

HARROGATE BRIDGE CLUB RULES

APPENDIX 'A' - COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Issued April 2023

Revised 5th May 2026

A1 PREAMBLE

A1A This Procedure is based on EBU guidance from their website. The Club shall act through its Conduct and Disciplinary Committees for the enforcement of standards described in the Rules. The Club shall have additional powers as set out below.

A2 NON-FORMAL COMPLAINTS

A2A Anyone witnessing or affected by bad behaviour may make a verbal complaint to the Chairman, or in his absence, to the Vice Chairman or Acting Chairman, who will make enquiries.

A2B After enquiries, if they judge the complaint to be credible they will inform the alleged offender and seek their response.

A2C If satisfied, the Chairman will close the matter but, if not, they will record the complaint on file with the Secretary but no further action will be taken.

A2D If there is a second complaint against the individual in the future it will be dealt with in the same way but they will be cautioned that if a third such complaint is received it will lead to a formal investigation by a Conduct Committee under clause A4.

A3 FORMAL COMPLAINTS

A3A Formal complaints against one or more Members must be in writing or by email to the Chairman. They must be expressed in courteous and respectful language, avoiding any offensive, inflammatory, or intemperate content. Complaints that do not meet this standard will not be considered.

A3B Normally, no action will be taken in respect of a complaint relating to an alleged offence which occurred one month or more prior to a formal complaint in writing.

A3C On receipt of such a complaint, the Chairman may, in potentially straightforward cases, handle the matter personally if they assess that informal resolution may be attainable. Otherwise, and more generally, they will appoint the Conduct Committee Chairman to take on the responsibility. The investigator will collect information from all relevant parties, ideally within 7-10 days from receipt of a complaint, and will make a recommendation to the Chairman. If, together, they decide that the complaint is not justified, all parties will be notified and the matter closed. A complainant has the right to appeal to a Conduct Committee if unhappy with the outcome.

A3D The Club would prefer and aim for any complaint to be resolved swiftly without resort to any formal disciplinary process and will encourage members amicably to resolve disagreements, disputes or misunderstandings. In practice, resolution will be sought through discussions and informal meetings. In the case of disputes between Members, it may be facilitated by a Club-appointed mediator acceptable to all parties. Should it not be possible to arrive at a satisfactory outcome, or if the matter is of such seriousness, the Chairman will invoke a formal disciplinary process as set out below.

The following sections are adopted from the EBU Model Club Constitution.

A4 CONDUCT COMMITTEE

A4A The Management Committee shall appoint its Conduct Committee Chairman. The Conduct Committee shall be responsible for investigating complaints against the Club's Members and to determine whether a disciplinary offence should be referred to the Club's Disciplinary Committee.

A4B The Conduct Committee shall consist of no fewer than three Members and no more than five. A quorum for any meeting shall be three of its Members.

A4C It shall act by simple majority vote. If there is parity of voting its appointed Chairman, or whoever in their absence the Conduct Committee shall select to chair its meeting, shall have a casting vote.

A5 DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

A5A The Chairman of the Club shall appoint the Disciplinary Committee to hear charges of offences and determine whether those charges are proved and, if proved, to determine the sanction imposed.

A5B The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of no fewer than three Members and no more than five. At least three of its members must be present when it decides to uphold a complaint and impose sanctions on the offending Member.

A5C It shall act by simple majority vote. If there is parity of voting its appointed Chairman, or whoever in their absence the Disciplinary Committee shall select to chair its meeting, shall have a casting vote.

A6 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE COMMITTEES

A6A Any member of either Committee who is in any way personally involved in the allegations within a complaint will be disqualified from participating in either Committee's handling of the complaint.

A6B A Member cannot be a member of both the Conduct and Disciplinary Committees.

A7 THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

A7A *Notice of Meetings*

A7A1 Subject to clause A2, where a written complaint is made or a matter otherwise comes to the attention of the Conduct Committee, it shall first consider whether such complaint or matter falls within the scope of this Procedure and whether further action is warranted. If it does, the Conduct Committee secretary shall first write to the defendant seeking their comments on the substance of the complaint or matter that has been raised. The Conduct Committee shall also be entitled to make such further investigations and enquiries as it in its absolute discretion considers appropriate. The Conduct Committee shall also be entitled to seek advice from within the Club and from the EBU Laws and Ethics Committee and to obtain external legal advice.

A7B *Complaint not justified*

A7B1 If the Conduct Committee decides that the complaint is not justified, all parties shall be notified.

A7C *Complaint justified*

A7C1 If the Conduct Committee decides that the complaint is justified, it may, in its absolute discretion, offer a verbal caution to the offending member which, if accepted, ends the matter.

A7C2 If the caution is not accepted by the offending Member, or the Conduct Committee does not feel a caution is appropriate, it shall refer the case to a hearing by the Disciplinary Committee. The defendant shall be notified, in writing, within two weeks of this decision of their right to make a written submission to the Disciplinary Committee and to attend the hearing. The defendant shall have the right to be represented by legal counsel of their choice or may be accompanied by a person to speak on their behalf.

The Disciplinary Committee shall give at least two weeks' notice of the hearing to the defendant.

A7D ***Disciplinary Committee's Sanctions***

A7D1 If after the hearing the complaint is upheld, the Disciplinary Committee may in its absolute discretion:

 Give a written reprimand to the offending Member(s), or:

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 Suspend the offending Member(s) from all or some of the competitions sponsored or licensed by the Club for such period as it shall determine, or:

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 Expel the offending Member(s) from the Club.

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A7D2

 If the complaint is against a member of the Committee, then in addition to any other sanctions applied the Disciplinary Committee shall have the power to suspend such a Member from the Club's Committee and any of its Sub-committees for such a period that it shall determine.

A7D3

 Any sanctions imposed by the Disciplinary Committee must be communicated to the offending Member(s) in writing within twenty-one days of the hearing.

A7D4

 Any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee shall take effect as soon as time for appeal has elapsed except that, if the defendant has filed Notice of Appeal within the time allowed, the sanction shall not take effect until such Appeal has been determined.

Appeal

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 Every defendant found guilty of an offence by the Club Disciplinary Committee has the right to appeal to the Yorkshire Contract Bridge Association. Appeals must be in writing and be lodged with the Secretary of the Association within twenty-one days of the written communication of the Club's Disciplinary Committee's decision to the defendant.

Referral to the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee

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 At any time, the County Disciplinary Committee may refer a complaint to the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee for its consideration. In doing so, the County Disciplinary Committee shall have fully discharged its responsibilities under this Procedure.