

2017 The Laws of Duplicate Bridge (World Bridge Federation)

The More Important Items

Control of Boards and Cards (Law 7)

Boards must now be kept in the centre of the table in the correct orientation. Turning a board or allowing a board to swivel can lead to the board being fouled.

Procedure Following An Irregularity (Law 9)

Dummy now has the right to try to prevent any irregularity (such as a lead from the wrong hand), irrespective of whom the potential perpetrator might be. However, once an infraction has occurred, dummy is still prohibited from calling attention to it until after the conclusion of the play.

Director's Discretionary Powers (Law 12)

There are more situations where directors need to award an adjusted score to one or both pairs to restore fairness.

Review And Explanation Of Calls (Law 20)

A player who realises that they have given a wrong or incomplete explanation of partner's call is no longer required to proffer a correction immediately, but they must still call the Director and make the correction prior to the facing of the opening lead. It will however generally be in the player's best interests to call the Director immediately.

Comparable Call (Law 23)

In some situations a player who makes an insufficient bid or a call out of turn may be able to make a comparable bid (that is one that contains all the information of the withdrawn call) and thus avoid restrictions that might otherwise apply to his or her partner's bids or leads.

Legal And Illegal Changes Of Call (Law 25)

The Laws still permit unintended calls to be changed providing the partner has not subsequently called, but the criterion for judging when a call is unintended has become

more stringent. The focus is very much on mechanical slips rather than loss of concentration.

Call Withdrawn, Lead Restrictions (Law 26)

When a comparable call has not been made after a withdrawn call then the laws now rely on the partner knowing that they cannot use any information from the withdrawn call. Partner must not choose an option that would be suggested by the withdrawn call if there is any other reasonable option. The same approach applies in situations when you might have unauthorized information from partner's mannerism or hesitation.

Lead Out Of Turn Accepted (Law 53)

A lead out of turn to trick 13 may no longer be accepted and must now be retracted.

Arrangement Of Tricks (Law 65)

A player may still draw attention to a card pointed incorrectly, but only until his side leads or plays to the following trick. Declarer bound by the same time limit as the other players.

Inspection Of Tricks (Law 66)

Declarer or a defender may inspect (but not expose) his own last card played until his side has led or played to the next trick. This is a change from the previous time limit which was until a card had been led by either side to the next trick.

Claim Or Concession Of Tricks (Law 68)

If a player claims he or she needs to face his or her cards at the same time as providing any information about an intended line of play. If doubt is expressed about the claim, and only if all four players agree, the hand can now be played on, otherwise the director needs to be called.

Communication, Tempo And Deception (Law 73)

This law continues to recognise a player's right to deceive an opponent by a call or play so long as it is not protected by concealed partnership understanding or experience. Players may purposely violate partnership agreements (excluding certain psychic bids prohibited by regulation) in an attempt to deceive. Players may also deliberately play a

deceptive card in an attempt to make an opponent go wrong, however it is now illegal to emphasise that deception with “unwonted haste or hesitancy”. A player may not take a long time to decide which of two equal spot cards to play in order to deceive an opponent when the effect of the hesitation is to give that opponent the reasonable impression you were considering winning the trick. Nor is it acceptable to hesitate before making a penalty double where this might dissuade the opponents from running to a better contract (or encourage them to redouble).

Mistaken Explanation Or Mistaken Call (Law 75)

It is now clear that failure to disclose information accurately constitutes Misinformation. Players remain obligated to disclose partnership agreements fully and freely upon request, but they also need to realise that answering enquiries from an opponent with words such as “I take it to mean” or “I think it means” is improper. If no agreement exists players are expected to state that fact, not guess what a bid means. Guessing is not only a potential source of misinformation but also unauthorised information, which may lead to a score adjustment.

Tricks Won (Law 79)

The number of tricks won or lost should be agreed at the table. If a dispute subsequently arises after the end of the round, then the Director is now empowered to decrease one side’s score, without necessarily increasing the other side’s score. Previously, if you found out that a wrong score had been entered when you checked your results, and the correction period (usually 30 minutes after the end of the session) had expired, your score could no longer be corrected. Now if you can persuade both the Tournament Organiser and the Director that the result is wrong, you might still be able to have it corrected (but not after the event is finished and the prizes have been awarded).

For further information please see <http://www.worldbridge.org/rules-regulations/2017-laws-of-duplicate-bridge>.