

Bidding Box Etiquette

Purpose - bidding boxes have been introduced to duplicate bridge in order to reduce the possibility of information being communicated between partners by voice intonation or other mannerisms such as eye contact, facial expressions etc.

Manner of use - when using a bidding box, try to decide what your bid is going to be **before reaching for or touching cards in the bidding box**. An extreme example of this impropriety is when, for example, you touch the 2♥ card and then pull out a pass card.

When using bidding boxes, the correct protocol is for the bids to be left on the table until the opening lead is made. This is to ensure that the defenders are able to review the auction and ask any questions prior to the commencement of play. The bids may then be returned to the box.

Other relevant points -

1) a call is considered made when a bidding card is removed from the bidding box and held touching or nearly touching the table or maintained in such a position to indicate that the call has been made.

2) A call may be changed without penalty, only if the player has **inadvertently taken out the wrong bidding card** and the player attempts to correct his mistake without pause for thought **and the player's partner has not made a call**.

Unauthorized information

A partnership may only transmit information about the value of their hand through the bids in the auction the signals they make during the play. Anything else imposes conditions on the partner of the player concerned, **whether the transmission of unauthorized information was intentional or not**.

Examples of unauthorized information that may suggest a bid or play to one's partner include -

- a remark
- a question
- a reply to a question
- an unexpected alert or failure to alert
- unmistakable hesitation
- unwonted speed - eg. - passing very quickly
- special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism

Whenever any of the above occurs, the partner may not choose from among logical alternatives a bid or action that could demonstrably have been suggested by the unauthorized information - a possible example might be -

North	East	South	West
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
3♠	Pass	4♠	noticeable pause
Pass	5♥		

The question is - did East have a clear bid of 5H in his/her own hand or did he/she act on the UA from West's hesitation. North/South should call the director for their own protection. After looking at East's hand - the director may choose to let the bid stand or roll it the bidding back to 4S.

What happens if you forget to alert partner's bid?

1) The auction is not over - you should alert as you remember and call the director. It's still possible that the director can fix the situation and permit normal play.

2) The auction is over.

(a) **Are you defending?** If you are defending, you must not say anything until the play finishes. When the play finishes, call the director and say that there has been a failure to alert.

(b) **Are you declaring?** When you are declaring, before the opening leader makes his/her lead - inform the defending side of the failure to alert and call the director.

Gloating and Gracious situations

Save the high fives until after you have left the table, especially if the opponents have made an error on defense and let you make the contract.

You catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar. Always strive to be nice and gracious. It will come back to you over time.

Who may ask questions during the auction?

Either opponent, at their turn to bid - may ask about the meaning of a specific bid.

Auction	P	1♣	P	1♠
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No one has alerted any bid so far in this auction, therefore there is no reason to ask any questions. If there has been a failure to alert and your side has been damaged, the director will usually bend over backwards to protect the non - offending side.

By asking questions about bids that have not been alerted, you may be giving your partner unauthorized information that you have values in the suit that you are inquiring about.

Unless it is your intention to bid it is far better to wait and ask your questions after the auction is complete.