



Cheating in Bridge Bangkok, May 17 2024

Short historical overview

Actions taken by EBL, ACBL and WBF

Reflection: where are we today

Questions and answers





Short historical overview - 1

Cheating is of all times, in all sports, also fighting it is a never ending story

In bridge, for decades there has been (un)proved cheating, all over the world

Last century: unauthorized signals like smoke, foot tapping, voice, hand positions, peeking

As a result we have got screens above and under table, bidding boxes, trays etc.

This century: more 'advanced' methods popped up, more difficult to detect/prove





Short historical overview - 2

For example: orientation of playing & bidding cards, placement of pens/paper, coughing

As a result we need(ed) more advanced counter measures like camera's, big data analysis

Online bridge has grown considerably, many new national and international platforms

Luckily, nowadays there is much more awareness, attention and realism: let the facts speak

Not only in the bridge community, also within the governing bodies cheating is taken seriously





Actions taken by EBL, ACBL and WBF - 1

2014: EBL put camera's at European National Team Championships, WBF followed in 2015

2015: EBL set up small Investigation Committee, handling some famous cases FS, FN, BZ, PS

2017: ACBL started Anti Cheating Committee comprised of int'l players and administrators

2018: ACBL & bigger NBO's also install camera's in their top events: broadcast + anti cheat





Actions taken by EBL, ACBL and WBF - 2

2020: Covid leads to exponential growth of online bridge, unfortunately with massive cheating

2020: Bridge community starts to revolt, WBF urgently has to show leadership or lose it

2020: WBF approves new Disciplinary Code on November 27, a very important date!

2020: WBF appoints Investigation Committee including also legal, technical and bridge experts





WBF Disciplinary Code Nov 27,2022 - 1

WBF reaffirms its institutional position as the Governing Body of Bridge, no other interference

WBF shares view of the bridge community, cheating threatens image and fairness of our sport

WBF fully supports fighting cheating and improper behaviour, adopting all measures needed

WBF claims jurisdiction also for events organised by third parties (both in-person or online)





WBF Disciplinary Code Nov 27,2022 - 1

This approval of the new disciplinary code brought tranquility in the bridge community, but..

We have to put one's money where one's mouth is: fighting for a clean game is not for free

External experts, licenses, storage, top class bridge players cost some tens of thousands \$/€

Are we sure our NBO's will agree to spend a few % of our income to a fight for a clean game?





WBF Investigation Committee - 1

WBF IC has 1 chairperson, 1 vice chairperson, 7 members and 1 secretary, all volunteers

Cases have in principal to be investigated and prosecuted by the relevant Zone or NBO

If NBO or Zone is unable or unwilling to take a case, the WBF can investigate and/or prosecute

WBF will only handle cases of players that are in WBF database and have been active last 5 yr





WBF Investigation Committee - 2

WBF will take a case where reprehensible conduct has occurred in both WBF and other events

If requested WBF IC will assist a Zone or NBO with process, data collection and -anonymisation

WBF IC may appoint external experts where appropriate (big data, image recognition, polling)

WBF IC until today has handled 7 cases, 1 has been sent to the WBF prosecutor





Where are we today? - 1

WBF IC has received hundreds of 'tips', complaints, gossips or 'clear proves' of cheating

WBF IC has created a big dataset of clean boards where cases statistically can be tested against

WBF IC has developed procedures to investigate collusive cheating and self kibitzing cases

On defense and leads more easy: we show 1 hand, we show also hand partner and full board





Where are we today? - 2

We scan participants of a WBF/EBL championship, partly a paid service of Nicolas Hammond

Nowadays collusive cheating on higher level is mostly client-sponsor partnerships, lazyness

Nicolas Hammond data/statistics shows on the online clubs still a lot of collusive cheating exist

Cheating toplevel partnerships came down considerably, they know big brother is watching





New development: tablets for bidding

2022: EBL tests digital bidding box (DBB) during youth teams championships in June
71 tables, survey shows players and directors are very positive

2022: EBL tests DBB during Championscup in November
12 tables, survey shows players and directors are very positive

2023: EBL uses DBB in all of it's championships, WBF also in youth teams and BB KO's





Tablets for bidding: advantages

no more: unauthorized information possible by use of tray, bidding cards, bidding box

no more: insufficient bids or bids out of turn, discussion about BIT, alerts and results

no more: Bridgemates, much quieter in playing area, no next board without result entered

bidding of all tables for everybody live available for analysis, comparison, directors, IC



Tablets for bidding: disadvantages

costs

software

tablets

transport

handling

dependancy of technology

WiFi network





Questions and answers

