



Bridge Federation of India

DISCIPLINARY CODE

(Approved by the BFI Executive Committee on dd/mm/yyyy)

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1. Introduction

The BFI Disciplinary Code was approved by the Executive Committee on 2023, in accordance with the sporting ideals and precepts, to ensure that its affiliated NBOs and their members abide by the principles of good conduct and ethics, in this sport.

In accordance with the sporting ideals, principles and guidelines of the Olympic Charter and in furtherance of the purposes set out by the Bridge Federation of India, henceforth referred to as BFI, the BFI requires its 'Members' to respect the fundamental principles of discipline and ethics.

This objective of this code is to -

- (i) reinforce and promote discipline and ethics and prohibit any violation thereof.
- (ii) ensure an acceptable form of behaviour by all members.
- (iii) ensure that all members play the game according to the rules and regulations of Bridge both in letter and spirit.
- (iv) ensure that all members participating in Bridge tournaments do so in a fair manner and with integrity.

In order to ensure the above and prevent any Reprehensible Act & Conduct or behaviour, BFI constituted the following:

- a) The Disciplinary Committee and the Disciplinary Code
- b) The Ethics Committee and the Code of Ethics

This Disciplinary Code describes various types of conduct which constitute “Reprehensible Act or Conduct”, and which may be penalised with one or more disciplinary sanctions. These will be enforced by the Disciplinary Committee.

The Code of Ethics sets out various forms of behaviour which constitute a breach or violation of Ethical values and principles in sports, which will be appraised by the Ethics Committee and may be penalised by the Disciplinary Committee, with one or more disciplinary sanctions.

2. Scope of Application/ Jurisdiction

This code shall apply to all members of BFI.

2.1 Without limitation, the expression 'members' shall include

- (i) All affiliated state associations,
- (ii) Any individuals (including players, non-playing captains, team representatives, coaches, tournament directors, technical officials, technicians, Chef's d' mission, accredited individuals, participants, observers and spectators) who participate in or attend any



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event, tournament or competition organized, granted or sanctioned by the BFI or its affiliates,

- (iii) Any individuals who hold any position or carry out any functions on behalf of either the BFI or its affiliates including any organ or committee of the same and
- (iv) Any other individuals who otherwise are directly or indirectly subject to it.

3. Responsibility of State Associations/Affiliates

- 3.1 Each state association or affiliate shall, upon request, provide all reasonable assistance to the investigation of the alleged Reprehensible Act & Conduct of its member or affiliates and the conduct of any resulting disciplinary proceedings.
- 3.2 In respect of any sanction imposed pursuant to this Disciplinary Code, the state associations and their affiliates shall respect, and be responsible for the enforcement of, such sanctions within their respective jurisdictions and spheres of activity.
- 3.3 In the event, that an association becomes aware of behaviour which is likely to amount to Reprehensible Act & Conduct for the purposes of this Code, it shall immediately inform the BFI Executive Committee of the same.

4. Disciplinary Committee – Formation, Duties & Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Disciplinary Committee is an independent organ of BFI and the sole adjudicating body within BFI (next to the BFI's Executive Committee for matters falling within its competence).
- 4.2 The Disciplinary Committee, hereon referred to as Disciplinary Committee, shall comprise of a Chairman and 5 (five) members.
- 4.3 Disciplinary Committee can have independent 'Members' (prominent 'Members', senior bureaucrat etc.) as committee members. However, it is advised that the Disciplinary Committee should essentially comprise individuals who are Bridge players of repute).
- 4.7 The Disciplinary Committee Chairman will be nominated by the BFI President.
- 4.8 The appointed Disciplinary Committee Chairman will then recommend members of the Disciplinary Committee to the BFI Executive Committee for its approval. The Disciplinary Committee will perform its functions free from any influence and without fear or favour.



5. Committee: Role, Responsibility & Modus Operandi

- 5.1 The Disciplinary Committee may carry out all the actions, which fall within its jurisdiction, virtually or in any place it deems appropriate.
- 5.2 The proceedings of the Disciplinary Committee shall be conducted in English language.
- 5.3 The Disciplinary Committee shall exercise jurisdiction over all 'members' of the BFI as defined above.
- 5.4 The Disciplinary Committee shall only consider complaints received which meet the requirements for the admissibility of complaints as set out in the Disciplinary Code.
- 5.5 Disciplinary Committee will take cognizance of any report or note of the Tournament Director/ Chef d' Mission, which is indicative of any 'Reprehensible Act or Conduct' of any member, during the tournament.
- 5.6 The Disciplinary Committee has no power to Suo Moto investigate breaches of this Code, but shall open a case, investigate and evaluate it after receiving an admissible complaint lodged with and forwarded to Disciplinary Committee by the Tournament Director/Tournament Committee or by the Chef d' Mission (in case of international tournaments) or the BFI Executive Committee only.
- 5.7 The Disciplinary Committee shall investigate complaints and reports of any alleged breach of the Disciplinary Code and recommend sanctions or other measures to the BFI **President**, in accordance with the Disciplinary Code procedures.
- 5.8 During all operations, the Disciplinary Committee will draw on precedents, mutatis mutandis, already established by sports doctrine and jurisprudence.
- 5.9 Any member of the Disciplinary Committee may not take any measure nor exercise any authority in relation to a matter where any conflict of interests or any other form of conflict exists or is justifiably perceived to exist. He/she must recuse himself/herself.
- 5.10 Members of the Disciplinary Committee shall be indemnified by BFI in relation to any claim arising from the carrying out of their duties as members of the Disciplinary Committee. Except in the case of bad faith or gross negligence, no member of the Disciplinary Committee, may be held individually liable in respect of any act or omission relating to any investigation, case, procedure or decision taken pursuant to the provisions of this Code.

6. Reprehensible Acts & Conduct:

Reprehensible Act & Conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- 6.1 Illicit or unethical behaviour on the part of an individual which is aimed at improperly affecting, or otherwise likely to improperly affect, the outcome of BFI and its affiliated



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events or match or any part thereof, including, but not limited to, cheating, corruption, match-fixing and bribery. **(Further details in Annexure 1)**

- 6.2 An individual placing a bet on or engaging in any betting-related activity in respect of, BFI and its affiliated events or match or any part thereof in which the individual placing such bet or engaging in such activity is directly or indirectly involved or interested.
- 6.3 Improper conduct, harassment, intimidation, threatening, insult/accusation, rudeness in conversation or gesture, excessive dissent against fellow players/tournament directors/ Chef d' Mission /administrators, including without limitation, acts of manipulation, aggression, violence, on the part of an individual towards any participant, official or body of the BFI and its affiliates in the performance of their duties or functions, whether within the context of BFI and its affiliated events or otherwise.
- 6.4 Public comments, statements, or behaviour, without justification, aimed at or likely to damage the reputation of the BFI, BFI Affiliates, BFI officials, Participants or Country, at BFI and its affiliated events and also Bridge in general. All statements made on any social media/media platform will form part of a public comment.
- 6.5 Failure to respect financial obligations (including fines but excluding annual membership dues or charges, which are dealt within the By-laws) towards the BFI.
- 6.6 Failure of an association to comply with the responsibilities set out as per the BFI MOA.
- 6.7 Failure to respect a decision of the BFI, including its organs, commissions, committees and officials.
- 6.8 Actions or behaviour unbecoming an individual participating or attending a BFI and its affiliated events, functions, or activity.
- 6.9 Infringement of the BFI Statutes, By-laws, or other regulations.
- 6.10 Behaviour, actions or omissions which cause harm or may cause harm to or damage the reputation of the BFI its associates and the game of Bridge; and
- 6.11 Any other act or conduct, which is not consistent with the principles set out above including, any form of discrimination based on race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise.
- 6.12 Under no circumstances should any player/coach/ official interact with the media.
- 6.13 The decisions of the coach of the respective teams is final. In extreme cases, the coach can even decide to repatriate a player. Argumentative behaviour with the decisions of the coach is liable for severe punishment.
- 6.14 No player will interfere/advise other team members except through the coach. Such action will lead to disciplinary action.
- 6.15 No player will leave the official venues except with the permission of the team leader.
- 6.16 Any other act or conduct referred in Annexure I.



7. Remedial Actions and Sanctions

7.1 Depending on the gravity of the 'Reprehensible Act or Conduct', one or more of the following sanctions may be imposed in respect of the Reprehensible Act & Conduct:

- a) Corrective measures resulting in an exoneration, warning, or reprimand. The first warning shall be a signal of concern and upon failure to correct, failure to render due apology or repetition of 'Reprehensible Act or Conduct', shall result in a disciplinary action. Additionally, BFI President can issue corrective measures to the violative member, independently.
- b) Where Reprehensible Act & Conduct occurs at or in connection with a BFI and its affiliated event, disqualification of all individual and team results, will be at the discretion of the Tournament Director/ Tournament Committee / Disciplinary Committee at such events, including forfeiture of any points, prizes and medals.
- c) Suspension/ removal for a given period of an Association or individual from being able to present candidates for positions or offices within BFI (including its organs, commissions, committees and affiliates).
- d) Ineligibility of individuals, either for a given period or permanently, from being able to stand for any position or office within the BFI (including its organs, commissions, committees, and affiliates).
- e) Suspension of an Association or individual from attending and/or participating in BFI and its affiliated events and/or activities, either for a specific number of events/activities or for a fixed period.
- f) Suspension of an Association or other individual from organizing BFI and its affiliated events and/or activities for a specific period.
- g) Permanent ban on the individual concerned from attending and/or participating in BFI and its affiliated events and/or activities.

7.2 The above-mentioned sanctions, when imposed, shall be officially communicated to all affiliated associations and, if published on the BFI website.

7.3 With respect to a particularly serious 'Reprehensible Act or Conduct' committed by an association or individual, Tournament Director/Disciplinary Committee shall be entitled to refer the matter to the President, who in turn may consult the Executive Committee, so that it may consider the possible suspension/ban/removal of such association/individual in accordance with this code or BFI MOA.



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- 7.4 In case of international events, such behaviour is to be notified to the BFI President immediately and the President's advice is to be implemented. This may include asking the individual to return forthwith.
- 7.5 The BFI may draw up Guidelines for the sanctions and periods applicable, referred to above.

8. Disciplinary Committee – Sanctions

Depending on the gravity of the Reprehensible Act & Conduct, one or more of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- 8.1 Warning
- 8.2 Monetary fine of to
- 8.3 Where Reprehensible Act & Conduct occurs at or in connection with a BFI Event, disqualification of all results (including, at the discretion of the hearing panel, the results of the team), including forfeiture of any points, prizes and medals.
- 8.4 Suspension for a given period of time of a 'Member' from being able to present candidates for positions or offices within BFI
- 8.5 Suspension for a given period of time or removal of individuals from any existing position or office within the BFI
- 8.6 Ineligibility of individuals, either for a given period of time or permanently, from being able to stand for any position or office within the BFI
- 8.7 Suspension from attending or participating in BFI events or activities, either for a specific number of events/activities or for a fixed period of time.
- 8.8 Suspension from organizing BFI events or activities for a fixed period.

9. Initiation and Investigation of Disciplinary Proceedings

- 9.1 The Disciplinary Committee may decide to investigate a case of possible Reprehensible Act & Conduct either on their own initiative or following a complaint by a 'Member' with a legitimate interest (including, without limitation, players) with respect to the alleged Reprehensible Act & Conduct occurring at BFI and its affiliated events.
- 9.2 Tournament Directors /Tournament Committee /Chef d 'Mission to file the tournament report within 7 days from the completion of the tournament.
- 9.3 The Tournament Director must take the cognizance of Reprehensible Act & Conduct by the member and act as per this code, to take actions immediately and impose suitable sanction with reference to Annexure I.



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- 9.4 In case of disagreement with the Tournament Director decision, for Reprehensible Act & Conduct not covered in Annexure I, members may complain to Disciplinary Committee and it shall decide the complaint accordingly.
- 9.5 Disciplinary Committee shall not consider any anonymous complaints. It is clarified that Disciplinary Committee shall have the power and authority to maintain strict confidentiality of the matter and parties involved therein. However, the Disciplinary Committee may ask for the comments of the individual even regarding anonymous complaints.
- 9.6 The complaints shall be lodged with the Disciplinary Committee, in the prescribed form and format (Annexure II), by the Tournament Director/Chef d' Mission, maximum within 7 days from completion of the tournament.
- 9.7 The Disciplinary Committee shall only consider complaints if they are lodged as per para '8.d' above. However, this shall not restrict the Disciplinary Committee's ability to commence investigations on behalf of the BFI at any time, if warranted as per the convenience of the Disciplinary Committee.

10. Urgent Proceedings

When a matter is considered 'urgent', it may be recommended as such by the Tournament Director/Chef d' Mission/ BFI Executive Committee on an expedited basis, in particular, but without limitation, the Disciplinary Committee may be convened on an ad hoc basis in order to deal with alleged Reprehensible Act & Conduct. In these circumstances, the Disciplinary Committee shall be entitled to take certain measures (including the imposition of certain sanctions, if necessary) and to defer other matters for subsequent consideration, if necessary. The quorum for urgent proceedings will be two members of the Disciplinary Committee.

11. Regular proceedings

- 11.1 The Disciplinary Committee will communicate the nature of the reprehensible act and conduct to the individual or association in writing/email. The individual/association will be allowed to respond to the charge within 10 days from receipt of communication from the Disciplinary Committee.
- 11.2 The Disciplinary Committee shall investigate the complaints and in connection therewith may adjudge after notice and an opportunity to be heard that the member be reprimanded, censured, suspended, expelled or any combination of the preceding or otherwise be disciplined as a player.



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- 11.3 No suspension or expulsion so adjudged by the Disciplinary Committee shall become effective unless a representation right is given to the 'Member' with reasonable timeline.
- 11.4 A second round of written submissions shall be permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

12. Hearing

- 12.1 The Disciplinary Committee shall determine, after receipt of the written submissions (and any further information or documentation) whether an oral/in-individual hearing is necessary.
- 12.2 The hearing should be held as soon as reasonably practicable following the closure of the written proceedings.
- 12.3 The Disciplinary Committee shall seek to organize any hearing in an appropriate location (bearing in mind the states of residence of the accused individual, experts, witnesses and the members of the committee. If no suitable venue is agreed, the hearing will be held online.
- 12.4 The Disciplinary Committee will decide (whether on the basis of the written submissions or after a hearing) by majority or unanimity.
- 12.5 The Disciplinary Committee shall record its reasoned decision in writing which shall be signed by the Chairman and notified to the parties concerned as soon as reasonably practicable by appropriate means (post/courier/ email).
- 12.6 The fact the accused individual(s)/association does not participate in the proceedings of the Disciplinary Committee (or any part thereof) does not prevent or restrict the Disciplinary Committee from proceeding and rendering a decision.

13. Enforcement

- 13.1 This Code, approved by the BFI Executive Committee on dd/mm/yyyy takes effect from dd/mm/yyyy.
- 13.2 With respect to the Reprehensible Act & Conduct, which may have occurred and were reported prior to the enforcement of this Disciplinary Code, the substantive provisions under BFI MOA shall apply.
- 13.3 Tournament Director/Tournament Committee/Disciplinary Committee shall take cognizance of any "Reprehensible Act or Conduct" committed at the playing arena and additionally designated other areas which are considered part of the venue.
- 13.4 It is primarily the responsibility of the Tournament Director/Tournament Committee/Chef d' Mission, to enforce this code, in view of event-specific provisions and take necessary



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measures and impose sanctions immediately, at the event in question. (Please refer to the guidelines in Annexure I, in this regard)

- 13.5 Other regulations of the BFI, including, but not limited to, the Laws of Duplicate Bridge, the Statutes, the By-laws and Conditions of Contest – contain specific provisions
- 13.6 For the avoidance of doubt, this Disciplinary Code shall be without prejudice to these event-specific provisions. Similarly, the fact that event-specific measures may be taken in respect of behaviour occurring at such events shall not in any way prevent or restrict further disciplinary measures being taken in respect of the same behaviour in accordance with the provisions of this Code.
- 13.7 This Disciplinary Code shall be without prejudice to any powers which the President / Executive Committee may have pursuant to provisions contained within the Statutes or By-laws of the BFI including, in particular, the power to suspend or remove an association or affiliate from the BFI and the power to suspend or remove a member from his/her position.
- 13.8 This Disciplinary Code shall not apply, and be without prejudice, to illegal acts including inter alia anti-doping matters, anti-betting or wagering laws and regulations, which shall be governed by the WBF Anti-Doping Rules and Regulations and other applicable laws.
- 13.9 The code will apply to all national and international tournaments, where the members have been selected through BFI or its affiliates including tournaments conducted under the aegis of BFI. This will be in addition to the applicable version of the WBF Code of Ethics and the WBF Disciplinary Code as adopted by the World Bridge Federation.

14. Disciplinary Archive

- 14.1 A Disciplinary Archive is to be maintained for all reports received, excluding those cases that are abundantly groundless and will be logged against the name of the person complained of.
- 14.2 The Archive will be strictly confidential and will be under the responsibility and control of the Secretary BFI and can be consulted only by the BFI President and the BFI Disciplinary Committee during their investigatory functions.

15. Guidelines for Imposing Sanctions

These guidelines have been laid by the BFI Executive Committee, to adopt a consistent approach to the imposition of sanctions on those 'Members' who breach its Disciplinary Code. The guidelines are intended to assist in determining the appropriate sanction for any person who admits or has been found guilty of 'Reprehensible Act & Conduct'. (*Please refer to Annexure I*). The sanctioning authority will be the BFI President, who may at his discretion refer the matter



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to the Executive Committee if the penalty envisaged is significant.

16. Discounted Sentencing

16.1 Life bans for partnerships are not subject to any discount.

16.2 The period of suspension for other sanctions may be discounted by one- third where the offender admits their culpability and demonstrates remorse.