



POLICY DOCUMENT

" The better I get, the more I realize how much better I can get". (Martina Navratilova)

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Despite the improvement in the status of women in the current era, it is still possible to see gender inequalities emerge in many areas of society including sports.

Studies show that engaging women (of all ages) in any type of sport contributes to improving their status in terms of personal empowerment, self-esteem, social integration, promoting gender equality and encouraging leadership and achievement.

As in many other sports, the game of Bridge also has a prominent male dominance in the highest levels. The male dominance in this arena creates situations that have a negative effect on the chances and desire of women to integrate into the bridge elite level.

The Women's Bridge Committee (**WBC**) of the European Bridge League (**EBL**) views the promotion of female bridge players, providing equal opportunities for them, protecting their dignity, physical and mental integrity, as a major part of its goals.

The WBC sees the importance of instilling in women (from an early age), the awareness that the game of Bridge belongs to them just as much as it belongs to men, and should view it as a platform for success in a safe, respectful and supportive sporting environment in which there is no place for "prohibited behavior" as detailed below.

Likewise, the leadership and excellence required in bridge, as a sport of achievement necessitates education in moral values and first and foremost in equality, fairness, excellence and human dignity.

This document applies to anyone who participates in Bridge activities in any way under the umbrella of the EBL whether at the local, national or international levels.

DEFINITIONS OF PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

Discrimination

1. Any observation, disqualification, preference or unequal treatment based on race, skin color, sex, religion, political view, nationality, social status, physical disability, family status, pregnancy etc., which results in violation or cancelation of equal opportunities in any way constitutes discrimination.



2. Discrimination can be caused by a player, captain, club manager, the federation's officials etc.
3. Discrimination can be direct (e.g.- preventing a pregnant woman from participating in a Bridge Team) or indirect by demanding irrelevant conditions which block and prevent certain sectors of the population.
4. Discrimination is considered as such, whether it be deliberate or unintentional.

Prohibited Behavior

1. Violent behavior (physical or verbal, direct or indirect), including threatening behavior, degrading, abusive, behavior that attempts to establish dominance, superiority or power over another individual or group.
2. Inappropriate emotional behavior – intentional behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or mental damage, including a negative attitude towards their background and encouraging a negative problematic self-image. This includes humiliation and verbal references, physical acts or acts that prevent attention or support, and harmful or harassing behavior
3. "Sexual harassment" – behavior of a sexual nature (physical or verbal) that is undesirable to one side, including derogatory or degrading comments towards gender or sexual orientation (even if said on a one-time basis), publication (without receiving consent) of a photograph, film or recording of a player, which focuses on the sexuality aspect.
4. Inappropriate unproven neuro-sexism remarks / assumptions about perceptions of brain differences that lead to different bridge skills.

WBC's POLICY ON WOMEN'S STATUS AND EQUALITY IN BRIDGE

1. The WBC will work towards restoring equality for Women in all aspects (competitions, conditions, media coverage etc).
2. The WBC will act in preventing "Prohibited and Inappropriate Behavior"
3. The WBC will work to increase the awareness by way of promotion, advocacy and education of the players towards fair dignified play, observing a clean and non-sexist language, towards maintaining a safe place for women in Bridge competitions.
4. The WBC will work to include and maintain equal opportunity for female players in national teams, to train, to be coaches, captains, and to hold key positions in the Federations or in the EBL.
5. The WBC will work to promote women towards achievement and excellence and to increase participation at the competitive level through affirmative action and the appropriate budget if required.
6. The WBC will work with coordinators in the Federations to implement its policy and goals.



BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Anyone found to be involved in prohibited or inappropriate behavior, will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action including temporary suspension, permanent suspension revocation of authority and position, expulsion from Bridge game, or in more extreme cases referral to the law enforcement authorities.

Referrals to the WBC can be addressed by email via the EBL to secretariat@europeanbridge.org

Signed by WBC members:

Oryah Meir – Chair,

Kari-Anne Opsal

Emmanuelle Monod

Ian Payn

Ida Gronkvist

This gender policy has emerged as a result of academic research on bridge, gender and mind sport see:

- [Bridging Brains: Exploring Neuro-sexism and Gendered Stereotypes in a Mindsport](#)
- [Between Equality and Discrimination: The Paradox of the Women's Game in the Mind-sport Bridge, World Leisure](#)
- Gendered Bridge Brains and Neurosexism paper (link to follow)