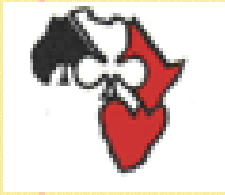


ABF NBO Officers' Seminar

BRIEF HISTORY OF BRIDGE

By Gianarrigo Rona WBF President

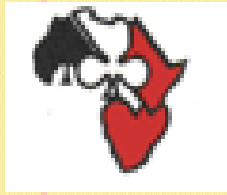
● Cape Town, South Africa , 3.- 5 May 2017



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“Bridge” has ancient roots dating back to the dawn of time. Of its direct ancestor, "**Whist**", we have confirmed knowledge in England since the 16th century, when it was commonly played among the humbler classes. The game began to attract also the more privileged classes and its success grew to the extent that in 1742 **Sir Edmond Hoyle** codified it with specific rules in his "**Short Treatise**", published in London, on the game's technique.

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The popularity became such that the expression "**according to Hoyle**" became synonymous of exemplary conduct even beyond the card game. Hoyle's intuition was to contextualise a good card game conceiving it as a social vehicle with deep moral significance. And this is still today the main reason for the success of the game.

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The game is still individual and only in 1873, in Buyukdere on the Bosphorous "Whist-bridge" is introduced, like the modern version with four players in two competing couples. At the same time, in the Middle East, a similar game of Russian origin, "Biritch" included in the whist-bridge category gains popularity.

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This has led to the **still unresolved** dispute as to whether the name of the game derives from the term 'bridge' as that which is cast between the players of a couple or, instead, it derives simply from the euphonic transposition of the term "biritch".

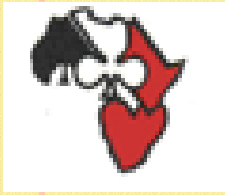
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Whist-bridge is gradually modified and the hierarchy of the suits takes on its final and present configuration (spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs), the determination of the trump card is still casual and left to the dealer or the latter's partner. In 1892, the American **John T. Mitchell** publishes a book on how to play competition whist and the **first American championships are held.**

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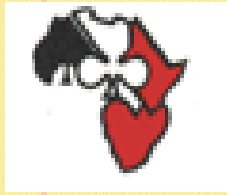


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With the advent of the 20th century, the game rapidly evolves. In 1904, **F. Roe** introduces "**Auction bridge**" the rules of which begin to include **the determination of the trump suit by means of an auction** amongst players and the game immediately gains widespread popularity

- in France and in the United States.

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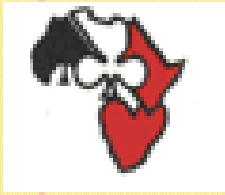


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In 1918, "**Plafond bridge**" is introduced in France with slight variations. In 1925, thanks to American **H. S. Vanderbilt**, the "Contract Bridge" rules are endorsed by the **Portland Club of London**, the **Whist Club of New York** and the **Commission Française de Bridge**, the most authoritative bodies with regard to the rules of the game and sporting ethic.

These rules are still in effect today.

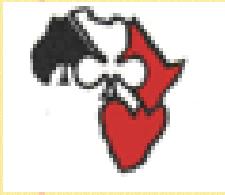
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In the United States, between 1927 and 1932, the game's popularity soars thanks to **Ely Culbertson**, an immigrant of Romanian origin, who had married **Josephine Murphy**, considered to be the top Bridge player in the United States, and who in 1929 founds the first bridge magazine, "**Bridge World**", still today **one of the most distinguished publications** on the subject.

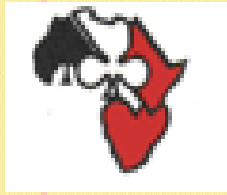
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In 1932, the **International Bridge League – IBF** – is founded in Scheweningen, the Netherlands, where it organizes the first European Championship and the first World Team Championships. In 1937, the **American Contract Bridge League – ACBL** – is founded in New York and in 1947, the **European Bridge League – EBL** – is founded in Copenhagen.

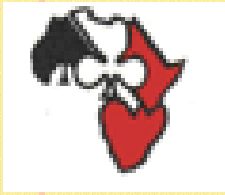
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In 1958, the **World Bridge Federation – WBF** – is founded in Oslo, replacing the International Bridge League, and taking on the task of **supervising** international bridge activities, **coordinating** relations among the various participating nations and **regulating** the rules of the competitions.

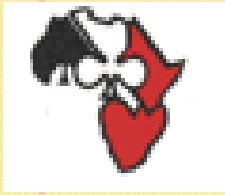
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In June 1995, WBF is recognised by the **International Olympic Committee** as an International Organization and in the June 1999 session it is **recognised** as an **International Sports Federation**: bridge is now a **fully-fledged sport**.

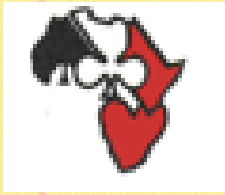
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In October 2000 in Munich, the World Bridge Federation is admitted as a member of the **GAISF** (General Association of Internationals Sports Federations – Olympic and non-Olympic) – now SportAccord – at the General Assembly of this Association. The WBF also becomes a member of **ARISF** (Association of IOC Recognised International Sport Federations).

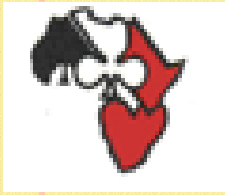
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The African Bridge Federation – ABF –
was founded, thanks to the efforts of
Bharat Bhardwaj, Julius Butkov and
Pierre Chavannaz, after the decision by
the WBF to separate the Nations of the
African Continent from Zone 4 (BFAME).
It was officially launched in **Abidjan,**
Ivory Coast on 30th May 2001.

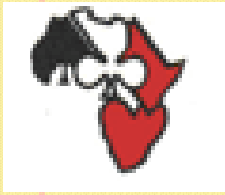
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In October 2002, the WBF moves its headquarters to **Lausanne** (Switzerland), **the Olympic City**, and on January 30, 2014 it finally becomes a non-profit organisation incorporated as a sport association in accordance with article **60 of the Swiss Civil Code** and registered in the **Commercial Register of the Canton de Vaud**.

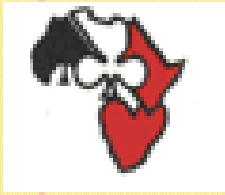
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Today the **Headquarters** of the WBF with its employed personnel is, together with the others International Sport Federations – IFs – in **Lausanne** at la **Maison du Sport International – MSI –**

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The WBF, together with **FIDE** (Chess), **FMJD** (Draughts) and **IGF** (Go) is a founder member of **IMSA (International Mind Sports Association)** which was established on April 19, 2005, thanks to the efforts of **José Damiani**, currently **Founding-President**.

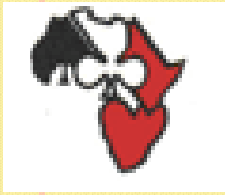
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The WBF is recognised by **FISU** (International University Sport Federation), which organises the World University Bridge Championship every two years, and by **UNESCO** (United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), it is Code Signatory of **WADA** (World Anti-Doping Agency), and Partner of **Peace & Sport** (L'Organisation pour la Paix par le Sport).

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