

# **“All Change! All Change!”**

## (The changes to the laws in 2017)

### 1. **Introduction**

Every ten years or so, representatives from national Bridge organisations worldwide convene to review and amend the Laws of Duplicate Bridge. The last revision was in 2007, and 2017 is no exception. Of course little has changed, and this latest revision includes one major re-think and a number of smaller changes made to reduce the number of cancelled boards.

Please read on to discover the principles behind Comparable Calls, the change to Claims and Concessions, and three other minor changes.

### 2. **Why do I need to know about Comparable Calls?**

A Comparable Call is a new concept introduced to help deal with Calls out of Rotation as well as Insufficient Bids. The new laws are far less punitive and enable the auction to continue normally, preventing bizarre contracts being reached which can distort the results for every pair in the room.

If a player makes a Call out of Rotation or Insufficient Bid, call the Director. The first option offered to the non-offending side will be to accept the call, in which case the auction proceeds without further ado. Otherwise, the offender's call is cancelled. Following a Call out of Rotation, the bidding reverts to the correct player's turn. In both cases, the Director will explain that the withdrawn call may be replaced without penalty by a Comparable Call, await the offender's next call and make a binding ruling whether it is comparable or not. Provided the replacement call is ruled as comparable, the auction and play continue normally. Although the ruling is binding, it may be appealed later and the Director can adjust the end result if the non-offending side has been damaged. If the replacement call is ruled as not comparable, it may not be changed, bidding restrictions may apply, and there will be lead restrictions if the offending side become defenders.

### 3. **So, what is a Comparable Call?**

There are three alternative definitions of a Comparable Call. Either:

- a) it has the same or similar meaning as that attributable to the withdrawn call; or
- b) it defines a subset of the possible meanings attributable to the withdrawn call; or
- c) it has the same purpose as that attributable to the withdrawn call.

This has a wide scope, and even a Pass out of rotation can be replaced by a bid. Suppose you Pass when your partner is dealer. When asked by the Director, your opponents do not accept it. Your partner opens 1H, and the next player passes. You may then bid 1NT or make a limit raise in Hearts, as all these show less than opening values and are classed as a subset of your opening Pass. What you may not do is make a change of suit response as this bid is not limited and therefore not contained within an opening Pass, which gave unauthorised information about your hand strength.

### 4. **Claims and Concessions**

When a Claim or Concession is made play is now suspended while the players decide what to do. The non-claiming side may suggest playing on, and, if all four players agree, they may do so. In which case, there is no obligation to follow the stated line of play, and the Director may no longer be called to adjudicate - whatever the outcome. So, if you are in any doubt about the validity of a Claim or Concession, it will always be best not to play on and to call the Director instead..

### 5. **Other Changes to Note**

**Strong Bids** are now defined as either 16+ HCP, or 12+ HCP with at least 5 controls. If you play Benji Acol, please make sure your 2C and 2D openings meet this requirement.

**Dummy's Rights** are extended to preventing irregularities by both the declarer and the defenders. Dummy may also ensure that the dummy hand follows suit!

**A Lead out of Turn** at trick 13 must always be retracted.

**“All Change! All Change!”**  
(The changes to the laws in 2017)

6. **Finally**

This addition to last year's “Ethic of the Month” series is to make our players aware of changes to laws affecting the day-to-day irregularities and supersedes some of the information in the previous documents in the series.

Please remember that 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, and particularly because the laws have changed.

You will now 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 latest Laws of Duplicate Bridge.

David Burch  
5<sup>th</sup> September 2017