

Lead Out of Turn by the wrong Defender

A defender's Lead Out Of Turn during play is less common than Opening Leads Out Of Turn but the ruling is very similar; obviously, if it is not the opening lead, Declarer can't become Dummy!

The options for Declarer are:

1. Accept the lead and play on as if nothing has happened (this is really the same as condoning the lead)
2. Require the Lead be made from the correct hand and either:
 - a. allow that Defender to play anything. The incorrect lead is left face up on the table as a Major Penalty (no matter whether it is an honour card or not);
 - b. require the correct Defender to lead the same suit. The incorrect lead can be replaced in the hand and is no longer a penalty card; or
 - c. prohibit the correct Defender from leading the same suit whilst they retain the lead. The incorrect lead can be replaced in the hand and is no longer a penalty card. (The 'retain the lead' bit is to prevent the player playing a winner in another suit and then continuing with the prohibited suit)

Before making the choice the players should be informed that if Option 2a is chosen and the Penalty Card is still on the table when their partner is subsequently on lead then Declarer will have the same options as in 2a; 2b; 2c.

The Partner of a Defender with a Major Penalty Card should never lead until Declarer has made their choice. This applies no matter how the Penalty Card arose; not just from a Lead Out Of Turn.

Congleton Bridge Club – Directing notes

Notes

The statement “It’s not your lead” from Declarer isn’t necessarily a request for the lead to be withdrawn.

The options above are available no matter how ‘attention is drawn’ to it and the Director should be called to sort it out.

Things can get very complicated if in a matter of nanoseconds:

1. Declarer says it’s not my lead
2. The Defender puts the card on table as penalty card (or worse back in their hand)
3. The correct defender leads a card
4. Declarer says “Hang on I might want to accept the lead”