



# 10th EBL NBO Officers' Seminar

## How to develop a successful national team

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## The French experience 2014-2017

- France won three world open championships between 1992 and 1997
- Since 2003, our Open team hasn't qualified for the Bermuda Bowl.
- In 2013, French federation president, Patrick Grenthe, decided to create a department dedicated to high level : the National technical direction (DTN).
- The DTN took responsibility for a specific project :

## Project France 2017



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## France 2017 Project

- Lyon will host Bermuda Bowl in 2017.
- On this occasion, French Federation needs a good Open team, able to compete for a medal, maybe even the title !
- We have four years to build it.





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## Building the team

### First step

- Create a group of good « young » players who will commit to putting in the effort.

The « Groupe France »

- **Focus on a professional approach**
  - Create pairs
  - Players commitment :
- Compete together in enough festivals and national events
  - Training
    - Studying



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## The Groupe France

### Several ways of improving pairs' standard

- Playing against strong foreign opponents
  - Getting invitations
  - Playing training matches – reciprocity concept
  - Trying to get some places in Nationals/ Open European/ Cavendish
- Training
  - Playing/bidding on BBO
  - Play often enough in daily events
- Studying bridge technique
  - Technical meetings
  - Hiring specific trainers (bidding, signalling, and so on...)



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## Choosing the pairs in the group

### The Trials

- The six pairs of the group are involved in the trials
- They play three times three days against foreign teams, pairs of the same country being only compared.
- At the end, the first three pairs make the team.



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## Support around the team

### Captain, coach, ...

- The coach takes responsibility for various aspects of bridge technique before and during the championship.
- The captain is THE man of the team. He is in charge of :
  - Team's cohesion
  - Strategic decisions
  - Support for players
- During championships, logistical support from the federation is necessary in case something is going wrong.



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## France 2017 project / other teams

### Ladies team

- French ladies' team has been successful for years
- Same rules apply for training and playing, but the group - particularly two of the pairs - existed before.
- Same format (as the Open team) for group building, trials, international matches.
- A dedicated French trainer has been chosen.
- Women (and some juniors) were welcome for most of technical training organized for Open team.





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## France 2017 project / other teams

### Junior and senior

- France 2017 Project didn't involve junior and senior teams.
- Junior team has been involved in its own skill development project for many years.
- Seniors are not involved in the FFB « professional » project. They will survive on their own !



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## How much does it cost ?

- Most important budget items (outside championships) :
  - Invitation of foreign teams
  - Players' travel to invitation matches or international tournaments
  - Training and trainers
  - Internal costs of National technical direction
- Total costs for two teams (Open and Ladies)
  - First year : €150,000
  - Subsequent years : €100,000



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## Who pays ?

- Bridge is not recognized as a sport in France
- FFB doesn't get any funding for international matters
- Project France 2017 has been 100% financed from FFB funds
- The cost is high, but affordable in the context of the French Federation budget (a little less than €7,000,000 per year).



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## The future...

- Players who have lived through this experience have improved.
- Some of them have become recognized champions and received good professional contracts, enough to make a living.
- Unfortunately, some have left, others got sick, some quite seriously, and the group has to be rebuilt now.
- For different reasons, the situation is the same for the women.
- Only one solution for the future : **to work hard again !**