

World Bridge Federation
president Gianarrigo Rona
European Bridge League
president Jan Kamras
Other zonal organizations
NBOs



Nov 24th 2020

Open letter about cheating in bridge

The pandemic has affected bridge. First and foremost, it has made travel to play championships and tournaments with our good friends from all over the world impossible. It has also affected the finances of the NBOs and zonal organizations, but hopefully we will fight through all that. In bridge we are lucky that it was possible to play online when meeting in person was no longer an alternative.

The pandemic is also threatening the game of bridge. Not because we cannot meet this year, and not by financially weakening our federations and zonal organizations. But because the cheating that now are taking place in online tournaments is so comprehensive, and so against the spirit of the game, that it threatens its existence.

WBF published a [statement](#) on July 20th regarding the Michal Nowozadski case saying that the online bridge competitions organized by private groups do not have any relation with the WBF and its organization. Further they say that this kind of behavior is aberrant and unacceptable and causes great harm to bridge and threatens its credibility. They also say that they have full support of the players... and the WBF Credentials Committee will consider these cases when applicable.

The EBL takes it one step further in their [announcement](#), saying that the EBL will consider action against cheats even if the offences occurred outside its immediate jurisdiction.

These statements were made during summer. It is now November and what has happened?

We are of the opinion, that if we do not take further actions against the cheating now, we are on the way to lose legitimacy for the game. When the bodies of the organizations do not take a stand, we are seeing players trying to solve this on their own; private groups formed to combat cheating and reports filed on bridge forums. We are also afraid of what we have seen in other sports will happen to bridge; new organizations are initiated with the goal of taking over. For instances, we have seen this in chess, darts, and boxing.

It is also problematic that private bodies accusing and “convicting” players they think are cheating without the cases ever going to a formal organ. This both threatens the security under the law and the credibility of the bridge organizations. The reason development with the allegations against Giorgio Duboin underlines the need for the organization to address the issues.

We believe it is time for the bridge organizations to step up and take further action. Leading the line should be the WBF, with the zonal organizations in close cooperation. We think it is time to organize an international seminar regarding cheating in bridge where experts on statistics, top players, IT, legal experts, and other fields that could play a part, are invited. We need a clear and precise way of finding, examining and convicting cheaters.

We would also ask the WBF, EBL and other zonal organizations to give all its member federations some answer and commitment both about the present (past) cheating and about the future:

- **Present (past) cases:**
 - We urge the WBF and zonal organizations to give a clear statement on the jurisdictional problems they are facing.
 - Will WBF and zonal organizations initiate their own examination of the evidence that are said to exist in the 30+ cases and say something about its credibility, even though no formal verdict can be delivered (possibly due to jurisdiction)?
 - If the examination of the evidence clearly suggest that illicit means have been used, should WBF and zonal organizations publish the names?
- **The future:**
 - We urge WBF and zonal organizations to make a binding time schedule for when the statutes and bylaws are to be changed. This applies to both online cheating and the use of statistics as evidence (partly the reason the last cheating case in CAS was lost).
 - Will the WBF and zonal organizations implement the different methods of detecting cheating (manual analysis, statistical analysis and electronic evidence)?
 - Will there be made inquiries to the online platforms offering bridge organizations to get jurisdiction? We think all tournament organizers online should have an option to make their tournament fall under the jurisdiction of the official bodies, and that participants must accept that jurisdiction.
 - Should there be an own online jurisdiction under the WBF, with reciprocity for all NBOs? If so, there are legal, practical and economical questions to be solved.
 - Which mandate are given to the recently created WBF Investigating committee? And when are they committed to handle cases?
 - To give a further announcement about the guideline for punishments for various cases of cheating.
 - Have full transparency and to publish all actions taken against cheating.

We urge all NBOs to give its support for this letter by publishing it on its own website and by giving us a notice that they support it. We will make a list of all NBOs who support it.

This letter will also be published on the website bridgewinners.com (if accepted) where many of the cheating allegations has been brought forward.

Kind regards,

Martin Löfgren /sign/

Swedish Bridge Federation
President

Pasi Kuokkanen /sign/

Bridge League of Finland
President

Nis Rasmussen /sign/

Danish Bridge Federation
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Jafet Ólafsson /sign/

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