

The WBF and Junior Bridge

As you know, the World Bridge Federation is committed to the promotion of Youth Bridge, which we strongly believe represents the future of our wonderful sport. Because of this, it has been decided that a new series of Simultaneous Pairs events will be introduced, the money from which will be used specifically to assist the development of Youth Bridge.

The WBF's Youth Projects will include:

- **better teaching aids for countries trying to encourage young players,**
- **assistance for youngsters to attend World Championships**
- **special Simultaneous Pairs for schools**
- **and other initiatives to encourage youngsters to learn bridge.**

We hope that you will appreciate this and will also join us for other Simultaneous Pairs that we plan to run in the future.

Jaime Ortiz-Patiño, President Emeritus of the World Bridge Federation introduced the World Junior Championships in 1987 and when José Damiani became President of the WBF he continued the development of this sector by introducing a Schools Bridge Championship for younger players, and later introduced a Pairs Championship and a Girls Team Championship. The various World Youth Championships are now fixtures in the WBF Calendar, but the new WBF President, Gianarrigo Rona, hopes to develop World Youth Bridge further.

It is recognised that for some countries, trying to send teams or pairs to the World Youth Championship events is an insurmountable financial burden. The President hopes that by setting up some fund-raising events it may be possible to assist these countries to send youngsters to participate at least in the Pairs or Individual events, where they have the opportunity to meet with young players from all over the world and further develop their game and their enthusiasm for Bridge.

Mr Rona would also like to develop better teaching aids for countries trying to encourage and bring on young players. He hopes to introduce special simultaneous pairs events with commentaries specifically designed for young people learning the game to enjoy. He wishes to offer discounted entry to events like the World Wide Bridge Contest, so that young players can join in and compete against the international field. Another possibility would be to offer talks or lectures for youngsters during a world championship – the local young players could come along, watch some of the top players on vu-graph then attend a talk from one of the bridge teachers or perhaps from one of the top players themselves.

Another way in which the WBF would like to get involved is by assisting NBOs to set up teaching programmes, or advising on running local Junior Camps or Youth events.

There are so many ways in which the WBF could help with the development of Youth Bridge but to undertake this in a meaningful way requires funding. **So we very much hope that NBOs and also the local clubs will see the value of this and encourage many of their clubs / players to take part. The WBF really needs your help on this.**

It was once said that “with music, bridge is a universal language” and this is so true – it is a medium that can join young people from all over the world without any prejudice, where they can play in partnership or as opponents, without understanding each other's language, but still find enjoyment, challenge and excitement. And what other sport can you think of where a newcomer has the chance

to play against one of the top pairs in the world as they can at bridge ? To meet your heroes at the bridge table is a very special experience and – when all is said and done – you win whatever happens ! If they win the board, then you have a great story to tell about how good they were, and if you win, well, that’s just wonderful and you can boast about it for months afterwards! Help us to help them to reach a point where they can join in and pit their wits against the best in the world – and maybe in due course, become the best in the world themselves!

Join us and help us to develop Youth Bridge – it is the future of our wonderful game !