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April 7, 2014

To: World Bridge Federation (WBF)
Attn: Jeff Polisner
From: Bridge Base Online, Ltd (BBO)
Re: Online vugraph at 2014 World Championships

The WBF has asked BBO to submit a bid to obtain the exclusive rights to broadcast vugraph from the 2014 World Championships in Sanya, China.

BBO respectfully wishes to suggest that the WBF is making a mistake in trying to monetize vugraph. Furthermore, BBO believes that the very notion of exclusivity in this area is impossible to enforce (both technically and legally) and is contrary to the best interests of both the WBF and the bridge-playing public at large.

There are various reasons why we strongly believe in these positions:

- 1) Online vugraph is the most effective medium ever developed for promoting interest in high-level bridge among casual players and among those who are new to our game. Restricting access to such presentations will adversely affect their potential impact.
- 2) The only viable way for service providers to recoup the money they spend to acquire exclusive rights is through charging viewers a fee to watch online vugraph. That would effectively restrict the vugraph audience to only the most serious players while destroying the promotional potential of online vugraph described in point number one above.
- 3) Such developments will alienate the NCBOs that provide much of the WBF's funding. It will be difficult for these NCBOs to continue to justify such funding when one of the primary ways in which the WBF benefits NCBO members is the widespread and free availability of online vugraph from the World Championships.
- 4) Such developments will alienate the many unpaid volunteers (expert commentators, vugraph operators, and technicians) who generously donate their time and energy to help produce high-quality free online vugraph presentations.

5) Such developments will alienate the hundreds of thousands of bridge fans from all over the world who greatly enjoy the opportunity to learn from watching our game being played by the best of the best.

6) Vugraph data is not subject to copyright law. There is no way for the WBF (or anyone else) to prevent "rogue broadcasters" from creating their own vugraph presentations of WBF events regardless of whether or not some other entity has purchased the exclusive rights to such broadcasts.

Of course we at BBO recognize the substantial costs that the WBF incurs in producing vugraph. We are sympathetic to the position that the WBF is in as we have also invested heavily in vugraph over the years. We believe that this has been (and continues to be) money well spent. The bottom line is that free vugraph is good for bridge.

It is part of BBO's basic mandate that vugraph should be presented for free. We are not willing to even consider changing this position.

We strongly believe that there is no place for exclusivity in online vugraph. As such, we are unwilling to offer the WBF any money for something we believe should not exist.

What we are willing to do is to offer various incentives that we believe will increase the value of vugraph for the WBF, especially in terms of potential to attract corporate sponsors. In particular:

- WBF can have all advertising rights during BBO vugraph presentations of their events
- We can arrange for viewers to access live vugraph directly through the WBF's web site and/or the web sites of the WBF's major sponsors
- There are various ways we can promote the WBF to the 100,000+ bridge players who log in to BBO every day (lobby news, automated chat messages during vugraph, etc).

We sincerely hope that this document will result in the WBF reconsidering their position in this area and that the WBF and BBO will continue their longstanding cooperation of working together for the good of bridge.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss these matters further.

(Signed)

Fred Gitelman, President
Bridge Base Online, Ltd.