



# 10th EBL NBO Officers' Seminar

## ELIGIBILITY CODE(s)

### A status update

By Marc De Pauw  
EBL Vice President



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2019 - a year of revisiting the eligibility rules both at WBF and EBL level

## **WHY ?**

- \* Need for clear and transparent rules, applicable worldwide.
- \* Harmonization needed.
- \* Stronger involvement of the NBOs

## **STATUS**

- \* New WBF Code (December 2019)
- \* New EBL Code in preparation



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## MAJOR CHANGES

### DEFINITION OF "EVENTS"

Distinction between "Representative" (restricted to participants representing their Country/NBO) and "Transnational" Events (open to all NBO registered members).

Examples:

Representative: Bermuda Bowl / World Bridge Games/ Zonal competitions qualifying for WBF representative events (e.g. EBL Teams Championships)

Transnational: Rosenblum / EBL Open Championships

The Eligibility Code(s) apply to both categories of Event, but the constraints on the Representative Events are more important (e.g. the "2 year rule").



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“Any player and non-playing captain must be a **National** or a **Bona Fide Resident** of the Country of the NBO that he will represent.”

- Country = Nationality

A choice needs to be made in case of Multiple Nationality

- Bona Fide Resident

The criteria on which to judge cases of relocation to another country (becoming BFR) have been rewritten (from a “check list” approach to the need to prove genuine new residency)

Maintaining the “only 1 move in a 10 year period” clause.

No waiting period in a case of return to the Country of nationality (whilst however maintaining the “2 year rule”).



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## CRITERIA FOR “BONA FIDE RESIDENCY”

“ BFR is one’s actual or true residence, maintained in good faith, and does not include a temporary or superficial residence established for convenience or for the purpose of circumventing the conditions of representative participation.”

The requests for BFR are submitted by the interested NBO and it is up to the players to provide sufficient proof. Criteria are cited by which the application may be accepted.

The Credentials Committee takes a decision.

Fulfilling the criteria for BFR status is a continuing requirement.

The “grandfathering” clause has been removed.



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## A STRONGER INVOLVEMENT OF THE NBOs

Up to now, the involvement of the NBOs was limited (certifying that the players participating in International Events are in “good standing” with their NBO) or not well defined (e.g. their role in the BFR procedures).

In the new Code(s) we will ask more from the NBOs:

- \* For Representative Events: declaration of full compliance with the Eligibility Code for their registered players.
- \* For Transnational Events: notify the WBF (EBL) if players seeking to register are not in “good standing” (including procedures for ethical violations).
- \* Introduce and advise BFR cases.



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## THE “2 YEAR” RULE

This rule, aimed at avoiding confusion caused by frequent “country-hopping” of players has been maintained in the new Code(s):

“ No player may represent another Country in a WBF **Representative Event**, until at least two subsequent calendar years (January 1st to December 31st) have passed without a specific proposal for the WBF Credentials Committee based on an extraordinary situation and subject to the approval of the WBF (EBL) Executive Council.”

NB: this clause has recently been disputed by an interested party



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## THE WBF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The Credentials Committee is the “guardian” of the Eligibility Code and has decisive power to judge cases of eligibility.

The participation in WBF events being by “strict personal invitation,” the CC may deny registration of players with “absolute discretion”. Internal motivation for the decision is needed, in view of potential disputes before CAS.

The CC judges the cases of BFR.

Violations of the Eligibility Code are subject to the WBF Disciplinary Code.





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## BRIDGE A CLEAN SPORT

The following two articles of the Code(s) are intended to contribute to the ethics of our sport:

- “No player with pending ethical violation charges, in respect of bridge matters, is eligible for invitation to play in a WBF event.
- “No player who has been convicted of collusive cheating is eligible to play as the partner or a team-mate of another player who has been convicted of collusive cheating.”

For the players (non playing captain, coach and team officials), the requirement to sign the “Participants Commitment Declaration” has been maintained.

**New:** no captain, coach, trainer and/or other team official shall act for more than one Federation in any Event.



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## SPECIAL CASE: YOUTH PLAYERS / AGE RESTRICTIONS

- **AGE RESTRICTIONS**

Only apply to competitions in the Youth categories (specified in the relevant Conditions of Contest) and Senior Events (from January 2020 till the end of 2021, the minimum age is 62).

- **YOUTH COMPETITIONS**

Maximum flexibility (in terms of eligibility conditions) for participation in Youth and Transnational Events. Most of the criteria and constraints do not apply.

Quid extension to the new U31 category .

# Status of the matter at the EBL level

- **Decision of Executive Committee (EC) Nov 15, 2019:**

Recognising the need for worldwide co-ordination of the eligibility codes and agreeing with the principal intentions of the modifications proposed at the WBF level.

Awaiting the formal approval of the new EBL Code by the EC, approving the following aspects of the new codes:

## **Eligibility Code**

- \* Separation of “National representative” events from “Transnational” events.
- \* “Extraordinary situations” need ratification by the EC.
- \* “Ethical violations” need to be bridge – related.

## **BFR requirements**

- \* New residency does not need to be established 2 years prior to the event (but the “2 year rule” of article 1.5 still applies).
- \* The supporting documents for BFR will be grouped into fewer, but much broader categories, to substantially strengthen the requirements.



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**THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION**

