

INTRODUCTION TO CLUB DIRECTING

This seminar is an introduction to the mechanical laws that club directors will come up against during club sessions.

Knowledge of the laws will benefit players but it will also hopefully inspire some members to become directors at club sessions. The transition to being a club director can be gentle – no need for exams, you can assist the director of the day until you feel comfortable and then start directing solo at sessions that you're comfortable at.

In this document, the abbreviations LHO and RHO refer to Left Hand Opponent and Right Hand Opponent.

THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

The laws exist not to penalize, but to restore equity.

- Opening Lead Out of Turn
- Lead out of Turn By Declarer or Dummy
- Lead out of turn By Defender
- Revoke
- Calls out of Rotation
 - “Comparative call” concept
 - Pass Out of Rotation
 - Bid Out of Rotation
- Insufficient bid
- Withdrawn Call, Lead Restrictions
- Unintended Calls
- Claims
- Penalty card
- Miscellaneous Laws
- Movements
- Tips on Tact

This document has been based on “The Director is Called” by John McIlrath, a top NSW director. The Club has copies of this booklet that club directors can use.

If you want to take your directing further, we recommend Reg Busch’s Tournament Directing Notes, available on our web site.

OPENING LEAD OUT OF TURN

Opening leads are to be made face down on the table.

After an opening lead out of turn, the Declarer should be given five options:

- (a) Accept the lead and still be declarer, but dummy's hand goes down next before declarer plays to the trick.
- (b) Accept the lead and become dummy. i.e. Declarer's hand goes on the table and the trick continues in normal rotation.
- (c) Ask the correct hand to lead a card of the same suit, in which case the card incorrectly led is replaced in the hand.
- (d) Ask the correct hand **NOT** to lead a card of that suit (for as long as they retain the lead), in which case the card incorrectly led is replaced in the hand.
- (e) Ask the correct hand to lead any card they wish, in which case the card incorrectly played stays on the table **AND** all penalty card provisions apply

If you have the situation where both defenders lead face up cards at the same time, you should allow the correct player to lead and the other card becomes a penalty card.

You may occasionally see a defender who has played a face down card and wants to change this to play an alternative card. This should not be allowed – a face down opening lead is still a played card.

LEAD OUT OF TURN – BY DECLARER OR DUMMY

When Declarer leads from the wrong hand (i.e. they lead from dummy when they won the previous trick in their own hand, or a defender was on lead but the declarer led from their hand or dummy), there are two options, either:

- (a) The lead can be accepted by either defender, or if they are in dispute, by the next player in rotation playing to the trick.
- (b) If the lead is not accepted, then the card played is returned to declarer's or dummy's hand and the correct hand leads.

Dummy may warn declarer about leading from the wrong hand, but not after declarer has led.

LEAD OUT OF TURN – BY DEFENDER

When a Defender leads at their partner's turn to lead, four options should be given to the declarer:

- a) The lead can be accepted by the declarer.
- b) Ask the correct hand to lead a card of the same suit, in which case the card incorrectly lead is replaced in the hand.

- (a) Ask the correct hand **NOT** to lead a card of that suit (for as long as they retain the lead), in which case the card incorrectly lead is replaced in the hand.
- (b) Ask the correct hand to lead any card they wish, in which case, the card incorrectly played stays on the table **AND** all penalty card provision apply

When a Defender leads when the lead should come from Declarer or Dummy, there are two options to be given:

- a) The lead can be accepted by the declarer
- b) If the lead is not accepted then the card incorrectly played stays on the table **AND** all penalty card provisions apply

REVOKE

The Director is called when a player revokes, that is they have failed to follow suit when still able to. The most important question for the Director is “**Has the revoke been established?**”

The revoke is **established** when the offender or their partner leads or plays. It is important to note that trick adjustments are only assessed after a revoke has been established. Otherwise the revoke must be corrected.

Revoke Not Established

An unestablished revoke needs to be corrected. When corrected, non-offending players may change any subsequent card played to the trick and, if they do, then so can the offending side but the original card played becomes a major penalty card if they are a defender. The revoke is corrected:

- i) By a defender, by playing a correct card and the withdrawn card stays on the table as a major penalty card.
- ii) By declarer or dummy, by playing a correct card and replacing the withdrawn card in their hand.

Notes

1. A revoke at trick 12 cannot be established and must be corrected.
2. Defenders have the right to enquire of their partner about a possible revoke by saying “*Having no more, Partner?*” or words to that effect. Declarer has same right to ask Defenders and Defenders may ask Declarer. Dummy can only ask Declarer.
3. A claim or concession, by the offending side, automatically establishes a revoke.

Trick Adjustment following an Established Revoke

If the revoke is established, play continues and any adjustment is assessed by the director after the play has completed.

A revoke is not always subject to a trick adjustment therefore, the Director must establish the following facts to decide whether 0, 1 or 2 tricks are transferred to the non-offending side.

- i) Did the offending **SIDE** win the trick on which the revoke occurred or any subsequent tricks? If the answer is **NO**, then **NO** tricks can be transferred.
- ii) Did the offending **PLAYER** win the trick (i.e. by trumping)? If so, there is a transfer of **ONE** trick **AND** if the offending **SIDE** won any more tricks, there is an **ADDITIONAL** one trick.
- iii) The offending **PLAYER** did not win the trick. Then there is a transfer of **ONE** trick – only if the offending **SIDE** won that trick or a subsequent trick.

Notes

1. You cannot take away any more tricks than were won from the time of the revoke to the completion of the hand.
2. If the Director considers that the **AUTOMATIC TRICK ADJUSTMENT** is insufficient compensation to the damaged side, then an adjusted score **MAY** be awarded.

CALLS OUT OF ROTATION

Whenever there has been a call out of turn, the first option is for LHO to accept the call and the bidding continues in rotation.

If LHO bids over the call out of rotation, they have accepted it and the auction continues without restriction.

“COMPARABLE CALL” CONCEPT

The concept of “Comparable Call” applies to Out of Turn calls and to Insufficient Bids.

A. Definition

A call that replaces a withdrawn call is a comparable call, if it:

1. has the same or similar meaning as that attributable to the withdrawn call, or
2. defines a subset of the possible meanings attributable to the withdrawn call, or
3. has the same purpose (e.g. an asking bid or a relay) as that attributable to the withdrawn call.

B. No Rectification

When a call is cancelled and the offender chooses at his proper turn to replace the irregularity with a comparable call, then both the auction and play continue without further rectification.

PASS OUT OF ROTATION

A. RHO’s Turn to Call

When a pass out of rotation is made at RHO’s turn to call, the offender must pass.

B. Partner’s or LHO’s Turn to Call

1. When the offender has passed at his partner’s turn to call, or at his LHO’s turn to call, then
 - i) Offender’s partner may make any legal call at his proper turn,
 - ii) Offender may make any legal call at his correct turn (but can’t be influenced by partner’s illegal pass) and:
 - a) When the call is a “comparable” call there is no further rectification.
 - b) When the call is not a “comparable” call offender’s partner must pass when next it is his turn to call.

BID OUT OF ROTATION

A. RHO's Turn to Call

When the offender has called at his RHO's turn to call, then:

1. If that opponent passes, offender must repeat the call out of rotation
2. If that opponent makes a legal bid, double or redouble, offender may make any legal call, and
 - a) when the call is a "comparable" call there is no further rectification.
 - b) when the call is not a comparable call offender's partner must PASS when next it is his turn to call.

B. Partner's or LHO's Turn to Call

When the offender has bid at his partner's turn to call, or at his LHO's turn to call if the offender has not previously called, then:

1. Offender's partner may make any legal call at his proper turn,
2. Offender may make any legal call at his correct turn, and (same as above)
 - a) when the call is a "comparable" call there is no further rectification.
 - b) when the call is not a comparable call offender's partner must PASS when next it is his turn to call.

INSUFFICIENT BID

The first option is to offer the offender's LHO the chance to accept the insufficient bid. If it is accepted then it becomes the current legal bid and the auction proceeds in the usual way. If LHO calls over the insufficient bid, they have accepted it.

When the bid has not been accepted, the offender now has 3 options:

1. Correct the bid to the lowest sufficient level which specifies the same denomination(s) and the bidding continues as if no wrong had occurred.
2. Correct the bid with a "comparable call" that the bidding continues as if no wrong had occurred
3. Make any other sufficient bid or pass but partner must pass whenever it is their turn to call. Lead penalties may apply.

WITHDRAWN CALL, LEAD RESTRICTIONS

This typically applies when a call is withdrawn from an insufficient bid or bid out of turn where the replacement call wasn't deemed to be comparable.

A. No Lead Restrictions

When an offending player's call is withdrawn and it is replaced by a comparable call, then **if he becomes a defender**, there are no lead restrictions for his side.

B. Lead Restrictions

When an offending player's call is withdrawn and it is **not** replaced by a comparable call, then **if he becomes a defender**, declarer may, at the offender's partner's first turn to lead may prohibit offender's partner from leading any (one) suit which has not been specified in the **legal** auction by the offender. Such prohibition continues for as long as the offender's partner retains the lead.

UNINTENDED CALLS

Until their partner makes a call, an unintended call may be replaced by the intended call. If the offender's LHO has already called, they can change their call if the offender changes their call. The Director needs to decide if it was genuinely an unintended call, not a change of mind, nit matter how quickly it was announced. Also, it doesn't matter if the offender's pen is still on the bidding slip.

CLAIMS AND CONCESSIONS

If a claim or concession is made, play should stop and the director will be called if there is a dispute. The laws provide for play to continue but all four players must concur.

If the director needs to decide on the validity a claim, they should determine what would have happened had play continued, taking into account the claim statement made. If the claim can fail buy normal or careless play then that's how the director should rule, but they cannot rule that tricks are lost through irrational play.

A similar situation applies for a concession – the director will rule based on what would have happened with normal or careless play but the conceiver but not irrational play.

PENALTY CARD

A penalty card is a card that was prematurely exposed (but not led) by a defender. Declarer (or dummy) can never have a penalty card.

There are major and minor penalty cards:

- i) A **minor penalty card** is one ranked from a 2 to a 9 that was **inadvertently** exposed, e.g. two cards played at once or dropped from the hand. Cards that don't fall into this category are **major penalty cards**. Also, once a defender has two minor penalty cards, they both become **major penalty cards**.
- ii) The importance of distinguishing between a major and a minor penalty card is in its disposition.
 - a. For a minor penalty card, a defender cannot play any card of the same suit below an honour card (AKQJT) unless they have first played the MINOR penalty card. They may play an honour card.
 - b. When the offender is to play, a MAJOR penalty card must be played at the first legal opportunity either in following suit, leading, or discarding.

When the partner of the offender has the lead, Declarer has two options:

- a) Ask for the lead of the suit of the exposed card, in which case the exposed card is replaced in the hand.
- b) Deny the lead of the suit of the exposed card (for as long as they retain the lead), in which case the exposed card is replaced in the hand.
- c) Give no lead restrictions, in which case the penalty card remains on the table and must be played at the first legal opportunity.

MISCELLANEOUS LAWS ISSUES

- Averages – when a result cannot be obtained on a board (this mainly arises from slow play), award an average (50%, 60% or 70%). Where a pair is not an all at fault they get a 60%, a pair at fault gets 40%, and all others get 50%. You can award different averages e.g. 50/60 as they don't need to balance.
- Unauthorised information from partner – when a player receives information from partner that they are not entitled to have (e.g. hesitation, comment etc) they must not select an action that is suggested by that information less more than 75% of players would take that action .

MOVEMENTS EXPLAINED

Mitchell Movement

A Mitchell Movement is one where is a progression of players who always remain in their original compass position. Pair Numbers are based on each pair's starting position; i.e. the table number is also the pair number for both NS and EW.

With Mitchell Movements, NS remain stationary, EW move up a table and the boards move down a table.

With an **ODD** Number of tables, the movement is straight forward and is completed when all NS have played all EW pairs.

With an **EVEN** Number of tables, the Director needs to utilize either a **Skip** or a **Share and Bye** method to avoid EW meeting the same boards after the half way point.

(a) Skip - the same as for an odd number of tables except that at the half way point of the movement (e.g. after 5 rounds in a 10 table movement) EW skip one table.

(b) Share and Bye - to avoid the skip, you have the highest and lowest tables sharing one set of boards and there is an extra set inserted on a bye stand directly opposite (in terms of the movement) from the sharing tables e.g. in a 10 table share and bye, tables 1 and 10 share and there is a bye stand between tables 5 and 6.

Any of the above movements can accommodate a half table. There are also variations of the above to accommodate half tables e.g. rover, 1.5 table appendix etc.

Also, any of these movements can be curtailed – the movement just stops after whatever round the director decides, though this results in some inequities in the scoring.

Howell or One-Winner Moment

Small fields tend to run a Howell or One Winner Movements. These movements involve irregular board and pair movement and pairs may switch from NS to EW throughout the session. It is best to ensure players receive a movement slip, showing their rounds, tables, opponents and boards.

TIPS ON TACT – THE CLUB DIRECTOR

Research reveals that poor behaviour at the table is the most consistent issue affecting our ability to grow the game. People simply want to play bridge in a friendly and welcoming environment.

If we are to grow bridge in Australia, we must ensure that people enjoy their bridge playing experience – particularly at the club level.

Club directors hold a critical role – they are essentially the public face of bridge in our country. While administering the laws of bridge is important, so too is the requirement for them to ensure that a friendly environment is provided for all players.

Key points for a club level director are:

- 1) The role is to create and maintain a warm, friendly atmosphere.
- 2) Be a kind helper rather than a strict magistrate.
- 3) When you are called, walk up to the table and make a conscious decision to smile as you approach.
- 4) Ask, *“How can I help?”* (in a respectful tone).
- 5) Be a host, welcome and invite people back next week to your session.
- 6) Avoid blame and judgement.
- 7) Where possible, give slow players a quiet tip that they need to *‘Move it along, please, else we may need to average it’*.
- 8) If players interrupt each other, ask the person who called you to first explain the issue. Then ask the others to add their piece.
- 9) If you want to educate players before a session begins regarding a recurring issue such as giving partner unauthorized information, it may be better to tell a humorous anecdote about an outrageous breach rather than offer a lecture.
- 10) Try and defuse tension before it has a chance to escalate.
- 11) Be firm and sympathetic. Don’t be dogmatic.
- 12) Be polite and understanding. Don’t be aggressive or critical.
- 13) If your view is questioned, offer to check the rules or check with another director.
- 14) Do not have prolonged discussions. Make your ruling and walk away from the table.