QBA SYSTEM REGULATIONS

(Effective 1st January 2007)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

Systems are classified according to the characteristics of their opening and overcalling structures, and will be identified by colour coding. In determining the classification of a system, the green, blue, red and yellow criteria are to be applied in that sequence until the appropriate classification is determined. All entrants in QBA Events and Congresses must display at all times on their partnership's system cards a coloured dot indicating the classification of the system being played. In addition to these primary colour classifications, certain individual conventional calls and treatments are defined as, and require an additional, Brown Sticker.

1.2 Definitions

Average Hand	A hand containing 10 HCP with no distributional values
Weak	High card strength below that of an average hand
Strong	High card strength a king or greater than that of an average hand (i.e. 13+ HCP)
Natural	A call or play that is not artificial or conventional
Length	Three cards or more
Shortage	Two cards or fewer
Artificial	An artificial bid is one which carries information concerning a denomination other than the one named or a bid concerned with values or controls without necessarily a preparedness to play in the named denomination
Distributional Values	A hand with distributional values contains one or more shortages
Balanced	For the purpose of classifying NT openings, balanced shall mean a hand with no more than one (1) shortage and that shortage shall be not less than two (2) cards in length.
Published	***A system will be considered as published if it has been recorded in an accessible form and made available in that form to officials of the QBA and all registered players in a QBA event or congress.***

2. CLASSIFICATION OF SYSTEMS

2.1 Green (Natural) Systems

a) All one-level opening bids are natural (non-artificial) bids

b) An opening bid of one of a suit guarantees length (3+cards) in the denomination named (Exception: a 4-4-3-2 shaped hand may be opened 1♣)

c) 1NT should be balanced
(Note: this does not preclude individual assessment of some hands, e.g. a hand with a singleton honour or a weak longer suit. The subsequent bidding methods however, should not be able to identify such hand types)

d) All one-level opening bids, must by agreement, promise at least 8 HCP.

2.2 Blue (Strong Club/Strong Diamond) Systems

This category includes systems that satisfy all of the following criteria:

a) One club/one diamond is artificial, forcing and always strong

b) One of a major is natural

c) 1NT is non-conventional

d) The one-level opening in the other minor may be artificial with various possibilities not covered by the other opening bids

e) All one-level opening bids, must by agreement, promise at least 8 HCP.

2.3 Red (Artificial) Systems

This category includes:

a) All systems employing artificial one-level openings that do not fall under the definition of Yellow (HUM) systems [see below], other than Strong Club/Strong Diamond (Blue) systems.

b) Any system in which the basic structure (other than the length of natural suit bids or the point range of openings) varies according to position and/or vulnerability.

2.4 Yellow (HUM) Systems (See also Section B Page 3)

For the purpose of these Regulations, a Highly Unusual Method (HUM) means any System that has, as a matter of partnership agreement, one or more of the following features:

a) A Pass in the opening position that shows at least the values generally accepted for an opening bid of one, even if there are alternative weak possibilities.

b) An opening bid at the one level that may be made on high card strength a king or more below that of an average hand (i.e., 0-7 HCP and insufficient compensating distributional values).

c) An opening bid of one of a major with alternative possible meanings that the hand may be long or short in a specified suit.

d) An opening bid of one of a major with alternative possibilities that show length in one specified suit or length in another specified suit.

2.5 Brown Sticker Conventions and Treatments

Certain types of conventional calls or treatments are considered to place demands upon the opponents' defensive preparations. The conventions/ treatments in question are categorized as 'Brown Sticker' (BS).

Any one of the following characteristics qualifies a convention/ treatment as BS if it is a matter of partnership agreement:

a) Any opening bid of two clubs through three spades that: could be weak and does not promise at least four cards in a known suit.

Exceptions:

(i) Where all the weak meanings guarantee at least four cards in one known suit and only the strong options do not.

(ii) A two level opening bid in a minor may show a weak hand with 5+ cards in either major only, or as an option among any number of strong hand types.

b) An overcall of a natural opening bid of one of a suit that does not promise at least four cards in a known suit.

Exceptions:
(i) A natural overcall in no trumps.
(ii) Any cue bid that shows a strong hand.
(iii) A cue bid in an opponent's known suit that asks partner to bid 3NT with a stopper in that suit.

c) Any weak two-suited bid (whether it be an overcall, an opening bid or a response) at the two or three level that may by agreement be made with three cards or fewer in one of the suits.

d) After a side has opened the auction at the 2 level or higher with a natural or conventional bid that may, by agreement, have a weak or partially weak component of fewer than 5 HCP then, should the agreed range be across more than 5 HCP, any subsequent conventional calls used by that side shall be classified as Brown Sticker. Examples of "across 5 HCP" are 0-4, 4-8.
NB 2.5 d) does not apply in the ABF events.

Notes:

I. None of the foregoing restrictions (a-c) pertain to conventional defences against strong, forcing artificial opening bids or defences against 'Brown Sticker' or HUM conventions. Conventional defences to 1NT are also unrestricted.

II. Additional to the classification of system, any partnership using one or more 'Brown Sticker' conventions must individually list them on their system cards and/or supplementary sheets.

2.6 Random Actions

It is forbidden to open or to overcall hands, which by agreement, may contain fewer than 8 high card points and for which no further definition is provided (i.e., bids that promise nothing more than 13 cards in a player's hand). Pairs employing HUM methods may however open hands at the one-level that conform to Section 2.4(b) criteria.

2.7 Encrypted Signals

Additional to the restrictions on bidding methods and conventions above, players may not use signalling methods by which the message or messages conveyed by the signals are hidden from the declarer because of some key available only to the defenders (i.e. encrypted signals are not allowed)

2.8 Players' Obligations

The onus lies with all players to classify their own systems appropriately according to these Regulations. If players are in any doubt about the appropriate classification of their system, they may submit their system card and any supplementary sheets to the Director of the event for formal classification. Any such submission should occur at least two weeks prior to the event or by the due date specified in the Entry Conditions.

2.9 "Protected Pairs"

A "Protected Pair" is a pair where both players are below the status of National Master, or one player is below the status of Local Master, and which chooses to play a Green System without the use of any Brown Sticker conventions throughout an event or stage of an event. To claim "Protected Pair" status, the pair must display on the front of their Systems Card a green sticker (which designates they are playing a Green System), together with an orange sticker (which designates their claim for protection against Yellow Systems and Brown Sticker conventions/treatments). Such pairs must confirm with the Tournament Director prior to the

start of the event or session that their system is Green and Non-BS, after which the Director will supply the relevant stickers.

In events or sessions where the Regulations allow pairs to claim "Protected Pair" status, such a pair will be required to inform their opponents before the start of each round of their "Protected" status. The opposing pair must then not employ their Yellow methods nor any Brown Sticker convention or treatment during the round in question.

3. ADEQUATE DISCLOSURE, SYSTEM CARDS AND SUMMARIES

3.1 Adequate Disclosure

Players must disclose fully the meaning of their conventional agreements, particularly conventions and treatments that may require extensive or unusual defensive preparation by opposing pairs. In addition to the appropriate system card, pairs shall use supplementary sheets, where necessary, to achieve this objective.

To satisfy the principle of adequate disclosure, the onus is on each pair to prepare for the information of opponents an accurate and reasonably comprehensive system card. Supplementary sheets as specified below, if appropriate, shall be available on request.

3.2 Prior Submission of System Cards and Supplementary Sheets

For each QBA Event or Congress, the Entry Conditions may specify the date and/or time by which the Chairman QBA Tournament Committee or Director, as the case may be, must receive copies of any system cards and supplementary sheets, as well as the form and/or number of copies required. Failure to meet the specified deadline date may result in prohibition of some or all of the relevant methods for part of or the entire event.

In general, advance notice of systems will be required from entrants wishing to use a Yellow system (when permitted).

The Chairman QBA Tournament Committee or Director shall be responsible for ensuring that all players (if they choose) are given prior access to systems information submitted in advance, in order to satisfy the principle of adequate disclosure.

3.3 System Cards

System cards shall be prepared legibly in a form approved by the QBA, properly identified with the names of the pair and a coloured sticker showing the category of the system as defined by these Regulations. The Tournament Director shall be responsible for providing pairs with an appropriately coloured sticker to attach to their system card prior to the commencement of the first session of any event.

For all QBA Events and Congresses, each pair must have two systemically identical ABF system cards on the table for the opposing pair before the start of play.

After withdrawing the cards from a board and until they are restored to the board at the conclusion of its play, a player's own system may not be consulted (except when specifically permitted under these Regulations, as in the use of "defence" notes).

3.4 Supplementary Sheets

The use of supplementary sheets is appropriate whenever methods that may require defensive preparation (i.e., HUM or Brown Sticker) are employed. Any opening or overcalling structure that causes a system to be so classified should be itemised; together with a summary of the possible options available to the responder and/or advancer.

Supplementary sheets shall be typed or written legibly in black ink on one side of an A4 sheet. For the current structure of QBA Events and Congresses, the maximum number of

supplementary sheets allowed shall be determined by the QBA Tournament Committee and published in the Entry Conditions and/or Supplementary Regulations.

3.5 Prior Submission of Detailed Yellow System Notes

Pairs intending to play Yellow Systems may be required to lodge in advance an electronic copy of their detailed system notes with the Chairman QBA Tournament Committee or Director, together with copies of their ABF Standard System Card and supplementary sheets.

These notes will be available for prior consultation by opposing pairs and for possible use at the table by opponents if they so choose. Yellow System pairs are also required to prepare and submit a suggested defence to the HUM aspects of their system.

3.6 More Comprehensive Descriptions of Systems

In the interests of full disclosure and for a pair's own benefit in case of disputes, any pair may submit one copy of a more comprehensive description of their system to the Tournament Director before the first session of any event. In decisions taken by Tournament Directors and by the Appeals Committee, pairs who have submitted their full system will be given the benefit of any support this provides for an explanation given at the table.

3.7 Playing the Same System

Both members of a partnership must play the same system, including bidding and card play agreements. Where, as a matter of style, members frequently adopt different approaches from each other, that difference (or those differences) must be disclosed on the system card.

4. SYSTEM CLASSIFICATIONS FOR QBA EVENTS AND CONGRESSES

4.1 In accordance with the above classifications, the QBA Tournament Committee shall determine the systems that may be played in any QBA Event in sufficient time for the relevant decisions to be published in the Entry Booklet or on Entry Forms for the event/s, and/or in Supplementary Regulations.

4.2 System restrictions may vary from one stage of a QBA event to another. They may also be different within a single stage as when determined by either round number or current field position (eg no Yellow systems in the early rounds of a Swiss, nor in the bottom part of a ranked field).

4.3 In its discretion, the QBA Tournament Committee may also allow or prohibit certain Brown Sticker conventions to be used in particular QBA Events, notwithstanding any of the above. These allowances do not affect the classifications of the systems themselves.

4.4 All such allowances will be construed strictly and shall be deemed not to extend to any further variations of the said convention, unless otherwise determined by the QBA Tournament Committee.

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7. DEFENCES AGAINST BROWN STICKER CONVENTIONS

7.1 Pairs may prepare written defences against those system elements that are categorised as Brown Sticker (not exceeding one A4 sheet), but no written defence against the defence will be permitted.

7.2 Such defences must be approved in writing by the Tournament Director and are to be given to the opponents (2 copies) at the table prior to the start of play.

7.3 Both pairs at the table may use them during the auction period and - for the purpose only of responding to a question - during the play period.

8. DEFENCES AGAINST YELLOW SYSTEMS

8.1 Notes detailing a defence against a Yellow system (not exceeding one A4 sheet), and any defence against the defence (also not exceeding one A4 sheet), may be used at the table during the auction period; and - for the purpose only of responding to a question - during the play period.

8.2 When opposing a team/pair that is playing a Yellow system, opponents wishing to use notes on their defence at the table must submit two (2) copies of that defence to the opponents at an appropriate time and place prior to the scheduled start of play, to be specified in the Supplementary Regulations. Such defences are deemed to be part of the opponents' convention card. In preparing a defence against a Yellow system, a pair using a Green, Blue or Red system may change their system, including opening calls.

8.3 Yellow systems that are to be played only as a defence against other Yellow systems may only be used if submitted in accordance with section 3.5 above.

8.4 Any defence against a defence (two copies, hand written) must be submitted to opponents at the start of play. In preparing their counter-defence, the pair using a Yellow system is not permitted to change any of the highly artificial aspects of its system.

9. VIOLATION OF SYSTEM AND PSYCHIC MANOEUVRES (See also Section B Page 5)

9.1 A player may violate his side's announced understanding always provided that his partner has no more reason to anticipate the violation than have the opponents.

9.2 A partnership understanding exists when the frequency of occurrence is sufficient for the partner of the player who makes the call to take his awareness of psychic possibilities into account, whether he actually elects to do so or not.

9.3 Understandings whereby from time to time there may be gross violations of the normal meanings of calls, and where the nature or type of violation might be anticipated, must be disclosed. These understandings may be explicitly agreed or they may have developed from partnership experience or mutually shared knowledge not available to opponents.

9.4 Agreements that so-called psychic calls are to be expected, or the provision of systemic protection for them, are classified as HUM (Yellow). A call, which is based on a partnership understanding, cannot properly be called 'psychic' and such methods are only permissible when the advance notice provisions of sections 3.2 and 3.5 have been fulfilled.

9.5 If the Director judges there is undisclosed knowledge affecting the result of a board he shall adjust the score and may award a procedural penalty.

9.6 The psyching of a conventional bid, which is unequivocally forcing and systematically indicative of the strongest possible opening hand (e.g., a Game Forcing 2♣ or a Precision 1♣) is strictly forbidden.

10. CHANGE OF SYSTEMS

No pair may play two different Yellow Systems during the course of an event without the express permission of the Chief Tournament Director, unless specifically provided for in the Supplementary Regulations. Similarly, a maximum of only three Yellow systems per team will be permitted during the course of any one event.

11. ONUS ON ENTRANTS

Entrants in a QBA Event or Congress shall make themselves aware of the QBA System Regulations and their application, as specified in the Entry Conditions and Supplementary Regulations pertaining to that event.

12. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH SYSTEM REGULATIONS

12.1 When it is brought to the Director's attention that a pair have transgressed the system regulations, whether in the system played or convention(s) used, the Director should consider whether the opponents have been damaged; and, if so, award an adjusted score(s).

12.2 In addition the Director should consider the assessment of a disciplinary penalty, taking into account:

a) The standard of the offending pair.
b) The standard of the field, especially those pairs that may have been affected.