

**UNITED STATES BRIDGE FEDERATION
GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONTEST FOR
ALL UNITED STATES BRIDGE
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

*Adopted by the Board of Directors
of the United States Bridge Federation*

Board of Directors of the United States Bridge Federation

International Team Trials Committee & Technical & Advisory Committee

USBC Conventions Committee

USBF Credentials Committee

Tournament Appeals Coordinators

Tournament Appeals Committee Panel

Tournament Planning Committee

Grievance & Appeals Committee

USBF Recorder

Hospitality Committee

Vugraph Committee

2020 General Conditions of Contest

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I. OVERVIEW AND APPLICATION

These General Conditions of Contest apply to all USBF Championships. Each USBF Championship also has Special Conditions of Contest, which govern areas not covered by these General Conditions of Contest as well as modifications to these General Conditions of Contest applicable to the specific event. When the Special Conditions of Contest for an event are different from these General Conditions of Contest, the Special Conditions of Contest control.

II. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply throughout these General Conditions of Contest.

- 1) USBF The United States Bridge Federation
- 2) USBF Championship The USBC, WUSBC, JUSBC, SUSBC, and MUSBC
- 3) USBC The United States Bridge Championship, which selects teams for Open WBF Championships and is regulated by the ITTC, a subcommittee of the USBF Tournament Committee.
- 4) WUSBC The Women's United States Bridge Championship, which selects teams for Women's WBF Championships and is regulated by the WITTC, a subcommittee of the USBF Tournament Committee.
- 5) JUSBC The Junior United States Bridge Championship, which selects teams for Junior WBF Championships and is regulated by the JITTC, a subcommittee of the USBF Tournament Committee.
- 6) SUSBC The Senior United States Bridge Championship, which selects teams for Senior WBF Championships and is regulated by the SITTC, a subcommittee of the USBF Tournament Committee.
- 7) MUSBC The Mixed United States Bridge Championship, which selects teams for Mixed WBF Championships.
- 8) NPC Non Playing Captain
- 9) DIC Director in Charge of a USBF Championship
- 10)ACBL American Contract Bridge League
- 11)ABA American Bridge Association
- 12)WBF World Bridge Federation
- 13)Selection trial An event that selects teams for a WBF Championship, subject to approval by the USBF Board of Directors.

III. ELIGIBILITY

A. All Participants

All participants in any USBF Championship (players and NPCs), and any player or NPC added to a team that has been nominated to represent the USBF as a result of its performance in a USBF Championship, must, subject to review by the USBF Board of Directors in unusual circumstances, meet the following requirements at the time of the USBF Championship:

- 1) Be either an Active or Resident member of USBF who is in good standing.
- 2) Not be under suspension by USBF, ACBL or ABA.
- 3) Not be under ACBL discipline for a reason other than financial that prevents the player from entering an ACBL Nationally-rated event.
- 4) Not be excluded from playing in the specific USBF Championship by a committee of USBF, ACBL or ABA.
- 5) Have completed and signed the USBF Competitor's Agreement (available on the [USBF website](#)).

B. Subsequent Ineligibility for Cheating

As used in this section B, "cheating" refers to intentional cheating that is systematic (i.e., occurs on multiple boards), egregious, and premeditated (i.e., the player or pair had more than a few moments to contemplate whether to engage in the unethical conduct).

If the USBF finds, at any time, that any player or pair engaged in cheating during a USBF tournament ("USBC"), the team on which that player or pair competed shall be disqualified from that USBC. Further, the entire team shall forfeit all of its wins in that USBC along with all placing points and masterpoints its players otherwise would have earned in that USBC.

If the finding of cheating is made based on conduct during the Round Robin and is rendered before play in the KO stage begins, the disqualified team's Round Robin results will be vacated and KO qualifiers and seeding will be determined based on Round Robin results against all other teams.

If the finding of cheating is made based on conduct in a KO match and is rendered before play in the next KO round begins, the team containing the guilty player(s) shall forfeit the match in which the cheating occurred, and its opponent shall be declared winner of that match.

If the finding of cheating is made based on conduct in a KO match and is rendered after play in the next KO round begins, the team containing the guilty player(s) shall forfeit the match in which the cheating occurred and the match it is currently playing. In this situation, the DIC may allow the team most recently

defeated by the team containing the guilty player(s) to replace the eliminated team, but is not required to do so.

If the finding of cheating is made after the USBC has concluded and if the team containing the guilty player(s) won the event, the team it defeated in the final KO round shall be declared the champion of the event and shall represent the U.S. in the WBF event for which that USBC selects teams. If the USBC selects two teams and the team that lost in the Finals went on to win the USA2 Finals, then the losing USA2 Finalist shall represent the U.S. in the WBF event for which the USBC selects teams. All teams the contaminated team defeated in earlier rounds of that USBC shall be deemed to have won their match against the contaminated team and shall receive the corresponding placing points and masterpoint awards, but those teams shall have no further remedy.

If any USBF player or pair is found to have engaged in cheating in a WBF championship by either WBF or USBF, USBF will officially reject any medals in that event won by the team or pair on which that player or pair competed.

C. Subsequent Ineligibility Other than That Covered in Section B

A team with a player who is later not invited or approved by the WBF and/or the USBF for any reason other than the cheating covered in Section B (such as ethics, residency, conduct, hygiene, etc.) may be disqualified should it win any USBF Championship.

D. Players

Each player in a USBF Championship must be eligible to compete in the WBF championship for which the USBF Championship is a selection trial. Players in the Women's USBC must be women. Players in the Senior USBC and Junior USBC must have been born at a time that will make them the appropriate age for the WBF Senior or Junior Championship at the time of the WBF Championship.

A player who has qualified to compete in the Open event at a World Championship is not eligible to enter a USBC that selects a team or teams for a conflicting event at the same World Championship.

E. Substitutes

With the approval of the DIC, substitutes may be allowed when there are temporarily fewer than four players able to play on a team. A substitute must be eligible to play in the event and must not be a participant in the event whose team has not been eliminated. A substitute must be of no greater expertise than the least expert player on the team who is not then playing. Substitutes may not play (in the aggregate) more than 50% of the boards in a Round Robin or in any KO match. E.g., one substitute may play for up to half a KO match or Round

Robin, or two substitutes may each play for up to one quarter of a KO match or Round Robin match.

Substitutes may be used in more than one match or RR stage, subject to the aggregate limits above. For instance, a substitute could play the last quarter of one match and the first quarter of the following match, but that team would be allowed no further substitutions in any match.

No team may field more than two substitutes at one time.

F. Non Playing Captains

A Non Playing Captain (NPC) of a team may not be a player on another team in the event, unless that other team has been eliminated.

If USBF is providing a stipend to cover the expenses of an NPC, the USBF Board must approve each proposed NPC, at its sole discretion. The Board will be guided by the proposed NPC's experience, expertise, maturity, team compatibility and such other criteria as the board, in its sole discretion, deems relevant.

IV. WITHDRAWAL BY A TEAM

A. Before the Event Starts

A team may withdraw before the USBF Championship starts. However, the Credentials Committee will review withdrawals made after entries close or no-shows by entire teams (especially a team with a bye). Players on such a team may be barred from future USBF Championships, or otherwise penalized, but late withdrawal for valid reasons is acceptable provided the USBF is notified as soon as possible by the players involved. Timeliness and circumstances will be considered before assessing any penalty against a team withdrawing from a USBF Championship or failing to show up for the event once having registered.

B. During the Event

A team may withdraw from a USBF event at any time with the permission of the DIC.

In all stages of the event, the DIC will take into consideration health related matters related to a team's request to withdraw. During the KO stage the DIC may grant a withdrawal if the request was made because the team is substantially behind.

Any team that fails to play a portion or all of a match without having received the permission of the DIC to do so shall appear before the tournament Conduct and Ethics Committee and be subject to whatever penalty that committee deems appropriate.

If a team withdraws during a Round Robin scores will be awarded in accordance with section IX. G (Scores of Unplayed Matches) below.

If a team withdraws after a Round Robin has been completed and the team has qualified for the next stage of competition, the highest placed non-qualifier from the Round Robin will qualify for the next stage of competition. If the withdrawal takes place before the KO bracket has been drawn, the highest placed non-qualifier takes its proper place in the bracket. If the withdrawal takes place after the bracket has been drawn, the highest placed non-qualifier replaces the withdrawn team in the bracket. If the highest placed non-qualifier is not available to compete in the next stage of competition, there shall be no replacement for the withdrawn team; in that case, if the next stage of competition is a Round Robin, it will proceed with one fewer teams, if the next stage of competition is a KO match, the team assigned to play the withdrawn team shall be the winner of the KO match.

If a team withdraws during a KO match, its opponent shall be deemed to have won the match.

If a team withdraws after winning a KO match, but before starting the next match, its next opponent shall be deemed to have won the next match.

V. **RESIGNATION BY A PLAYER**

A. **Mandatory Resignation**

A player who has qualified to represent the US in a World Championship event (“first event”) and subsequently qualifies to represent the US in a conflicting event at the same World Championship must resign from the player’s team for the event that the player did not select as the player’s preferred World Championship event before the start of the first USBC in which the player qualified.

B. **Optional Resignation During Selection Event**

Any player may withdraw from a team competing in a USBF event with no penalty to either the player or the team, so long as the player’s team has 4 or 5 players after the withdrawal. If a player’s resignation reduces a team to fewer than 4 players, it shall be treated as a withdrawal by the team.

If a player resigns from a team during the selection event and the team subsequently qualifies to represent the USBF in the World Championship event for which the USBF event selects team(s), the player who withdrew may be added to the team for the World Championship, but shall be subject to stringent scrutiny by the Credentials Committee, starting with the presumption that the player should not be added to the team.

C. **Optional Resignation From Qualified Team**

A player who has qualified to represent the United States in two conflicting World Championship events may resign from the team which the player selected as the player’s preferred World Championship event only with Credentials Committee approval, which will usually be granted only if the resignation is based on a reason that arose after the USBF selection events. Any other player may resign from a team that has qualified to represent the USBF in a World Championship event with no penalty to the player.

D. **Eligibility of Team from which a Player has Resigned**

At least 4 eligible players who were on the team that qualified in the USBF selection trials are required for a team to continue to be eligible to represent the United States. For the Mixed Teams, the remaining team members must include at least 2 men and 2 women. **Exceptions:** (1) a Replacement Team described in Section E below remains eligible so long as a majority (3 out of 4 or 5; 4 out of 6) of the players on the team in the USBF selection trials will compete in the World Championship; (2) a team that qualified in a subsequent selection trials and is reduced to fewer than 4 players because one or two of its players are members of a replacement team for an event selected in a prior selection trials remains

eligible so long as a majority (3 out of 4 or 5; 4 out of 6) of the USBC team members will compete in the World Championship.

If, after resignations, these conditions are not met, the team will be replaced as set forth in section E below. In that situation, no player who resigned from the winning team shall be eligible for augmentation to the new team representing the United States, but the other players on the eliminated team are eligible to be augmented to the replacement team.

E. Replacement Team

If a team has become ineligible to represent the USBF in a World Championship event, the team will be replaced by the last eligible team that lost in the USBF selection event in which the ineligible team qualified. If more than 1 team lost at the same time, the last team that lost to the ineligible team will be the replacement team.

VI. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

The Credentials Committee makes determinations both before and after USBF Championships. Before a Championship, the Credentials Committee may have to determine whether a team's Positioning Points should be reduced because the team has different players than those with whom it won its PPs. After a Championship, the Credentials Committee may have to determine whether a player on a team that has qualified to represent the United States is eligible to do so, and may also have to deal with augmentation issues. The general procedure in all of these situations is the same, but the specifics may be different. When the USBF Board has asked the Credentials Committee to review the eligibility of a player on a potential World Championship team, a subcommittee of the Credentials Committee shall always be formed to review the evidence and make a recommendation to the Board. Whenever any other question is to be determined by the Credentials Committee, the USBF Secretary polls the entire committee and the result of that poll may decide the question or may necessitate forming a subcommittee to investigate the matter further.

A. Positioning Point Dilution

If a team that has earned Positioning Points for the Open USBC adds one or two players for the Open USBC, the Credentials Committee shall determine whether the team's Positioning Points should be diluted or removed in accordance with the Special Conditions of Contest for the Open USBC. The USBF Secretary shall poll the Credentials Committee regarding whether the team's PPs should be reduced. If all but one of the Committee members responding agree that the PPs should not be reduced, that will be the result (except that if there are fewer than eight respondents, they must be unanimous). If two or more Committee members

believe the PPs should be reduced, a subcommittee shall review the matter further. If a subcommittee is to review the matter, the USBF Secretary shall inform the captain of the team that the subcommittee is going to meet and that the team may present an argument to the subcommittee by email.

B. Eligibility of Player on Winning Team

If the USBF Board of Directors has a question about the eligibility to represent the United States of a player on a team that has qualified to represent the United States, the Board shall submit the name to the Credentials Committee. A subcommittee of the Credentials Committee shall be formed to review the matter and make a recommendation to the Board.

C. Augmentation

A team representing the United States in international competition shall be composed of six players. If a team that qualifies to represent the United States has fewer than 6 players, an additional player or players shall be added to the team in accordance with the following procedure.

1. Team Nomination

The team may nominate a player or players to be augmented. If it does so, the USBF Secretary shall poll the entire Credentials Committee regarding whether any member of the committee believes that the proposed augmentee should not be accepted. If all of the members of the Credentials Committee respond that the player(s) should be added, the proposed player(s) shall be approved. If not, the procedure set forth in Section 2 below shall be employed.

2. Alternate Procedure

If there is no nomination by the team or if any member of the Credentials Committee believes that the alternate procedure should be employed, the following shall be the procedure.

a) Announcement of Need to Augment

The USBF Secretary shall send an email to every USBF Active or Resident Member who has provided USBF with his or her email address and post a notice on the USBF website stating:

- A team that has qualified for the (named) WBF Championship has fewer than 6 players.
- Additional player(s) will be selected.
- Eligible members may submit their names for augmentation in accordance with Section B below.

b) Players Submit Names

Any Active or Resident Member of USBF may inform the USBF Secretary that he or she wishes to be considered for augmentation. The member may include a statement regarding why s/he would be an appropriate player to be added. The statement may include information about any partnerships the player has with players already on the team to be augmented and any other information the player deems relevant. By submitting his or her name for augmentation, a player agrees that if selected, s/he will play on the team in the World Championship, barring any unforeseen events.

c) Augmentation Committee Chosen

An Augmentation Committee shall be selected from the members of the USBF Credentials Committee. Normally, the Augmentation Committee will be self-selected. The USBF Secretary shall ask all members of the Credentials Committee if they are available to serve on selected dates and times and if they have any reason to believe that they have a conflict. Any Credentials Committee member who is available and does not have a conflict shall become a member of the Augmentation Committee.

d) Augmentation Committee Selects Players

The Augmentation Committee shall review the names of players who have asked to be added to the team and shall select the player(s) whose addition to the team would result in the strongest possible team. Before making its decision, the Augmentation Committee shall consult with the team captain and may ask for additional information from any player who has asked to be augmented. Normally, the augmentation committee will select from 3 to 5 players or pairs.

e) Team Selects Player(s) to be Added

The Augmentation Committee shall send the names of player(s) it has selected to the team captain. The team captain shall select the number of players necessary to augment the team to 6 players from among the players whose names were provided by the Augmentation Committee. The players so chosen shall be added to the team.

f) If Team Fails to Select Players, Full Credential Committee Chooses Player(s) to be Added

If the team is unable to agree upon the necessary number of players from the list provided to them, the full Credentials Committee (except for any members who have a conflict) shall meet and choose the players to be added to the team.

D. Subcommittee Procedures

To the extent possible, a subcommittee making a ruling prior to a Championship shall consist of players who have not entered the Championship.

A subcommittee shall have at least 5 members and no more than 10 members.

Each subcommittee shall have a chair, who may be appointed by the USBF Board before the subcommittee is formed or elected by the subcommittee after its formation if no chair has been appointed. Subcommittees normally meet by telephone conference call. Each subcommittee may decide matters of procedure for itself, including whether to permit any persons who might be affected by the subcommittee's decision to make oral arguments to the subcommittee. The subcommittee shall consider any written statements presented to it by persons who will be affected by its decision.

VII. COMPLIANCE WITH WBF REQUIREMENTS

Each player in a USBF Championship, by entering the event, agrees that in the event the player represents the United States in a WBF Championship, he or she will comply with WBF requirements for the championship. These requirements include, among other things:

Drug Testing: Each player must be willing to submit to drug testing mandated by WBF.

Publicity: Players are required to play on Vugraph when assigned to a Vugraph table. Players may be videotaped at any time during the championship and agree to the use of video footage or other photographs to publicize the championships and for any other reasonable purpose of the WBF.

VIII. SYSTEMS AND CONVENTIONS

A. Methods Allowed

Any method included on the [ACBL Open Plus Chart](#) is allowed in USBF events.

B. System Summary Form and ACBL Convention Card

1. System Summary

Each pair is required to complete a System Summary Form (SSF) on the [USBF website](#) at least 2 weeks in advance of the Championship and have a printed copy available for their opponents the day before a match, immediately before play and during a match. If a pair files the SSF late, or fails to file it, that pair's team will lose seating rights in one segment of play for every day the SSF is late. If a pair files a SSF that the USBF Tournament Systems Committee finds is inadequate, until the pair makes the SSF adequate, whenever the pair is playing, the opposing team has seating rights. The System Summary Form is posted on the USBF website.

Each participant in the Championship is responsible for reviewing his or her opponents' System Summary Forms in advance. Any time in excess of 5 minutes spent at the table on preparation for methods properly described on the System Summary Form shall be charged to the players preparing for the methods and not to the players using the methods.

2. ACBL Convention Card

Each pair is required to complete an ACBL Convention Card and submit it to the USBF Secretary or his or her designee for posting on the USBF website 2 weeks in advance of the Championship and each player is required to bring the ACBL Convention Card to the table. If a pair files the ACBL convention card late, or fails to file it, that pair's team will lose seating rights in one segment of play for every day the convention card is late.

3. Players Added Within 2 Weeks of the Start of the Championship

If one or two players are added to a team within two weeks of the start of a Championship, they will have three days to file a System Summary Form and ACBL Convention Card with no penalty. The penalty for filing after three days will be loss of seating rights in one segment of play for every day the SSF or Convention Card is late.

In addition, the new pair may not employ any method in the Round Robin that is not substantially the same as a method played by another pair in the Championship.

4. Provision of System Summary and Convention Card to Opponents

Upon arriving at the table, each player should give the partnership's System Summary Form and ACBL Convention Card to his or her screen mate for the screen mate's use during the match.

C. Advance Submission Form and Recommended Defense

1. Requirement for Advance Submission Forms and Defenses

Any pair employing a method described in Paragraph 3 or 7 of the Open+ Convention Chart and for which there is not an ACBL Approved Defense must submit an Advance Submission Form describing the method and provide a Recommended Defense to the method.

Advance Submission Forms posted on the USBF website. Instructions for completion of Advance Submission Forms are included on the forms.

Note that although unusual responses and methods for which there is an ACBL Approved Defense do not require an Advance Submission Form, they must be clearly described on the System Summary Form under "Methods that May Require Advance Preparation."

2. Submission Procedure

Advance Submission Forms shall be filed with the USBF Secretary and posted on the USBF website at least four weeks in advance of the Championship. Upon completion, they will be subject to section 3 below.

3. Review and Adequacy

Each participant in a USBF Championship is responsible for reviewing the Advance Submission Forms and Recommended Defenses submitted by other participants. Any participant who has an objection to the completeness of the Advance Submission Form or the adequacy of the Recommended Defense shall make that objection to the USBF Tournament Systems Committee within 1 week after the date upon which the Advance Submission Form or Defense was posted on the USBF website or 3 weeks prior to the Championship, whichever is later. If the USBF Tournament Systems Committee deems that the Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense is not adequate it will require the players submitting the Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense to improve it. No pair may employ a method if an objection has been made to the Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense unless and until the USBF

Tournament Systems Committee approves the Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense.

If no objection is made to a Recommended Defense by 1 week after the date upon which it was posted on the USBF website or 3 weeks prior to the Championship, whichever is later, the Recommended Defense shall be deemed adequate, unless there were serious errors or omissions in the Advance Submission Form describing the bid for which the defense is recommended.

4. Methods for Which ACBL has an Approved Defense

If there is an approved defense to a method posted on the ACBL website at the closing date for entries to the USBF Championship, that defense will be acceptable as the Recommended Defense for that method and will be deemed adequate.

5. At the Championship

Each pair employing a method requiring an Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense must bring copies of the Advance Submission Form and Recommended Defense to the Championship and make them available to their opponents both on the day preceding a match and at the table immediately prior to play. Each pair employing a method for which there is an ACBL Approved Defense available, must bring the ACBL Approved Defense to the table.

D. Use of Written Defenses at the Table

Players may bring their own written defenses to artificial preempts below 3NT that do not show at least 5 cards in a known suit, and may refer to their own written defenses or the recommended defense provided by the opponents.

E. Exception to Advance Submission Requirement

If any pair desires to employ a method requiring an Advance Submission Form, for which they did not submit an Advance Submission Form and Recommended Defense as required under section C above, they may do so if and only if:

- 1) at least one other pair in the Championship submitted an Advance Submission Form and Recommended Defense for the method in a timely manner, and
- 2) if the pair desiring to play the method had submitted an Advance Submission Form it would have been identical to that submitted with regard to weak meanings for any bid.

F. Additional Convention Regulations

1. Use of Method without Compliance with Section C above

If a pair uses a method requiring an Advance Submission Form and written defense without having complied with Section C above, in addition to any possible score correction under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge, the DIC shall impose a 3 imp procedural penalty for each offense. Requests for application of this penalty shall expire at the beginning of the next segment of play.

2. Accessibility of System Notes.

If requested by a director, appeals committee or recorder, pairs shall produce any written agreements or system notes. Pairs who do not make their notes available or do not have their system notes on site may get the worst of any ruling or inquiry dependent on partnership understandings.

IX. ROUND ROBIN PROCEDURES

A. Victory Point Scales

The Victory Point Scales set forth on the USBF website and shall be used in Round Robin matches.

B. Balanced Play Requirement

Any time that two teams will meet for more than one segment in the same Round Robin stage of a USBF Championship, either because the matches in a Round Robin are played in two or more separate segments, or because there are two or more complete Round Robins comprising one stage of the Championship, each player on a team must play at least one half of the segments against each other team.

C. Seating

1. Matches Played Straight Through

When matches are played straight through, they may be played in clumps of two or three matches to save time. Player substitution is allowed during a clump of matches, but no extra time is allowed for score comparison.

a) Setting the Order of Play

The DIC shall determine the order in which matches shall be played prior to the event, but shall not disclose that order of play until immediately prior to each clump of matches, except that if teams will have byes, the DIC shall tell each team when its bye will be in advance of the Round Robin.

b) Advance Submission of Line-ups

Teams shall submit their line-ups for all matches in a clump to the DIC in advance of each clump and before any pairings for that clump are known (a "clump" is a set of boards played consecutively without time for score comparison).

c) Penalties

If a team does not sit in the positions it has specified in the advance lineup submission, the following penalties will apply:

First or intentional offense: warning

Second offense: 3 VP penalty

Third and subsequent offenses: 5 or more VP penalty, in the discretion of the DIC

2. Matches Played in Halves

When matches are played in halves, for all matches other than those in which one half will involve sequestering (see Section E below), each team shall have seating rights in one half of each match. To determine which team has seating rights, the matches shall be numbered in the order in which they are played. The higher numbered team shall have seating rights in the first half of each odd numbered match, the lower numbered team shall have seating rights in the first half of each even-numbered match. The team with seating rights seats its players after the other team has seated its players.

D. Tie Breaking

A tie is when there is no mathematical difference between teams according to the VP scale in use. Ties shall be broken only if the exact finish of the teams is relevant to which teams advance to the next phase of the competition or to the seeding of the next phase of competition. In those events, ties will be broken by VP's against all tied teams, then by successive two-board matches.

E. Closed Room for Final Session of Play

The final session of play of any Round Robin shall include at least 15 boards during the play of which one room shall be Closed, with no substitution of players allowed in that room ("sequestered matches"). Substitution of players will be allowed between matches in the Open Room. No score comparison shall be allowed during this final session of play.

F. Scoring a Round Robin with 2 separate Segments

If a Round Robin is played in 2 or more separate segments, the IMP score for each segment shall be converted to VPs and the team's score shall be the total of the VP scores for all segments played.

G. 3 Team Round Robin

When a Round Robin has three teams, with two advancing, the format shall be:

Each team will play a match against each other team. Both matches will be played simultaneously, with 14 boards played in a segment, 7 boards against each other team, 4 segments per day. There will be no substitutions during the 14 board segments. For the first half of each segment, team 1 will be NS at table 1 and EW at table 2, team 2 will be NS at table 2 and EW at table 3, and team 3 will be NS at table 3 and EW at table 1; for the second half of each segment, team 1 will be NS at table 1 and EW at table 3, team 2 will be NS at table 2 and

EW at table 1, and team 3 will be NS at table 3 and EW at table 2. After each half, the boards will be moved to the EW team's table

There will be a short break between segments for teams to compare and for player substitutions.

Each match will be scored at IMPs and converted to VPs using the USBF VP scales. The teams will be ranked by VPs to determine which 2 teams advance.

If the 3 team Round Robin is one day long, it will be scored as two separate 21 board matches, one played in the first 3 segments and one played in the second 3 segments. IMPs will be converted to VPs using the USBF 14 board VP scale. .

If the 3 team Round Robin is one and one-half days long, it will be scored as two separate 21 board matches, one played in the first 3 segments and one played in the second 3 segments. IMPs will be converted to VPs using the USBF 21 board VP scale.

If the 3-way stage is 2 days long, VPs will be calculated separately for each day, using the USBF 28 board VP scale, and each team's score for the stage will be the sum of its VPs for each day.

In accordance with the USBF's balanced play requirement, each player on each team must play at least half of the boards of each match against each other team.

Section E above will not apply.

H. Scores of Unplayed Matches

1. If a team withdraws before it has played any matches

If a team withdraws from the event before it has played any matches in a Round Robin, no score shall be assigned to the teams that remain in the Round Robin because they do not play the team that has withdrawn.

2. If a team withdraws after having played one or more matches

If a team withdraws from the event after it has played one or more matches in a Round Robin, the scores of matches that have been played shall not be affected by the withdrawal. Any team that does not play its scheduled match against the withdrawn team shall be assigned the greater of the average of the Victory Points earned by the team(s) that did play against the withdrawn team or the average of the Victory Points it earned against all other teams, for the missed match.

X. KNOCKOUT PROCEDURES

The following procedures apply to any Knockout matches in a USBF Championship.

A. Setting the Bracket

The bracket shall be set in accordance with the Special Conditions of Contest for the USBF Championship.

B. Knockout Seating Rights.

For each segment of KO play, there is an Away team, (the unseeded team) which seats its players first, and a Home team, (the seeded team) which seats its players second.

Before the match starts, preferably immediately after the teams are known, seating rights are assigned as follows:

- d) The higher ranked team elects either to choose one segment in which to be the Home team, or passes the first choice to the other team.
- e) Then the team that did not choose first selects two segments in which to be Home.
- f) Next, the first team to select selects two segments to be Home.
- g) The teams continue to alternate choosing two segments each until only one segment is left. The team that would be next to choose is Home in that segment.

Normally segments will be 15 boards, but a segment may be any number of boards after which the teams will compare and then re-seat themselves.

In matches where there are seating rights, teams are encouraged to make their line-ups known to their opponents as soon as possible. A member of the Away team must be in the playing area with its line-up ten minutes before the start of a segment. A member of the Home team must advise the away team of its line-up five minutes before the start of a segment. Failure to comply will be treated as tardiness. Should there be a line-up board available, the line-ups must be noted on the board within the above time limits in order to be timely.

C. Knockout Round Tie Breaking.

Ties in knockout matches will be broken as follows:

1. For all matches before the USA1 or USA2 Final, if the tied teams met in the Round Robin:

- a) If the tied teams met in the Round Robin and their Round Robin match did not end in a tie, the winner of the Round Robin match will win the tie.
- b) If the tied teams met in the Round Robin and their Round Robin match ended in a tie, the team that finished higher in the Round Robin will win the tie.

2. Otherwise:

For the USA1 or USA2 Final or if the tied teams did not meet in the Round Robin, the tie will be broken by one (or more, if necessary) additional segments of 8 boards if a match of 120 boards or more or 6 boards if less than a 120-board match. There will be no seating rights in tie-break matches; teams will submit lineups in advance.

Ties for byes, seeding, or bracket number will be broken by a coin-flip.

XI.

TIME

A. General Principles

These Conditions of Contest are based on the position that the quality of time used is more important than the amount of time used. A player or pair who habitually wastes time will be subject to the sanctions set forth below (Ladder of Penalties).

Some examples of time wasted are:

1. Taking undue time to play for an overtrick in a cold contract.
2. Refusing to play a card in a hopeless situation.
3. Post-mortems
4. Breaks
5. Unnecessary questions

Some examples of legitimate use of time are:

1. When the dummy comes down
2. Playing a difficult contract
3. A difficult defensive decision.
4. A high-level competitive decision.
5. Any kind of slam auction.
6. Difficult choice of game decisions.

Appendix A Instructions for Time Monitors, more fully discusses the way in which use of time should be evaluated.

B. Time allotted.

In USBF Championships, the schedule of play is based on 8.5 minutes per board for KO matches and 9 minutes per board for Round Robin matches. In a Round Robin where several matches are played in one session, the DIC may schedule additional time for changing tables.

C. Penalties

1. In a Round Robin

In Round Robin play, when a match is not completed although time has expired, the DIC shall curtail the match by removing boards if the auction has not begun before time expired. If one team is found responsible for the slow play, its opponents will be awarded the greater of average plus (normally 3 imps per board removed), or the imps its other-table result would normally earn.

2. In a Knockout Match

In knockout play, the DIC may impose the ladder of penalties set forth below when in the DIC's opinion, which may be based upon statements by an independent observer ("time monitor") as well as direct observation by the Directors, a pair has wasted an excessive amount of time. In order to avoid giving any unwanted incentive for a slow pair's opponents to slow down, it is possible for an egregiously slow pair to incur a time penalty, even when the table finishes the session on time. The DIC shall take into consideration the ratio of the

number of segments and amount of time a pair or player has wasted to the number of segments such a pair or player has played.

The DIC may also curtail boards, if necessary for the orderly progress of the event. If one team is found responsible for the slow play, its opponents will be awarded the greater of average plus (normally 3imps per board removed) or the imps its other-table result would normally earn.

D. Ladder of Penalties

When the DIC has determined that it is appropriate to assess a penalty against a team because one or both of its pairs has wasted an unreasonable amount of time, normally, the following penalties will be assessed in order. In egregious situations, the DIC may accelerate the ladder of penalties or impose additional penalties, in the DIC's discretion. Time penalties imposed by the DIC shall not be appealable:

1. A written warning shall be given to the team captain stating that the DIC has concluded that the pair wasted an unreasonable amount of time.
2. The team shall lose its seating rights for the next segment in which it has seating rights
3. The team shall lose between 3 and 9 IMPs, based upon the DIC's assessment of how serious the waste of time was. An IMP penalty may be imposed only if the segment for which the penalty is assessed was recorded on video or was shown on BBO Vugraph or a Time Monitor was present throughout substantially all of the segment.

E. Time Monitors

When the DIC believes a pair or a table is playing at a pace slower than normal, he may assign a time monitor to the table.

When a team has been warned and has lost its seating rights, the DIC shall assign a Time Monitor to the table(s) of the pair(s) at fault for any additional segments those pairs play.

The time monitor shall assess the time being taken in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph A above and the Time Monitor Instructions. Any time the Time Monitor believes a player or pair has wasted a significant amount of time, the Time Monitor shall inform the player or pair that he or they might be in danger of being penalized.

F. Long Term Slow Play

Whenever a player or pair has, in the sole opinion of the DIC, wasted an unreasonable amount of time in a significant number of segments, the DIC shall prepare a report documenting that fact and file it with the USBF Recorder. The USBF Recorder shall write the offending player(s) informing them that the DIC

found them to be guilty of excessive waste of time and that should such behavior be repeated at a future USBF Championship, the player(s) will be subject to being barred from competing in one or more USBF Championships.

G. Tardiness.

Play shall begin at the announced starting time. All pairs shall be prepared to commence play at the announced starting time. If a player arrives at the table more than 1 minute after the announced starting time, the player's team will be penalized 1 VP in a Round Robin or 3 IMPs in a KO match if the player is less than 5 minutes late, 2 VPs or 6 IMPs if the player is between 5 and 10 minutes late, 3 VPs or 9 IMPs if the player is between 10 and 15 minutes late, and an additional 1 VP or 3 IMPs for each subsequent 5 minutes, in addition to all other penalties for slow play and tardiness. Egregious tardiness will be referred to the USBF Conduct and Ethics Committee for possible disciplinary action

XII. REQUIRED PERCENTAGE OF BOARDS

A. Counting Boards.

- 1) Round Robin
 - a. For the purposes of 5 or 6 handed teams playing in a Round Robin with an odd number of matches, the play requirement is slightly relaxed to matches divided by 2, rounded down to the nearest whole match. As an example, each player is only required to play 4 out of 9 matches.
 - b. If a team withdraws or is disqualified after having played some but not all of the matches in a Round Robin, the play requirement for players on other teams does not change. Teams that have not yet played the withdrawn or disqualified team will submit blind lineups for the remaining matches without knowing which match is scheduled against such team, and the players whose names are submitted for the match against such team will be treated as having played a match. Players on teams that have already played the withdrawn or disqualified team get credit toward the play requirement for that match.
- 2) In cases of forfeiture, the winning captain shall notify the DIC of the assignment of the “unplayed” playing time to particular team members.
- 3) Boards played in a playoff between tied teams do not count.

B. Failure to Play Required Percentage of Boards.

- 1) If a member of the winning team has failed to play:
 - a) Either 50% of the matches in any Round Robin, or,
 - b) At least 50% of the boards in any knockout match,that player will appear before the Tournament Conduct and Ethics Committee at the conclusion of the match in which such a failure has occurred.
- 2) Exception: A player may fail to play all or any part of the boards on the first day of an event, so long as that player plays 50% of the boards in the first two stages of the event. For purposes of this rule, the two halves of a morphed Round Robin are two stages of the event.
- 3) No exemptions from the play requirement will be granted prior to the start of play for any reason. Once play has begun, if such a failure occurs:
 - a) Prior to the final match, the Tournament Conduct and Ethics Committee will normally not allow that player to continue to be a member of the team, but may allow that player to remain if there is a clear reason for failure to play the required number of boards other than bridge skill. Should that

player be permitted to continue, the Committee may increase the percentage of boards required for that player in later matches.

- b) In the final match, the Tournament Conduct and Ethics Committee will normally decline to submit that player's name to the USBF as a team member, but it may include the player if there is a clear reason for failure to play the required number of boards other than bridge skill.

In either instance, the Tournament Conduct and Ethics Committee or USBF Recorder may discipline a player and/or the player's team if such player failed to play the required percentage of boards for non-health related reasons.

For permitted withdrawal by a player, see section IV.B.2 above.

XIII. APPEALS AND CONDUCT AND ETHICS COMMITTEES

A. Establishment; Timeliness of Requesting Ruling or Appeal.

The time limit for an appeal of, or to request a ruling, expires 30 minutes after the end of any segment, session or match, or when the next segment, session or match begins, whichever is earlier. However, at the DIC's discretion, a later appeal may be heard in regard to issues that were not immediately discovered due to the use of screens.

The right to appeal for a score correction expires at the start of the next segment of a Round Robin, the next session of the same Knockout match, 15 minutes before the start of a new Knockout match on the same day, one hour before the start of a new Knockout match on a different day, or in the case of the last segment of the final or any repechage final, 60 minutes after completion of play.

B. Jurisdiction of Committees and Regulations.

By participating in a USBF Championship players agree to the following regulations and procedures.

1. Tournament Committees

Two committees will be available at any USBF Championship to hear director's rulings and appeals of assessed penalties, conduct disciplinary proceedings and similar matters.

- a) Hearing panels of the Tournament Appeals Committee will handle matters usually referred to committees at tournaments (e.g., appeals of director's rulings, review of late play penalties, etc.). The Appeals Coordinators shall organize appeals committees in such a way as to have a procedure as close to that which would exist if all of the members of the Committee hearing an appeal were at the tournament. Normally, this will involve a telephone conference call. If a telephone conference call is not feasible, the Appeals Coordinator may use some other procedure, but shall attempt to use a procedure that allows interaction among the committee members. The members of the Tournament Appeals Committee Panel will normally be listed on the front page of the Daily Bulletin, but the Appeals Coordinators may appoint people not listed to a committee for a specific appeal, if it is not possible to form a committee from listed Tournament Appeals Panel members.

The decision of a Tournament Appeals Committee shall be subject to appeal only on questions of law. Otherwise, the decision of the Committee is final. Any appeal on a question of law must be made in accordance with the provisions of the USBF Bylaws.

- b) The Tournament Conduct and Ethics Committee will hear serious matters such as those that might result in disqualification of a team or player, (including when such a player has failed to play the required percentage of boards), or such as would affect the participant's USBF playing or membership rights. Matters may be brought to this committee through the DIC or may be referred to it by an Appeals Committee. Conduct and Ethics Committee members are appointed by the DIC and the Tournament Coordinator. Sanctions by this committee may be appealed to the USBF Grievance and Appeals Committee in writing up to 15 days after the conclusion of the event. By entering a USBF Championship, participants agree to be subject to the Bylaws, rules, and procedures of the USBF. Such Bylaws require an aggrieved participant to seek binding arbitration after exhaustion of all other administrative remedies.

2. Regulations governing players in a USBF Championship

Playing in a manner to advance the interest of one's opponent, or inducing or attempting to induce another to play against their best interest or against the best interest of their own team is subject to discipline.

Providing any inducement to a player not to compete in the event is subject to discipline.

Players are subject to the regulations in Section XII – Security and the regulations and By-Laws of the USBF.

USBF Championships will be governed by the ACBL interpretation of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge.

XIV. SCREEN PROCEDURES

The purpose of the screen is to prevent information from being transmitted from one side to the other. Players should strongly endeavor in all situations to ensure that sounds of any kind are not heard on the opposite side of the screen during the auction.

The screen is placed diagonally across the table in such fashion that North and East, South and West are screenmates (unless otherwise required as a reasonable accommodation to a disabled player). The board is placed in the middle of a moveable tray. The screen is closed so that the bidding tray can just pass under it. The players remove their cards from the board and make their calls.

Beginning with the dealer, players place bidding cards silently on their section of the tray from the extreme left-hand edge, neatly overlapping so that all calls are visible and faced towards partner. A call is considered to have been made when a player releases it onto the tray (but law 25 may apply). North or South slides the tray under the screen after his or her screenmate has called, and the tray should be placed so that all calls are visible on the other side. There will be no oral communication during the auction. After three consecutive passes, all players remove their bidding cards. At this

point, the declaring side may offer information about their own explanations.

During the auction period, after an opponent has acted quickly, it is proper to adjust the tempo back to normal timing by either delaying one's own call (place the bidding card faced in front of, but not on, the tray) or by waiting before passing the tray. It is not proper for a player to use this procedure where the overall time taken to pass the tray may create the perception of a sufficient hesitation where the opponent may view this as unauthorized information. One should also endeavor to refrain from asking questions where the answer to those questions is not relevant at that time, and where the time taken to ask and respond to those questions may create the perception of a sufficient hesitation where the opponent may view this as unauthorized information.

After the lead is made, the opening leader's screenmate shall raise the screen aperture or indicate for the screen aperture to be raised. The opening leader's screenmate is entitled to delay the opening of the screen for up to fifteen seconds after a lead has been made. During that period and throughout the play the leader may not take any action to indicate to the other side that his lead was delayed by the declaring side. The opening lead shall be made face-up on the table. The defending side should refrain from touching the opening lead until it becomes a quitted trick.

If the tray is removed from the table, only the declaring side may do so.

The Laws of Duplicate Bridge North American Edition are in effect except as specified below:

LAW 9A(2);LAW 42B(3); LAW 43A(1)(b):

Dummy may call attention to a defender's card prematurely exposed.

LAW 13:

The Adjusted Score and Possible Penalty prescribed in Law 13B shall apply only if the call has been transmitted to the other side of the screen.

LAW 16:

A bidding tray returned in 15 seconds or less normally creates the presumption that there is no Unauthorized Information (UI). A tray returned after a longer period may be considered to have made UI available if it is apparent that one side is responsible for the delay.

In tempo-sensitive situations and at random times, players may delay the tray but only to insure that it remains on their side of the screen for up to 15 seconds. A player whose actions (e.g., asking or answering questions audibly, clicking bid cards against bid box or tray, etc.) permit players on the other side of the screen to identify when a specific action on his side was taken may be liable for UI and/or may abrogate his side's right to claim damage due to UI.

Under certain circumstances, questions asked may be considered the equivalent of holding the tray.

Until the conclusion of play of the hand, only a player on the opposite side of the screen from the side on which an alleged hesitation occurred may summon the director regarding a hesitation.

LAW 20:

Review of the Auction: Until the bidding cards are removed from the tray, a player obtains a review of the auction by inspecting them. At trick one, when a player is still entitled to obtain a review and an inspection of the bidding cards is no longer feasible, a player obtains a written review of the auction from his screenmate.

EXPLANATION OF CALLS:

1. During the Auction:

a. At any time a player may request, in writing, of his screenmate a full explanation of an opponent's call. The reply also is in writing.

2. Prior to the Opening Lead:

a. The opening leader is permitted to ask for clarification from his opponent on the other side of the screen. The request and reply should be in writing.

b. Preferably before the opening lead, the declaring side is strongly encouraged to confirm explanations given on the two sides of the screen if there is any possibility those explanations might have been different. If the explanations were different, the director must be summoned to ensure the defenders both have access to the information to which they are legally entitled. In cases where one side's explanations were different as a result of the other side giving different explanations of their own calls, the director shall protect the non-offending side from misinformation as the Laws provide. If in such cases the exchange of information across the screen resulted in the defenders becoming aware of their own misunderstanding, the director shall protect the declaring side from the resulting unauthorized information.

3. After the screen is raised:

a. Third hand (opening leader's partner) is permitted to ask for clarification in writing.

b. If based upon the appearance of dummy, declarer has reason to suspect there may be need for clarification of explanations, before playing from dummy, those remedies provided in 2.b. are also in effect.

4. During the Play Period:

Questions and answers during the play period should be in writing with the aperture closed. The screen is raised after the response has been made.

5. Misunderstandings:

Failure to provide a written response may be resolved in favor of MI or both sides may be ruled against.

LAWS 26-32; LAW 34; LAWS 36-39:

For the infractions covered by these laws, the following procedures are used:

A. Tray not passed:

Before the tray is passed, the offender's screenmate shall call attention to the infraction and summon the TD. The TD shall see that the infraction is rectified without penalty. These calls may not be accepted.

B. Both sides at fault:

When the infringing call is nonetheless passed across the screen, both sides being at fault (as when either player commits a bidding infraction and the proper player — North or South — moves the tray before rectification), both players on the other side of the screen are responsible for calling attention to the infraction and summoning the TD. In situations where the laws permit LHO to accept the infringing call, it is accepted on behalf of the non-offending side when the screenmate passes the tray (Law 72C may apply). Otherwise, the TD shall return the tray to the offending players for rectification of the irregularity without penalty. These calls may not be accepted.

C. Only one side at fault:

When the infringing call is passed across the screen with only one side at fault (the player who committed the bidding infraction — East or West — also moved the tray improperly), both players on the other side of the screen are responsible for calling attention to the infraction and summoning the TD. The TD shall return the tray to the offending player for rectification of the irregularity and the appropriate penalty is applied. These calls may not be accepted.

D. Irregularity not noticed:

When the infringing call is passed across the screen and neither player draws attention to it, the tray eventually being returned to the side of the screen where the bidding irregularity was committed, the auction stands without penalty or rectification. However, in the case of an inadmissible call, Law 35 applies.

E. Information:

Authorized or not: Information from withdrawn calls is unauthorized for any partnerships at fault but authorized for a player or partnership that has committed no irregularity.

LAW 33:

The subsequent call is canceled without penalty.

LAW 40:

Alerts: When an alertable call is made, the player alerts his screenmate silently. The preferable way to alert is to silently place the alert card over the alertable call and then remove it after receiving acknowledgement. It is the responsibility of the person alerting to ensure that the alert has been noticed. When the tray is passed, both players should immediately alert partner's alertable call. There are no delayed Alerts when playing behind screens.

LAW 41A:

Opening lead out of turn: The offender's screenmate should attempt to prevent any opening lead out of turn. A faced-down lead out of turn is retracted without penalty. A faced opening lead out of turn is retracted without penalty if the screen has not been raised. When the screen has been raised after a faced-opening lead out of turn - through no fault of the declaring side:

A. and, the other side has not yet led face up, the lead is considered to be out of turn and Law 54 applies.

B. and, the other side has also led face up, the card becomes a major penalty card. When the declaring side has incorrectly opened the screen, the lead is accepted. The TD shall award an adjusted score if he considers that the player who opened the screen could have known that it would be to his advantage to accept the lead.

LAW 73D:

During the Auction period, after an opponent has acted quickly, it is proper to adjust the tempo back to normal by either delaying one's own call (place the bidding card faced in front of, but not on, the tray) or by waiting before passing the tray. It is not proper for a player to use this procedure where the overall time taken to pass the tray may create the perception of a sufficient hesitation where the opponent may view this as unauthorized information.

It is considered that normally there can be no implications if a tray returns after 20 seconds or less (this period may be extended in the later stages of a complicated or competitive auction without necessarily creating implications). However, if the players have not been controlling the tempo of the auction as recommended above or if the nature of the auction makes it apparent that only one side could reasonably have been thinking then even a delay of materially less than 20 seconds may well be regarded as significant.

LAW 76:

Spectators may not sit so they can see both sides of the screen.

XV.

SECURITY

Tournament directors are expected to address any departure from these rules immediately and are empowered to warn, penalize (seeding, seating, IMPs) or refer to the Tournament or USBF Conduct and Ethics Committee or the USBF Recorder.

A. Rules Applicable to Players

- a) When a hand has started, all players, except dummy during the play, should remain at the table. While dummy is permitted to leave the table (and remain away from the table until the hand is completed), dummy is expected to courteously inform the table that he is departing. The departure may not be disruptive and dummy must make sure that he does not see the hands of the other players.
- b) When dummy has left the table, dummy has lost all rights. If there is a surrogate dummy, such dummy has no rights.
- c) Once play of a segment has begun, unless escorted or monitored, both members of a pair may not be away from the table at the same time until the segment is completed. If a pair wishes to converse in private, they must be monitored by a tournament official.
- d) Until the segment has been completed, players leaving the room must be escorted. Players may be escorted by opponents, neutral kibitzers, or tournament officials or their designees.
- e) Any special tactics or change in tactics must be disclosed to the opponents.
- f) When using screens, players are required to cooperate by bidding silently, writing questions, writing answers to questions, and generally making as little noise as reasonably possible.
- g) A player upon finding himself in a position in which security is compromised must report the situation to a tournament director immediately.
- h) No electronic communication devices (other than health aids) are permitted to be in the possession of anyone other than a tournament official or Vugraph operator in a playing room. If a player is found in possession of an electronic device in the playing room during a Round Robin match, the player's team shall be penalized 3 Victory Points. If a player is found in possession of an electronic device in the playing room during a Knockout match, the player's team will be penalized 9 IMPs. Tournament directors will handle emergency/important paging situations on a case by case basis at their discretion.

B. Rules Applicable to Kibitzers

Unless otherwise stated, “Kibitzer” includes Media and NPCs.

- a) During any use of duplicated boards across multiple matches, Kibitzers must select one table for kibitzing and may not move to any other table during a session or segment.
- b) Kibitzers may not speak with players, must watch only one hand at a time, may not sit in such a position as to see more than one hand at a time, may not sit in such a position as to see a computer screen in use for Internet broadcast, must check communication devices with the Director, cannot call attention to irregularities other than a board being placed incorrectly on the table (arrow positioning), but may serve as witnesses to a possible irregularity.
- c) Kibitzers must enter the playing room before play commences. Kibitzers are required to remain until the segment of play is completed at the table they are watching or to leave the playing area entirely. Kibitzers are expected to abide by the same rules as the players regarding leaving the room (e.g. be escorted to the restroom).
- d) Except as expressly provided in these conditions and appendices, NPC’s shall be subject to the WBF General Conditions, Section 16.
- e) No one other than the Internet broadcast personnel and Tournament Directors may watch any computer screen or any other mechanism for enabling the Internet broadcast at any time in either the Closed or the Open Room.
- f) These rules may be revised in specific instances by the DICs for the orderly running of the event.

A. **TIME MONITOR INSTRUCTIONS**

Time monitors are asked to spend a substantial amount of time in the playing room, watching what goes on. They are there primarily so that the Directors will know which player or pair to penalize if a pair uses too much of their allotted time.

The USBF have concluded that in determining whether a pair is guilty of slow play, the **quality** of time taken can be a more important factor than the **quantity** of time taken. A player who takes extra time playing a hand for an overtrick is guiltier of slow play than another who takes extra time playing for his contract. A player who takes time to discuss a played hand shall be charged with wasting time. A player who is tardy will be charged with wasting time.

The following are examples of improper use of time, which should be considered to be wasting time:

- 1) Taking undue time to play for an overtrick in a cold contract. While overtricks are part of the game, they are relatively insignificant in the grand scheme of things. Of course there is nothing wrong with going after an overtrick as opposed to just claiming. But when a player takes excess time to do this, that is time-wasting. Of course if the contract is doubled then overtricks become important, so a player may legitimately take some time going for an overtrick.
- 2) Squeezing out the last percentage point. Of course a player is entitled to spend time finding the percentage play. But when it comes down to choosing between a 95% line of play and a 99% line of play, taking undue time deciding between these choices is time-wasting.
- 3) Refusing to play a card in a hopeless situation. Quite often a declarer or defender can see that there is no chance to achieve his objective. Some players will sit for minutes looking for what they know is impossible. This is time-wasting.
- 4) Constant rechecking. Of course a player is entitled to recheck his conclusions. But some players go over the same thought process for minutes before finally doing the obvious thing that they knew after a few seconds that they were going to do. These players are wasting time.
- 5) Taking a long time for an opening lead on a simple auction. Of course if the auction is complex and revealing, a player may have a lot to consider. But when the auction is 1NT-3NT or 1♠-2♠-4♠, there simply isn't that much to think about. A player who takes an undue amount of time to make an opening lead on such an auction is simply wasting time.
- 6) Initial action in the auction. Everybody knows what an opening bid is in their partnership and what should be opened. Similarly for an overcall or a takeout double. Either you do or you don't. We have all seen these hands countless times, and there is no new information to be considered. Players who take a

long time for their initial action are just wasting time unless they have some truly unusual hand. The one exception might be vs. a high-level preempt -- there is more to consider and more at stake since any action is likely to be conclusive.

7) Accepting or rejecting a game try. When partner makes a game try, either you have it or you don't or you are somewhere in-between. If the decision looks close, all the thinking in the world isn't going to help. Players who spend a lot of time on these decisions are just wasting time. Of course if the auction is complex and you have learned a lot about partner's hand then there may be a lot to think about as far as extent of fit, etc. But when the bidding goes 1NT-2NT (or something simple like that) there just isn't anything to think about.

8) Low-level balancing. When the bidding goes 1♠-P-P to you, you just have to make a decision. All the thinking in the world isn't going to help. Players who take a long time on such decisions are wasting time.

9) Post-mortems. Any post-mortem of the hand is clearly time-wasting.

10) Unnecessary questions. While it can be important to determine the meaning of enemy bids, quite often it is obvious that it can't matter immediately. Many players waste a lot of time asking questions about the enemy bids when they could just as easily wait until the auction is over and then get a full explanation. At the very least, players should arrange to do their questioning when the tray is on the other side of the screen so as to not waste time.

The following are examples of appropriate use of time:

1) When the dummy comes down. Both declarer and 3rd hand are fully justified in spending time planning the play or defense.

2) Playing a difficult contract. Obviously this may take some time.

3) A difficult defensive decision. Again, thought may be necessary here.

4) A high-level competitive decision. This can be crucial, and there is often a lot of information from the previous bidding to be analyzed.

5) Any kind of slam auction. Not only are these very important, but they also require the most analysis picturing partner's hand accurately.

6) Difficult choice of game decisions. These can be quite complex and take some analysis.

In theory, (although unlikely in practice), it is possible that a table finishing late will not be penalized on a difficult set of hands, or a table finishing on time could be penalized if one pair took too much time on easy hands.

As soon as the Time Monitor observes that a player or pair is wasting time, the Time Monitor shall tell the entire table that in the Time Monitor's opinion the N/S or E/W pair (or both pairs) are wasting time and may be subject to penalty and encourage them to speed up. The sooner the Time Monitor is able to notify the players that there is a problem, the better.

It is the subjective determination of Time Monitors that will be used to determine whether a pair has played slowly. Thus we ask you to use your bridge judgment and report to the director which player or pair wasted the most time, and particularly whether the amount of time wasted was moderate, serious, or outrageous.