

Suffolk Contract Bridge Association and the EBU Funding Proposal

The English Bridge Union is seeking to change the way it is funded from a subscription model to one where players of duplicate bridge at clubs pay according to how much they play.

The Suffolk committee is broadly in favour of the proposal.

Now widely known as Pay-to-Play (P2P), the EBU has engaged in a long and occasionally fraught consultation with members, counties and clubs culminating in a census of clubs as to their intentions and preferences. The EBU recently (20-March-2008) issued a document, *Strategy Proposal for the Future of the EBU and Duplicate Bridge in England* summarising their intentions. Even at that late date there were new developments, but in outline, the situation is now:

- All members of an affiliated bridge club will join the EBU and be treated as current subscription members; receiving the EBU magazine, diary, able to register Master-Points and play in EBU events.
- There will be a single per-session fee (expected to be 29p) irrespective of a club's decision to award Master-Points, which will be free to affiliated clubs.
- Each club will pay an annual affiliation fee of £30 (currently £20.50) to the EBU
- Counties are free to raise their funds in any manner they choose; by an addition to the per-session fee, club or member subscription – or by any combination.

The proposal will be put to a meeting of EBU shareholders – of which Suffolk is one – on 4-June-2008 when a vote will be taken.

The SCBA regards the proposal as an initiative for future bridge development and is fairer to all. Not all county associations are the same size and make-up and consequently the advantages for our association and clubs are differently felt to those presented by the EBU.

We believe the key points are:

- A national body, one that provides opponents, teachers and a common experience in clubs across the land, creates a level playing field that enables the game to exist. This is a considerable unseen benefit to all players and it is just that they should contribute and proper that their views are represented.
- There will be increased connection through all levels of the game: newcomers and experienced players alike, though keen to widen their horizons, are wary of joining another organisation. That they will already be part of a continuous range of players will encourage personal development and enjoyment.
- The implementation is well chosen, making minimal impact on the club player. By effectively raising table money a few pence (approx 20p* in Suffolk clubs), the change will be small and may not even be apparent.

* Assuming a 29p levy to the EBU and 4p to the SCBA. However, where Master-Points are awarded, 13p per player-session was already paid to the EBU, so the resulting 33p represents a net 20p increase.

- The package of EBU benefits; Master-Points for recognition of lifetime achievement, a new national ranking system, free scoring for clubs, *English Bridge* for all etc. will appeal to some more than others. However, it is undeniable they will create a shared experience.

The SCBA still has an open mind on P2P.

It is listening to its members and importantly, to its clubs who represent those players not currently part of the SCBA or EBU. The committee has established a working party to advise on factual matters and questions pertaining to the EBU document and receive recommendations from the involved parties.

P2P will also affect county finances. Currently the SCBA receives funds from member and club subscriptions. We intend to retain club subscriptions (already on a per-club-member basis) and replace member subscriptions with a small increment on the per-session amount.

P2P Working Party

Christopher Chambers

Pauline Hanson

Eric Newman

Jeff Orton

Rick Waters

All of the above are available to consult, receive opinions or represent the association at any club.