policy
- Appendix 4:** WBF Psychic Bidding Guidelines

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## **Appendix 1: Application to File**

## **Appendix 2: Application to File**

## **Appendix 3:**

## **Appendix 4:**

### **Psychic Bidding Guidelines**

Psychic Calls and similar actions based upon partnership understandings.

The Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge 1997 permit a player to make a psychic call "provided that such call is not based upon a partnership understanding". If a call is based upon a partnership understanding it ceases to be psychic. In its minute of 30th August 2000 the WBF Laws Committee ruled that a partnership understanding exists when the frequency of occurrence is sufficient for the partner of the player who makes the call to take his awareness of psychic possibilities into account, whether he does so or not; or, of course, it may be a matter explicitly agreed. There are also relevant statements in the WBF Code of Practice. Such an understanding must be disclosed beforehand.

The understandings in question are to be disclosed in World Championships and other tournaments conducted under the auspices of the WBF in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Explicit agreements that psychic calls are expected, or providing systemic protection for them, are classified as Brown Sticker. One example of the kind is when, third in hand at favourable vulnerability, a player is expected to open the bidding on anything at all.
2. Understandings whereby from time to time there may be gross violations of the normal meanings of calls, and where the nature or type of violation can be anticipated, must also be disclosed on the convention cards. The understandings may be explicitly agreed or they may have developed from partnership experience or mutually shared knowledge not available to opponents. They must be listed on the card amongst the conventions that may call for special defence and the supplementary sheets must give full detail of situations in which these violations may occur and of the relevant partnership practices and expectations. Subject to satisfactory disclosure methods of this kind are permissible in any category of event.
3. It continues to be the case that random psychics may occur as the laws allow, without warning, so long as these can no more be anticipated by the partner than by the opponents.
4. Similar principles apply in the case of psychic actions in defenders' play of the cards.

***WBF Systems Committee***

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