

Conduct of Members of BFACT Affiliated Clubs

1 Conduct considered an offence

- 1.1 Action by BFACT of a disciplinary nature will be limited to the conduct of persons who are registered with the ABF occurring during BFACT events or in connection with BFACT events. Where Council receives advice of alleged conduct occurring during events conducted by a BFACT affiliated club, then Council shall refer the advice to the relevant club for appropriate action.
- 1.2 The following is a list of examples of conduct, which may be the subject of a disciplinary enquiry and which, if proven, are considered to be offences against BFACT. The list is not an exhaustive list of possible offences.

improper communication between partners. When such communication is proven to have been pre-arranged the automatic penalty is expulsion from participating in BFACT events for life;

offences relating to courtesy and etiquette. Such offences include failure to maintain a courteous attitude towards a partner or opponents, disruption of the orderly progress of the game, any remark or action which causes annoyance or embarrassment to another player or person in the club rooms, and interfering with the enjoyment of the game including making frivolous or groundless complaints. Recommended penalties are: for the first complaint—a reprimand; for the second complaint—suspension from participating in BFACT events for 3 months; for subsequent complaints—suspension from participating in BFACT events for one year; and

offences against non-members of BFACT affiliated clubs. Any offence against a non-member, that might be subject to a penalty under civil or criminal legal action, may also be considered by Council as the subject of a disciplinary enquiry. The penalty may range from a written apology to a suspension from participating in BFACT events.

2 Disciplinary enquiry

- 2.1 Of its own volition or upon receipt of a complaint in writing—which may be a complaint by an affiliated club, the Australian Bridge Federation or an individual— Council may hold an enquiry concerning the conduct of any member of an affiliated club.
- 2.2 Council may appoint a ‘disciplinary committee’ to conduct the enquiry. No member who formulated the complaint against the member, or other members who may have any particular interest or bias in the matter may be amongst those members who deal with or judge any disciplinary matter before the Council which shall conduct all disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the rules of natural justice.
- 2.3 The committee will submit a report to Council for ratification. Any member of the disciplinary committee who is a member of Council will not be allowed to vote on a motion imposing disciplinary penalties on the person or persons who are the subject of the disciplinary action.
- 2.4 Such an enquiry may be concerned with the conduct of the member in the following areas (but not necessarily limited to the following):

in relation to the provisions of the laws of contract bridge;

in relation to behaviour in BFACT events;

in relation to behaviour at any place where the member is present as a bridge player; and
in relation to the provisions of the constitution or by-laws of BFACT.

- 2.5 The member concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Council (or disciplinary committee) before its decision is made. The member shall be given twenty-one days notice of the enquiry and of the details of the conduct to be the subject of the enquiry. No matter prejudicial to the member may be raised at the enquiry, unless the member has been given notice of the matter.
- 2.6 The member has the right to legal or advocate representation at the enquiry.
- 2.7 Only members of an affiliated club are to be present at the enquiry, other than as provided for in clause 2.4.

3 Disciplinary procedures

- 3.1 The Secretary shall maintain a separate register of all disciplinary matters dealt with by Council. The register will include a record of all written complaints received by Council and a statement about the action taken. The register will be available only to members of Council. Any relevant material will be made available for disciplinary enquiries.
- 3.2 Council will advise all BFACT affiliated clubs of all disciplinary penalties imposed and on request all relevant matters relating to the member's penalty. The Council will also advise the Australian Bridge Federation if it considers it likely that the member concerned will compete in an event of the Australian Bridge Federation during the period of any suspension from play in BFACT events imposed.
- 3.3 Council may reinstate any member subject to a disciplinary penalty, including suspension or expulsion from the club, as it sees fit.

4 Penalties that may be imposed by the committee

- 4.1 If a complaint against a member has been proven to the satisfaction of Council following an enquiry, Council may impose a penalty or combination of penalties from the following list:
reprimand /warning;

suspension from participation in all BFACT events for a specified period of time;

suspension from participation in bridge play in BFACT events of a certain type or class for a specified period of time;

a fine; and

a written apology.

- 4.2 In imposing penalties Council will take note of previous penalties imposed. However, penalties may be varied depending on circumstances.
- 4.3 If the Council decides to suspend the member, the member may by notice in writing to the Secretary within seven days of the communication to him of the decision of the Council, require that the Council refer the decision without delay to a General Meeting. The decision of the Council to suspend shall prevail unless reversed by resolution of the majority of those present and entitled to vote at the meeting. If so reversed the decision shall be of no effect.
- 4.4 Council may not reduce the impact of any disciplinary penalty imposed on a member of the

club by the Australian Bridge Federation. Council may review any such penalty and extend its application. Council may also review any disciplinary penalty imposed by any bridge club, in or out of Australia, and extend its application.