

Rules of the Midland Counties League

The format of the Midland Counties League (MCL) is a series of head-to-head matches played over 32 boards. Each County will play all the other participating Counties each season, either home or away. Each County will field three teams of 8 players. The first teams will play for the Dawes trophy, the second teams will play for the Porter Cup and the third teams for the Markham Trophy. Scoring will be by double cross-imping converted to VPs on an agreed scale (see below). The winning team of each of the three Leagues will be determined by the County with the highest number of VPs at the end of the season. In the event of a tie between two or more Counties, those Counties with the equal highest VPs will be considered to be joint winners. Where it is necessary to have one nominated County to participate in inter-regional finals, EBU procedures will apply.

1. The three Leagues are competitive with each County trying to do their best to win each match, in each League. Nevertheless, players are reminded that each match is often between friends and neighbouring Counties and maintaining a good spirit between Counties is important. Players should always be courteous and disputes avoided wherever possible.
2. Eligibility; All players must be members of the EBU and can only be selected for their County of Primary Allegiance. A player may switch his or her County of Primary Allegiance once during the season and may play for the new County in the MCL, provided they have not played for any other County during the current season in any of the following competitions; MCL, Tollemache, Pachabo or Corwen.
3. Each Season will be from the 1st of September to the following 30th of April. The League Administrator will publish, at least 12 months in advance, a calendar showing the date of each match and the home or away designation. Counties are encouraged to adhere to the published calendar, but County captains may make any change, mutually agreed, (subject to rule 4) in date or venue. In the event that Counties cannot agree a requested change the default is the date published in the calendar.
4. No match may be deferred beyond the date of the last match in the published calendar except in exceptional circumstances (see rule 6).
5. All matches will start at 2.00pm unless there is a mutually agreed variation.
6. In exceptional circumstances, most commonly the result of bad driving conditions making travel hazardous, a match may require a last minute postponement. If the home team has incurred unavoidable costs the away team is expected to share these costs. County captains are expected to agree a mutually acceptable alternative but where no agreement is forthcoming, the League Administrator will determine the date for a postponed match. Note, non-availability of players is not considered sufficient grounds for seeking the postponement of a match. If there are problems in finding a new

date for the match it can be played up to the end of April with the permission of the Dawes League Secretary.

7. In exceptional circumstances, a County may not have sufficient players available to field three teams of 8 players. Priority will be given firstly to Dawes matches, and then Porter matches. Any Markham or Porter match forfeited will be scored using the EBU procedures for forfeited matches.
8. In the event of the late arrival of one or more players at a match, the Captains may agree to a mutually acceptable delay or to the inclusion of a substitute or penalties can be applied for missing results if it is known that the players will arrive before the end of the first stanza. Any substitute can be replaced by the late arriving player(s), at any point, up to the end of the second stanza, after which the line-up cannot be changed. In the event that a home team provides a substitute for an away team, that person is exempted, for the match concerned, from the rule requiring players to play for only one County in a season.
9. If the match is started with players missing from one team and some boards are not played then penalties can be applied 15 minutes after the match is started. On each affected board the penalty is as follows :-
 - 1 missing comparison = 3 IMPs in total
 - 2 missing comparisons = 4 IMPs in total (ie 2 IMPs per missing comparison)
 - 3 missing comparisons = 5 IMPs in total
 - 4 missing comparisons = 6 IMPs in total
10. It is generally agreed that standard EBU procedures always apply and that breaches of bridge law and regulations etc should always be dealt with in accordance with EBU governance unless a specific variation is agreed within these rules.
11. Counties are encouraged to resolve any bridge disputes during or at the end of each match and generally each County will be fielding several experienced players and/or Tournament Directors. The remainder of this section is for guidance or in the event that the two captains are unable to agree a decision.
 - a. If a board cannot be played at one table and it is clear that one team is at fault then the penalties defined in section 9 can be applied.
 - b. Where a ruling requires bridge judgement, the TD should consult a suitable number of people before making a ruling. This might delay the ruling, and where that causes a problem, an interim ruling (eg "score as if the claim was valid") will be made.
 - c. Where one or other party is not satisfied with the final ruling, they should inform the TD as soon as possible.
 - d. If the issue is an issue of interpretation of the Laws or Regulations, then the party concerned can seek an appeal before the match scores

are announced or some earlier mutually agreed time. The two Match Captains will seek to agree a suitably qualified director(s) to adjudicate and the adjudicator(s) decision will be final. If there is no agreed suitable candidate then an EBU panel TD will be used.

- e. If the issue concerns a judgement ruling then the appeal is referred to the two Match Captains, or their appointed representatives. If, following discussion with the aggrieved party, the two Captains can come to an agreement then that decision is final and if they believe that a serious error of judgement might have taken place, the score can be amended. If the two Captains fail to agree, then the matter will be referred to an EBU Appeal Referee, whose judgement shall be final. Any referral to the EBU Appeal Referee must be made within 72 hours of the conclusion of the match.

12. In the event of any non-bridge appeal, the League Administrator should be contacted and arrange for the dispute to be decided by County Chairmen

13. Each of the Leagues will use the EBU League Management System and it is agreed that Match Secretaries should upload the result and players for each match within 48 hours of the completion of the match

14. Counties may propose changes to the above procedures, which will be implemented subject to majority support of participating Counties.

15. Victory Point Scale

Total Cross Imps	VPs
0-6	10-10
7-20	11-9
21-35	12-8
36-51	13-7
52-70	14-6
71-90	15-5
91-114	16-4
115-141	17-3
142-174	18-2
175-215	19-1
216+	20-0

Amended 26th of July 2018