

Bridge From Home

BFH SYSTEMS POLICY 2020

1. PREAMBLE

The objectives are to ensure that BFH Online Championships can be properly operated and adequately administered, with a fair and equal chance for all competitors. It is necessary that players should be in no doubt as to what is expected of them with regard to systems allowed in BFH Championships held online.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Hand Strength:

- a. **“Average Hand”**: A hand containing 10 HCP with no distributional values.
- b. **“Weak”**: High card strength below that of an average hand (9 HCP).
- c. **“Strong”**: A hand that contains at least 16 HCP or at least 13 HCP and meets the “Rule of 24”.
- d. **“Very Strong”**: A hand that contains at least 20 HCP or at least 13 HCP (with 5 controls) and is within one trick of game assuming suits break evenly among the other hands.

2.2 Natural:

- a. Any opening bid, response, or overcall in a suit at the one-level showing 4 or more cards in the suit bid, except as provided in 2.2(f) and 2.2(g).
- b. Any opening bid at the two-level or higher showing 5 or more cards in the suit bid.
- c. Any response or rebid in a minor at the two-level or higher showing 3 or more cards in the suit bid.
- d. Any response or rebid in a major at the two-level or higher showing 4 or more cards in the suit bid.
- e. Any suit overcall at any level showing 4 or more cards in the suit bid.
- f. A 1C opening bid showing 3 or more clubs. This opening may also include exactly 4-4-3-2 shape.
- g. A 1D opening bid, or response showing 3 or more diamonds.
- h. A NT opening bid or overcall that contains no voids, no more than one singleton, which must be an ace, king, or queen, and that does not contain 10 or more cards in two suits combined.
- i. A call is still Natural, if it also shows distribution in another suit.
- j. A pass, double, or redouble is Natural if it suggests the current contract as the final contract.
- k. After the opening bid any bid is Natural if it suggests the contract bid as the final contract.

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3. POLICY

3.1 Classification of Systems

Only two classes of System will be allowed in BFH Online Championships:

Green Natural

Blue Strong Club/Strong Diamond, where one club/one diamond is artificial strong, shows a hand with 13 high cards or more and is always forcing

3.2 Brown Sticker Conventions and Treatments

The following conventions or treatments are categorised as 'Brown Sticker':

- a) Any opening bid of two clubs through three spades that:
- i) could be weak (made on 9 HCPs or less) AND
 - ii) does not promise at least four cards in a known suit

EXCEPTION: The bid always shows at least four cards in a known suit if it is weak. If the bid does not show a known four card suit it must show a hand with 13 high card points or more. (Explanation: Where all the weak meanings show at least four cards in one known suit, and the strong meanings show a hand with 13 high card points or more, it is not a Brown Sticker Convention.)

EXCEPTION: a two level opening bid in a minor showing a weak two in either major, whether with or without the option of strong hand types containing 16 high card points or more, or with equivalent values. Defensive measures are permitted for opponents.

- b) An overcall of a natural opening bid of one of a suit that does not promise at least four cards in a known suit.

EXCEPTION: A natural overcall in no trumps.

EXCEPTION: any cue bid suit that shows a strong hand.

EXCEPTION: a jump cue bid in opponent's known suit that asks partner to bid 3NT with a stopper in that suit.

- c) Any 'weak' two-suited bids at the two or three level that may by agreement be made with three cards or fewer in one of the suits.
- d) Psychic bids protected by system or required by system.
- e) None of the foregoing restrictions pertain to conventional defences against forcing, artificial opening bids or defences against 'Brown Sticker' or HUM conventions.
- f) For the avoidance of doubt an opening bid of one club which may be made on a doubleton or singleton club and which is ostensibly natural and non-forcing should be regarded as natural and not artificial..

Brown Sticker Conventions are not allowed.

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3.4 Encrypted Signals

Additional to the restrictions on bidding methods and conventions above, players may not use signalling methods by which the message or messages conveyed by the signals are hidden from the declarer because of some key available only to the defenders (i.e. encrypted signals are not allowed).

3.5 Random Openings

It is forbidden to open hands which, by agreement, may contain fewer than 8 high card points and for which no further definition is provided.

3.6 Third Hand Openings

Minimum HCP requirements for third hand opening to be clearly informed to opponents. It is expected that lower limit is about 7 hcp.

4. Convention allowed at BFH Championships

The following guidelines will be applicable for championships conducted under BFH:

4.1 General Approach and Style

It is good to inform opponents regarding your style and tendencies to open, respond and compete on light or substandard hands. You should inform or alert your opponents in case:

- You tend to open 1NT on small singleton, you need to inform and alert.
- You respond on 3-card Major to 1C/D/H opening bid
- 2C relay with less than 3-card club
- You play transfer Responses
- For pre-emptive or weak bid, lower limit has to be informed to opponents. However it can't be lower than 4 HCP. An opening bid with 0-10 or 2-10 hcp is not permitted.

4.2 One Club

As only Green and Blue Systems are allowed, One club opening bid should be:

- Strong and forcing as per the definition of strong hand in 2.1C
- Natural min 3-cards club (5-card major possible only with 5/6-card C)
- Natural or balanced hand of specific ranges (without 5-card major suit)
- You can't play 1C opening as either 5-card club or 5-card diamond or some other types of hands.

4.3 One Diamond

Any of the following meanings:

- Strong or semi strong, forcing as per the definition of the strong hand in 2.1C
- Natural min 3-cards Diamonds (5-card major possible only with 6-card D)
- Natural or balanced hand of specific ranges (without 5-card major suit), min no of diamonds has to be two.
- Prepared Diamond in a strong club system which covers other hand types not covered by other One Level opening Bids (5-card major possible only with 6-card D)

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4.4 One Heart/Spade

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural 5 cards
- 4-card Major system or 4-cards in 5-card Major system in 3rd/4th seat.
- 3-card Major opening is prohibited.

4.5 One Notrump

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural balanced hand of a specific range which should generally be a 3 point range, upgrade or downgrade by 1 point allowed. For 15-17 opening, 1NT opening bid with 13 HCP is not permitted and will be considered as a psyche.
- May have a singleton honor as per definition in 2.2h
- Opening 1NT with a small singleton is permitted with due disclosure to opponent before start of the match and proper alert and explanation in alert box during bidding. However subsequent auction can't pinpoint the singleton suit.
- Opening 1NT with less than 10 HCP is prohibited.

4.6 Two Club

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural with 5-card suit with or without a 4-card major, 10-16 HCP.
- Artificial Strong 2C with definition of very strong hand as per 2.2d
- Multi 2C which is weak two in Diamonds or other strong hands.
- Ekren style opening with min 4-4 or 5-4 in majors which can be weak or strong
- A two suited opening with 5-card heart and 4 card minor, weak hand.

4.7 Two Diamond

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural with 5-card suit with or without a 4-card major, 10-16 HCP.
- Artificial Strong 2D with definition of very strong hand as per 2.2d, may contain balanced hands of 22+ HCP
- Weak 2D, min 5/6-cards
- Multi 2D which is weak two in a major with or without the strong options.
- Either Weak two in Hearts or other strong hands
- Either weak two in Hearts or Strong hand in hearts
- Ekren style opening with min 4-4 or 5-4 in majors which can be weak or strong
- A two suited opening with 5-card Spade and 4 card minor, weak hand
- Flannery, showing 5+ hearts and 4 spades, 11-16 HCP
- Rosencranz 2D opening which shows a balanced hand of 18-19 HCP.
- A precision 2D opening with shortness in Diamond or shortness in any minor, can have 4-3 in majors, 10-16 HCP

4.8 Two Heart

Any of the following meanings:

- Weak 2H, min 5/6-cards 4-10 hcp
- Nat 2H, min 6-cards 10-13 hcp

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- Either weak two in Spade or Strong hand in Spades
- Ekren style opening with min 4-4 or 5-4 in majors which can be weak or strong
- Flannery, showing 5+ hearts and 4 spades, 11-16 HCP
- Tartan 2H, a two suited opening with 5-card Heart and 4/5 card any other suit, weak hand, min number of cards in suits must be informed
- Similar to precision 2D opening with shortness in Diamond can have 4-3 in majors, 10-16 HCP

4.9 Two Spade

Any of the following meanings:

- Weak 2S, min 5/6-cards 4-10 hcp
- Nat 2S, min 6-cards 10-13 hcp
- Tartan 2S, a two suited opening with 5-card Spade and 4/5 card minor suit or any other suit, weak hand, min number of cards in suits must be informed
- Preemptive 3C opening
- Both minors, weak hand or strong hand
- Any solid 7-card suit with outside A or K, must have min 13 HCP

4.10 Two Notrump

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural balanced hand of a specific range which should generally be a 3 point range, upgrade or downgrade by 1 point allowed.
- May have a singleton honor as per definition in 2.2h
- Opening 2NT with a small singleton is permitted with due disclosure to opponent before start of the match and proper alert and explanation in alert box during bidding. However subsequent auction can't pinpoint the singleton suit.
- Unbalanced strong hand with any two suiters
- Transfer, 3C opening can be preemptive and may have second suit with better hand, min 6-card clubs must be guaranteed
- Both minors, weak hand or strong hand
- Both majors, weak hand or strong hand
- Any solid 7-card Major suit or minor suit or any suit, with outside A or K, must have min 13 HCP
- Preempt in any minor is not allowed as it is a Brown Sticker.

4.11 Three Clubs

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural preemptive opening bid with min 6-cards in clubs
- Transfer, 3D opening can be preemptive and may have second suit with better hand, min 6-card diamonds must be guaranteed
- Both minors, weak hand
- Any solid 7-card Major suit or minor suit or any suit, with outside A or K, must have min 13 HCP
- Preemptive 3D opening or any strong two suiter hand

4.12 Three Diamonds

Any of the following meanings:

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- Natural preemptive opening bid with min 6-cards in diamonds
- Transfer, 3H opening can be preemptive and may have second suit with better hand, min 6-card hearts must be guaranteed
- Any solid 7-card suit, with outside A or K, must have min 13 HCP

4.13 Three Hearts

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural preemptive opening bid with min 6-cards in Hearts
- Transfer, 3S opening can be preemptive and may have second suit with better hand, min 6-card spades must be guaranteed

4.14 Three Spades

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural preemptive opening bid with min 6-cards in Spades
- Any solid 7-card suit, with outside A or K, must have min 13 HCP

4.15 Three Notrump

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural balanced hand to play.
- Strong hand with a single minor to play
- A broken minor pre-empt
- Any solid 7-card suit, with outside A or K, must have min 13 HCP

4.16 Four Clubs

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural preemptive opening bid with min 7-cards in clubs
- NAMYATS - Solid 7/8-cardsHearts suit, with outside A or K, however small variation in definition is permitted.

4.17 Four Diamonds

Any of the following meanings:

- Natural preemptive opening bid with min 7-cards in Diamonds
- NAMYATS - Solid 7/8-cards Spades suit, with outside A or K, however small variation in definition is permitted.

5. Alerting Policy

While playing on BBO, alerting is very important and needs to be done carefully. You should not make your bid and then later on try to put comments in alert box. It may happen that opponent makes a bid before he could see your explanation. Therefore the following procedure needs to be followed.

- All alertable bids must be pre-alerted. Only alert your own bids, do not even attempt to explain your partner's bids.
- For alerting your callpress the alert button before making the bid. Giving an explanation is not compulsory but advisable. For example if you are playing forcing NT over major openings (which is very common) or 2C Stayman, alerting should be sufficient (if needed opponents can ask for explanation), but if you are playing 1NT transfer to Clubs, only alerting is not enough.

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- You have to type the explanation before making the bid. For example, if you are opening 1C which is 2+, just type “2+C” in the explanation box or with transfer responses if you bid 1D, just type “4+H” in the box when you make the bid.
- Alert explanation space is limited on BBO, if opponents ask for further clarification using private chat respond privately, not on table chat. (Of course, unless opponents asked on table chat).
- In case you like to open natural 1NT and 2NT opening bids with a small singleton, you must properly alert while bidding. Failure to alert makes NT bid illegal.
- If you are playing an unusual system make sure you pre-alert it before you start bidding the first board, including but not limited to
 - If you open very light pre-empts
 - If you respond on very weak hands
 - Variable or weak NT openings
 - Strong ♣ or ♦ systems, 4-card major systems
 - Transfer Preemptive Openings
 - Transfer Responses
 - Responding on 3-card major suits after 1C/D/H opening bids
 - Multi 2D or other multi Bid
 - Playing unusual honor card leads like Rusinow or low from a doubleton
 - Odd even discards or revolving discards
 - Defense to opponents Strong Club or 1NT opening bids

6. Undo

While playing on BBO, misclicks do happen. But at times, these are not really misclicks but lack of concentration. It is everyone's own responsibility to bid and play correctly. There is a setting in BBO which allows you to confirm every bid and card played to avoid these misclicks. We recommend everyone to use these settings. However following policy will be followed in BFH championships:

- During the qualification stages, teams may mutually agree to allow undos while setting the match. In case undo option was not ticked during creation of the match, you can stop the match and request for TD in case of obvious misclicks. TD will evaluate and may allow undo if he is satisfied beyond reasonable doubt.
- During the finals, undo will remain off. Players may call the director if they wish to undo in the event of an obvious, inadvertent misclick. Undos will be only allowed with the express permission of the director.

Attachments:

Appendix: Psychic Bidding Guidelines

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APPENDIX:

Psychic Bidding

Psychic Calls and similar actions based upon partnership understandings.

The Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge 2017 permit a player to make a psychic call “provided that such call is not based upon a partnership understanding”. If a call is based upon a partnership understanding it ceases to be psychic. In its minute of 30th August 2000 the WBF Laws Committee ruled that a partnership understanding exists when the frequency of occurrence is sufficient for the partner of the player who makes the call to take his awareness of psychic possibilities into account, whether he does so or not; or, of course, it may be a matter explicitly agreed. There are also relevant statements in the WBF Code of Practice. Such an understanding must be disclosed beforehand.

The frequency of usage of the Psych Bid by the Partnership must be explicitly stated in the Convention Card.

The understandings in question are to be disclosed in tournaments conducted under the auspices of the BFI in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Explicit agreements that psychic calls are expected, or providing systemic protection for them, are classified as Brown Sticker. One example of the kind is when, third in hand at favourable vulnerability, a player is expected to open the bidding on anything at all.
2. Understandings whereby from time to time there may be gross violations of the normal meanings of calls, and where the nature or type of violation can be anticipated, must also be disclosed on the convention cards. The understandings may be explicitly agreed or they may have developed from partnership experience or mutually shared knowledge not available to opponents. They must be listed on the card amongst the conventions that may call for special defence and the supplementary sheets must give full detail of situations in which these violations may occur and of the relevant partnership practices and expectations. Subject to satisfactory disclosure methods of this kind are permissible in any category of event.
3. It continues to be the case that random psychics may occur as the laws allow, without warning, so long as these can no more be anticipated by the partner than by the opponents.
4. Similar principles apply in the case of psychic actions in defenders' play of the cards.