

SOUTH AFRICAN BRIDGE FEDERATION

REGULATIONS FOR THE CONTROL OF CONVENTIONS

The purpose of these regulations is to create uniformity in the definition of bids and acceptability of conventions throughout the bodies under the jurisdiction of the South African Bridge Federation and at tournaments run by such bodies.

These regulations are promulgated under the authority awarded to Sponsoring Organisations in terms of Law 40 and Law 80 of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge.

During any tournament, these regulations shall be applied by the Tournament Director and in appeals being considered by an Appeals Committee. In the event of disagreement concerning an interpretation of these regulations, the case may be referred to the Executive of the S.A.B.F. for interpretation. The Executive will provide such an interpretation, using expert advice, but only for future use, not retrospectively.

These regulations will be known as the Conventions Control Regulations.

INTERPRETATION

The Executive of the S.A.B.F. will be the sole interpreter of these regulations.

In the event of a dispute about an interpretation of any part of these regulations, the Executive will refer the dispute to individuals and organizations, both local and overseas, for clarification leading to an acceptable interpretation.

DEFINITIONS

High card points (HCP)

Calculated on the basis of:

Ace = 4 points

King = 3 points

Queen = 2 points

Jack = 1 point

Rule of 18

The agreed minimum value of the hand is that the number of cards in the two longest suits together, when added to the number of High Card Points (HCP) in the hand, will total not less than 18.

Similarly Rule of 12, 19, 22, 23, etc.

For the purposes of defining natural and artificial calls the following terms are defined as follows:-

When a suit denomination is first named by a member of a pair, "Willingness" means a minimum holding of four cards in a major or three cards in a minor.

When directly or indirectly raising a suit first bid by partner, the number of cards held in that denomination may be less than the minimum stipulated above.

High Card Strength is defined as a minimum of 3HCP.

Artificial As defined in the Laws of Duplicate Bridge.

Natural A bid of a suit that indicates willingness to play in that denomination and which says nothing about any other denomination;
OR
strength in that suit denomination or at least three cards in that suit denomination;
OR
a bid of no-trumps which indicates willingness to play in that denomination and shows either a balanced hand or, in response to a suit bid by partner, a hand short in the suit, or suits, bid by partner;
OR
a pass, double, redouble that indicates willingness to play in the last denomination named.

Strong is to be interpreted within the context of the statement and the subject matter to which it applies, except as shown below.

Normal opening bid The range shall be from a minimum which conforms to the Rule of 18, up to a maximum of 15HCP. This does not preclude the use of a normal opening bid with a stronger hand which is subsequently redefined on the rebid.

Weak Bids When a bid is described as 'weak' it shall be weaker than the one described as a Normal opening bid. If the CCR stipulate a range, such range shall not exceed 6HCP 's.

Strong opening bid Minimum HCP range shall be 16 HCP upwards or a hand that would conform with a Rule of 24. These ranges are subject to a variance of a point or so either

way depending on the texture of a hand in the context of normal bridge situations.

Pre-emptive opening bid Minimum strength is rule of 12

Balanced A hand of 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 or 5-3-3-2 shape.

Alertable calls Any call which, by partnership agreement, contains information of which the opponents may not be aware must be alerted by the partner of the player making such a call and a full explanation given upon request by an opponent. This applies to natural as well as to artificial calls. Opening bids in a suit which contain less than three cards in a minor denomination are alertable. Standard Stayman, as defined in these regulations, needs not be alerted. Cue-bids after suit agreement and Ace-asking bids above the 3NT level must only be alerted, and explained on request, after the bidding has been completed. However, an Ace-asking bid as an initial bid or as a competitive bid is alertable.

One-suiter A hand containing one suit of at least five or more cards and suggesting no other suit of four or more cards.

Two-suiter A hand containing at least one suit of five or more cards and another of four or more cards.

Three-suiter A hand of 4-4-4-1, 5-4-4-0 or 5-4-3-1 shape.

Prepared 1C or 1D An opening bid of a minor suit that may be as short as two cards, as a first move on a balanced hand. This bid is alertable.

One No-trump opening Minimum of 10HCP (weak) – 15HCP (strong). The point count range must not exceed 4 HCP. Any special partnership agreements are alertable, such as an agreement that the 1NT may contain a singleton or may not contain a four card major. The range must be announced by the partner of the 1NT opener.

Limit raise A bid which raises the suit bid by partner and says nothing about any other suit. Limited to specific point count ranges.

Change of suit A bid which changes the denomination from the suit bid by partner without bypassing a level of bidding. Forcing for one round opposite a partner who has not already passed,

Jump shift A bid which changes the denomination from the suit bid by partner whilst bypassing a level of bidding. May be played either as forcing or non-forcing, but not both.

Standard Blackwood In response to a Blackwood 4NT enquiry, the following responses are defined as standard :-

5C indicates 0 or 4 aces;
5D indicates 1 ace;
5H indicates 2 aces;
5S indicates 3 aces.

The same definition applies to a Blackwood 5NT enquiry, but at one level higher

Standard Stayman Guarantees holding at least one four card major.

In response to a Stayman enquiry for a four card major, the following replies are defined as standard: -

2D indicates no four card major
2H indicates a four card Heart suit
2S indicates a four card Spade suit and denies a four card Heart suit.

The response to the 2C Stayman bid is ONLY alertable if it does not conform to the above. Neither the 2C Stayman bid nor the standard responses defined above need to be alerted. A 2C bid in response to a 1NT opening which is not a Stayman bid is alertable.

The same definition applies to a Stayman 3C enquiry in response to a natural 2NT opening, but at one level higher.

Any bridge terms not defined above will be considered to conform to normal bridge terminology and definition.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Both members of a pair are required to play an identical system.

Players are required to exchange the following information before commencement of bidding :

- a) Basic type of system;
- b) Strength of their opening no-trump bids;
- c) Minimum length for opening bids of a suit;
- d) Forcing opening bids;
- e) Strong opening bids;
- f) Leads;
- g) Signals;
- h) Discards.

Players have the responsibility to find out about their opponents' system of bidding and carding and should ask questions wherever applicable. The onus is upon both pairs to volunteer this information before the start of play. However, if for some reason players do not obtain this information before the start of play, and make enquiries during the bidding or play, then any bid or play based upon information that COULD have been given by partner's enquiry MAY be ruled as unauthorized information.

Identical convention cards containing partnership understandings must be provided by each member of a pair and should be available on the table at all times, for use by the opponents, Opponents are expected to avail themselves of the information provided by the convention cards.

For club purposes, a simple convention card containing the above basic information will be considered sufficient. Any further information must be provided by means of the alert system. For higher level events, more detailed convention cards may be required.

In the event of a dispute about the meaning of a call, the lack of an adequate convention card will usually result in the Tournament Director ruling on the basis of misinformation.

ACCEPTABLE BIDS AND CONVENTIONS

OPENING BIDS

Any NATURAL opening bid that conforms to the above definitions is allowed. However, if there is any additional information contained in the bid that might not be known to the opponents, the bid is ALERTABLE and all such information must be given by the partner of the bidder, but only on a legal request from an opponent. Failure to alert or failure to give a complete and correct explanation of the partnership agreement will be deemed to be misinformation in the event of a dispute.

The following CONVENTIONAL bids are acceptable at all levels of duplicate events, provided that individual clubs may restrict the use of these conventional bids at their own club, however, such restrictions may lead to these events not being eligible for master points. All artificial bids are alertable, other than Standard Stayman as defined, Ace-asking bids above the 3NT level and cue-bids after suit agreement. The last two conventional sequence must, however, be alerted at the end of the auction and explained on request, if the bidders are declarer and dummy, but only after the end of the hand if they are defenders.

ONE LEVEL BIDS

- 1C: May be ONE of the following:
- a) ARTIFICIAL forcing opening indicating a minimum of 15HCP. A negative 1D response may be used;
 - b) An all-purpose bid when 1D is an artificial forcing opening bid;
 - c) ARTIFICIAL forcing bid where the minimum point count and point range are specified;
 - d) PREPARED opening bid in 4 card major systems.
- 1D: May be ONE of the following:
- a) An all-purpose bid when played in conjunction with an artificial 1C opening bid;
 - b) ARTIFICIAL forcing opening indicating a minimum of 15HCP. A negative 1H response may be used;
 - c) PREPARED opening in a 5 card major system.

TWO LEVEL OPENING BIDS

OPENING suit bids at the 2 level or higher may indicate ONE of the following:

- a) a weak single-suited hand with a minimum of 5 cards in the suit, the minimum point count and range must be specified;

- b) A two-suiter where at least one of the suits is designated, the minimum point count and range must be specified;
- c) a three-suited hand where at least one of the suits is designated;
- d) a hand containing at least 16HCP;
- e) a hand that guarantees 8 playing tricks, if played in that suit.

OPENING No-trump bid at the two level or higher indicating a two-suiter with at least one suit specified.

2C: ARTIFICIAL opening bid indicating ONE of the following:

- a) 16 or more HCP or 8 or more playing tricks, balanced or unbalanced, forcing for at least one round. Suit need not be specified;
- b) 16 or more HCP or 8 or more playing tricks, balanced or unbalanced, game-force. Suit need not be specified;
- c) Two-suiter, one of which is clubs;
- d) A three-suiter, specified shortage.

2D: ARTIFICIAL opening bid indication ONE OR MORE of the following:

- a) 16 or more HCP or 8 or more playing tricks, balanced or unbalanced, forcing for at least one round. Suit need not be specified;
- b) 16 or more HCP or 8 or more playing tricks, balanced or unbalanced, game-force. Suit need not be specified;
- c) A three-suiter, minimum point count and range to be specified;
- d) Both majors, minimum point count and range to be specified;
- e) A 5-card major, the minimum point count and range must be specified;
- f) As in a) above, but with Diamonds as the suit denomination.
- g) Multi showing a weak opening in a major, combined or not with strong hands. Point count and ranges must be specified.

THREE LEVEL OR HIGHER OPENING BIDS

An artificial opening bid of three of a suit may be ONE of the following:

- a) A transfer pre-empt;
- b) A two-suiter where at least one of the suits is designated.

OPENING 3NT bid indicating ONE of the following:

- a) An unspecified solid minor without high cards outside (maximum Q);
- b) An unspecified solid minor plus high cards outside;
- c) A long, broken minor.

OPENING bid of four of a suit transferring to a specified known suit.

RESPONSES AND RAISES

Any NATURAL responses and raises may be used, provided that any implicit partnership agreement is alerted and a correct explanation given on request.

Any CONSTRUCTIVE ARTIFICIAL responses or raises may be used and are alertable, as well as other than Standard Blackwood and Standard Stayman, as defined. Full disclosure must be given on request and an incomplete explanation will be deemed to be misinformation.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUCTION

Any allowed method may be used, subject to alerts and full disclosure, of any call which may not be entirely natural.

COMPETITIVE AUCTIONS

Any allowed method of competitive auction may be used, subject to the following requirements which are alertable:

Partnership agreement that overcalls may be made on a four card suit must be specified in the convention card.

Two-suited overcalls:

Over a natural call:

must show at least 5-4 distribution with at least one of the suits designated; may be weak or very strong.

Over an artificial 1C or 1D opening:

Must be specified, if artificial, in the convention card.

All doubles need **not** be alerted.

Conventional balancing calls.

Any other conventional competitive call that does not conflict with the specific requirements set out above.

DISALLOWED BIDS AND BIDDING METHODS

The following bids or methods are disallowed and are subject to adjusted scores and/or penalties:

Conventions and/or agreements whose primary purpose is to destroy opponent's methods;

Highly Unusual Methods (HUM) and Brown Sticker systems, as defined by the World Bridge Federation, except where specifically allowed in Category A events. See page 10;

Psyching of artificial opening bids and conventional responses to artificial opening bids or any prior agreement about psyching;

Relay systems. This does not affect the use of a relay bid sequence as enquiry bids in specific situations;

Controlled psyches;

Systemic psyches;

Systemic variations;

Opening one level bids which show values less than the Rule of 18 by partnership agreement. This prohibition does not preclude the use of a psyche which conforms to Law 40 of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge (whatever version is current);

To vary partnership understanding during the auction or play following a question asked, a response to a question, or any irregularity.

Use of similar psyches more than once a session or more than one session of an event, will lead to the type of call being deemed a partnership agreement and subject to be disallowed under this section;

Partnership agreements that any call may be a random call or may have a random meaning;

Tournament Directors and Appeals Committees are specifically empowered to prevent players from using artificial calls and sequences that those players frequently misbid or explain incorrectly, until they satisfy the Directors that they have rectified the errors and have been given permission to use the artificial sequence again. Use of an artificial sequence by a pair who have been prevented from using the sequence will be subject to an **automatic** disciplinary penalty and possible score adjustment, Repeated violations of such a ban will be grounds for a Disciplinary Committee hearing.

LEADS, SIGNALS AND DISCARDS

Any method of leads, signals and discards, except those specified below, may be used provided that FULL disclosure has been made prior to commencement of play. Failure to supply or obtain this information may lead to the award of an adjusted score and/or disciplinary penalties.

Leads, signals and discarding methods must NOT be alerted during play.

The following carding methods are specifically disallowed:

Encrypted Signals;

Random carding.

CATEGORIES OF EVENTS

Category A events

Quarter-final, semi-final and finals of team's events at regional and national level, where not less than 28 boards are played per session or any event specifically designated as a CATEGORY A event by the Executive of the S.A.B.F. Any OTHER event is a CATEGORY B event.

The sponsoring organization (S.O.) is the S.A.B.F. in respect of national events and the provincial union in respect of regional events within the jurisdiction of the particular region. The S.A.B.F. does have the power to over-rule a provincial union in respect of Category A events.

The following variations of normal restrictions are allowed to be used in Category A events, subject to full disclosure when required:

Opening bids of one of a major need not have a minimum of four cards in the suit;

Opening two-level bids need not conform to the conventional definitions of these regulations;

Opening bids at the 3 level, or higher, need not specify at least one suit;

Conventional responses to opening bids need not conform to the definitions contained in these regulations.

Any non-destructive methods or treatments may be used, with full disclosure in advance with the prior approval of the S.O.

The S.O. will determine how much prior notice must be supplied to prospective opponents before use of such methods may be employed in Category A events and any specific conditions for the use of such methods. The S.O. will also determine whether such methods constitute Highly Unusual Methods, in which case the restrictions of the following paragraph apply.

Highly Unusual Methods may not be used, except with the consent of the S.O. and then only in accordance with the regulations laid down by the World Bridge Federation for the use of such methods.

The use of systems variations and relay systems is permitted, subject to prior notice requirements, as stated above and full disclosure when required.

Encrypted Signals and Random Carding are specifically disallowed.