



Bridge Federation of India

DISCIPLINARY CODE

(Approved by BFI Executive Committee at the BFI AGM Meeting on 29th August, 2024)

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1. Introduction

The BFI Disciplinary Code was approved by the Executive Committee conducted online on 30th January, 2024 at Delhi followed by approval in Annual General Meeting held on 29th August at Goa, in accordance with sporting ideals and precepts, to ensure that its affiliates and its members abide by the principles of good conduct and ethics, in this sport. In view of this the Executive Committee has decided to merge the functions of the Ethics Committee and the Disciplinary Committee, given that BFI is a small organization. This has been discussed with the ministry of youth affairs and sports, who have no objection.

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.

The 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 in 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 **Disciplinary Committee and the Disciplinary Code**

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. This code will be enforced by the Disciplinary Committee.

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



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- (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 in conducting 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 as mentioned in this Code, it shall immediately inform the BFI Executive Committee of the same.

4. Disciplinary Committee – Formation

- 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 shall comprise a Chairman and 5 (five) members.
- 4.3 Disciplinary Committee can have independent nominated persons (prominent Government Officials, Industry Leaders etc.) as committee members. However, it is advised that the Disciplinary Committee should essentially comprise individuals who are Bridge players of repute.
- 4.6 The Disciplinary Committee Chairman will be nominated by the BFI President.
- 4.7 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. Disciplinary Committee: Role, Responsibility & Modus Operandi

- 5.1 The Disciplinary Committee may carry out all actions which fall within its jurisdiction, virtually or in any place it deems appropriate.



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- 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 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 the Disciplinary Committee by the BFI President.
 - 5.6 The Disciplinary Committee shall investigate all such complaints received from BFI President and recommend sanctions or other measures to the BFI President, in accordance with the Disciplinary Code procedures.
 - 5.7 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.
 - 5.8 Tournament Directors /Tournament Committee /Chef d 'Mission to file the Tournament Report within 7 days from the completion of the tournament
 - 5.9 During all operations, the Disciplinary Committee will draw on precedents, mutatis mutandis, already established by sports doctrine and jurisprudence.
 - 5.10 A 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.
 - 5.11 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 or its affiliated events or match or any part thereof, including, but not limited to, cheating, corruption, match-fixing, and bribery. (Further details in Annexure 1)



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- 6.2 An individual placing a bet on or engaging in any betting-related activity in respect of, BFI or 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, threat, 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 or its affiliates in the performance of their duties or functions, whether within the context of BFI or 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 a BFI or its affiliated events and 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 Memorandum of Association (MOA).
- 6.7 Failure to respect decisions of the BFI, including its organs, commissions, committees and officials.
- 6.8 Actions or behaviour unbecoming an individual participating or attending a BFI or its affiliated events, functions, or activities.
- 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 or its affiliates 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 As per SAI guidelines, for international events, where players are representing the country, they must be briefed before the event regarding media interaction norms. Any media interaction should only be done by the Chef d' Mission. Under no circumstances should any player/coach/ official interact directly with the media unless officially authorised. Additionally, they may be allowed to interact with the media if such condition is a part of the 'conditions of contest'.
- 6.13 At international tournaments, where players are representing the country, the decisions of the coaches of the respective teams are final. In extreme cases, a coach can even decide to



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repatriate a player. Argumentative behaviour towards the decisions of the coach is liable for severe penalties.

- 6.14 At international tournaments, where players are representing the country, no player will interfere/advise other team members except through the coach. Such conduct will lead to disciplinary action.
- 6.15 At international tournaments, where players are representing the country, no player will leave the official venues except with the permission of the team leader.
- 6.16 Any other act or conduct referred to 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, the BFI President can issue corrective measures to the violative member, independently.
 - b) Where Reprehensible Act & Conduct occurs at or in connection with a BFI or its affiliated event, disqualification of all individual and team results, will be at the discretion of the Tournament Director/ Tournament 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 or 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 individual from organizing BFI or its affiliated events and/or activities for a specific period.
 - g) Permanent ban on the individual concerned from attending and/or participating in BFI or its affiliated events and/or activities.



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- 7.2 The above-mentioned sanctions, when imposed, shall be officially communicated to all affiliated associations and will be published on the BFI website.
- 7.3 With respect to a particularly serious 'Reprehensible Act or Conduct' committed by an association or individual, the Tournament Director/Tournament Committee shall be entitled to refer the matter to the President, who may consult the Executive Committee, and the Disciplinary Committee, so that it may consider the possible suspension/ban/removal of such association/individual in accordance with this code or BFI MOA.
- 7.4 In case of international events, any Reprehensible Act or Conduct' 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 (instead of IMPs) to be imposed on Players leaving the table during an event.
- 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.
- 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 can investigate a case of Reprehensible Act & Conduct after receiving an admissible complaint forwarded by the BFI President. An individual can file a



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complaint through the CTD or the State Association, who will forward it to BFI. In case an investigation is launched, BFI will also inform the Member's State Association.

- 9.2 Any aggrieved member may lodge a complaint with the Tournament Director / Tournament Committee. The Tournament Director / Tournament Committee shall evaluate the complaint and if found admissible, will forward the same to BFI President.
- 9.3 The complaints shall be forwarded to the BFI President, in the prescribed form and format (Annexure II), by the Tournament Director/Chef d' Mission, maximum within 7 days from completion of the tournament.
- 9.4 The BFI President will forward the complaint to the Disciplinary Committee for adjudication.
- 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 BFI President shall only consider complaints if they are lodged as per clause 9.3 above.
- 9.7 The Tournament Director must take the cognizance of Reprehensible Act & Conduct by the member and act as per this code, to take action immediately and impose suitable sanction with reference to Annexure I.
- 9.8 In case of disagreement with the Tournament Director decision, for Reprehensible Act & Conduct, members may complain to BFI and it shall forward the complaint to the Disciplinary Committee for necessary actions.

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



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- 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.
- 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. Such representation rights must be given to the Member even in cases where the Member's State Association files a case against the Member.
- 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



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- 13.1 This Code, approved by the BFI Executive Committee on 30/01/2024 takes effect from 01/04/2024.
- 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 measures and impose sanctions immediately, at the event in question. (Please refer to the guidelines in Annexure I, in this regard)**
- 13.5 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.
- 13.6 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.
- 13.7 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 Indian and WBF Anti-Doping Rules and Regulations and other applicable laws.
- 13.8 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.



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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 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.