

Bridge Laws and Table Etiquette

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Bridge Laws and Table Etiquette

(Course outline)

- ▶ Auction
- ▶ Director Calls
- ▶ Play
- ▶ Communication with Partner
- ▶ Claims and Concessions
- ▶ Examples

Sources of Bridge Regulations

- ▶ The 93 Laws of Duplicate Bridge established by the World Bridge Federation can be located at <http://cdn.acbl.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Laws-of-Duplicate-Bridge.pdf> and <http://www.worldbridge.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2017LawsOfDuplicateBridge-withhighlights.pdf>
- ▶ The alert and announcement requirements established by the ACBL can be located at <http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/AlertChart.pdf> and <http://cdn.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/AlertProcedures.pdf>

Auction - Preparing and Bidding

- ▶ Getting ready to play
 - ▶ Review your convention card
 - ▶ Count cards
- ▶ Bidding
 - ▶ Don't think with your hands when bidding
 - ▶ Bid in tempo
 - ▶ Skip bid requires 10 second pause by next bidder
 - ▶ No communication with partner, except through bids made

1. Review your convention card to make sure of your agreements and that it matches partner's card. Count cards.
2. Don't think with your hands when you're bidding.
3. Bid in tempo.

If there's a skip bid on your right, you are obligated to wait 10 seconds, even though as of January 1st, the stop card and skip bid warnings have been eliminated. You are entitled to communicate with partner through your calls, but not through facial expressions or gestures or other comments.

"It is desirable, though not always required, for players to maintain steady tempo and unvarying manner. However, players should be particularly careful when variations may work to the benefit of their side. Otherwise, unintentionally to vary the tempo or manner in which a call or play is made is not an infraction. Inferences from such variations are authorized only to the opponents, who may act upon the information at their own risk." (Law 73D1)

"A player may not attempt to mislead an opponent by means of a question, remark or gesture; by the haste or hesitancy of a call or play (as in hesitating before playing a singleton); by the manner in which a call or play is made; or by any purposeful deviation from correct procedure . . .)." (Law 73D2)

Auction - Clarification of Bids

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- ▶ Asking Questions During Auction
 - ▶ Only when it's your turn to bid
 - ▶ Ask about "agreements", not how they "take" a bid
 - ▶ Proper question is "Please Explain"
 - ▶ Questions should not disclose particular interest in suit
- ▶ Answering Questions
 - ▶ Full disclosure if opponents show any interest
 - ▶ Opponent need not ask the "right question"
 - ▶ Disclose explicit and implicit agreements, including partner's tendencies
 - ▶ Don't just name a convention, explain its meaning

4. Clarification of calls during and after auction

A. Asking questions.

You can ask questions when it's your turn to bid, not your partner's. Under the laws, you're entitled to learn about your opponents' special agreements, so ask about their agreements, not how they "take" a bid. The proper question to ask is "please explain." You should be careful about asking any questions that indicate a particular interest in one suit, particularly in the pass-out seat. Ask at the appropriate time.

B. Answering questions.

Opponents need not ask exactly the right question. Full disclosure should be triggered by any inquiry about your bidding. The proper response is to explain your explicit agreements and any implicit agreements that have arisen your observation of your partner's style, including if they tend to forget a particular convention. Naming the convention used is not a sufficient answer. For example, saying your opening leads are "standard" is rarely a sufficient explanation. You need not explain nonconventional bids or inferences available from general bridge knowledge. If you have no agreement, that is all you need to say.

Auction - Clarification of Bids

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- ▶ Clarification Period After Auction
 - ▶ Begins at end of auction
 - ▶ Ask questions and correct misinformation
 - ▶ Opening leader asks questions before making opening lead face down
 - ▶ Once lead is face down, can't change it without director's permission
 - ▶ Should not prompt partner to ask questions
 - ▶ Be careful about asking questions that provide unauthorized information
 - ▶ At your first turn to play you may ask for a review of auction
 - ▶ After you have first played, you may ask what the contract is and for an explanation of bids

4. Clarification of calls during and after auction (cont.)

C. The clarification period at the end of the auction

Opening leader should ask any questions he or she has before making the opening lead face down. As a defender, you may be curious about one particular bid, but if your question emphasizes one bid, it may appear that you are giving partner unauthorized information about your holding in that suit. It's safer to ask about the entire auction than one bid. Opening leader shouldn't prompt partner to ask questions, particularly before you've selected a lead. Once your lead is face down, you can't change it without the director's permission. At your first turn to play, you may ask for a review of the auction, but not thereafter. Thereafter you can, however, ask what the contract is and for an explanation of any bids.

Auction - Clarification of Bids

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- ▶ Misinformation (including failures to alert)
 - ▶ Declaring side - Correct misinformation after auction
 - ▶ Defending side - Correct misinformation at end of play of the hand
 - ▶ Do not have to explain misbids, only your agreements
 - ▶ Before offering a correction you should call the Director

4. Clarification of calls during and after auction (cont.)

If misinformation was provided by you or partner (which includes a failure to alert) the declaring side, including dummy, is required to clear up any misstatements. By law, the director should be called before you offer a correction. You have no obligation to explain that you misbid as long as the opponents are told your agreements.

The defending side's obligation is different. You have to live with partner's misstatement or omission (failure to alert) until the end of play of the hand, at which time by law you should call the director and explain the error.

Director Calls

- ▶ Directors keep the game flowing and resolve issues
- ▶ Directors are not the police and opponents are not criminals
- ▶ Be nice in asking for Director's help and when talking about the issue

Play - Play in Tempo

- ▶ Play Cards in Tempo
 - ▶ Anticipate finesses and other actions by declarer
 - ▶ Don't hesitate with singleton
 - ▶ Don't detach card before declarer has played a card
 - ▶ Don't detach several cards while deciding which card to play
 - ▶ Communicate through card played, not facial expressions or gestures

1. Playing cards in tempo.

Think if you need to, but you should anticipate possible finesses by declarer. If you're looking at the Ace or the Queen or both, and declarer leads up to dummy holding of a KJ, you should have already decided which card you'll play. Do not hesitate with a singleton. Do not detach a card before the declarer has played a card. Do not detach several cards in deciding what to play. You can communicate with partner by the cards you play, but not by facial expressions or gestures.

Play - Dummy's Rights

- ▶ Dummy's Rights are Limited

- ▶ Can correct declarer's turning of a card before they play to the next trick
- ▶ Don't suggest which card to play
- ▶ Don't initiate a Director call, unless after someone else calls attention to an irregularity
- ▶ May ask declarer, but not defenders, if they have any more cards in a suit played
- ▶ May point out an irregularity after the play of the hand is concluded

Communication with Partner

(1 of 2)

- ▶ “Any extraneous information from partner that might suggest a call or play is unauthorized. This includes remarks, questions, replies to questions, unexpected alerts or failures to alert, unmistakable hesitation, unwonted speed, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism.” (Law 16B1) “When a player has available to him unauthorized information from his partner, such as from a remark, question, explanation, gesture, mannerism, undue emphasis, inflection, haste or hesitation, an unexpected alert or failure to alert, he must carefully avoid taking any advantage from that unauthorized information [see Law 16B1(a)].” (Law 73C1)
- ▶ In other words, anything that happens at the table that’s not on the table.

You should bid and play as though partner is behind a screen and cannot be seen or heard.

When you believe your opponent has made unauthorized information available, you need not call the director immediately, so long as you obtain the opponents’ agreement that it occurred. If the opponents dispute your characterization, they should call the director immediately. If they agree with your characterization, you should summon the director when play ends if you believe you’ve been damaged.

The laws require you to split your attention when partner has erroneously alerted or failed to alert. For purposes of clarifying your auction, as the declaring side, you’re required to correct your mistakes promptly. But for purposes of having the auction, you have to assume that partner properly alerted when there was no alert and vice versa.

Sometimes the auction can give you authorized information that will supersede your unauthorized information.

Communication with Partner

(2 of 2)

- ▶ Act as though partner cannot be seen or heard.
 - ▶ The laws require you to split your attention when partner has erroneously alerted or failed to alert. For purposes of clarifying your auction, as the declaring side, you're required to correct your mistakes promptly. But for purposes of having the auction, you have to assume that partner properly alerted when there was no alert and vice versa.
 - ▶ When you believe your opponent has made unauthorized information available, you need not call the director immediately, so long as you obtain the opponents' agreement that it occurred. If the opponents dispute your characterization, they should call the director immediately. If they agree with your characterization, you should summon the director when play ends if you believe you've been damaged.
 - ▶ Sometimes the auction can give you authorized information that will supersede your unauthorized information.

Claims and Concessions

- ▶ During the play of a hand, any statement about how many more tricks either side will get is a claim or concession. You will be held to your stated line of play.
- ▶ “A claim should be accompanied at once by a clear statement of the line of play or defense through which the claimer proposes to win the tricks claimed, including the order in which the cards will be played. The player making the claim or concession faces his hand.”
- ▶ Play is suspended at the time of a claim or concession
- ▶ If all players (including dummy) agree to resume play, play can resume and the claim or concession is canceled
- ▶ Dummy can dispute declarer's concession