

**2023 UNITED STATES BRIDGE FEDERATION  
GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONTEST FOR  
ALL UNITED STATES BRIDGE  
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

*Adopted by the Board of Directors of the  
United States Bridge Federation*

**Board of Directors of the United States Bridge Federation**

**International Team Trials Committee & Technical & Advisory Committee**

**USBC Conventions Committee**

**USBF Credentials Committee**

**Tournament Appeals Coordinators**

**Tournament Appeals Committee Panel**

**Tournament Planning Committee**

**Grievance & Appeals Committee**

**USBF Recorder**

**Hospitality Committee**

**Vugraph Committee**

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# 2023 General Conditions of Contest

## I. OVERVIEW AND APPLICATION

These General Conditions of Contest apply to all USBF Championships. Each USBF Championship also has Special Conditions of Contest, which govern areas not covered by these General Conditions of Contest as well as modifications to these General Conditions of Contest applicable to the specific event. When the Special Conditions of Contest for an event are different from these General Conditions of Contest, the Special Conditions of Contest control.

## II. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply throughout these General Conditions of Contest.

1. USBF The United States Bridge Federation
2. USBC United States Bridge Championship, which selects teams for WBF Championships. Each USBC is named based on the event for which it selects team(s):
  - a. The Open USBC selects teams for Open WBF Championships
  - b. The Women's USBC selects teams for Women's WBF Championships
  - c. The Mixed USBC selects teams for Mixed WBF Championships.
  - d. The Senior USBC selects teams for Senior WBF Championships.
  - e. The Junior USBC selects teams for Junior WBF Championships and is regulated by the JITTC, a subcommittee of the USBF Tournament Committee.
3. NPC Non Playing Captain
4. DIC Director in Charge of a USBF Championship
5. ACBL American Contract Bridge League
6. ABA American Bridge Association
7. WBF World Bridge Federation
8. Selection Trial An event that selects teams for a WBF Championship, subject to approval by the USBF Board of Directors.

## III. ELIGIBILITY FOR SELECTION TRIALS

### A. All Participants.

All participants in any USBC (players and NPCs), and any player or NPC added to a team that has been nominated to represent the USBF as a result of its performance in a USBC, must, subject to review by the USBF Board of Directors in unusual circumstances, meet the following requirements at the time of the USBC:

1. Be either an Active or Resident member of USBF who is in good standing.

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2. Not be under suspension by USBF, ACBL or ABA.
3. Not be under ACBL discipline for a reason other than financial that prevents the player from entering an ACBL Nationally-rated event.
4. Not be excluded from playing in the specific USBF Championship by a committee of WBF, USBF, ACBL or ABA.
5. Have completed and signed the USBF Competitor's Agreement (available on the [USBF website](#)).

### **B. Subsequent Ineligibility for Cheating**

As used in this section B, "cheating" refers to intentional cheating that is systematic (i.e., occurs on multiple boards), egregious, and premeditated (i.e., the player or pair had more than a few moments to contemplate whether to engage in the cheating conduct).

If the USBF finds, at any time, that any player or pair engaged in cheating during a USBF tournament, either online or face to face, the team on which that player or pair competed shall be disqualified from that tournament. Further, the entire team shall forfeit all of its wins in that tournament along with all placing points and masterpoints its players otherwise would have earned in that tournament.

If the finding of cheating is made based on conduct during the Round Robin and is rendered before play in the KO stage begins, the disqualified team's Round Robin results will be vacated and KO qualifiers and seeding will be determined based on Round Robin results against all other teams.

If the finding of cheating is made based on conduct in a KO match and is rendered before play in the next KO round begins, the team containing the guilty player(s) shall forfeit the match in which the cheating occurred, and its opponent shall be declared the winner of that match.

If the finding of cheating is made based on conduct in a KO match and is rendered after play in the next KO round begins, the team containing the guilty player(s) shall forfeit the match in which the cheating occurred and the match it is currently playing. In this situation, the DIC may allow the team most recently defeated by the team containing the guilty player(s) to replace the eliminated team, but is not required to do so.

If the finding of cheating is made after the tournament has concluded and if the team containing the guilty player(s) won the event, the team it defeated in the final KO round shall be declared the champion of the event and shall represent the U.S. in any WBF event for which that tournament selects teams. If the tournament selects two teams and the team that lost in the Finals went on to win the USA2 Finals, then the losing USA2 Finalist shall represent the U.S. in the WBF event for which the tournament selects teams. All teams the tainted team defeated in earlier rounds of that tournament shall be deemed to have won their match against the tainted team and shall receive the corresponding placing points and masterpoint awards, but those teams shall have no further adjustment.

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If any USBF player or pair is found to have engaged in cheating in a WBF championship by either WBF or USBF, USBF will officially reject any medals in that event won by the team or pair on which that player or pair competed.

### **C. Subsequent Ineligibility Other than That Covered in Section B**

A team with a player who is later not invited or approved by the WBF and/or the USBF for any reason other than the cheating covered in Section B (such as ethics, residency, conduct, hygiene, etc.) may be disqualified by the USBF Board should it win any USBC.

### **D. Players**

Each player in a USBC must be eligible to compete in the WBF championship for which the USBC is a Selection Trial. Players in the Senior USBC and Junior USBC must have been born at a time that will make them the appropriate age for the WBF Senior or Junior Championship at the time of the WBF Championship.

A player who has qualified to compete in an event at a World Championship is not eligible to play in a USBC that selects a team or teams for a conflicting event at the same World Championship.

### **E. Replacement Players**

#### **1. Unrestricted Replacement**

When a player on a team that has qualified for face-to-face play in a USBC is unable to continue to play because the player has qualified for a concurrent event at the World Championship for which the USBC will select teams, or because the player has died, the team may replace the player with no limitations other than eligibility of the replacement player, including with a player who previously played in the event.

#### **2. Replacement with USBF Board Approval**

When a player on a team that has qualified for face-to-face play in a USBC is unable to continue to play for any other reason, the team may replace the player with the approval of the USBF Board, which has unlimited discretion to accept or reject the replacement.

### **F. Substitutes**

With the approval of the DIC, substitutes may be allowed when there are temporarily fewer than four players able to play on a team. A substitute must be eligible to play in the event and must not be a participant in the event whose team has not been eliminated. A substitute must be of no greater expertise than the least expert player on the team who is not then playing. Substitutes may not play (in the aggregate) more than 50% of the boards in a Round Robin or in any KO match. E.g., one substitute may play for up to half a KO match or Round Robin, or two substitutes may each play for up to one quarter of a KO match or Round Robin match.

Substitutes may be used in more than one match or RR stage, subject to the aggregate limits above. For instance, a substitute could play the last quarter of one match and the

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first quarter of the following match, but that team would be allowed no further substitutions in any match.

Normally a team may not field more than one substitutes at one time. On a showing of good cause, the DIC may waive this rule.

### G. Non Playing Captains

A Non Playing Captain (NPC) of a team may not be a player on another team in the event, unless that other team has been eliminated.

If USBF is providing a stipend to cover the expenses of an NPC, the USBF Board must approve each proposed NPC, at its sole discretion. The Board will be guided by the proposed NPC's experience, expertise, maturity, team compatibility and such other criteria as the board, in its sole discretion, deems relevant.

## IV. ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER USBF EVENTS

### A. All Participants

Each participant in an USBF event that is not a Selection Trial must:

1. Be either an Active or Resident member of USBF who is in good standing or be under the age of 26 and participating in the USBF Junior Training Program.
2. Not be under suspension by USBF, ACBL or ABA.
3. Not be under ACBL discipline for a reason other than financial that prevents the player from entering an ACBL Nationally-rated event.
4. Have completed and signed the USBF Competitor's Agreement (available on the [USBF website](#)).

### B. Substitutes

With the approval of the DIC, substitutes may be allowed when there are temporarily fewer than four players able to play on a team. A substitute must be eligible to play in the event and must not be a participant in the event whose team has not been eliminated. Absent a compelling situation, substitutes may not play (in the aggregate) more than 50% of the boards in a Round Robin or in any KO match. E.g., one substitute may play for up to half a KO match or Round Robin, or two substitutes may each play for up to one quarter of a KO match or Round Robin match.

Substitutes may be used in more than one match or RR stage, subject to the aggregate limits above. For instance, a substitute could play the last quarter of one match and the first quarter of the following match, but that team would be allowed no further substitutions in any match.

Normally a team may not field more than one substitutes at one time. On a showing of good cause, the DIC may waive this rule.



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### C. Non Playing Captains

A Non Playing Captain (NPC) of a team may not be a player on another team in the event, unless that other team has been eliminated.

## V. WITHDRAWAL BY A TEAM

### A. Before the Event Starts

A team may withdraw before the USBF tournament in which it is entered starts. However, the Credentials Committee will review withdrawals from an USBC made after entries close or no-shows by entire teams (especially a team with a bye). Players on such a team may be barred from future USBF tournaments, or otherwise penalized, but late withdrawal for valid reasons is acceptable provided the USBF is notified as soon as possible by the players involved. Timeliness and circumstances will be considered before assessing any penalty against a team withdrawing from a USBC or failing to show up for a USBF tournament once having registered

### B. During the Event

A team may withdraw from a USBF event at any time with the permission of the DIC.

In all stages of the event, the DIC will take into consideration health related matters related to a team's request to withdraw. During the KO stage the DIC may grant a withdrawal if the request was made because the team is substantially behind.

Any team that fails to play a portion or all of a match without having received the permission of the DIC to do so shall appear before the tournament Conduct and Ethics Committee and be subject to whatever penalty that committee deems appropriate.

If a team withdraws during a Round Robin scores will be awarded in accordance with section X. G (Scores of Unplayed Matches and Boards) below.

If a team withdraws after a Round Robin has been completed and the team has qualified for the next stage of competition, the highest placed non-qualifier from the Round Robin that is able and willing to play will qualify for the next stage of competition. If the withdrawal takes place before the KO bracket has been drawn, the replacement team takes its proper place in the bracket. If the withdrawal takes place after the bracket has been drawn, the replacement team replaces the withdrawn team in the bracket.

If a team withdraws during a KO match or after winning a KO match, but before starting the next match, its opponent shall be deemed to have won the match.

## **VI. RESIGNATION BY A PLAYER**

### **A. Mandatory Resignation**

When a player has qualified for a World Championship event, that player must resign from any teams competing in USBCs that select teams for conflicting events at the same World Championship.

### **B. Optional Resignation During a Selection Event**

Any player may withdraw from a team competing in a USBC with no penalty to either the player or the team, so long as the player's team has 4 or 5 players after the withdrawal. If a player's resignation reduces a team to fewer than 4 players, it shall be treated as a withdrawal by the team.

If a player resigns from a team during the selection event and the team subsequently qualifies to represent the USBF in the World Championship event for which the USBC selects team(s), the player who withdrew may be added to the team for the World Championship, but shall be subject to stringent scrutiny by the Credentials Committee, starting with the presumption that the player should not be added to the team.

### **C. Eligibility of Team from Which a Player has Resigned**

#### **1. Eligibility for face-to-face stages of play**

When 1 or 2 player(s) have resigned from a team that qualified for the face-to-face stages of a USBC, the team continues to be eligible for the face-to-face stages so long as it played 4-handed in the qualifying stage and has 3 remaining players who played in the qualifying stage, or it has 4 players who met the play requirements in the qualifying stage. In addition, if the team is playing in the Mixed USBC, it must have 2 men and 2 women.

#### **2. Eligibility for World Championship**

At least 4 eligible players who were on the team that qualified in a USBC are required for a team to continue to be eligible to represent the United States. For the Mixed Teams, the remaining team members must include at least 2 men and 2 women.

### **D. Replacement Team**

#### **1. Replacement for face-to-face stages of USBC**

If a team is no longer eligible to compete in the face-to-face stages of a USBC, the next-highest placed team in the qualifying stage that is able and willing to play in the face-to-face stages will replace it.

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### 2. Replacement for World Championship

If a team has become ineligible to represent the USBF in a World Championship event, the team will be replaced by the last eligible team that lost in the USBC in which the ineligible team qualified. If more than 1 team lost at the same time, the last team that lost to the ineligible team will be the replacement team. Usually this will mean that in a year in which the USBC selected 1 team, the losing Finalist will be the replacement team, and in a year in which the USBC selected 2 teams, the losing USA2 Finalist will be the replacement team.

## VII. CREDENTIAL COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

The Credentials Committee makes determinations before, during, and after USBCs. Before a USBC, the Credentials Committee may have to determine whether a team's Positioning Points should be reduced because the team has different players than those with whom it won its PPs. During a USBC, the Credentials Committee may have to determine whether a proposed replacement for a player who has withdrawn from a team is eligible. After a USBC, the Credentials Committee may have to determine whether a player on a team that has qualified to represent the United States is eligible to do so, and may also have to deal with augmentation issues. The general procedure in all of these situations is the same, but the specifics may be different.

### A. Positioning Point Dilution

If a team that has earned Positioning Points for the Open USBC adds one or two players, the Credentials Committee shall determine whether the team's Positioning Points should be diluted or removed in accordance with the Special Conditions of Contest for the Open USBC. The USBF Secretary shall poll the Credentials Committee regarding whether the team's PPs should be reduced. If all but one of the Committee members responding agree that the PPs should not be reduced, that will be the result (except that if there are fewer than eight respondents, they must be unanimous). If two or more Committee members believe the PPs should be reduced, the Credentials Committee shall form a subcommittee to review the matter further. If a subcommittee is to review the matter, the USBF Secretary shall inform the captain of the team that the subcommittee is going to meet and that the team may present an argument to the subcommittee by email.

### B. Eligibility of Player on Qualified Team

If the USBF Board of Directors has a question about the eligibility to represent the United States of a player on a team that has qualified to represent the United States, the Board shall submit the name to the Credentials Committee. A subcommittee of the

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Credentials Committee shall be formed to review the matter and make a recommendation to the Board.

### **C. Augmentation**

A team representing the United States in international competition shall be composed of six players. If a team that qualifies to represent the United States has fewer than 6 players, an additional player or players shall be added to the team in accordance with the following procedure:

The team shall nominate a player or players to be augmented. The USBF Secretary shall poll the entire Credentials Committee regarding whether any member of the committee believes that the proposed augmentee(s) should not be accepted. If all of the members of the Credentials Committee respond that the player(s) should be accepted, the proposed player(s) shall be approved. If not, the team shall be asked to nominate a different player or players and the USBF Secretary shall poll the entire Credentials Committee for objections to the new proposed augmentee(s). If all of the members of the Credentials Committee respond that the player(s) should be added, the proposed player(s) shall be approved. If not, the Credentials Committee shall form a subcommittee to meet with the team or its representative(s) to determine eligible augmentee(s).

### **D. Subcommittee Procedures**

To the extent possible, a subcommittee making a ruling prior to a USBC shall consist of players who have not entered the USBC.

A subcommittee shall have at least 5 members and no more than 10 members.

Each subcommittee shall have a chair, who may be appointed by the USBF Board before the subcommittee is formed or elected by the subcommittee after its formation. Subcommittees normally meet by Zoom or telephone conference call. Each subcommittee may decide matters of procedure for itself, including whether to permit any persons who might be affected by the subcommittee's decision to make oral arguments to the subcommittee. The subcommittee shall consider any written statements presented to it by persons who will be affected by its decision.

## **VIII.COMPLIANCE WITH WBF REQUIREMENTS**

Each player in a USBC, by entering the event, agrees that in the event the player represents the United States in a WBF Championship, he or she will comply with WBF requirements for the championship. These requirements include, among other things:

Drug Testing: Each player must be willing to submit to drug testing mandated by WBF.

Publicity: Players are required to play on Vugraph when assigned to a Vugraph table. Players may be videotaped at any time during the championship and agree to the use of video footage or other photographs to publicize the championships and for any other reasonable purpose of the WBF.

## **IX. SYSTEMS AND CONVENTIONS**

### **A. Methods Allowed**

Any method included on the ACBL Open Plus Chart is allowed in USBF events.

### **B. System Summary Form and ACBL Convention Card**

#### **1. System Summary**

Each pair is required to complete a System Summary Form (SSF) on the USBF website at least 2 weeks in advance of the tournament. If a pair files the SSF late, or fails to file it, that pair's team will lose seating rights in one segment of play for every day the SSF is late. If a pair files a SSF that the USBF Tournament Systems Committee finds is inadequate, until the pair makes the SSF adequate, whenever the pair is playing, the opposing team has seating rights. The System Summary Forms are posted on the USBF website, linked to the players' names on the tournament Teams Entered page.

Each participant in the Championship is responsible for reviewing his or her opponents' System Summary Forms in advance. Any time in excess of 5 minutes spent at the table on preparation for methods properly described on the System Summary Form shall be charged to the players preparing for the methods and not to the players using the methods.

#### **2. ACBL Convention Card**

Each pair is required to complete an ACBL Convention Card and submit it to the USBF Secretary or his or her designee for posting on the USBF website 2 weeks in advance of the Championship. Convention cards are linked to the pair's SSF on the USBF website. If a pair files the ACBL convention card late, or fails to file it, that pair's team will lose seating rights in one segment of play for every day the convention card is late.

#### **3. Players Added Within 2 Weeks of the Start of the Championship**

If one or two players are added to a team within two weeks of the start of a Championship, they will have four days to file a System Summary Form and ACBL Convention Card with no penalty. The penalty for filing after four days will be loss of seating rights in one segment of play for every day the SSF or Convention Card is late.

In addition, the new pair may not employ any method in a Round Robin that is not allowed under the ACBL Open chart and is not substantially the same as a method played by another pair in the tournament.

#### **4. Provision of System Summary and Convention Card to Opponents**

Upon arriving at the table, each player should give the partnership's System Summary Form and ACBL Convention Card to his or her screen mate for the screen mate's use during the match, unless the SSF and Convention card are available on an electronic

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device on which the event is being played. If the SSF and convention card are available electronically, players may print the opponent's SSF and/or convention card and bring the printed version to the table, but may not add anything to the SSF or convention card.

### **C. Advance Submission Form and Recommended Defense**

#### **1. Requirement for Advance Submission Forms and Defenses**

Any pair employing a method described in Paragraph 3 or 7 under Disallowed Opening Bids of the Open+ Convention Chart and for which there is not an ACBL Approved Defense must submit an Advance Submission Form describing the method and provide a Recommended Defense to the method.

Advance Submission Forms are posted on the USBF website. Instructions for completion of Advance Submission Forms are included on the forms.

Note that although unusual responses and methods for which there is an ACBL Approved Defense do not require an Advance Submission Form, they must be clearly described on the System Summary Form under "Methods that May Require Advance Preparation."

#### **2. Submission Procedure**

Advance Submission Forms shall be filed with the USBF Secretary and posted on the USBF website at least four weeks in advance of the Championship. Upon completion, they will be subject to section 3 below.

#### **3. Review and Adequacy**

Each participant in a USBF Championship is responsible for reviewing the Advance Submission Forms and Recommended Defenses submitted by other participants. Any participant who has an objection to the completeness of the Advance Submission Form or the adequacy of the Recommended Defense shall make that objection to the USBF Tournament Systems Committee within 1 week after the date upon which the Advance Submission Form or Defense was posted on the USBF website or 3 weeks prior to the Championship, whichever is later. If the USBF Tournament Systems Committee deems that the Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense is not adequate it will require the players submitting the Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense to improve it. No pair may employ a method if an objection has been made to the Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense unless and until the USBF Tournament Systems Committee approves the Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense.

If no objection is made to a Recommended Defense by 1 week after the date upon which it was posted on the USBF website or 3 weeks prior to the Championship, whichever is later, the Recommended Defense shall be deemed adequate, unless there were serious errors or omissions in the Advance Submission Form describing the bid for which the defense is recommended.

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### 4. Methods for Which ACBL has an Approved Defense

If there is an approved defense to a method posted on the ACBL website at the closing date for entries to the USBF tournament, that defense will be acceptable as the Recommended Defense for that method and will be deemed adequate.

### 5. At the Tournament

Each pair employing a method requiring an Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense must bring copies of the Advance Submission Form and Recommended Defense to the tournament and make them available to their opponents at the table immediately prior to and during play. Each pair employing a method for which there is an ACBL Approved Defense available, must bring the ACBL Approved Defense to the table unless the tournament is being played on an electronic device and the Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense or ACBL Approved Defense is available electronically. If the Advance Submission Form or Recommended Defense or ACBL Approved Defense is available electronically, the opponents may print any or all of those documents and bring the printed version to the table.

#### D. Use of Written Defenses at the Table

Players may bring their own written defenses to methods requiring an Advance Submission Form, and methods for which there is an ACBL approved defense, and may refer to their own written defenses or the recommended defense provided by the opponents.

#### E. Exception to Advance Submission Requirement

If any pair desires to employ a method requiring an Advance Submission Form, for which they did not submit an Advance Submission Form and Recommended Defense as required under section C above, they may do so if and only if:

1. at least one other pair in the tournament submitted an Advance Submission Form and Recommended Defense for the method in a timely manner, and
2. if the pair desiring to play the method had submitted an Advance Submission Form it would have been identical to that submitted with regard to weak meanings for any bid.

#### F. Additional Convention Regulations

##### 1. Use of Method without Compliance with Section C above

If a pair uses a method requiring an Advance Submission Form and written defense without having complied with Section C above, in addition to any possible score correction under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge, the DIC shall impose a 3 imp procedural penalty for each offense. Requests for application of this penalty shall expire at the beginning of the next segment of play.

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### 2. Accessibility of System Notes

If requested by a director, appeals committee or recorder, pairs shall produce any written agreements or system notes. Pairs who do not make their notes available or do not have their system notes on site may get the worst of any ruling or inquiry dependent on partnership understandings. An Appeals Committee shall only consider written agreements or system notes in support of the pair submitting them if the documents have been submitted to the Tournament Organizer in advance of the tournament. System Notes should be sent to the Tournament Organizer by email and will be maintained by the Tournament Organizer in confidence. Should a Director, for the purpose of making a ruling, or an Appeals Committee, in order to decide an appeal, request the System Notes, the Tournament Organizer will make relevant portions of the System Notes available only to the appropriate people.

### 3. Change of Methods or Strategy

Any changes to submitted methods and any special tactics or change in tactics must be disclosed to the opponents.

## X. ROUND ROBIN PROCEDURES

### A. Victory Point Scales

The Victory Point Scales set forth on the USBF website and shall be used in Round Robin matches.

### B. Balanced Play Requirement

Any time that two teams will meet for more than one segment in the same Round Robin stage of a USBF tournament, either because the matches in a Round Robin are played in two or more separate segments, or because there are two or more complete Round Robins comprising one stage of the tournament, each player on a team must play at least one half of the segments against each other team.

### C. Seating

#### 1. Matches Played Straight Through

##### a. Setting the Order of Play

The DIC shall determine the order in which matches shall be played prior to the event, but shall not disclose that order of play until immediately prior to each round, except that if teams will have sit outs, the DIC shall tell each team when its sit out will be in advance of the Round Robin.

##### b. Advance Submission of Lineups

Teams shall submit their line-ups for each round to the DIC in advance of each round and before any pairings for that round are known.

##### c. Penalties



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If a team does not sit in the positions it has specified in the advance lineup submission, the following penalties will apply:

First offense: warning

Second or intentional offense: 3 VP penalty

Third and subsequent offenses: 5 or more VP penalty, in the discretion of the DIC

### 2. Matches Played in Halves

When matches are played in halves, for all matches other than those in which one half will involve sequestering (see Section E below), each team shall have seating rights in one half of each match. To determine which team has seating rights, the matches shall be numbered in the order in which they are played. The higher numbered team shall have seating rights in the first half of each odd numbered match, the lower numbered team shall have seating rights in the first half of each even-numbered match. The team with seating rights seats its players after the other team has seated its players.

### D. Tie Breaking

A tie is when there is no mathematical difference between teams according to the VP scale in use. Ties shall be broken only if the exact finish of the teams is relevant to which teams advance to the next stage of the competition or to the seeding of the next stage of competition. In those events, ties will be broken by VP's against all tied teams, then by successive two-board matches.

### E. Scoring a Round Robin with 2 separate Segments

If a Round Robin is played in 2 or more separate segments, the IMP score for each segment shall be converted to VPs and the team's score shall be the total of the VP scores for all segments played.

### F. 3 Team Round Robin

When a face-to-face Round Robin has three teams, with two advancing, the format shall be:

Each team will play a match against each other team. Both matches will be played simultaneously, with 14 boards played in a segment, 7 boards against each other team, 4 segments per day. There will be no substitutions during the 14 board segments. For the first half of each segment, team 1 will be NS at table 1 and EW at table 2, team 2 will be NS at table 2 and EW at table 3, and team 3 will be NS at table 3 and EW at table 1; for the second half of each segment, team 1 will be NS at table 1 and EW at table 3, team 2 will be NS at table 2 and EW at table 1, and team 3 will be NS at table 3 and EW at table 2. After each half, the boards will be moved to the EW team's table.

There will be a short break between segments for teams to compare and for player substitutions.

Each segment will be scored at IMPs and converted to VPs using the USBF 7 board VP scale.

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If the 3 team Round Robin is one day long, it will be scored as two separate 14 board matches, one played in the first 2 segments and one played in the second 2 segments. The VPs awarded in each segment will be added together to determine the score of each match and the scores for the matches will then be added together to determine the score for the Round Robin.

If the 3 team Round Robin is one and one-half days long, it will be scored as two separate 21 board matches, one played in the first 3 segments and one played in the second 3 segments. The VPs awarded in each segment will be added together to determine the score of each match and the scores for the matches will then be added together to determine the score for the Round Robin.

If the 3-way stage is 2 days long, total VPs will be calculated separately for each day, by adding the VP scores for all of the segments played in that day.

In accordance with the USBF's balanced play requirement, each player on each team must play at least half of the boards of each match against each other team.

Section E above will not apply.

### **G. Scores of Unplayed Matches and Boards**

#### **1. If a team withdraws before it has played any matches**

If a team withdraws from the tournament before it has played any matches in a Round Robin, no score shall be assigned to the teams that remain in the Round Robin because they do not play the team that has withdrawn.

#### **2. If a team withdraws after having played one or more matches**

If a team withdraws from the tournament after it has played one or more matches in a Round Robin, the scores of matches that have been played shall not be affected by the withdrawal. Any team that does not play its scheduled match against the withdrawn team shall be assigned the greater of the average of the Victory Points earned by the team(s) that did play against the withdrawn team or the average of the Victory Points it earned against all other teams, for the missed match.

#### **3. If a team fails to play one complete match**

If a team fails to play a match ("team A"), but remains in the event, the team shall receive 0 Victory Points for the match. The team against which it was scheduled to play ("team B") shall receive the highest of:

- a. The average VP score of teams that played against team A;
- b. The average VP score of team B;
- c. 12 VPs

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### 4. Score for a board played at only one table

A board that has not been started when time expires will not be played. If it is likely that a board will not be played at one table, the DIC may prevent the other table from playing it.

If a board has been played at one table and not the other, the DIC will assign a score based on the Cross-IMPs for the result at the table where the board was played, as long as the board has been played at least twice. Results from all tables in USBF events playing the same deals will be used in the Cross-IMP calculation. If there are three or fewer comparisons available, the table's result will be added to the Cross-IMP calculation.

## XI. KNOCKOUT PROCEDURES

The following procedures apply to any Knockout matches in a USBF tournament.

### A. Setting the Bracket

The bracket shall be set in accordance with the Special Conditions of Contest for the USBF tournament.

### B. Knockout Seating Rights

For each segment of KO play, there is an Away team, which seats its players first, and a Home team, which seats its players second.

Before the match starts, preferably immediately after the teams are known, seating rights are assigned as follows:

- a. The higher ranked team elects either to choose one segment in which to be the Home team, or passes the first choice to the other team.
- b. Next, the team that did not choose first selects two segments in which to be Home.
- c. Next, the first team to select selects two segments to be Home.
- d. The teams continue to alternate choosing two segments each until only one segment is left. The team that would be next to choose is Home in that segment.

Normally segments will be 15 boards, but a segment may be any number of boards after which the teams will compare and then re-seat themselves.

In matches where there are seating rights, teams are encouraged to make their line-ups known to their opponents as soon as possible. For the first segment of play each day, the Away team shall give its lineup to the Home team no more 70 minutes before the start of play. The Home team shall give its lineup to the Away team no more than 65 minutes before the start of play. The teams shall inform the Tournament Organizer of their lineups, or enter them on the lineup spreadsheet if there is one, no more than 60 minutes before the start of play. For subsequent segments each day, a member of the Away team must inform the Home team of its lineup ten minutes before the start of a

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segment. A member of the Home team must advise the Away team of its line-up five minutes before the start of a segment.

Penalties for failure to submit a lineup on time will be 1 VP or 3 IMPs if the lineup is submitted before the scheduled start of play; 2 VPs or 6 IMPs if the lineup is submitted after the scheduled start of play.

### C. Knockout Round Tie Breaking

Ties in knockout matches will be broken as follows:

#### 1. For all matches in a USBF Tournament other than in a USBC USA1 or USA2 Final, if the tied teams met in the Round Robin:

- a. If the tied teams met in the Round Robin and their Round Robin match did not end in a tie, the winner of the Round Robin match will win the tie.
- b. If the tied teams met in the Round Robin and their Round Robin match ended in a tie, the team that finished higher in the Round Robin will win the tie.

#### 2. Otherwise

For a USBC USA1 or USA2 Final or if the tied teams did not meet in the Round Robin, the tie will be broken by one (or more, if necessary) additional segments of 8 boards if a match of 120 boards or more or 6 boards if less than a 120-board match. There will be no seating rights in tie-break matches; teams will submit lineups in advance.

Ties for byes, seeding, or bracket number will be broken by a coin-flip.

## XII. TIME

### A. General Principle

In an electronic environment, with complete bidding, play and time records, each pair will be given an amount of time for each segment of play and the pair's team will be penalized in accordance with section C.3 below for any time taken in excess of that amount whether or not the table as a whole finishes on time.

3.

### B. Time allotted

In USBF tournaments played in an electronic environment, the schedule of play is based on on 7.5 minutes per board for one board fewer than those in the segment, 15 or 20 minute breaks between most segments, and a longer lunch break in approximately the middle of the playing day.

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### C. Removal of Unplayed Boards and Penalties

#### 1. In a Round Robin

In Round Robin play, the DIC may curtail a match by removing unplayed boards after time has expired. An unplayed board is one where the auction has not begun. The DIC will assess a procedural penalty in accordance with Section 3 below against either or both teams if they are found responsible for the slow play. If a board is played at only one table, it will be scored in accordance with Section X. H. 4 above (“Score for a board played at only one table”). If a board is played at neither table, it will be scored as 0-0.

#### 2. In a Knockout Match

In knockout play, the DIC may impose the penalties set forth in Section 3 below based on electronic time and play records. In order to avoid giving any unwanted incentive for a slow pair's opponents to slow down, it is possible for a slow pair to incur a time penalty, even when the table finishes the session on time.

The DIC may also curtail boards, but only if it is necessary to allow the next segment of play to start on time. If a board is played at only one table, it will be scored in accordance with Section X. H. 4 above (“Score for a board played at only one table”).

#### 3. IMP & VP Penalties for Slow Play in Electronic Environment

When events are played on either RealBridge or LoveBridge, the time taken by each pair for a segment is available to the director, and IMP or VP penalties will be imposed if a pair takes more than their allotted time for a segment. A team's excess time is the sum of the excess time taken by all pairs on the team during a match. Appendix A sets forth the general procedures for measuring time and informing players of the time they have used during a segment. Penalties will be imposed on the following schedule:

1. In a Round Robin match, excess time will be penalized as follows: 1/4 VP per minute for the first 5 minutes of excess time.
  - a. 1/2 VP per minute for any minutes in excess of 5 minutes of excess time.
2. In a KO match, each team's excess time will be penalized as follows:
  - a. The first 7 minutes in a match will not be penalized.
  - b. The next 5 minutes in a match will be penalized 1/2 IMP per minute.
  - c. The next 5 minutes in a match will be penalized 1 IMP per minute.
  - d. The next 5 minutes in a match will be penalized 2 IMPs per minute.
  - e. Subsequent excess time will be penalized 3 IMPs per minute.

NOTE - for 2023 only, these penalties will be reduced by 50% - that will go in the Special Conditions of Contest for the 2023 USBCs.

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### D. Long Term Slow Play

Whenever a player or pair has, in the sole opinion of the DIC, used more than its allotted time in a significant number of segments, the DIC shall prepare a report documenting that fact and file it with the USBF Recorder. The USBF Recorder shall write the offending player(s) informing them that the DIC found them to be guilty of excessive use of time and that should such behavior be repeated at a future USBF Championship, the player(s) will be subject to being barred from competing in one or more USBF Championships.

### E. Tardiness

Play shall begin at the announced starting time. All pairs shall be prepared to commence play at the announced starting time. If a player arrives at the table more than 1 minute after the announced starting time, the player's team will be penalized 1 VP in a Round Robin match or 3IMPs in a KO match for each 5 minutes of tardiness, in addition to all other penalties for slow play and tardiness. Egregious tardiness will be referred to the USBF Conduct and Ethics Committee for possible disciplinary action

## XIII. Required Percentage of Boards

### A. Required Percentage

Each player is normally required to play at least 50% of the boards in any stage of a USBC to continue to play in the event. However, see section below regarding failure to play the required number of boards in an early stage of the event and making those boards up later.

### B. Counting Boards

#### 1. Round Robin

- a. For the purposes of 5 or 6 handed teams playing in a Round Robin with an odd number of matches, the play requirement is slightly relaxed to matches divided by 2, rounded down to the nearest whole match. As an example, each player is only required to play 4 out of 9 matches.
- b. If a team withdraws or is disqualified after having played some but not all of the matches in a Round Robin, the play requirement for players on other teams does not change. Teams that have not yet played the withdrawn or disqualified team will submit blind lineups for the remaining matches without knowing which match is scheduled against such team, and the players whose names are submitted for the match against such team will be treated as having played a match. Players on teams that have already played the withdrawn or disqualified team get credit toward the play requirement for that match.

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### 2. Forfeiture

In cases of forfeiture, the winning captain shall notify the DIC of the assignment of the “unplayed” playing time to particular team members.

### 3. Playoff Boards

Boards played in a playoff between tied teams do not count for play requirements.

### C. Failure to Play Required Percentage of Boards

1. If a member of a team that has qualified for the World Championship has failed to play:
  - a. Either at least 50% of the matches in any Round Robin, or,
  - b. At least 50% of the boards in any knockout match,

that player will appear before the Tournament Conduct and Ethics Committee at the conclusion of the event. the Tournament Conduct and Ethics Committee will normally decline to submit that player's name to the USBF as a team member, but it may include the player if there is a clear reason for failure to play the required number of boards other than bridge skill.

### D. Exception for Failure to Play Required Percentage of Boards in Early Stages

A player may fail to play all or any part of the boards in the first two face-to-face stages of an event, so long as that player plays at least 50% of the boards in the first three stages of the event. For purposes of this rule, the two halves of a morphed Round Robin are two stages of the event.

For permitted withdrawal by a player, see section IV.B.2 above.

## XIV. COMMITTEES

### A. Establishment; Timeliness of Requesting Ruling or Appeal

The time limit for an appeal of, or to request a ruling, expires 30 minutes after the end of any segment, session or match, or when the next segment, session or match begins, whichever is earlier. However, at the DIC's discretion, a later ruling may be requested or appeal may be heard in regard to issues that were not immediately discovered.

The right to appeal for a score correction expires at the start of the next segment of a Round Robin, the next session of the same Knockout match, 15 minutes before the start of a new Knockout match on the same day, one hour before the start of a new Knockout match on a different day, or in the case of the last segment of the final or any repechage final, 60 minutes after completion of play.

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### B. Jurisdiction of Committees and Regulations

#### 1. Tournament Committee

Three committees will be available at any USBF Championship to hear director's rulings and appeals of assessed penalties, conduct disciplinary proceedings and similar matters.

- a. A Tournament Committee, appointed by the DIC and Tournament Organizer, after consultation with the Appeals Coordinator, when needed, will hear matters relating to the orderly conduct of the tournament, including interpretation of the Conditions of Contest and eligibility of players and teams.
- b. Hearing panels of the Tournament Appeals Committee will handle matters usually referred to committees at tournaments (e.g., appeals of director's rulings, review of late play penalties, etc.). The Appeals Coordinators shall organize appeals committees in such a way as to have a procedure as close to that which would exist if all of the members of the Committee hearing an appeal were at the tournament. Normally, this will involve a Zoom or similar online conference. If such a conference is not feasible, the Appeals Coordinator may use some other procedure, but shall attempt to use a procedure that allows interaction among the committee members. The members of the Tournament Appeals Committee Panel will normally be listed on the front page of the Daily Bulletin, but the Appeals Coordinators may appoint people not listed to a committee for a specific appeal, if it is not possible to form a committee from listed Tournament Appeals Panel members.  
The decision of a Tournament Appeals Committee shall be subject to appeal only on questions of law. Otherwise, the decision of the Committee is final. Any appeal on a question of law must be made in accordance with the provisions of the USBF Bylaws.
- c. The Tournament Conduct and Ethics Committee will hear serious matters such as those that might result in disqualification of a team or player, (including when such a player has failed to play the required percentage of boards), or such as would affect the participant's USBF playing or membership rights. Matters may be brought to this committee through the DIC or may be referred to it by an Appeals Committee. Conduct and Ethics Committee members are appointed by the DIC and the Tournament Organizer, after consultation with the Appeals Coordinator. Sanctions by this committee may be appealed to the USBF Grievance and Appeals Committee in writing up to 15 days after the conclusion of the event. By entering a USBF Championship, participants agree to be subject to the Bylaws, rules, and procedures of the USBF. Such Bylaws require an aggrieved participant to seek binding arbitration after exhaustion of all other administrative remedies.

#### 2. Regulations governing players in a USBC

Playing in a manner to advance the interest of one's opponent, or inducing or attempting to induce another to play against their best interest or against the best interest of their own team is subject to discipline.



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Providing any inducement to a player not to compete in the event is subject to discipline.

Players are subject to the regulations in Section XII – Security and the regulations and By-Laws of the USBF.

USBF Tournaments will be governed by the ACBL interpretation of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge.

### **XV. ELECTRONIC DEVICE PROCEDURES**

When using electronic devices rather than cards for face-to-face play, the “table” is split into two halves. North and East play in one room (and are “roommates”), South and West play in another; bids, plays, and disclosure are sent to the other room via the play software.

During the auction period, after an opponent has acted quickly, it is proper to adjust the tempo back to normal timing by delaying one's own call. It is not proper for a player to use this procedure where the overall time taken to pass the tray may create the perception of a sufficient hesitation if the opponent may view this as unauthorized information. One should also endeavor to refrain from asking questions where the answer to those questions is not relevant at that time, and where the time taken to ask and respond to those questions may create the perception of a sufficient hesitation that the opponent may view this as unauthorized information.

The Laws of Duplicate Bridge 2017 North American Edition are in effect except as specified below:

#### LAW 16:

Two calls transmitted to the other side of the “table” in 20 [30?] seconds or less normally creates the presumption that there is no Unauthorized Information (UI). A tray returned after a longer period may be considered to have made UI available if it is apparent that one side is responsible for the delay.

Under certain circumstances, questions asked may be considered the equivalent of delaying one's own call.

Until the conclusion of play of the hand, only a player on the opposite side of the screen from the side on which an alleged hesitation occurred may summon the director regarding a hesitation.

All “table chat” is unauthorized information for the partner of the player who sent the chat and authorized for the other side.

#### LAW 20:

B: Review of Auction During Auction Period: The software keeps the auction visible to all players that have the legal right to an auction review.

F: Explanation of Calls:

1. During the Auction:

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a. At any time a player may request a full explanation of an opponent's call. This request is done by clicking the call in question; the person who made that call should explain the call within the electronic environment. (See Law 40 below.)

2. Prior to the Opening Lead:

a. The opening leader is permitted to ask for clarification of previously explained calls from his roommate.

b. Preferably before the opening lead, the declaring side is strongly encouraged to confirm explanations given in the two rooms if there is any possibility those explanations might have been different. If the explanations were different, the director must be summoned to ensure the defenders both have access to the information to which they are legally entitled. In cases where one side's explanations were different as a result of the other side giving different explanations of their own calls, the director shall protect the non-offending side from misinformation as the Laws provide. If in such cases the exchange of information across the screen resulted in the defenders becoming aware of their own misunderstanding, the director shall protect the declaring side from the resulting unauthorized information.

3. After the opening lead is made:

a. Third hand (opening leader's partner) is permitted to ask for verbal clarification from his roommate.

b. If based upon the appearance of dummy, declarer has reason to suspect there may be need for clarification of explanations, before playing from dummy, those remedies provided in 2.b. are also in effect.

LAW 40:

Alerts: Disclosure of methods during the auction shall be made by the player making the call that warrants disclosure. This disclosure will be transmitted to both opponents via the software.

Players should provide an explanation of Alertable calls with the call; the explanation should be typed before the call is made.

If a player wants a further explanation of the opponents' methods, they may verbally ask their roommate for more information, but the initial disclosure must be within the electronic environment. This request for further information may not be for the sole purpose of finding out if the opponents are having a misunderstanding.

There are no delayed Alerts when playing in an electronic environment.

LAW 25: Unintended calls will be rectified under the Laws of Duplicate Bridge. A contestant who makes an unintended call should summon the Director immediately. As in live play, undos are permitted only upon instruction of the Director.

LAWS 45, 46, and 47: An unintended played card ("misclick") by declarer or a defender will be treated as in Law 45D1: The card must be withdrawn if attention is drawn to it before each side has played to the next trick; cards played subsequent to the unintended played card may be withdrawn. Information from all such withdrawn

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cards is deemed to be unauthorized to the side with the unintended played card, and authorized to the other side.

LAW 68D1b(i): upon the request of the non-claiming or non-conceding side, play may continue after a claim as long as the three non-dummy players concur that play should continue.

LAW 76: There will be delayed kibitzing and Vugraph online. "Live" kibitzing from next to a player is not allowed, except by NPCs.

### **XVI. SECURITY**

Tournament directors are expected to address any departure from these rules immediately and are empowered to warn, penalize (seeding, seating, IMPs) or refer to the Tournament or USBF Conduct and Ethics Committee or the USBF Recorder.

#### **A. Rules Applicable to Players in Electronic Environment**

- a. Once play of a segment has begun, unless escorted or monitored, both members of a pair may not be away from the table at the same time until the segment is completed. If a pair wishes to converse in private, they must be monitored by a tournament official.
- b. Until the segment has been completed, players leaving the room must be escorted. Players may be escorted by opponents, neutral kibitzers, or tournament officials or their designees.
- c. A player upon finding himself in a position in which security is compromised must report the situation to a tournament director immediately.
- d. No electronic communication devices (other than health aids or devices being used to play) are permitted to be in the possession of anyone other than a tournament official in a playing room. If a player is found in possession of an unauthorized electronic device in the playing room during a Round Robin match, the player's team shall be penalized 3 Victory Points. If a player is found in possession of an unauthorized electronic device in the playing room during a Knockout match, the player's team will be penalized 10 IMPs. Additional penalties are set forth in the Special Conditions of Contest for each event. Tournament directors will handle emergency/important paging situations on a case by case basis at their discretion.

#### **B. Rules Applicable to Kibitzers**

Only NPCs are Allowed to Kibitz in Playing rooms and they may kibitz in only one room during any one segment

- a. Kibitzers may not speak with players, must watch only one hand at a time, must check communication devices with the Director, cannot call attention to irregularities, but may serve as witnesses to a possible irregularity.
- b. NPCs who want to kibitz must enter the playing room before play commences and must remain until the segment of play is completed or leave the playing area entirely.

## **2023 General Conditions of Contest**

- c. Except as expressly provided in these conditions and appendices, NPC's shall be subject to the WBF General Conditions, Section 17.
- d. These rules may be revised in specific instances by the DICs for the orderly running of the event.

**2023 General Conditions of Contest**  
**APPENDICES**

**A. TIME PROCEDURES IN ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENT**

When play is taking place on electronic devices, the following procedures will be in place:

1. Each pair is allocated half of the time allocated to the session as its “pair time”
2. Time shall be deducted from each pair’s time whenever it is the turn of a player on the pair to bid or play. If a bid or play is being delayed after it has been made and before it is shown to the other players, that time is not deducted from the pair’s time.
3. The following time will not be charged to either pair:
  - a. When a bid or play is being delayed after it has been made and before it is shown to the other players;
  - b. When the director has been called and has not restarted the time;
  - c. When a player has chosen to “hold the tray” after both bids have been made on one side of the screen;
  - d. When a player has clicked on the “pause” button to review a hand;
  - e. When a claim has been made and has not yet been accepted or rejected;
4. Each pair shall have a separate clock to measure the time the pair has taken. The clock will be shown to the pair at the start of each board, but not during the bidding and play of the board.