

5. The Wessex League (Inter-Club Teams of Eight Championship)

(i) The event shall be organised in one or more divisions according to the size of the entry, as determined by the Tournament Committee and ratified by the Management Committee.

(ii) Entries shall be submitted by affiliated clubs of the Association who may enter one or more teams, **or by non-affiliated groups and clubs who do not meet the criteria for eligibility to affiliate to the Association but who have entered the League for each of the previous three seasons. Other non-affiliated clubs and groups based within Oxfordshire may, however, submit entries for participation in the lowest Division, but are encouraged to affiliate wherever possible, and in any event may not obtain promotion without affiliation.**

(iii) A team for any match consists of eight club members, all of whom must be members of the Association, and who must not have played in the League for any other club during the current season.

(iv) Any player playing more than twice in a season for a higher ranked team may not subsequently play for a lower ranked team. Ranking will be determined by the positions of teams at the end of the previous season, unless redesignated by a club prior to the start of the current season.

(v) Any player who plays more than three times for a higher ranked team having already played for a lower ranked team may not play in a higher number of matches during the season than that higher ranked team are scheduled to play during that same season.

(vi) Infringements of rule (iii) shall be penalised by reducing the VP total of the offending side by 2 VPs per infringement. Infringements of rules (iv) and (v) shall be penalised by reducing the VP total of the offending side by 2 VPs per infringement and by adding 2 VPs to the total of the non-offending side, except that their adjusted score shall not exceed 20. The score of the offending side may become negative.

(vii) The League Secretary shall furnish club secretaries and team captains with details of the composition of divisions, and match schedules.

(viii) The dates of the fixtures will be agreed at the Wessex League Fixture Meeting held at the beginning of September. The home club must offer the away team a choice of three dates for play, of which not more than two shall be in the same week or on the same day of the week, and of which none shall clash with the away club's duplicate night. Changes in dates can be made up to the end of September at one team's request. From October 1st no changes in dates (except for adverse weather conditions) should be made unless agreed by and convenient to both teams. The venue shall be decided **and provided** by the home team, who shall also provide necessary playing equipment. **All venues must be within reasonable travelling distance of the home base of the away team and must provide suitable playing space and conditions.** Should captains agree to a half way venue, both teams shall share expenses.

(ix) The movement employed shall be at the discretion of the home captain, but it must be so designed as to ensure that each pair plays six boards against each pair from the opposing team. There shall be no change of partnerships within either team, although substitutes may be allowed in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the opposing captain.

(x) The away team sits for the first set and remains stationary for the match while the home team circulates every six boards. Normally the match is played in two stanzas of 12 boards. If both captains agree the match can be played in four stanzas of 6 boards or one stanza of 12 boards and two of 6 boards, swapping opponents half way through any 12-board stanza.

(xi) For purposes of scoring the team of eight shall be considered as a single unit. On each board points gained or lost at all four tables shall be aggregated and converted to IMPs.

(xii) Scoring shall take place after a 6-board or 12-board stanza has been played, but only when play has finished at all four tables. The use of travelling score slips is strictly forbidden.

(xiii) The final score shall be converted to show the result for the whole match in VPs according to the following table:

Difference in IMPs	VPs
0 - 1	10-10
2 - 4	11-9
5 - 8	12-8
9 - 13	13-7
14 - 20	14-6
21 - 28	15-5
29 - 37	16-4
38 - 47	17-3
48 - 58	18-2
59 - 70	19-1
71 +	20-0

The captain or secretary of the winning team, or in the event of a draw, the captain or club secretary of the home team, shall notify the League Secretary of the result in writing, to reach the League Secretary within 15 days of the match being played. Failure to do so will result in a 2 VP fine to the offending side.

(xiv) If, whilst scoring, it is discovered that a board was fouled, then the following rules apply:

(a) If the board was fouled as it was played on the fourth time (e.g. arrow-switched), there will be, say, two NS scores for one team and only one EW score. The arrow-switched score is not to count. The two NS scores are averaged and then added to the EW scores and IMPed. If this results in a score that lies between two IMP ranges, the lower value is taken, e.g.

+430 and +120 for the NS pairs	averaged $(430+120)/2$	=275
-400 for the EW pair	add on to the averaged score	- 400
	Results in a score of	- 125

This lies between 3 and 4 IMPs, to be scored as -3 IMPs.

(b) If the board is fouled after being played twice e.g. two hands being transposed, then you have two pairs of comparable scores. All four scores are still added up and IMPed as usual (not as two teams of four).

(c) In all other situations the principles described above can be applied.

(xv) If, during the play, it is discovered that a board has been fouled, then the following rules apply:

(a) If a board is arrow-switched on the second or third time it is played and noticed, then the fourth table (or third as appropriate) should switch it as well to correct this error. It does not matter that different pairs are now NS than on other boards in the stanza.

(b) In all other situations the principles described in (xiv) can be applied

(xvi) In the event of a default by one team and an unplayed match, see section 14.(xii) of the Oxfordshire Bridge Association Competition Bye-Laws.

(xvii) If a team withdraws from the league without completing its matches, the following rules are to apply:

(a) If the team represents a club with more than one team in the Wessex League the lower ranking team will be deemed to have defaulted.

(b) If the withdrawal occurs before half the scheduled matches have been played, the results of all the team's matches shall be cancelled for both the withdrawing team and its opponents. Where these cancelled matches effect the number of matches a player may play during a season it shall be assumed that these cancelled matches were never played and that the withdrawing team had never been entered in that league.

(c) If half or more of the team's scheduled matches have been played, the results of those matches shall stand and the scores of unplayed matches calculated as provided for in section 14 (xii) of the Competition Bye-Laws. No withdrawing team may win its division of the league.

(xviii) The team scoring the most VPs in each division shall be deemed the winners of the division.

(xix) If two or more teams tie on VPs for the leadership of any division except the first, or if a tie requires splitting to determine which of two or more teams shall be promoted or relegated, the current EBU ruling on the splitting of ties shall be used. To determine the champions of the first division in the event of a tie there shall be a play off match of 24 boards if two teams are involved, or a multiple teams contest of 16 boards against each other team if more than two teams are involved. Scoring shall be by IMPs.

(xx) If both teams tie in a final play-off involving two teams, four further boards shall be played, and a further four should the tie still not be broken. If teams tie in a final play-off involving three or more teams, the contest shall be scored on a league basis using an approved VP scale. If this still results in a tie, the result shall depend on the outcome of the match between the two teams assessed in terms of total IMPs or, if they be equal, in terms of aggregate points.

(xxi) The winner of Division 1 in any year shall represent the county in the next Garden Cities Trophy, provided their entry was submitted by an affiliated club whose primary allegiance is to Oxfordshire. If the winner of Division 1 does not meet these criteria, then the highest placed club in Division 1 which does meet these criteria shall be the county representative. If there is a tie for this position, then there shall be a play-off match as described in paragraphs (xix) and (xx) above.

(xxii) Local points shall be issued by the Association at the end of the season.

(xxiii) The club whose team(s) win any one of League's Divisions shall receive a trophy to be held for a period of one year.

(xxiv) Divisions shall operate from season to season on a promotion/relegation system. Two teams shall normally be exchanged by adjacent divisions. If in the event of an increase or decrease in the total entry for the competition it should prove impractical to implement this rule, the number of teams to be relegated and promoted shall be determined in accordance with the following principles:

(a) All new entries shall be placed in the lowest division.

(b) The size of divisions shall, where possible, be equal; but when the total entry is not exactly divisible by the number of divisions, the complement of a higher division shall be less than that of a lower one.

(c) In the event of the number of teams in the next year's league being different from the previous year, resulting in the usual promotion and relegation of two teams not being possible, a minimum of one team shall be promoted and a minimum of one team shall be relegated each season.

(d) If there are 32 or more entries there shall be a fourth division, and, with 41+, a fifth division. If entries subsequently drop to 31 (or 39), the process is reversed. In transition years, rules for promotion/relegation will be determined by the Tournament Committee.

(xxv) Teams shall be identified by title only, their constitution being a matter for the club concerned.

(xxvi) Level 4 conventions (formerly called Restricted Licences) may be played in divisions 1&2. Level 3 conventions (formerly called General Licences) will be played in divisions 3 and below.

(xxvii) The League Secretary shall have discretion to recommend ad hoc exceptions to any of the above by-laws, to be confirmed by the Competitions Sub-Committee, and where time allows to be ratified by the Management Committee, before implementation.

(xxviii) Proposals for changes to the Wessex League Rules must be submitted to the Tournament Committee in advance of a quarterly Management Meeting so that the Tournament Committee may include such proposals on the agenda as a substantive motion. Such proposals are not deemed appropriate to take under 'Any Other Business'.