

EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

Yves Aubry
President

To the attention of the
Presidents of all EBL NBOs

Lausanne, 7th September 2015

Dear President,

No doubt you will have read or heard about the allegations of cheating by Lotan Fisher and Ron Schwartz that have been published on the Internet and Social Media.

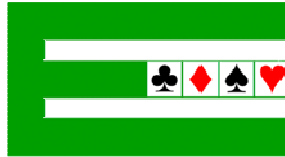
Although the EBL had not received any official request from any EBL NBO, these 2 players were under surveillance during our recent EBL championships. However, right up until today the EBL has not received any direct accusation of wrongdoing by the pair from any opponent or their NBO that had arisen during EBL championships.

The only related official request has come from Lotan Fisher and Ron Schwartz in Tromsø, when they were accused in a bar during the “night” by Peter Fredin to be the biggest bridge cheats in the world.

Daily, I follow what is being published on the matter. It is a serious affair not only for these 2 players but for Bridge in general, the Bridge community, top players and of course institutions like the EBL.

In this area of discipline, the following matters need to be considered:

1. The EBL’s direct responsibility for discipline is limited to EBL Championships. We are a sport federation and our options to investigate and take decisions are clearly limited in statutes and rules and regulations to our EBL Championships.
2. To officially investigate, the EBL needs to receive formal requests from members of the EBL; the EBL members are the NBOs and not individual players. We have received written requests from the Presidents or representatives of 6 Nordic countries, thus providing a legal basis to commence an investigation.
3. Investigation of incidents that occur in ACBL championships, national championships or invitational events are the responsibility of the authority organizing the event. For example



Fisher/Schwartz won the Cavendish in Monaco but were not invited to return the following year. To date, no information has been passed on to the EBL on why this course of action was taken.

4. The EBL is strongly opposed to cheating and will take all feasible measures to eliminate it but it is impossible to have a camera and a TD behind every player under suspicion. 3 pairs were under close surveillance in during the 2014 Team Championships in Opatija but no cheating could be proved.
5. In following our disciplinary code, it is not mentioned that the EBL President can himself make a request to investigate the actions of players but neither does it say he cannot, so last week I have taken the first step by asking our legal advisor for advice on the legal procedures to be followed.
6. All players are under the authority of their NBO and this is the reason why the Israeli Federation is conducting an investigation into the allegations related in various media; they can be expected to reach a conclusion before the end of September.
Similarly, it is the responsibility of the Swedish Federation to make a judgment on Peter Fredin's behavior as described above.

Having received the official request from 6 member NBOs, the EBL has now a legal basis to set an investigation process in motion to deal with matters occurring at EBL Championships. Due process will follow and the 2 players will be given the opportunity to explain any of their actions that warrant an explanation. The EBL Disciplinary Committee charged with investigating the matter will reach a conclusion and if appropriate, action will be taken. All decisions can be subject to an appeal.

Until the investigation has been concluded, if required, the EBL Credentials Committee can, under the rules and regulations, decide to accept or not accept these players' entry for any EBL event without giving a reason.

Following any conclusions reached, if needed, the EBL Executive Committee can refer to the statutes in reviewing the final results of the last EBL Open Team Championships.

It is quite important to conduct this matter in a legal and structured manner. The world of Bridge has had recent experience which will probably need 10 years in different courts and countries to be definitely concluded. I want to avoid any possibility of this recurring.

Yours sincerely

Yves Aubry