



## Disciplinary Procedures

The Welsh Bridge Union will follow the guidelines laid down by the European Bridge League in this area. The key elements of any disciplinary process are:

- The accused shall be made fully aware of the accusation and evidence against them
- A case shall be prosecuted in a professional manner by an Officer of the Union, charged and empowered with that duty by the Union's statutes
- A case shall be heard before an independent tribunal constituted and authorised under the Union's statutes
- All cases shall be heard in an open, public, and timely manner

## Correct procedure in the event of a complaint

- 1) A complaint about unacceptable behaviour must be addressed, in the first instance, to the appropriate body – generally the sponsoring organisation. Thus, bad behaviour in a club tournament is referred to the club committee; in an Area tournament to the Area Committee; in a WBU event, to the tournament convener. Complaints made at an event will normally be dealt with on the spot by a Tournament Director, or the Convener of the event.
- 2) Complaints received after the event make it more difficult to establish the facts. The sponsoring organisation will inform the accused player of the complaint, but may decide that no further action is possible. All formal complaints must be in writing. If they are addressed to the 'wrong' person they will be acknowledged, and forwarded to the appropriate body.
- 3) On receipt of such complaint the sponsoring organisation may decide that it is without merit, in which case it will inform the complainant immediately. If dissatisfied the complainant may take the matter to the next higher level in the hierarchy.
- 4) Should the sponsoring organisation accept that the complaint may have merit, their first step is to inform the accused player(s) of the complaint. If he/they plead guilty a decision as to further action may be taken at this point. The player may appeal against the severity of his punishment.
- 5) If the player(s) plead not guilty an official must be appointed to make a thorough investigation of the complaint and the circumstances surrounding it. When he is satisfied that his investigation is complete he will report to the committee, who will appoint a panel to hear the case. The accused player(s) may attend the hearing if they wish, but are not compelled to do so. He/they must be given complete access to all the evidence against them, and may bring a friend or adviser to help them present their case.
- 6) The panel shall consist of unbiased, respected members of the bridge community with no previous knowledge of or involvement in the case.
- 7) The decision of a judicial tribunal is final. A player may appeal to a higher body only if the correct procedures have not been followed.



## **Offences deemed worthy of disciplinary action.**

**Failure to abide by the Conditions of Contest:** the WBU will publish standard fines for offences such as late arrival, slow play, sitting at the wrong table, playing boards out of order. These fines are imposed by the TD. A player may appeal against such a fine to the Chief TD. There is no role for an Appeals Committee in offences such as these: a player who feels harshly treated may appeal to the sponsoring organisation.

**Infractions during play:** offences such as misuse of unauthorised information or inadequate disclosure of partnership methods are also dealt with by the TD in the first instance. Where a player appeals against the TD's decision an Appeal Committee hearing is held on the spot.

There is no appeal against the Appeal Committee's bridge judgment

Players or TDs may appeal to the appropriate body only if:

Some member of the Appeal Committee might be biased by personal relationship with one of the parties.

The Appeal Committee was incompetent in carrying out its duties, by failing to follow correct procedure, failing to inform itself of the facts, abusing its powers, etc.

**Unethical Conduct:** more serious complaints such as fielding psychic actions by partner, or trying to intimidate opponents by staring, rudeness, bad language etc shall also be reported to the TD.

The TD is empowered to impose fines, issue warnings about the consequences of further infractions, and to expel an offender from the current session or the entire tournament

Any such warnings or sanctions for unethical conduct or bad behaviour shall be reported to the Laws and Ethics Committee. They will be entered into a permanent record, to be taken into account in sentencing if that player is subsequently found guilty of another offence by a disciplinary panel.

Any party may appeal against such sanctions to the appropriate governing body.

**Unsuitable Behaviour:** failure to pay expenses incurred at the venue, damaging property or premises, rudeness to staff or other players, drunkenness or violence etc may be reported to an official.

The official will request a formal complaint addressed to the Secretary of the Welsh Bridge Union so that the disciplinary procedures may be set in motion.

**Deliberate Cheating:** A very serious accusation. An official may report his suspicions to the L&E who will carry out an investigation. To this end they may appoint observers to gather evidence over any period of time. Should they consider the accusations to be substantiated they will set disciplinary proceedings in motion.

*Note that it is inappropriate for a local official to take charge of an investigation into Deliberate Cheating without reporting the matter in confidence to the Laws and Ethics Committee. An investigation should be carried out by someone appointed by the L&E Committee. The matter must be kept confidential until the investigation is complete.*