

TARTU ÄRTU

2026

Tournament Regulations

Estonian U26 Bridge Championships

Dates:	8–10 May 2026
Venue:	Raadimõisa Hotel, Tartu, Estonia
Organizer:	Riko Piirisild
Head Tournament Director:	Rao Zvorovski

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1. Organizer and Venue

1.1 Organizer

The Tartu Ärtu 2026 tournament is organized by **ThinkKing**. The main organizer is **Riko Piirisild**, reachable by:

- Email: riko.piirisild@gmail.com
- Phone: +372 5817 7077
- Social media

1.2 Venue

The tournament is held at **Raadimõisa Hotel**, Mõisavärava tn 1, Raadi, 60534 Tartu County, Estonia.

2. General Provisions

1. This tournament shall be governed by the **Laws of Duplicate Bridge 2017** and these Tournament Regulations.
2. These Regulations supplement the Laws. Where these Regulations are silent, the Laws apply. Where these Regulations conflict with the Laws, these Regulations prevail.
3. The tournament also serves as the Estonian U26 Bridge Championships in the Pairs and Teams events.
4. The tournament is directed by a team of Tournament Directors, headed by **Rao Zvorovski** as Head Tournament Director. Tournament Directors are responsible for enforcing the Laws and these Regulations. The Head TD shall hear all appeals, and his decisions shall be final and binding. The Head TD shall resolve and decide on all questions of regulations not specifically covered herein.
5. The Head TD may amend or supplement these Regulations at any time if circumstances warrant. Such amendments will be announced to all participants before they take effect.
6. By entering the tournament, all participants agree to abide by these Regulations and any amendments thereto, and to accept the decisions of the Tournament Directors.

3. Eligibility and Categories

3.1 Age Requirement

All players must have been born on or after 1 January 2001 (under 26 years of age).

3.2 Categories

Three age categories apply to both Pairs and Teams events:

- U26 — born 2001 or later
- U21 — born 2006 or later
- U16 — born 2011 or later

A pair or team is eligible for every category for which *all* its members qualify. For example, an all-U16 pair competes simultaneously in U16, U21, and U26.

3.3 Team Composition

Each team consists of exactly four players. There are no substitutes in this format.

4. Registration and Participation Fee

4.1 Registration

Registration is open to all eligible players at thinking.ee/Tartu2026, which also contains all important tournament information. Registration closes no later than **one week before the start of the tournament**.

4.2 Participation Fee

The participation fee is **€170 per person**, which includes two nights' accommodation, all meals during the event, and entry to all tournaments.

Participants who wish to arrive a day early or depart a day late may do so for an additional **€40 per extra night**, which includes accommodation and breakfast. Both options may be combined.

5. Tournament Format and Schedule

5.1 Pairs Championship (Friday, 8 May)

The Pairs Championship consists of five sessions of 12 boards each, scored by matchpoints.

Time	Activity
10:00 – 10:40	Check-in and registration
10:40 – 10:50	Opening ceremony
10:50 – 14:00	Pairs sessions 1 and 2 (12 boards each)
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch
15:00 – 19:50	Pairs sessions 3, 4, and 5 (12 boards each)
19:50 – 20:50	Dinner
20:50 –	<i>Free time and social activities</i>
21:30 – 01:30	<i>Optional (18+): Goulash teams tournament</i>

Highlighted rows indicate social programme events.

5.2 Teams Championship — Qualification (Saturday, 9 May)

The Teams qualification consists of eight rounds of 8 boards each, played as a Swiss. Scoring is by IMPs converted to Victory Points on the WBF 20 VP continuous scale.

Time	Activity
08:00 – 09:00	Breakfast
09:00 – 13:15	Rounds 1–4 (8 boards each)
13:15 – 14:15	Lunch
14:15 – 18:30	Rounds 5–8 (8 boards each)
18:30 – 19:30	Dinner
19:30 – 20:15	<i>Kahoot: “Are you smarter than an Estonian world champion?”</i>
20:15 –	<i>Free time and optional activities</i>

5.3 Teams Championship — Finals (Sunday, 10 May)

The top teams from the Swiss advance to Round Robin finals. The Final A group consists of four teams playing three rounds of 12 boards each. The remaining teams will be divided into further groups of

approximately four, depending on the total number of entries. The number of rounds and boards per round may vary between groups depending on group size. Scoring is by IMPs converted to Victory Points on the WBF 20 VP continuous scale.

Time	Activity
08:00 – 09:00	Breakfast
09:00 – 12:05	Rounds 1 and 2 (12 boards each)
12:05 – 13:05	Lunch / Hotel checkout
13:05 – 14:35	Round 3 (12 boards)
14:45 – 15:00	Prize ceremony

5.4 Time Allowance

The time allowed per board is approximately 8 minutes for pairs rounds and 8-board team matches, and approximately 7.5 minutes for 12-board team matches. For team matches the total playing time is:

- 8-board match: 64 minutes
- 12-board match: 90 minutes

The period of play commences at the scheduled start time and includes the time needed for system explanation and scoring.

6. Scoring

6.1 Pairs Championship

The Pairs Championship is scored by matchpoints. Results from all five sessions are combined into a single overall ranking.

6.2 Teams Qualification (Swiss)

Each match is scored by International Match Points (IMPs). The IMP difference is converted to Victory Points using the WBF continuous VP scale for 20 VPs. Rankings are determined by total VPs accumulated across all eight rounds.

6.3 Teams Finals (Round Robin)

Each match is scored by IMPs converted to VPs using the WBF continuous VP scale for 20 VPs. Final rankings are determined by total VPs within each group.

6.4 Forfeits

Scores for forfeited matches shall be calculated in accordance with the EBL General Conditions of Contest.

7. Equipment and Procedures

7.1 Bidding Boxes

Bidding boxes are mandatory. Screens and tablets are not in use.

The following procedures apply (per EBL Bidding Box Regulations):

1. Starting with the dealer, calls must be removed from the bidding box and placed on the table directly in front of the player making the call.

2. All calls must be visible and neatly overlap in a straight line from left to right, at an equal distance from each previous call.
3. Players should refrain from touching any bidding cards until they have determined their call. A call is considered made when it is removed from the bidding box with apparent intent.¹
4. The Alert Card must be used when partner makes an alertable call. It is the responsibility of the alerting player to ensure that the opponents have seen the alert.
5. Before making a skip bid, a player must place the Stop Card on the table in left-hand opponent's clear view, then make the call, and remove the Stop Card after approximately 10 seconds. Left-hand opponent must not call until the Stop Card has been removed. If the Stop Card has been removed hastily or has not been used, an opponent should pause as though the Stop Card has been used correctly.
6. A review of the auction may be obtained by inspecting the bidding cards on the table. Once the bidding cards are returned to the bidding box, a player may obtain a review of the auction at their turn to play to trick one.
7. Violations of correct bidding box procedure are subject to penalty.

7.2 Bridgemates

Bridgemates are the official score-recording devices.

1. The pair sitting North/South is responsible for entering the score into the Bridgemate at each table.
2. Scores must be entered promptly once the outcome of the board is agreed. Failure to enter the score before leaving the table is subject to penalty.
3. The East/West pair (or a designated person) must verify and accept the entered score. The official score is the score entered by North/South and confirmed by East/West.
4. Players are responsible for the accuracy of their own scores. Errors in Bridgemate entry should be reported to the TD as soon as they are discovered.
5. In the case where a TD ruling is pending, players should enter the table result and notify the TD.

7.3 Play of the Cards

During play, each card should be played towards partner in a consistent manner and placed on the table in the same position each time so that it can be seen by all players.

Quitted tricks should be placed consistently in a neat row in front of the player, evenly overlapping with tricks won pointing towards partner and tricks lost pointing towards the opponents.

Face-up opening leads are not permitted.²

8. Systems and Convention Cards

8.1 Systems Policy

There are no restrictions on bidding systems at this tournament. All methods, including Highly Unusual Methods (HUM) and Brown Sticker conventions, are permitted.

However, psyching artificial opening bids is prohibited.³ Psyching other calls, including overcalls and responses, is permitted.

¹Law 25.

²Law 41A/45A.

³Law 40B2a(v).

Pairs may not use pre-arranged agreements to vary their understandings during the auction or play following an irregularity committed by the opponents.⁴

8.2 Convention Cards

Pairs are encouraged to prepare convention cards describing their system. While not mandatory for most pairs, a completed convention card is a courtesy to opponents and may avoid misunderstandings. Players must be prepared to fully explain any conventional call or play agreement upon request.

Pairs using Highly Unusual Methods (HUM) or Brown Sticker conventions (as classified under the EBL system policy) must have a convention card.

At the discretion of the TD, inexperienced players may be permitted to consult system notes during the auction.⁵

8.3 Obligation to Disclose

Players must make a full disclosure of the meaning of any call or play in response to a proper question from an opponent. Failure to disclose a partnership agreement is subject to penalty.⁶

9. Alerting

9.1 General

The EBL Alerting Policy applies. Players are expected to be familiar with the alerting requirements.

9.2 Precision 2♣

The Precision 2♣ opening (showing at least five clubs and opening strength) is considered generally known in Estonia and is not treated as a special partnership agreement.⁷ Foreign players who alert the Precision 2♣ nonetheless commit no infraction.

9.3 Alertable Calls

In general, the following must be alerted:

- Artificial and conventional calls
- Natural calls with unexpected or unusual meanings
- Calls that could be misunderstood by the opponents

9.4 Pre-Alerts

Before the start of each round, pairs should briefly inform their opponents of any unusual methods or agreements in their system, such as:

- An opening bid that may be shorter than expected (e.g., a potentially short club)
- Highly Unusual Methods
- Any artificial strong or forcing openings

9.5 Asking for Explanations

A player may ask for an explanation of an opponent's call at that player's own turn to call. During the play, the declarer or either defender may ask at their turn to play.

⁴Law 40B2a(iv).

⁵Law 40B2d.

⁶Law 40 and Law 75.

⁷Law 40B1.

10. Conduct and Ethics

10.1 Sportsmanship

All participants are expected to display good sportsmanship and conduct. The tournament should be an enjoyable experience for all.

10.2 Discussions at the Table

Players are to avoid discussions or arguments with partner or opponents during the match. In case of a dispute, a player's proper recourse is to call the Tournament Director.

10.3 Unauthorized Information

Players must not act on unauthorized information — information that is available to them through means other than the legal calls and plays, such as partner's tempo, mannerisms, emphasis, or any remark or gesture. A player who possesses unauthorized information must carefully avoid taking any action that could have been suggested by that information.⁸

10.4 Language

The permitted languages at the table are Estonian and English. All four players must agree on which language to use; if no agreement can be reached, English shall be the default. Explanations of calls must be given in a language understood by the requesting opponent. If the pairs do not share a common language, a TD should be called, who will arrange for translation.

11. Electronic Devices

Mobile phones, smartwatches, and other electronic communication devices must be switched off (or placed in airplane mode with all wireless communication disabled) while in the playing area and at the table during play. Devices must be stored out of sight (e.g., in a bag).

Any player whose device produces a sound or vibration during play will be subject to a procedural penalty at the discretion of the Head TD.

12. Smoking and Alcohol

Smoking (including electronic cigarettes) is prohibited throughout the venue, except in specifically designated locations. No player may leave the playing area before completion of play in a session in order to smoke.

The consumption of alcoholic beverages in the playing area during play is prohibited. A player whose behaviour is disruptive due to intoxication or any other reason may be removed from the tournament by the Head TD, with no possibility of substitute.

13. Slow Play

13.1 General

Bridge is a timed event. Players are expected to play at a reasonable pace and to complete their boards within the allotted time. The time allowance is approximately 8 minutes per board.

⁸Law 16 and Law 73.

13.2 Late Arrival

The allocated playing time begins at the scheduled start time regardless of when players arrive. Late arrivals lose playing time accordingly; the slow play provisions below apply if the round or match cannot be completed in time.

In pairs events, a pair not seated at the table at the start of a session will receive a warning on the first occasion. On each subsequent occasion, a penalty of 50% of the matchpoints available on a board will be imposed.

In teams events, at the start of a session, all participants should be in their proper seating positions two minutes before the announced starting time. Any team not seated and ready to play at the announced starting time will receive a warning for a first offence during that phase of the event for being up to 5 minutes late. Late arrivals of more than 5 minutes, or further late arrivals, will be subject to penalties at the discretion of the Head TD, ranging from 1 VP to 2 VPs. Furthermore, such a team will be considered the offending side for purposes of the slow play penalties below for at least the number of minutes by which it arrived late. Any team not seated within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time forfeits the match.

For subsequent rounds within a session, participants arriving late at the table will be considered at fault for any delay in finishing the round, up to the number of minutes by which they arrived late.

13.3 Pairs Events

The TD will actively manage the pace of play. Players who consistently finish late will be warned. A late finisher will be given a warning for the first offence and penalized for subsequent occurrences. At the TD's discretion, unplayed boards may be removed, in which case:

- The offending pair shall be awarded Average Minus.
- The non-offending pair shall be awarded Average Plus.

13.4 Teams Events

If at the end of the allocated time play has not been completed, the following penalties may be imposed at the discretion of the Head TD, shared between the two teams according to the percentage of responsibility of each:

- From 0 to 5 minutes late: 0.2 VP per minute or part thereof.
- From 5 to 10 minutes late: in addition, 0.4 VP per minute or part thereof.
- More than 10 minutes late: 6 VPs in total.

No new boards may be started once the allocated playing time has expired. Unplayed boards will be assigned scores according to the Laws.⁹

Players who believe the slow play is attributable to their opponents should call the TD.

14. Rulings and Appeals

14.1 Calling the Tournament Director

A Tournament Director must be summoned to the table as soon as attention is drawn to an irregularity. Players should not try to resolve irregularities themselves.

A player who becomes aware of potential unauthorized information may reserve the right to summon the TD rather than doing so immediately.¹⁰

⁹Law 12C2 and Law 86B1.

¹⁰Law 16B2.

14.2 Rulings

The TD will apply the Laws of Duplicate Bridge and these Regulations. All rulings will be communicated to the players involved.

14.3 Appeals

Any appeal against a TD ruling must be made to the Head Tournament Director, Rao Zvorovski. Appeals should be made promptly, and no later than 30 minutes after the ruling is communicated.

The Head TD's decision on all appeals is final and binding. There is no further appeals body at this tournament.

14.4 Correction Period

The correction period for all sessions played in a day ends at the starting time of the first session on the following day. For the final day's play, the correction period ends 10 minutes after the official scores have been made available.¹¹

15. Prizes and Awards

15.1 Estonian U26 Championship Medals

This tournament counts as the Estonian U26 Championships. Gold, silver, and bronze medals will be awarded to the top three pairs and top three teams in which at least 50% of the players are Estonian.

15.2 Prize Breakdown

Trophies and prizes are awarded based on the overall ranking, regardless of nationality. The total guaranteed prize pool is €3,000, distributed as follows:

- Pairs Championship: prizes for the top three pairs in each age category (U16, U21, U26).
- Teams Championship: prizes for the top three teams in Final A, plus a prize for the winner of each lower group (B, C, D, ...).
- Additional special prizes may be announced on the spot at the tournament.

The detailed monetary distribution will be announced at the tournament.

16. Tie-Breaking Procedures

16.1 Pairs (Matchpoints)

In the event of a tie, the winner shall be the pair with the highest score in their best single session. If still tied, the highest score in their two best sessions decides, and so on.

16.2 Teams Swiss

In the event of two or more teams having the same number of Victory Points, rankings shall be determined as follows:

1. Swiss Points — the total VPs of each team's opponents. The team whose opponents accumulated the most VPs is ranked higher.
2. If still tied, the result of the direct match between the tied teams.
3. If still tied, the IMP quotient of all matches against the same opponents.

¹¹Law 79C.

16.3 Teams Round Robin Finals

1. A tie between two teams is broken by the result of the direct match between those teams.
2. If still tied, the IMP quotient of all matches against the same opponents.
3. If more than two teams are tied with the same VPs, the tie is decided by the results of the matches between those teams.

17. General Rules

17.1 Fouled Boards

A board is considered fouled if one or more cards were misplaced such that direct comparison is impossible. The TD will determine the appropriate scoring adjustment.

17.2 Remaining at the Table

Players should not leave the table needlessly before a round, session, or match is finished, or leave the playing area without permission from the TD.

17.3 Spectators

Spectators must remain quiet and refrain from addressing the players, talking, or otherwise distracting their attention. Spectators may not bring mobile phones or other electronic devices into the playing area.

The Teams Championship will be broadcast electronically via Vugraph. Spectators following the broadcast must comply with any additional rules established by the organizer to prevent information from reaching the players.¹²

17.4 Playing Area

The playing area includes the playing rooms and the immediately surrounding corridors. All regulations concerning conduct, smoking, alcohol, and electronic devices apply throughout the playing area.

17.5 Indoor Shoes

The hotel is reserved exclusively for the tournament. Players are required to wear indoor shoes in the playing area.

17.6 Hotel Rules and Damages

Players are expected to follow the rules and regulations of the venue hotel at all times, including but not limited to noise, common areas, and room use. Players are personally responsible for any damage they cause to the hotel premises or property and shall reimburse the hotel for any such damage.

A player or team expelled from the venue by the hotel — for any reason — is automatically disqualified from the tournament, with no refund and no possibility of substitution.

17.7 Image Rights and Consent

By entering the tournament, all participants consent to:

- Photographs and video being taken at the venue, and
- Their names being published in tournament results and used in the promotion of this and future events.

¹²Law 76A2.