

# Rules for NIBU Leagues 2017 - 18

## 1 Scope

- 1.1 These rules govern the operation of the **Premier, Senior, Intermediate A, Intermediate B, Novice and any other Leagues** organised by or under the auspices of the Northern Ireland Bridge Union [the Union].
- 1.2 Nothing in these rules shall be interpreted as implying that the Laws of Contract Bridge, as applied by the Union, are in any way diminished or inoperative.
- 1.3.1 In all matters not specifically covered by these rules the initial power of decision rests with the Competitions Secretary of the Union [the Secretary].
- 1.3.2 In the event that the Secretary is conflicted in a matter about which a decision is being sought the power of decision shall be exercised by the Laws & Ethics Committee, and in the event that any members of the Laws & Ethics Committee are conflicted, by the non-conflicted members of the Laws & Ethics Committee.

## 2 Composition and Organisation

- 2.1.1 The **Premier** League shall consist of a first division of 8 teams [**Premier I**] and, optionally, a second division of up to 8 teams [**Premier II**].
- 2.1.2 Each of the **Senior, Intermediate A, Intermediate B and Novice** Leagues shall normally consist of one division. If the number of entries exceeds 9 in any league then that League shall be split into two divisions and the final positions decided by a play-off. Play-offs shall be played over the same number of boards as a normal league match. In the event of a tie, this should be broken by comparing total aggregate scores. If the match is still tied, then four extra boards shall be played, four at a time until a result is obtained.
- 2.2.1 Each League and each division of the Premier League shall be administered by an Organiser, who shall be appointed for each season by the Secretary or the Council of the Union. In the absence of a new appointee the previous year's Organiser remains in post unless he resigns.
- 2.2.2 Entry to the Leagues shall be made to the Organiser on the attached schedule, and considerations of eligibility shall be decided by the Organiser. Electronic entry is acceptable.
- 2.3 It shall be the duty of the Organiser:
  - 2.3.1 to arrange the venue for each League match and provide pre-dealt boards for each match.
  - 2.3.2 to publish on the Union web-site before 15 August in each year a suitable date for the receipt of entries for each League [the League entry date] together with the date and alternative date of each match. Depending on entries and composition of teams the Organiser will, if necessary, before 15 September in each year arrange a suitable date or dates for play-offs.
  - 2.3.3 to verify the eligibility of each team member prior to accepting the team's entry.

- 2.3.4 to publish on the Union website after the date for entries to a League has expired, the names and master point number of each team member, e-mail and telephone numbers of the captain of each team, and the venue and date set for each match and the alternative venue and date set for each match.
- 2.3.5 to publish on the Union website the results of league matches within 7 days of completion of each match
- 2.3.6 to act as Tournament Director for each League match held on the published date and to be available to adjudicate in matches held on the alternative published date. The Organiser may appoint a Tournament Director to act as proxy at a session of the League. Such a Tournament Directors shall exercise all the powers of the Organiser insofar as they apply during a match of a League.
- 2.3.7 to maintain a record throughout the season of team memberships and, in particular, designations of **regular** and **substitute** members (see Rule 5 below);
- 2.3.8 to forward the results of league matches within 5 days of completion of each match to the Secretary.
- 2.3.9 to collect the entry fees if not yet paid.
- 2.3.10 to check on the eligibility of a team's members if the captain of the opposing team asks for this within 96 hours of the completion of a match.
- 2.3.11 or the appointed Tournament Director to, as far as is practical, ensure that there is at least another playing table or a suitable distance between the opposing tables in a match.
- 2.3.12 or the appointed Tournament Director to be responsible for monitoring that each team carries out its scoring after each stanza in such a way so that the discussions can't be heard at adjacent tables.

### **3 Matches**

- 3.1.1 Each team in the **Premier, Senior, and Intermediate A** Leagues shall play each other team in its league or division once over 28 boards.
- 3.1.2 Each team in the **Intermediate B and Novice** Leagues shall play each other team in its league or division once over 24 boards and 20 boards respectively.
- 3.1.3 Each team in the **Intermediate B and Novice** Leagues shall play each other team in its league or division once over 24 boards and 20 boards respectively.
- 3.1.4 If one player is temporarily delayed, the Tournament Director may, with the agreement of the opposing Captain, play, or permit a spectator to play the first four boards. If agreement is not forthcoming, the match shall be suitably reduced in length.
- 3.2.1 Matches must, except as provided in Section 3.3, be played on the due night at the due venue.
- 3.2.2 Each session shall commence at 7.15 p.m. and no new board shall be started after 10.50 p.m. except by express permission of the Tournament Director. The agreed result must be given to the Tournament Director by 11.00 pm.

- 3.3.1 Matches shall be played on the published date at the published venue, or, with the agreement of both captains, on the alternative published date and venue. If the latter the teams must inform both the Secretary and the Organiser, otherwise Rule 3.4 may be invoked.
- 3.3.2 In the event that the alternative published date and venue is not agreed by both captains, the Organiser shall at his discretion decide whether the published date or the alternative published date shall apply, but will ensure that so far as is just and equitable that the team prepared to play on the published date is not disadvantaged.
- 3.3.3 Under exceptional circumstances including bereavement, sudden inclement weather preventing travel to the venue, road accident or the like, a team, hereinafter called the requesting team, may request the opposing team, hereinafter called the opposing team, for a postponement of the match. Any bona fide request for postponement shall be granted. If agreement can't be reached the Organiser shall decide. Initial contact with the opposing team must be as soon as feasible. Failure to do so will normally lead to concession of the match.
- 3.3.4 The opposing team shall within 3 days of being informed of the exceptional circumstances, offer 3 dates within the next 14 days for the match to be played. Failure to play on one of these days will be treated as a concession. The venue will be decided by the opposing team and any reasonable costs met by the requesting team.
- 3.3.5 Otherwise than is provided above the Organiser is not empowered to allow a match to be postponed.
- 3.4 If teams play a match without the Organiser's permission at other than the normal date and time, then the match shall be null and void and both teams shall be treated as if they conceded the match under Rule 6.
- 3.5 All matches played on the published or alternative dates shall use pre-dealt hands supplied by the Organiser and bidding boxes of a pattern approved by the Union. A match played on another date shall use bidding boxes, but the hands shall be as agreed by the captains.
- 3.6.1 Only systems and conventions approved by the Union shall be used for the relevant league.
- 3.6.2 Any system may be used in the **Premier I** and **Premier II** Leagues, but Brown Sticker and HUM systems may only be used provided at least 2 weeks' notice of such systems is given to the captain of the opposing team with a full description of the system or convention and suitable defence(s) thereto. The opposing team shall have sole seating rights against competitors playing such systems and may consult a written defence during the bidding.
- 3.6.3 Any pair in any doubt as to the eligibility of their chosen methods should apply, to the Convener of the Laws & Ethics Committee of the Union for guidance.
- 3.6.4 The Organiser shall apply Rule 8 below if any team uses unapproved methods.
- 3.6.5 Each pair shall have two properly completed convention cards which shall be deemed to provide a complete statement of their methods. In the absence of such the Tournament Director, if the bid does not correspond with the hand, will normally rule that misinformation has been given, rather than that the hand has been misbid.
- 4 Promotion and Relegation**
- 4.1.1 At the end of each season the lowest placed team in the **Premier I** League shall be relegated to the **Premier II** League. The place left vacant shall be filled by the leading team in **Premier II**.

- 4.1.2 Provided the second team in **Premier II** wishes they shall play off against the seventh team in **Premier I** over 28 boards, the arrangements to be made by the **Premier I** Organiser. The **Premier I** team must win by 1 IMP or more to retain its place for the following season otherwise it is relegated to **Premier II**.
- 4.1.3 If the second team in **Premier II** does not wish to play then the seventh team in **Premier I** shall remain in **Premier I**.
- 4.2.1 The winning team in the **Senior** League play-offs is entitled, if they wish, to promotion to **Premier II**. If the number of teams in **Premier II** thereby would exceed 8, then the lowest-placed team in **Premier II** shall be relegated to the **Senior** League.
- 4.2.2 If the runners-up in the **Senior** League play-offs wish to compete in **Premier II**, they shall, if necessary, play-off with the seventh placed team in **Premier II**. The **Premier II** team must win by 1 IMP or more to retain its place for the following season; otherwise it shall be relegated to the **Senior** League.
- 4.2.3 If the second team in the **Senior** League does not wish to play then the seventh team in **Premier II** shall remain in **Premier II**. The **Premier II** Organiser shall be responsible for the playoffs described in this paragraph.
- 4.3 At the end of each season the winning team in a **Novice, Intermediate B and Intermediate A** League is entitled to promotion to the League immediately ranked above that of the winning team. Winning teams may remain in their league if suitably qualified. But Regular members who win the League in two successive years may not play in that or a lower League the following year.

## **5 Changes in Formation of Teams and Eligibility**

- 5.1.1 Each team shall consist of between 4 and 6 Regular members; there is no limit to the number of substitute members. Each member must be a member in good standing of a club affiliated to the Union, at the time they first play for the team, and must not be otherwise ineligible [some grounds for ineligibility and definitions of membership are given in Section 5 below].
- 5.1.2 Every team must designate, in writing, to the Secretary on or before a specified date (see Para. 2.2.2), four, at least, of its members as **regular** members. Additional regular members may be similarly notified during the season. Designation of **regular** team members can have important consequences as outlined in the following rules.
- 5.1.3 All notifications of team members must include the Master-Points numbers of the team members.
- 5.2.1 Regular team members can play in any number of the team's matches. Other regular members notified during the season are also permitted to play in any number of matches.
- 5.2.2 Additional members may be designated as substitute members and these are only permitted to play in less than one-third of the team's matches. A substitute member becomes a regular member if they play in one-third or more of the matches from the date they exceed that number. A regular member, who does not play one-third of the matches, will, after the season is over, be treated as a substitute member for the purposes of Rule 5.6 below. Teams may re-designate a regular player as a substitute provided they still qualify as such, and at least 4 players remain as regular members.

- 5.3 It is up to each Captain to ascertain the eligibility of additional team members.
- 5.4 In the case of **Novice, Intermediate A** and **Intermediate B** Leagues no proposed member of a team or substitute is eligible if that member is registered as a player of a category higher than that of the League in which the member is intending to play.
- 5.5 In the case of **Senior** and **Premier** Leagues no regular member of a team or substitute is eligible if that player has played a match in a higher league or division as a Regular member in the current season. Matches played for a higher league team prior to the player becoming a regular member of a team are acceptable.
- 5.6 A regular member of a relegated team may only play in the division or league, from which they have been relegated, in the following season as a substitute.
- 5.7 A substitute member of a relegated team may play in the higher division or league.
- 5.8 No regular member of any team may play, either as a regular or substitute member, in a lower division or League.
- 5.9 Except as provided in Section 3.1.4 no player may play, either as a regular or substitute member, for more than one team in any league or division.

**Rules 5.10 - 5.15 apply in particular to the Premier League and its divisions.**

- 5.10 After promotions and relegations in Division I of the **Premier** League, if the number of entries falls below 8, the vacancy or vacancies may not be filled by reorganisation of existing teams in Division I from the previous season but from the relegated team or teams or from teams that were members of Division II in the previous year, normally according to their position in that division in the previous year. The organisation of this to be decided by the Secretary or referred to the Laws & Ethics Committee.
- 5.11.1 After promotions and relegations in Division II of the **Premier** League, if the number of entries falls below 8 the vacancy or vacancies may not be filled by reorganisation of existing teams in Division II from the previous season.
- 5.11.2 Such a vacancy or vacancies may only be filled from the relegated team or teams together with teams from the Senior League invited by the Secretary to play in playoffs for such positions.
- 5.12.1 In the Divisions I and II of the **Premier** League if any team wishes, from season to season, to change its **regular** personnel the following rules apply.  
a) Only team members designated as **regular** members in the previous season have rights in decisions pertaining to changes in personnel  
b) Two members of a team cannot be considered a team.  
A team is only deemed to remain in being if a majority of the players (at least 3 of those designated as **regular** team members in the previous season) wish to continue playing together in the future.
- 5.12.2 If this condition is satisfied, the team may submit an entry by the addition of suitable eligible players, excepting where 6 players of the original team were designated as **regular** team members and the six wish to split into two equal parts in which case 5.12.3 applies.

- 5.12.3 If the team splits into two equal parts the Organiser shall require the two resulting teams to play off for the place. The winning team shall be the team winning by 1 Imp or more. The losing team shall be relegated to the Premier II or **Senior** League. Both teams will be considered to have entered the Leagues for the season and should have paid the appropriate entry fee.
- 5.12.4 If two or more teams of the same division wish to re-arrange **regular** personnel then, unless the number of teams would thereby increase, the Organiser shall normally acquiesce in the re-arrangements unless they are contested by regular members of one of the teams involved, when Section 5.12.3 shall apply.
- 5.13 If for any other reason a team does not accept its rightful place the vacancy shall be filled at the discretion of the Secretary.
- 5.14 If a team does not complete at least two-thirds of its matches, then none of its regular members shall be eligible to play in the **Premier** League in any capacity the following season. Individual players with good reason may apply to the Laws and Ethics Committee for a waiver of this rule. Application should be made by 30<sup>th</sup> April.

## **6 Scoring Methods and Concessions**

- 6.1 If a team completes fewer than half its matches, then none of its results shall count.
- 6.2 All matches shall be scored by International Match Points [Imps] converted to Victory Points [VPs] on the scale set out in the Appendix hereto.
- 6.3 The final placings in each division shall be decided on VP aggregates.
- 6.4.1 No team may concede during a match (except for reasons of ill-health) unless the opposing team has already established a lead sufficient to score a maximum victory (currently 20 VPs).
- 6.4.2 If a concession is made on health grounds then, if the other team has a lead sufficient to give 12 VPs or more it shall be awarded that score, else it shall be awarded 12 VPs. The conceding team will be awarded the remaining VPs.
- 6.4.3 The Tournament Director may, at his discretion, as a substitute complete, or ask a spectator as a substitute to complete, the match in the place of the ill player. Similar provisions apply as under 3.1.4 above.
- 6.4.4 Wilful violation of this rule shall invoke standard Union penalties for refusing to complete a fixture. The match will be scored as under 6.5 or 6.4.2.
- 6.5 If a team concedes a match before the start of the match the opposing team shall be awarded 12 VPs or the average number of VPs scored over all that teams other matches, both before and after the conceded match, whichever is the greater. The offending team shall receive 0 VPs.
- 6.6 Subject to any request for postponement made under Rule 3.3.3 and to the result of a postponed match, any team failing to turn up for a match or being more than 30 minutes late for the start of a match shall receive 0 VPs.

- 6.7 If a team completes a match in good faith and it is subsequently discovered that the opposition has fielded an ineligible player, the non-offending team shall be awarded 12 VPs or the average number of VPs scored in all their other matches (both before and after that match) or the score actually obtained in the match, whichever is the greater. The offending team shall receive 0 VPs.

## **7 Breaking of Ties**

- 7.1.1 If two or more teams finish with the same VP total, the tie shall be broken by (in descending order) :-  
a) most points on a scale of 2 for a win and 1 for a draw then  
b) the result of the direct match in VPs.
- 7.1.2 If a tie still exists, then if required for prize money, qualification for a further competition or for decisions on relegation, the teams should play a further 28 board match, 1 Imp deciding. Followed if necessary by 4 boards sets until the tie is broken.
- 7.2 Conceded matches shall be assessed to have scored as minus 50 Imps.

## **8 Penalties for Rule Infractions**

- 8.1 Slow Play
- 8.1.1 Penalties may be imposed against any team whose members, in the Tournament Director's opinion, are guilty of slow play. The penalty for slow play during any set of 6/7 boards is 1VP. A penalty may be imposed for slow play during each and every set of 6/7 boards.
- 8.1.2 'Slow play' is the inability to maintain a playing speed of 7 boards plus scoring per 55 minutes. When 6 boards are being played 50 minutes is allowed.
- 8.1.3 Any competitor who considers that an opponent or opponents are, in his opinion, playing slowly should call the Tournament Director's attention to the situation else the Tournament Director shall consider each pair to be equally guilty of slow play.
- 8.1.4 The Tournament Director may, at his discretion, rule that one or more boards of the set cannot be played, in which case the penalties for not completing 28 boards may at the Tournament Directors discretion be invoked.
- 8.1.5 Any penalty may be withdrawn if the Tournament Director is satisfied that the team members have recovered lost time.
- 8.1.6 The Tournament Director may issue a warning to a table following which the 1VP penalty set out in 8.1.1 above shall apply to any table in that match which fails to complete a stanza within the allotted time.
- 8.1.7 The Tournament Director may apportion the responsibility for slow play between the two pairs involved. The Tournament Director may monitor or appoint a person to monitor to assess the responsibility for the speed of play either on request of one of the players or of his own volition.
- 8.2 Non-completion of 28 boards
- 8.2.1 If a match is running behind schedule the Tournament Director shall decide the number of boards to be played in the last set of boards.

- 8.2.2 In Premier 1 and 2 and the Senior Leagues failure to complete the prescribed number of boards in time shall attract an automatic penalty of 2 VPs on both teams where the competitors have not drawn the Tournament Director's attention to slow play. In other Leagues it shall be at the Tournament Director's discretion.
- 8.2.3 The Tournament Director shall have the power to impose further penalties up to an additional 3 VPs for what is, in his opinion, excessively slow play, or deliberately slow play.
- 8.3 Use of unapproved methods
- 8.3.1 The conventions and systems permitted to be used in each league are described in Rule 3 of these Rules.
- 8.3.2 The penalty for using any unapproved convention(s) or system(s) is 2 VPs or such other penalty as the Tournament Director, to a maximum of 6 VPs, may decide is just and equitable.
- 8.3.3 The Tournament Director may award the non-offending side such part, up to the whole, of the penalty where he thinks they have suffered.
- 8.3.4 The use of unapproved methods must cease upon discovery: continued use shall entail concession in addition to the penalty already incurred.
- 8.4 Late arrival
- 8.4.1 A team is late if one or more playing members of that team are not seated and ready to play at the advertised starting time. Warnings and penalties apply to the team as a whole rather than to any individual or to any partnership within a team.
- 8.4.2 The penalties described below apply to each separate match.
- 8.4.2.1 There will be a penalty of 1 VP for any team not seated at the advertised starting time, save that a warning will be issued in lieu of a penalty for the first offence of no more than 10 minutes of lateness.
- 8.4.2.2 Thereafter for each portion of 10 minutes late or part thereof up to 30 minutes late, there shall be an additional 1VP penalty. The Tournament Director may after discussion with the non-offending sides Captain reduce the number of boards to be played.
- 8.4.3 Subject to any request for postponement made under Rule 3.3.3 and to the result of a postponed match, if a team is more than 30 minutes late the match is abandoned due to late arrival and the match shall be treated as conceded by the offending team.
- 8.4.4 A team which feels that it can demonstrate good cause for late arrival may apply to the League Organiser for a waiver or relaxation of any penalty.

- 8.5 Fouled stanza
- 8.5.1 A stanza is fouled if teams sit in the same direction in both rooms and the error is not discovered until the end of the stanza or, after two thirds of the boards in that stanza have been played.
- 8.5.2 When a stanza is fouled the stanza is abandoned and scored as 0 imps to both teams. The match will still be scored as if had been played in full.
- 8.5.3 When a stanza is fouled both teams shall be penalized 1.5 VPs.

## **9 Notification of Results**

- 9.1 All results, including those of re-arranged matches, must be received, in writing or email, by the Organiser or the Secretary within 48 hours of the completion of the match. The Tournament Director will also accept results. The Organiser may, at his discretion, penalise any infraction.
- 9.2 The information to be notified must include :-
- a) the names and Master Point numbers of all members of both teams playing in the match,
  - b) the actual IMP scores of both teams, and
  - c) the signature of both captains, or if by email similar evidence of agreement.
- 9.3 The Organiser or the Secretary should ensure that all results and the up-to-date positions within each division are posted on the Union web-site and are available at the start of each session.
- 9.4.1 The captain of any team may apply to the Organiser within 96 hours of the completion of a match for an adjustment to the score submitted to the Organiser.
- 9.4.2 The Organiser, after inviting and considering any submission made by the opposing captain, shall rule on the application for an adjusted score.

## **10 Appeals**

- 10.1 Any appeal against decisions or rulings, either of the Secretary, the Organiser or of a Tournament Director, shall be made in the prescribed fashion to the Laws & Ethics Committee of the Union. Appeals against a decision of a Tournament Director shall be subject to the normal procedure.

Schedule

## LEAGUE 2017 - 2018

### ENTRY FORM

<b>League</b>	
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<b>Captain</b> e-mail address Home telephone number Mobile phone number	
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<b>Team Members (Put an R after Regular members names</b>	<b>Master Point No.</b>
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

<b>Notes:</b> [1] All players must be members of a club affiliated to the NIBU at the date of entry. [2] The entry fee is £160 per team, reduced if fewer than seven matches, due and payable on the first night. [3] Rules of the competition are published on the NIBU website.
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