

Online Bridge: A Statement from the Laws and Ethics Committee

In these difficult times bridge players are fortunate to be able to get their fix online, thanks in particular to BBO. Many of you have enjoyed playing online as a substitute for the real thing.

Unfortunately, online conditions make it quite easy to cheat.

Cheating is the most serious accusation that can be levelled at a bridge player, and we do not use the word lightly.

Most online matches are organised by individuals, not the SBU. They attract neither master points nor money and limited glory, but they should nonetheless be played in the right spirit.

We cannot tolerate any form of cheating by our members, no matter when or where it occurs.

A very small minority seem to think that there is nothing wrong in setting up a second account with the purpose of kibitzing their own matches; or finding ways to communicate illegally with partner during a casual friendly match. Not so. It is not a minor peccadillo. The Laws and Ethics Committee takes these forms of cheating very seriously indeed.

You should feel as guilty as Michal Nowosadski. Read his Confession in

<http://bridgewinners.com/article/view/confession-of-a-self-kibitzer/>

We have a duty to all our members to root out those who are selfishly spoiling others' enjoyment of online games, and perhaps tainting honest players with suspicion.

Instances of possible cheating have been reported to BBO and brought to our attention.

Illegal behaviours can be monitored quite easily on BBO. Hand records are freely available after games. BBO has software that analyses actions taken and will report events such as a player consistently getting all their critical decisions correct. There is also a record of sign-ons and who is kibitzing matches.

If you cheat you **will** be identified.

It may be difficult to 100% prove online cheating, but we shall regard overwhelming statistical evidence of repeated faultless play as sufficient reason to apply an appropriate sanction. Other evidence, for example multiple sign-ons, may also be considered as sufficient proof.

If you are tempted to cheat you should consider how your actions will affect your bridge future when you are found out.

Liz McGowan

(Chair, Laws and Ethics Committee)