

# Minutes of the WBF Laws Committee

Marrakech - 29 August 2023

Present:

Ton Kooijman (In the Chair)

Laurie Kelso (Secretary)

Chip Martel

Maurizio Di Sacco

Eitan Levy

Antonio Riccardi

Susie Subeck

Apologies:

Matt Smith

Fu Qiang

Howard Weinstein

1. The Chairman opened the meeting at 10:00am by welcoming those members present. He then introduced the two new members of the committee (Antonio Riccardi and Susie Subeck) and invited each to say a few words about their respective backgrounds and areas of experience.
2. The Secretary proffered an apology in respect to the non-availability of minutes from the preceding meeting. He also gave an undertaking to finalise and circulate the minutes of the current meeting together with those of the prior one within the next two months.
3. The Secretary reported that the revised versions of Law 73 and 89 had now been ratified by the Executive Committee. Ms Subeck indicated that the EC had set 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 as the date of implementation.
4. The Committee discussed the process whereby the decennial review of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge might best be accomplished in a timely manner. The following 'in principle' decisions were agreed upon:
  - 4.1 All members of the Committee will participate in the deliberations (i.e., there is no need for the creation of a 'Drafting Sub-Committee').
  - 4.2 The Secretary will collate all submissions received to date. He will first expunge any identifying information as to their origin and then rearrange them according to current law number. The anonymized compilation will then be circulated to the full committee.
  - 4.3 It was agreed that the Review would commence as of January 2024 with the initial work proceeding in law number sequence. It is envisaged that many of the changes and much of the associated debate regarding wording will be handled via email.

- 4.4 Periodic meetings via Zoom will also be necessary (especially in respect to proposals that would significantly alter the effect of a law). Time-zone differences will however be a factor since the committee membership ranges across multiple Zones (i.e., 1, 2, 6 & 7).
- 4.5 The plan is to have a penultimate draft of the new laws ready for distribution to the various stakeholders (NBOs, Zones, Tournament Officials and Directors) as of January 2027, with the intention of allowing a window of time for receipt of subsequent feedback and any other final comments. The (finalised) Laws should then be ready for submission to the Management Committee as of April 2027.
5. The Committee will continue to meet annually at each of the next three World Championships (2024, 2025 and 2026). It can sometimes however be difficult to obtain a quorum since only a subset of committee members attend any particular Championship. Also, certain key individuals only have limited opportunities to attend meetings due to the playing schedule or their other official duties (i.e., those working at the event).

The Chairman foreshadowed the possibility of organising a single purpose, stand-alone, multi-day, face-to-face meeting. This would need to coincide with the later stages of the drafting process, possibly near the end of 2025 or early in 2026. Given the composition of the Laws Committee, a location in either North America or Europe would be appropriate

6. Mr Martel suggested that the Committee also establish a ‘focus group’ (made up of a range of interested and knowledgeable individuals) as part of the later stage of the review process. It being his belief that feedback obtained from such a group would be valuable, especially in regard to any proposal for a new or significantly changed law.
7. The Secretary raised the issue as to whether the review should also encompass a possible rearrangement/re-ordering of the current sequence of laws and/or law numbers? Mr Di Sacco spoke in favour of such a proposal.
8. The Secretary enquired about the use of gender-neutral language. Mr Di Sacco spoke about problems gender-neutral terms could cause NBOs needing to translate the laws into another language. The Secretary suggested that the Committee’s primary objective should always be to produce text that is unambiguous.

It was resolved to follow an approach similar to that used for the 2017 Laws, i.e., the WBFLC will produce a gender-neutral translation (as it did in 2019 from the 2017 text) but only after the official 2027 (reference) version of the Laws has been promulgated.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11:45am.