

BRIDGE ETIQUETTE AND RULES (For Duplicate Bridge Players)

1. Once the bidding has begun, general conversation is not encouraged at the bridge table. All players need to understand that duplicate bridge is a very competitive game and thus each player needs to respect the rights of all other players. Before the first board begins it is certainly permissible to exchange pleasantries with partner and the opponents.

2. At no time should there be any discussion of the hands. Wait until the game is over for post-mortems. Not only is it illegal to discuss hands in front of opponents, it is usually not in the best interest of a partnership effort. When North scores the result on the traveler and offers it for the others to see, there should be no discussion of the results.

3. Keep your mannerisms and intonations consistent at all times. Neither partner nor the opponents are entitled to information gained from deviations in behavior or voice fluctuations. It takes a great deal of effort to master a uniform tempo of play and a steady voice level, but without them, the opponents obtain much more information that you need to give them.

4. Avoid hesitations by being consistently deliberate in your bidding and play. An acquired habit of playing smoothly and evenly (even on very bad hands) will always give you more time to think. Remember that a hesitation followed by a pass places an extra burden on partner as any bids by him or her must be very clear cut. Do not be upset if an opponent calls the director to monitor the auction in this situation as it is the proper thing to do. Also develop the habit of making skip bid warnings and be courteous of the opponents by honoring their skip bid warnings.

5. Playing deliberately is not the same thing as "slow play". The latter comes about mostly because of bad habits such as (a) too much general conversation and waste of time, (b) not thinking about bridge when the opponents pause to think about bids or plays, (c) wasting the other players' time by such things as writing down the contract before putting your hand down as dummy, and too much time spent studying the traveler from the last board and discussing the results among the players at the table. Remember that unduly slow play is subject to penalty at the discretion of the director.

6. Any player, except the dummy, must call the director when law infractions, hesitations, rude behavior, or problems of any kind occur. The director's responsibilities include handling all law and rule infractions as well as running a smooth and pleasant game. Remember that the director is your friend but that does not mean that he or she will always rule in your favor. All directors try to be knowledgeable and impartial in applying bridge laws that are not generally known nor easily understood. It is also in your best interest as a bridge player to learn the basic bridge laws covering such things as dummy's rights and penalty cards as well as those concerning your responsibilities as a participant at the table.

7. There are certain table manners (or rules) that all bridge players should know. Some of these are:

(a) The cards should not be taken out of a board until all players are present. When you have removed your hand, but before looking at the cards, count them to ensure that you have exactly thirteen.

(b) All players should have completed convention cards and those of partners should match. The opponents should review each others' convention cards for general approach before bidding or play begins. It is wise to look at carding agreements related to defense and opening leads, notrump ranges, types and ranges of opening two-bids, and other non-alertable calls that may be of importance.

(c) It is inappropriate to grab an opponent's convention card during the auction period. However, when it is your turn to call, you may ask to see a convention card and may then ask any questions about alerts or the auction. Inquiries concerning alerted calls can only be made at your opportunity to call or before you have played to the first trick when play commences. Be careful about asking about alerted calls during the auction as players have been known to become confused or to forget their agreements; however, it is usually in your best interest to know what is going on before you make a competitive call and before play starts.

(d) The North player is responsible for the proper observance of all

procedures and for maintaining proper conditions of play at the table. For examples, North is responsible for turning the boards and South, East, and West may not touch the boards without North's permission. Nobody can reach under the top board to get their hand from the next board.

(e) After a board has been played, you may not, without permission, remove someone's hand to look at it. If you have received permission, only one hand at a time may be out of the board.

(f) When play commences, do not detach a card from your hand until it is your turn to play and you have decided to play that card. Do not pull up a card, push it back into your hand, and then pull up another card. Nor should you detach a card and then replace it to play another card. Also do not detach your card before it is your turn to play and never rearrange your hand when you are out of a suit. All of these maneuvers provide additional valuable information to the declarer.

(g) When you are on opening lead, detach a card from your hand and lay it face down on the table. This prevents irregularities...such as leading when it is not your turn to do so and allows questions about the auction and any alerts to be answered. All players, except dummy, may now request a review of the auction and an explanation of any alerted calls. You, as the opening leader, should ask before you make your faced lead. Other players may also ask for a review of the auction at their first opportunity to play.

(h) As dummy you may not call the director. In fact, you may not call declarer's attention to anything except that he is about to lead from the wrong hand or to ask if he is out of the suit being played. As dummy you may not play or touch any card in dummy (even a singleton) until declarer calls the card. If declarer designates a suit, but not the rank, he is deemed to have called for the lowest card of the suit indicated. If declarer designates a rank but not a suit, he is deemed to be continuing the suit in which dummy won the last trick.

8. In bridge as in other competitive endeavors it is extremely important to learn how to win and to learn how to lose. While it is acceptable in tennis or

football to do "high fives" when completing a successful maneuver, it is not proper behavior at bridge. In fact, it is not even proper to commend partner for an extraordinarily good play or defense in front of the opponents. On the other hand, it is also poor behavior to berate partner when he or she plays less than perfectly. Likewise, it is not proper to chastise the opponents when a poor play turns out to be lucky or a good play provides you with a bad board.

9. And last, but certainly not least, ENJOY THE GAME...and remember at all time that **it is only a game.**

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