



ELIGIBILITY RULES for the WBF Competitions

**SEMINAR SINGAPORE
June 2019**



WBF ELIGIBILITY CODE

1. General principles

To be eligible for participation in the World Championships and in the Qualifying Events leading up to any of the WBF Championships and for any event for which WBF Master Points are awarded, the **players** and **non-playing captains** must comply with the conditions of eligibility.

No player may represent another country in such events until at least **two subsequent calendar years** have passed since he/she has represented a different country. (The WBF Credentials Committee can give a specific permission based on an extraordinary situation.)

Any player and non-playing captain must be a **National** or a **Bona Fide Resident** of the country of the NBO that he will represent.



2. “National”

Nationality as defined by country of birth, citizenship, pasport.

Quid “Dual or More Nationality”

A competitor who is a national of two or more countries at the same time, may represent any of them, as he/she may elect. Changing this choice is allowed, respecting the “two calendar years “ rule.



3. “Bona Fide Resident”

To avoid abuse, the WBF has recently (May '19) decided to strengthen the rules about BFR.

- *Bona Fide Residence is one's **actual or true** residence, maintained in good faith, and does not include a temporary residence or superficial residence established for convenience or for the purpose of circumventing the conditions of representative participation.*
- *The request of Bona Fide Residency and all the related documentation must be forwarded to the WBF Credential Committee by the interested NBO, individual requests cannot be accepted.*
- *The following criteria will apply for those players seeking reliance upon the Bona Fide Residency Criteria:*

A) the player must establish bona fide residence in the country that they seek to represent for at least two years prior to the start of the year within which they wish to participate;

B) the player must have a visa or permit that allows them to remain in that country for a period of at least one year; or the laws of that country allow the player to remain in that country for a period of at least one year.



“Bona Fide Resident” (continued)

- *Residence may be established and supported by the production documents from at least three of the following categories:*
 - *Voter’s registration*
 - *Driver’s licence*
 - *Local or national tax records*
 - *Homeowner or tenant records*
 - *Medical records*
 - *Utility bills (gas, electric, water, telephone, mobile phone, waste disposal)*
 - *Financial records (loan, credit, investments, etc)*
 - *Welfare records*
 - *Vehicle records*
 - *Such other documents that may demonstrate residence*
- The choice to represent a country as a Bona Fide Resident may be made only once in any 10-year period (except as approved by the WBF Credentials Committee).
- In case where a player returns to his country of birth or first nationality, the period is reduced to 3 years.
- The “2 calendar years rule” applies in all cases.
- A player who has represented a country 2 or more times during the previous 5 years shall continue to eligible to represent that country.



- **4. Age restrictions**

- **Youth Championships**

Players competing in the **U26** events may not have achieved their 25th birthday by 31st December of the year prior to the year in which the competition is to take place. For the **U21** and **U16** events, similar conditions prevail.

Youth players nominated for participation in Youth or Transnational Championships are not subjected to the “nationality” restrictions.

- **Senior Championships**

Specific age requirements for participation in the Senior events (minimum 61 years old for the 2019 Championships, increasing to 62 (2020 events), 63 (2022 events), etc. From 2026 onwards, the minimum age becomes 65.



Special cases

Art 1.8.

Any player with pending ethical violation charges is not eligible for invitation to play in a WBF event.

Art. 1.9.

Any player who has been convicted of collusive cheating is not eligible to play as the partner or teammate of another player who has been convicted of collusive cheating.



AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE ELIGIBILITY CODE

1. Create **clear and transparent rules** on who is eligible to play in the WBF Championships and events leading up to these championships and WBF sanctioned events.
2. Prevent practices of “**country hopping**”, avoiding confusion in the eyes of the bridge public.
3. Recognize the world globalization trend, allowing for changes in NBO codes, based upon true **re-allocation** by players to other countries.
4. Allow for flexibility in favour of **youth bridge**.
5. Organize **procedures** in order to supervise and control the rules.
6. Make the **players** aware of the rules.
7. Involve the NBOs by asking for a “nihil obstat” (players must be in good standing with their NBO).



PROCEDURES

WBF Credentials Committee (CC)

Duties of the CC (Art 48.3 WBF By-Laws):

- To determine all questions relating to the rights and eligibility of players or entries nominated to participate in any WBF contest.
- To refuse to invite (or to revoke the invitation to) any player, captain or coach in any WBF contest. No reasons need to be given by the CC for a refusal of such persons.
- The refusal/revocation must be approved by a majority of 2/3 of the CC Members (otherwise the decision is taken by the Executive Council).
- The CC includes members of at least four Zones.



PROCEDURES

The COMPETITOR'S COMMITMENT Form

- “
1. I agree and commit myself to participate in such WBF events that I apply to play in and/or I am nominated by others to play in and to compete with respect for the WBF rules and fair play.
 2. I am aware that the WBF events are governed by the Laws of Bridge, the Conditions of Contest, the WBF Disciplinary Code and all other Rules & Regulations of the WBF and I undertake to comply with such rules all of which are fully known to me (...).
 3. I therefore agree to be submitted to such rules, regulations and procedures to the jurisdiction of the bodies and persons that are in charge of applying them. After the exhaustion of internal remedies within the WBF system, I acknowledge the the **Court of Arbitration for Sport** (Lausanne, Switzerland) has ultimate jurisdiction for all disputes in connection with the WBF events and agree that recourse to the ordinary courts of law is prohibited. “



CONSIDERATIONS

- Need for harmonization with the Zonal rules.
- Specific guideline for Zonal and NBo trials leading up to the WBF Championships:
 - a. Only the NBO staging the trials in which the player wishes to participate can decide to accept him/her. Each NBO may have specific laws, rules or regulations regarding the eligibility.
 - b. If the NBO decides to accept a player who is not a national of that country, the NBO must immediately contact the Zonal and/or the WBF Credentials Committee to ensure that the player will receive authorisation to play for his country.
 - c. Any authorisation given will be based not only on the period of 2 years since the player's last participation for a different country, but also on the Bona Fide Residence requirements.
- Motivation of the CC decisions

In theory not needed for, but see jurisprudence of CAS.



THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION