



**MINUTES OF THE 2nd MEETING
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Austin, Texas
Sunday, 28th November at 09:00**

In Attendance

Mr Gianarrigo Rona, President in the Chair
Mr José Damiani, President Emeritus
Mr Al Levy, 1st Vice President
Mr Jan Kamras, Hon. Secretary
Mr Marc de Pauw, Treasurer
Mr Marcelo Caracci, Member
Mr Nader Hanna, Member
Mr Eric Laurant, Member
Mr Bernard Pascal, Member
Mr Douglas (Kip) Rotchell, Member
Mr Adam Wildavsky, Member

Also, in Attendance

Mr David Harris, General Counsel
Ms Arianna Testa, Secretary to the Executive Council

By invitation of the President

Mrs Georgia Heth, ACBL President and Honour Committee Member

Attending via Zoom

Mr Fernando Lema, Member
Mr Gilad Ofir, Member
Mrs Suzi Subeck, Member

Excused

Mr Patrick Choy, 2nd Vice President
Mr Giorgio Duboin, Member
Mrs Helen Kruger, Member
Mr Kirubakara Moorthy, Member
Mrs Kari-Anne Opsal, Member
Mrs Janice Seamon-Molson, Member
Mrs Esther Sophonpanich, Member
Mr Ben Thompson, Member
Ms Wang Yannan, Member

The President called the meeting to order at 09:10. He declared that there was a quorum, and the meeting proceeded as follows.

1. Investigation Committee (Agenda item 8)

The President asked Mr Eric Laurant, Chairman of the WBF Investigation Committee to present his report.

Mr Laurant reported about the activity of the Investigation Committee during the year 2021.

He informed that the FISU case is still open and that the teams involved are continuously asking about the progress of the investigation. The President assured that Wang Yannan is available to help getting in touch with the players that are currently unreachable and not included of the WBF database.

Mr Kamras suggested that for the future, the players participating in an event under the patronage of the WBF must be at least members of an NBO.

During the discussion, Mr Laurant explained that BBO is no longer providing connection data for privacy reasons which is an important issue to consider for the future cases. Connection data cannot be shared with third parties before the official decision to prosecute. In the official events the players won't be able to play with nicknames, they will have to use their real name. The analysis of the hands requires human resources that are the more and more reluctant to cooperate.

The President and the Council thanked Mr Laurant.

2. Updating Disciplinary and Juridical Matters (Agenda item 10)

The President asked the General Counsel to report about the juridical matters.

General Counsel informed the Committee of the significant details of the CAS decision in the second case brought by Pierre Zimmermann, the first application having already been dismissed with a significant cost award made in favour of the WBF. The second application dealt with PZ challenging the new Eligibility Code introduced in December 2019 that he sought to have overturned. In particular PZ sought to argue that the ". . . waiting period (for him to again represent the Country of his birth) should be construed as 2 x 365 days rather than 2 full calendar years commencing on 1st of January"; CAS did not agree with the interpretation suggested by PZ. Secondly there was a challenge that Frank Multon should be entitled to seek a change in his *Bona Fide residence* with effect from 15 December 2020.

CAS determined that neither PZ nor FM had been affected by the new Code as it had not been applied against them at the stage that the Appeal was made; in those circumstance the new code could not have affected the sporting rights and interests of the Appellants. Other procedural challenges that were made were also considered to be without merit and all the reliefs sought were dismissed. The Appellants were ordered to pay the costs of the Arbitration and also ordered to pay the sum of 10,000CHF to the WBF towards its costs given the lack of merit in any of the matters brought by the Appellants.

On the German Doctors case, the General Counsel reported that the Doctors have filed a complaint against the WBF for having violated their private life by diffusing their video which was in realty a live streaming of the event.

The President and the Members of the Management Committee thanked the General Counsel sharing unanimously his report.

3. World Championships (Agenda item 11)

The President reported about the 2021 World Teams Championship to be held in Salsomaggiore Terme, Italy 27th March – 9th April 2022. Soon the conditions of contest will be published with the details of the requirements and restrictions due to COVID-19.

Mr Levy and Mr Wildavsky proposed to consider an online event in case of impossibility of running the traditional World Championships.

The Executive Council delegates the Organizing Committee of the Championships to define the final details of the event depending on the evolution of the pandemic and according to the number of the attending teams.

In case of more important decision the President will call an extraordinary Executive Council Meeting.

The President reported about 2022 World Youth Open Championship, Salsomaggiore Terme, Italy, that are confirmed in August from the 2nd until the 9th with all the usual categories including the U31. The final details will be defined with the LOC and then the event will be officially announced and the 1st Info-letter forwarded.

The President reported about the 2023 World Teams Championship to be held in Marrakech, Morocco, 21st October – 4th November. After the election of the new President, Abdellatif Belkouch, the Royal Moroccan Federation confirmed their enthusiasm for the organization of the Championships. In the middle of March there will be a meeting to start defining the terms of the contracts. Mr. Bernard Pascal confirmed that Morocco is ready to host the event and Zone 8 will give its total support to achieve a successful result.

Mr Rotchell informed the Council that due to the size of the event, Bermuda is not able to host the 2025 World Teams Championships since the renovations of the venue will start in a while and is not sure that it will be ready for the organization. The President proposed to split the events and have the Bermuda Bowl and the Venice Cup in Bermuda, to maintain the traditional recurrence of the Bermuda bowl's anniversary, and the D'Orsi Trophy and the Wuhan Cup in another location. The Council unanimously agreed. Mr Rotchell will investigate this possibility.

The President informed the Council that Montreal is interested in organizing the 2026 World Bridge Series. A small organizing committee will be appointed to start the dialogue.

The President reported that for the 2024 World Bridge Games, , thanks to the good offices of Sevinç Atay, there is a proposal from Turkey. A restricted Committee will be appointed by the President to start the contacts with the Turkish Federation and its new President Mrs. Başkan Yasemin Merçil.

Concerning the World Bridge Series 2022, the President remarked that the matter has been already discussed during the Treasurer Report. The Championship will be held in Wroclaw from 19th August – 3rd September 2022 and that the negotiation are in progress to define and sign the contract with the Polish Bridge Union.

The Council thanked the President and unanimously approved his report.

4. Youth Matters (Agenda item 12)

The President presented the item concerning the Youth eligibility for Representative World Championships.

The Eligibility Code does not specify the kind of link that a junior player must have with a country to be eligible to represent it. The Executive Council approved to ask for a specific link with the country for a junior player to play representing a different country from his own. Mr Wildavsky voted against the proposal. The President asked the General Counsel and the Chairman of the Credential Committee to prepare the text to be submitted to the approval of the Executive Council/Management Committee.

Mr Ofir confirmed that in February 2022 the Online World Teams Championship, organized as a League will continue as it used to be before the pandemic.

The President informed that starting from the next University Online Championship, the rules of the WBF will be applied.

5. WBF Meetings 2022 (Agenda item 14)

The President informed that the upcoming meetings of the Executive Council are planned during the World Teams Championship in Salsomaggiore Terme, Italy, 27th March – 3rd April and in Wroclaw, Poland, 2nd – 9th September, where also the Congress will be held on 3rd September. The Management Committee will meet in Funchal, Portugal, June 2022. All the useful information will be provided in due time.

6. Zonal Presidents Reports (Agenda item 15)

The President thanked and congratulated the Presidents of the Zones for their reports and the job done.

Mr Levy stated that the players were pleasantly surprised by the online events organized for the trials.

The following reports previously circulated within the members.

ZONE 1

Dear Gianarrigo, dear colleagues

I am pleased to report on our activities since my last report in November 2020.

General and Financial

We are still 46 NBOs but one, Albania, is under threat of suspension for being 2 years in arrear with its annual dues. The total of registered individual members in the NBOs has decreased from about 365.000 to about 340.000. Based on what we hear from some NBOs we expect a further decrease in 2021. These decreases are obviously related to the Covid-19 pandemic, whereby there are large differences between NBOs in terms of relative decreases.

We had to ultimately postpone the European National Teams Championships (“ENTC”), again, from 2021 to 2022. We also had to postpone the Youth Championships into 2022. We did manage to stage some events though – please see below.

The Executive Committee continued holding its meetings by video conferencing. Our first face-to-face meetings were held in Slovakia, during the Champions’ Cup in November. Everyone was excited to see each other again after almost two years.

The aftermath of the many cheating allegations and convictions emanating from private online events for elite players during 2020 demanded a lot of attention and resulted, among other things, in the changes to the WBF Disciplinary Code and creation of an Investigation Committee to take over such matters from the HLPC (and hopefully also from private groups). The EBL is also changing its Code accordingly, and we assume other Zones will follow suit.

Controversy was created, and emotions stirred, during the EBL Qualification event (see below) when players and even NBOs refused to play against a team that included a player having previously been convicted of collusive cheating by the EBL Disciplinary Commission (a verdict that was later partially set aside by CAS on appeal). Harmonizing actions are called for by and between NBOs, and this and related matters will be a main topic during the EBL NBO Officers’ Seminar in January 2022. In preparation, this will be preceded by a high-level meeting among the largest NBO’s in early December. I think it also needs to be discussed in the WBF Executive or Management Committees.

Financially, 2020 ended with a deficit of about €30.000, in line with the projection in my last report. For 2021 we now project a small profit. The budget for 2022 is very uncertain and depends largely on what happens with the ENTC on Madeira. The local government institutions had originally (pre pandemic for the original 2020 event) committed some €300.000 to the organisation but is now threatening to withdraw most of it. Negotiations are ongoing but we will need to slim down the costs to a bare minimum.

Championships

When the WBF announced its intention to stage the WTC in late 2021 or early 2022 the EBL had to quickly find a way to determine which NBOs should fill the Zone 1 quotas. This is normally determined by the results from the ENTC which however, as mentioned above, were cancelled. Due to the pandemic, it was impossible to

arrange a fully face-to-face event and the idea of arranging a qualification online was born. We decided early on that it needed to be done completely differently from how such events had hitherto been organised, in order to ensure complete integrity with the apparently rampant cheating in online events last year still fresh in our minds. I am reporting separately on how this was achieved. After an enormous amount of planning and thanks to the cooperation of NBOs, TDs, Observers, staff, players and the people at RealBridge, the qualification was held during one week in August. Judging by reactions from participants and organisers alike it was very successful and sportingly fair. It was obviously marred by the controversy referred to above which however, fortunately, did not affect the final result in terms of WTC qualification.

The 13th Small Federation Games were held face-to-face in Vilnius/Lithuania in the last days of September. Despite the Covid-related restrictions 10 NBOs participated which, under the circumstances, was quite satisfactory. The host federation lead by Erikas Vainikonis did a great job in organising the event, which was won by Ukraine ahead of Lithuania and Serbia.

The 19th European Champions' Cup was held, also face-to-face, in Pezinok/Slovakia 11th-13th November 2021, having been postponed from 2020. The host federation lead by Peter Belcak and his team performed admirably in arranging the event. As if this year had not already had more than its fair share of "firsts", a player (who had not yet played) was testing positive for Covid-19 on arrival, albeit with a rather low viral count (typical for fully vaccinated persons). Thanks to a mammoth effort by our hosts, we arranged for every single participant and staff, some 100 persons in total, to be tested early the next morning. Play was postponed until the results came in later that day. Fortunately, no one else tested positive (the vaccine works!) and play could resume. It was an expensive exercise, but we did not want to take any chances. The winner was Bergen Akademiske (Norway) ahead of Bridge Contact (Switzerland) and BK Lavec (Sweden).

Other Events

The 10th NBO Officers' Seminar was held in Prague/Czech Rep. 31st January-2nd February 2020, with 29 NBOs represented by 58 participants.

As usual the seminar covered a variety of topics, most selected by the NBOs themselves, in both plenary and group sessions.

The 8th TD Workshop will be held in Budapest/Hungary at the time of the WBF EC meetings in Austin.

Meetings

- We held 4 EC meetings by video conferencing before our recent face-to-face meeting in Slovakia. We also held several MC and other committee meetings by video conferencing.

- I also attended several WBF MC and other committee meetings by video conferencing.

Upcoming Events (subject to the development of the pandemic)

- EBL NBO Officers' Seminar in Larnaca/Cyprus, January 28-29, 2022.
- European National Teams Championships in Funchal, Madeira/Portugal, June 12-22 2022.
- European National Women and Seniors Pairs Championships in Funchal, Madeira/Portugal, 12-15 June 2022.
- European National Youth Teams Championships in Veldhoven/the Netherlands, July 20-26, 2022.
- Small Federation Games at a location to be decided, September-October 2022.
- European Champions' Cup in Helsinki/Finland, November 10-12, 2022.

In closing, I wish to express my personal thanks and appreciation to my colleagues on the Executive Committee, our employees in Switzerland and France as well as all the dedicated staff working so tirelessly and professionally during our events.

I wish everyone a successful Executive Council meeting and look forward to seeing you again in person.

ZONE 2 USBF

2021 NABF Zonal Championship Report

The United States Bridge Championships (USBCs) are the Zone 2 Zonal Championship.

In 2021, because of concerns about COVID19, the USBF postponed the USBCs from their normal May dates to October, and held the Knockout stages of all four USBCs (Open, Women's, Senior, and Mixed) face-to-face in an electronic environment.

The Women's USBC, with only 4 teams entered, was entirely a Knockout event. The other 3 three USBCs started with an online Round Robin on RealBridge to reduce the field to eight teams for KO play. The Seniors (10 teams) and Mixed (12 teams), played one complete Round Robin of 10 board matches for the Seniors and 9 board matches for the Mixed. The Open (21 teams) played two Round Robins: a 3-day complete Round Robin of 7 board matches, from which 12 teams qualified for a double Round Robin with 2 7-board matches between each pair of teams, after which the top 8 teams qualified for the face-to-face Knockout stages.

The knockout matches were played in a unique way, with 2 players (screenmates) in each room, playing on tablets running LoveBridge software. As usual, USA1 KO matches were 2 days long (120 boards). Because we were starting with 8 teams, the USA2 Quarterfinal and Semifinal matches were 1 day long (60 boards).

All of the players, staff, and volunteers were fully vaccinated against COVID19. Masks were required in all public areas of the hotel, which included the playing rooms. The USBF served breakfast and lunch "grab and go," with a limit of 6 players in the hospitality suite at any one time. To the best of our knowledge, no one who attended the USBCs caught COVID.

Although there were many players who expected to hate using tablets instead of cards, most found they liked it. Comments after the event included:

“I expected to hate it, and now I would choose it over any other format I’ve played. It creates camaraderie instead of animosity. Shocking... utterly unexpected. **The best thing to happen to bridge in my lifetime.**”

“I was skeptical but felt like it was obvious how much better it was not to have any UI from the other side of the screen.”

“Very positive experience ...and I suspect the product will improve over time”

“I didn’t [think] I would like the format but I loved it. It was speedy (no discussion amongst partners between hands). It eliminated some infractions (revoke, bidding out of turn, insufficient bids) etc which made the contests focused on bridge. Lastly, all alerts and explanations are documented and both opp received same info. For these 3 reasons (in that order), I loved it.”

“Thanks for introducing us to LoveBridge. I thought I would strongly dislike the entire atmosphere but, I love it!”

“I am shocked to say the event was brilliant. Never would I have imagined tablets are the way to go and separating the pairs.”

Even with the learning curve of a new way to do things, the tablets were a positive experience for the directors and organizer:

- There were no more debates about who took how much time when a table was slow,
as each action by each player has a time stamp;
- We didn’t have to worry about getting the boards onto the tables promptly at the start
of each segment;
- We didn’t have to make hundreds of boards;
- With 2 players in a room, discussion of director calls was simple and there were
substantially fewer UI issues.
- Security was significantly improved, eliminating concerns about illegal communication
between partners.
- There is a complete and accurate record of bidding and play from every table, for
review by players after the event, as well as for spectators and journalists, and there

was no need to recruit, train, pay and coordinate Vugraph operators.

- Vugraph commentators were able to integrate play from all of the tables into their

audio commentary, which was very popular with spectators.

After 30 days of play in the four events, the USBF teams for the 2021 World Bridge Teams Championship (subject to approval by the USBF Board) are:

BERMUDA BOWL:

USA1: Nick Nickell-Ralph Katz, Eric Greco-Geoff Hampson, Bobby Levin-Steve Weinstein, NPC Jill Levin

USA2: Warren Spector-Gavin Wolpert, Kevin Bathurst-John Hurd, Vince Demuy*-John

Kranyak, NPC Kent Mignocchi

VENICE CUP:

USA1: Pam Wittes-Shawn Quinn, Emma Kolesnik-Amber Lin, Cheri Bjerkan*-Rozanne

Pollack*, NPC Joe Stokes

USA2: Lynn Baker-Karen McCallum, Jill Meyers-Kerri Sanborn, Janice Molson-Sandra

Rimstedt*, NPC Sam Dinkin

WUHAN CUP:

USA1: Andrew Rosenthal-Debbie Rosenberg, Dana Berkkowitz-Eldad Ginossar, Migry

zur Campanile-Chris Willenken, NPC Jeff Aker

USA2: Linda Lewis-Paul Lewis, Disa Eythorsdottir-Mark Itabashi, Ljudmila Kamenova-

Ron Smith, NPC Kay Enfield

D'ORSI SENIOR BOWL:

USA1: Mike Levine-Eddie Wold, Mark Lair-Mike Passell, Jeff Meckstroth, NPC Bob Morris

USA2: Bart Bramley-Kit Woolsey, Dan Morse-Pratap Rajadhyaksha, Bob Hamman*-

Peter Weichsel*

*Players who have been added to qualified teams and approved by the USBF

Credentials Committee.

Adam Wildavsky, one of the NABF representatives to the WBF Executive Council, wrote

the following personal statement about playing in the 2021 Mixed USBC, and asked me

to include it with this report.

This September I spent six pleasant days in Schaumburg, IL, playing in the in-person stage of the USBF mixed trials where we used LoveBridge tablets for the first time. This is a report of my experience with them.

Some bridge players are traditional "I must hold the cards in my hands" and "I need the feel of the table" types. I understand these, but I am not one myself. I love the game for the unique challenges posed by its mechanics. Thus I enjoy playing online as well as I do in person. That said, I found that LoveBridge combines the best of both worlds. While we introduced it in the USBF primarily due to concerns over COVID-19 it has shown a myriad of other benefits.

I found the game more social, not less. Sharing playing space with one opponent we were free to chat as much or as little as we liked. The game moved more quickly than usual for a number of reasons. And not only does collusive cheating become much more difficult, many of the everyday problems of Unauthorized Information or Misinformation are reduced or eliminated. When UI and MI do arise, the TDs are much better placed to deal with them than in a traditional format because they have a complete record of what has been typed and the timing of every call and play.

I knew that tablets would be a boon for spectators and journalists because of the wealth of information available after the fact - a complete record of the bidding and play at every table, along with written explanations. What I did not anticipate was the treasure trove of data that would be available to the players. Each of us was provided with a report showing, for instance, every play where we missed an opportunity to make or set a contract, or where we gave an opponent an unnecessary opportunity to do so. These reports are not perfect, because they rely solely on double-dummy analysis, but they are amazingly useful. We are also given information we hadn't previously realized we'd find useful, such as which of us makes more or fewer unusual calls, that is, calls that are not duplicated by other players. While some statistics are made available only to the players themselves, out of concerns for privacy, I'm not shy and am happy to share mine. You can see them here:

<https://stats.lovebridge.com/>

username: USAJ496069 password: 7sB01Y00Ci

This deal is a good example. Usually I know when I've made a mistake, though sadly only in retrospect. Here I had no idea that I had missed a chance to set 2H until LoveBridge pointed it out:

<https://vugraph.lovebridge.com/screen/usbc/2314?screen=replay&ns=26046&board=49&session=2&cindex=11>

I urge every tournament organizer to consider using these wonderful tablets or something like them, if only on an experimental basis. The USBC had a maximum of eight tables in play at a time, so the logistics and the expense were manageable. I expect these to be more of a challenge for larger tournaments, but using tablets will simplify some matters as well.

Jan Martel, USBF COO and tournament manager

ZONE 2 Canada

The ACBL has done a great job in helping many bridge clubs in North America survive the pandemic over the past 20 months. The ACBL sanctioned online club games provided a lifeline to the clubs, and replaced the in-person club games. The online club games also helped keep many bridge players engaged with their clubs and with the game they love. However, despite the online games, we still lost a number of major brick and mortar clubs permanently.

At the national level, the 2020 and 2021 Canadian team championships were also successfully held online. In both cases participation was more than 50% higher than the 2019 in-person championships.

However, similar to many NBOs, we have experienced a significant decrease in membership due to the pandemic. Deaths from COVID-19, dislike/discomfort with online play, and the increasing concern about cheating in online games, are all contributing factors to the decrease in membership. At the same time, recruitment of new members, which typically takes place at the bridge clubs, became almost non-existent.

Looking Forward

The outlook is quite uncertain for when bridge activities will start getting back to normal, and how long it'll take to reach pre-pandemic levels (membership, tournaments, attendance, etc.)

Despite the fact that more than 92% of Canadians in the 60+ age group (i.e. the vast majority of bridge players) are fully vaccinated, many bridge players are not ready to travel to tournaments or play at a club in person. Several clubs which recently started offering in-person games, reported poor attendance. Once again that does not bode well for recruiting new members and increasing membership levels in the near future.

Canada-Mexico Zonal Playoff

The Canada-Mexico playoffs for the World Team Championships in Salsomaggiore are scheduled to take place in Mexico, January 15-16, 2022. Online matches are a possibility but have not been agreed to yet. Limited MBF resources are an issue that is delaying final arrangements for the playoffs.

ZONE 3

Given the current epidemiological situation, online bridge has been strengthened and that has been taken as an opportunity by several of our countries.

Real Bridge was added to the BBO platform, which is now in use for zonal, local, and transnational events

With the idea of being able to self-finance new promotional projects in the area, we have implemented transnational tournaments for both social and competitive players. These events (tournaments stratified by teams and pairs) have given us access to social players, who rarely participated in competitions. With this, we have two objectives, first to generate ties of friendship between players from all the countries in the area, strengthening the relationship between our countries and second, it has allowed us to raise money to invest in training, in financial aid to the most complicated countries, and for the preparation of new projects for the promotion of the youth bridge.

In some countries we are already starting to play in clubs, and we hope that in 2022 we will have our activities normally.

Web site

We redesign and update our website, since it is our visible face, and we want to start giving more strength to its contents.

Situation by country

Argentina, Brazil and Chile

Good use of the increase in players connecting online, generating more associated players and a significant increase in online tournaments.

We have developed new online training courses for youth and adults. In Chile, new clubs were also associated, and the academic staff was consolidated, but classes in schools were suspended due to the pandemic.

Bolivia and Peru

Very immobilized by the Covid, they present a significant decrease in the number of associated players

Ecuador

The pandemic hasn't stopped the good work with youth from continuing. Weekly training and coaching sessions are currently being developed

Paraguay

Activity only through tournaments on BBO. The promotion processes are suspended due to the pandemic.

Venezuela

Online activities take place two days a week in the morning and every day in the afternoons, with the incorporation of new players, who previously played socially. Online classes are also being held, but with little youth participation. The difficult situation in the country means that many young people have emigrated abroad, and in addition, the internet connection is very poor.

Zonal Tournament

Our team selection process for the next world tournament took place in seven of our countries last October, on the Real Bridge platform. Gustavo Chediak and Fernando Pérez were in charge of the Direction and Bernardo Biondo acted as Reviewer.

Teams from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Venezuela participated in the Zonal. The teams classified for the next World Championship in the different categories were:

Open: Argentina and Uruguay Ladies: Brazil and Argentina Seniors: Argentina and Brazil Mixed: Chile and Argentina

ZONE 5

CACBF ZONE 5 PRESIDENTS REPORT

On behalf of my NBO's and Members it is indeed a pleasure to see you all here in person after a long 2 year hiatus.

Like the rest of the world, we have suffered in health, wealth and loss. Not just in the friends and family that succumbed to this nasty virus but the interaction and personal fellowship we have all taken for granted. Prior to the pandemic and because of our geographic disadvantages coupled with the exorbitant cost to visit each other's countries most face to face encounters generally only occurred every 2 years during our Zonal Championship's. Therefore, invoking the old saying ... if you are given lemons then make lemonade my Board initiated almost immediately (March 2020) the implementation of 3 online games a week. it soon became apparent that the eagerness to play overcame the lockdown blues and thereby quenched the thirst we were all subjected to.

These games were not just limited to pairs events but grew to include NBO Team, Mixed and Ladies games attracting in excess of 120 players. But more importantly, the net result was an integration of our members across the Zone never before seen. Suddenly a vague name became more familiar, and many friendships have been forged and cemented that without doubt will continue hereafter.

After a lot of effort and diligence performed by my Bermuda NBO it has become apparent that World Championships have outgrown this small island. It is now twice the size as the games were when they last hosted the event in 2000. Whilst splitting and hosting the tournament in 2 locations was investigated (there are only 2 suitable locations) the straw that broke the camel's back was the news that one of them is currently closed for renovations with no hint of when the work can start.

It is incumbent on me, as President of Zone 5 to speak on behalf of my Members and as such I feel the following needs to be said, recorded and acted upon. While we, the WBF, took the decision to reduce annual fees for 2020 and exempt the smaller NBO's entirely I can only assume this was done in recognition that face to face games were suspended along with regular fund raising tournaments. For this we are to be commended. However, as sound and compassionate as this logic is I have a tough time expecting my NBO's to pay their annual fees for 2021 when we in Central America and the Caribbean are still, as we meet here today, in lockdown. Nothing has changed from 2020 to 2021 and as you will see from the attached list most of my NBO's have yet to play face to face resulting no income whatsoever. I therefore am appealing to the Management Committee through this Executive Council to extend this gracious concession for 2021.

It behooves me having to repeatedly come to the table with my begging bowl seeking concessions, but the plain truth is pure mathematics. Somehow or another I have to find €16000.00 to pay the entry fees alone for all 4 disciplines at the World Championships next March. That in itself is a mammoth task let alone the ancillary expenses that we have partially subsidized for our NBO's over the years that now needs to be found. Failing which a reluctant decision to scale back representation may need to be invoked which cannot be good for the game.

So, in closing, I'm appealing to the Executive Council to seriously consider our plight in these distressing times and consider any financial assistance or subsidy that might be offered.

ZONE 7

[SPBF \(Zone 7\) report to the WBF Executive Committee](#)

November 2021

Australia and New Zealand (the countries) are both fortunate to now be at relatively high population vaccination levels, and relatively low case and hospitalization numbers. Club bridge in both countries has enjoyed substantial periods of face-to-face bridge. Interestingly club-based online bridge has remained quite popular

The Zone conducted a successful online zonal championship, testing at our relatively small scale the measures employed by Zone 1. We will be conducting an online tri-nations championship together with our friends from Indonesia in Zone 6 in December.

A significant concern for both NBOs sending teams to Salsomaggiore, and the players intending to participate at either Salsomaggiore or Wroclaw, is the health and safety protocols that will be in force – both international requirements, and the event protocols to be put in place by the WBF. Although it seems likely that quarantine requirements will no longer be required for fully vaccinated travels, it is not yet certain. And clearly, with bridge players' average age being greater than the general population, there are naturally concerns about risk exposure.

Zone 7 is keen for increased security protocols to be put in place for players with the most significant history of collusive cheating. It is incumbent on the administrative organs (such as the Zone 7 federation!) of our beautiful game to continually improve the processes, tools, and protocols we employ to prevent, obstruct and detect cheating.

Australia

National level competition briefly resumed in the first half in face-to-face mode but many events were cancelled or deferred as a result of significant recursion on covid. As a result, many deferred events are being held online in the last few months of 2021. The major Summer Festival will be conducted online before the popular Gold Coast Congress marks the return, hopefully permanent, of face-to-face major national events.

The ABF's new web-based entry management and player information system is now in use for all national events and some lower level ones. The system is gradually being enhanced to bring simpler and more functionality to the players.

New Zealand

The Delta outbreak in New Zealand particularly affected bridge in Auckland, which Auckland experiencing an extended lockdown. The traditional Inter-Provincial championship was quickly moved online as a result.

NZBridge has successfully prosecuted several cases against players who cheated online during the pandemic. While the occurrence is disappointing, NZBridge is committed to ensuring its players can enjoy a clean game.

In conclusion, while the Australian and New Zealand NBOs have experienced a reduction in members, playing activity, and revenue over the last 2 years, both started in a strong financial position and have been able to survive – and look forward to a resurgence in bridge.

7. Unfinished Business (Agenda item 17)

Mr Levy presented the request from Amaresh Deshpande to be reintegrated in the Youth Committee and to be invited to the WBF events. The Council discussed about the matter and agreed on waiting for outcome and results of the previous project to decide how to proceed.

The President brought a last item to the attention of the Council, the mail from Marek Malysza asking for a financial support for his research circulated in the morning, the

Executive Council unanimously delegates the President and the Treasurer to evaluate the entity of the support that WBF could give for the project.

Not being other items in Agenda, the President thanked the attendees for their great contribution to the works and at 14:00 declared closed the meeting that was adjourned *sine die*.