

RULES FOR NATIONAL RUBBER BRIDGE COMPETITION

1. Matches

All matches are to be played under the rules laid down in The International Laws of Contract Bridge 2014.

2. Formats

Formats are up to the individual Regions to organise but should fall within one of the following two methods.

- (a) A one-venue event held over a day or a weekend. In this case, a Pair must not have more than one bye and, if numbers are awkward, the event may be run with one or both of the following two features.
 - (i) **Closest Loser(s).** In this case, the Pair who lost by the closest margin may be allowed through to fill out the draw, e.g. 14 Pairs could produce 7 winners and 1 closest loser to make a full draw of 8 Pairs for the quarter finals.
 - (ii) **Repechage.** In this case, first-round losers play a series of short matches to allow one or two to get back into the event, e.g. 24 Pairs would reduce to 12 winners, who play off for 6 quarter-final places, and 12 losers, who play a series of 10-board matches for the other 2 quarter-final places.

In either case, any draw that puts two Pairs together who have previously met will be declared invalid and completely redrawn, unless the competition has progressed to a stage where it is impossible to avoid Pairs meeting again.

- (b) An event held over a longer period of time, generally in people's homes. Early rounds can be drawn with a geographical bias, to reduce travelling. If there is a substantial difference in numbers from various areas, the Regional Committee may permit a format that effectively gives a Pair more than one bye. Under this format, there can be no closest losers or repechage as in (i) or (ii).

3. Length of Matches

All matches will be of 30 deals, unless there is a good cause, such as a repechage, to run shorter matches. A passed-in hand constitutes a deal.

4. Incomplete Rubbers

If, at the end of the specified length of the match, a rubber is not finished, the score is computed as follows: if only one game has been completed, the winners of that game will be credited with 300 points; if only one side has a part score (or part scores) in a game not completed, that side is credited with 100 points.

5. Tie Breaks

Ties at the end of the match will be resolved by the addition of two deals to the length of the match. This means that Contestants retain all the conditions of the match as at the end of the last board, e.g. the dealer, vulnerability, scores below and above the line (but not the bonus points computed for an incomplete rubber at that stage) etc., and play a further two deals. The score is then recalculated including the bonus points for an incomplete rubber, if any. If the scores remain tied, the procedure is repeated. In effect, the tie break is a continuation of the match for a further two deals each time, until a winner is found. Some formats may require the resolution of ties between Pairs who have not been in direct competition. One example of this would be a format in which the closest loser also survived to the next round. If there was a tie between two or more Pairs for such a qualification, it is to be resolved by tossing a coin or drawing lots.

6. Slow Play

In a type (a) one-venue format, the timing of the event may be disrupted by excessively slow play. If this happens, the organisers must not shorten any matches, but can use the following measures to encourage participants to maintain a reasonable speed of play.

- (a) A penalty may be imposed on one or both Pairs in a match, which would take effect from the start of the next match. A standard penalty would be approximately 300 points, but this is only a guideline that can be varied by the Director, taking into account each individual case. For example, if the Director deems that the responsibility for slow play in a quarter final is being, or was, equally shared, he/she may rule that the winner of the match will start the semi-final with a deficit of 300 points. If the Director believes one Pair to be mostly responsible for the slow play in question, then he/she can rule that the penalty will apply only if that Pair wins the match.
- (b) The Director can file a report to the Region giving details of the incident and recommending that the Region not accept entries from this Pair for the Rubber Bridge Knockout in the following year. The Director may also warn Players that such an action may be taken if their speed of play does not improve.

7. Substitutes

(a) Format (a) events

These are one-venue events and include the play-offs at the National Congress. The Director may approve a substitute for one match or part thereof. Should that Pair win the match but then still be unable to continue, then the substitution will be revoked and the other Pair will proceed to the next round.

(b) Format (b) events

These events are held at times to suit the Players and often in private homes. No substitutes will be allowed under any circumstances. Pairs who are unable to complete their match within the allocated timeframe will forfeit their match and their opponents will progress to the next round.

New Zealand Bridge Manual

8. National Finals

The winning Pair in each Region progresses to the National Final held at the Hamilton Congress. In the Region with the largest number of entries, the beaten finalist will also qualify for the National Final. If there is a tie for the largest number of entries between two or more Regions, it will be broken by random lot.

9. Replacement Pairs

Should a Player or Players become unavailable to play in the National Final after having qualified, the Pair will be replaced using the following method.

- (a) If the Pair came from a Region with only one Pair in the National Final, that Pair will be replaced by the beaten finalists.
- (b) If the Pair came from a Region with two Pairs in the National Final, that Pair will be replaced by the beaten finalists in the Region with the second-largest entries.

In both cases, if that Pair is unavailable (even if it is because the Players are already replacing another Pair), there will be no further replacement and the National Final will proceed with fewer than eight Pairs.

SYSTEM REGULATIONS FOR NATIONAL RUBBER BRIDGE COMPETITION

1. The objective is to allow methods that could be used by any two Players forming a partnership for the first time for a game of Rubber. Only systems that are allowed to be played in Junior Tournaments can be used (**page D41**).
2. Contestants are expected to follow the intention and "spirit" of the Regulations.
3. Before the start of the match, Players should agree, as far as practical, on the legality of their opponents' system. If unsure of the legality of any bid or method, the Contestants, before the match starts, should:
 - in a type (a) event, consult with the Director;
 - in a type (b) event, consult with any Director.
4. Conventions permitted in this competition are those that Players in Junior Tournaments can be expected to play. A list of permitted conventions is included in the following section (**page D7**). Players may agree to play other conventions provided they are consistent with the spirit of the event. They must be agreed before play starts on the first board and a written record of the agreement should be made.
5. Penalties

Should it be ruled that a Pair has used an unauthorised convention and attention is drawn to it immediately, the non-offending Pair will have the choice (after completion of the hand) of

- (a) 200 points above the line and the result cancelled, or
- (b) the result on the hand plus an additional 100 points above the line.

In either case, it will count as a played hand.

If attention is drawn to the irregularity after either non-offending Player looks at his/her cards on the next deal, then only penalty (b) can be applied.

If attention is drawn to the matter after Players have left the table at the end of the match, no penalty will be applied unless no Director is present, in which case it should be drawn to the attention of the Regional Committee at the earliest practical opportunity.

The penalty provisions in the Regulations should be implemented only for a gross breach that leads to damage.

GUIDE TO SYSTEMS AND CONVENTIONS PERMITTED IN NATIONAL RUBBER BRIDGE COMPETITION

The following short summary has been prepared to assist Players with regard to the basic requirements and treatments that are approved to be played at the New Zealand National Rubber Bridge Competition.

1. Opening Bids

Call	
1♣	Opening strength; minimum suit length, 2 cards; OR Simple Precision with no relay or artificial response other than the negative 1♦ response
1♦	Opening strength; minimum suit length, 3 cards; OR Precision style (opening strength, any distribution)
1♥ 1♠	Opening strength; minimum suit length, 4 cards
1NT	Balanced; lower limit at least 11 HCP
2♣	Very strong; forcing; any distribution; OR Opening strength; minimum suit length, 5 cards (Precision style)
2♦	Very strong; forcing; any distribution; OR Opening strength; minimum suit length, 5 cards; OR Weak; minimum suit length, 6 cards
2♥ 2♠	Weak; minimum suit length, 6 cards; OR Strong; minimum suit length, 4 cards
2NT	Balanced; lower limit at least 18 HCP
Suit bid, 3+ level	May be weak; minimum suit length, 6 cards
3NT	Very strong; OR "Gambling" (with a long minor suit)

Notes

"Precision" may also include any convention / treatment that is allowed to be played at this level with a natural system.

Unless otherwise noted, the suit to which the "minimum length" applies must be the suit named in the bid.

New Zealand Bridge Manual

For the purposes of this table, the following definitions of strength apply

"Opening strength": At least 11 HCP or equivalent with allowance for distribution (for which the guideline is: Add one point for every card after the eighth in the two longest suits).

"Strong": At least 15 HCP or equivalent.

"Very strong": At least 19 HCP or equivalent.

"Weak": Less than opening strength.

2. Responses to Opening Bids

Any artificial negative response to a forcing opening, including "impossible" 1♦ response to Precision 1♣.

Artificial forcing responses promising trump support (e.g. 2NT, splinter bids).

Stayman or Baron responses to NT bids, including modified forms.

Transfer or range-finder responses to NT bids.

2NT enquiry response to weak 2-suit opening.

2♦ enquiry response to Precision 2♣ opening.

3. Calls Over Opponents' Natural 1 Suit Opening

Any suit bid that promises 4+ cards in the suit.

A cue bid showing a very strong hand.

Any bid (including a cue bid) that shows two suits (5+/5+), at least one specified; must be either "weak only" or "strong only".

Jump cue bid asking partner to bid 3NT with a stopper in that suit.

4. Others

Any defence to opponent's 1NT opening.

Any defence to opponent's artificial forcing opening.

Any meaning of "double" in any sequence.

Any ace-asking bids and responses.

Any treatment for a cue bid made after the first bid by one's own side.

New Zealand Bridge Manual

5. Permitted Conventions

Opening	Gambling 3NT
Responses to 1 suit openings	Any artificial negative response to forcing opening, including "impossible" 1♦ response to Precision 1♣
	Artificial forcing responses promising trump support (e.g. Jacoby 2NT, Bergen raise, splinter bids)
Responses to NT opening and NT intervening bids	Stayman or Baron, including modified forms
	Transfers and range finder
Response to weak 2♣ opening	2NT enquiry
Response to Precision 2♣ opening	2♦ enquiry
Intervention after opponents' natural 1 suit opening	Cue bid that shows a strong hand
	Any bid that shows a two-suited hand (5/5), either weak or strong but not both (e.g. Michaels, unusual NT)
	Jump cue bid asking partner to bid 3NT with a hold in that suit
Intervention after opponents' 1NT opening	Any defence
Intervention after any artificial opening by opponent	Any defence
Other	Any ace-asking enquiry and responses
	Any meaning of cue bid after first bid by own side