

Duplicate Laws, Ethics, Procedures

Courtesy:

- **Be friendly and courteous:** Welcome opponents to your table. Treat partner and opponents in a friendly and respectful manner.
- **Wear your nametag:** So that others do not feel sheepish about forgetting your name.
- **Let it ride.** If partner or opponents make a mistake, don't belabor the point. It only makes partner or opponents feel badly. Even comments made with the best intention can make the other feel badly.
- **Arrive 15 minutes before game time** to avoid last minute disruptions. The director needs time to set up the number of tables in the game and to get things started.
- **Director, Please:** Also be courteous when calling the director.

Laws:

- **Convention card:** Each player must have a completed convention card at the table. Your card and partner's card should be identical.
- **Count your cards before looking at your hand.** If you have more than 13, have the director fix things before you see the cards.
- **Don't fondle the bidding box.** Make up your mind before you reach for the bidding box. Reach for it only once, not two or three times.
- **Mechanical bidding errors.** If you make a mechanical error (intend to pull out one bid card but another one comes out instead), you can correct it as long as your partner has not bid. You can correct a mistake of the "hand", but not a mistake of the "mind".
- **Mechanical play errors.** Once a card is played, it remains a played card even if you intended to play a different card. But the need to follow suit takes precedence. Call the director if you played the wrong card and thereby failed to follow suit.
- **Wait for your turn.** Do not reach for the bid box until it is your turn to bid. Do not detach a card from your hand until it is your turn to play.
- **Make opening lead face down.** If partner has any questions about the bidding, partner is not allowed to ask them until you choose your opening lead. Make it face down so that your card is not exposed if you are not the opening leader.
- **Dummy should not touch any card until declarer has called for it.**
- **Dummy can tell declarer whether the next lead is from dummy or the hidden hand.**
- **No more spades, partner?** Always ask partner whether they are really out of a suit when they fail to follow suit. Partner, always double check. Dummy can ask declarer. This avoids the messy situations that occur when you realize a few tricks later that someone failed to follow suit.

- **Once all cards have been turned over for a trick, you cannot ask for a second look at what was played.**
- **That trick is ours partner.** You can tell partner that a trick is turned the wrong way, but only the last trick, and only before the next trick has started. Dummy can tell declarer.
- **Mistakes:** Don't say anything when you make a mistake. For example, don't say "Oh, that's not what I should have bid". Carry on as if nothing had happened. (You can and should call the director if you realize that you failed to follow suit.)
- **Skip or Jump bids:** You should study your cards for about 10 seconds before bidding when your right hand opponent makes a jump bid. Suppose your opponent preempts 3C. This often causes you problems and you must think a few seconds before deciding what to do. Perhaps you were intending to open the bidding but now find that you must pass. If you pass quickly, partner will know you have nothing. You must use the same 10 seconds when you have nothing as when the preempt causes you to reconsider.
- **Talking about the hands:** You should not talk about the hands in a fashion that people at the other tables can overhear. If you say loudly "4 hearts, down 1", people at the other table will bid only 3 hearts and will get a better score than you. Not only will it affect your score, but it is also forbidden in the laws of duplicate bridge.
- **Call the director if any irregularity occurs.** If there is an insufficient bid, failure to follow suit, lead out of turn, disagreement about the number of tricks won, or any other unusual occurrence, call the director as soon as it occurs. The director is there to help restore equity and a normal result, not to punish.

Ethics:

- **Facial expressions and body language:** Don't grimace when partner fails to lead the suit that you bid. Don't show visible discomfort when you have trouble choosing an opening lead. If you do, an ethical partner must go out of their way not to make use of such unauthorized information. Partner must base their actions only on the bids you made and the cards you played.
- **Tempo:** Don't bid fast with nothing and slowly with something. This tells partner whether you have nothing or have something. Use the same tempo with good and bad hands.
- **Overhearing about the hands from other tables:** An ethical player will strive not to take advantage of information overheard from other tables. If partner makes an invitation that you would normally accept, you should accept it even if you heard from another table that game does not make.

Procedures:

- **At end of each round:** Players move up to the next higher table; boards go down a table.
- **Opening leader:** Pick your opening lead before writing anything on your score sheet. You can write on your score sheet while the dummy is coming down.

- **Keep a personal score.** This helps resolve disagreements. The director may need to see what all 4 people at the table have written down to determine what actually happened.
- **Include opening lead on your score sheet.** We enter the opening lead in the Bridgemate. You can then review on our web site what other players chose to lead. If it is not written down at the start of play, no one can remember it at the end of play.
- **East/West is responsible for verifying the score at the Bridgemate.** Verify (1) correct direction, N/S versus E/W, (2) right contract, (3) right opening lead, (4) correct result.

Alerts and Announcements:

- **Basic premise.** Alert bids that do not have their natural meaning. For example, if the 2H in 2C-2H denies an ace or a king (rather than showing a heart suit), it should be alerted.
- **Alert partner's bids, not your own.** If you alerted your own bids, you might be helping partner, waking up a sleeping partner, which is not allowed.
- **Ask at your turn:** If you want an explanation of an alerted bid or any other bid, you can ask, but only at your turn to bid. Ask the partner of the person who made the bid.
- **Know your agreements.** When the opponents ask, give them a clear explanation. Usually a shorter explanation is clearer. Don't say "I think it means blah, blah". Either you know or you don't. If you don't know, say so. Don't guess.
- **If partner fails to alert or gives a wrong explanation:** Do NOT say anything on the spot (or make any facial expression). Doing so might get partner back on the rails when partner was going off the rails. Helping partner, even inadvertently, is not allowed. Keep bidding according to what your agreements really are.
- **If partner fails to alert or gives a wrong explanation:** If you become declarer, call the director before the opening lead. If you become a defender, call the director after play of the hand has finished. A wrong explanation might damage the other side (e.g. dissuade them from bidding) and they might be entitled to some remedy.

Bridgemate (electronic scoring device):

- **Use OK key to power up and to proceed forward.** The Bridgemate turns itself off after being idle for 20 seconds to conserve battery life. Press OK to power it back up. Press OK to move forward from item to item.
- **Use Cancel key to move back:** If some item is not correct, use the cancel key as many times as needed to move back to that item. Then correct it.
- **Fear not the Bridgemate:** All other keys are self explanatory. After one afternoon session, you will be an expert. If you need help, just call the director.