



**MANCHESTER CONTRACT
BRIDGE ASSOCIATION
LEAGUE 2019-20
CONDITIONS OF CONTEST**

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These Conditions of Contest are the definitive conditions under which the Manchester Contract Bridge Association (MCBA) League will run. MCBA has also produced a much shorter and simpler set of guidelines to assist teams and captains in organising and playing matches, particularly if they are relatively new to playing in the league. The guidelines will suffice in almost all cases, unless difficulties arise in arranging a match or during the match itself, when this fuller set of Conditions of Contest will have to be consulted.

In all cases, if there is any discrepancy between the Guidelines and these Conditions of Contest, then the Conditions of Contest will take precedence.

1. Definitions

- 1.1. The Conditions of Contest for the Manchester Contract Bridge Association (MCBA) League comprise these Conditions of Contest and the general regulations of the EBU concerning matches played privately. In the event of any conflict between the EBU regulations on matches played privately and these regulations, these regulations shall prevail.
- 1.2. For any issues relating to the league, these regulations, arranging league matches, or any other matter relating to the MCBA League, please contact the League Secretary, Adam Wiseberg, at league@manchesterbridge.org.uk

2. Scope of the League

- 2.1. The MCBA League is a local league played by teams within the boundaries of the MCBA area. Whilst this is not strictly defined, it is expected that matches will be played within 14 miles of Manchester City Centre, defined for this purpose as Piccadilly Gardens. However, by mutual agreement, captains may play matches anywhere.
- 2.2. A team cannot insist on playing a match further than 14 miles from Piccadilly Gardens, and the away team can, in such circumstances, insist upon a half way venue. The costs of such a venue will be shared between the teams.
- 2.3. The League will be around 6 to 7 Divisions each consisting of about 9 to 11 teams.
- 2.4. Promotion and relegation between the top two Divisions will be 3-up and 3-down. Promotion and relegation from the other divisions will normally be on a 2-up and 2-down basis between Divisions except that may be varied when Divisions are resized because of new teams or teams dropping out. Additional promotions/non-relegations may be made by the League Secretary (based on the average number of VPs scored per match) to balance the divisions.
- 2.5. If a team withdraws at the end of the season, then there will be one less demotion unless the vacancy is filled by a new team (see below).
- 2.6. The league position of a team which splits up will be retained by the larger contingent or by the captain if the contingents are equal in size. In order to retain their place in a division in the following season, a team must either retain at least four players or retain two or more players who each played at least half of the matches.
- 2.7. Newly formed teams are positioned at the discretion of the League Secretary (normally just below or reasonably appropriate to their perceived ability level).
- 2.8. All teams winning a Division will receive a commemorative award. Winning team members who played in at least 1/3 of the matches will also receive this award.
- 2.9. Ties in terms of Victory Points will be split by the result (in VPs) of the match between the teams, and then by total IMPs over the season.

3. Entry Fee

- 3.1. The entry fee is £40 for a team of four players, with a further £5 for each additional player. Any player(s) who has primary allegiance to another county (see section 4 below) will be required to pay £6 in addition to the entry fee.
- 3.2. Entry fees are due by 31st August at the latest. Any team paying after 31st August will be subject to a £10 per month or per part of month late fee.
- 3.3. Payment is preferred by BACS. Bank details : Account name : MCBA. Sort Code : 01-07-20 A/c Number : 41526708. Please use the team name as a reference. If paying by cheque it should be made out to MCBA, have the team name on the back and sent to The Treasurer, 10 Priest Avenue, Gatley, Cheadle, SK8 4JW.

4. Team Members and Eligibility

- 4.1. A team may have as many players as it wishes. However, teams with more than eight players are encouraged to split into two teams.
- 4.2. All players in a team must be current members of the EBU and must have Manchester as their county of primary or secondary allegiance before the start of the first match. School students are exempt from this requirement.
- 4.3. Any team fielding a player in a match who does not have Manchester as county of primary or secondary allegiance (except for school students) will forfeit the match and score 0 VPs.
- 4.4. No player may play for more than one team in the League in any one season, except in the case of a substitute agreed with the League Secretary in advance (see section on substitutes). Any team which plays a player who has already played for another team in any division (except for substitutes) will forfeit all matches in which that player played and will score 0 VPs for those matches.

5. Arranging Matches

- 5.1. Whilst being a competitive event, the League is meant to be friendly. It is thus assumed that all matches can be arranged amicably between the team captains.
- 5.2. It is good practice to start arranging league matches as soon as the league information comes out. History has repeatedly shown that teams who leave a lot of matches until near the end of the season have great difficulty playing them all, and often end up defaulting matches.
- 5.3. Opposing teams can be played in any order, as is convenient for both teams. However, matches should be played regularly and at least 3 league matches should be played by the end of December.
- 5.4. Team captains should check the information provided which indicates the preferred days of the other teams in the same division.
- 5.5. All matches should be arranged by mutual agreement between the captains.
- 5.6. Either captain may initiate the arrangement of matches, though the onus is on the away captain to initiate the contact.
- 5.7. Matches can be at any reasonable venue, but are normally played in the home captain's house, or at a bridge club. Teams wishing to play at a bridge club should contact the relevant club for details of facilities, including food.

- 5.8. When arranging a match, the venue, start time, any dietary requirements, any access requirements, and any other relevant matters, should all be clearly specified. It is also useful for captains to exchange phone numbers, particularly mobile numbers, in case they need to contact each other on the night.
- 5.9. The home team is responsible for all costs (unless the match is at a half way venue when the costs are shared) and should provide light refreshments (usually a hot drink, sandwich and cake or something of that sort).
- 5.10. On occasion, through no fault, a match has to be cancelled, and it will need to be re-arranged. If a match is cancelled with less than 24 hours notice, the League Secretary must be informed. If a match is cancelled near to the end of the season, re-arrangement may not be possible, and a default may have to be awarded.
- 5.11. It is hoped that all matches can be arranged. If, for whatever reason, there are problems arranging the match, then the League Secretary should be contacted immediately. The provisions of Appendix A will be followed in the case of difficulties in arranging matches and team captains are advised to study these.

6. Playing Conditions and Playing the Match

- 6.1. Matches are of 24 boards, played in two 12 board stanzas, with compulsory change of opponents after the first stanza (subject to 6.2 below). The away team captain chooses which pair of the home team to play against in the first stanza. Should a team play more than four players in a match (which is not recommended) then the extra player(s) may only play in the second stanza, and in that case the opposing captain has choice of which pair to play against in the second stanza. If both teams play more than four players, then the home captain has choice of opponents in the second stanza.
- 6.2. Matches in Divisions below Division 6 will be of 20 boards played in two 10 board stanzas arranged as in 6.1. If both captains agree, then matches can be of 24 boards as in 6.1 above.
- 6.3. All players must abide by the EBU Best Behaviour at Bridge guidelines. Anyone who thinks they have been affected by bad behaviour should report back to the League Secretary as soon as possible.
- 6.4. No animals other than guide dogs may be brought into the playing area.
- 6.5. Smoking (including electronic cigarettes) is prohibited in all playing rooms throughout the match. However, the match host may designate an area where smoking is permitted during scoring breaks.
- 6.6. Players are requested to turn off mobile phones, ipads, ipods etc during matches.
- 6.7. Each pair must have two identically completed system cards for the opponents to refer to. It is expected that EBU 20B convention cards will be used. WBF convention cards are acceptable ONLY if prior permission has been obtained from the opposition captain.
- 6.8. EBU regulations, and in particular the EBU alert and announcing procedures should be followed at all times. The EBU summary of alerting and announcing regulations is available at <https://www.ebu.co.uk/laws-and-ethics/publications>.
- 6.9. Level 4 conventions as defined in the EBU Blue Book are allowed in all divisions of the league. However, pairs playing methods or conventions that may be unfamiliar to opponents should note that the onus is on them to fully explain their methods to opponents. For methods that may be unknown to opponents, it is considered good practice for a pair to make available a convention card to the opposing team captain prior to any match. For example, a pair playing Polish Club might wish to do this as their opponents may never have come across this system before. However, there is no requirement to do this.

- 6.10. Bidding boxes must be used in all matches (except in the case of disability).
- 6.11. Boards are dealt at the table in the presence of at least one player from each team. Pre-duplicated (duplimated) boards may be used as long as both captains agree and are satisfied with the security arrangements.

Rulings

- 6.12. A Tournament Director (TD) or a suitably qualified player present but not playing in the match may give a ruling. Do not continue to play the board without a ruling. Please inform the League Secretary about any rulings.
- 6.13. If no TD ruling is attainable or you wish to appeal the TD ruling, send the full details about the hand to the League Secretary using an Appeal Form which can be downloaded from the EBU site (<https://www.ebu.co.uk/laws-and-ethics/forms>). The form should make clear what details are agreed upon by both teams. The League Secretary will consult with suitable players and make a ruling with reference to EBU regulations.
- 6.14. Teams unhappy with the League Secretary's ruling may appeal to the EBU about the ruling, but unless it is a matter of bridge regulation, they may decline to hear it.

Incorrect Direction of Seating

- 6.15. It is considered good practice to nominate a home table, where the home team sit North-South and an away table, where the away team sit North-South. However, both pairs at the table are equally responsible for sitting in the correct direction. If a pair sits in the wrong direction in one stanza, that set cannot be scored. Any completed stanza will be scored by IMPs. The remaining stanza will have to be replayed, either immediately or at a later date arranged by both captains. If, for whatever reason, the stanza looks like it cannot be replayed then the League Secretary should be contacted immediately. The provisions of Appendix B will apply in such circumstances, and a team may find that it defaults the match if it does not make sufficient attempt to get the stanza replayed. As a last resort, if and only if the League Secretary is convinced that both teams have shown good faith in attempting to get the stanza replayed, the VP score will be calculated by multiplying the IMPs from the stanza played by 1.414 (rounding to the nearest whole number), and then converting to VPs on the scale given in Appendix B.

Abandonment of Match

- 6.16. If a match is abandoned due to unforeseen circumstances with neither team at fault, then any remaining boards should be replayed at another date. The provisions of 6.14 above and Appendix B apply in the case of abandonment of a match.

Fouled or Cancelled Boards

- 6.17. If a board is fouled or cancelled in the first stanza, a substitute board is added to the second half with the same dealer and vulnerability. If a board is fouled or cancelled in the second stanza a substitute board may not be played if the final score without that board is known.

Late Arrival

- 6.18. The home team should allow leniency in the matter of late arrival, particularly if matches have a start time which means the opposition are travelling during rush hour. However, the home team may choose to impose the following penalties for late arrival:
 - A team is deemed to have arrived when it has four players present at the venue.
 - A team cannot start to count any late period until four of its players are present at the venue.
 - If a team arrives less than 30 minutes late, there is no penalty

- If a team arrives more than 30 minutes late, the match is shortened by removing two boards (so now the match is 22 boards long).
- For each further complete 15-minute period by which the offending team is late, two further boards are removed.
- The maximum number of boards which can be removed is 8.
- For each board removed, the non-offending side scores 3 IMPs.
- The boards removed are those consecutively numbered from 1.
- When the length of the match is known, the number of boards is divided into two equal stanzas (or as near two equal stanzas as possible).
- If a team arrives more than 90 minutes late, the match is defaulted.

The late arriving team has the right of appeal to the League Secretary for mitigation but would need to provide clear evidence of unusual circumstances ("heavy traffic" for example would not be considered unusual circumstances).

7. Scoring and Reporting Results

- 7.1. Scoring will be by IMPs, converted to VPs on the scale given in appendix B.
- 7.2. Full details of the match including the name of the winning team and the net IMP difference should be noted and uploaded to the EBU website <https://www.ebu.co.uk/members/v2/> within 24 hours of a match being played by either captain. To submit a League Result:
 - Click My EBU and enter your EBU No and Password
 - Click Utilities and EBU League
 - Find your team and division corresponding to your Team registered entry
 - Click on the specific match and enter the results and tick players accordingly

8. Substitutes

- 8.1. If fewer than four players are available for a pre-arranged match, then the following options are available:
 - Try and re-arrange the match
 - Register another player(s) on the team who is available for the match. Such a player(s) must not have played for any other team in any match in that season.
 - Apply to the League Secretary for a substitute(s) for the match.
- 8.2. The League Secretary is under no obligation to grant a substitute(s) and will only do so if convinced that the other options are not viable. Any substitute must not:
 - have played for a team in the same or a higher ranking division in that season
 - be materially stronger than the player(s) substituted for. This will be determined by examining the NGS grades of the players involved. If either or both players have their NGS grade hidden, then the substitute will automatically be deemed of higher rank and not be allowed.

- 8.3. There will be a compulsory 5 VP penalty per substitute per match in which a substitute is played, subject to a team scoring a minimum of 0 VPs. The VP score of the opposing team will not be affected by this. So, for example, if a team with a substitute wins 25-5, then the team with the substitute will score 20 VPs and the team without the substitute will score 5 VPs.
- 8.4. Playing a substitute without agreement of the League Secretary will result in the match being forfeited and the team scoring 0 VPs.
- 8.5. The League Secretary will inform the opposing captain that a substitute(s) is being played and who the substitute is, but it is good practice for the captain of the team with the substitute(s) to also inform the opposing team captain.

9. Defaults

- 9.1. All matches must be completed before the announced "End of Season" date (19th April 2020 for the 2019-20 season) unless approval to play after that date is granted by the League Secretary (see Appendix A).
- 9.2. Any outstanding matches will be **void** (no VPs for either team) unless the League Secretary was consulted by **April 1st**.
- 9.3. When the League Secretary was consulted by April 1st, the provisions of Appendix A will come into force to determine which team, or both, will default the match.
- 9.4. If a team is awarded a match as a result of a default by the opposing team then:
 - The defaulting team receives no VPs.
 - The other team will be awarded 15 +(their VP average – opponent's VP average) VPs (subject to a minimum of 15 VPs and a maximum 30VPs)

Artificial VP scores from other defaulted matches are not included in this calculation.

10. Withdrawals

- 10.1. On occasion a team withdraws from the League. In such a case:
 - If a team withdraws from the League having played fewer than half its matches (rounded up in the case of an odd number) in the season, all results against that team will be cancelled.
 - If the team has played at least half its matches in the season (rounded up in the case of an odd number), results in the remaining matches are calculated using the default match formula above.
- 10.2. The League Secretary reserves the right to refuse entry in the following season to some or all the members of a team who consistently default matches or consistently withdraw during the season. For this purpose, consistent will be withdrawing in two years or defaulting two or more matches in two consecutive years.

11. Masterpoints

- 11.1. Local points will be awarded in accordance with the EBU Masterpoint Handbook.

Appendix A: Procedure in the Case of Difficulty Arranging Matches

It is hoped that all matches can be arranged amicably. If, for whatever reason, there are problems arranging the match, then the following regulations will apply:

- 1) Before the End of Season (April 19th 2020 for the 2019-20 season), the team captains can apply to the League Secretary for an extension of 1 week in order for the match to be played. This will usually be granted, but there is no requirement for the League Secretary to grant this extension and teams should not rely on this provision. Only in exceptional circumstances (eg serious illness of a team member) will an extension of longer than one week be granted.
- 2) If, for whatever reason, there is difficulty in arranging a match, then the away team should formally offer 4 dates to the home team, these all to be before April 19th (or within any extension if granted).
- 3) Of these dates, at least 3 must be week evening dates, and no more than 2 should fall in any continuous 7 day period.
- 4) All dates offered must be a minimum of 5 weekdays from the date they are offered (that is, if dates are offered on a Monday, the earliest date that be offered is the following Monday etc).
- 5) it is advised that these dates are communicated by email or other written communication in order to ensure an audit trail.
- 6) if the conditions above are met, the home team is unable to agree to any of these dates, and no other date can be arranged, then the match will be awarded to the away team as a default and the relevant regulations for awarding VPs will apply.
- 7) if the away team cannot or will not offer the relevant number of dates within 4 weeks of being requested by the home captain, then the home team is entitled to offer dates, in line with the provisions of paragraphs 2) – 5) above.
- 8) If the away team is unable to agree to any of these dates, and no other date can be arranged, then the match will be awarded to the home team as a default and the relevant regulations for awarding VPs will apply.
- 9) If neither team are able to offer dates which comply with 2) – 5) above and/or were unable to prove that (see 5) above) then the match will be void (0 VPs for each team).
- 10) In all cases, the team(s) awarded against can appeal against this decision. This appeal will be dealt with by the Chair of Council, who may form a committee of up to 3 people to assist. The League Secretary may not be involved in the appeal, though the League Secretary will be asked for a written statement as to how and why the decision was made.

Appendix B: Scale of IMPs to VPs For MCBA League Matches

Diff.	VPs	Diff.	VPs	Diff.	VPs	Diff.	VPs
0-2	: 15-15	16-19	: 19-11	32-35	: 23-7	48-51	: 27-3
3-7	: 16-14	20-23	: 20-10	36-39	: 24-6	52-55	: 28-2
8-11	: 17-13	24-27	: 21-9	40-43	: 25-5	56-59	: 29-1
12-15	: 18-12	28-31	: 22-8	44-47	: 26-4	60+	: 30-0

So, every complete 4 IMPs gains 1VP, except that a 3 IMP win is also worth 16-14 VPs