

FVBC Talk – Bridge Procedures, Rules & Etiquette

4. Dummy's Rights and Limitations

When your partner is Declarer and the opening lead is faced, you assume the role of Dummy.

Dummy's first responsibility is to arrange the cards, by suits, vertically, with the cards in order of rank, with trumps to Dummy's right. Declarer and Dummy should make sure that all cards are visible and properly arranged. The Defenders bear no responsibility for proper arrangement of the cards. If the Declarer revokes due to a hidden or misplaced dummy card, the responsibility is entirely on the Declarer.

Dummy may not assist the Declarer during the play of the hand. Dummy's role is simply to play cards as called by Declarer, without hesitation or reaction. When Declarer does not designate a specific card, Dummy should play as follows...

If Declarer calls:

- High – play the highest card of the suit led
- Low – play the lowest card of the suit led
- Win It – play the lowest card that is known will win the trick
- A Suit Only – play the lowest card in the suit
- A rank only – if on lead, play the card of that rank in the previously-led suit
- Play Anything – Either defender, without consultation, may designate the card to be played
- Card Not in Dummy – The call is voided, and Declarer must make another call.

Dummy's Rights

- Dummy is entitled to see all cards played.
- Dummy should place played cards in a manner to indicate which side won the trick.
- Dummy may inform Declarer that he has the latest completed trick turned incorrectly.
- Dummy may try to prevent an irregularity by Declarer. This typically means:
 - Asking Declarer who has failed to follow suit whether he has a card in the suit led, or
 - Attempting to stop Declarer from playing from the wrong hand (reactively, not proactively)
 - If Declarer incorrectly leads from their hand, either Defender may accept the lead even if Dummy immediately informs Declarer that the lead was in Dummy. The same is true when Declarer incorrectly calls for a card from Dummy when Declarer is on lead.

Dummy's Limitations

- Dummy may not leave his seat to watch Declarer's play of the hand.
- Dummy may not look at a Defender's hand.
- Dummy may not call attention to an irregularity (such as a revoke) during play
- Dummy may not initiate a call to the Director
- Dummy may not participate in the play, or communicate anything about play to Declarer
 - Example: "Remember you're playing no trump, partner"
 - Example: "You just need two more tricks, partner"
 - Example: Hesitation to play a called card from Dummy that you think is a poor play

Once the last trick is completed, the player is no longer Dummy and these limitations no longer hold. Dummy is free to point out an irregularity, such as a revoke, and should do so before the cards are returned to the board.