

RULES FOR NCBA “TEAMS OF FOUR” LEAGUE

The League is under the management of the NCBA committee. All players are expected to ensure that matches are arranged and played for mutual convenience and enjoyment. Where problems arise captains are urged to consult one another to resolve matters to mutual satisfaction.

Postponement of matches causes problems to all and every effort should be made to complete fixtures on the dates agreed.

General

- 1 The entry fee for the league is payable before the start of the season.
- 2 Any squad wishing to enter or withdraw their team must do so before April 30th.
- 3 All differences and disputes that cannot be settled between teams shall be referred to and settled by the NCBA Committee, whose decision shall be final. For any breach of any of these Rules or any other irregularity, the Committee may impose such penalties either by way of deduction of points or otherwise as it may think fit.
- 4 If at the end of the season a team has played less than half of their matches then the results for the matches they have played are cancelled. If the offending team has played half or more of their matches then their results stand and the other teams in the division that have not had the opportunity to play against the offending team are awarded VPs along the following lines:-
The non-offending team receives (a) 12 VPs or (b) its average score in VPs for the season or (c) 20 minus the offending team's average score in VPs for the season, whichever is the greatest.
- 5 New teams entering the League will start in the lowest division.

Eligibility

- 6 The League is open to any squad of players. Membership of the EBU or NCBA is not required.
- 7 No player may play for more than one squad within the League in any one season.
- 8 A squad may consist of up to 8 players. Names must be submitted to the League Secretary who will publish them on the website.

- 9 Any team that includes an unauthorised player for one or more matches will incur a penalty of 5 VPs for each occasion. Unauthorised players are those who have previously played for another squad in the same season.**

Matches and Results

- 10 Matches may be played on any day and at any time to suit both teams. The Home team are required to provide a suitable venue and refreshments.**
- 11 Matches are to be played over 24 boards with imps scoring. Where 24 boards cannot be played (for whatever reason) the same victory point scale should be used. At least 18 boards must be played for the match to be valid.**
- 12 Matches are played within several rounds. Each round has a finishing date. If there are difficulties in arranging a date to suit both teams then the home captain is expected to offer three alternative dates for the match before the finishing date. These must be in different weeks and on differing days and the away captain must accept one of these alternatives. The League Secretary must approve any exceptions.**
- 13 If a ruling on the laws of bridge is required, the captains of both teams should be called, and they should attempt to agree on a ruling. (For help contact the League Referee: details at the end of the Rules). All irregularities should be reported to the League Secretary either at the time of the occurrence, or with the result sheet. No appeal will be considered once the result sheet has been signed by both captains. Captains are advised not to sign a score sheet if they have a dispute that could not be solved on the night.**
- 14 Results of matches must be returned to the League Secretary within 7 days of the match.**
- 15 Matches must be played by September 30th. Matches not played by then will be recorded as 0 – 0 unless there are exceptional circumstances. (See note 1)**
- 16 An agreed match date may be re-arranged only by mutual consent or, in exceptional circumstances, on application to the League Secretary who may sanction rearrangement or refer to the NCBA Committee.**
- 17 Where matches are postponed, even by mutual consent:**

- (a) Within 7 days, a penalty of 3 VPs may be incurred by the team that postpones the match. Within 2 days, a penalty of 6 VPs may be incurred by the team that postpones the match.
- (b) A statement to the effect that a penalty is due should be entered on the reverse of the results sheet and signed by both captains. Penalties for late postponement of matches cannot be waived; they must be notified in this manner. Any dispute should be communicated to the League Secretary, in writing, as soon as possible.
- (c) Penalties for postponement will generally not be applied if there was an acceptable reason for the team that postponed the match being unable to meet its commitment. In these cases no statement is needed on the results sheet. Acceptable reasons include: poor weather conditions (e.g. thick fog, snow), sudden illness of team members.
- (d) The process of re-arranging a postponed match is the responsibility of the captain of the team which caused the postponement, and the venue may be specified by the other team captain. Any expenses incurred by the team not at fault (e.g. for hire of venue) should be made good by the team that postponed the match.

18 Non-arrival or late arrival of one or more members of teams is treated as a late cancellation.

All of one team is present

- (a) If no members of the offending team are present 45 minutes after the scheduled start, then the match can be abandoned.
- (b) If some members of the offending team are present (this constitutes notification)
 - (i) After 30 minutes of late arrival (notified or not) the match is reduced by 2 boards and for each extra 15 minutes a further 2 boards. A total of 18 boards must be played. For each board not played 3 imps is awarded to the non-offending team.
 - (ii) The match cannot be abandoned until 1 hour 30 minutes has elapsed from the scheduled starting time. (Note: This period of time may enable the team to be completed either by the arrival of the player(s) or by replacement player(s) being found).

Neither team is complete at the scheduled start

- (c) The team which is completed first is the non-offending team and Rule 17 (b) applies.

Abandoned match

- (d) The offending team is penalised by 6 VPs and the non-offending team awarded 12 VPs or its average score for the season or 20 minus the average score of the offending team whichever is the greatest.

- 19 As a matter of course, any team not completing the full fixture list by September 30th is not eligible for promotion to another division, Irrespective of their position in the league. Applications for exceptions to this rule should be made in writing to the League Secretary as soon as possible, and each case will be considered by the NCBA Committee. (see note 2)
- 20 At the end of each season, provided that the structure of the League remains the same, within each division the two teams with the most VPs will be promoted to the division above and the two teams with the least number of VPs will be relegated. In the event of a tie the team that won the head to head will take precedence.

Rules of Play

- 21 Computer dealt hands may only be used with the prior agreement of both teams. Prior being when the match is confirmed and again, for the avoidance of doubt, before the match starts.
- 22 All pairs should have matching convention cards. Failure to do so will mean that when any bidding dispute or ruling on the laws of bridge is required (see Rule 13 above) players without convention cards will always be disadvantaged. (See note 3 for help on convention cards)

Notes:

1. If one team is entirely at fault, (including withdrawal from the league after the half-way point) that team receives 0 VPs. The non-offending team receives (a) 12 VPs or (b) its average score for the season or (c) 20 minus the opponent's average score, whichever is the greatest. Matches may be played after the end of March with the prior permission of the League Secretary.
2. Only teams that can demonstrate beyond doubt that their failure to complete their fixtures is through no fault of their own may be exempted from this rule. The Committee's decision is final.
3. Convention cards can be downloaded from the EBU <http://www.ebu.co.uk/laws-and-ethics/convention-cards> and customised to individual pairs' systems.

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