

Rutland and Oakham Bridge Club – Table Conduct

Boards. Leave the board in play on the table, pointing in the right direction, until the hand is finished. This makes it more difficult to put the hands back in the wrong slots.

Leads. When you're on lead, make your lead face-down in case your partner wants to ask a question. It is good practice to make a lead before putting your bidding cards away or entering the contract in the tablet.

Tempo. Try not to take too long over calls or when playing a card.

Dummy. Unless dummy has left the table, declarer should never touch dummy's cards to avoid argument about whether a card has been played or not.

Claiming. As declarer, if you can clearly see that all the remaining tricks are yours, claim them rather than play on. You must specify clearly your line of play, including a statement about drawing any remaining trumps.

Outcome. At the end of a board, make sure all players are agreed on the result before putting the cards away. North should be careful to record the score on the tablet fully and accurately, and East or West should verify it.

Discussion. Don't spend time talking about a hand until you have finished all the boards in that round. And if you do want to discuss a hand at the table, do it very quietly (otherwise people who haven't yet played it might hear you).

North. It is North's responsibility to make sure that boards are passed on to the correct table (or relay as appropriate) at the end of each round.

Bidding Boxes. Don't touch the 'bid' cards in the bidding box and then take out a card from the other section, or vice versa. In fact, try not to touch the box at all until you are sure of your call.

Stop Cards. Use the 'STOP' card when making a jump bid (including opening bids): take it out, leave it on the table for ten seconds, then put it away. The next player shouldn't bid whilst the 'STOP' card is still on the table. This automatically creates a short pause for thought, avoiding the inference that a player who passes quickly has nothing to think about.

Alerts. When alerting a call, it is your responsibility to make sure that both opponents see the 'ALERT' card. At Rutland and Oakham Bridge Club we follow the EBU rules on Announcing and Alerting – see the website for details.

Questions during bidding. During the bidding, you can only ask an opponent for an explanation of a bid made by their side when it's your turn to call. And you must ask the partner of the player who made the bid, not the player who made it. Avoid asking questions about the bidding while it is continuing, unless you really need to know the answer in order to decide what your next call should be.

Questions after bidding. The opening leader may now ask questions and the opening lead should always be made face down. At that point the leader's partner still has the opportunity to ask questions about the opponents' bidding. If there are none, the partner should say "No questions".

Misunderstandings in Bidding. If there has been a misunderstanding by declarer or dummy during the auction, this should be explained after the final bid has been made but before play starts. If the defenders think they have been damaged, they should call the Director. However, defenders mustn't say anything about misunderstandings in their own bidding until the play of the hand has finished, when they should call the Director.

The Opening lead. Once the opening lead has been made it can't be changed, but it shouldn't be turned over until partner has asked anything he/she wants to know. For this reason, all four players should leave the bidding cards on the table until any questions have been asked and the opening lead has been faced.

Hesitations. If there is any hesitation in the bidding or the play, the partner of the player who hesitated must be very careful not to draw any inference from this and must bid/play as he/she would have done if there had been no hesitation. This is particularly the case if a player hesitates during the bidding and then passes.

During Play. You should not say anything about the hand while the auction is in progress, or during the play – unless asked for an explanation of a call, or lead/signalling/discard system, by an opponent. You should not touch other players' cards. You may ask them to show you.

Returning Cards. You should shuffle your cards after the hand before returning them to the board.

Director. Do call the director at any time if there is a problem during the bidding or the play. Please do not argue if the Director makes a ruling you do not agree with. You do have the right to make an appeal if you so wish.

Tablets. North is responsible for entering the scores but he/she may delegate this to South. East is responsible for verifying the entry but he/she may delegate this to West. If there is a mistake, North should undo the score and re-enter it correctly, and this should then be verified by East. If an incorrect result has been erroneously verified and cannot be corrected, the director should be called.

Consideration. The other players may request to see the overall percentage and other scores. Best practice is for East (or West) to hold the terminal in a fashion such that all the other players at the table can see these.

If you are not sure about something, please ask the Director.