

Alerting

There are significant problems in CAVBC in relation to alerting. There are a large number of players who are not alerting bids which they should. At the other end of the spectrum, there are a small number of players who pester opponents for explanations of bid, sometimes even bids which they know, or ought to know, the meaning of. This is intimidatory behaviour which nobody should be subjected to. This policy attempts to address both of these issues.

It must be remembered that online bridge is different from face-to-face bridge in many ways. There are currently 435 people on the CAVBC/Foxbay include list. Many are elderly and some have little or no experience with computers. Despite this, they have overcome their fear of the technology involved because of their love of bridge. These people deserve nothing but admiration and respect. Expecting some of these players to master the techniques required to alert and deal with queries may be too big of an ask, and under no circumstances do we want to deter anyone in this category from playing in and enjoying our games.

Notwithstanding the above, there are plenty of people who are quite capable of alerting bids and responding to queries about their bids, who are just not doing so. This is potentially very unfair to their opponents and is contrary to bridge law.

What is required?

- In BBO, you alert **your own** bids, **not** partner's.
- In BBO, you alert all the way to the end of the auction. You **do not stop** alerting above 3NT.

- You announce the range of your 1NT openings **only**.
- You announce Jacoby Transfer bids of 2♦ and 2♥.
- If you open 1♣ or 1♦ and that bid could show fewer than 4 cards, you announce "Could be n" where "n" is the lowest number it could be.
- If you play a forcing 1♣ opening, in addition to announcing "Could be n" you **must** also alert that it is forcing.

- **All** conventional bids **must** be alerted with the exception of **standard** Stayman and the **standard** Acol 2♣ opening bids.
- A natural raise of a one level opening which is game forcing **must** be alerted (e.g. 2/1 Game Force bids)
- Any **non-standard** doubles **must** be alerted e.g. Negative doubles, Support doubles, a double of 1NT that is **not** for penalties.
- It is **particularly important** to alert **all jump bids** as the meaning of these will rarely be clear from the description of your system, varies enormously between partnerships, and may have a profound effect on the judgement of your opponents.

The fact that you included a convention in the description of your system on your profile or the description you gave when you greeted your opponents does **not** obviate the need to alert such a bid when you make it.

You are entitled to ask the meaning of any of your opponent's bids. To do so, simply click on the bid. Your opponent must answer.

If you are asked for an explanation of your bid

- Give a **succinct** description using the space in the "Explain" dialog box. **Never use chat** for this, as your partner can see that, and it is unauthorised information.
- Do not simply give the name of a convention. So, for example if you overcall their opening 1NT with 2♣, don't say Landy. **Explain it** – something like "Both majors & opening values"
- Don't make a fool of yourself by saying something risible. The most common example of this I see is an explanation which says, "Jump bid". Your opponents can see it's a jump bid, they want to know what it means.

Dos and Don'ts if you ask for an explanation and none is forthcoming, or you get an inadequate response

This can be very annoying but keep cool, lest you fall off the moral high-ground and put yourself in the wrong. It's very easy to do that. Never forget that your opponent may be visually impaired or have arthritic fingers. The following is the procedure you should follow:

- Wait 20 seconds to give your opponent time to type a response. If nothing appears (or something inadequate appears) decide how you are going to interpret the bid and **continue** bidding yourself.
- Do **not** disrupt the whole competition by going on strike. The TD will replace you with a robot if you do this.
- Do **not** hit the explain button repeatedly. This is spamming you opponent and is completely unacceptable behaviour.
- Do **not** send a message using chat, no matter how polite. This constitutes unauthorised information.
- **Under no circumstances send an abusive message.**
- **NEVER SHOUT (like I just did - sorry!)**
- Complete the auction, play the game and if at the end you feel your result was less than it would have been had you got a satisfactory explanation, note the BBO names of your opponents, the board number and the round number.
- When you next get a chance, send a **concise** report to the TD giving enough detail for him or her to make a determination. Don't interrupt the tournament to do this. The TD can access all the relevant details from player and table records. The TD will adjust the score if there is a need to restore equity. This may take some considerable time. Use private chat to make your report to the TD.
- **Don't waste the TD's time** reporting incidents that did not lead to any **damage** to your side. If there was no damage done, there will be no adjustment made. The TDs job is to restore equity **not** to punish wrongdoers!

What if you are spammed?

- Summon the TD.
- Unless the spam messages are covering parts of your screen such that you can't continue, **do not stop** bidding or playing.
- If you genuinely can't continue, wait for the TD to arrive. The TD will adjust the score to restore equity.

About Chat

The chat function can and should be used to, in some small way, cater for the social aspect of face-to-face bridge that so many players enjoy. It should **never** (with one exception) be used to conduct "Bridge Business". What's the exception? At the start of each round, introduce yourself and partner and give a brief description of your system. **From that moment until the last card of the round has been played, there should be absolutely no bridge related chat.**

If you find yourself with a few minutes at the end of a round, there is no prohibition on "doing a post-mortem" but is that really a good idea? You risk offending partner if things didn't go well and your opponents if things went well and you, however unintentionally, come over a little triumphalist. Even sending messages like WPP may be hurtful to your opponents, particularly if your partner's good result was due of their weakness rather than partner's prowess.

Never interrogate your opponents because you feel, for example, that their bidding was misleading. If you have a genuine grievance, that's what the TDs are there for. Report it calmly to them and let them deal with it. Even if you think you know more about bridge law than a particular TD, refer to them. For one thing, you may well be wrong and in any case, less experienced TDs have good access to more experienced colleagues.

On a related topic, it can be risky to be "helpful" to a less experienced pair you have just beaten. I once read a piece of advice to the effect that unless you are being paid to do so, never give Bridge Lessons. A bit extreme perhaps but consider that unsolicited advice may or may not be well received.

Never forget that online chat is a pale reflection of the real thing. There's no intonation or cadence, much less body language. You might easily get away with making a remark in a particular way, perhaps with a little smile or a glint in your eye, and succeed in being funny or even endearing. The exact same words in a chat message may cause deep offence and don't assume that emoji will make it all OK. Be very careful.

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