



THE WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION

**MINUTES OF THE 3rd MEETING
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Lyon, France
Tuesday, 15th August 2017 at 10:15**

In Attendance

Mr Gianarrigo Rona, President in the Chair
Mr José Damiani, President Emeritus
Mr John Wignall, 1st Vice President
Mr Al Levy, Executive Vice President
Mr Yves Aubry, Vice President
Mr Patrick Choy, Vice President
Mr Mazhar Jafri, Vice President
Mr Radoslaw Kielbasinski, Vice President
Ms Georgia Heth, Hon. Secretary
Mrs Sevinç Atay, Member
Mr Marcelo Caracci, Member
Mrs Chen Zelan, Member
Mr Giorgio Duboin, Member
Mr Josef Harsanyi, Member
Mr Paul Janicki, Member
Mrs Sheena Rayner, Member
Mr Merlin Vilhauer, Member
Mr Howard Weinstein, Member
Mr David Harris, General Counsel

Also in Attendance

Mr Simon Fellus, WBF Secretary
Ms Carol von Linstow, Secretary to the Executive Council

By invitation of the President

Mr Philippe Cronier, Chairman HLPC
Mr Panos Gerontopoulos, Honour and Advisory Committee Member
Mrs Esther Sophonpanich, President of Zone 6
Mrs Lilian Sun, Interpreter

Excused

Mr Marc De Pauw, Treasurer
Mr Bernard Pascal, Member
Mrs Janice Seamon-Molson, Member

The President called the meeting to order at 10:15. He declared that there was a quorum, and the meeting proceeded as follows.

1. International Organizations & Events – agenda item 14

1.1 *Olympic Channel – agenda item 14.9*

Mr Fellus presented the new Olympic Channel to which all sports federations are able to provide clips, stories of players and the competition. The most interesting things for this channel are from the personal side. Mr Fellus is hoping to be able to send some highlights from Lyon during the championships which will be edited before being broadcast. The President reported that he has authorized the purchase of additional software to protect the WBF website from being hacked: the Executive unanimously approved.

1.2 *Peace & Sport – agenda item 14.6*

The President reported on this point. It is an opportunity for the WBF to be part of this to develop our presence. There is a ceremony in Monaco at the end of the year to which the President has been invited and will be useful for making contacts.

1.3 *Sport Integrity Conference, December 2016 – agenda item 14.7*

Mr Harris reported on his attendance at this conference in December 2016 which focussed on match fixing. Also, the need to set a good example by abiding by the rules of each sport. When entering into contracts with any corporation or organization, it is essential that this is seen as benefitting the wider bridge world and that there is no evidence of it being to the benefit of an individual.

2. Youth Bridge – agenda item 15

2.1 *The 5th World Youth Open Championship, Lyon, 15th-25th August – agenda item 15.1*

The President reported that the Opening Ceremony for this event will be held this evening. With respect to the age, he noted that when a championship actually takes place, the players must not exceed the maximum age, i.e. if a player qualified for the up-to-15 while still 15, but had turned 16 when the championship took place, then he/she would not be eligible to play.

There was some discussion on the age of seniors, but Mr Janicki said that this will be discussed in the Seniors Committee meeting and will be reported to the Executive later in these meetings.

3. WBF Master Point Plan – agenda item 12

Mr Newton was invited into the meeting and reported on the changes in the Master Point plan with the addition of a Mixed ranking which was put into place this year. In addition, whereas previously if a player died the record of their MPs would be deleted, these have now been re-instated.

Mr Damiani noted that the ACBL has trademarked the words "Master Point".

In the ranking for Placing Points, even those who have passed away are listed as this is historic. The Master Point ranking lists are current showing who is playing.

The Executive thanked Mr. Newton and unanimously approved.

4. Disciplinary Matters – agenda item 18

4.1 The German Case – agenda item 18.1

General Counsel provided a further report on the case of the German Doctors. He had attended the last hearing in Cologne at the end of January 2017 when the Court stated it would hand down its judgment on 28th February 2017. The Court subsequently informed our German lawyers that the decision would not be forthcoming until 31st March 2017 and it was actually received on 13th April 2017.

The Court dismissed the Claim by E & W against the WBF holding that it was inadmissible. The Court found that the arbitration clause within Article 13 of the Constitution of the WBF applied and was governed by Swiss Law by virtue of the seat of arbitration being based there. The Court further found that the players had subjected themselves to the WBF regulatory framework and that any remedy would only have been available via an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport. An announcement of the decision was published on our website.

In May, E & W served notice of their intention to appeal that decision to the Higher Regional Court in Dusseldorf. They served their grounds of appeal at the end of July and we must serve our response by 4th September 2017. Our German lawyers have drafted a skeleton argument that will form the basis of our rebuttal of their appeal. E & W's main challenge is that they were not subject to the Arbitration Clause requiring reference to the Court of Arbitration for Sport. The Court has fixed a hearing date of the 15th November 2017 when it may determine the appeal or give further directions.

4.2 The Fantoni-Nunes Case – agenda item 18.2

4.2.1 The proceeding in the EBL

Mr Aubry reported on the proceeding in the EBL, held in Lausanne in April 2017. A decision will be taken by the CAS later this year

4.2.2 The proceedings in Italy

There has been another situation in Italy as the pair has been sanctioned by the Italian Bridge Federation and this has been appealed to the Italian CAS that confirmed the FIGB decision. Fantoni/Nunes promoted an action against FIGB and CONI at TAR Lazio, a Special Judge competent for sport asking for the cancellation of the decision and the reimbursement of damages, indicated in 800.000 € each, and preliminarily for the suspension of the sanction: the TAR rejected the request of suspension and reserved to fix the date of the hearing for the discussion of the merit.

4.3 The Balicki-Zmudsinski Case – agenda item 18.3

Mr Aubry reported on the disciplinary action that they will be taking. New accusations have come up.

4.4 The HLP Express Line – agenda item 18.4

There will be a report on this later in the meetings.

4.5 The ACBL decisions – agenda item 18.3

Ms Heth reported that the ACBL has completed its review of the hearings held regarding Fantoni-Nunes and Fisher-Schwartz. All four had been convicted of collusive cheating and expelled from the ACBL. The findings of guilt and expulsions were confirmed. None of the four appealed to the courts so the decisions are final.

The ACBL enacted a new version of its Code of Disciplinary Regulations at its July meeting. The new code attempts to clarify and simplify the procedures.

4.6 The ACBL & EBL Joint Commission activity – agenda item 18.6

Mr Weinstein reported on the progress being made towards cooperation between the ACBL and the EBL with respect to cheating. The meetings between the disciplinary authorities have largely been informal and limited by confidentiality considerations. It is obligatory on the WBF to provide effective leadership in combating cheating.

The President remarked that we need to change the culture to where it is the responsibility of each player to do their part in helping clean up the game. The players must be expected to file a player memo when they see something unusual, with the understanding it will remain confidential until they give permission.

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On the request of the President, Fotis Skoularikis reported on Data at this time – the site was experiencing 2m hits per day; 584,000 pages visited; and 50,000 unique visitors per day. A major part of this is because of the interconnection of people on computers, phones and tablets. This traffic is totally unprecedented. He expects double this number by the end of the week. 5m hits per day and 100,000 single visitors.

There is an increased number of robots coming to the site. This is all very good news.

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The meeting was adjourned at 13:20 to be reconvened at 09:30 on Wednesday, 16th August.