

# **OBC Playing Guidelines**

These Playing Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the separate documents covering:

- OBC Best Behaviour at Bridge
- Table Etiquette
- Alerting and Announcing

## ***OBC Playing Guidelines***

Oxford Bridge Club CIO has adopted a set of guidelines when running duplicate sessions to enhance the enjoyment of the people playing. Each session is normally run by a qualified Director who is responsible for implementing these guidelines and for the smooth running of the event.

For full information look at all the sections as follows:

- ♣ *Arriving to play*
- ♣ *Seating*
- ♣ *At the table*
- ♣ *During Play*
- ♣ *Role of the Director*

If you have any feedback on any aspect of these guidelines, please talk to the Director of the session you played in or fill in the club feedback form.

## Arriving to play

- ◆ Regular sessions at OBC normally start play at 10:00am (morning sessions) and 7:15pm (evening sessions). It takes time for everyone to find a table and a few minutes to set up the movement for a session which cannot start until the number of tables is finalised. For the sake of the scorer's and director's health and to achieve a prompt start, players are asked to arrive at Oxford Bridge Club at least 15 minutes before play is due to start and to be seated, ready to play, 10 minutes before play is due to start.
- ◆ As a matter of fairness to those who are ready to play on time, it is the policy of OBC that the Director may refuse to accommodate pairs who are not seated 5 minutes before the session is due to start. If a player is delayed by exceptional circumstances but still expects to arrive before play starts they should telephone the club to confirm their arrival time – the Director may at his discretion (*e.g. to avoid a sit-out*) accommodate the player.
- ◆ The capacity at an OBC session varies depending on the space allocated for the session. If 10 minutes before the session starts there are more players wanting to play than there is space for, then the Director will give priority in the following order:
  1. Players in complete partnerships in order of arrival
  2. Incomplete partnerships where a telephone call has been acknowledged by the Director that a player is delayed by exceptional circumstances but still expects to arrive before play starts
  3. Other partnerships that become complete less than 10 minutes before the scheduled start of play but before the movement is set

Note: On a Teams night, read the above substituting “teams” for “partnerships”.

## Seating

- ♥ On arrival, players may choose seats where they like.
- ♥ Anyone who, for medical reasons, needs a stationary seat should inform the director and, where possible, they will be allowed one. Before the start of play, the director will normally draw a random card from a shuffled pack. If it is an odd black card, all those sitting at odd-numbered tables change direction. If it is an even black card, all those sitting at even-numbered tables change direction. If it is an odd red card, players at all tables change direction. If it is an even red card, no one changes.
- ♥ Along with this, we will continue to apply the principle that if there is an odd number of tables, there is an EW sit-out and if there is an even number of tables, there is an NS sit-out (there are some exceptions dictated by the movement).
- ♥ If you are a player who genuinely needs to be stationary for a session, then you need to let the Director know and should normally try to sit in a Mitchell movement as NS. If you sit in a Howell movement, it is more difficult to ensure you will be stationary, although this can be accommodated by one table at least.
- ♥ The Trustees shall draw up a list of players who need to be seated as North or South, and shall keep the list under review. This responsibility may be delegated to the Bridge Committee.

## At the table

- ♠ Each session is run by a Director and will have a Scorer – this may be the same person. Please treat the Scorer and the Director with respect, as they are doing an onerous job as well as playing bridge.
- ♠ It is a condition of playing at any session that players comply with the “Best Behaviour at Bridge” guidelines. Any player experiencing any breach of these guidelines must call the Director of the session. When the Director determines that the guidelines have not been followed they are empowered to give warnings, assess scoring penalties and in exceptional situations exclude players from further play in the session.
- ♠ Players at OBC duplicate sessions are expected to be familiar with:
  - the rules and requirements of table etiquette
  - bidding procedures (Alerting and Announcing) including pausing after a stop card
- ♠ Players should only use conventions when both they and their partner can clearly explain what they mean when asked.
- ♠ It is an EBU requirement that each partner in a partnership has a matching and properly completed convention card. If you do not, the Director will require that you use a simple system for that session. Convention cards for Benji ACOL and simple ACOL in common use at the OBC are available at the club or can be downloaded from the OBC or EBU websites.
- ♠ If at the start of a round, your opponents do not have matching convention cards, you must call the Director, so that he can ensure compliance with the convention card requirements.
- ♠ If you do not have matching and properly completed convention cards and you are playing a system which is not Benji Acol or Simple Acol, then any mishap occurring in your bidding is likely to be ruled against you. This is because the Director will have no way of telling (reliably) what any bid you make means. Just saying what it means in this situation is not enough.

## During Play

- ♣ It is the policy at Oxford Bridge Club that should a mishap occur at your table, you are required to call the Director. The Director is there to ensure equity – it is not a punishment to call the Director to sort out a query – it is in the best interests of every player, as the Director will ensure that a correct score is awarded should there be any need. This will have an impact on every score for that board and, by implication, for every player's score during the evening.
- ♣ The Director should be called immediately if there is any infringement of the rules on etiquette, on alerting, on announcing, on use of the stop card or “Best Behaviour at Bridge” guidelines. It is inappropriate to try to apply the laws about infringements without consulting the Director.
- ♣ The Director may call on another qualified Director for assistance at any time.
- ♣ All psyche bids made at your table must be reported to the Director.
- ♣ The Director will usually run any session so that a 2-board round is played in 15 minutes. This is the accepted EBU standard for playing 2-board rounds. In general, a round is expected to take 7 minutes per board with 1 minute for the move, so a 3-board round should take 22 minutes. Players in Duplicate sessions are expected to keep to this rhythm.
- ♣ The Director may choose to use a 4-minute warning signal to aid time-keeping. If this signal sounds before you start to bid a board, please call the Director who will assess the situation. The Director will not normally allow the board to be played. In this case, offenders will be given an Average “-” and non-offenders an Average “+”. Where neither pair has caused the delay, both pairs will be given an Average.
- ♣ It is discourteous to those players following you and to those players who are kept waiting at the next table if you play too slowly. Consistently slow players will be warned and after a warning, boards may be removed. Following removal of a second board, a fine will be assessed on the offending pair.

## ***Role of the Director***

- ❖ The role of the Director is to run a particular session or competition and to resolve, at the time, any difficulties when something goes wrong.
- ❖ The Director will apply the Laws of Contract Bridge, the English Bridge Union's regulations, the rules and procedures of OBC and any directions from the Trustees.
- ❖ If you disagree with a ruling of the Director you may appeal: contact the Chief Tournament Director ([td@oxfordbridgeclub.com](mailto:td@oxfordbridgeclub.com)) and an ad-hoc Appeals Panel will be put together. However, you must not argue with the Director, and must follow "Best Behaviour at Bridge" guidelines at all times.
- ❖ In cases of poor behaviour, the Director can impose disciplinary penalties. In particular the Director may exclude any player from a session if in their reasonable opinion that player would not satisfy the club's conduct requirements.
- ❖ The Director will provide a report to the Trustees if a disciplinary penalty is given for any breach of "Best Behaviour at Bridge" guidelines, or if any player argues with any ruling after the ruling is made.
- ❖ The Director will also provide a report to the Trustees if any partnerships or teams at any session are not able to play for lack of table space.