

Northamptonshire Contract Bridge Association

Inter Club League for Teams of Four

COMPETITION RULES

1.

The league is part of the NCBA competition programme and is open to all clubs affiliated to NCBA. Clubs from outside the county may also be admitted at the discretion of the NCBA Committee.

2.

The competition shall be organised and directed by a League Secretary appointed by the NCBA committee. All correspondence relating to the conduct of the competition, including appeals, should be addressed to the League Secretary.

3.

Level four conventions will be permitted in all divisions. All partnerships should have a fully completed system card or, if the match is played online, they should post a link to one.

4.

Teams shall consist of four players. No player may represent more than one club in the same season without the prior consent of the League Secretary. This consent will not usually be given if the player has played two or more games for their first club.

5.

(a) When a club fields more than one team in the league, players will be expected to be part of a squad for one team only. Members of a squad may be re-registered in a lower ranked team provided they have not played more than one match for the original team and that the League Secretary and opposing captain are informed, in advance, of them playing for the lower ranked team. Such players would not be allowed to play for a higher ranked team for the remainder of the season.

(b) Any member of a team squad may play for a higher ranked team or teams up to 3 times in total. Once a lower ranked player plays for a higher ranked team for a fourth time then that player is automatically re-registered for the lower of those higher teams. The player will not then be allowed to substitute in any lower ranked team. The same applies to a player not originally listed in any squad.

(c) Where it is necessary to do so, and only in order to ensure that a match is played on the agreed date, any team from a club may select one player from the next highest ranked team, provided that that player is not disqualified under the terms of rule 5(b).

(d) If any player plays for a lower ranked team, except as permitted by rule 5(c), the match is forfeited. The offending team receives zero VPs and the non-offending team receives the higher of the awarded score according to rule 15 and the actual score in the match.

6.

Dates of matches and venues will be arranged by the team captains. Matches may be played online if both captains agree.

Exceptionally, it may prove impossible to play a match on the agreed date. In these circumstances the captain wishing to change the date (initiating) must consult the other captain (opposing) at the first opportunity. The opposing captain has the right to select three dates from which the new fixture should be chosen. These dates must be on different days and not all in the same week.

In the event that one captain unilaterally postpones a match or a team fails to arrive at the agreed venue, the circumstances must be reported to the League Secretary by both captains. Rule 11 below is likely to apply and the ruling of the League Secretary will be final.

7.

Matches shall consist of 24 boards except in exceptional circumstances as described in Rule 8. Each pair shall play 12 boards against each of the opposing team's pairs. Computer dealt hands should be used whenever possible.

8.

In the event that a match cannot be started on time because one or both of the teams are incomplete:-

(a) The matter should be settled by apology in circumstances which are exceptional and likely to have led to the late arrival. Apology will always be regarded as sufficient where the delay in arrival is not more than 15 minutes.

(b) Where the delay is between 15 and 30 minutes the non-offending captain shall have the right to reduce the match to 20 boards, five boards being played in each set, and claim 12 IMPs (3 IMPs for each board not played).

(c) Where the delay is greater than 30 minutes the non-offending captain has the right to claim the match, but may elect to play it, provided there is time to play at least 16 boards, an equal number against each pair. The non-offending captain has the right to claim 3 IMPS for each board not played: that is, a total of 12 IMPs if 20 boards are played and 24 IMPs if 16 boards are played.

In the event that a match cannot be completed on time for other reasons:-

(d) Both captains may also mutually agree to curtail to 20 or 16 boards where exceptional circumstances call for an early finish.

(e) If a match is abandoned (Power failure or illness) during the first half, it must be re-arranged as soon as possible. If abandoned during the second half then any boards played at both tables are scored as usual. These IMPs are added to the first half score and the winners determined on the most appropriate Victory Point scale.

9.

A fouled board which has been played at one table should be computer re-dealt for play at the second and subsequent tables. Without a Duplimate machine the board must be re-dealt at the second table and replayed at the first table before the end of the particular session of the match.

10.

Teams entering this competition are expected to fulfil all of their fixtures. Should any team fail to fulfil all its fixtures the NCBA Management Committee will issue a warning that it has the authority to consider demotion to a lower division for repeated offences.

11.

If a match is not played, the side adjudged as non-offending shall receive a score which is the highest of the following:

(a) The average of the non-offending team's VPs for the matches played or as soon as they have played half of their fixtures. The non-offending team's average will be rounded up to a whole number if necessary.

(b) Twenty less the average of the offending team's VPs for their matches played or as soon as they have played half of their fixtures. The offending team's average will be rounded down to a whole number if necessary.

(c) 11 VPs.

The offending team will usually receive zero VPs. The League Secretary reserves the right to award the balance of the VPs (20 less than the score awarded to the opponents) in exceptional circumstances. The League Secretary has the discretion to award a different result in a case where there is no offending team.

12.

When two or more teams tie on Victory Points at the end of the season then their positions shall be determined by:-

(a) The aggregate VPs scored by the teams in their matches against each other.

(b) Where this does not break the tie then the TOTAL Net IMPs for ALL matches will determine the ranking: that is, the total IMPs scored less the total IMPs conceded.

13.

The NCBA Committee will decide the number and structure of divisions. Each team in a division will play the others once. Additional teams will enter the lowest division, which may cause further movement of teams upwards. When devising the League structure, the NCBA Committee will take the following into consideration. Subject to sufficient entries, each division should have at least 5 teams

14.

Below Division One, at the end of the season, the winning team will always be promoted and possibly a second team if any team drops out of a higher division. With the exception of the lowest division the bottom team, at the end of the season, will always be relegated. More than one team may be relegated in order to restructure the league. The NCBA committee can override normal promotion and relegation when restructuring the league between seasons in the best interest of the competition.

15.

Applications for admission to the League or re-admission to the League shall be presented to the League Secretary prior to a deadline set by him/her. Late entries will only be accepted at the discretion of the League Secretary.

16.

The league secretary is appointed by and is responsible to the Committee of the Northamptonshire Contract Bridge Association. Under these rules his/her responsibilities and powers are:-

- (a) To organise and direct the running of the League.
- (b) To manage new entries, promotions and relegations.
- (c) To receive all correspondence relating to the league and to respond to it appropriately.
- (d) To determine a player's eligibility to play for more than one club in the League during the same season.
- (e) To determine Trophy winners and report to the AGM.
- (f) To ensure the smooth running of the League throughout the season and to report to meetings of the Committee.
- (g) To rule on all matters of dispute between captains and to ensure decisions made are effected.
- (h) To adjust the scores of offending and non-offending teams in accordance with the provisions of Rule 11.
- (i) To break a tie where necessary in accordance with the provisions of Rule 12.
- (j) To receive appeals relating to the conduct, play or results of matches and to adjudicate those appeals. Where necessary the League Secretary may refer the matter to the Committee for appropriate action.
- (k) To determine a player's eligibility to play for more than one team for the same club in the League during the same season. (Rule 5)

17.

These rules are effective from the NCBA AGM held on 29th April 2026 and may only be changed by the Management Committee. Queries relating to them should be addressed to the League Secretary.