

# LEAGUE RULES

## 1 Scope

1.1 These rules govern the operation of the **Premier, Senior, Intermediate A, Intermediate B, Novice** and any other Leagues organised by or under the auspices of the Northern Ireland Bridge Union [NIBU]. They are in addition to the general Conditions of Contest [COC] of the NIBU.

## 2 Composition and Organisation

2.1. The leagues in order of ranking are: - **Premier Divisions 1 and 2, Senior, Intermediate A, Intermediate B** and **Novice**.

2.1.1 The **Premier** League shall consist of a first division of 8 teams [**Premier Division 1**] and, a second division normally of up to 8 teams [**Premier Division 2**]. The latter may be amalgamated with the Senior League if there are insufficient teams. The *Senior, Intermediate A, Intermediate B* and *Novice* Leagues may be divided and may have play-offs if they have more than 8 teams.

2.2. Each League and each division of the **Premier League** shall be administered by an Organiser, who shall be appointed for each season by the Hon. Competitions Secretary of the NIBU [the Secretary] or the Council of the NIBU.

2.2.1 Entry to the Leagues shall be made to the Organiser on the Entry Form in the attached schedule [the Entry Form]. Electronic entry is acceptable.

2.3 Each team shall consist of at least 4 members. Team members may be added during the season. [subject to 5.1.1]

2.3.1 NIBU leagues are specifically for members in good standing of a NIBU-affiliated club or any person who could, at the time of playing, be eligible to play for Northern Ireland under Bridge Great Britain rules.

2.3.2 Members of other unions are only eligible if they are also members of a NIBU club. A maximum of 2 such players may play in any one match.

### 2.4 *It shall be the duty of the Organiser:*

2.4.1 to arrange the venue for each League match and provide computer generated pre-dealt boards for each match and a hand record for each player and to arrange any play-off matches.

2.4.2 to publish on the NIBU website after the date for entries to a League has expired, the names, e-mail address and telephone numbers of the captain of each team and to forward the results and current standings for publication on the NIBU website.

2.4.3 to collect the entry fees at or before the start of play of the first league match.

2.4.4 to maintain a record throughout the season of team memberships and to check on the eligibility of the members of each team before publishing match results on the NIBU website.

2.4.5 to publish on the NIBU website each ruling made by the Organiser or the Secretary and the decision of each appeal against a ruling of the Organiser or the Secretary. No decision to be published if the appeal procedures are unfinished.

### 3 Matches

3.1 Each team shall play each other team in its league or division at least once over 4 equal stanzas in one session. In the **Premier, Senior, and Intermediate A** Leagues over 28 boards and the **Intermediate B** and **Novice** Leagues over 24 boards and 20 boards respectively.

3.1.1 Subject to 3.1.2 and 6.2.3 only 4 members of a team may play in any match.

3.1.2 If one player is temporarily delayed, the Tournament Director [TD] may, with the agreement of the opposing Captain, play, or permit a spectator to play the first 4 boards. If agreement is not forthcoming, the match shall be suitably reduced in length.

3.2 Each session shall commence at 7.15 p.m. and no new board shall be started after 10.50 p.m. except by express permission of the TD.

3.3 Matches shall be played on the published date at the published venue, or, with the agreement of both captains, on the alternative published date and venue. If the latter the teams must inform both the Secretary and the Organiser, otherwise 3.4 may be invoked.

3.3.1 In the event that the alternative published date and venue is not agreed by both captains, the Organiser shall at his discretion decide whether the published date or the alternative published date shall apply, but will ensure that so far as is just and equitable that the team prepared to play on the published date is not disadvantaged.

3.3.2 Under exceptional circumstances including bereavement, sudden inclement weather preventing travel to the venue, road accident or the like, a team, [the requesting team], may request the opposing team, [the opposing team], for a postponement of the match. Any request for postponement shall be made by the captain of the requesting team to the Organiser and then to the captain of the opposing team. Any *bona fide* request for postponement shall be granted. If agreement can't be reached the Organiser shall decide. Initial contact with the opposing team must be as soon as feasible. Failure to do so will normally lead to concession of the match.

3.3.3 The opposing team shall within 3 days of having been informed of the exceptional circumstances, offer 3 dates within the next 14 days for the match to be played. Failure

to play on one of these days will be treated as a concession. The venue will be decided by the opposing team. The costs including the costs of room hire and dealing of computer-generated hands using the programme used for league boards shall be met by the requesting team. The opposing team captain shall inform the Organiser of the date and venue agreed. The Organiser shall provide the boards.

3.3.4 Otherwise than is provided above the Organiser is not empowered to allow a match to be postponed.

3.4 If teams play a match without the Organiser's permission at other than the normal date and time, then the match shall be null and void and both teams shall be treated as if they conceded the match under 6.3.

3.5 Except where Highly Unusual Methods [HUMs] are being used there shall be a coin toss to determine seating rights. [See HUM regulations in COC.]

#### **4 Promotion and Relegation.**

4.1 Subject to 6.1, at the end of each season the lowest placed team in the **Premier Division 1** League shall be relegated to the **Premier Division 2** League. The place left vacant shall be filled by the leading team in **Premier Division 2**.

4.1.1 Within 14 days of the completion of the last **Premier Division 2** league match, the second placed team in **Premier Division 2** may opt to play off against the seventh placed team in **Premier Division 1** in a 28 board match arranged by the Organiser of **Premier Division 1**. To avoid relegation to **Premier Division 2** the **Premier Division 1** team must win the play off by at least one IMP.

4.2 The winning team in the **Senior League** may opt to be promoted to **Premier Division 2**. If the number of teams in **Premier Division 2** thereby would exceed 8, then the lowest placed team in **Premier Division 2** shall be relegated.

4.2.1 Within 14 days of the completion of the last **Senior league** match, the second placed team in **Senior** may opt to play off against the seventh placed team in **Premier Division 2** in a 24 board match arranged by the Organiser of **Premier Division 2**. To avoid relegation to the **Senior League** the **Premier Division 2** team must win the play off by at least one IMP.

4.3 At the end of each season the leading team in a **Novice, Intermediate B** and **Intermediate A** League is entitled to promotion to the League immediately ranked above. The suitably qualified team members of a winning team may remain in a league. Regular members in a team which wins the League in 2 successive years may at the discretion of the Organiser play in that league for a further year.

#### **5. Changes in Formation of Teams and Eligibility**

## 5.1 Regular Team Members.

5.1.1 Regular members are defined as those members who have played more than one third of the matches by the end of the season. A team may have no more than 6 Regular members. A Regular team member is not eligible to play in a lower ranked division or league, but may play as a substitute member in a higher league.

## 5.2 Substitute Team Members.

5.2.1 Members who have played less than one third of the matches during the season are defined as substitute members. There is no limit to the number of substitutes who may play on a team. A substitute team member is eligible to play on no more than one team in a division or league in a season.

5.3 It is the obligation of each Captain to ascertain the eligibility of team members and substitute team members. Captains should ensure that they do not play anyone in a match that would lead to a player being retrospectively ineligible in a previous match. Should they do so their match will be treated as a concession.

5.4 In the case of **Novice, Intermediate A and Intermediate B** Leagues no proposed member of a team or substitute is eligible if that member is registered as a player of a category higher than that of the League in which the member is intending to play.

5.5 In the case of **Senior and Premier** Leagues no regular member of a team may play as a substitute in a lower league or division.

5.6 In the season after having been relegated, a Regular team member of a relegated team is eligible to play as a substitute team member in the division or league from which that team member has been relegated but not as a regular member.

5.7 Except as provided in 3.1.2 no player may play for more than one team in any division or League.

## 5.8 After promotions and relegations in **Premier Division 1:-**

Any vacancy or vacancies shall be filled by team(s) in the following order

- (i) The seventh team in **Premier 1** if they lost the play-off.
- (ii) The relegated team.
- (iii) The second team in **Premier 2** if not already promoted.
- (iv) The team with the most National Points which is willing to play. [Only 4 members to count.] This may include a team relegated under 5.10.2.

5.9 After promotions and relegations in **Premier Division 2**, if the number of entries falls below 8, the vacancy or vacancies shall be filled in a similar manner as that of **Premier Division 1**.

5.10 In **Premier Division 1** and **Premier Division 2** if a team wishes, from season to season, to change team members the following rules apply.

5.10.1 Only Regular team members have rights in decisions pertaining to changes in personnel. In order to retain a place at least 2 regular members must wish to play the following season and then only if other regular members of the team are absorbed into another team or do not wish to play in the league.

5.10.2 If the team splits into 2 parts both of which have 2 or more regular members the Organiser shall require the 2 resulting teams, having paid the appropriate entry fee, to play off for the place. The losing **Premier 1 team** shall be relegated to the **Premier Division 2** if a place is available otherwise to the **Senior League**. The losing **Premier 2 team** is relegated to the **Senior League**. Both teams are considered to have entered the league and be willing to play in a lower league if they lose. Players unwilling to play in a lower league are not eligible to play in the higher league for 2 seasons.

5.10.3 If 2 or more teams of the same division wish to re-arrange team members then, unless the number of teams would thereby increase, the Organiser shall normally acquiesce in the re-arrangements.

## **6. Scoring Methods and Concessions**

6.1 Save for a concession after a match has started on the grounds set out in 6.2.1 and 6.2.2, if a team fails to complete more than 2 matches all the team members who have played on that team shall be relegated.

6.2.1 No team may concede during a match [except for reasons of ill-health] unless the opposing team has already established a lead sufficient to score a maximum victory [currently 20 VPs].

6.2.2 If a concession is made on health grounds then, if the other team has a lead sufficient to give 12 VPs or more it shall be awarded that score, else it shall be awarded 12 VPs. The conceding team will be awarded the remaining VPs.

6.2.3 The TD may, at his discretion, with the consent of the opposing captain, act as a substitute, or ask a spectator to substitute in order to complete the match in the place of the ill player.

6.3 If a team concedes a match before the start of the match, the opposing team shall be awarded 12 VPs, the average number of VPs scored over all the opposing team's other

matches [both before and after the conceded match], or the average number of VPs conceded by the conceding team in their other matches, whichever is the greatest. The offending team shall receive 0 VPs.

6.4 Subject to any request for postponement made under Rule 3.3.2 and to the result of a postponed match, any team failing to turn up for a match or being more than 30 minutes late for the start of a match shall receive 0 VPs.

6.5 If a team completes a match and it is subsequently discovered that the opposition has fielded an ineligible player, the match will be scored as in 6.3.

## **7. Penalties**

7.1.1 'Slow play' is the inability to maintain a playing speed of 7 boards plus scoring per 55 minutes. When 6 boards are being played 50 minutes is allowed.

7.1.2 Slow play may be penalised at the discretion of the TD. Persistent slow play should be penalised. Regular slow play in matches should be penalised. A 1VP fine for a first offence doubled for subsequent offences. This may be apportioned between the teams.

7.1.3 The TD may reduce the number of boards played in a stanza due to slow play or late arrival of a team. If the TD reduces the number of boards in the first stanza they may be added to the last stanza if time permits. They may not be added after the results of the last stanza are known. An offending team loses 3imps for each board not played. The match is scored over the expected number of boards.

7.1.4 If a stanza is played with the same polarity at both tables, each team will be penalised 3 imps per board so played up to a maximum of 10 imps.

7.1.5 A team is late if one or more playing members of that team are not seated and ready to play at the advertised starting time. There will be a penalty of 1 VP for any team not seated at the advertised starting time, save that a warning will be issued in lieu of a penalty for the first offence of no more than 10 minutes of lateness. Thereafter for each portion of 10 minutes late or part thereof up to 30 minutes late, there shall be an additional 1VP penalty. If a team is more than 30 minutes late the match is abandoned due to late arrival and the match shall be treated as conceded by the offending team.

7.1.6 Any penalty may be withdrawn if the TD is satisfied that the team members have recovered lost time.

## **8.0 Notification of Results and Appeals**

8.1 Results of matches must be received, in writing or email, by the Organiser or the Secretary within 48 hours of the completion of the match.

8.2 The captain of any team may apply to the Organiser within 96 hours of the completion of a match for an adjustment to the score submitted to the Organiser. The Organiser, after inviting and considering any submission made by the opposing captain, shall rule on the application for an adjusted score. If there is any doubt the original score stands.

8.3 Any appeal on the interpretation of the rules or for matters not covered by the League rules shall be decided by the Secretary. Where an immediate decision is required in the absence of the Secretary, the Organiser or finally the TD will make the decision. This may be appealed to L & E. A final appeal may be made to Council.

## LEAGUE ENTRY FORM

<b>League</b>	
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<b>Captain</b> e-mail address Home telephone number Mobile phone number	
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<b>Team Members</b>	<b>Master Point No.</b>
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

**Notes:**

[1] All team members must be members of a club affiliated to the NIBU. An entry will not be accepted with less than 4 named members.

[2] The entry fee is £160 per team, reduced if fewer than seven matches, due and payable on or before the first night.

[3] Rules of the competition are published on the NIBU website.