

Guidelines relating to Slow Play on BBO

What does CBAI and EBU say

Pairs events on BBO are run under a regime where the round ends after a fixed time and the play of any unfinished boards is curtailed. If there are only at most four tricks remaining, the platform will assign a result based on the double-dummy outcome from the point where play was curtailed. If there are more than a few tricks to be played, the TD will assign a score based on the auction and play that occurred. It is possible for slow play to result in an advantage for one side; for example, if declarer can avoid taking a two-way guess until the last four tricks and the round ends before the board is finished, the assigned double-dummy outcome will be the outcome where declarer always 'guesses right'. If the side that was responsible for slow play gains an advantage in this manner, the TD can assign an adjusted score: for example, a weighted outcome between 'guessing right' and 'guessing wrong'. The laws expect an artificial adjusted score for boards which are not completed (Law 12C2) but a WBFLC minute (item 3 of the minutes of 2008-10-10) allows an assigned score 'if a board is incomplete but has reached a stage when completion of the board can be foreseen' (see WB 8.12.7 and WB 8.12.10). This may allow the TD to award an assigned score (rather than an adjusted score) when a board has been curtailed by the online platform.

Significant hesitations are unauthorised information, which will constrain the player and can be subject to a ruling under Law 16B or Law 73C. There can be reasons for pauses in an online game, due to the environment, but the TD is entitled to determine that a significant hesitation is nevertheless unauthorised information and rule accordingly.

What do the Laws of Duplicate Bridge say

Law16B

Extraneous Information from Partner

Any extraneous information from partner that might suggest a call or play is unauthorized. This includes remarks, questions, replies to questions, unexpected alerts or failures to alert, **unmistakable hesitation, unwonted speed**, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism.

- (a) A player may not choose a call or play that is demonstrably suggested over another by unauthorized information if the other call or play is a logical alternative.
- (b) A logical alternative is an action that a significant proportion of the class of players in question, using the methods of the partnership, would seriously consider, and some might select.

Law73C

When a player has available to him unauthorized information from his partner, such as from a remark, question, explanation, gesture, mannerism, undue emphasis, inflection, **haste or hesitation**, an unexpected alert or failure to alert, he must carefully avoid taking any advantage from that unauthorized information

Best Practice on CAVBC

1. We currently allow 7 mins per board in CAVBC BBO competitions, which is allocated as 14 minutes in 2 boards-per-round events, 21 minutes in 3 boards-per-round, and 28 minutes in 4 boards-per-round events. This is universally acknowledged as more than ample time to bid and play a board.
2. It is acknowledged that some boards may be trickier than others, particularly the bidding which may result in the bidding and playing of a board taking longer than 7 minutes.
3. Where a player believes that there is unnecessarily slow bidding or slow play during a round (2 board, 3 board, 4 board etc.), they may call the director.
4. The Director will take a copy of the Table History for the reported game and analyse the time taken to bid and play.
5. If the TD determines that “unauthorized information” has been passed, during the bidding process, from Player A to Player B through an “unmistakable hesitation” and Player B, who had a logical alternative, has chosen an action suggested by the “unmistakable hesitation”, then under Law 12, the TD may award an “assigned score” in order “to redress damage to a non-offending side and to take away any advantage gained by an offending side through its infraction of the game”. This “assigned score” may be awarded up to 20 minutes after the game finishes and before the result is finalized on BBO.
6. If the TD determines that the side that was responsible for slow play has gained an advantage, the TD may assign an “assigned score” when a board has been curtailed by the online platform.
7. The Director will closely monitor the pair that have been reported.
8. Where a player’s slow play, or refusal to play, is affecting the flow of the game, the TD may replace that player with a robot.