

Play Nicely!

(How to be on your best behaviour)

1. **Introduction**

We all wish to maintain a friendly and welcoming atmosphere throughout our club; but it may seem to some people that sticking closely to rules of the game has the opposite effect. In fact, law 74A of The Laws of Duplicate Bridge states that “a player should maintain a courteous attitude at all times”. Even so, misbehaviour can and does occur and you are extremely fortunate if you have never experienced anything ranging from simple ill-manners to downright rudeness.

Please read on to remind yourself of what is expected, how best behaviour can improve your results and what to do if there is an unacceptable incident.

2. **Best Behaviour At Bridge**

The EBU's guidelines for best behaviour include the following:

- a) Greet others in a friendly manner prior to start of play on each round. With everyone's name available from the Bridgmate, North can take the lead in making introductions.
- b) Be a good ‘host’ or ‘guest’ at the table; ensure that your mobile phone is off; enjoy the company and make the game pleasant for yourself, your partner and your opponents.
- c) Make your system card readily available to your opponents and fill it out completely.

It is unacceptable to criticise your partner or opponents in public; to inspect another player's hand without their permission; be less than polite at the table; to gloat over a good result; to object to a call for the Director; to argue with a Director or to dispute a ruling. If you do slip up and criticise your partner, then expect some bad boards to follow!

3. **Bridgmate Protocol**

We are now very familiar with using Bridgmates to enter our initial table number and the players' EBU numbers. It is then North's responsibility to check each board number and add the contract and declarer details after the auction, followed by the lead as soon as it is made. At the end of play, North records the result and then passes the Bridgmate to East (or to West if requested by East), who confirms all the details before placing the Bridgmate on the table facing West and pressing the Accept button. Only when there is plenty of time remaining in the round, may you then review the results at other tables. All discussion of boards should be avoided because it risks providing extraneous information to neighbouring tables, making the boards unplayable. It also wastes time, especially when you should be greeting a new pair at the start of the next round.

4. **Slow Play**

Slow play often has a serious effect on the enjoyment of a session. It can create ill-feeling by putting time pressure on the bidding and play of the next hand, and players may become so stressed and irritated that our best behaviour guidelines are quickly forgotten. Whenever one table is slow to move, two tables are late starting the next round, which may escalate to three tables in the following round. So, please move as quick as you can when the Director calls the movement.

Save time by making the lead and tabling dummy before writing on your scorecard. Please remember that once the 3 minute buzzer has sounded, you must not start the last board of the round: that means do not continue if the first call in the auction has not been made. Instead, the only call you must make is to the Director, who may allow you to play the board or play it during the tea break, or award an adjusted score - which is a shame when you really came to play Bridge.

5. **“Director, please!”**

If there is any behaviour that upsets you during a session, then please do call the Director. This includes bringing misbehaviour to the Director's attention even if you are not directly concerned. Bad behaviour is taken very seriously by the EBU, and the Director is entitled to impose a Disciplinary Penalty even on a first offence. So let's “play nicely!” - it is in everyone's interests.

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6. **Finally**

The aim of this “Ethic of the Month” series is to make our players aware of the day-to-day irregularities which are easily avoided, and thereby reduce the number of calls to the Director.

However, whenever there is any sort of issue at your table, it is important that you do call “Director, please!” and hold up a hand to show the Director from where the call has come. Please do not make your own rulings at the table without calling the Director, regardless of how long you yourself have been playing or directing.

You will also be well equipped if you venture out of the club to play in events at other clubs and in Surrey County or national tournaments, and represent Woking Bridge Club in the best possible way. Above all, enjoy your Bridge in the knowledge that we are playing to the best standard of behaviour promoted by the EBU.

David Burch

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