

### Examining Your Own Convention Card

The rules forbid written or mechanical aids during the auction and play. Thus you must not display a bidding card during the play to remind yourself or your partner of the final contract (as I have seen one director at a local club do to help her clients when she plays "professionally"). Nor may you keep your convention card on your lap, hidden from your opponents but available for easy perusal by yourself during the auction.

Nonetheless, there are times when it is permissible and desirable to examine your own convention card and times when it is obligatory.

It is permissible to examine your own convention card when you are dummy or between deals, and desirable to do so when you have a little extra time between rounds.

It is obligatory to examine your own convention card, after the final pass when you are dummy or declarer, or after Trick 13 when you are a defender, when you suspect that your partner has failed to alert or announce your call properly, or explained it inaccurately to your opponents.

### Documenting Your Methods

Suppose you have forgotten a partnership agreement. It can happen to anyone, and it is neither against the rules nor unethical. It has even happened to me. For example, suppose you play a 3♥ response to 1♠ as weak with your present partner, but you forget and make what you think is an invitational 3♥ jump. Your partner alerts and explains your 3♥ as weak; then, after your LHO passes, he raises to 4♥.

Your partner's explanation jogs your memory. His explanation is correct, and your 3♥ bid was wrong (you have an ace more than you should have for your bid), so, quite properly, you do not offer any correction at the end of the auction. During the play, a defender underleads the ♣K, expecting his partner to have the ♣A, but you have it and make two overtricks. The defenders call the director and complain that your partner misdescribed your 3♥ jump.

Here's where it pays for you to have two convention cards, identical in substance if not in wording. A competent and impartial director will allow the "table result" to stand if both your convention cards are marked for "Weak Jump Shifts Not in Comp." *because the explanation was correct even though your bid wasn't*. Otherwise, however, a good director will adjust the score to reflect the result on optimal defense ... and impose a procedural penalty on your side.

Properly filled out convention cards protect you against penalty when the issue is *misinformation* (an infraction) or *misbid* (an innocent error from which you may benefit legitimately).

Note, by the way, the requirement to write full names on each convention card. "Bob and Carol" won't suffice if Carol uses different methods with different Bobs (I've been at a small gathering in somebody's parlor with four Bobs).