

Open letter to the WBF, EBL, European NBOs and the international bridge community

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Full compliance with the rules, regulations and ethical standards is essential for the game of bridge in general and for international competitions in particular. Depending on developments and new insights, regulatory frameworks governing what is deemed “proper behavior” evolve over time. It is crucial that players and officials support these frameworks and comply in form and in substance.

This week, Italy has included the player Fantoni in their team for the European qualification games for the upcoming Bermuda Bowl. In accordance with the outcome of legal proceedings in his case, Fantoni can be fielded. However, all players of the other participating countries (more than halfway the games), deem it unacceptable that Fantoni plays. They refuse to play against Italy for ethical reasons. Their arguments are understandable and convincing.

The Dutch Bridge Federation is of the opinion that this situation requires immediate action. Recent developments should encourage the WBF and the EBL to urgently reinforce and strengthen the regulatory and ethical framework regarding unethical behaviour and take measures to ascertain full compliance during plays. Players convicted need to be banned from playing in national teams for a significant period (potentially for life). Retroactive adjustment of results should be considered as part of the investigation. Awaiting the amendment and sharpening of the framework, it would be advisable that NBOs are reluctant to field players that are under investigation or players who were convicted for serious misbehaviour.

We conclude with granting our compliments and a sincere thank you to the players who took this action! We hope and expect that this is an important next step in cleaning up our game.

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Chairman of the Dutch Bridge Federation