

Slow Play

Even though in general our events run reasonably to their scheduled time, like all Bridge Clubs, dealing with slow play is & will always be a concern. Obviously different people play at different speeds and as well as chasing up slow players it's important to ensure that those who want to use up all their allotted time are allowed to do so without being harassed by fast players.

At the main F2F session we are aiming to play 24 boards in 3 hours – that works out as 7.5 minutes per board, or 15 minutes for a 2 board round. In the Gentle Duplicate sessions for our novices, we need to look at 10 minutes per board – so only 12 boards in a 2-hour session – although our more experienced students can probably manage more like 15 boards in 2 hours (8 minutes per board).

In all our sessions we should attempt to keep as close to these timing as possible all the way through (getting behind early means we will almost certainly end late) & all of us as players can help us with this by incorporating some good habits in our play (& stopping some bad habits).

The following are suggested “good habits”:

1. Lead first and write it down later.
2. Move promptly: if move is called get to the next table swiftly.
3. Score swiftly: enter details before the end of the hand if you can and then put in the rest of the detail and offer the Fire Tablet to your opponent. eg ‘We got 45%,’ is usually enough rather than going through how many bid which particular game.
4. Catch up: if you are late arriving then you have an obligation to try to catch up.
5. Time yourself: in Chess they have clocks but even in bridge you should be aware if you have taken 11 of the available 15 minutes to deal with the first board of two.
6. Limit your post-mortem until you have finished all the boards for the round.
7. Alert: don't ask every time there is an alert.
8. Claim: consider claiming if you have a reasonably easy end position.
9. Use your opponent's thinking time: you may be able to plan your own play better.
10. If your opponent is going to cash a long suit in dummy, decide on your discards. I bet you've watched someone agonise over their first discard and then when another winner is played do exactly the same again. It can hardly be a surprise.

Directors can & should call the movements before all the tables have finished – i.e. with about ¼ of the tables still playing (so 3 out of 12) & maybe higher than that once the 15 minutes for the round limit is close (say around the 14-minute mark).

However, sometimes we get to the situation where we need to do more to get back on track timewise & the only tool at our disposal is to prevent the play of a board at the table that is delaying everyone else. It should be noted that we cannot “take a board away” once it has been started – what that means is we may well instead have to take 2 boards away at the tables where the slow players now are.

ADJUSTED SCORING FOR REMOVED BOARDS

This will depend on the situation, as follows:

1. TD unable to establish blame AVE/AVE ie 50%/50% OR 0 IMPS/0 IMPS in teams
2. Both pairs at fault but with extenuating circumstances (unlikely – but maybe both pairs have had connection issues on Realbridge for the first time that session) AVE/AVE ie 50%/50% (0 IMPS for Teams).
3. At fault pair vs non-offending pair AVE-/AVE+ - i.e. 40%/60% OR -3 IMPS/+3 IMPS IN TEAMS
4. 2 non-offending pairs (this could be the case when a board has to be removed at a subsequent table) AVE+/AVE+ i.e. 60%/60% (+3/+3)
5. Both pairs at fault AVE-/AVE- 40%/40% (-3/-3)
6. 1 pair non-offending the other pair “at fault but with extenuating circumstances” AVE+/AVE ie 60%/50% (This could happen ONLINE when 1 pair has suffered connection issues for the first time that session – OR could apply at the playing directors table – where the director is unable to play the board due to their director's duties).

Please Note the following extract from the White Book:

8.81.4.2 Pairs events

If the TD is unable to establish which pair is to blame, then the TD should award average for each board removed. A non-offending pair is entitled to AVE+, and an offending pair receives AVE- (see §4.1.1.1).

A TD is entitled to be stricter with a pair known to be slow. Inexperienced players, the infirm and the elderly should be treated less strictly.