

# LONDON BRIDGE CENTRE CODE OF CONDUCT REGULATIONS

The purpose of these London Bridge Centre (LBC) Code of Conduct Regulations is to promote the objectives of the Code of Conduct while providing due process to anyone accused of an infraction. These Regulations adapt the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR) to the club level. The ACBL CDR provides much more detailed guidance with more formal proceedings and should be referred to as needed by those involved in the LBC disciplinary process.

The Code of Conduct applies to all LBC members, whether or not they also belong to the ACBL, and to non-members of LBC when they participate in LBC events.

## DEFINITIONS:

- **Charge** – a matter brought to a Disciplinary Panel following investigation of a **report** or **complaint**
- **Complaint** – a written accusation that requests that a **charge** be considered
- **Conduct Chair** – the Chair of the Conduct Committee, or the person fulfilling those responsibilities in a specific case
- **Recorder** – an LBC member who investigates and evaluates a report or complaint and recommends to the **Conduct Chair** whether to lay a charge against the **Subject**
- **Report** – a written record of an incident; it may or may not also be a **complaint** and may, after investigation, lead to a **charge**.
- **Reporter** – the person who makes a **report**, either verbally or in writing; the **Reporter** may request that their identity be kept confidential, or may waive confidentiality.
- **Subject** – the person or persons whose conduct is described in the **report**

**CONDUCT COMMITTEE** - The LBC Board appoints a **Conduct Chair** and Conduct Committee to administer the Code of Conduct and discipline process.

**JURISDICTION**-The LBC Conduct Committee has jurisdiction over LBC members and non-members when participating in LBC events or activities. If the **Subject** is an ACBL member, the ACBL CDR discipline process may also have jurisdiction. If a **report, complaint or charge** alleges a serious ethical violation and the **Subject** is an ACBL member, the ACBL CDR requires that LBC refer the matter to the ACBL National Recorder for evaluation prior to the start of an investigation. The ACBL process has different confidentiality provisions than the LBC regulations.

**CONFIDENTIALITY** – While this description of the process is a public document, the operation of the process in a particular case will be confidential as far as possible. It will often be necessary to mention names during an investigation, and incidents may have been witnessed by several other players. Names can be used in discussions within the Conduct Committee and Discipline Panel. Discussions at the Board will be on a no-names basis except when a penalty or appeal is being processed. When a suspension or expulsion is imposed, game directors will be notified.

Results of individual discipline cases will be held in confidence by London Bridge Centre except for reporting to the ACBL as required by the ACBL regulations, or to law enforcement agencies where criminal activity may be involved, or as needed (e.g., to Game Directors) to enforce the discipline imposed.

When a person makes a **report** or files a **complaint**, that **Reporter** may request that their identity not be made known to the **Subject**. That request will be honoured, recognizing that this may prevent a full investigation. A **Reporter** will be informed after the evaluation or investigation whether the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Conduct Committee; no details of any penalty will be communicated. If the situation involved an implication that the **Reporter** had engaged in unethical conduct, the **Conduct Chair** or the **Recorder** will indicate whether this implication had been found to be valid, and whether any further action would be taken in respect to the **Reporter's** conduct.

**DIRECTOR AUTHORITY** – Laws 81 through 93 outline the director's authority. During a game, Law 91A authorizes the director to assess disciplinary penalties. These range from an adjusted score for the board or a procedural matchpoint deduction, up to and including disqualification or ejection from the game, with no refund and no masterpoint awards. More severe penalties, such as suspension from future games, require further due process. The Director or another player may file a **complaint** with the **Director of Bridge Operations** or any LBC Official, who will forward it to the **Conduct Chair**.

Director's Rulings which involve judgement may be subject to appeal. If a player wishes to appeal a director's ruling, the player must notify the director no later than 30 minutes after the end of the game. If the appeal deals with a ruling that is subject to appeal, the director will convene a committee of three players to hear the appeal as soon as possible following the game, as described in Law 83.

If there is an incident involving inappropriate behaviour or an ethical violation during the game, the director will complete a written incident **report** on the appropriate form and submit it to the **Director of Bridge Operations**, preferably within 24 hours.

If a player makes a verbal report of an incident, the club official receiving the report will evaluate the circumstances and complete a written **report** if deemed appropriate and submit it to the **Director of Bridge Operations**.

**DIRECTOR OF BRIDGE OPERATIONS RESPONSIBILITY** – The **Director of Bridge Operations** should review any such **report** promptly and forward it with his comments to the **Conduct Chair**. If no **complaint** has been filed, he should consider whether he should file a **complaint**. When the **Conduct Chair** is not available because of absence or conflict of interest, the **Director of Bridge Operations** will appoint another LBC member (a member of the Conduct Committee if one is available) as **Conduct Chair** for that case. The **Director of Bridge Operations** has no authority to impose penalties beyond those in the Director's authority.

**CONDUCT CHAIR RESPONSIBILITY** -- The **Conduct Chair** should review any **reports** promptly, consider whether further action is needed, and appoint a **Recorder** if needed, who may be himself or another member of the Conduct Committee. Any LBC member may be appointed as **Recorder** for a case.

The **Conduct Chair** has authority to issue verbal warnings, written reprimands, or interim suspensions pending a discipline panel hearing, as well as to lay a **charge** or to direct the **Recorder** to do so. Any of these actions are to be reported to the Conduct Committee and recorded in the **Subject's** conduct file and may be considered in the disciplinary process for future **complaints** and **charges**. If the **Subject** objects to the **Conduct Chair's** verbal warning or written reprimand, the **Conduct Chair** will file a **charge** to a Discipline Panel.

The **Conduct Chair** is responsible to maintain a confidential file of incident reports, complaints and charges. He will provide a copy of a **Subject's** conduct file to the Chair of a Discipline Panel, a **Recorder**, and/or **Director of Bridge Operations**, and/or Unit 249 Recorder upon request.

**RECORDER RESPONSIBILITY** – The **Recorder** will investigate the incident, interviewing the participants and witnesses as deemed appropriate. If the **Reporter** has requested confidentiality, it may not be possible to interview the **Subject** or other parties because of the risk of revealing the identity of the **Reporter**. The **Recorder** should make a written note of any verbal reports that are considered serious enough to be recorded in the conduct file of the **Subject** for reference in future disciplinary proceedings. The **Recorder** should recommend to the **Conduct Chair** whether to file a **charge**.

**PROCEDURES FOR LBC DISCIPLINE PANEL**—The Conduct Chair shall, upon a **charge** being laid, appoint a Panel of three LBC members to hear the case. The Chair of the Panel should be a member of the Conduct Committee, if one is available; the other two Panel members may or may not be members of the Conduct Committee. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the Panel should be appointed within one week of the **charge** being laid. The Conduct Chair will promptly notify the **Subject** of the **charge** and of the appointment and identities of the Panel, and whether an interim suspension pending hearing has been imposed.

The Chair of the Panel should be familiar with the LBC Code of Conduct Regulations, and be aware of the ACBL CDR. The procedures as described in the ACBL CDR Section 5 should be reviewed but need not be followed; recording of the hearing is not required. The Chair of the Panel will arrange for a hearing as soon as possible. It is to be understood that LBC disciplinary proceedings are not criminal or civil trials in that they do not involve personal liberty but rather the privilege of membership in the LBC or continued participation in LBC or ACBL-sanctioned events. Charged persons are not required to appear, and their failure to appear shall not be grounds for further discipline. Complainants may be invited to appear in person, by telephone, or may submit a signed statement. Members of the Panel and other persons may participate by telephone or other electronic means only if they are able to hear and be heard by all other participants.

During the hearing, the party laying the charge (normally the **Conduct Chair** or the **Recorder**) has the burden to prove, by a preponderance of evidence, that an offense was committed by the **Subject**. If the charge alleges an ethical violation, the allegation must be proved by “Comfortable Satisfaction” – the decision makers have a comfortable satisfaction that they have reached a correct and just conclusion.

The Discipline Panel shall provide a written decision to the **Subject**, the **Conduct Chair** and the **Recorder** documenting any disciplines imposed, identifying the parties involved as appropriate, and summarizing the circumstances that gave rise to the **charge**. A copy of the decision will be filed in the **Subject's** Conduct file, and will also be submitted to the Unit 249 Recorder by the **Recorder** if required by the ACBL CDR.

**GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE** – The ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations Section 3 has a detailed list of grounds for discipline; more generally:

1. Violation of the London Bridge Centre Code of Conduct
2. Violation of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge
3. Leaving a session prior to completion of play without either good cause or the permission of the game director
4. Cheating and similar ethical violations
5. Betting on the results of any LBC event
6. Breach of confidentiality of the discipline process
7. Unauthorized use of LBC-provided member data for (a) personal use, (b) financial gain and/or (c) harassment.

**DISCIPLINE** – This section lists the disciplines that may be imposed by a Discipline Panel. The Panel may choose to combine such disciplines.

1. Reprimand – a written statement of censure, an explanation of the relevant disciplinary policy and a warning against further related violations.
2. Probation – a fixed term during which any further disciplinary violation, whether similar or different, may result in suspension or expulsion.
3. Exclusion from Events and Programs – loss of the right to play in certain specified events or to participate in programs sponsored by LBC.
4. Suspension – loss of all LBC rights and privileges including membership for a specified period.
5. Reduction or Forfeiture of Masterpoints or Disqualification – loss of a specified number or all of the masterpoints earned in an event, or a reduction of rank in an event, or disqualification in an event. See ABCL CDR. This penalty may affect the **Subject's** partner(s).
6. Expulsion – permanent loss of all LBC rights and privileges, including membership. (See “Loss of Membership” section below.)

While serving a suspension or while expelled, a person may not participate in or attend any LBC event, including social events and member meetings.

**INTERIM SUSPENSION PENDING HEARING** – When a **charge** has been laid, the **Subject** may play in LBC events until the hearing unless otherwise directed by the **Conduct Chair**. Such interim suspensions pending hearings should only be issued when the **charge** alleges a serious offence. When one is issued, the hearing must commence within one week thereafter unless the **Subject** requests or causes a delay – in which case, the **Subject** is suspended until a decision has been communicated following the hearing.

**APPEAL PROCEDURES** – A **Subject** excluded from an LBC event or program, or suspended or expelled, may appeal the decision of the Discipline Panel to the full Board. The President will appoint a member of the Board to act as Chair of the Appeal. The **Recorder** and any member of the Discipline Panel, or any Board member who was directly involved in the underlying incident, will not participate in hearing the Appeal, other than to give evidence at the Appeal proceeding if appropriate. On appeal, the Board may increase or reduce discipline as well as affirm, reverse or modify the disciplinary determination. The Board may, but need not, conduct a hearing for the appeal.

Written notice of Appeal must be filed with the **Conduct Chair** within ten days following the **Subject's** receipt of notice of the discipline.

**STAYS OF DISCIPLINE PENDING AN APPEAL** - Filing an Appeal does not stay execution of a discipline. A written request for a stay may be filed with the Board, including the reasons for the request. A stay may be granted only if the appellant makes a showing that a reasonable likelihood exists that the verdict will be reversed or that the discipline will be reduced. A stay may only be granted by the Board member appointed as Chair of the Appeal.

**LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP** – If the Discipline Panel determines that suspension for one year or longer or expulsion is the appropriate discipline, and the decision on Appeal, if any, supports this determination, the Conduct Committee will recommend to the Board that the **Subject's** membership be suspended or terminated as provided by Article 8.03 of By-Law One. The **Conduct Chair** will provide the **Subject** with the required 15 days notice of the proposed Board decision, and advise of the right to submit a written objection. The **Subject** will be suspended during the notice period until the Board decision has been finalized.

**RESIGNATION** – If a member attempts to avoid possible disciplinary action by resigning, the discipline process for the charge will be carried through to its conclusion. The former member may not thereafter participate in any LBC events or programs. Such person may be readmitted to membership only by the Board on recommendation of the Conduct Committee. No application for readmission may be considered for one year from the date of resignation. The Board may impose such conditions on the readmission as it deems appropriate.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST** --If the **Subject** is a member of the Conduct Committee or the Board, that individual will take a leave of absence from LBC responsibilities until the charge has been resolved. If any party is unable to fulfill their duties in a particular case because of a real or perceived conflict of interest (such as direct involvement of themselves, family members or close personal friends in the incident) then the remaining members of the Conduct Committee will appoint other LBC members to fulfill those functions for the particular case.

Enacted by LBC Board Resolution Jan. 10, 2018