

The Laws of Bridge 2007

Reg Busch

This series of articles is intended as a guide for directors and players on the changes in the Laws, to come into force early in the New Year. But don't start applying them until the ABF has announced the official date. I must stress that the views and interpretations herein are my own only, and carry no official weight. I no longer have any official status with the QBA.

This is the first of a series. This will be a general overview. Subsequent articles will be produced over the next month or so discussing particular Laws which have changed. The good news for directors is that some bad Laws have gone or been changed. The bad news is that even more is demanded of the Director's judgment.

Laws which have significantly changed are:

- The Revoke Laws (61 – 64). Now simpler
- Law 27 – insufficient bid. The Law on insufficient conventional bids has gone. It has been replaced by a rather loosely worded Law which requires some judgment by the Director. I myself am still struggling with the interpretation of the new Law and further clarification will need to be forthcoming.
- Law 25B (delayed change of call) has thankfully gone. The bridge players' favourite word ('inadvertent') has disappeared and been replaced by 'unintended' (which really means the same thing).
- Law 16 (unauthorised information) has significantly changed. The major change: the current Law does not specify what constitutes a 'logical alternative', and we have relied on the ABF National Authority's 70% rule. Now the Laws do define a logical alternative and the old 70% rule will go by the board.
- The word 'penalty' has nearly disappeared, and been replaced by 'rectification'. This is in line with the intent of the Laws that penalties were not intended to have a punitive connotation, but were intended to provide redress for possible damage after an infraction. The word 'penalty' still appears in relation to procedural penalties and disciplinary penalties where there is still a punitive intention.
- There are some changes in laws 68-71 (Claims and Concessions). 'Acquiescence' has disappeared and has been replaced by 'agreement'.
- There are other minor changes which we shall cover later e.g. players will be required to shuffle their cards before returning them to the board.
- There are two major changes which won't directly affect club directors, but all players should be aware of them. The words 'Sponsoring Organisation' have disappeared from the Laws. The SO has been the club for club events, the state for state events, and the ABF for national events. Now the Laws talk of a 'Regulatory

Authority', and in any country the only RA is the national body, in our case the ABF. This is in direct conflict with historical and constitutional arrangements, where Qld is a federation of clubs and the ABF is a federation of states. The QBA has never had the right to dictate to clubs how they run their events (provided they don't violate the Laws of Bridge). Similarly the ABF has never had the right to dictate to states. However I'm confident that this can be solved. The RA has the right to assign its powers to other bodies. I believe that the ABF will solve this problem by assigning to the clubs the power to run club events and to the state the power to run state events.

- The other major change: the RA now has effectively been given carte blanche to regulate partnership agreements. Until now, that right has extended only to regulating the use of conventions, but now it extends to all partnership agreements, This is a two edged sword and it remains to be seen whether this will work.
- One other change to tradition. Look at the title of your Lawbook and you will see 'The Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge'. When you get your new Lawbook you will see that it has become 'The Laws of Duplicate Bridge'. Why the change I've no idea.

Enough for now. Further material in a few days.

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