

Format and Regulations for Senior Trials 2026

Dates for trials

- a. Senior trials 19 – 24 July
Closing date for entries 14 June 2026.
- b. SABF reserves the right to extend the closing date.

The length of trials is dependent on the number of entries received but players must be available for the full duration indicated above. SABF may start or end the trials any time within the indicated framework.

Eligibility for trials

1. Fully paid-up members of the SABF who are in good standing with The Federation.
2. SABF reserves the right to refuse any entry to the trials.
3. Trials are open to all South African citizens and residents who satisfy the WBF residency criteria. However, the SABF reserves the right to refuse any entry if they feel the entrants are not of a sufficient standard to play in this event.
4. The SABF reserves the right to allow, or invite, additional pairs to enter trials after entries have closed if there is a valid reason to do so.
5. Age: Must turn 65 or more in 2026.
6. The Entry Fee for the World Bridge Games will be paid in full by the SABF. There will be no subsidies for participants, but the SABF will strongly support fund-raising efforts by players in our national teams.
7. All players who enter trials are expected to make themselves available for the African Zonal championships in 2026 and the World Bridge games in 2027 if they qualify.

Format of the trials

Trials will be played Face-to-Face at a venue determined by where the majority of entrants are residing.

- a. Screens will be in use. Players are required to alert their own bids and their partner's conventional bids. All bids, including those above 3NT must be alerted. All explanations must be written. Verbal explanations will not be accepted if there is a dispute.

- b. Cell phones and smartwatches must be switched off completely and must be visible at the play tables. Contravention of cell phone rules will attract penalties without warnings. 1st offence 1VP, 2nd offence 3VPs, 3rd offence will result in the immediate disqualification of the pair. If a player's cellphone is on and their partner's cellphone is also on, this will result in immediate disqualification from the event. Penalties are cumulative over the qualifying rounds and the final.

The exact format for trials is highly dependent on the number of entries received.

- a. Pairs trials will be held provided at least 8 pairs enter in each section
- b. If more than 8 pairs have entered:
 - i. For up to 10 pairs entered there will be no qualifying round.
 - ii. 11+ pairs there will be an initial qualifying round to bring the number of pairs for the final down to 8 pairs.
 - iii. Seating and draws will be random.
 - iv. Ties will be resolved according to WBF rules.
- c. If fewer than 8 pairs have entered
 - i. If 4- 7 pairs enter, pairs will be asked to form teams of 2-3 pairs and a team's trial will be held. If a pair cannot form a team, they will automatically be excluded.
 - ii. If 3 or fewer pairs enter – SABF reserves the right to not send a team in that category.
 - iii. If the entry requires a team's format
 - 1. If 3 teams are formed, there will be an initial 3 way match eliminate 1 team. Following which the remaining 2 teams will play a straight knockout.
 - 2. If 2 teams are formed
 - a. A straight knockout will be played.
 - b. 96 boards over 2 days 6X16 board segments 2 hours 15 minutes for each segment (8.5min per board)
 - c. If there is a tie at the end of play, a further 4 boards will be played until a result is obtained.

- d. For a team's Final
 - i. Seating rights, a toss of coin will determine who may choose seating rights for rounds 1,3 or 5 or 2,4,6. Away teams must put in their line-ups at least 15 minutes before the start of the round. The home team must put in their line-ups 10 minutes before start of the next round. Late posting of line-ups will be penalised with 1 warning for first offence, 3 imps for first offence, 6 imps for 2nd offence and 10 imps for third offence.
 - e. If a team of 4 wins the knockout, they must choose a 3rd pair from the losing team(s).
 - f. Players must play a minimum of 33% of the boards in each segment to qualify to represent South Africa.

c. Withdrawal of Qualified Pairs

In the event that an individual or a pair withdraws from any of the SA Teams for any reason at any time prior to the World Bridge Games or Zonals, the pair that came 4th will be invited to join the team. If 2 pairs withdraw, the pair that came 5th will be invited to join the team. No team will be sent if none of the top 3 qualifiers are able to play or if all three withdraw prior to the event for any reason.

- d. Entry fees – R2400 per pair. Please pay to the account below.

Name of account: SABF

Nedbank current account number 1777000327

Reference: Pair Name (person responsible for the entry), SABF number, trials 2026

e. Captains

If a non-playing captain is nominated by the team, this must be approved by the SABF. No husband/wife/" significant other" of any

player in a team may be nominated as captain of the team. The playing or non-playing captain of each team will be responsible for:

- i) Organising practice sessions before the event
 - ii) Organising a review of the opponents' convention cards and taking relevant copies to the event, distributing when needed
 - iii) Ensuring that the teams convention cards are submitted for the relevant events in accordance with WBF policy
 - iv) Having the final say in determining the line ups for the events themselves (the team may have input, but the captain's word should be final)
 - v) Ensuring all admin tasks are dealt with timeously during the event (captain's meetings, line ups etc)
 - vi) Reporting back to the SABF subsequent to the event
- f. Members of a representative team are awarded SA colours if SA citizens or Federation colours if residents.
- g. Rules for trials. WBF rules for duplicate bridge (2017) and the Supplementary regulations (2025), as posted on the SABF website, will apply. Entrants are expected to familiarise themselves with the above rules.
- h. Convention cards: Partnerships are expected to have completed convention cards which must be submitted to B. Donde (bdonde101@gmail.com) by 21 June. Only WBF convention cards in word or PDF format will be accepted. HUM (highly unusual methods as defined by the WBF) will only be permitted if there is a final following the qualifying rounds. Each pair must have 2 identical WBF convention cards available at each match for their opponents to peruse.

The SABF reserves the right to change any of the above rules for cause.