

Opening Lead Out of Turn

One of the most common reasons for the Director to be called.

If the lead has been made face down it is put back and the correct Defender leads without penalty.

If the wrong defender has faced an opening lead (let's call the Wrong Lead WL), then Declarer has five options. Declarer should have all the options described before being asked to choose.

The Five options are:

- a. Play on. Dummy is put down and then Declarer plays the second card from their own hand etc.
- b. Become Dummy. Declarer puts their own hand down and Dummy becomes Declarer
- c. Require the correct Defender to lead any card. In this case WL becomes a Major Penalty Card and is left face up on the table
- d. Require the correct Defender to lead a card of the same suit as WL. In this case the WL can be returned to the hand.
- e. Prohibit the correct Defender from leading a card of WL's suit. This prohibition continues for as long as the defender keeps the lead. *This is to prevent defender leading an Ace and then the prohibited suit.* As in the last case WL is returned to the defender's hand.

Congleton Bridge Club – Directing notes

Notes

These more complicated situations, apart from the first do not often arise – please ask for help if you are unsure.

If Declarer does a) or b) before the options are described then the Director will rule play to continue. Declarer is said to have ‘condoned’ opponent’s action.

If the correct defender leads after the WL this card itself becomes a major Penalty Card. The Director will still give Declarer the options as above. If d) or e) are chosen then this will take precedence over the playing of the penalty card (which must still be played if possible).

If both defenders face leads simultaneously the correct lead takes precedence. The other card is deemed to have been played to the trick and will become a major Penalty Card if a revoke needs to be corrected.

Only option a) may be chosen if the player may have seen an unfaced card in his partner’s hand, eg swapping hands which though not normally penalised is very bad practice.

Whenever a player is on lead when their partner has a major penalty card, declarer has the options described in c) d) and e)

If Option d) is chosen but the player is void in that suit, the player may lead any card without further penalty and WL is still replaced in defender’s hand. This may seem a little unfair as there has now been no lead penalty; the penalty card has ceased to be; and the offender now knows his partner is void in that suit!! This is what is termed ‘Rub of the Green’; a lucky happenstance; for which there is no recourse to the Law Book. If it turns out that the player did have a card of the suit then they have revoked.

An opening lead out of turn by Declarer or Dummy!!!!!! cannot be accepted. The card is returned to the hand without penalty and the correct (hopefully) Defender leads.

Unauthorised Information (UI)

The sight of the WL can give all sorts of other information to their partner: eg

- a. The S2 against a 3NT contract might tell of a 4 card suit
- b. The HQ in a suit contract may promise the HJ and deny the HK

This information is said to be ‘unauthorised’. If declarer can show he has been disadvantaged because a defender knew things about his partner’s hand which was unauthorised then the Director can award an adjusted score. *I think that this would be extremely unlikely at Club level.*