

Ethics and Conduct in Duplicate Bridge

In duplicate bridge as sanctioned by the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), there are agreed rules and behaviors. This introduction may help newcomers, intermediates, and advancing players progress in their playing experience and appreciate why there is a director supervising the game. Remember: the director is our friend ... is there to protect everyone ... and is trained to resolve issues of ethics and conduct. Directors and teachers may use this resource (as printed) at their clubs and/or classes. For details, turn to Laws of Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Revised Authorized Edition).

1. **BEST BEHAVIOR AT THE TABLE** ... North and South should greet the opponents and introduce themselves.
 - a. all cell phones shall be turned off, unless the director has given specific permission.
 - b. all players shall have a completed convention card that is identical to their partner's card
(... not always enforced during club games).
 - c. **THE PLAYER SITTING NORTH** ... is officially in charge of the table:
 1. to make certain the table has the correct boards ... and that they are facing in the right direction.
 2. to confirm the pair number of the opponents ... and that they are at the right table.
 3. to record the score for each board ... and have the opponents verify each score.
 4. to change the duplicate boards when ready to go to the next hand.
 5. to move the duplicate boards to the proper table when instructed by the director.
 - d. **ALL PLAYERS AT A TABLE** ... are responsible for:
 1. confirming that they are at the right table ... and sitting in the right position.
 2. confirming that they will play the right boards ... facing the right direction.
 3. confirming that they have 13 cards in their hand ... even before looking at the cards.
 4. touching the cards in the bidding box **ONLY AFTER** having decided what call they are going to make.
 5. trying to maintain a uniform tempo in the bidding, passing, and play of the cards.
 6. (*after the trick is over*) - - placing the card on the table in an overlapping fashion to show who won or lost the trick.
 7. (*after the hand is over*) - - counting the winners and losers ... and confirming the score with the opponents **BEFORE** picking the cards from table.
 8. (*after all agree about the score of the hand*) - - shuffling their own 13 cards and returning them to the proper slot in the duplicate board.

2. **BIDDING IN TEMPO:** Bridge players are expected to bid "*in tempo*" ... neither too fast nor too slow ... to avoid conveying unauthorized information to partner. Ordinarily, a player is expected to make a call within 3-5 seconds after the previous call, but sometimes "extra" time is needed. However, if a player does take "extra" time and then passes, the partner must not use that information in deciding his/her next call. When an extended tempo break is followed by a pass (and the partner still has an opportunity to bid), the director should be called. The exception to this 3-5 second tempo occurs when the previous bidder has made a jump bid. Then the next player should wait 10 seconds before making any call (including a pass).

3. **UNAUTHORIZED INFORMATION:** Unauthorized information is not only conveyed by changes in the bidding tempo (see #2 above). Here are some other behaviors to avoid. If you do any of these, the director may be called.
 - a. reaching for or touching the bidding box, then retracting or moving one's hand to a different call.
 - b. gestures or expressions, such as fidgeting or expressing unease with partner's call or card play.
 - c. verbal remarks before or during the making of a call.
 - d. folding one's hand and placing it on the table to show disinterest or boredom.
 - e. placing a bidding card on the table with special emphasis, occasionally coupled with eye contact, in an attempt to signal something to a partner. This also is true during the play of the cards.

4. **OPENING LEAD:** You should make the opening lead (**BEFORE** recording the contract on your score card) by placing the card **FACE DOWN** on the table and asking, "*Any questions, partner?*" This allows partner to ask any questions about the bidding ... and often prevents a lead out-of-turn. The card on the table may not be replaced in the player's hand unless there has been an irregularity. As soon as the opening lead is made, dummy shall place her/his cards on the table (**BEFORE** recording the contract on the score card). If a lead is made out-of-turn, call the director.

5. TABLE TALK: Let the cards from your bidding box do most of the talking.
Play all the boards in a round before discussing any hand.
Speak softly; do not disturb players at other tables.
Praise your partner and compliment the opponents on good play.
Remember: bridge is just a game.

6. DUMMY'S ROLE: ● When you are dummy, place your cards on the table after the opening lead (but BEFORE you write on your score card). ● Keep your hands away from the cards until the declarer calls for a card to be played. Do not play any card (even a singleton) until declarer has called for it. ● If declarer calls for "*a spade*" always play the lowest card in that suit. ● After each trick is played, place the card on the table showing win or loss in overlapping fashion. ● Dummy shall not call the director during the play of the hand, but must wait until the hand has been completely played. ● Do not mingle cards until AFTER there is agreement with partner and the opponents regarding the outcome of the hand. Then shuffle your cards and place them in the proper slot of the duplicate board.

7. ASKING AN OPPONENT ABOUT A BID:

- a. during the bidding (but only at one's turn-to-bid), a player may ask an opponent what partner's bid means.
- b. after the bidding, any player (except the dummy) may ask for a bidding review before his/her first play.
- c. during the play of the hand (but only at one's turn-to-play), a player may ask for a bidding explanation from the partner of the player making the bid in question.

If the opponent doesn't know (or is not sure) what partner's bid means, s/he should simply say "*I don't know*" OR "*We have no partnership agreement about that.*"

8. IRREGULARITIES: Call the director regarding any irregularity, questions, or rude and intimidating behavior. Simply say "*Director, please.*" Do not discuss the issue; wait for the director to come. Dummy shall not call the director during the play of the hand.

●●● **AFTER A REVOKE - - A FAILURE TO FOLLOW SUIT ...**

- a. a player has the right to inquire about a possible revoke ...
 1. declarer may ask a defender who has failed to follow suit whether s/he has a card in the suit led.
 2. dummy may ask declarer...
 3. the defenders may ask declarer or partner...
- b. a player may correct his/her revoke (if aware) before it becomes established, but should call the director.
- c. a revoke is established when the offender or partner leads or plays to the following trick. Once a revoke is established it can no longer be corrected. Call the director.
- d. if you notice an opponent's revoke, it is to YOUR advantage to wait until the end of the hand to call attention to it. Then say "*I believe there was a revoke on the (eighth) trick*" and call the director.

9. ANNOUNCE & ALERT:

- a. some bids need to be **ANNOUNCED** by the partner of the player making the bid. Those bids needing to be announced are printed in **blue** on the ACBL convention card.
..... If your partner opens with a 1NT bid, YOU must announce your agreed range (e.g. "*15 to 17*") before the next player bids or passes.
- b. some bids need to be **ALERTED** by the partner of the player making the bid ... saying "*alert*" and waving the ALERT card from the bidding box. Typical bids to be alerted are printed in **red** on the convention card. After alerting a bid, you should not say anything more unless asked by an opponent in his/her turn. When asked ("*please explain*"), explain the details of the convention; do not simply name it.

10. BIDDING & PLAY OF THE HAND:

- a. during the bidding, if you make a mechanical mistake (like pulling an unintended bidding card), you can call the director prior to your partner's bid ... explain that it was a mechanical error ... and that you want to correct your bid.
- b. during the play a hand, if a defender's card touches the table or is seen by her/his partner, that card must be played immediately. Take a card from your hand ONLY when you are ready to play it.