

DUPLICATE BRIDGE RULES SIMPLIFIED

2017

David Stevenson

Mr Bridge

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The authorities used in writing this booklet are the Laws of Duplicate Bridge (2017), the EBU Blue Book (2017) and the EBU White Book (2017).

INTRODUCTION

The Laws of Duplicate Bridge are not always easy to understand and are certainly not easy to read to players at the table. This book aims to solve both these problems, putting the Laws in a form that is much easier for both Director and Player.

Bridge is undoubtedly most enjoyable when the rules are followed and so one of the most important Laws of Duplicate Bridge is [Law 9]: The DIRECTOR is your referee and should be used EVERY TIME a problem of any sort occurs.

To be correct in all situations, a Director should take a Law book to the table with him and read from it, but sometimes reading straight from the Law book leaves both players and Director confused. This book aims to change all that. It aspires to be the book that all Directors will take to the table happily, with the confidence that it will help to make correct rulings and with the knowledge that, by reading from it, the players will understand his rulings more easily.

This 'YELLOW BOOK' contains all the most important and common laws and even contains some extra help with various more difficult laws, but it does not purport to be exhaustive.

The original idea for this uncomplicated guide to the Laws of Duplicate Bridge came from John Rumbelow and, while it has been re-written several times, his user-friendly style and the absence of cross-referencing has been retained as far as possible.

The Laws are the same world-wide, but there are a few rules that differ, because of options in the Laws or supplementary regulations. This book follows the English and Welsh approach in general, but notes the main areas where the Scottish and Irish approach is different.

The best way to use this book is by referring to the [Index](#) at the back (page 60) and finding the page for the Laws or rules you need.

[LHO = left-hand opponent: RHO = right-hand opponent]

PERMITTED SYSTEMS AND AGREEMENTS [LAW 40]

Clubs may permit or ban ANY agreement or system they wish for their own club duplicate events. However, they should have a policy and it is sensible to pick one of the EBU's levels as their basis. Normally, Level 2 is for novice and holiday bridge, Level 4 is for club, event and competition bridge. Some clubs stick to the former Level 3. When they are running a heat of a National or County event, they must apply the regulations laid down by the governing body.

OPENING TWO BIDS

In England and Wales especially, players often claim to be playing two-bids that show strong hands, but open pre-emptive type hands with these two-bids. This misleads opponents and may be illegal. This occurs especially with bids purporting to show Acol Twos. These are meant to show strong hands, but players rely often on playing tricks only.

If they are natural, described often as Acol Twos themselves, then it is legal to open them on a wide range, but the opponents must be informed. The system card should indicate that they may be quite weak in high cards and they should be announced as, 'Intermediate to Strong, forcing.'

If they are artificial, such as a Benjamin 2♣, then really weak openings are illegal. To be legal, they must conform to one of:

- (A) A hand of at least 12 HCP (high-card points) that contains at least five controls, where ace is two controls and king is one control. There are twelve controls in the pack.
- (B) Any hand of at least 16 HCP.

If they can be fairly weak in top cards, eg it is quite normal to have fewer than 16 HCP, then that should be explained on any system card

and in answer to a question. If explained merely as ‘Strong’ this would suggest at least 16 HCP.

SYSTEM CARDS [LAW 40]

Each player should complete a System Card (often referred to as a Convention Card) and make it available to his opponents at the table. Many bridge clubs do not insist on this requirement, allowing instead, one card to be shared between pairs. A System Card is not really required by pairs using very simple systems; however when pairs are using complicated methods like Precision Club with Relays, or Modern Scientific Acol, each player must complete a System Card. Opponents may look at the System Cards when it is their turn to call or play, except when they are dummy, and between the auction and the play, and if it is necessary to answer an opponent’s question about an agreement.

Note: all players in non-club events will be expected to complete a System Card. Failure to do so could prejudice a claim arising in a dispute.

OVERCALLS

Players should disclose their overcalling methods on their System Cards. In the absence of such information, they will be considered to conform to historic standards:

A suit overcall should be of at least five cards, with some strength in the suit and approximately 8 to 15 points.

Any deviation from these standards **MUST** be indicated on the System Card.

CHANGE OF CALL [LAW 25]

- (A) A slip of the tongue, or the wrong card taken from the box using Bidding Boxes, may be changed (so long as Partner has not called subsequently, nor the opening lead faced). Once the player notices his mistake (however he becomes aware of it) then he may change his call and the second call is legal (LHO may withdraw without penalty any call he made after the first call) and the bidding continues normally without penalty.
- (B) If it was a change of mind or he lost concentration and made the call he intended despite it not being correct in general terms, then the call may not be changed. If he does change it in this case then the next player may accept the change, otherwise it reverts to the original call and there may be [Lead Penalties](#); see page 7.

COMPARABLE CALLS [LAW 23]

The rules have been changed in 2017 to decrease the severity of penalty for an insufficient bid or call out of rotation by allowing the use of a Comparable Call.

A call that replaces a withdrawn call is a comparable call, if it:

- (A) Has the same or similar meaning as that attributable to the withdrawn call, or
- (B) Defines a subset of the possible meanings attributable to the withdrawn call, or
- (C) Has the same purpose (eg an asking bid or a relay) as that attributable to the withdrawn call.

When an insufficient bid or call out of turn is replaced by a comparable call then the auction proceeds without penalty, though the director can adjust afterwards if he believes the offending side has gained through its infraction.

The term 'defines a subset' might be difficult to understand. Consider an opening pass out of turn: this would show a range of 0-11 points. The next player does not accept it and the bidding reverts to partner, who opens 1♥ and next hand passes. If this hand now passes (0-5) or bids 2♥ (5-9) or a natural 1NT (5-9) then these are all calls which show a hand that would have passed originally so they are Comparable Calls. However if this hand bids 1♠, that is not a Comparable Call because it could be made on opening bid values, so partner has additional information from the pass that it is not a normal 1♠ response.

LEAD PENALTIES [LAW 26]

When a call is withdrawn for whatever reason, there may be the following lead penalties if the OFFENDER becomes a Defender:

- (A) If the withdrawn call is replaced by a Comparable Call, see page 6, then there are no lead penalties.
- (B) If the withdrawn call is not replaced by a Comparable Call then:
PENALTY when the Offender's PARTNER first obtains the lead, Declarer may forbid the lead of ANY one suit that was not specified in the legal auction by OFFENDER for as long as Offender's PARTNER retains the lead.

INSUFFICIENT BID [LAW 27]

LHO can accept (or condone) any insufficient bid. If he does so, the bidding continues normally and there is no penalty. If the bid is not accepted, the insufficient bid must be corrected by a legal call.

- (A) IF the insufficient bid defines a suit or suits or shows a balanced hand, THEN the player MAY correct the insufficient bid to the lowest sufficient bid that shows the same suit or suits or shows a balanced hand respectively AND there is NO penalty.

- (B) IF there is a Comparable Call, see page 6, THEN the player MAY correct the insufficient bid to that Comparable Call AND there is NO penalty.
- (C) OTHERWISE the player MUST replace the insufficient bid with any sufficient bid or pass (not a double or redouble):
PENALTY the Offender's PARTNER must pass throughout and there may be Lead Penalties, see page 7.

Examples:

- If the auction starts 2NT-P-2♦ intended as a transfer but insufficient then, if 2♦ is not condoned, it may be corrected to 3♦ (transfer) under (A) since both 2♦ and 3♦ show hearts and there is NO PENALTY.
- If the auction starts 2♣-2♠-2♦ intended as a negative response but insufficient then, if 2♦ is not condoned, it may be corrected to pass which is a Comparable Call under (B) since both 2♦ and pass have a similar meaning and there is NO PENALTY.

Notes:

- The player may NOT correct to a double or redouble EXCEPT as provided in (B) above. If he does so, unless LHO condones the insufficient bid, then (C) above applies.
- If the OFFENDER attempts to change his insufficient bid to another insufficient bid, unless LHO condones either one, then (C) above applies.
- If the OFFENDER changes his insufficient bid to a legal bid as above before the Director tells him his options, unless LHO condones the insufficient bid, then (A), (B) or (C) applies to the substituted legal bid.
- If the OFFENDING SIDE reaches a better contract because of the insufficient bid than they would without, in (A) or (B) above, the Director may award an adjusted score.

CALL OUT OF ROTATION [LAWS 28 TO 34]

Note: A call out of rotation, when it was LHO's turn to call and the OFFENDER has called previously, is treated as a CHANGE OF CALL.

Note: An ARTIFICIAL pass (or a pass of Partner's artificial call) out of rotation is treated as a bid out of rotation.

Note: When there is a call out of rotation, followed, before anything else happens, by a call by the player whose turn it was to call and that player is an opponent, the original call out of rotation is cancelled without penalty.

BID OUT OF ROTATION

LHO can accept (or condone) a bid out of rotation. If he does so, the bidding continues normally and there is no penalty. If he does not, then the bid out of rotation is cancelled and bidding reverts to the player whose turn it is to call.

(A) When it was RHO's turn to call:

If RHO passes, the bid out of rotation must be repeated and bidding continues normally. There is no penalty. If RHO bids, doubles or redoubles, OFFENDER may in turn make any legal call and:

(1) If it is a Comparable Call, see page 6, then there is no penalty and the bidding continues normally.

(2) If it is not a Comparable Call:

PENALTY the Offender's PARTNER must pass when next it is his turn to call and there may be Lead Penalties, see page 7.

(B) When it was the Offender's PARTNER'S turn to call, or the OFFENDER opens the bidding when his LHO was dealer, the call is cancelled and bidding reverts to the correct player. Offender's PARTNER must treat the bid out of rotation as unauthorised information and OFFENDER may in turn make any legal call and:

- (1) If it is a [Comparable Call](#), see page 6, then there is no penalty and the bidding continues normally.
- (2) If it is not a Comparable Call:
PENALTY the Offender's PARTNER must pass when next it is his turn to call and there may be [Lead Penalties](#); see page 7.

PASS OUT OF ROTATION

LHO can accept (or condone) a pass out of rotation. If he does so, the bidding continues normally and there is no penalty. If he does not accept the pass out of rotation, it is cancelled and the bidding reverts to the player whose turn it is to call:

- (A) When it was RHO's turn to call:
PENALTY the OFFENDER must pass for one round.
- (B) When it was the Offender's PARTNER'S turn to call or the OFFENDER passes initially when his LHO was dealer, the call is cancelled, bidding reverts to the correct player. Offender's PARTNER must treat the pass out of rotation as unauthorised information and OFFENDER may in turn make any legal call and:
 - (1) If it is a [Comparable Call](#), see page 6, then there is no penalty and the bidding continues normally.
 - (2) If it is not a Comparable Call:
PENALTY the Offender's PARTNER must pass when next it is his turn to call and there may be [Lead Penalties](#), see page 7.

Note: if a call has been followed by three passes, the auction does not end when one of those passes was out of rotation, thereby depriving a player of his right to call at that turn. The auction reverts to the player who missed his turn. All subsequent passes are cancelled and the auction proceeds as though there had been no irregularity.

DOUBLE OR REDOUBLE OUT OF ROTATION

LHO can accept (or condone) a double or redouble out of rotation so long as it is a double of an opponent's bid, or a redouble of an opponent's double. If he does so, the bidding continues normally and there is no penalty. If he does not, then the double or redouble out of rotation is cancelled and bidding reverts to the player whose turn it is to call. If the double or redouble out of turn was not legal then see [ILLEGAL DOUBLE OR REDOUBLE](#) on page 52.

(A) When it was RHO's turn to call:

If RHO passes, the double or redouble out of rotation must be repeated if it is legal and bidding continues normally. There is no penalty. If RHO bids, doubles or redoubles, OFFENDER may in turn make any legal call and:

(1) If it is a [Comparable Call](#), see page 6, then there is no penalty and the bidding continues normally.

(2) If it is not a Comparable Call:

PENALTY the Offender's PARTNER must pass when next it is his turn to call and there may be [Lead Penalties](#), see page 7.

(B) When it was the Offender's PARTNER'S turn to call the call is cancelled, bidding reverts to the correct player and OFFENDER may in turn make any legal call and:

(1) If it is a [Comparable Call](#), see page 6, then there is no penalty and the bidding continues normally.

(2) If it is not a Comparable Call:

PENALTY the Offender's PARTNER must pass when next it is his turn to call and there may be [Lead Penalties](#), see page 7.

SIMULTANEOUS CALLS

A call made simultaneously with one made by a player whose turn it was to call is deemed to be a SUBSEQUENT call.

REVIEWS, QUESTIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

REVIEWING THE BIDDING [LAWS 20 & 41]

A player may ask for a FULL review of the bidding as follows:

- At any time when it is his turn to call during the auction (unless he is required to pass).
- Before selecting the opening lead if he is on lead.
- After the opening lead is face-down if his Partner is on lead.
- Before playing to the first trick if his Partner was on lead.
- Before the opening lead is faced if he is Declarer.
- Before playing his first card from Dummy if he is Declarer.

After having played a card, Declarer or either Defender may ask only what the contract is and whether (but not by whom) it was doubled or redoubled.

ASKING QUESTIONS [LAWS 20 & 41]

Who may ask questions? When?

A player may ask for the meaning of a call:

- At any time when it is his turn to call during the auction.
- Before selecting the opening lead if he is on lead.
- After the opening lead is face-down if his Partner is on lead.
- Before the opening lead is faced if he is Declarer.
- At his turn to play if he is Declarer or a Defender.

Declarer may ask about the Defenders' card-play agreements:

- Before the opening lead is faced.
- At his turn to play from either hand.

Note: it is required that the opening lead be made face-down.

Consequences of asking questions

A player who asks concerning a call which is not alerted and then passes, has shown an interest which may well restrict his Partner's subsequent choice of action. Although an ALERT reduces the likelihood that a question would appear to show interest, the possibility is not excluded.

A player should recognise that, when the answer to a question will not affect his immediate action, it might be better to defer his enquiry until the auction has concluded. Furthermore, if his Partner is on lead, he should wait until his Partner has made the opening lead, face down.

EXPLANATIONS [LAWS 20, 21, 40 & 75]

When giving explanations, players should avoid such words as 'natural' or 'standard' as they mean different things to different people. The explanation **MUST** be a clear statement of the partnership agreement. The name of an agreement is rarely a conclusive disclosure of a call's meaning and the opposition is **ENTITLED** to a **FULL** explanation.

Mistaken explanation and mistaken bid

If a player, in answer to an enquiry, gives an explanation of his Partner's call and it transpires that the original hand does not fall within his description, two possibilities arise:

- (A) The explanation was an **INACCURATE** statement of the partnership agreement, in which case the opponents **ARE** entitled to a remedy if they have been damaged.
- (B) The original call was a **DEPARTURE** from the partnership agreement, which had been correctly explained. In this case, the opponents **ARE NOT** entitled to a remedy, but the Director should be summoned in case the explanation has provided the player who made the call with unauthorised information, from which he may be adjudged to have profited.

A player who believes that his Partner has given an incorrect explanation or alert:

- (A) If he is to be DECLARER or DUMMY:
MUST rectify it AFTER calling the Director BEFORE the opening lead is faced. The Defender in the pass-out seat may then withdraw his final pass and re-open the auction.
- (B) If he is to be a DEFENDER:
MUST NOT speak about his Partner's error until the play of the hand is complete. However, there is an OBLIGATION on a Defender to expose Partner's error at the end of play AFTER calling the Director.

Misinformation

A player who realises that he himself has given a wrong explanation should call the Director. If he realises during the auction he must call the Director at the end of the auction, or if he prefers may call the Director earlier. During the play he must call the Director immediately he realises. This includes alerting (or not alerting). The Director will require the explanation to be corrected and:

- (A) The last call made by the non-offending side may now be changed. If it is, then the offending side can change its last call if it was made after this changed call.

Note: this includes the last call by the non-offending side after the auction has ended, but before the opening lead is FACED, and the Director may re-open the auction in this case.
- (B) OTHERWISE the Director lets play proceed, and awards an adjusted score if he is convinced there is damage in consequence of the wrong explanation.

HESITATIONS AND UNAUTHORISED INFORMATION [LAWS 16 & 73]

AUTHORISED and UNAUTHORISED INFORMATION

Authorised information, on which players are entitled to base their own calls and plays, can be imparted between Partners only through Calls (Bids, Passes, Doubles and Redoubles) and Plays. Players may also use information available to them before they took their cards from the board, such as knowledge of system, their estimate of their score, their evaluation of opponents' capabilities and the like. Players may also use information from the board itself, ie who was dealer and who is vulnerable. Players may also use information from opponents, such as their hesitations, mannerisms and comments. Information which a player receives, which is not authorised as above, may not be put to use.

Examples of Partner's actions which may convey unauthorised information during the auction are:

- A remark or question.
- An answer to a question.
- Special emphasis, or tone of voice.
- A gesture, movement or mannerism.
- An unmistakable hesitation (or undue haste) before calling.

Examples of other actions which may convey unauthorised information are:

- Looking at the wrong hand.
- Overhearing calls, results or remarks from other tables.
- Seeing another player's cards.

UNAUTHORISED INFORMATION from OTHER SOURCES

When a player has unauthorised information from other sources, not Partner, he should let the Director know. The Director may:

- (A) Adjust positions (for example, allowing the board to be played arrow-switched if East has seen some of North's cards).
- (B) Let the board be redealt if the form of competition allows it and if no calls have been made.
- (C) Allow the board to be played, cancelling the board later if he decides it necessary.
- (D) Cancel the board immediately.

If he cancels the board he will award adjusted scores, assigned if possible.

RESERVING RIGHTS

A player is entitled to reserve his rights to summon the Director later when he suspects unauthorised information may have been made available by his opponents. The opponents should summon the Director immediately if they dispute the claim. It is better to summon the Director anyway if he is non-playing. This reserving of rights is primarily to establish that the unauthorised information occurred.

Where unauthorised information is conveyed by his Partner, a player is required to act as follows:

- (A) If he believes there is only one action that any reasonable player would take, then he takes it.
- (B) Otherwise he considers what logical alternatives there are.
- (C) If one of the logical alternatives is demonstrably suggested over another by the unauthorised information, then he must avoid that action.

Basically, a player, who has received unauthorised information from his Partner, MUST seek to avoid gaining advantage from it.

HESITATIONS

By far the most common form of unauthorised information is the pause that suggests doubt, generally called a hesitation. It is important to understand that thinking about the hand IS hesitating. Hesitating is not illegal, nor does it force Partner to pass. But it does put a requirement on Partner to avoid taking any advantage.

In deciding whether a hesitation points to a particular course of action by Partner, the Director may be helped by the following rule of thumb:

- (A) If a player hesitates and then passes, he would welcome a bid or double from Partner.
- (B) If a player hesitates and then doubles, he would not be unhappy if his Partner removed the double.
- (C) After a suit is agreed, if a player hesitates and then bids no-trumps, he would not be unhappy to hear his Partner go back to the agreed suit.

The term BIT has come to be used in some places for a call out of tempo, which includes both hesitations and calls made with undue haste, both of which provide unauthorised information to Partner. BIT is short for Break In Tempo.

DIRECTOR'S GUIDANCE

The Director should listen to what all four players have to say and decide whether there was unauthorised information:

- (A) NO: then there is no adjustment and the matter ends.
- (B) YES: then the Director tells the players that there is unauthorised information and asks to be recalled at the end of the hand if they are unhappy. If not recalled, there is no adjustment.

If recalled, the Director has to decide, using the GUIDELINES below, whether the player possibly made use of the unauthorised information.

The Director must decide:

- (1) Did the player have a LOGICAL ALTERNATIVE to the action that he chose to take? LOGICAL ALTERNATIVE is defined as an action that a significant proportion of players of like ability would consider, of whom some would actually take it.
- (2) Was the player's choice suggested by the unauthorised information?

If the answer to (1) & (2) is YES AND the opponents were damaged, then the Director should adjust, OTHERWISE there is no adjustment. A significant proportion is roughly one in five people or more.

Having decided to adjust, he now proceeds to give an assigned adjusted score, as explained in the next section. This will often be a weighted score.

He should always consult someone to make sure he has not overlooked something obvious. If no other Director is available, he should consult one of the better players. There is no hurry to make a decision; he will often decide at the end of the evening, but he must make sure the score-sheet or Bridgemate is amended if appropriate.

DIRECTOR'S POWERS

ADJUSTING THE SCORE [LAW 12]

The Director may award an adjusted score either on his own initiative or on the application of any player, but only when the Laws empower him to do so. He must define the type of adjusted score as an artificial adjusted score or an assigned adjusted score.

Artificial Adjusted Score

This is a score provided where, for any reason, a board is unable to be played, usually as a result of a mechanical irregularity, but also sometimes when the Director deems the board unplayable.

Average-plus: 60% of the match points (or their overall average whichever is higher) to a contestant who is in NO WAY at fault.

Average: 50% of the match points to a contestant only PARTIALLY at fault.

Average-minus: 40% of the match points (or their overall average whichever is lower) to a contestant DIRECTLY at fault.

Assigned Adjusted Score

This is a score provided where the Director decides that, in consequence of an irregularity, the result obtained on the board is disallowed.

An assigned score is awarded on the basis that, if the Director feels confident he knows what the result would have been without the infraction, then he awards that score to both sides. He calculates the various scores he believes might sensibly have been attained without (or with) the irregularity and if one is outstandingly likely, then that is the score that he assigns. If there is not one obvious outcome, then the Director awards a weighted score.

Example: suppose that 4♥ is doubled very slowly and Partner of the doubler (North) removes it to 4♠, which makes for N/S +620. The Director decides that the removal is not automatic, ie that Pass is a logical alternative. Now he disallows the 4♠ bid and assigns a score for 4♥ doubled. If he thinks that 4♥ will go two off, then he adjusts to 4♥ doubled two off for N/S +500. On the other hand if he is not sure how many off then he gives a weighted score as in the next section.

Note: the non-offenders never lose by this assignment. Suppose that 4♥ doubled would go three off, for 800: the Director does not adjust, but leaves the score at 620 for 4♠: there has been NO DAMAGE.

Weighted scores

It is normal for the Director to be unsure what the final result would have been. In the example above, when he adjusts to 4♥ doubled instead of 4♠, he might think, on looking at the hand, that it is quite possible that it will go two off, but it is also quite possible it will go one off. At such a time he gives a weighted score. Suppose he thinks that one off is twice as likely as two off. Now he would give a score such as this:

$$\begin{aligned} & 30\% \text{ of } 4\heartsuit \text{ doubled } -2 \\ & + 70\% \text{ of } 4\heartsuit \text{ doubled } -1 \end{aligned}$$

Why 30% and 70%, rather than 33.3% and 66.7%? After the Director decides what he thinks might have happened and how likely, he then gives a small bias, up to 10%, in favour of the non-offending side (East-West in this case).

Having given a weighted score, the Director has to score it. Good modern software allows for weighted scores. Otherwise the Director will have to put a manual adjustment into the computer, or just calculate it if working by hand. He does that by finding out the matchpoints for each score from the frequencies, and then applying the weighting by multiplying. This example is taken from an 11-table movement, with 10 as average.

Score	Matchpoints for N/S	Weighting	Adjusted Matchpoints
NS +500	8	30%	2.4
NS +200	5	70%	3.5

He then adds up the Adjusted Matchpoints, which comes to 5.9, so N/S get 5.9, E/W get $20 - 5.9 = 14.1$. Easiest is to enter an average for these two pairs (which is 10) and then put in adjustments of -4.1 for N/S, 4.1 for E/W. It is much easier when the software does it for you.

A similar approach is used in teams, where the IMPs are calculated, then the weighting is applied and the adjusted imps added up.

PROCEDURAL PENALTIES [LAW 90]

The Director should issue a PROCEDURAL PENALTY when a player does anything wrong that affects the conduct of the event. If a player fails to count his cards, or scores on the wrong line, or passes the boards to the wrong table, or is slow, or late, or touches other players' cards or curtain cards, or anything else similar, then the player receives a PROCEDURAL PENALTY. Normally, such PROCEDURAL PENALTIES consist of a warning on the first few occasions.

Only if a player fails continually to follow correct procedure, or in an exceptionally bad case, should the PROCEDURAL PENALTY be assessed as a fine. A normal fine is 10% of the top on a board.

DISCIPLINARY PENALTIES [LAWS 74 & 91]

Players are required by the Laws to be courteous. If a player is rude or offensive, whether to Partner, opponents, the Director or anyone else present, or uses bad language or acts in a drunken fashion, or any other similar way, the Director can issue a DISCIPLINARY PENALTY. Normally this would be a fine of 20% of the top on a board, or more. Further similar actions would lead to suspension from the rest of the session and the Club Committee might consider further action.

BEST BEHAVIOUR AT BRIDGE

In England and Wales there is a movement to eliminate bad behaviour. Players are required to be friendly, greet opponents, act as a good host or guest at the table and make bridge enjoyable for everyone. They are required to avoid criticising other players, being impolite, gloating over good results, objecting to a call for the Director or arguing about a ruling with unnecessary vigour. These approaches are recommended for clubs since it is felt that bad behaviour is the most common reason for people to leave the game.

If a player fails to follow these rules and his behaviour is not consistent with this section, then the Director should consider a Disciplinary Penalty as above.

APPEALS [LAWS 92 & 93]

Any ruling by a Director can be appealed against within the [CORRECTION PERIOD](#) (see page 55). While appeals of this nature are rare at Club level, all Clubs should be prepared for them.

Appeals should normally be held by an Appeals Committee comprising three of the more experienced players in the Club. Both sides in the dispute and also the Director should be heard. The Director should explain the Law, but the Committee will be the final arbiter.

If club members are unhappy about arranging appeals themselves, they should approach their County, Area, District or National authority, who will be happy to help.

PSYCHING AND/OR FORGETTING THE SYSTEM [LAW 40]

A psyche is a deliberate and gross misrepresentation of the hand, such as opening the bidding with a doubleton and three points. A deviation is a minor misrepresentation, such as opening a 12-14 no-trump with 11 points. A misbid is an unintentional misrepresentation, such as opening an Acol Two with eight playing tricks having forgotten that you are playing Weak Twos (or vice versa).

To psyche is not illegal; however, the strain is on the psycher's Partner who is expected to behave normally, making no allowance for a possible psyche until it becomes glaringly obvious from the bidding. It is not good enough to say, 'Somebody hasn't got his bid: perhaps it is Partner.'

In England and Wales psyches are placed into three categories, based on the actions taken by Partner: RED, AMBER and GREEN to distinguish their severity, RED being the most serious. The Director assesses the actions of the Partner of the psycher. If he decides the Partner made allowance for the possibility of a psyche (called fielding the psyche), he will rule it a RED psyche and will cancel the score (unless the psycher got less than 40%). He awards an Average-plus and an Average-minus, penalising the offending side an additional 10% on top of this (60%-30%). If the Director considers the Partner has not fielded the psyche, but his action was somewhat unusual under the circumstances, he will rule it an AMBER psyche: there is NO adjustment unless the same pair commits another Amber or Red psyche, in which case, they BOTH become Red. If Partner's actions are innocuous, he will rule it a GREEN psyche and take no action.

Misbids are not categorised in the same way as psyches and the director must decide whether strange action by partner which seems to allow for the actual hand suggests that because of experience there really is misinformation. There is also the possibility of the use of unauthorised information if a misbid has been alerted or explained.

The important thing to consider with psyches, misbids and deviations is the frequency with which they occur. Very occasional psyches, misbids and deviations can be expected, but if a pattern of regular use develops that would suggest an ILLEGAL partnership understanding.

ALERTING AND ANNOUNCING

NOTE ON JURISDICTIONS

Most of the advice in this Yellow book applies throughout the British Isles. However, the alerting rules shown here apply only in England and Wales. Announcements are used in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Eire uses announcements for 1NT openings, transfer responses, and short minor openings only, and there is no alert for an opening Acol 2♣ nor for a Stayman 2♣ response. In general, if you alert calls with surprising meanings and all artificial calls except the most common, you will not go far wrong in Scotland or Ireland. However, no doubles or redoubles are alerted in Scotland. The actual tournament organiser, whether a club or holiday organiser, for example, can have their own rules for alerting and announcing since these are regulations and not Laws but should clarify them.

ANNOUNCE THESE CALLS

When a player opens 1NT, unless it is artificial, in which case Partner alerts, his Partner says the range immediately (for example 'twelve to fourteen') adding 'may have a singleton' if that is their agreement. That is an announcement. Similarly, Partner gives the range if a player opens a natural 2NT. In response to an opening 1NT or 2NT, Stayman and Major Suit Transfers are announced, Partner saying 'Stayman', 'Hearts' or 'Spades' as appropriate. It does not matter whether Stayman promises a four-card major or not. The transfers must guarantee the suit shown: a response of 2♦ showing either hearts or a weak take-out in diamonds is alerted, and must not be called a transfer.

When a player opens with two of a suit, unless it is artificial, in which case Partner alerts, his Partner describes the strength immediately, saying 'Weak', 'Intermediate', 'Strong, not forcing' or 'Strong, forcing' as appropriate. Some players play very wide-range openings, for example eight playing trick hands that are not necessarily strong, and

an announcement like ‘Intermediate to Strong, forcing’ covers such agreements. A Precision 2♣ opening is described as ‘Intermediate’.

When a player opens 1♣ or 1♦ to show an opening hand and the opening bid may be passed by partner and the suit bid may be fewer than three cards in length, then partner says ‘May be two/one/zero cards’ as suitable but does not alert. If it may have another five card suit that should also be announced, for example ‘May be two cards and may have five diamonds’: this is not necessary if it will only have five cards when the suit opened has five cards as well.

All 1NT, 2NT and two of a suit openings are announced or alerted, so it is normal and allowed for the opponents to remind the Partner of the opener if he does neither. Except in jurisdictions where weak take-outs are normal, 2♣, 2♦ and 2♥ responses to a natural 1NT are always announced or alerted, so again a polite reminder is acceptable, and similarly over 2NT. The director should be clear that these reminders do not provide unauthorised information.

ALERT THESE CALLS

Most artificial calls **MUST** be alerted. Common examples are: Ghestem, Benjamin 2♣, Precision 1♣, Unusual no-trump, Asptro, a pass that shows unexpected values. Exceptions are calls that are announced and calls after the first round (ie from opener’s rebid onwards) which are above 3NT. Also there are special rules for doubles.

Alert also any call whose meaning is so strange that opponents are not likely to consider it as a possibility. Examples are: a Canapé bid, a raise from one to three as a pre-emptive raise over LHO’s pass, or as a forcing raise, a minimum response to a take-out double that shows values, a non-forcing change of suit response below game-level to a suit opening bid (except over a double or after Partner passed originally).

Alerting doubles: ALERT a double of a natural suit bid if it is NOT take-out OTHERWISE alert a double if it is NOT penalties. Also alert any other double which has a totally unexpected meaning in addition

to being take-out or penalties. Do not alert doubles of 4♣ or higher, except for Lightner doubles (and any other artificial lead directing doubles).

Example: 1♣-(1♦)-Dbl: it is normal to play this as take-out showing a major, or showing both majors, or with no restrictions: these are not alertable. But if played as showing hearts specifically then it requires an alert because of the unexpectedness. Similar if it shows spades specifically. This is different from 1♣-(1♠)-Dbl which it is normal to play this as take-out showing hearts specifically,

When a player knows his Partner's call is alertable, but cannot remember its meaning, he should alert. If asked for its meaning and if it is likely to be on the System Card, he may refer his opponents to his System Card. He must not say how he intends to interpret Partner's call. If the opponents misunderstand his intentions when referring them to his System Card, or if the meaning of the call is not on the System Card, or if they require more information, the Director should be called to ensure that any unauthorised information does not affect Partner's actions. The Director should be told that the player is unsure of the meaning of the call. (The Director may require him to leave the table in order to ask his Partner for the explanation, but only if there is an agreement.) Players should not guess what Partner's call might mean. The statement, 'I take it to mean . . .' causes no end of trouble.

DO NOT ALERT THESE CALLS

- A weak jump overcall.
- A 5-card major opening bid.
- A 3-card minor opening bid.
- A non-forcing overcall where the suit may contain only four cards.
- A natural response to an opening bid when a take-out double has intervened, whether forcing or non-forcing.

- A natural opening bid of 4♥ or 4♠ when you also have a South African Texas 4♣ or 4♦ or similar artificial bid in your system.
- A long-suit trial bid showing at least three cards in the suit bid.
- A response of 2♣ to 1♠ that may be made on a 3-4-3-3 hand with four hearts.
- An opening 2NT which is normally balanced, but may have a singleton.
- Calls after the opening round which are above 3NT, ie from opener's rebid onwards.
- Calls that are announced.

DAMAGE BY FAILURE TO ALERT

If a player claims to have been damaged because his opponents failed to alert a call and it is reckoned that he was aware of its likely meaning, he would fail in his claim if he had had the opportunity to ask without putting his side's interests at risk.

EXPOSED AND PLAYED CARDS

WHEN IS A CARD PLAYED? [LAW 45]

A Defender's card held so that it is possible for his Partner to see its face must be played. The test is whether it was POSSIBLE for the Offender's PARTNER to see it, NOT whether he did see it.

Declarer's card must be played if it is held face-up touching or nearly touching the table or held in a position to indicate it has been played. A card in Dummy must be played if Declarer has named it or deliberately touched it (other than for the purpose of adjustment or reaching for another card).

A face-down opening lead is not a played card until it is faced. However, it may be withdrawn ONLY if there has been an irregularity AND the Director has given his consent.

INCOMPLETE CALL OF A CARD FROM DUMMY [LAW 46]

When calling for a card from Dummy, Declarer should clearly state both the suit and the rank of the desired card. In the case of an incomplete or erroneous call by Declarer of the card to be played from Dummy – unless his intention is INCONTROVERTIBLY OTHERWISE – the following restrictions apply:

Incomplete Designation of Rank

If Declarer calls 'high' or words of like import, he is deemed to have called for the HIGHEST card. If dummy is last to play, he may be deemed to have called for the lowest winning card.

If he directs Dummy to 'win' the trick, he is deemed to have called for the lowest winning card.

If he calls 'low' or words of like import, he is deemed to have called for the lowest card.

Designates Rank but not Suit

When leading, he is deemed to have continued the suit in which Dummy won the preceding trick, provided there is a card of the designated rank in that suit. In other cases, Declarer must play the only card of that rank available. If there are two or more such cards, Declarer must designate which he is to play.

Designates Suit but not Rank

He is deemed to have called for the lowest card of the suit.

Designates neither Suit nor Rank

If Declarer says ‘Play anything’ or words of like import, either Defender may designate the card to be played from Dummy.

Erroneous call of a card not in Dummy

If Declarer calls for a card that is not in Dummy, the call is void and Declarer may designate any legal card.

RETRACTING A CARD PLAYED [LAW 47]

A card once played can be retracted ONLY:

- (A) To comply with a penalty.
- (B) To correct an illegal play, except when such a card is deemed to be a [penalty card](#), see page 32.
- (C) When Declarer changes an inadvertent designation legally. Now a Defender who has played a card that was legal before the change of designation may, without penalty, retract the card so played and substitute another.
- (D) If the leader was informed mistakenly by an opponent that it was his turn to lead.
- (E) If the play was caused by a mistaken explanation of an opponent’s call or play. The card must have been played before a corrected

explanation was given AND can only be retracted if no card was played subsequently to that trick. If a card was played subsequently, thereby prohibiting the retraction, the Director may award an adjusted score at the end of the hand.

Note: an opening lead may not be retracted after Dummy has appeared.

CARDS EXPOSED DURING THE AUCTION PERIOD [LAW 24]

When, during the auction period, a player has faced a card or exposed it so that it is POSSIBLE for his Partner to see its face (not whether he did see it) every such card must remain face up on the table until the auction period ends. If the OFFENDER becomes a Defender, every such card is treated as a [penalty card](#), see page 32. FURTHERMORE, if the card exposed during the auction is an honour card, or if it is prematurely led, or if more than one card is exposed:

PENALTY Offender's PARTNER must pass for one round.

CARD ACCIDENTALLY EXPOSED BY A DEFENDER [LAW 49]

A Defender's card is deemed to be exposed if it was POSSIBLE for the Offender's PARTNER to see its face. Every such exposed card is treated as a [penalty card](#), see page 32.

CARD ACCIDENTALLY EXPOSED BY DECLARER [LAW 48]

The accidental exposure of a card by Declarer incurs no penalty.

CARD MISPLAYED BY DUMMY [LAW 45]

If Dummy places in the played position a card that Declarer did not name, the card must be withdrawn if attention is drawn to it before each side has played to the next trick and a Defender may withdraw (without penalty) a card played after the error, but before attention was drawn to it; if Declarer's RHO changes his play, Declarer may withdraw a card he had played subsequently to that trick.

PENALTY CARDS [LAWS 50 TO 52]

A PENALTY CARD is a card exposed prematurely by a Defender. It must be left, face up, on the table until it is played and the Director must be called to designate it as either a MAJOR penalty card or a MINOR penalty card, each of which is dealt with DIFFERENTLY.

MINOR PENALTY CARDS

A MINOR penalty card is an inadvertently exposed card, that is one which has been dropped face up accidentally, or when a player plays two cards to the same trick accidentally AND it is a card below a ten AND it is the player's only penalty card. To summarise:

IT IS A SINGLE, ACCIDENTALLY EXPOSED CARD BELOW A TEN.

How do you deal with a MINOR penalty card?

The OFFENDER does NOT have to play a MINOR penalty card at the first legal opportunity if, instead, he plays an honour card of the same suit or a card in a different suit. The OFFENDER may not play a non-honour card in the same suit until after the penalty card is played. When an OFFENDER has a MINOR penalty card, his Partner is NOT subject to a lead penalty (although he must ignore the penalty card and not make decisions on the knowledge that Partner has it).

MAJOR PENALTY CARDS

A MAJOR penalty card is a card that is exposed without being legally played, and it is:

- (A) ANY card exposed intentionally OR
- (B) ANY exposed honour card OR
- (C) ANY exposed card when a Defender has two or more penalty cards.

How do you deal with a MAJOR penalty card?

- (A) If the OFFENDER is on lead, he MUST play the MAJOR penalty card unless there is a lead penalty. In that case, the lead penalty is applied rather than any MAJOR penalty card action.
- (B) If the OFFENDER is to play, he must play the MAJOR penalty card unless it would constitute a revoke.
- (C) If the Offender's PARTNER is on lead, Declarer can either:
 - (1) Require the lead of the penalty card suit, OR
 - (2) Forbid the lead (for as long as he retains the lead) of the penalty card suit, OR
 - (3) Let the penalty card remain as a penalty card.

If Declarer exercises one of the first two options, the penalty card is picked up and ceases to be a penalty card.

If Offender's PARTNER leads before Declarer has exercised an option, his lead also becomes a MAJOR penalty card.

Failing to play a penalty card

When a Defender fails to play a penalty card as required, he may not, on his own initiative, withdraw any other card he has played instead. If he does play another card then Declarer may:

- (A) Accept the play (he must do so if he has played from Dummy or his own hand, condoning the play). The penalty card remains a penalty card, OR
- (B) Reject the card played, requiring the Defender to substitute the penalty card; the rejected card becomes a MAJOR penalty card.

Authorised or Unauthorised?

When a penalty card is faced on the table all information from that card (and the rules for when it shall be played) is authorised for both sides.

When the penalty card is returned to the player's hand as above all information from that card is unauthorised for the Defenders but is authorised for Declarer.

When the penalty card has been played, the information that created that card as a penalty card is unauthorised for the Defenders but is authorised for Declarer.

TWO OR MORE PENALTY CARDS

(A) OFFENDER ON LEAD

When an OFFENDER has two or more penalty cards and it is his turn to play, Declarer designates which card is to be played.

(B) PARTNER ON LEAD

(1) Penalty cards in the same suit

If the Offender's PARTNER is on lead, Declarer can:

- (a) Require the lead of the penalty cards' suit, OR
- (b) Forbid the lead (for as long as he retains the lead) of the penalty cards' suit, OR
- (c) Let the penalty cards remain as penalty cards.

If Declarer exercises one of the first two options, all the penalty cards are picked up and cease to be penalty cards.

(2) Penalty cards in more than one suit

If the Offender's PARTNER is on lead, Declarer can:

- (a) Require the lead of one of the penalty cards' suits, OR
- (b) Forbid the lead (for as long as he retains the lead) of some or all of the penalty cards' suits, OR
- (c) Let all the penalty cards remain as penalty cards.

If Declarer exercises one of the first two options, all the penalty cards in the suit or suits specified are picked up and cease to be penalty cards.

Note that there is no limit to the number of penalty cards. For example, if a defender fails to realise he is a defender and puts his cards on the table as dummy there are now 13 major penalty cards.

LEADS AND PLAYS OUT OF TURN

[LAWS 53 TO 59]

Throughout this section, we assume the lead to have been a spade.

AN OPENING LEAD OUT OF TURN

When a Defender faces an opening lead out of turn, the Director should say to the Declarer, 'You have FIVE options.' These are:

- (A) You may accept the lead out of turn, Partner puts his hand down as Dummy, and you play as normal, your hand first.
- (B) You may accept the lead out of turn and let Partner play it (but no conferring).
- (C) You may have the spade as a major penalty card: the correct leader may lead what he likes, but his Partner's spade must be played at the first legal opportunity.
- (D) You may require the correct leader to lead a spade: the lead out of turn is picked up and the Defender who led out of turn may play any legal card.
- (E) You may forbid the correct leader from leading a spade for as long as he retains the lead: the lead out of turn is picked up.

If declarer chooses OPTION (C), he will be given further options if Offender's Partner gains the lead while the penalty card is still on the table. See [MAJOR penalty cards](#) on page 32.

If declarer or dummy makes the opening lead, that card is picked up without penalty.

Condoning the opening lead out of turn

If Declarer begins to spread his hand in response to the opening lead out of turn and any of his cards are exposed, he **MUST** accept the lead and his hand becomes Dummy.

If Dummy begins to spread his hand in response to the opening lead out of turn and any of his cards are exposed, Declarer **MUST** accept the lead and play the hand himself.

DEFENDER LEADS OUT OF TURN

When a Defender faces a lead when it is his Partner's turn to play, the Director should say to the Declarer, 'You have **FOUR** options.' These are:

- (A) You may accept the lead out of turn and you play as normal.
- (B) You may have the spade as a major penalty card: the correct leader may lead what he likes, but his Partner's spade must be played at the first legal opportunity.
- (C) You may require the correct leader to lead a spade: the lead out of turn is picked up and the Defender who led out of turn may play any legal card.
- (D) You may forbid the correct leader from leading a spade for as long as he retains the lead: the lead out of turn is picked up.

If declarer chooses **OPTION (B)**, he will be given further options if Offender's Partner gains the lead while the penalty card is still on the table. See [MAJOR penalty cards](#) on page 32.

When a Defender faces a lead when it is Declarer's or Dummy's turn to play, the Director should say to the Declarer, 'You have **TWO** options.' These are:

- (A) You may accept the lead out of turn and you play as normal.
- (B) You may have the spade as a major penalty card.

If you choose **OPTION (B)**, you will be given further options if Offender's Partner gains the lead while the penalty card is still on the table. See [MAJOR penalty cards](#) on page 32.

If Declarer plays from his hand or Dummy after a Lead Out of Turn, the lead is accepted (or condoned).

DECLARER LEADS OUT OF TURN

Either Defender may accept the lead or require it to be retracted. If the Defenders choose differently, the option selected by the player next in turn after the lead out of turn prevails. Should the Defenders exchange opinions over the lead, they forfeit the right to penalise and the lead is allowed to stand.

When Declarer is required to retract the lead, the lead reverts to the correct player and there is no penalty upon Declarer.

INABILITY TO LEAD OR PLAY AS REQUIRED

If a player is unable to lead or play as required to comply with a penalty, he may play any legal card. This may be because he holds no card of the required suit, or because he has only cards of a suit he is prohibited from leading, or because he is obliged to follow suit.

PREMATURE PLAY BEFORE PARTNER HAS PLAYED

When a Defender leads to the next trick before his Partner has played to the current trick, or plays out of turn before his Partner has played, the card so played becomes a **MAJOR penalty card**, see page 32, and:

PENALTY Declarer selects one of the following options:

- (A) He requires Offender's PARTNER to play the highest card he holds in the suit led.
- (B) He requires Offender's PARTNER to play the lowest card he holds in the suit led.
- (C) He requires Offender's PARTNER to play a card of another suit SPECIFIED by Declarer.
- (D) He forbids Offender's PARTNER from playing a card of another suit SPECIFIED by Declarer.

PREMATURE PLAY BY DECLARER

A Defender is not subject to a penalty for playing before his Partner, if Declarer has played from both hands before his Partner has played.

If declarer plays (not leads) when it is an opponent's turn to play, that play stands and may not be retracted.

SIMULTANEOUS PLAY OF TWO OR MORE CARDS

If a player leads or plays two or more cards simultaneously and only one card is exposed, that card is played. All others are picked up without penalty.

If more than one card is exposed, the OFFENDING player designates which card he proposes to play and when that player is a Defender, each other card exposed becomes a MAJOR or MINOR penalty card, see page 32, and the usual penalties apply.

If a player withdraws an exposed card, an opponent who had played subsequently to that trick may withdraw his card and substitute another without penalty.

If the simultaneously played card remains undiscovered until both sides have played to the next trick, that trick becomes a DEFECTIVE TRICK containing a fifth card; see page 48.

ARRANGEMENT OF TRICKS

EXAMINING THE LAST CARD PLAYED [LAW 66]

Until a lead is made to the following trick, Declarer or either Defender may re-examine his own card played, taking care not to expose it to any other player. A player who has not yet turned over his card may require all cards just played to the trick to be refaced.

QUITTED CARD POINTING THE WRONG WAY [LAW 65]

Players (including Dummy) are permitted to draw attention to any quitted card pointing the wrong way until the lead to the next trick.

REVOKES [LAWS 61 TO 64]

WHO CAN ASK WHOM ABOUT A POSSIBLE REVOKE?

ANYONE except dummy can ask ANYONE; dummy can only ask declarer. Dummy and defenders are warned that asking could give unauthorised information.

WHEN IS A REVOKE ESTABLISHED?

- (A) When the Offender or his Partner makes any play to the next trick, OR
- (B) If the Offender or his Partner designates in any manner a card to be played to the next trick, OR
- (C) If the Offender or his Partner makes any claim or concession or agrees to a claim.

CORRECTION OF A REVOKE

A player must correct a revoke if in time to do so, that is before it becomes established. When correcting a revoke, the revoke card is withdrawn and a legal card substituted. If that card is a Defender's card, it becomes a MAJOR penalty card, see page 32.

WITHDRAWING A CARD PLAYED

Each member of the NON-OFFENDING side may withdraw a card he has played after the revoke and BEFORE attention was drawn to it. The PARTNER of the OFFENDER is also entitled to withdraw his played card, BUT ONLY if his RHO does so. Whereas NO card withdrawn by the NON-OFFENDING side becomes a penalty card, any card withdrawn by the OFFENDING side becomes a MAJOR penalty card, see page 32, if the Defenders are the OFFENDING side.

REVOKE ON TRICK TWELVE

A revoke on trick 12 is corrected, even if established, if discovered before all four hands are returned to the board. However, if the

Offender's PARTNER had a choice of suits to play to trick 12 AFTER his Partner's attempted revoke, then he may not choose to play to trick 12 the card suggested by the revoke card.

PROCEDURE WHEN A REVOKE IS ESTABLISHED

How many tricks did the OFFENDING SIDE win from the revoke trick onwards (INCLUDING the revoke trick)?

- (A) NONE: there is no Penalty.
(B) ONE: **PENALTY ONE TRICK** transferred.
(C) TWO or MORE: Did the revoke card win the revoke trick?
 YES **PENALTY TWO TRICKS** transferred.
 NO **PENALTY ONE TRICK** transferred.

Tricks are transferred as shown to the opponents at the end of the hand. If the revoke penalty is insufficient compensation for the non-offenders, then see [RESTORING EQUITY](#) on page 41.

SITUATIONS WHEN, ALTHOUGH THE REVOKE IS ESTABLISHED, THERE IS NO PENALTY

- (A) The offending side has won neither the revoke trick nor any subsequent trick.
(B) The revoke is the second revoke by the same player failing to play a card of the same suit as he was required to play in the previous instance.
(C) The revoke was in failing to play a card that was face up on the table (in Dummy's hand or otherwise).
(D) Attention was first drawn to the revoke AFTER the offending side has called on the next hand or after the end of the round.
(E) The revoke was on the twelfth trick.
(F) Both sides have revoked on the same hand and both revokes are established.

DECLARER OR DUMMY REVOKING

Declarer is liable to penalties for revoking in exactly the same way as the Defenders. However, if Declarer revokes and Dummy wins the trick, Declarer is deemed NOT to have won that trick for the purposes of assessing a penalty.

There is no penalty for a revoke by Dummy. If this is insufficient compensation for the non-offenders, then see [RESTORING EQUITY](#) below.

One of the silliest sayings in bridge is ‘Dummy can’t revoke’. Of course he can. What they mean is that there is no automatic penalty.

A REVOKE CARD MAY NOT BE WITHDRAWN

Once established, a revoke card may not be withdrawn and the revoke trick stands as played.

RESTORING EQUITY

If, for any reason, the non-offending side loses out after the revoke penalties (if any) are applied, the Director can assign an adjusted score if he deems the non-offending side is compensated insufficiently for any damage done. Examples are:

- (A) The revoke was from dummy, OR attention was first drawn to the revoke AFTER the offending side had called on the next hand or after the end of the round and so no revoke penalty was applicable. However, the Offenders gained a trick or tricks from the revoke.
- (B) Despite a penalty of one or two tricks, the Offenders have gained more than that because of the revoke.

The NON-OFFENDING SIDE should be AWARE of the fact that, ALTHOUGH it can NEVER BE WORSE OFF after a REVOKE, it does not, in every case, have to end up BETTER OFF.

CLAIMS AND CONCESSIONS

[LAWS 68 TO 71]

A claim is made when a player indicates he will win one or more of the remaining tricks. A concession is made when a player indicates he will lose one or more of the remaining tricks. If the player indicates he will win at least one but not all of the remaining tricks, then it is both a claim and a concession.

Whenever a claim is made, there are THREE immediate requirements:

- (A) That all play ceases, although, at this stage, players do not reveal their cards AND
- (B) That the player making the claim makes a statement immediately as to how he intends to play the remaining cards AND
- (C) That the player making the claim puts his hand face up on the table.

Note: Defenders may claim; Players do not need to be on lead before they claim.

After a claim one of the non-claiming side may suggest playing on. If all four players (including dummy) agree then they may do so, but it is as if the claim or concession never occurred and the Director will not rule on the claim or concession if this occurs.

Once the Director has arrived there will be no subsequent play. A contested claim is solely a matter for the Director, who will decide as fairly as possible, giving the benefit of any doubt to the side not making the claim.

The Director must understand that no play of the cards, subsequent to the making of the claim, has any validity whatsoever unless a non-claimer suggested playing on and all four players had agreed. However, he is allowed to take note of what happened when they played on illegally (at claimer's suggestion or with one or more players disagreeing) in making his decision.

The result of the hand is to be settled upon the placement of the cards at the time of making the claim. A DEFENDER IS WRONG TO ASSUME THAT HE HAS THE RIGHT TO TELL HIS PARTNER HOW TO DEFEND ONCE HE HAS A VIEW OF DECLARER'S CARDS. What he can do is challenge the claim and explain to the Director the potential plays that exist, which would invalidate the claim.

STATING A PROPOSED LINE OF PLAY

When a player makes a claim, it is in his interest to state clearly his proposed line of play. If the claim is contested, the Director must be called and he should establish what the claimant FIRST said, not what he is saying now. Note that opponents often interrupt a claim statement: if the Director judges that this is what happened, then he should allow the claimer to complete his statement now.

FINESSING OR PLAYING FOR THE DROP

Unless the intention was made clear when claiming, the Director should not allow a player to finesse or play for the drop where one of the alternatives is more successful than the other unless:

- (A) An opponent's failure to follow suit prior to the claim creates a proven finesse or drop position, OR
- (B) It is COMPLETELY clear from the play or current position.

WHEN THERE IS AN OUTSTANDING TRUMP

When there is an outstanding trump in one of the opponent's hands, the Director should award a trick (or tricks) to the opponents if:

- (A) The claimant failed to mention that trump, AND
- (B) He was possibly unaware at the time of his claim that the trump remained in the opponent's hand, AND
- (C) A trick could be lost to that trump by any NORMAL play. For the purpose of this Law, normal includes play that would be careless or inferior for the class of player involved.

AGREEMENT

This means that the opponents do not contest the claim. They may, however, change their minds and contest the claim either until the round ends, or until their side makes a call on another board.

They are also allowed to change their mind within the CORRECTION PERIOD (see page 55) but the benefit of any doubt shifts. Now the Director will award them tricks only if they have conceded a trick that they have won, OR that they would likely have won if play had continued.

HELPING THE DIRECTOR DECIDE

If part of the claim involves declarer cashing winners in more than one suit, and in fact they are not winners in one suit the Director should assume the claimer is as likely to start with that suit as any other.

If part of the claim involves declarer cashing winners in one suit and in fact they are not all winners in that suit, the Director should assume generally that solid suits are played from the top down, but from broken suits, any card may be chosen.

Examples:

- (A) If declarer's claim involves AKJ as winners in one suit and the singleton K as a winner in another suit, but a defender holds the ace, it is normal to assume the declarer plays the singleton King first, perhaps losing several tricks. It is normal play to pick a random suit to play when declarer believes they are all winners.
- (B) If declarer's claim involves AK2 as winners, but a defender holds a card (or even a doubleton) it is normal to allow declarer three tricks. It is abnormal play to lead the 2 before the A or K.
- (C) If declarer's claim involves 752 as winners, but a defender holds a singleton 6 it is normal NOT to allow declarer three tricks. It is perfectly normal play to lead the 2 or 5 rather than the 7.

DEFENDER OBJECTS TO PARTNER'S CONCESSION

If a Defender objects immediately to Partner's concession, then no CLAIM OR CONCESSION has occurred. Play continues. Cards shown by either Defender are not penalty cards, but knowledge of them is unauthorised to Partner.

CONCESSION CANCELLED

Within the CORRECTION PERIOD, see page 55, the Director shall cancel a concession:

- (A) If a player has conceded a trick his side has won, OR
- (B) If a player has conceded a trick that could not have been lost by any NORMAL play of the remaining cards.

HESITATIONS AND OTHER MISLEADING ACTIONS [LAW 73]

Players are sometimes misled by such things as comments opponents make, questions opponents ask, mannerisms of opponents and hesitations of opponents.

If a player makes a remark which deceives, hesitates when he has no justifiable decision to make, makes some gesture or mannerism which serves to deceive or asks some deceptive question for which he has no evident justification, the Director must consider, having decided that the action occurred:

- (A) Did the action mislead? Has the complainant a reasonable case to say so?
- (B) In the case of a hesitation, did the player have NO real decision to make?
- (C) At the time of the action, could the Offender have recognised that it could mislead?

(D) Could the Offender have known that the deception might work to his benefit?

If the answer to these questions is YES, then the Director should adjust the score, see [Adjusting the Score](#), page 19. Note that he does not say that it was a deliberate act when he adjusts.

INCORRECT NUMBER OF CARDS

MISSING CARD [LAW 14]

If three hands are correct and one has a card(s) missing, then the Director makes a search for the missing card(s).

If it is during or before the bidding (before the opening lead is faced) then the card is restored to the deficient hand (using a replacement pack if necessary) and the auction continues unaltered.

If it is during or after the play then, if the card is found among the played cards, there is a [DEFECTIVE TRICK](#), see page 48.

OTHERWISE it is returned to the deficient hand (using a replacement pack if necessary) and treated as though it has been there all along: this means that if the player has failed to follow suit by not playing this card, he has REVOKED and is subject to the normal penalties for this.

WRONG NUMBER OF CARDS [LAW 13]

If only one hand is incorrect then:

- (A) If it has too few cards, the previous section (Missing Card) applies.
- (B) If it has too many cards the surplus card is removed, and the deal continues. The Director may award an adjusted score if the extra card is found amongst the quitted tricks.

If two or more hands are incorrect then it is corrected by the Director, using hand records or by consulting previous people who have played it. Once it has been corrected, then, if no-one has seen a card belonging to another player, the hand is played normally. Alternatively, if a player has seen a card belonging to another player but no call has been made by a player who had an incorrect hand, the hand is played normally. OTHERWISE, the Director must decide if it is playable.

It is considered playable if the Director decides the information any player has gained from seeing a card belonging to someone else's hand is not important enough to make a serious difference.

If the board is deemed playable, then it is completed normally. However, the Director can decide after play ends that it was affected so much that he cannot let the result stand.

If the Director decides not to let the result stand, or does not allow the board to be completed, or if the board was completed before the wrong number of cards was discovered, then the Director awards an [adjusted score](#), see page 19.

CONTROL OF CARDS [LAW 7]

The responsibility for players to have thirteen cards rests with the player receiving the cards. Players are REQUIRED to count their cards before looking at them. Thus it is not normal practice to fine players who forward the boards with cards misplaced, unless they do it frequently. Players are required to shuffle their cards before returning them to the board.

No player should ever touch another player's cards (or curtain card) for any reason, during or after the hand (except declarer may touch dummy's cards to play them if dummy is unable to play them, for example when he is absent from the table), without the permission of the Director or an opponent. If a player wants to see one of the other hands after play, it is best to ask the player to show them to him.

FIFTH CARD PLAYED TO A TRICK [LAW 45]

Unless the Director deems it was a card led, the fifth card is withdrawn. If it was played by a Defender, then it becomes a [MAJOR penalty card](#), see page 32.

DEFECTIVE TRICK [LAW 67]

If a trick has too many cards, or too few cards and this is discovered before both sides play to the next trick, then it is corrected by:

- (A) If someone did not play a card, then they play any legal card.
- (B) If someone played too many cards, it is treated as either:
 - (1) [A SIMULTANEOUS PLAY](#), page 38, OR
 - (2) [A FIFTH CARD PLAYED TO A TRICK](#), see above.

If a trick has too many cards or too few cards and this is discovered after both sides play to the next trick then the ownership of the trick stands, but it is corrected by:

- (A) If someone did not play a card, then:
 - (1) If he has at least one card of the suit led, then he chooses one to put in that trick, OR
 - (2) If he has no card of the suit led, then he chooses any card to put in that trick.

In either case:

PENALTY he is deemed to have revoked on that trick, and may be subject to a ONE-TRICK penalty.

- (B) If someone played too many cards, the Director decides which was the superfluous card, assuming it is the lower of two cards of the same suit if he cannot decide otherwise and it is restored to the correct hand.

PENALTY it is deemed to have belonged to the player's hand throughout, so failure to have played it may constitute a revoke.

DUMMY'S RIGHTS [LAWS 42 & 43]

DUMMY is NOT allowed to:

- Ask a Defender about a possible revoke.
- Look at an opponent's System Card during the play of a hand.
- Draw attention, before the hand is over, to any irregularity, once it has been committed.
- Point out how many tricks have been won or lost.
- Suggest the Director be called before another player draws attention to an irregularity.
- Take any part in the play of the hand except to play the cards as Declarer tells him.
- Look at Declarer's cards or his curtain card.
- Look (at his own initiative) at any card in a Defender's hand.
- Ask any questions or make any comments on the hand.
- Leave his seat to watch Declarer's play.

DUMMY IS allowed to:

- Keep track of tricks won or lost for his own information.
- Warn one of the other players he has put a quitted card in the wrong direction, but only until the next trick is started.
- Try to prevent Declarer from committing an irregularity. For example: saying, 'Are you not in Dummy?' when he is about to take a card from his hand. BUT it would be too late to warn him once he has played the card.
- Try to prevent Declarer from establishing a revoke, for example, saying 'Having no clubs?'
- Try to prevent an irregularity on the part of a DEFENDER.
- Call the Director if one of the other three players draws attention to an irregularity.
- Give information as to fact or law when the Director is present BUT not to ask questions even if the Director is present.
- Draw attention to an irregularity once the hand is completed.

PLAY OF WRONG CARDS [LAW 15]

PLAY OF THE WRONG BOARD

If a board is being played which is not the correct board for this round, so long as none of the four players have played it before, and the auction period has commenced, the Director allows the board to be completed and scored.

When one or more players have previously played the board with the correct opponents or otherwise, the board is stopped as soon as it is realised and cancelled for both sides.

The Director shall award an artificial **adjusted score** (normally Average-plus), see page 19, to any contestant deprived of the opportunity to earn a valid score.

PLAY OF THE WRONG HAND

When a player picks up the cards from a wrong board inadvertently then:

- (A) On the board he is meant to be playing
 - (1) If the OFFENDER makes a call, that call and any call by Offender's LHO are cancelled.
 - (2) If Offender's LHO and Partner have called over the cancelled call, the Director shall cancel the board.
 - (3) OTHERWISE the board is played normally, with any withdrawn call by Offender's LHO being unauthorised to his opponents but not his Partner.
- (B) On the board he took the cards from
 - (1) If the OFFENDER repeats the cancelled call subsequently on the board from which he drew his cards mistakenly, the Director may allow that board to be played normally.
 - (2) HOWEVER, the Director shall cancel the board when Offender's call differs in any significant way from his cancelled call (including if it is now effectively a psyche).

MISCELLANEOUS

SHUFFLE AND DEAL [LAW 6]

Except in the case of pre-dealt/computer-dealt hands, the cards are shuffled and dealt before the start of play. ALL boards should be dealt before the start: it is incorrect to deal and play a board, then deal and play another. There is NO requirement that a board should be dealt by the player marked as Dealer. Any form of dealing is permitted so long as consecutive cards do not go into the same hands.

POSITION OF THE BOARD [LAW 7]

When a board is to be played, it is placed in the CENTRE of the table until play is completed. Some clubs allow the board to be removed from the table. This is undesirable, leads to misboarding and deprives players of their right to see the Dealer and Vulnerability. Putting the board at the corner of the table is a compromise that is acceptable, so long as the board is not rotated, in one of two situations: if the tables are very small, or if one of the players has a disability and the board in the centre causes him difficulty.

CALLING THE DIRECTOR [LAWS 9 & 10]

Which is the most important Law? Perhaps the one that instructs players to call the Director when something goes wrong. The loudest and most vicious arguments in Clubs start with the words, 'I am not going to call the Director, BUT ...'

Only the Director can give rulings. Players who claim to know the Laws are a menace. There is no rule about who calls the Director: if something goes wrong, call him even if you did the wrong thing, do not discuss whether to call him.

PLAYING AFTER AN ILLEGAL CALL OR PLAY [LAWS 11 & 60]

If an infraction has been committed and a player of the non-offending side calls, plays or leads BEFORE a penalty has been assessed, he forfeits the right to penalise that offence. Once that right is forfeit, the illegal call or play is treated as though it were legal.

ILLEGAL DOUBLE OR REDOUBLE [LAW 35 & 36]

Any double or redouble not permitted by the Laws is cancelled. The OFFENDER must substitute a legal call. If the OFFENDER'S LHO has also called subsequently, that call and all subsequent calls are cancelled, and there is no penalty. Otherwise:

PENALTY the Offender's PARTNER must pass throughout and there may be [Lead Penalties](#), see page 7.

If the illegal double or redouble is out of turn then it is cancelled and the bidding reverts to the correct player. The OFFENDER may make any legal call at his turn:

PENALTY the Offender's PARTNER must pass throughout and there may be [Lead Penalties](#), see page 7.

OTHER ILLEGAL CALLS [LAWS 35 to 39]

If a player is required to pass and does not then:

- (A) If his LHO calls his call is condoned and there is no penalty, but if he had to pass for the remainder of the auction this still applies.
- (B) If his LHO does not call the call is cancelled and a pass substituted then:

PENALTY both members of the OFFENDING SIDE must pass throughout and there may be [Lead Penalties](#), see page 7.

If a player makes a bid of more than seven his call and any subsequent calls are cancelled and a pass substituted then:

PENALTY both members of the OFFENDING SIDE must pass throughout and there may be [Lead Penalties](#), see page 7.

If a player makes a call after the final pass:

- (A) If his LHO also calls, then all calls after the final pass are cancelled and there is no penalty.
- (B) If he passes the pass is cancelled and there is no penalty.
- (C) If he makes any call other than pass and LHO does not call then:
PENALTY his call and any subsequent calls are cancelled and there may be [Lead Penalties](#), see page 7.

PARTIAL OR INCOMPLETE CALLS

If a player designates only part of a call, such as 'Stop' or 'One', then he has only made a Partial Call. It is similar if a player takes a Stop card out of the bidding box. A partial call does not constitute a Call and does NOT have to be completed. It carries no penalty except that it gives Unauthorised Information to Partner. If the partial call was out of turn, the bidding reverts to the correct player and the bidding continues as normal.

A common error is for a player to take a double or pass card out of the bidding box followed by a jump bid: if the director judges that the player meant to take the Stop card out of the box then there is no penalty and it is treated as a Stop card and a jump bid.

OFFENDER GAINING FROM IRREGULARITY [LAW 72]

If a player commits ANY irregularity and the Director considers that the NON-OFFENDING SIDE was damaged by the irregularity, he must award an adjusted score PROVIDED THAT he deems that the OFFENDER, at the time of the irregularity, could have known that his irregularity would be likely to cause such damage.

RECTIFYING MISTAKES ON THE SCORE SHEET OR BRIDGEMATE [LAW 79]

There is a duty on players to agree the number of tricks won before the hands are returned to the board.

If there is a subsequent disagreement, the Director must be called and he will determine how many tricks were made. Up to the end of the round, any mistake in the score can be corrected fully.

After the round has ended and within the CORRECTION PERIOD, see page 55, a score can be changed, but now the Director should increase a side's score only if he is completely confident it is right to do so.

FOULED BOARD [LAW 87]

A board is considered fouled if the Director determines that it was played with some cards in different positions at some tables, OR with different dealer position or vulnerability.

In scoring a fouled board, the Director determines as closely as possible which scores were made on the board in its original form and which in its changed form. He divides the scoring on that basis into two groups and scores each group separately. Good software will do this for him.

REDEALING BOARDS [LAW 22]

After the auction period has ended, if no player has bid, the hands are returned to the board without play. There SHALL NOT be a redeal. The Director should caution a player who redeals a hand that is passed out on the first round. It should be noted that redealing is unfair to players who open light or play very weak no-trump openings or like to make judgements whether to open fourth-in-hand.

LATE RULING [LAWS 92]

The Laws allow a player to ask the Director, after the end of a round, for a ruling in regard to some occurrence taking place during that round. However, as the Laws require that the Director should be called when attention is drawn to an irregularity, it follows that a player will need to demonstrate that he has gained some significant information which he did not have at the time of the occurrence.

If a ruling is asked for at the end of a session (or even later) and the Director cannot find out the facts for any reason, then he will rule against the pair who have asked for the ruling.

CORRECTION PERIOD [LAWS 79 & 92]

The final time that a Director will consider any request for a ruling, or for an appeal against his ruling, or for an adjustment to a score, is at the end of the Correction Period. This is defined as half-an-hour after the scores are made available for inspection or later if the organisers say so. Clubs are recommended to make the end of the Correction Period the start of the Duplicate one week later.

ASSIGNMENT OF SEATS [LAW 5]

Players may occupy seats assigned to them either at the Director's discretion or by mutual agreement. Having once selected a compass direction, a player may change it only upon instruction or with the permission of the Director. It is normal for players with disabilities to be allocated stationary seats and, in many clubs, the Director as well. It is important that each club has a policy and makes it known.

SCORING USING BRIDGEMATES

The Bridgemates must be set up at the start of the session. Opening leads is an option but it is recommended. With the newer software opening leads reduce the number of mistakes. The option for No Play to need Director approval **MUST** be activated: players **MUST NOT** enter No Play.

At the end of the auction the board number, contract, by whom it is played and the lead are put into the Bridgmate by North (or South). If the player is on lead or dummy, he should, as a matter of politeness, not put it into the Bridgmate until after the dummy has appeared so as not to delay the hand unnecessarily. If the hand is passed out enter **PASS**: do not enter 0 (No Play) which is entirely different.

At the end of play the result is entered into the Bridgmate which **MUST** then be passed to East or West for them to accept it. If there is a mistake made which needs correcting some Directors will allow the player to do it using the **CORREC** button in **SCORES**, other Directors must be summoned who will change it themselves using the PIN code. Players should not try to guess the PIN code.

If a board cannot be played which should be played, for example because of slow play, the Director will enter averages dependent on who is at fault. To enter No Play is **ILLEGAL** and benefits the slowest players.

The only legitimate uses of No Play are:

(A) After a change in the movement, for example:

- (1) It is not certain whether there are 11.5 tables or 12 tables, but the movement is the same. The Director sets it up for 12 tables: when he discovers he has 11.5 he enters No Play at the sitting out tables each round.
- (2) The evening goes slowly and the Director decides to cancel the last round (or perhaps one board of the last round). The unplayed boards all get No Play.

- (B) If the Director permits a Late Play, ie a board cannot be played because of time but he permits it to be played in the break or at the end, then the Bridgemate will not move on to the next round without a score so the Director enters No Play. He **MUST** change it later to the score if the board is played, or to averages if it is not.

SPECIAL METHODS FOR MAKING CALLS [LAWS 18 & 19]

BIDDING BOXES – INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Making a Call

Players place their selected calls in front of them in turn, facing towards the centre of the table, in a row from left to right, with every call in the sequence visible. Note that some left-handed bidding boxes are available, where the calls are placed in a row from right to left.

When is a Call Deemed to be Made?

A call is deemed to be made when the bidding card is removed from the bidding box with apparent intent. Players should decide which call they are going to make before touching any card. To hesitate between choices is **UNAUTHORISED INFORMATION** to Partner. If a **STOP** card was produced first that does not mean the call is made so the player can take the **STOP** card back without penalty, although it may provide **UNAUTHORISED INFORMATION** to Partner.

Correction of a Call

A call may be changed without penalty **ONLY** if it is unintended, ie a mechanical error, not a change of mind. Originally, it was advised that changes should not be allowed if the player had let go of the card, or if it was from a different part of the box. This is not now the case.

If LHO made a call before the change was allowed, he may withdraw that choice and replace it with another without penalty.

STOP and ALERT Cards

- (A) The STOP card should be placed on the table before any jump bid and stay there for about ten seconds after the bid is made. The next player may not call until it is removed and should wait about ten seconds however fast it has been removed.
- (B) When the ALERT card is required, it should be taken from the box and shown to both opponents (making sure that it has been seen by both) before being replaced in the box.

Incorrectly Exposed Bidding Card

Calls not made should not be visible. An incorrectly exposed call can be subject to penalty if the Director judges that an opponent has been misled.

At the End of the Auction

The bidding cards should remain in place until the opening lead has been made face down, all explanations have been obtained and the lead turned face up after which they should be returned to their boxes.

SILENT BIDDERS – INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Making a Call

A bid is made by touching the relevant figure and symbol or word. Other calls are made by touching the relevant symbol or word.

When is a Call Deemed to be Made?

A bid is deemed to have been made when both the appropriate figure and symbol or word have been touched. Other calls are deemed to have been made when the relevant symbol or word has been touched. To hesitate between choices is UNAUTHORISED INFORMATION to Partner.

Correction of a Call

A call may be changed without penalty ONLY if it is unintended, ie a mechanical error, not a change of mind. Originally, it was advised that changes should not be allowed unless the player had touched a symbol adjacent to the one intended. This is not now the case.

If LHO made a call before the change was allowed, he may withdraw that call and make a new one without penalty.

STOP and ALERT Symbols

- (A) The STOP symbol should be touched before any jump bid. The next player may not call for about ten seconds.
- (B) When the ALERT symbol is required, it should be touched (making sure that it has been seen by both opponents).

INDEX

This index is designed to be easy and quick to use. It lists key words and phrases in alphabetical order. The **BOLD** entries are the Main Headings throughout the booklet and these can be useful if your query does not turn up in the list – find the main heading that it might come under and turn to that part of the book.

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NOTES

Every ten years, the World Bridge Federation (WBF) publishes a fresh Law book taking into account the changes thought needed or necessary. *Duplicate Bridge Rules Simplified* has been fully updated and revised by David Stevenson to incorporate these latest changes.

He is uniquely qualified for the task, being a Premier Grand Master and winner of several of the game's most prestigious trophies. He has been a Chief Tournament Director of the WBU as well as being an EBU and WBU National Tournament Director, also a European Bridge League (EBL) Tournament Director. He has also worked on the EBU and WBU Laws and Ethics Committees. In addition he has been involved in the high-level training of EBU and EBL Directors.

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