

SCOTTISH BRIDGE UNION

Summary of Changes in the Laws: 2008

As from 1 September 2008, the latest version of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge will be implemented in Scotland

A complete file of the new Laws can be downloaded from the WBF website, www.worldbridge.org; or from www.ecatsbridge.com. We hope to produce a printed version soon.

Most of the changes are aimed at clarification rather than alteration: we list below the changes that are most likely to affect you, the players.

Law 7 Control of Boards and Cards.

The Laws require you to count your cards face down after removing them from the board or wallet. You should count them again, and are now also required to shuffle your cards, before returning them to the board.

Law 17 The Auction Period

The auction period begins for a partnership when either partner withdraws his cards from the board (previously this was defined as 'when either player looks at his cards'.) Once the auction period begins you may no longer consult your own convention card, or any other form of aide memoire, until the auction is completed.

Law 20 Review and Explanation of Calls

You may ask questions about the bidding at your turn to call or play. When your partner asks you are now specifically forbidden from asking supplementary questions until it is your turn to call or play.

Where previously you could ask only for a full explanation of the auction, you may now ask questions about a specific call during the auction and throughout the play. Try to avoid questions that might be construed as drawing attention to a specific suit: you may be accused of offering unauthorised information to your partner.

Note the basic requirement to ensure that opponents are fully informed about your methods.

Law 21 Call based on Misinformation

When the explanation of a bid does not conform to the actual hand the director must now presume that the explanation was wrong unless there is evidence to the contrary - a good reason to carry convention cards!

Law 25 Legal and Illegal Changes of Call.

Calls are now defined as 'intended' and 'unintended' rather than 'inadvertent'. If you make an 'unintended' call (eg by pulling the wrong bid from your box) you may correct it 'without pause for thought'. If you notice your error after a pause, call the TD. If you change an unintended call after LHO has made a call he too may change his call. You may not change an unintended call after your partner has bid, or if the auction is finished.

If you wish to change a call because you have changed your mind then your first call is an 'intended' call. You are advised to summon a TD. Your LHO can accept a substitute call, but not after he has made a call.

Law 27 Insufficient Bid

As before, an insufficient bid can be replaced with the lowest sufficient bid in the same denomination provided both the insufficient bid and the replacement are incontrovertibly not artificial. A change is that if the insufficient bid (artificial or not) is replaced with any legal call that has the same meaning as, or a more precise meaning than, the insufficient bid, the auction proceeds without further rectification. Eg, an inadvertent 4D response to Blackwood can be converted to 5D without rectification. Always ask the TD to rule on this thorny issue! Even after allowing a change he may award an adjusted score at the end of play if he later decides that the outcome of the hand might have been different without the assistance of the insufficient bid.

Replacing an insufficient bid with a call that does not satisfy either of the above conditions still silences partner for the rest of the auction.

Left-hand opponent may accept an insufficient bid, even when it has been replaced before a director has ruled. Should an insufficient bid be replaced with another insufficient bid the new Laws lose patience: LHO may accept the substituted insufficient bid, otherwise it must be replaced by a legal bid or pass, and partner is silenced for the rest of the auction.

Law 40 Partnership Understandings.

These are defined as 'methods adopted explicitly in discussion and implicitly through experience.'

It is incumbent on you to ensure that opponents are not damaged through ignorance of your methods. You do this by alerting correctly and giving full explanations of your understandings.

(See 'Alerting Procedures' under 'Support: Resources' on the SBU website: www.scottishbridge.co.uk)

Law 61 Failure to Follow Suit - Inquiries Concerning a Revoke

During the play declarer may ask a defender who has failed to follow suit whether he has a card of that suit; either defender may similarly ask declarer, and now a defender may ask his partner. The defenders risk a claim of creating unauthorised information if they ask one another.

Dummy may ask declarer whether he has failed to follow suit - one of the few things dummy is allowed to do.

Law 64 Procedure After Establishment of a Revoke

When a revoke is established, and the offending side wins that, or a subsequent trick, one trick is transferred to the non-offending side. A major change is that two tricks are transferred only when the trick is won by the revoke card itself. There is also a new provision that if both sides revoke on the same deal, not necessarily on the same trick, there is no transfer of tricks. The Director retains the power to adjust the score if the non-offending side is insufficiently compensated by the trick transfer.

Law 65 Arrangement of Tricks

This is a new provision: declarer may require that a card that is incorrectly pointed should be corrected at any point during the play. Dummy or either defender may also draw attention to an incorrectly pointed card, but only until the lead is made to the following trick; if done later Law 16B (unauthorised information) may apply.

Law 67 Defective Trick

If a player fails to follow suit to a trick, and later discovers that he has more cards than the other players, he may place a card of the suit led, failing which any card of his choice, among his played cards. He is deemed to have revoked, with a one trick transfer if possible.

Law 68 Claim or Concession of Tricks

There is some clarification of the position when one defender concedes one or more tricks, and his partner immediately objects. Play continues, and any of defender's cards which have been exposed is not a penalty card, but partner may not use the information available from seeing such cards.

Law 70 Contested Claim or Concession.

Play should cease after a claim or concession, but any play occurring after a claim may be used by the director as evidence of the players intentions, and the accuracy of the claim.

Law 75 Mistaken Explanation of Mistaken Call

Rewording: If a call is misexplained: a player should report his own mistaken explanation immediately. Declarer or dummy should correct partner's error before the opening lead is made.

A defender must wait till the end of play before correcting partner's mistake – there may be an adjusted score.

A mistaken call does not attract an adjusted score, but a mistaken explanation is to be assumed in the absence of evidence to the contrary (See Law 21)

Law 76 Spectators

Spectators in a playing area are now under the control of the director. There are some new regulations to take account of new scoring technology and electronic transmission of play.

Laws 79; 85; 86 Director's Powers

Changes here give directors additional powers. Law 75 allows him to correct a scoring error after expiry of the official correction period, provided he is satisfied that the record is wrong.

Law 85 advises that he may rule on disputed facts based on the balance of probabilities in accordance with the evidence he is able to collect.

Law 86 allows a director to award an assigned score in a teams match when an adjusted score has been given at one table, but the non-offending side at the other table obtained a favourable result.