



## Palmerston North Bridge Club

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NZ Bridge  
Attn: Board Members  
Via email: [secretary@nzbridge.co.nz](mailto:secretary@nzbridge.co.nz)

### **NZ Bridge International Selection Method – Review 2018: 19 December 2018**

PNBC wishes to comment on several matters contained in the above paper.

As to the Selection method itself, we note the excellent results that have been achieved in recent times by the Open team, and suggest tinkering at best with the selection structure.

Under 4.1.9 it mentions a selection structure that varies by year. We think consistency with a single selection method is best.

Under 4.1.8 (a) it mentions the use of Modified Datums in calculating player performance. While we agree in principle with the concept of incorporating the strength of opposition into the calculation, the formula for Modified Datums<sup>1</sup> has not been subject to testing for “best fit” as far as we can determine. In particular, the 0.5 appears to be a “guesstimate”. It could be, say, 0.1 or 0.8. We suggest such formula optimisation could easily occur by back-testing on the large number of boards that have been played by teams at international level over many years. Until such optimisation has occurred (indeed, a different formulaic expression may be better) it may be best to just use raw datums.

#### **Level of Funding.**

PNBC believes the current level of funding of \$400k across 4 years for country representation is appropriate and reasonable for an organisation the size of NZ Bridge. We find it concerning that with such a level NZB is only partially subsidising player costs for such events (see 3.1). We believe this is because NZB is spreading itself too thin over too many events, leading to inadequate player support over all events.

#### **Which international events.**

Under 3.2 it states “New Zealand is typically required to select between 12 and 16 international teams during the 4 year cycle.” PNBC does not agree with this statement. NZB is not “required” to do anything, it chooses which events it participates in. We note that NZB currently provides subsidies for the Open team, and the Women’s team. One casualty of such a spread of events is international youth events, which are generally not supported (refer 2.6). We consider this a travesty. Youth should be strongly supported and provided they meet a suitable selection standard NZB should be encouraging the participation in such events.

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<sup>1</sup> “the modified datum (MD) for pair X is the total raw datum score for all matches played by pair x + 0.5 \* (the sum of [the average datum per match for each of the opponents of Pair x]). The MD can be optionally normalized by dividing it by the actual number of boards played by X.”

One set of events, which is participated and funding provided for every year is Women's events. PNBC does not condone gender bias in any direction and fails to understand how participating in such events aids the perception of bridge as a gender neutral sport in which females compete on equal terms with males. PNBC appreciates the Women's events are held by international organisations and NZB is merely participating, but by so participating it is condoning and approving of gender bias. NZ has a strong and rich history of not condoning such bias. The Board in our view is dropping the ball on this matter. The savings in not funding such Women's events could immediately be applied to better and more appropriate funding for the Open team and for Youth teams.

We note also that the player funding per event is likely to decrease as NZB is increasing the number of participatory events with the inclusion of a Mixed gender team in some years. We believe this focus on gender is misplaced and should not be encouraged.

We note the letter circulated re international events invited submissions from only certain individuals with past, or current international experience or with future international aspirations. We trust this was meant to encourage submissions from such types and was not intended to prohibit submissions from others.

Regards

Graeme Thomson  
President  
PNBC