

Alerts, Announcements and Questions

We believe that it is important for members to achieve best practice in these areas on nights when we seek to play to standards which members can expect to experience in outside competitions. At other times a more relaxed approach can be taken but we would like experienced members to help the less experienced to gain understanding in a kindly and constructive way.

We consider the following to be best practice:

1. Have properly completed convention cards available. Announce briefly at the outset of a round if you are playing a system with marked deviations from the variations of Acol, which members might normally expect.
2. Take care to understand EBU protocols on alerts and announcements. It is important to alert a natural bid which is used in an unusual way. For example many partnerships now use a raise to the three level pre-emptively and have a bid of 2NT available to show a stronger raise.
3. Do not ask questions during the auction if you have no intention of bidding. Instead, ask opponents to explain the auction at the appropriate time before play commences. This will speed up play and avoid inferences being drawn.
4. You may ask, during the auction, for a complete recap of bids with their meanings, if the explanation might affect your bidding. Do NOT pinpoint any one bid. If having heard the explanation you decide to pass, your partner must NOT take any inferences from your request, and must bid and play as if it had never happened.
5. You should not ask questions during the bidding, about bids which have not been alerted. If, at the end of the auction or later, it becomes clear that a bid should have been alerted then the TD is the best person to rule if damage has been done.
6. When the information about a specific 'alerted' bid is needed make the question as neutral as possible – 'what did your partner's bid mean please'.
7. When explaining the meaning of bids, the conventional name will not suffice. Explain it fully. Never say 'I am taking it as' but 'no agreement' or 'I cannot remember'. If the last statement, then the TD should be called for a ruling.
8. Do NOT attempt to resolve disputed issues, card play errors or bidding errors yourself. Please call the TD politely and obtain a ruling.

We cannot cover all matters which might arise in a short note like this but even adherence to these simple points will speed up play, avoid disputes and contribute to the friendly atmosphere which we all desire.

Derrick Kime - Chief Tournament Director Bill Gordon - Chairman