



WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION

International Sport Federation (IF) recognized by the International Olympic Committee

WBF IT Committee Project

Object: International Player Database for the WBF and NBO Tournament Directors

1. Preliminary, file format

The list of player names on the Bridgemates II was transformed from an internal table of the BWS file (Access 97 standard) to an external MDB file (Access 2000 standard), named “BMPlayerDB.mdb”

The file format and content have been defined by Bridgemate, but they are a “de facto” standard for other wireless scoring devices, such as the Jannersten’s Bridge Scorer and Bridge Tabs, or other systems based on tablets or cell phones that many software producers are developing and placing in the bridge market.

The former approach (internal BWS) was not satisfactory because each club (or other Bridgemate users) created an independent database of numbers and names, and the same players are coded with different numbers in different contexts (other clubs); furthermore, the scoring programs loads the full set of names in each BWS file, making them potentially huge and resource-consuming. The current approach (external MDB file) is a solution to these problems, because it allows for copies of the same database with an unlimited number of records to be distributed to many users. This has been demonstrated by other organizations, for example, the Italian Federation (FIGB).

The limitation of using the external MDB file is that the Bridgemate can only manage numeric codes in the range from 1 to approximately 2 billion, which means that codes such as the FIGB ones (an example is BLN041) cannot be used directly; the solution was to create a unique number for each registered past or current code, and to make sure that they will continue to be created for the new members in a consistent way.

Quite likely the new number will become the prevailing code and will be the only one to be bar-coded on the membership cards in the near future.

A second limitation is the length of the names (18 characters), which is dictated by the limited space on the devices where the names will be written; this fact suggests a proposal that will be formulated later.

2. The WBF database



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The external MDB files for the Bridgemates is the solution for a recurrent problem in international events – how to deal with players codes and names in such a way as to minimize or fully eliminate misspelling, duplications, etc. (Just to give an example, during an EBL Open it was discovered that Lorenzo Lauria had 4 different codes, two of them labeling him as a new player.)

The solution can only come from a centralized management of player names and associated data, which is what the WBF is planning to do by generating a single database storing the essential data from all the NBOs, necessarily subject to some constraint.

The collected data will be used (after fully testing) during the Sanya 2014 World Bridge Series. At the end of this year procedures will be made available for the NBOs for two purposes: (a) the updates of their local data into the International player database and (b) the downloading/updating of the MDB files for the NBOs recognized Tournament Directors.

It will then be possible for foreign players who occasionally or systematically play in another NBO to register with the Bridgemate any equivalent system when they attend a tournament using their national codes (the same ones that they use in their own country) and just prefixing the WBF international code.

The data required by the WBF is slightly more general than the basic Bridgemate player database, because they are other possible needs such as year of birth to determine eligibility into junior and senior events.

- **NUMERIC CODE** limited to 7 digits
- **FULL NAME**, limited to 32 characters
- **SHORT NAME**, limited to 18 characters
- **PLAY LEVEL**, from 0 to 3
- **GENDER**, either M or F
- **BIRTHDATE** in yyyyymmdd notation

It will be noticed that there is no membership date or equivalent: indeed, the NBOs should communicate data *both for current members and for past ones* (down to a reasonable number of years) that they still have in their databases, subject to unique numerical codes.

In the first implementation, only the code and name (shortened name up to 18 characters) will be transferred to the localized MDBs that will be downloaded by the TDs; after the first year quite likely more data will be added to give the scoring programmer the possibility to plan for extended services.

3. Remarks on the data

CODE – it must be numeric and limited to max 7 digits, because it must leave room for the international prefix; the NBOs using codes that are not purely numeric are invited to do what the FIGB did, i.e. create an equivalent unique number for each past or current member.

NAMES (both full and short) – only standard Latin characters (A-Z or a-z), plus space, underscore or (single) apostrophe (like in Lagana’); please avoid national characters (same example, Laganà).

SHORT NAMES – it is planned to have a uniform format respecting the BM constraints; we do not expect the NBO to perform the additional work of going name by name to decide abbreviations, but we need to “cut” long names just the same. We will try to do it as “intelligently” as possible, but the NBO will be able to edit the data later, using adequate interactive tools that we will make available on the dedicated WBF sub-site.

BIRTHDATE – a “neutral” string format (8 characters) is required (e.g. 20140515 for May 15, 2014) to avoid local interpretations; again, we are not asking the NBOs to do this, just to communicate the dates in any format – at least for the first time.

PLAY LEVEL – a very simple set is proposed: 0 = local (club) player, 1 = competitor in national events, 2 = national master, 3 = international master – this can help a local Director who is looking for a correct partner for an occasional foreign player.

4. Time limits and file formats

The NBOs are invited to proceed as soon as possible to send the required data to the WBF office, in the address webmaster@worldbridgefed.com.

Acceptable formats: Excel, Access, Text file with fixed length record, Text file with tabs as separators. If you need any help, please contact the WBF webmaster.

Procedure:

Request data from NBOs (or zones). The minimum data is numerical code, name, gender, year of birth. In addition some reference to a player’s playing level, e.g., masterpoints in zone 2 (ACBL). If possible, full date of birth. If possible any short name on file. See 3. Remarks on the data.

Establishing the new data file with as many names as received.

A process for regular updates (say, semiannual). To be disseminated later.

Process for NBO TDs using the new International Player Database.

Periodic updates and review.