

WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION

Minutes of the Meeting of the
WBF Laws Committee
Held on 24 August 1998
Lille, Flandres

Present

Ton Kooijman	Chairman
Grattan Endicott	Secretary
Virgil Anderson	
Joan Gerard	
Robert Howes	
William Schoder	
John Wignall	

Guests

Chip Martel (for part of the time)
Barbara Nudelman (for part of the time)
Richard Colker

1. Constitutional Position

The Committee took note of its constitutional position as set out in the By-Laws of the WBF, which read:

Laws Committee. The President shall appoint a Laws Committee and shall designate the Chairman of such Committee. The Committee shall consist of not less than seven members representing at least three Zones. The function and duty of this Committee shall be to consider and take account of all matters relating to the international laws of bridge. The Committee shall make whatever changes in the laws it deems appropriate, subject to approval by the Executive. The Committee shall interpret the laws; shall periodically review the laws;

and at least once each decade shall make a comprehensive study and updating of the entire laws structure. The Laws Committee shall fix its own rules of procedure and shall act as provided by such rules or by direction of the Executive.

The Committee made observation that interim interpretations of Law are made by Zonal Organisations. Where significant conflicts are identified the Committee will consider its view at its next Meeting.

2. Law 40E

Mr Wignall raised a question on behalf of the Systems Committee concerning the exercise of powers under Law 40E. The Committee held that the Systems Committee (and any sponsoring organisation likewise) has unrestricted power to identify any method as 'unusual' and to authorise reference to written defences at the table in countering such methods.

3. Information arising from possession of a penalty card

The Committee considered the question of information arising from possession of a penalty card. Information that the player must play the penalty card as the law requires is authorised and partner may choose the card to lead from the suit on the basis of that knowledge (e.g. may lead small from K Q J x when partner's penalty card is the Ace). Information based on sight of partner's penalty card is unauthorised so that, for example, the player may not choose to lead the suit if the suit is suggested by the penalty card and play of a different suit is a logical alternative.

4. Beneficial effect of a penalty Card

If possession of a penalty card has a beneficial effect for the offending side, the Director may have recourse to Law 72B1

5. Definition of 'Convention'

Consideration was given to the definition of 'convention'. The Committee held the definition in the laws to be adequate. In writing the definition the intention was not to deem it conventional if a natural opening bid carried an inference as a matter of general bridge knowledge that the hand held no longer suit than the one named.

6. Internet Bridge Laws Mailing list.

The activities of the bridge laws mailing list on the Internet were mentioned. The Chairman expressed anxiety lest Directors, especially those in poor contact with their NBOs, began to take guidance from this source, some of whose contributors present strange opinions. The Secretary supported the Chairman in what he had said. The Committee was in part inclined to believe they should bring forward requests for decisions formally; the view was taken that subjects might be collected and brought to the Committee at each year's meetings.

The Secretary remarked that past decisions and recorded intentions of the Committee represented the position of the Committee unless and until it changed them.

7. Agenda of 'unsure' matters

It was agreed that an agenda of 'unsure' matters should be collated for each year's meetings.

8. Actions authorised in the laws

The Secretary drew attention to those who argued that where an action was stated in the laws (or regulations) to be authorised, other actions if not expressly forbidden were also legitimate. The Committee ruled that this is not so; the Scope of the Laws states that the laws define correct procedure and anything not specified in the laws is, therefore, 'extraneous' and it may be deemed an infraction of law if information deriving from it is used in the auction or the play.

9. Footnote to Law 25B1

The Committee discussed the footnote to Law 25B1. It was held that where an insufficient bid is prematurely substituted the premature correction is cancelled by the tournament director who then applies Law 27A to allow the LHO, if he so wishes, to accept the original insufficient bid. If he does not do so, the Tournament Director explains his options to the offender and allows him to select his action, applying Law 27B.

The meeting then terminated and agreed to reconvene at a later time.

Finally agreed text