

Andrew



Bob

Our  
experts  
on

Rules and  
Etiquette

GS  
BO

EBU

## Best Behaviour @ Bridge

# Do Your Bit for Bridge

Andrew Robson reminds us of the need for good behaviour at the bridge table



We thank Andrew Robson and *The Times* for kind permission to reprint these articles. Andrew's *Times* articles are available online at [www.thetimes.co.uk](http://www.thetimes.co.uk)

WHY are fewer and fewer playing in many duplicate bridge clubs – whilst the game is growing in popularity at a social level?

Online bridge is undoubtedly taking people away, but the fact that friendly, welcoming duplicate clubs are all thriving points to a different reason. I fear that a few regular duplicate players put newer players off by their rude, officious, critical, even intimidating behaviour. The chasm of difference from the encouraging classroom is too much for many. They quickly back off and play with their friends. Lost to duplicate bridge. Forever.

I'm far from alone in thinking this. Fellow bridge teacher Harold Schogger has asked me to tackle this subject and so over three days I will devote my *Times* column to education and reform.

Experienced duplicate players should be welcoming new players to the club, not frightening them away. At my club I operate a zero tolerance rule: no bad behaviour of any sort is allowed. Ever. You

### The EBU Guide to Good Behaviour at Bridge

- Greet others in a friendly manner prior to start of play on each round.
- Be a good 'host' or 'guest' at the table.
- Make your convention card readily available to your opponents and fill it out completely.
- Make bridge enjoyable for yourself, partner and opponents.
- Give credit when opponents make a good bid or play.
- Take care of your personal grooming.
- Ensure that your mobile phone is turned off.
- Enjoy the company as well as the game.

Please call the director if you think you may have been affected by bad behaviour. You will be helping others as well as yourselves.

should greet your opponents with a cheery hello, smile a lot and thank them when you finish the round. I know I'm largely preaching to the converted. But it

only takes one bad experience to put a new player off for life.

### Ethics Quiz

Now here's a quiz. Which of these is allowed and which is not allowed:

- To open INT (ostensibly 12-14) when holding 11 points?
- To bid after your partner has hesitated?
- To hesitate when you have a singleton?

A. Perfectly allowed. If you decide that your 11 looks like 12, open INT. If your opponents tell you that you're cheating, they're completely wrong and totally missing the point. High-card points are only a guide to bidding, no more.

B. Allowed, but only if you were going to bid anyway. If the opponents believe you have bid based on partner's pause rather than your hand, they are entitled to call the director. However (a) they should give new players lots of leeway here and (b) if they do feel the director should be called, they should do so politely and gently.

Don't shout 'DIRECTOR!' Say to the opponents: 'Would you mind awfully if I asked the director to come over?' before

putting up your hand and saying calmly 'Director, please.' He will then decide whether the bid was acceptable.

C. Not allowed. Cheating. You can never pause with the deliberate intention of misleading; only pause when you genuinely have something to think about. If you find that you've paused inadvertently (easily done in a distracted moment), say 'Sorry, I had nothing to think about.'

### Behave as Though You're Hosting a Tea Party

'DIRECTOR!' If you've played at a 'scary' duplicate club, you'll know that cry. There's no 'please'. There's no consultation with the other players before the shout. No wonder new players look to play elsewhere; no wonder the club is losing membership.

Harold Schogger thinks that it is the new player who should be calling the director, not the die-hard; to complain about his high-handed, rude and intimidating behaviour. Harold's right.

Harold reports incidents of the die-hard trying to claim back two

tricks on a revoke at trick twelve (you can't revoke after trick eleven). Or claiming you've cheated if you've downgraded a 15-point hand and opened a 12-14 INT. You haven't.

I'm pretty hopeless at the Law. Penalties for leading out of turn, revoking etc. can all get quite technical. So get the director over – in a nice way. That's what he's there for (as well as moving the boards).

I will say one thing though: if a player inadvertently drops two cards on the table (or similar unintended minor infraction) think twice before you shout 'EXPOSED CARD – DIRECTOR!' You're perfectly within your rights to say: 'Oh dear, I'm so sorry, perhaps we should get the director over.' But I know what I (and a few other top players such as Zia Mahmood) do in such a situation. 'Oh, pick it up.'

I go back to my primary message. Behave to your partner and opponents as though you're hosting a tea party. Then duplicate bridge will start to thrive again – it's such a fabulous game.

## YOUNG CHAMPIONS

THE Under-19 Pairs Championship was held at the Easter Festival in London, and was won by Isaac Channon, aged 15, and Jasmine Bakhshi, aged 10 (pictured). Jasmine and Isaac (both London) finished on 56.12%, with Harry Madden (Derbys) and Daniel Winter (Yorks), and Jamie Muller (Surrey) and Andy Cope (Warks), tied for second on 54.08%.



## Ethics Quiz

Which of these is allowed and which is not?

**A** to open 1NT (ostensibly 12-14) when holding 11 points?

**B** To bid after your partner has hesitated?

**C** To hesitate when you have a singleton?

A to open 1NT (ostensibly 12-14)  
when holding 11 points?

Perfectly allowed.

B To bid after your partner has hesitated?

Allowed....IF you intended to bid anyway.

C To hesitate when you have a singleton.

Not allowed.

If you inadvertently hesitate - a senior moment! - you say  
"Sorry, I had nothing to think about."



EBU

Why is the EBU  
concerned about bridge  
behaviour?

Poker is  
mad, bad  
and  
dangerous.

James  
Bond plays  
poker!

He didn't  
play bridge  
in Casino  
Royale.





# The Bridge image?



Image  
of a  
bridge  
partner  
ship?

They  
get  
cranky?



*“So, Kincaid - thought you could finess the queen  
after the bidding clearly showed East  
with diamond strength and  
weak clubs, did you?”*

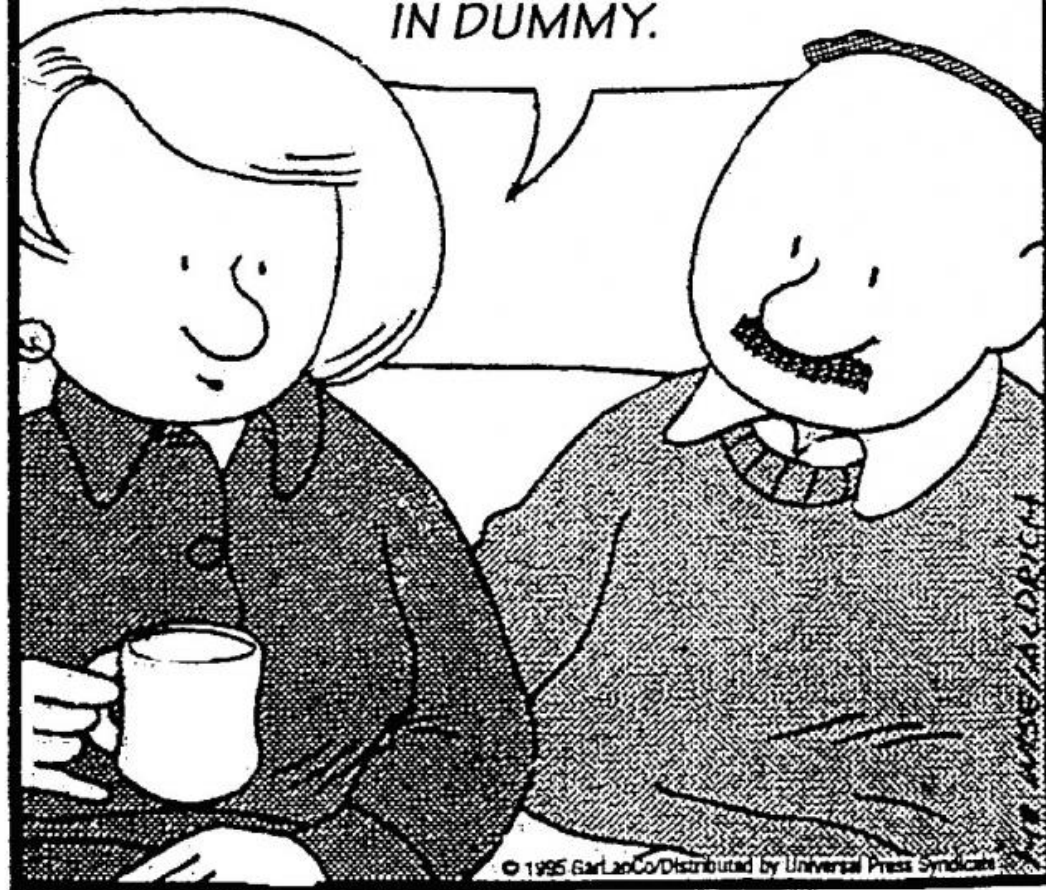




"My bridge partner signals a lot."

An overly  
complicated  
game  
with two  
many  
rules?

SOUTH LED WITH THE SPADE KING  
AND WEST SIGNALLED WITH THE  
SEVEN, CONVINCING SOUTH HE HAD  
A DOUBLETON, AFTER THE ACE AND  
ANOTHER SPADE, SOUTH RUFFED  
IN DUMMY.



Bridge: the perfect game for those who don't  
find quantum physics challenging enough.

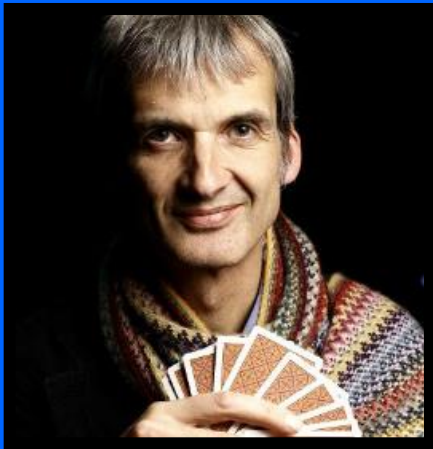
15

38

635 013 559 600

*"Bridge is for fun. You should play the game for no other reason. You should not play bridge to make money, to show how smart you are, to show how stupid your partner is, to prove that you are the greatest teacher since Socrates, to show off the latest fad in bidding or to prove any of the several hundred other things that bridge players are so often trying to prove."*

*Charles Goren*



“Bridge is possibly the best game devised by mankind - and certainly one of the most popular. But a word of warning: you'll soon be hooked.”





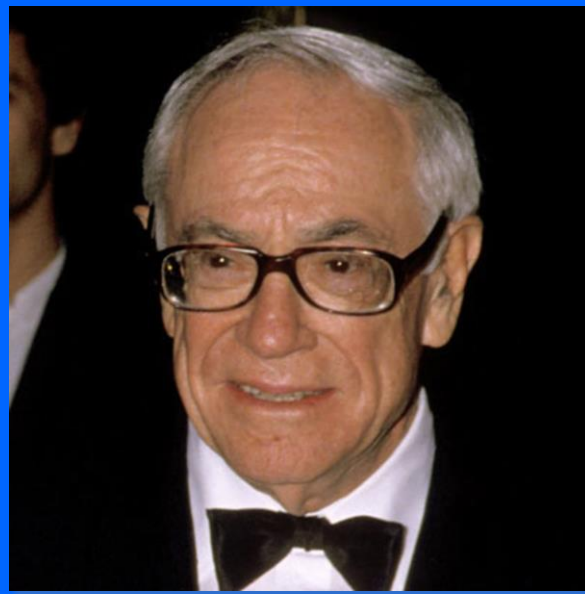
Many games provide fun, but bridge grips you. It exercises your mind. Your mind can rust, you know, but bridge prevents the rust from forming.

- *Omar Sharif*



Bridge is such a sensational game that I wouldn't mind being in jail if I had three cellmates who were decent players and who were willing to keep the game going 24 hours a day.

*- Warren Buffett*



It's one of the really great pleasures of life. Anybody who's missing bridge is missing so much in life.

- *Malcolm Forbes*



Life is not a  
matter of  
holding good  
cards, but  
playing a poor  
hand well.

Robert Louis  
Stevenson

## Pros:

Playing bridge has been shown to ward off Alzheimer's, improve standardized test scores, boost the immune system, and help you live longer.

## Cons:

Diminished sense of self when brought face-to-face with an impenetrable mystery.



EBU

Is the EBU worried  
about us?

# Winchester Bridge Club

We're a strong club, but  
not just because we're  
friendly.







Out of the hundreds of actual rules, the EBU have issued general guidelines to help people enjoy the greatest game ever. We're here to have fun!

# Start with tea and Fred and Ginger.





1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,  
7, 8

Bid and play  
bridge...in  
tempo.

Don't rush -  
don't dawdle -

People can't help but read things into sudden rushes to get to the pass card...or long pauses over what to bid. Playing in tempo gives you time to think when you need to.

Don't reach  
for the  
bidding box  
until you  
know what  
you want to  
bid.





Warning that you  
are about to skip  
a bid.

### Procedure:

- 1) - pull out stop card
- 2) - pull out bidding card
- 3) - leave both for 10 seconds
- 4) - put stop card back

The 10 second rule  
gives LHO the chance  
to continue to play  
"in tempo" and still  
have time to think.  
May have been all  
set to bid 1 H, when  
you skipped and bid  
2S.

# Announcements



NT bids  
Staymen  
Transfers



Warn ops  
that a  
convention is  
being used  
and it's not a  
natural bid.

- 2 clubs
- 2 diamond relay
- 2 diamonds
- 2 heart relay

# Questions Partner?



You can ask a bidder's partner at any stage, what a bid means. BUT. It's polite to wait until the end, before a lead, unless it makes a difference to your own bidding.



# What can dummy do?



Answer:  
Not a lot!

Having no spades partner?

You're on table partner.

Hands in lap until card is called for. If declarer calls for a heart dummy can't even ask, "Which one?"



At the bridge table  
you should behave  
as if you are at a tea  
party.

# The Etiquette bit.



Partners who are trusted and feel supported, make fewer mistakes. Invest in your partner.



**Post Mortems aren't much fun for anyone  
except the person performing them.  
Avoid them.**



Try very hard to save conversations  
about the hand until they have all  
been played.

Remember when I  
asked for your  
opinion...yeah, me  
neither.



som<sup>ee</sup>cards  
user card

Mobile  
phones?



# Bridge mates:

*Check score is entered correctly...  
but then turn machine towards the others to push "accept"...*







*...and after that  
hit the OK button  
so everyone can  
see other bids.*

*Why? Everyone  
sees percentage and  
other bids without  
having to ask and it  
keeps discussion to a  
minimum.*



I'm not very good at all the rules!

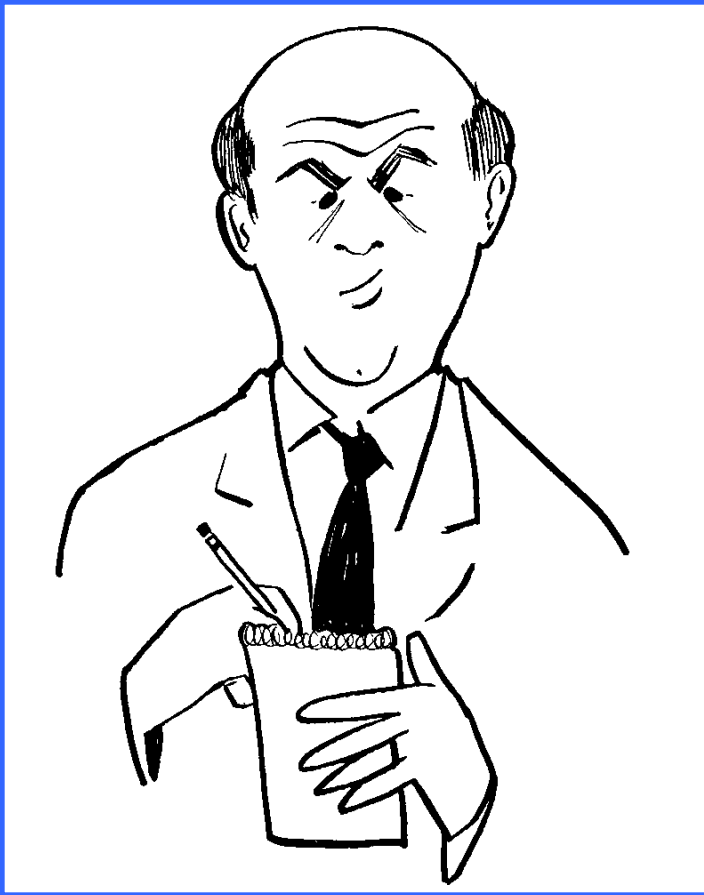
Directors are there for the rules that are appropriate for our level of playing. Never be shy about calling for the director and never feel badly if someone calls the director.



Shall we call  
the director?

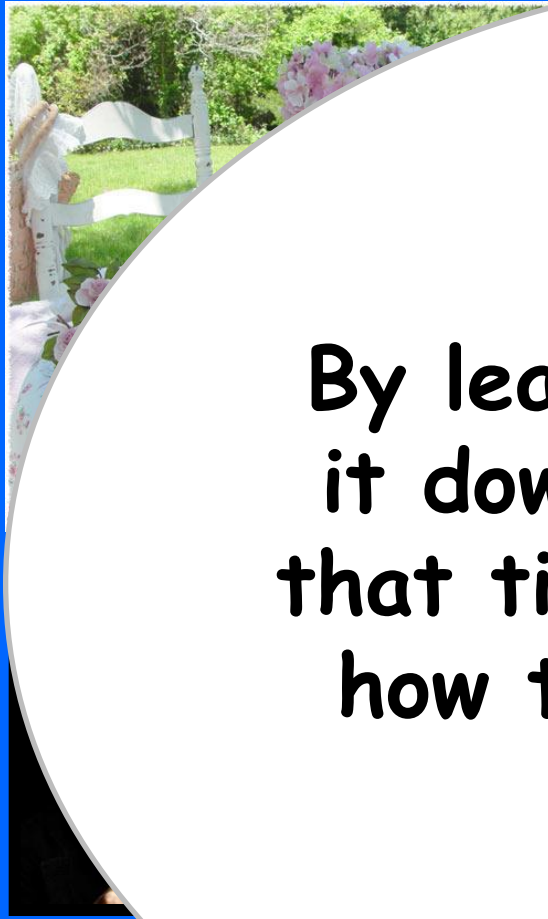
Director please.

- Having called a director, accept the decision without hesitation. You can always appeal later.



# Writing down the Bid

1. You don't have to
2. Try to write the pair number in at the beginning so you don't have to ask.
3. It's polite to write it down **AFTER** you lead or after you've put dummy down. But **WHY?**



olite  
for

By leading before writing  
it down we give declarer  
that time to think through  
how they intend to play  
the hand.

...K  
ake  
play  
...EN think  
about what to do next.



North is the one who has invited you to play bridge - the tea party! It's their job to help things run smoothly and perhaps remind others of the guidelines. It helps us all have fun.



Take pity on new players, beginners and those that are about to make a mistake!



Now  
it's time  
to  
practise.