

You're bidding along and all of a sudden you get a question from your opponent: "What does your bid mean?" Or you get a system message that your bid has been questioned and there's that little box for you to type your answer.

What does she want? Your bid means what it means, right? Well not always.

Although it may appear to you that they are asking you something that is none of their business, actually it is.

At the bridge table there can be few secrets. The opponents are entitled to the very same information that your partner has. If you have an agreement with partner about a certain bid, the opponents are entitled to know what that agreement is, and it's your responsibility to tell them

And when you answer your opponents you must answer promptly, clearly and completely. For instance, not everyone has heard of the Jacoby 2NT convention or knows what it means. So, when you're questioned about your 2NT bid, "*Jacoby 2NT*" isn't the right answer. And although there's not a whole lot of room to explain, it can be done with just a few more characters by typing something like "*game pts, 4+ cd suppt. bal.*"

This is what Full Disclosure means. If you have an agreement with partner, the opponents are entitled to that information also. This not the time to be coy or to give bits and pieces of information, this is the time for Full Disclosure!

But what if you make a bid and you have no agreement with partner? Do you still have to explain your bid and more or less tell them what you hold in your hand? Of course not. If you have no agreement with partner on a bid then your answer to your opponent's question is No Agreement. It's as simple as that!

By answering your opponents quickly and completely when questioned, your game will go faster, smoother and give YOU a reputation as a bridge player in the know.

At your local bridge club you would fulfil your obligations on full disclosure in three ways:

1. Announcements: one or two word statements about your partner's call (not your own!!) that are so universally understood that they require no elaboration, e.g. 12-14, Stayman, 'Hearts' (after you open 1NT and partner bids 2D – transfer) , Weak, etc.
2. Alerts: Hold up the blue 'alert' card when your partner makes a call which has or may have an unnatural meaning that requires a more fulsome explanation. For example, if you open 1NT and partner bids 2S (wanting to make a weak takeout into 3C or 3D), you must alert partner's bid. It is then up to your opponents to ask what the 2S bid means. If they don't ask, don't volunteer. If they ask then you should give a full

explanation (there are several different continuation options – the one I teach requires opener to bid 3C and responder passes or converts to 3D, but there is an alternative method where opener rebids 2NT and responder then bids his long minor.)

3. Ask questions: Not all partnership agreements can be covered by announcements or alerts. A good example is the meaning of a double, penalty or takeout. Another example is when your opponent makes a jump overcall. It's a natural bid but can have a wide range of meanings (shape, point count), depending on the bidder's system. If you want to know, ask.

### **Self alerting/announcing on BBO; asking questions**

On BBO, Announcements and Alerts are dealt with by 'self-alerting' in the bidding box before making the call (NOT BY 'CHAT' – the caller's sleepy partner must not be given unauthorised information).

On BBO, questions are asked by clicking on the caller's bid in the auction box. Only the caller can see that a question has been asked, and the answer. The caller's partner will not be made aware of either the question or the answer. When asked questions you should respond in a helpful and positive manner, even if you think the answer should be obvious. Remember, your opponents have an absolute right to full disclosure.

### **Your BBO Account Profile**

A brief description of your system on your profile is not intended to be a mini convention card, and is not an excuse for thinking you don't have to self-alert some bids. Even if you have stated '3 Weak 2s' on your profile, you still must self-announce it.

The primary reason for including a brief description of your system on your profile is to help players who are checking out players on partly filled tables hoping to find a suitable pick up partner i.e. one who plays a similar system. Club hosts (such as the Aacol Club) get rather annoyed if players that have invited themselves to their club have not bothered to complete a basic system profile, as this results in players joining a table, quickly finding out that their pickup partner plays a system they are unfamiliar with, and then promptly leaving the table! **As we get such a lot out of BBO for free, it is not much to ask that we all complete our profile for the benefit of others.**