

Rules and Regulations

We all play bridge for enjoyment and for the social opportunities it provides. But like any quality game, duplicate bridge is governed by a comprehensive set of rules and regulations.

The law book is not an easy book to understand, so we have prepared a summary of the most important issues on the next few pages. These procedures will assist all players to gain a better understanding of the ABF requirements and will certainly make life easier for our directors.

If you follow the guidelines set out here, we believe you will also improve your bridge game and gain greater satisfaction and pleasure from your bridge sessions. And that's what it is all about!

Many Thanks!

Permitted Systems

Most systems are permitted. These include:

- ✓ Standard five card majors
- ✓ Two over one game force
- ✓ Acol
- ✓ Polish Club
- ✓ Precision

If you have any doubts whether your system is allowed, check with the director before you start play.

If you play a system that is likely to be unfamiliar to some of our members, it is a good idea to have a properly filled out system card. Even if you play a natural system but use conventions that may not be understood by our members, it is only courteous to provide system cards.

Announcements

By law, whenever partner opens 1C, you **must** immediately make an announcement. If you play a strong club system, you should say "strong" and give the minimum point count. If you play a hybrid 1C system (such as Polish Club) you say "unusual". Otherwise, you announce the minimum club length as for example "two plus".

Similarly, whenever your partner opens 1NT, you must immediately announce the point range; for example, "fifteen to seventeen".

Alerting

By alerting, you notify your opponents that your partner's call has a special meaning. You should say the word "alert" and draw a circle round you partner's call. Do not offer an explanation unless an opponent asks.

Some bids are deemed self-alerting. You should not alert these:

- ✗ 2C after your partner's 1NT in an uncontested auction
- ✗ Bids in any denomination bid or shown by an opponent
- ✗ Calls above 3NT except for artificial opening bids
- ✗ Doubles and redoubles

You should alert:

- ✓ Artificial bids except self-alerting bids
- ✓ Natural bids that have a meaning that may surprise your opponents. For example, a 1NT overcall that does not promise a stopper in the opponent's suit

At the end of the auction and before the opening lead is faced, the declaring side only should draw attention to any unusual features of their auction - particularly unusual self-alerting calls.

Do this by putting a small + next to the bid(s) in question. If a lot of +'s are needed, it may be easier to say something like "would you like an explanation of our auction?" Do not give an explanation unless your opponents indicate they would like one.

How to be a Good Dummy

- ✓ When displaying dummy, make sure all 13 cards are visible. The director may award an adjusted score if your opponents are damaged because a card was hidden.
- ✓ Your partner will find it easier to play the hand if you are attentive.
- ✓ You may try and prevent partner from leading from the wrong hand but if you are too late to prevent that, you must remain silent.
- ✓ If partner does not follow suit, you may check to see if there was a revoke by saying "having none, partner".
- ✓ You may tell any player if he has pointed the card of the most recent trick in the wrong direction.

How Not to be a Bad Dummy

- ✗ Do not play a card from dummy until told to do so by your partner.
- ✗ Do not suggest a card to be played by moving a hand towards it.
- ✗ Do not ask defenders if they have revoked.
- ✗ Do not call attention to an irregularity such as a revoke until the hand is finished.
- ✗ Do not call the director unless another player has already pointed out an irregularity.
- ✗ Do not look at any other player's hand while play is in progress.

Claims

When you claim, you should make a clear statement about how you will play the remaining tricks.

If you feel an opponent's claim is invalid, you have two options.

1. (Recommended) Call the director.
2. If all four players agree, you can "play it out".

If you are defending and your partner tries to concede one or more tricks and you don't agree, you guessed it - call the director.

Some Random Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- ✓ Have fun! That's why we play bridge.
- ✓ Make visitors feel welcome.
- ✓ Call the director if you have a concern about something that happened at your table.
- ✓ Count your cards before you look at them.
- ✓ Make your opening lead face down and wait for your partner's confirmation before turning it over.
- ✓ Raise a hand when calling the director.

Don't:

- ✗ let your opponents talk you out of calling the director.
- ✗ discuss a hand with loud voices.
- ✗ rotate the board or move it from the centre of the table while the hand is in progress.

Unauthorised Information

What do I do if partner pulls a face, gestures, makes a comment, takes a long time to call, etc any of which suggests to me something about his hand?

What you may have learned about partner's hand is called Unauthorised Information (UI). To impart UI accidentally is not an infraction. You must be careful that your calls and play are based only on your hand and information received from your partner through your system.

If you feel that an opponent may have taken advantage of UI, you should call the director. You should do this as diplomatically as you can. UI is sometimes a contentious issue and you don't want to upset anyone.

Again, if the opponents call the director because they think you may have taken advantage of UI, don't get upset. No one is accusing anyone of cheating. It is just another irregularity like a lead out of turn or an insufficient bid.

What do I do if I learn something about a hand I am yet to play?

Call the director immediately. He will look at the situation and determine whether or not what you have learned will affect the play of the hand. Depending on the circumstances the director may award an adjusted score.

More What Ifs

What do I do if partner does not alert my bid when I think he should have done?

What do I do if I think partner has explained one of my bids incorrectly?

The same thing happens in both cases. During the auction, you should give no indication that anything is amiss. At the end of the auction when you will be declarer or dummy, call the director. If you end up defending, call the director at the end of play.

What do I do if I realise I have failed to alert or given a wrong explanation?

In both cases, call the director immediately.

What do I do if I am asked to explain partner's call but I have forgotten the agreement?

Once again, call the director. Do not say something like "I am taking this to mean..." That is very wrong.

What do I do if I have revoked but I realise almost immediately?

No surprise! Call the director. If you continue without calling the director you will make things worse.

What do I do if I have made a wrong call according to our system?

Nothing! A misbid is not an infraction.