

LCBA LEAGUE RULES: 2015-16

1 LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

- 1.1 The League Secretary [hereinafter LS] is the Competition Controller responsible to the LCBA Executive Committee (the Tournament Organiser) for the proper administration of the LCBA League in accordance with EBU rules and guidelines.
- 1.2 He shall seek to operate the League to the benefit of the members of the LCBA.
- 1.3 He shall exercise these responsibilities in consultation with the League Subcommittee [hereinafter LSC].
- 1.4 The LS shall organise between one and three meetings of a League Forum each year to discuss long term and overall League management, structure and policy, and to keep the LSC informed of grass roots views. Each Affiliated Club [hereinafter Club] shall be entitled to send up to one delegate per team entered and each other participating body/group [hereinafter Group] one delegate to meetings of the forum. This entitlement to attend is additional to LSC members who are ex-officio members of the Forum. The second and third meetings may be cancelled with the express consent of both the LSC and a majority of the Club Delegates.

2 LEAGUE STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Applications, incorporating details of proposed venue and captain, from existing or prospective teams to participate in the League season 2015-16 must be sent to the LS by 30 June 2015, together with the entry fees. A surcharge of £5 per team may be applied to any late entries accepted.
[The corresponding date for the 2016-17 season is 30 June 2016.]
- 2.2 The League shall be organised in a single hierarchy of Divisions by the LSC acting in accordance with the document 'Determining the League Structure for the Season 2016-17' published as an addendum to these rules. In each Division teams will normally play two matches against each other on a home and away basis. The LSC shall have discretion to organise the match schedule in a Division differently if it deems this appropriate.
[The document 'Determining the League Structure for the Season 2015-16' published as a further addendum to these rules shall apply from May 2016, unless previously modified by the LSC in consultation with the team delegates; with proposals for radical change being subject to endorsement by the LCBA Executive.]
- 2.3 The LSC shall aim to publish the League structure by 29 July 2015, and after allowing five days for any appeal (see 2.5), the LS to then publish the full fixture list by 20 August 2015.
- 2.4 Only in exceptional circumstances may the LSC later amend the League structure.
- 2.5 Any appeal against the LSC decision shall be to the LCBA Executive Committee and shall be submitted within five days of the publication of the League structure, or amendment made thereto in accordance with 2.4. Appeals will not be entertained if they are based upon information that should have been submitted to the LS at the time of entry. Appeals shall be accompanied by a deposit of £40.00 which will not be returned if the LCBA Executive Committee determines that the appeal is frivolous or otherwise without merit.

3 TIE BREAKS

- 3.1 Teams ending the season with the same number of VPs are considered to be tied. Ties will be resolved where necessary (e.g. to determine promotion, relegation, the destiny of trophies) in accordance with the following rules:
 - 3.1.1 A tie between two teams shall be resolved (a) by the combined results in VPs of the matches between the two teams, failing that (b) by any difference in IMPs over these matches, failing that (c) by the total number of matches won by each team (draw = half win), failing that (d) by their net IMPs over the whole season, failing that (e) by random ballot.
 - 3.1.2 If the tie is between three or more teams then the equivalent tests (a) to (e) involving all tying teams shall be applied until at least one team is removed from the tie. At this point, if the necessary resolution has not occurred, then the tie splitting process shall revert to stage (a) in 3.1.1 in respect of the teams remaining tied.

4 ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

- 4.1 All regular players must be Player Members of the EBU who meet the general LCBA conditions (see Footnote 1) for participation in the Association's Members-only competitions for the year 2015-16.
However if a Club/Group is unable to fulfil a fixture by playing only such LCBA members then:
 - 4.1.1 In divisions 1 - 3 inclusive up to two 'other persons' may if necessary be introduced in order to complete a team, without penalty subject to all payments necessary to make such persons, retrospectively and thereafter, eligible being made within 14 days of the Club/Group being aware that this had happened.
 - 4.1.2 In division 4 any such 'other persons' may be introduced to play in one match without any penalty or payment being due. If however any such 'other person' plays in any further match then all payments necessary to make them retrospectively and thereafter eligible must be made within 14 days of the Club/Group being aware that this had happened.
- 4.2 If any such payments remain outstanding 14 days after the Club/Group was notified by the LS; then he is authorised to apply a late-payment surcharge of £5, and shall issue a final warning that unless payment is received within 14 days thereafter all matches in which the player(s) concerned played will be deemed lost by default and scored as in 8.
- 4.3 No-one may play for two Clubs/Groups in a season without the prior approval of the LSC.
- 4.4 Each Club having two or more teams in the League must nominate eight players for each team, other than its lowest. Nominees must be expected to play in at least five matches for the team for which they are nominated. They may not play for any lower ranking team; that is one identified by a later letter of the alphabet.

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- 4.5 The nominations should be sent to the LS prior to the first match of the season; if none are received those playing in the opening match will be deemed nominated. Nominations may only be changed with the consent of the LSC. The LS will aim to warn a Club with two or more teams if any of its nominated players appear unlikely to meet the five match criterion in 4.4. The LSC may require a Club to nominate additional, or replacement, players.
- 4.6 (1) If any team includes anyone barred from playing for that team by the provisions of 4.3 - 4.5 then the match(es) in which that person played whilst barred will normally be deemed lost by default and scored as in 8.

(2) If however the infringement is under the provision of 4.3, and the LSC is satisfied that the player and the team concerned were both quite unaware at the time of playing that the player was barred from participation in the match, and that the player was not of a higher standard than the norm for that team or division, then the match score as played shall stand, but a fine of 2 VP shall be deducted from the overall VP score of that team for the season.

5 LAWS, SYSTEMS, CONVENTIONS

- 5.1 Matches shall be played in accordance with the 2007 Laws of Duplicate Bridge and supplementary regulations laid down by the Laws & Ethics Committee of the EBU. The home team should provide at least an authorised copy of the 2007 Laws, a copy of the 2015 Blue Book which took effect on 1 August 2015, and the LCBA Guide for League Playing Directors, together with a copy of the 'On the Night' LCBA League Rules for reference as necessary during the match.
- 5.2 Each player must provide a completed EBU 20/20A/20B style system card (see Footnote 2), and hand this to the opponents for their use throughout each stanza. Pairs not having completed such cards should be furnished with EBU 20B style LCBA Simple System Standard English Cards (or alternatively in division 4 only an LCBA Simple System Basic Acoll Card) and required to play in accordance with these until alternative personal EBU cards are completed. WBF style cards may not be used.
- 5.3.1 In divisions 1 - 3 inclusive pairs with properly completed (2 paged) EBU 20 style system cards, may employ EBU Level 2 Permitted Agreements, as detailed in Section 6 of the 2015 Blue Book. However pairs wishing to include Agreements only permitted at Level 4, as detailed in Section 7 of the 2015 Blue Book must complete full (4 paged) EBU 20A or preferably 20B style system cards.
- 5.3.2 In division 4 pairs with properly completed (2 paged) EBU 20 style or (4 paged) EBU 20A/20B style system cards may employ EBU Level 2 Permitted Agreements [N.B. Multi 2♦ is not permitted.], as detailed in Section 6 of the 2015 Blue Book. *[Copies of these sections of the 2014 Blue Book are posted on the LCBA Website.]*

6 MATCH ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 Matches are scheduled to begin at 7.15 p.m. unless the captains have agreed upon a different time.
- 6.2 Teams shall consist of 8 players. Reserve players may be brought in at the end of a stanza. A planned substitution at any other time requires the consent of the opponent captain.
- 6.3 Matches shall normally consist of 24 boards, but captains may agree to reduce a match to 20 boards.
- 6.4 Each pair/reserve of the visiting team shall be allowed a choice of stationary seats; each pair/reserve of the home team shall then, subject to the provisions of Rule 7, play an equal number of boards at each table, and alternate stanzas NS and EW respectively. New opponent pairs may, but are not obliged to, compare their scores in the previous stanza at the start of the second and fourth stanzas.
- 6.5 Before play commences the captains should if possible agree upon an experienced Director (or failing that, an experienced player), to act as Director should a ruling be needed. Without such agreement the captain of the away team, or his nominee, shall act as Director.
- 6.6 If a psychic bid is reported to the Director, he shall, on request, record the details of the board on which it occurred, and report the matter to the LS for the attention of the Laws & Ethics SC of the LCBA. The Director may also record and similarly report any departure from the system that he considers should be brought to its attention.
- 6.7 The net aggregate score on each board of a match shall be converted to an IMP score using the standard scale, and the net IMPs for the match shall be converted to a VP score using the scale shown on the Match Result Form
- 6.8 The team captains should each countersign their opponent's Match Result Form at the end of the match and enter result and players on the EBU League Management System without delay.

7 LATENESS & PARTIAL ABSENCE PROVISIONS + FOULED OR UNPLAYED BOARD PROVISIONS

- 7.1 Even if only one team is complete at the agreed start time, then within 5 minutes thereafter play should be begun at as many tables as possible, subject to not requiring the offending team to field other than intended partnerships. The non-offending team shall decide at which table(s) play shall initially be begun, and the sequence in which play shall be begun at the other table(s).
- 7.2 If any table is still incomplete 15 minutes after play actually starts then the first 2 boards due to be played there should be removed from that table; the next 2 such boards then being removed after each further 15 minutes of incompleteness.
- 7.3 On each board played at 3 (or 2) tables an artificial score shall be awarded at the table(s) at which the board was not played. The artificial score shall be the most favourable to the non-offending side of the real scores on the board. A full record of the scoring of all boards for which any artificial score was awarded shall be sent to the LS with the Match Result Form.

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- 7.4 Any board played at no more than one table shall be scored +4 / -4 IMPs in favour of the non-offending team.
- 7.5 If a team is still incomplete 45 minutes after the scheduled start time, or at any stage becomes incomplete due to illness or emergency for in total 45 minutes, the non-offending team shall in all cases have the option of either (a) continuing the match; but with artificial scores as in 7.3 continuing to be given at the incomplete table(s) until, if ever, they become complete, or (b) withdrawing; in which case the match shall be scored as in 8.
- 7.6 If for any reason the second half of a match is not started within 1 hour and 45 minutes of the scheduled match start time (i.e. normally by 9.00 p.m.) a captain may require each later stanza to be reduced by 1 board.
- 7.7.1 A board unplayed at one or more tables due to the absence of one or more players shall be scored as indicated in 7.3 – 7.5 above.
- 7.7.2 If it is unplayed for any other reason at one or more tables then these Fouled Board regulations shall apply:
- a) If the board is fouled at either of the two tables sharing the boards in any stanza then the score at the other of these tables shall be cancelled, and the IMP conversion for this board shall initially be that for the net score at the other two tables.
 - b) However if the fouling is due solely to the actions of one team then a second artificial IMP score of +3/-3 in favour of the non-offending team shall be added to this. If both teams offend no such score is added.
 - c) It should be noted however that if a board is
 - i) played twice with the same team NS in the earlier of the two stanzas in which it is due to be played this need not be treated as a fouled board; the situation can be retrieved by the other team playing NS twice in the later stanza.
 - ii) otherwise fouled in the earlier stanza, it can always be played and scored normally in the later one, re-dealing if necessary.

8 SCORES FOR UNPLAYED AND DEFAULTED MATCHES

- 8.1 For the non-offending team the best score (any fraction being rounded up) from:
- (a) their own average VPs for completed matches over the whole season;
 - (b) the converse of the offending team's average VPs for completed matches over the whole season;
 - (c) their own average VP score in the match(es) actually played between the two teams, if any, in the season;
 - (d) 7 VPs,
- together with the minimum positive IMPs difference corresponding to this score;
- or (e) in the case of a match later defaulted under the provisions of 4.2 or 4.6 the actual score, both in VPs and IMPs, obtained in the match.
- 8.2 For the offending team: 0 VPs, -82 IMPs
- 8.3 If both teams are offending each shall score 0 VPs, -82 IMPs.
- 8.4 However if a team fails to complete at least half of its fixtures, then 8.1 – 8.3 shall not apply and all scores against that team shall be cancelled.

9 POSTPONEMENT OF MATCHES

- 9.1 The LCBA expects League matches to be played on, or before, the date shown in the League programme whenever possible.
- 9.2 If a captain realises in advance that no home venue, not necessarily just the usual one, will be available on the scheduled date he shall notify both the LS and the opponents of this. Instead of offering alternative dates, as in 9.3, the away captain may choose to offer to play the match on the scheduled date either at their home venue or to arrange an intermediate one.
- The home captain is expected to accept such an offer. Irrespective of where the match is actually played the team designated as the home team in the original league programme shall remain deemed the home team and retain the other responsibilities and status of the home team in accordance with these rules in respect of the match; and likewise the away team. The captains may, but need not, choose to make a venue change for a return fixture part of their agreement.
- 9.3 However if a captain realises in advance that his team is unable to fulfil a fixture on the scheduled date (e.g. because there are (predicted) extreme weather conditions or he cannot raise a team by utilising the dispensations allowed under 4.1) he shall notify both the LS and the opponents of this.
- The opponent captain is expected to offer to rearrange the match to any of a minimum of three dates of his team's choice. The offered dates must include at least one Wednesday, not be all in the same week, and not include any date clashing with another LCBA event in which a regular member of either team might wish to take part.
- If, exceptionally, the postponement of the final scheduled match of the season is allowed, the rescheduled match must be played within seven days thereafter.
- 9.4 Both captains shall report the outcome of their negotiations re 9.2 or 9.3 to the LS before the scheduled date wherever possible and otherwise within seven days thereafter. Any agreement in 9.3 to play the match at a later date will be subject to the approval of the LS. Any difficulty or dispute in agreeing a rearrangement must be referred to the LS within 14 days. The LS shall seek to expedite the playing of the match but has, in consultation with the LSC, the power to default one or both of the teams.

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- 9.5 Any necessary net extra expenses resulting from the rearrangement of a fixture shall be met by the team seeking the rearrangement.
- 9.6 No player from the Club seeking the rearrangement may play in two matches that were originally scheduled for the same date, except with the specific prior approval of the LS. Any breach of this rule will incur an automatic 2 VP procedural penalty being applied in respect of the match played second.
- 10 DISPUTES, RULINGS & APPEALS**
- 10.1 When a bridge law related problem or question arises at a table the Director (see 6.5) should make a ruling.
- 10.2 A captain wishing to appeal, or preserve the right to appeal, a ruling must record this on the Match Result Form, notify the Director and seek to ensure all parties have clear factual records.
- 10.2.1 The actual appeal should be made on an LCBA League Appeal & Psyche Form and sent within 3 days of the match, together with all required documentation as detailed on that form, to the LS for transmission to the L&E. Normally a single Appeal Form should be fully completed on the night with an agreed statement from the two captains of the facts, (including the original claim, the name of the Director and the ruling he gave), as well as making clear the claim(s) now made. If however separate Appeal Forms are submitted, or a team wishes to make a further statement, copies must be sent to both the opponent captain and the Director, simultaneously with the submission to the LS.
- 10.2.2 Any appeal against a decision of the L&E must be submitted, within 14 days of receipt of that decision, to the LS for the attention of the National Authority (EBU Laws & Ethics Committee) accompanied by a deposit of £75 and in accordance with section 1.7 of the 2015 White Book. *(a copy of this section is on the LCBA Website).*
- 10.3 Any appeal against a decision of the LS or LSC can only be made to the LCBA Executive Committee. A representative of each team involved will be invited to the meeting hearing this appeal. The outcome may not be further appealed.
- 10.4 Any serious misconduct allegation, associated with an appeal under 10.2 or 10.3 or otherwise, lodged with the General Secretary of the LCBA will be referred to the Investigatory Committee and then if appropriate either to the LCBA Conduct Committee or the National Authority, which bodies shall determine any sanctions to be applied.

FOOTNOTE 1 - Eligibility to play in LCBA Competitions (2015-16) – General Conditions

Players may not be members of the LCBA unless they are 'Player Members of the EBU'.

A person is a 'Player Member of the EBU' if he is a member of any EBU Affiliated Club that has, as required, reported his club membership and necessary personal details to the EBU. Any person may alternatively become a 'Player Member of the EBU' by making a subscription of £32 to the EBU (inclusive of £4 LCBA subscription) thus becoming a Direct Player Member of the EBU with Prime Allegiance to the LCBA.

To be eligible to play in LCBA Members-only Competitions (Josephs Bowl, Leicestershire Cup and their Plates, Joyce Cup, LCBA League, Samani Salver & Plate, Gimson Trophy, Stanley Trophy, Otto & Edith Bowl, Buckby Cup, Olga Cup, Hyman Crammer Trophy, Pairs League) EBU Player Members must also for the year 2015-16

- either a) be a paid up member of at least one EBU Club which is affiliated to the LCBA, and have declared personal Prime Allegiance to the LCBA, and play on average in approximately one P2P session per month in total in all such LCBA Clubs - in which case no LCBA subscription is required;
- or b) have paid an LCBA subscription of £4 (£1.50 if born in April 1994 or later).
- Note this subscription is due where the EBU Player Member
- (i) otherwise satisfies a) but plays less frequently; or
 - (ii) is a Direct EBU Player Member (unless LCBA sub. sent through EBU); or
 - (iii) has declared Prime Allegiance to another County Association.

All such LCBA Subscriptions, of either £4 or £1.50, should be sent to Pat Beasley at 7 Sharnbrook Gardens, Sharnford, Hinckley, Leics. LE10 3QD, indicating the category (i), (ii), or (iii).
Cheques should be made payable to LCBA.

FOOTNOTE 2 - re System Cards

It is now some years since the EBU withdrew 20 and 20A cards. The continued use of such cards can cause unnecessary difficulty for opponents faced with their non-standard layout.

Although for this season the use of 20 and 20A cards will continue to be permitted all league players are encouraged to convert their own cards to 20B format as soon as possible, and not wait until the use of old style EBU Cards is (like the use of WBF cards) not permitted.

The divisions 1 – 3 default System Card for use by players not having completed any EBU card remains the LCBA Simple System Standard English Card. In division 4 only the EBU 20B format LCBA Simple System Basic Acoll Card is an acceptable alternative for less experienced players using fewer conventions.

Addendum 1 : Determining the League Structure for the Season: 2016-17

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The League Secretary will gather information from teams entering for the season 2015-16 regarding their venue restrictions, their likely strength in the new season and any grounds they have for seeking other than a normal placing in the League. This information will be made available to the LSC. Then -

A Preparation of a Ranking List and later B Grouping the Ranking List

Full text of A & B is omitted from this printing as all this has already happened.

The details are exactly as printed below in Addendum 2, but with all dates brought forward by precisely one year.

Addendum 2 : Determining the League Structure for the Season: 2016-17

When in the past attempts were made to assess majority club/team opinion there was no clear consensus other than:

1. that the views expressed by teams should be taken into account, and
2. it was desirable to promote teams winning Divisions.

In addition a majority of those whose views were heard:

3. considered Divisions of eight teams to be optimal; and probably the sub-optimal number of teams in a Division to be seven, then six, then nine, and
4. if the outcome is to be a mixture of Division sizes, the allocation of Divisions of eight shall be prioritised from Division 1 downwards.
5. The above 4 points should not be taken in any priority order.

It is however now recognised that the historic 'view' collection exercises had been flawed by the view suppliers not being fully representative of the teams, and by collecting data late in (or after) the season at a time when 'personal interest' too easily overcame general principles.

In consequence if it is thought by any of the LS, the LSC or a number of clubs that such issues should be revisited then the League Secretary will conduct such consultation as thought necessary within the first three months of the current 2015-16 league season, enabling the LSC to put firm proposals in front of a January Forum, and then present the outcome to the LCBA Executive for endorsement.

The outcome shall then be notified to all clubs before they are invited after the April Forum to make entries for 2016-17.

The League Secretary will then gather information from teams entering for the season 2016-17 regarding their venue restrictions, their likely strength in the new season and any grounds they have for seeking other than a normal placing in the League. This information will be made available to the LSC. Then

A Preparation of a Ranking List for the Season: 2016-17

The LSC will generate a team ranking list for this new 2016-17 season. This will be done as follows, applying these steps in the order they are listed.

1. All teams entered for the season 2015-16 will be listed in the order in which they finished that season, with any team that withdrew after scheduling treated as having finished bottom of the Division in which they had been scheduled to play.
2. The teams finishing first and second in all Divisions other than the first will each be moved two places up the list, that is ahead of the two teams (including any team that withdrew) finishing bottom of the Division above.
3. Any team that withdrew after scheduling for season 2015-16 will be deleted from the list; any application to re-enter will be treated as an application on behalf of a new team and placed under 5 below.
4. Any team that fails to re-enter for the season 2016-17 will be deleted from the list.
[Following name changes and/or the amalgamation or splitting of clubs then each of their teams will initially be included sequentially in the slots occupied by the original club(s) teams. Requests to vary this will be treated as under 6 below; any extra teams arising will be placed under 5 below.]
5. New teams in the competition will be inserted into the list by the LSC. Whilst normally this will be at the foot of the list the LSC will use its judgement, using information available to it as to the likely strength of the new teams.
6. The LSC will use its judgement in the light of information available as to likely playing strength as to whether to agree to a request by an existing team to be placed other than in accordance with the above.
7. The LSC shall have absolute discretion to consult with team captains, and to exercise judgement to resolve any eventuality not covered by the foregoing.

B. Grouping the Ranking List for the Season: 2016-17

The LSC shall then use its judgement to group the ranking list into Divisions.