

## Alert Regulations Comments

Strong disagree with section 11.2

The onus should not be on the non-offending side to clarify any ambiguity in alerting. For example, you hold ,

xx,Axx,AQ10x,xxxx

1H - pass - 3 diamonds - ?

Lets say, 3 diamonds was a bergen raise .

When 3 diamonds is not alerted ( but seems possibly artificial), the ethical player must pass in order to avoid giving partner unauthorised information when he is on lead/defence against 3 hearts or 4 hearts.

When the player in fourth seat does ask a question (hoping to double 3 diamonds if it were artificial), he might get a response of "natural" and if the final contract is not 3 diamonds, the partner of the question-asker possesses significant unauthorised information which would impact his defensive plays.

( As also a good declarer now has an inference about the outstanding diamond strength. This is what is often called "table feel" by some).

An appeal adjudged in Surfers comes to mind. In a similar situation, \*\*\*\*\* passed and suffered a bad result for no fault of his own. Expecting players to assume the opponents have committed an infraction and to provide for that scenario seems wrong.

Especially in the early rounds of an auction, it must be the responsibility of the offending side to follow the alerting regulations. That is the only way to play a clean game.

I would guess that this clause has been put in to avoid legal hawks trying to bend the system.

It should be up to an Appeals committee/Director to weed out the legal-action-hawks. The players' job should be to play clean.

Seems strange that these would be brought into effect and then comments invited but anyway....

I think the ABF needs to consider a graded level of alerts which distinguishes between different standards.

We cannot simply develop a set of alert procedures which is equitable to the improver and the expert.

As a club owner I need to point out that the problems with alerts are not simply a set of rules which are promulgated but the educating of players at the lower levels of their obligations and avoiding their inadvertently taking advantage of alert rules. There has traditionally been so much confusion about whether Stayman is alertable that imagining extending some of the concepts contained in the document seems difficult.

For example why should a player not alert a double at the one or two level which is NOT takeout. Players at the club level feel aggrieved when a player makes a penalty double at the one level and there is no alert - they claim it simply isn't part of the game - and in their defence at their level of the game it isn't. This encourages some players to 'bend' the alert rules to gain an advantage.

Why not include the prescribed manner when discussing alerts with bidding boxes.

I would love to see a section included which discusses failure to alerts, damage and the need to connect the two before an adjustment. The club player seems to think that if he is not alerted that this is grounds for improving his score regardless of what happened or damage resulted.

There should be a discussion of the spirit of alerts. A number of players are renowned for answering only the questions asked and offering no gratuitous information to the enquirer which would enable him to better understand what is happening. For example there are players who only discuss the positive information conveyed in bids and never voluntarily disclose any negative ramifications of a bid.

2.1 I realise that the definition in 2.1 is from the law but to me it is ambiguous 'in last denomination named' . What exactly is meant by this definition? should it not be the last denomination named by the partnership to exclude those mentioned by the opponents?

2.2.2 It is clear from this that we need not alert that the NT may contain a five card major. But this presumably should be advised in the pre alert phase.

3.3.3 Change 'A defender' to 'Defenders' to correct the syntax and change 'until the end of the hand' to 'until the play of the hand is completed'

5.2(i) Transfer bid but the use of transfer preempts are to be advised in the pre alert phase.

5.3.1 Alert (a) add but Michael's cue bids are not alertable.

7.5 I think the 'prescribed manner' should at least have a reference or better the prescription itself. Especially

in the ABF Alerting Regulations

8.3 On taking care not to ask questions when not intending to bid - I too hate partners and opponents who ask futile questions but though I do not intend to bid I mean need to know the meaning of the bidding for leading or signalling purposes, especially against relay auctions. To place an outright ban on asking questions when not intending to bid could deny a pair information invaluable in the play of the hand. Perhaps this is covered by requesting a full explanation at the end of the auction.

9.4 I was under the impression, clearly wrong, that I could ask about the system including responses. If this is not the case how do I find out what the response options and their meanings. For example, if I overcall a precision 1C, pass and double by my LHO both have very specific meanings, but may be adjusted by a partnership. How do I determine what these options are before I overcall. I feel this is information I am entitled to maximise the impact of my intervention.

My understanding - perhaps wrong - is that:

1. You don't have to alert naturally bid suits.
2. You don't have to alert no trumps, which are apparently 'self-alerting'.

The type of things that can happen in that case is that:

1. An inverted minor bid doesn't need to be alerted.
2. A Jacoby 2NT doesn't need to be alerted.

My partner and I alert these bids but I don't understand a situation where doubt about whether these bids are alertable can exist.

I would have thought that one simple rule would be the solution to alerts and that would be:

Alert every bid that may be construed by the opponents to mean something different to your understanding of your partner's bid.

In this case, the onus would be on the side bidding to ensure that the opponents know as much about the bid as the bidders.

If this rule were in place, even a weak 1NT opening bid should be alerted at most clubs (where strong NT is played) and vice versa. The upside is that one of the opponents won't stare at his cards and then say "What's your NT range?" and then say "Oh! Pass" when told it's strong.

I fail to see the downside of this approach. Surely a little over alerting is better than any under alerting?

Under 3.2.1 it notes that "very weak non-jump overcalls " should be pre-alerted and appear on the system card.

Under 5.3.1 Overcalls

Do not alert:

"single suit overcalls whether weak, strong or intermediate".

There may be some legalistic types who maintain that the very general statement under 5.3.1 includes the very weak overcall and therefore the law under 3.2.1 is a contradiction and not sufficiently clear to warrant a penalty.

Or alternatively that very weak non-jump overcalls must be pre-alerted but not alerted.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

My overall impression is that somehow the point has been missed. If it takes a ten-page document to describe alerting rules, then perhaps the concept itself is flawed. I guess I wouldn't be the first person to put this view!

The second point I wanted to make was that the approach used looks to be built on rules and examples rather than principles. This means the validity of the document might be challenged by one new example that is not covered or doesn't fit. I would prefer a principles-based approach. This would make it easier to accept the ?????;why????; in some of the examples. For example, if the principle is to alert calls whose meanings would be unfamiliar to ??????, Goren players, (or average rubber bridge players, or whatever) at least it would have a defined basis.

To descend into the detail of examples, I have trouble working out why 2C Stayman needs alerting when it is so common, similarly 1S (X) 3S when pre-emptive (does anyone play it as strong?), see para 5.3.2(b). Similarly I have trouble with the specific rules on cue-bids being self-alerting, in conjunction with the definition in 2.3, where if a 1D opening shows spades, then both 1S and 2D are cue-bids. I have had experience of this one; having once bid 1S natural (by partnership agreement) over such a 1D, partner not

being allowed to alert, and the opponents raising naturally to a poor 4-3 fit, breaking badly of course, because of this rule (maybe the self-alert system should be off after artificial openings?? But then that is just another rule to extend the document).

Another example that troubles me comes from real life. Opponents were playing that overcalls were limited to less than opening point count. All openings were taken via doubles. I found out because my partner knew this, but my concern is that the proposed alert rules don't seem to cover things like this, which are arguably far more important during the auction and play than alerting 2C Stayman.

My final point is perhaps more from me as a bridge player. I remember very few alerts as having saved me from indiscretion, and I think all of them would have been in the pre-alert class; transfer pre-empts, strange 2-bids and the like. Maybe that means it is all we need.

I believe that doubles should not be considered self alerting. Eg 1NT double showing a single suiter Considering bids self alerting when they have been bid or implied by oppositions is ok, but the majority of players has not understood the concept. Consequently lots of bids get alerted anyhow

In my view current alerting procedures are inappropriate- as you alert bids that everyone knows their meaning-eg stayman, and don't alert bids like double which maybe single- suiter hand or penalties or spades,etc.

If a cue bid - shows 2 particular suits - this is not presently alertable! Some partnerships play conventions which show specific 2suiter overcalls- should these be pre-alerted as say auction goes 1sp-(3c)- shows ds and hearts- when alerted maybe oppo think showing clubs weak or interm reason for alert.

in my view - any bid including double!which the oppo. may not understand- should be alerted!

The current alerting rules are not clear to all directors. Is 1D:2D inverted, therefore showing a point range and forcing - alertable?- we were told no on the weekend as it only agreed Diamonds.

There is no point changing rules when the current ones are not enforced or not known.

Add to Section 3.2.2 (b)

A 'forcing for one round' response of 1NT to an opening bid of 1M.

An 'unlimited [and therefore] forcing response of 1M over natural 1m or 1H.

Add to Section 3.2.2 (b)

A response in NT, which while expressing a willingness to play in NT, also shows a fit in a suit.

Add to Section 5.1 (c)

Alertable: 2C which, if there are only 5 clubs, also shows a four card major

Add to Section 5.3.1 Do not alert (a) ... .. , strong, or wide ranging in strength

Section 6

A section should be added to (the outside of) the System Card where the type of can easily be defined.

Section 7.2

Change "should" to "must".

Section 7.5

A "strong" publicity campaign will be needed to get this concept across

Section 8.1

This area is definitely not understood/followed by the majority of players. If this is the procedure the ABF wants followed, a "strong" publicity campaign will be needed to get the concept across

Section 9.1

When explaining an alerted or self-alerting bid, you should within the explanation indicate if this same bid (when made later in the match) may have slightly different meaning (eg different point range), due to a variation in vulnerabilities and/or position around the table.

Section 9.2

I believe it is important to emphasis (again via a "strong" publicity campaign) that "I take it to mean.. .. and "I'm treating it as.. .." should NEVER be used in an explanation.

## GENERAL COMMENT ON THE ABF ALERTING REGULATIONS

Although I do not wish to appear negative, I feel obliged to express some non-positive views on the regulations as a whole.

I believe it is unreasonable to expect a complete review of all possible doubles, other than "takeout/negative-type doubles" in the pre-alert stage even in a match without physical movement for 8 or more boards, let alone during each pre-alert stage of a standard 2 board movement in pairs.

I believe the concept of self-alerting bids is at odds with the principle of "full disclosure (as required by the Laws)" and the Laws about Unauthorised Information. On the one hand you cannot ask a question about a self-alerting bid in case you give unauthorised information, on the other you cannot know whether you want to bid because you do not have the information. I do not believe the Pre-alerts will solve this problem. Even with an alerted bid, asking a question, which may result in you not wanting to bid, is dangerous as regards the Laws on Unauthorised Information.

There is a suggestion that some bridge players may be choosing to ignore the laws of the game and others may be condoning such action (see page 8 of July ABF Newsletter). The rule being discussed in that newsletter was simple and completely defined; yet it took almost two full pages of writing to discuss whether a breach may have occurred.

Unfortunately the ABF Alerting Regulations as currently constructed, and proposed, are nowhere near as completely defined (as the Rule of 15). Phrases such as:- "highly unusual carding", "a meaning the opponents may not expect", "very unusual doubles", "very weak non-jump overcalls", "unusual methods", "unusual cue-bids", "reasonably misunderstand", are open to interpretation.

All Directors, and most players, try to be as ethical as possible; however, I am certain the innocent will fall foul of the law, particularly when playing in events outside their 'native' area. The example of a West Australian being told off for alerting a Stayman bid, when playing in an East Coast event (a few years ago) [because it was standard not to do so in that region], provides an insight as to what may happen as each region evolves its own interpretation(s) of the regulations.

A minority of players who delight in gaining every possible advantage from (all) rules and regulations (this concept is certainly not restricted to the bridge world), may well have a 'field day'.

Item 13.6 Not being allowed to say weak or strong seems a bit unfair. Also it should always be stressed at clubs to be nice and not nasty when asking about a bid

Pretty good but wish the ABF persisting with insisting on both the spoken and circling. At the club level virtually no one does both and they will continue to do so. What penalty can be given for only circling, which is the norm in all ABF events at the club and Congress level? This merely allows the pedantic ass-holes, who do exist in bridge, a way to upset beginning Congress players and drive them away.

The regulations seem fine.

Why bother to alert short club?

Whilst the ABF may believe that the alerting regulations are quite clear, this conception does not flow thro to players at club level.

Possibly this is due to the academic opinions of various directors & "senior players".

I believe that there should be a clear directive on alerting regulations and that the ABF should

- a) state what the regulations are in its jurisdiction
- b) state clearly how the regulations are to be interpreted
- c) hang draw & quarter the academics & other obfuscators who cause the doubt or counters to the approved official interpretation.

by way of example, I am subjected to contrary advice by "senior directors" (congress & state level) regarding 'self alerting' bids.

The regulations state that certain bids( jumps, cues, x, xx) are self alerting & need not be alerted.

Some directors however state that if the self alerting bid is not what 60% of players expect, then it should be alerted.

Some directors say it MUST NOT be alerted...(that is a compulsory MUST NOT).

Clarity & a firm directive will assist many players.

I would prefer all X & XX and bids higher than 4C to be alertable when they have an unexpected meaning. eg 1) 1NT, X, XX forcing pd to bid 2C.

## 2) 1D, 4D RKCB

I would prefer Weak Jumps regularly made on less than 6 cards to be alertable.

I would prefer preempts regularly made with unusual shapes eg 3H with 4S or 3C on 2245.

Because alerts do not carry across screens regulations to alert are permitted when screens are in use but not for face to face [L80F/ L73B1]. To the point, alerts [and absence thereof] are communication other than by call or play. They are not questions nor answers thereto, nor are they conventions.

Which raises the question, 'Since alerts are not permitted, how is the SO to facilitate dealing with the player's problem of making his agreements available to the opponents?' I have considered the matter at length and if you wish will share my conclusions.

I am just a player (not a law-maker, or a TD, or even a member of ABL) but Peter Newman suggested in BLML (Bridge Laws Mailing List) that you would be open to suggestions from any source.

IMO, Alerts require complex rules and are an invitation to several distinct modes of UI.

Buch better would be...

... \*no alerts\* (but CC highlights & mandatory explanations at the end of the auction).

... \*option\* to request an auction explanation (opponents then explain every call by their partners, in real time, as they are made). You need explain only divergence from the "standard system" (if you can't be bothered to learn the standard, just explain every call).

For example, you might designate WBF standard as the system from which you must explain departures. If any player does not know that system, you have to explain every call at the end of the auction. Normally the auction proceeds with no alerts or explanations, but you may request an auction explanation at any time. If an opponent asks for explanations, you must explain each call by partner, in real time, as it is made, as well as all previous calls.

Under these rules, Alerts or partial alerts are treated like any other kind of UI.

Unsolicited explanations, during the auction, are also UI.

You should not ask about any particular call without first summoning a TD to protect against possible UI.

During the auction, you can completely avoid the UI from opponents' "wake-up" alerts by not asking for explanations.

Anyway, to protect tyros, you must explain all your calls after the auction, before play commences.

Instead of an ALERT card, you have an EXPLAIN card which has a roughly complementary effect.

No altering just a fully descriptive systems card and provision of a full explanation on request. Failure to explain correctly is penalised with the best possible result to the opponents. It should be the responsibility of those that play a weird and wonderful system to know what they are doing and to explain on request in full what any bidding means

An artificial, strong, opening of 1C (16+pts, any shape, for example) followed by an overcall of 2C is currently self alerting. I see this as a difficult situation for intermediate players. Intermediate precision players ought not to have to guess whether to ask the question.

Many self-alerting situations seem to be awkward in this way. Suppose an auction goes..

pass, 1D, 2D (michaels), 3D...3D is self alerting yet how many players, expert or otherwise, would bother to ask the question. Perhaps it shows a heart stopper and asks for a spade stopper. Maybe it shows an interest in a club slam.

Another awkward situation arises from low-level penalty doubles, all self-alerting. Occasionally, a congress pair will play negative doubles only at the 1 level. I know no congress players who would bother to ask what a double means in this sequence;

1S, 2C, X

they would assume it was for takeout.

It's true that this sort of system ought to be pre-alerted but there is nothing in the reg's COMPELLING anyone to do so.

I think the concept of a "self-alerting" bid should be limited to situations where players would instinctively ask the question: "what does that bid mean?"

My general opinion is that the alerting regs are fairly good, and certainly better than they used to be some years ago.

However, I believe the conjunction of para's 8.3 (last sentence) and 11.2 is most unfair and that something needs to be changed.

At the 2003 NOT, \*\*\*\*\* opened 1D P 3D ? 3D was not alerted; there was nothing on their systems card as to it's meaning and I had a problem. Catch 22. If I ask the meaning of 3D and it shows a limit raise I shall pass; partner will then have unauthorised info (and may be constrained ) and so too will \*\*\*\*\* who will now declare with extra brilliance. If, instead, I pass and they play inverted minors, we could well miss a game (which in fact was what did happen). The Director failed to adjust the score quoting the "rule" that I should have asked about the 3D bid.

Para 11.3 urges Directors to consider whether full disclosure has been given, yet 11.2 allows players to profit from failing to provide any disclosure at all.

If para 11.2 is kept, then para 8.3 will need to be changed so that a player may, during the auction, be allowed to ask the meaning of a bid even though he has no intention of bidding whatever the answer. Actually I think the last sentence of para 8.3 should be changed anyway. In a long artificial bidding sequence by the opponents I want to follow proceedings as they occur, so I can spend the time planning the defence. If I have to wait until the auction has ended, I have to plan in realtime at a time when the table is probably already in time trouble. Even if there is no time problem, I have less time to plan than if the opponents had used a natural system. It seems that if a pair choose to play a relay (or other highly artificial) system, then para 8.3 will provide them with an unfair advantage.

Another suggestion.

Remove one or two of your Committee members and replace with two experienced but non-expert players. (Perhaps at the National or lower Life master levels).

1. Disappointed that the ABF has not exercised its powers under the Laws as a Sponsoring Organization to regulate conventions avoid restating the Laws Definition of "2.1 Convention ..etc" which is a garbled piece of English which boils down to saying a Pass is usually not a conventional call.

### 3.3 Delayed Alerts

Consider existing requirements for Declarer to inform opponents at expiry of auction period that "This auction includes some self alerting calls, do you wish to have an explanation of our auction?" is perfectly adequate. If they are self alerting during the auction why do we need to waste time later?

If it is necessary for Declaring side to mark self alerting calls for the benefit of the Defenders why do you not insist that Defenders highlight their self alerting calls for the benefit of the Declarer?

5.3.1 ? It is not clear whether 1NT (2NT) is self alerting or must be alerted during the auction only where it shows 2 suits. As the definition of cue bids does not cover NT as a denomination rather than a "suit" that clause does not make it self alerting. Clarity could be improved if these regulations define NT calls that do not show a willingness to play in NT contracts be conventional and require alerts if not higher than 3NT  
Problems with administration: Masterpoint definition of Novice congresses was advised to Masterpoint Secretaries but not state associations.

Alerting Regulations prepared and promulgated without any review by other than ABF councillors and officials so viewpoints of wider bridge community were not considered.

I have had a good read of the proposed Alert Regulations and would like to make the following observations:

1. They are contrary to (as are the current alert regulations) Law 75 A regarding Partnership Agreements. There is no allowance for conventional bids to not be alertable. This includes doubles, cuebids and bids above 3NT. "Special partnership agreements, whether explicit or implicit, must be fully and freely available to opponents..." This does not exclude bids. Note that "must" is a very strong term in the Laws.
2. They are complicated and likely to suffer in the interpretation because of the unnecessary detail.
3. They are not at all accessible to club-level bridge players.

Note the brevity given to the discussion of partnership agreements in the Laws. Similarly any Alert Regulations should reflect this brevity. I would suggest that the Alert Regulations should reflect this, ie "All special partnership agreements must be alerted". Any unauthorised information acted upon by an alert should be handled by the director in the same method a hesitation or a question about an alert is handled. Alert regulations are not there for the appeals committees. The current and proposed regulations seem to

reflect issues that would only be experienced by members of appeals committees.

The current Alert Regulations and the proposed Alert Regulations are remarkably similar in style to the system notes for the "Standard System" played by me and my partner in national competition. These system notes are far removed from the Standard System played by the majority of ABF players and the Alert Regulations should also not be above the comprehension of the majority of players.

I would suggest that alert regulations could be phrased in one short paragraph with the addition of a reference to Law 74/2 concerning etiquette of word and action.

Current alert regulations cause confusion and embarrassment at the club level. Any action taken by the ABF will end up at the club level and the proposed Alert Regulations are not at all viable.

I am the owner of bridge clubs with more than 1000 members. I am an A grade director. The current and proposed Alert Regulations are not acceptable.

As a kiwi who competes in Australia at least annually now : 1. It would be helpful NOT to alert stayman, but in lieu to alert any 1nt-2cl sequence that is not simple straightforward stayman. The position is different if 1nt is doubled. 2. Once your alert procedure is finalised every effort should be made to convince nzcba to adopt it as well. This could involve some liaison at this point to try for agreement or a "meeting of minds" or if that is unsatisfactory offer the opportunity for comment on the basis that major events involve quite an interchange of competitors. Your existing procedure superior anyway in my view. 3. You should define a "round" for the purpose of pre-alert comments--is two boards in a pair event a round? I assume it is in the absence of anything to contrary and is that process feasible in such circumstances in all its rigour? With both sides involved that is a lot of conversation to generate in a room full of people. If they are carrying system cards and the standard alert procedure applies anyway is it purposeful, unless the round is defined as longer than 2 boards?

Most questions and problems that I become aware fall into 4 categories:

(a) Calls not alerted when they should be.

(b) Calls alerted when they shouldn't be.

(c) Defender on opening lead asking questions about specific calls.

(d) Partner of opening leader asking specific or general questions before the opening lead is face down on the table.

(a) and (b) have been very well catered for in the new regulations.

Do not alert: (a) Could this be "Single suited overcalls including jump overcalls"? Intermediate jump overcalls cause a lot of argument.

Could the Unusual 2NT as in (1NT) 2NT be mentioned? I am often asked if it should be alerted. It looks to ring its own bells but isn't the cue bid of a suit.

Is there now no suggestion that a 1NT opening that could have a 5 card major requires alerting? Good.

4.2 Why "presumed suit"? Definition 2.5.1 for transfer promises suit.

2.1 Perhaps an explanation of what "(or in the last denomination named)" means

I expect existing problems with (c) and (d) to increase.

I feel the inclusion of specific delayed alerts a backward step.

Apparently self-alerting calls and alerted calls made by two players (declaring side) can de-alert themselves, or somehow become invisible, and require re-alerting via a delayed alert while similar calls by the other two players (the defenders) remain alerted and visible.

There is already a tendency to over alert either to be on the safe side or to intimidate.

3.3.1 & 7.5 & 13.1.3 If the declaring side draws particular attention to a call, via a specific delayed alert, the natural tendency is for a defender to say "OK, seeing as you offered, what does 2D mean?" thereby immediately creating an UI situation which could possibly be manipulated by the declaring side.

More emphasis needs to be placed on the fact that it is only the opening leader who is entitled to ask questions at this time. Rather than trying to lure defenders into asking damaging questions, why not keep the current obligation (up here at least) like:

When the declaring side's auction contains unusual features not already explained, and in particular any unusual self-alerting calls, an explanation of the entire auction must be offered to the defender required to make the opening lead. (Some reference to Law 41 B and 20F for other players and occasions may be necessary.)

"Mary, before you choose your opening lead, would you like an explanation of our auction? It contains

unusual calls." By making it clear that the declaring side is only addressing the defender on lead goes some way to discouraging the other one from asking, at that time.

A cross could be placed in the centre of the bidding slip as proof that an explanation was offered.

In many places in an effort to stress the desirability of asking about specific calls only when made since a player's last turn to call and asking about the whole auction at other times, other options under Laws 41 B and 20 have been neglected.

Many previously "must/ must not" concepts have been changed to "should/ should not" concepts, perhaps to fall in line with the strength of "should" under Scope and Interpretation of the Laws. Fair enough, but without the qualification "which will jeopardise his rights" it reads as if the player can do or not do something as he pleases, without any consequences.

The result is to create a whole new battlefield over the grey areas. Why undo the years of work done in educating players to alert certain bids/passes and not to alert self-alerting calls. Players cannot be expected to always get it right about knowing what an opponent might understand. An unusual treatment is often simply one we don't play ourselves.

5. & 7.2 & 13.2 When should a self-alerting call be alerted during the auction?

13.8.2 Perhaps include failure and mistaken as in 10.3

On the more nit-picky side:

1. Identical cards (difficult if hand written) or systemically identical information on them or word perfect?

1. The last paragraph would be easier to read if the first 2 sentences were joined with a "but also" "on your system card but also partnership understandings" with a new sentence starting after the deleted "and" "The opponents are entitled"

3.3.3 "his" partner

3.1.1 Are subsequent questions always legal?

5.2 (i) Perhaps "below ????" as for Splinters.

11.2 A colleague has queried the removal of the proviso to the old regulation.

1. A bit more notice that these were about to start would have been nice. Even the Directors here in Canberra had no idea.

2. I take it that 'skip' bids like (1D):2H by me are no longer alertable, whether weak, intermediate or strong. [5.3.1 second (a)]

3. If I open 1H with 5/5 in the majors, is it alertable? It appears not...

3. 7.5 will be unworkable. [nice idea, but it won't work...]

Very comprehensive - the work involved is appreciated by us all. If you want to be even more comprehensive, here's three suggestions:

(1) Replace "Forcing 1NT response" by "Forcing 1NT Response and 2C/2D rebids after it" or similar.

(2) For "Multi 2D", not all responses have to be alerted, eg 2D (2H) [correctable] is not alertable, so technically the word "all" in the new regs is probably inaccurate. Also, one should clarify that after a Multi a Pass which shows the opener's major suit is alertable, as it gives the opponents a cue-bid to use, eg 2D P 2S 3C P shows spades so should be alertable. Vast numbers of players get this wrong, so I think it's worth clarifying.

(3) Also please include whether 1NT P 2H P 2S where 2H is a transfer - is 2S alertable always or never or only if agreements about super-accepts exist? Not an easy one for players to figure out at the table, so a guideline would help.

First of all, I express my unqualified support for the principles behind these regulations. The concept of the self-alerting call is simply "brilliant" (trying not to be too over the top). The number of alerting problems faced by the director has been reduced enormously since the concept was introduced.

My comments, therefore, mainly relate to ways in which the regs might be clarified slightly.

1. 5.1(b) and in a number of places, the regs refer to alerting 1H if it denies four spades. It might be useful if the requirement to alert possible canape openings is also spelt out. (eg. 1H = 4+ hearts and may contain a longer minor).

2. 5.2(i) the explanatory note "(below 4C)" would make this consistent with 5.2(h) and would emphasise the self-alerting of calls above 3NT - particularly in relation to Namyats.

3. Has consideration been given to whether there should be any guidance on whether to alert a no-trump

opening (especially 1NT) which may contain a five card major? - or maybe to be included in pre-alerts? This is perhaps the second most common alerting question I am asked. (The most common is of Stayman, which I am very happy to see has been answered in these regs.)

4. I see that 11.2 has been shortened from the form in the previous regs with the removal of the exception "...unless it can be demonstrated that to ask about a non-alerted call would convey UI...". Without this mitigation, I think we tend to place too much pressure on innocent parties, and also encourage them to be less than honest when asked the question about their knowledge of the possible meanings. The situations where it needs to apply are not particularly common, so I don't think that it would be that open to abuse. Once again, my congratulations on a very good job to all involved with these regs.

These regulations are excellent. Well done to you and whoever else helped.

Can I make one suggestion about structure that we found very effective in the finance industry when writing documents to tell our customers about their rights and obligations ... ?

I suggest you move the summary at the end to the front page, and include page references at the end of each para, so people can find the detail easily. That way, people can read the front page and know what they need to do.

I chaired a number of appeals at the ANC in Darwin where the committee felt strongly that although one side had committed a technical breach of the alerting regulations, the other side had only themselves to blame for their result.

As a result, I would like to see more in the document about

- the obligation on the alerted side to ask,
  - that players should call the director if there is any problem, and may lose rights if they don't do so,
- On another matter, I think it would be helpful to remind players that they should also try to ask questions in a consistent fashion and avoid undue emphasis.

You could point out that it's just like bidding and play ... just as they should try to bid and play in tempo and that a break in tempo or a question with undue emphasis may give partner unauthorized info.

#### **Para 2.2.1**

Definition of natural needs to be 4+ in a major or 3+ in a minor, to be consistent with the rest of the document. Alternatively, you might if you prefer say natural bids have to show 4+ in 1<sup>st</sup> suit bid (except 1 of a minor = 3+), and 3+ in second suit?

#### **Para 2.5.1**

I think the definition of transfer is too strong. Over 1NT-2D for example, I'm not "required" to bid 2H if I can super-accept instead. Suggest a transfer bid "shows length in another suit, often inviting or requiring partner to bid that suit."

#### **Para 3.3.1**

I don't think the declaring side should simply give a delayed alert and then sit back, waiting to be asked. If there is anything unusual, I think we should require them to actively invite the question, saying something like "this auction was not standard. Do you want a full explanation?"

#### **Para 5.2(j)**

Sorry – I don't understand this. Can you give an example?

#### **Para 5.3.2 and 5.3.3**

These should include preemptive raises, for consistency with para 3.2.2.

(You might also consider combining these into a single para, since the material is quite similar.)

#### **Para 7.4**

refers to using bidding boxes "in the prescribed manner". Can you include a reference to where to find this?

#### **Para 8.4.**

I think it would be good if we could expand on what's acceptable and what's not. For example, I think it should be acceptable to:

- confirm that an opening bid is artificial before taking an artificial defensive action, especially if playing against unfamiliar methods. This simply puts the partnership back where it would have been if playing against familiar methods.
- Ask "not alertable?" if a player doesn't alert something that is normally alertable. For example, LHO bids 2D multi and RHO bids 2S, normally pass-or-correct. If it's alertable, better to find out now. If not, I don't see any real damage in asking.

#### **Para 9.2**

I think it would be better to offer examples of acceptable wording instead of (or as well as) unacceptable wordings. For example, "I'm not sure whether we have an agreement, but if we do it's likely to be either *this* or *that*."

### **Para 13.6**

What is the problem with saying "weak"??? Seems perfectly clear to me!

I have long thought that the alerting process would work more smoothly if the alerting side offered a basic explanation without waiting to be asked. The explanation should be very simple, allowing the other side to ask for more info if they wish. For example, instead of just saying alert, the side could still say alert, but then add one of the following reasons for the alert:

- Transfer
- Forcing
- Non-forcing
- Weak (or "Preemptive", if you insist!)
- Artificial C/D/H/S support
- Splinter
- Two/three suited with <name known suit(s)>
- Highly Artificial – please ask.

This might be too radical a departure from WBF practice – if so, fine. But I'm sure it would work better. At the moment, so many bids are alertable, that the value of the process is lost without further info. It's true that the explanation may give unauthorised info to partner, but we can deal with that ... it's no different to the information from the alert and explanations in response to questions.

Congratulations on the good work, Over to you ...

### **1. ADOPT WBF ALERTING REGULATIONS.**

Why does the ABF think it knows better and continuously has to re-invent the wheel

### **2. ALLOW NON ALERTING IF REQUESTED BY THE OPPONENTS.**

See WBF Rules of competition No 14.