

S10 BRIDGE CLUB, SHEFFIELD **POINTS OF LAW, ETIQUETTE AND PROCEDURE**

This list is prepared mainly for the benefit of new members. It is gratefully based on the EBU etiquette document with a number of local additions. Most members should be aware of the majority of these points. More experienced players are asked to be tolerant of those who are still learning the intricacies of duplicate bridge and to provide gentle help and guidance where necessary.

General procedure

These points help to make sure that play proceeds at a reasonable speed and helps avoid mechanical errors, e.g. cards getting mixed up between hands.

Please turn up promptly. Do not expect to be accommodated if play has started when you arrive.

Please switch off your mobile or set it to 'silent mode' before play begins.

Acknowledge and welcome the opposition, especially visitors or new members of the group. Be attentive and avoid discussing previous hands.

Always count your cards before looking at them. If you don't have 13 cards, call the tournament director (TD) or steward for the evening.

Leave the board in play on the table, pointing in the right direction, until the hand is finished. This makes it harder to put the hands back in the wrong slots afterward.

Try not to take too long over calls or when playing a card. Best practice is to always try and play in tempo.

It is discourteous and unfair to keep other pairs waiting.

As declarer, if you can clearly see that all the remaining tricks are yours, claim them rather than play on. You must specify clearly your line of play, including a statement about drawing any remaining trumps.

Don't spend time talking about a hand until you have finished all the boards in that round. And if you do want to discuss a hand at the table, do it quietly (people who haven't yet played it might hear you otherwise).

It is best not to remove more than one traveller from the boards at any one time. North should always make sure that all travellers have been returned to the correct boards at the end of the round.

It is North's responsibility to make sure that boards are passed on to the correct table (or relay as appropriate) at the end of each round.

Bidding and play

These points help to make sure that everyone bids and plays as fairly as possible. Using bidding boxes at least stops us from using our tone of voice to indicate whether our partner should bid on or pass, but it's still all too easy to pick up

inferences, known as 'unauthorised information', either from an unguarded comment, from a facial expression, or even from the speed at which someone bids or plays. You are perfectly entitled to try to take advantage of this if your opponents do it, but NOT when it's your partner. Of course, you should try to avoid doing anything yourself which might give away any information of this sort to your partner.

If you play anything more complicated than a fairly basic ACOL system, both players should have an identically completed convention card giving details of the basic system that they play, along with the meaning of all artificial calls, and their system of leads, signals, and discards. These should be left on the table throughout the bidding and play, so that your opponents can consult them.

Thinking a long time about your hand before bidding is hesitating. It is not illegal and no longer forces partner to pass. However, it does put a requirement on partner to avoid taking any advantage because you are effectively saying, for example, 'I have something but maybe not quite enough to make a bid.'

Don't touch the 'bid' cards in the bidding box then take out a card from the other section, or vice versa. Try not to touch the box at all until you are sure of your bid.

Avoid looking directly at partner/opponents/their hands during the bidding and play.

Use the 'STOP' card when making a jump bid (including opening bids): take it out, leave it on the table for ten seconds, then put it away. The next player shouldn't bid whilst the 'STOP' card is still on the table. This creates a short pause for thought, avoiding the inference that a player who passes quickly has nothing to think about.

When alerting a call, it is your responsibility to make sure that both opponents see the 'ALERT' card.

We follow the EBU guide on Announcing and Alerting (separate document in our library).

During the bidding, you can only ask an opponent for an explanation of a bid made by their side when it's your turn to call. You must ask the partner of the player who made the bid, not the player who made it.

Avoid asking questions about the bidding while it is continuing, unless you really need to know the answer in order to decide what your next call should be (because if you then pass, your partner might draw an inference about your strength, or your interest in the suit bid). Otherwise, wait until the auction is finished.

Left hand defender leads but face down saying, 'any questions?' At this stage anyone, except dummy, can ask questions about the auction. If there are none, the partner should say, 'No questions.' Once the opening lead has been made it can't be changed, but it shouldn't be turned over until partner has asked anything he/she wants to know. All four players should leave the bidding cards on the table until any questions have been asked and the opening lead has been faced. The led card is then faced. The main purpose of 'asking' is to prevent a lead out of turn.

Dummy neatly lays out the cards so that they are all visible, with trumps conventionally on dummy's right.

Declarer says, 'thank you partner', sometimes through gritted teeth.

If there has been a misunderstanding during the bidding by declarer or dummy, this should be explained to the opponents after the final bid has been made but before play starts. If the defenders think they have been damaged, they should call the TD. However, defenders mustn't say anything about misunderstandings in their own bidding until the play of the hand has finished, when they should call the TD.

If there is any hesitation in the bidding or the play, the partner of the player who hesitated must be very careful not to draw any inference from this and must bid/play as he/she would have done if there had been no hesitation. This is particularly the case if a player hesitates during the bidding and then passes.

You should not say anything about the hand while the auction is in progress, or during the play – unless asked by an opponent for an explanation of a call, or lead/signalling/discard system.

You should not touch other players' cards. You may ask them to show you.

Dummy

Declarer should never touch the cards in dummy. Declarer calls for a precise card and dummy plays that card, no other. **Exception:** sometimes there is a bidder or dummy leaves the table, but the procedure remains. Declarer calls for a card before playing it, he/she does not just pull the card out of dummy.

If during play the dummy cards become disturbed, dummy may straighten them but only immediately, saying, 'Just straightening the cards' or something similar.

Dummy's fingers should not hover over or point to a card or suit during play (it may be taken as dummy leading declarer). Best is for dummy's fingers to be off the table.

If declarer says to dummy, 'Play any card', or, 'It doesn't matter which', dummy does not have the choice. Defenders have the choice.

If declarer says to dummy, 'A diamond [or whatever] away', it is usual to play the lowest card.

If declarer says to dummy, 'Run the diamonds [or whatever]', that is not quite good enough. He/she needs to qualify that by saying which card to begin with.

Dummy should help prevent declarer leading from the wrong hand but needs to remind declarer immediately after the previous trick and before declarer says which card to play from the dummy. If declarer says to dummy, 'Play [whatever]' when the lead should be from declarer's hand, dummy should remain quiet. The defence, if they spot the irregularity, have the right to accept the lead or to ask the declarer to lead from hand. If declarer incorrectly leads out of hand, again the defence can or cannot accept the lead from the wrong hand, but the card is returned to hand with no penalty. Declarer can then call for any card from table.

After declarer leads from hand, he/she announces to dummy which card to play only after left hand defender has tabled their card.

If declarer shows out of a suit and plays another suit dummy should say, 'having no [whatever]s partner?' This is to help prevent establishing a revoke but it must be said before playing to the next trick. After that the revoke is established.

Dummy can also tell partner that he has played a trick the wrong way round but only before playing to the next trick. After that dummy must remain silent.

Dummy can call attention to any irregularities e.g. a revoke, lead out of wrong hand, false claims or a trick the wrong way round, but only at the end of play.

Dummy calls the Director but only at the request of one or more of the other players. He/she may answer the Director's questions.

During The Play

Who can ask about a possible revoke? Other than dummy, anyone can ask anyone. So, for example, declarer can ask either defender, 'No whatever?' Dummy can only ask declarer. Either defender can ask declarer, if dummy hasn't already done so. Defenders can ask one another.

Until a lead is made to the next trick, declarer or defender may re-examine his own card just played. A player who has not yet turned over his or her card may require all cards just played to the trick to be refaced.

A defender's card is deemed exposed if it was possible for their partner to see its face. Every such exposed card becomes a penalty card and has to be placed face up on the table until played according to the rules. A minor penalty card is one with a value less than 10 and a major penalty card 10 or above. They are treated differently so best call TD who will explain when and how to play them. The accidental exposure of the card by declarer incurs no penalty and can be returned to hand.

After the Play

Shuffle your cards before returning them to the board.

North enters the score on the traveller and shows it to East or West to verify before returning it to the board.

Thank your opponents at the end of the round and move promptly to your next table.

Don't forget to enjoy the game!

Calling the director (steward)

Do call the director (steward) at any time if there is a problem during the bidding or the play. He or she is there to help, so don't try to sort things out yourselves.

Please call the director in a courteous manner. Agree the necessity or politely explain to your opponents the reasons for calling the director first.

Please call the TD immediately if you spot an error on a traveller.