



EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

## EBL SYSTEMS POLICY 2002

(Adopted December 1994; amended October 1996, January 2000, August 2002, October 2007 & October 2008 & September 2009 & October 2010, September 2013, June 2015 and July 2015)

### 1. Objectives

The objectives are to ensure that EBL Championships can be properly operated and adequately administered, with a fair and equal chance for all competitors, while at the same time affording proper consideration to progress and innovation; to ensure that players are in no doubt as to what is expected of them with regard to preparation and filing of systems material for EBL Championships.

Additions or amendments to this policy will normally be put into effect only after four months' notice.

### 2. Definitions

#### 2.1 General

Average Hand	a hand containing 10 high card points (Milton Work) with no distributional values
Weak	high card strength below that of an average hand
Strong	high card strength a king or more greater than that of an average hand
Natural	a call or play that is not a convention ["special partnership understanding" as defined in Law 40B1(a)]
Length	three cards or more
Shortage	two cards or less
Long Match	a match of 17 or more deals
Short Match	a match of less than 17 deals

## 2.2 HUM Systems

For the purpose of this Policy, a Highly Unusual Method (HUM) means any System that exhibits one or more of the following features, as a matter of partnership agreement:

- a) A Pass in the opening position shows at least the values generally accepted for an opening bid of one, even if there are alternative weak possibilities
- b) By partnership agreement an opening bid at the one level may be weaker than pass.
- c) By partnership agreement an opening bid at the one level may be made with values a king or more below average strength.
- d) By partnership agreement an opening bid at the one level shows either length or shortage in a specified suit
- e) By partnership agreement an opening bid at the one level shows either length in one specified suit or length in another.

**EXCEPTION:** one of a minor in a strong club or strong diamond system

## 2.3 Classification of Systems

In order to facilitate recognition and handling, systems material will be identified by one or more of the following:

- i) a coloured sticker;
- ii) the appropriate name (hand printed or typed) colour;
- iii) a check mark on a system card next to the appropriate colour - in keeping with the following descriptions:

### **Green Natural**

**Blue Strong Club/Strong Diamond, where one club/one diamond is always strong**

**Red Artificial: this category includes all artificial systems that do not fall under the definition of Highly Unusual Methods (HUM) systems [see definition below], other than Strong Club/Strong Diamond systems (see 'Blue').**

Examples would be a system where one club shows one of three types - a natural club suit, a balanced hand of a specific range, or a Strong Club opener; or a system in which the basic methods (other than the no trump range) vary according to position, vulnerability and the like; or a system that uses conventional 'weak' or 'multi-meaning' bids (with or without some weak option) in potentially contestable auctions, other than those described in Section 2.4

**Yellow Highly Unusual Methods ('HUM') as defined above.**

## 2.4 Brown Sticker Conventions and Treatments

The following conventions or treatments are categorised as 'Brown Sticker':

- a) Any opening bid of two clubs through three spades that:
  - i) could be weak (may by agreement be made with values below average strength) AND
  - ii) does not promise at least four cards in a known suit.

**EXCEPTION:** The bid always shows at least four cards in a known suit if it is weak. If the bid does not show a known four card suit it must show a hand a king or more over average strength. (Explanation: Where all the weak meanings show at least four cards in one known suit, and the strong meanings show a hand with a king or more above average strength, it is not a Brown Sticker Convention.)

**EXCEPTION:** a two level opening bid in a minor showing a weak two in either major, whether with or without the option of strong hand types containing 16 high card points or more, or with equivalent values. Defensive measures are permitted for opponents as in 6 below.

- b) An overcall of a natural opening bid of one of a suit that does not promise at least four cards in a known suit.

**EXCEPTION:** A natural overcall in no trumps.

**EXCEPTION:** any cue bid suit that shows a strong hand.

**EXCEPTION:** a jump cue bid in opponent's known suit that asks partner to bid 3NT with a stopper in that suit.

- c) Any 'weak' two-suited overcalls or openings at the two or three level that may by agreement be made with three cards or fewer in one of the suits.
- d) Psychic bids protected by system or required by system.
- e) None of the foregoing restrictions pertain to conventional defences against forcing, artificial opening bids or defences against 'Brown Sticker' or HUM conventions.
- f) For the avoidance of doubt an opening bid of one club which may be made on a doubleton or singleton club and which is ostensibly natural and non-forcing should be regarded as natural and not artificial..

Additional to the classification of systems in 2.3 above, any partnership using one or more 'Brown Sticker' conventions must indicate this alongside its system classification.

## 2.5 Encrypted Signals

Additional to the restrictions on bidding methods and conventions above, players may not use signalling methods by which the message or messages conveyed by the signals are hidden from the declarer because of some key available only to the defenders (i.e. encrypted signals are not allowed).

## 2.6 Random Openings

It is forbidden to open hands which, by agreement, may contain fewer than 8 high card points and for which no further definition is provided.

### **3. Systems allowed at EBL Championships**

In relation to the aspect of Systems to be allowed at EBL Championships, the events will be divided into three categories:

*Category 1:* European Team Championships defined as Category 1 by the EBL Rules and Regulations Committee.

For such events all classifications of systems will be permitted, subject to adequate disclosure, but teams using HUM systems must submit their System Cards in advance in accordance with the Conditions of Contest and will be subject to a reduction of seating rights, as follows:

Whenever a team with one or more pairs using a HUM system opposes a team that has no such pair, the HUM systems team will be the 'Away' team, and lines up first throughout.

No special seating rights or line-up restrictions shall apply when two teams containing HUM systems pairs (regardless of line-up) oppose one another.

*Category 2:* European Team Championships or stages thereof defined as Category 2 by the EBL Rules and Regulations Committee.

The use of HUM systems is prohibited.

Up to three 'Brown Sticker' conventions per partnership will be permitted, subject to adequate disclosure, but players using them must submit their Systems Cards & Brown Sticker Announcement Forms (appendix 1) in advance in accordance with the Conditions of Contest. At the same time a viable suggested defence to any Brown Sticker convention must be filed. This will be deemed to be a part of the System Card and may be referred to by the opponents at the table.

*Category 3:* All other EBL Tournaments & Championships and stages of such events not covered by Categories 1 & 2 above

The use of both HUM systems and 'Brown Sticker' systems is prohibited.

#### **4. Systems Material**

For all Category 1 Teams events, where Yellow (HUM) systems are permitted, any pair using a HUM system is required (in addition to the normal timely filing of the System card and Supplementary Sheets) to submit **the full system** in English in advance before the beginning of the Championship in accordance with the Conditions of Contest.

Pairs using Green, Blue or Red systems are encouraged to submit their full system in English at the beginning of any EBL Championship.

In decisions taken by Tournament Directors and by the Championship Committee, pairs who have submitted their full system will be given the benefit of any support this provides for an explanation given at the table, as far as this goes.

#### **5. System Cards/Supplementary Sheets**

The principle of adequate disclosure requires that competitors fully disclose all conventions and treatments requiring defensive preparation. In addition to the System cards, pairs will use Supplementary Sheets to achieve this objective.

Competitors should make use of the Guide to Completion of WBF Convention Cards when completing their system cards.

The use of Supplementary Sheets is not strictly limited for all events, provided that the entries are properly numbered to correspond to appropriately cross-referenced numbers on the System card itself. The sheets must be readily legible and the numbered entries must be clearly separated by discernible heavy lines. While brevity is encouraged, particularly for Category 2 and Category 3 events, full disclosure must not be prejudiced in any way as a result.

All systems and treatments requiring defensive preparation must be listed on the front right part of the WBF or EBL Card. They must be explained and fully developed (including competitive agreements) either in the appropriate section on the front or back of the card, or, where there is inadequate space there, in the first numbered entries on the Supplementary Sheets.

The front right part of the System Card must include:

- i) All artificial openings (except strong one club/two club openings)
- ii) A reference to responses to natural openings which are weak and conventional
- iii) All conventional defensive bids used over natural openings of one of a suit (making sure that all two suited intervention is detailed precisely; the best way to do this is to write: 'Two Suiters' and include a reference to the left column or a reference number to an Supplementary Sheet entry) If a pair uses any bid which should have been listed here, but which has been left out, and their opponents do not get to their best contract, there will be a strong presumption that the opponents have been damaged by not being able to prepare a defence. The offending pair may also be liable to incur a procedural penalty.

Any pair playing a HUM system or 'Brown Sticker' convention has a special obligation to present a complete description of both their bids and subsequent developments (especially competitive developments). If a pair uses an auction that is not fully described, then the same presumption of lack of advance notice (with adjustments and penalties as described in the preceding paragraph) shall apply.

For each tournament, the Conditions of Contest will state the date by which, and the address at which, systems material and System Cards (together with telephone and

fax number or email addresses of the individuals best equipped to deal with queries regarding the system) must be received. The onus is jointly on the pair, the non-playing captain (where relevant), the NBO and the Zonal Organisation to obtain the information required to meet this deadline. Failure to meet this deadline will result in automatic penalties, which will be fully described in the Conditions of Contest. Problems with systems should be referred to the Chairman of the Systems Committee or his nominee in accordance with details given in the Conditions of Contest.

After the closing date for submission of systems, the following will be the policy governing any changes to the System Card and Supplementary Sheets:

- a) Deletion of an item or a statement will be permitted upon application to the Chairman of the Systems Committee or his nominee
- b) A change replacing an agreement with another or to introduce a fresh agreement, where the new material is not Brown Sticker, will normally be permitted. The permission to use the new agreement will operate at the discretion of the Chairman, but will normally be from the morning of the second day after notification of the change is issued to other contestants
- c) Neither the replacement of a Brown Sticker convention with another Brown Sticker convention, nor the introduction of a new Brown Sticker convention will be permitted

It is strongly emphasised, and all contestants must note, that the policy stated above will be rigorously applied.

## **6. Defence against Yellow (HUM) Systems and Brown Sticker Conventions**

For Team events in Category 1, the following regulations will apply to defensive measures against HUM systems.

- i) A pair opposing a HUM system pair will submit two (clearly legible) copies of their defence to the HUM system at an appropriate time and place prior to the start of that segment, to be specified in the Conditions of Contest. Such defences are deemed to be part of the opponents' system card.
- ii) In preparing the defence against a HUM system, pairs using Green, Blue or Red systems are allowed to change their systems, including opening calls. Pairs using a HUM system are not allowed to change their opening calls.
- iii) The pair using a HUM system must inform the opponents in writing (two clearly legible copies) about their counter-defence at the table prior to the start of the session. In preparing their counter-defence, the pair using a HUM system is not permitted to change any of the highly artificial aspects of its system.

The following regulations will apply in relation to defensive measures against Brown Sticker Conventions:

A pair may prepare written defences against the 'Brown Sticker' elements of any system. Such defences will have to be given to the opponents (two clearly legible copies) at an appropriate time and place specified in the Conditions of Contest prior to the start of that segment for team events, or prior to that round for pairs events. Written defences against Brown Sticker conventions are deemed to be part of the opponents' system card.

## **7. Number of systems allowed per team**

For Category 1 events, a maximum number of four Red or Yellow Systems, of which only three may be Yellow, will be permitted for each participating team. A System, for the purpose of this section, may include different methods for different vulnerabilities.

Both members of the partnership must agree to use the same methods of bidding and card play.

## **8. Additional Regulation for Category 3 EBL Championships**

In EBL Category 3 events psychic conventional opening bids are prohibited

APPENDIX 1

**9. BROWN STICKER OPENING BID ANNOUNCEMENT FORM**

This form is to be completed and sent, by email, to [anna@ecats.co.uk](mailto:anna@ecats.co.uk) by the closing date announced in the Conditions of Contest

**Names:**

**Country**

**Event**

**Opening bid of**

**in**

**seat at**

**Shows:**

**Detailed Description:**

---

**Responses and Rebids in Uncontested auctions**

---

**With what hands will responder pass the opening bid?**

**Meanings of other responses and rebids:**

---

**Competitive Agreements**

---

**Responses after opponent's DBL**

(including Pass, RDBL and expected follow-ups)

**Responses after opponent's overcall:**

**Rebids after 4<sup>th</sup> hand DBLs the response:**

**Rebids after 4<sup>th</sup> hand overcalls:**



**10. BROWN STICKER OVERCALL ANNOUNCEMENT FORM**

This form is to be completed and sent, by email, to [anna@ecats.co.uk](mailto:anna@ecats.co.uk) by the closing date announced in the Conditions of Contest

**Names:**

**Country**

**Event**

**After opponents opening bid of**

**showing**

**Our overcall of**

**at**

vulnerability

**Shows:**

**Applies:**

Opposite PH; Opposite UPH; All the time

**Detailed Description:**

---

Responses and Rebids When Responder Passes

---

**With what hands will advancer pass the overcall?**

**Meanings of other advances and follow ups:**

---

Competitive Agreements

---

**Responses after opponent's DBL**

(including Pass, RDBL and expected follow-ups)

**Responses after opponent's bid:**

**Rebids after opener DBLs the overcall (1X)-2Y-(P)-P-(DBL)-?**

**Rebids after opener DBLs advancer's bid:**

**Rebids after opener's suit rebid:**