

MANCHESTER CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

HIGSON CUP AND PLATE

2025-26

GUIDELINES FOR ARRANGING AND PLAYING MATCHES

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This Set of Guidelines is a simplified version of the complete Conditions of Contest for the Manchester Contract Bridge Associations (MCBA) Higson Cup and Plate.

They set out the main elements of how to arrange and play matches in the MCBA Higson Cup and Plate, and are designed to assist teams and captains

in organising and playing matches, particularly those who are relatively new to playing in competitions.

These Guidelines will suffice in almost all cases, unless difficulties arise in arranging a match or during the match itself, when the complete set of Conditions of Contest will have to be consulted.

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

Scope of the Higson Cup and Plate

The MCBA Higson Cup and Plate is a handicapped local competition.

The Higson Cup will consist of group stages with group winners and runners up qualifying to play finals at a suitable venue (usually a MCBA affiliated club) within the MCBA area.

A random draw for each round will be undertaken by the Higson Cup Secretary, with seeding for 6 teams.

Teams will be informed of their opponents as soon as the draw is made, and also of the end date for completing the matches

Teams heading each group will compete for the Higson Cup, and runners up will play the Higson Plate final.

The Higson Cup and Higson Plate are handicap events, and teams should consult the full Conditions of Contest to determine their handicap for the group matches

The finals of the Higson Cup and Plate will also be handicapped but on this occasion by using the NGS gradings of the players and the EBU handicapping formula (modified with the MCBA coefficient applied)

The Higson Cup and Plate winners will hold the trophy for 1 year.

Entry Fees

The entry fee is included in the fee paid for entry to the MCBA League. Otherwise the entry fee is £20 for a team not participating in the League. A late fee of £10 per month or per part of a month per team will be imposed on any team playing after the deadline of 14th October.

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. Cheques should be made out to MCBA, have the team name on the back and sent to The Treasurer, MCBA, 10 Priest Avenue, Gatley, Cheadle, SK8 4JW.

There is no further entry fee for playing in the Higson Plate.

Teams

A team may have as many players as it wishes. However, teams with more than eight players are encouraged to split into two teams.

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.

Players may only play for one team in the Higson Cup or Plate in any one season.

Arranging Matches

As the finals will be face to face, it is the default that the knockout rounds will be arranged face to face, however the Captains may by mutual agreement arrange matches online where it is convenient to do so.

Whilst being a competitive event, the Higson Cup and Plate is meant to be friendly. It is thus assumed that all matches can be arranged amicably between the team captains.

It is good practice to start arranging the match as soon as the draw comes out. History has repeatedly shown that teams who leave arrangements until near the end of round date have great difficulty arranging the match, and often end up defaulting.

Team captains should check the information provided which indicates the preferred days of the other teams in the same division.

All matches should be arranged by mutual agreement between the captains.

Face to face 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.

When arranging a face to face 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.

The home team is responsible for all costs and should provide light refreshments (usually a hot drink, sandwich and cake or something of that sort).

Playing the Match

Matches are of 24 boards, played in two 12 board stanzas, with compulsory change of opponents after the first stanza.

Face to Face Matches

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.

No animals other than guide dogs may be brought into the playing area.

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.

Players are requested to turn off mobile phones, ipads, ipods etc during matches.

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.

Bidding boxes must be used in all matches (except in the case of disability).

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.

If you are the home captain, introduce team members and offer tea and coffee at the start of match.

The home team distributes score cards.

You are entitled to look at the opponents' system card at any time.

The opposition are obliged to fully inform you about their bids, so if you don't understand anything – ask!

Deal the boards at your table and play them. Do not re-deal any board which is passed out. Passed-out boards are a part of the game, and anyway someone in the other room may choose to open.

When these boards are finished, exchange them with the other table and play those boards.

Check that your version of the scores matches the opponents' version before scoring with team mates.

When play in the first stanza is completed, combine your scores with your team-mates, convert the net difference to IMPs and add up the IMPs. [At this stage, the IMP score might be 30-24, or +6 IMPs net to your side].

After light refreshments, share the next set of boards between the 2 tables and take your seats.

Deal the boards at your table, play them, exchange the boards with the other table, play those boards, and check your scores.

Return to your team-mates, combine your scores, convert the net difference to IMPS and calculate the total IMPS over the whole match adding any handicap to the lower ranked team's score. [The score might typically be 70-46, or +24 IMPS net to your side].

If the match, after taking into account the handicap, is drawn, the lower rated team is deemed to have won, or if the teams are of equal status then further sets of 4 boards are played until a result is achieved.

Thank the hosts for their hospitality. Leave before having any protracted post-mortems because your hosts may need to be up early next morning!

Online Matches

1. In the Higson Cup, matches will be 24 boards
2. 24 board matches are played in two 12 board stanzas, with compulsory change of opponents after the first stanza. 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.

For matches on BBO captains should set them up with +private+ and +slow+ in the description field. This will prevent other players trying to enter your match and will stop a match timing out if it is played very slowly. The addition of +noinvite+ in the description field will enable the captain to omit a player from either team and start the match with seven or fewer players. The missing player can then be introduced by the following method. Click on the match in your Director tab and choose Show Tables from the options. Where there is a missing player the word Invite will appear in their seat. Click on Invite and type in the missing player's name. They will get an invitation to SUBSTITUTE in the match. As soon as they accept you can start playing. All the instructions must use lower case and have a

+ both before and after. e.g. +NOINVITE+ will NOT work.

Scoring and Reporting Results

Scoring will be by IMPs, after taking into account the handicap.

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

Substitutes

Substitutes are not allowed under any circumstances. However, new players may be registered to a team at any time, including just before either final. New players must conform to the criteria listed in teams above.

Masterpoints

EBU regulations do not allow masterpoints to be awarded for handicap events, so no masterpoints will be awarded for this event.

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