

2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge Guideline for Directors

This document is an outline of the major changes to the 2017 laws.

These laws come into effect on the 1st August 2017.

Law 1 – The Pack

Part C requires that the backs of cards should have an axis of symmetry. Clubs are **not** expected to replace cards that don't comply but should be aware of this requirement when purchasing new packs.

Law 7 – Control of Board and Cards

This law has been amended subtly and now requires the board to remain in the centre of the table *correctly orientated*.

We would encourage players follow this law so as to reduce the risk of cards been returned to incorrect pockets.

Law 9 – Procedure Following an Irregularity

Dummy may now attempt to prevent an irregularity by any player, but is still unable to draw attention to an irregularity which has occurred until play concludes, except for correction of a mistaken explanation by Declarer. Note though, that Law 61 specifically prevents Dummy from enquiring about a revoke by a Defender.

Law 12 – Director's Discretionary Powers

Part A of this law gives Directors the powers to award an adjusted score.

Part B details the objectives of a score adjustment – to redress damage to the non-offending side and to take away any advantage gained by the offending side from an infraction.

Part C has been re-written details in a logical way the steps to take in awarding an adjusted score. The intent in the Laws is, as often as possible, to award *assigned* adjusted scores and not *artificial* ones. That is, to attempt to obtain a **bridge result** at the table where at all possible.

The Laws frequently refer Directors to Law 12C1(b) when an adjusted score needs to be considered.

Law 13 – Incorrect Number of Cards

If the auction has commenced and a player holds a card belonging to another hand, then the hand should be corrected, the auction is completed and the hand is played out. This should occur even if the player has seen another player's card and regardless of which card it is. If the non-offenders are damaged, then an adjusted score can be awarded.

Law 15 – Wrong Board or Hand

If players commence an auction on a board that they are not supposed to play at that turn, and that none of them have played, then the auction proceeds and they are awarded the result they achieve on the board.

They can be required to play the board they were supposed to play at a later time (the end of play).

The pairs that don't get the opportunity to play the board because their opponents have already played it, could play it against each other at a later time.

This will require editing pair numbers in the scoring programme.

Law 20 – Review and Explanation of Calls

If a player gives an incomplete or incorrect explanation of their partner's bid, they must call the Director prior to the opening lead to correct their explanation, although they can call them sooner.

Players are not permitted to enquire about a call if the sole purpose is to elicit an incorrect response from the opponents.

Law 23 – Comparable Call

This is a significant change in these Laws and introduces the concept of a Comparable Call. It is critical that Directors develop a clear understanding of what constitutes a Comparable Call. Many players will struggle with interpretations of these definition and Directors need to be prepared to be able to correctly advise them.

A Comparable Call is defined in the Laws as follows:

[A call that replaces a withdrawn call is a comparable call, if it:](#)

1. [has the same or similar meaning as that attributed to the withdrawn call, or](#)
2. [defines a subset of the possible meanings attributable to the withdrawn call, or](#)

3. has the same purpose (eg an asking bid or a relay) as that attributable to the withdrawn call

Examples:

A call with a same or similar meaning as that attributed to the withdrawn call.

W	N	E	S
		1H	
W	N	E	S
1H	P	2NT ¹	
¹ 4 card support, game force			

1H by East was bid at West's turn to open and wasn't accepted by South. West opens 1H and after a pass by North, East bids 2NT – described above – which has the same meaning as the withdrawn bid out of rotation.

A call that is a subset of the possible meanings attributable to the withdrawn call.

W	N	E	S
		P	
W	N	E	S
1H	P	2H	

Pass by east was called at West's turn to open and wasn't accepted by South. West opens 1H and after a pass by North, East bids 2H. The 2H bid is a subset of all the hands make up the set of pass hands. It is less than an opening hand and promises H support. 1NT, 3H and even 4H may be acceptable bids depending on the partnership methods.

A call that has the same purpose as that attributable to the withdrawn call.

N	W	E	S
2NT	P	2C	
N	W	E	S
2NT	P	3C	

East's purpose in bidding 2C was to bid Stayman but he bid at the wrong level.

As long as 3C over 2NT has the same purpose – enquiring about 4 cards suits – then it is a comparable call.

If a player makes an Insufficient Bid, Pass out of Rotation, Bid out of Rotation or Double or Redouble out of Rotation and that call isn't accepted by the next player in turn, then if they can replace that call with a Comparable Call (as defined above) then there is no further rectification.

See the Appendix for a further discussion on Comparable Call.

Law 24 – Card Led or Exposed During the Auction

This law now applies to auction and **not** the time prior to the opening lead as it does in the 2007 Laws.

A card exposed prior to the auction commencing or in the clarification period is not covered by this law.

The WBF Laws Committee are to meet in the next few weeks and it is likely that they will provide guidance regarding how to deal with cards led or exposed during these two periods.

In the meantime, a card exposed or led prior to the auction should be considered unauthorized information.

A card exposed or led during the clarification period by a defender should be dealt with under Law 49.

There is a new definition in the Laws

Presumed Declarer – who is 'the player, in the absence of an infraction, would become the declarer.

A defender is defined:

Defender – an opponent of (presumed) declarer

There is only one period of time – the Clarification Period – in which there can be a presumed declarer and this allows Law 49 to be applied during this period.

Law 25 – Legal and Illegal Changes of Call

This law has become more stringent and loss of concentration is specifically mentioned. It is not a justification claiming that a call is unintended.

Law 26 - Call Withdrawn, Lead Restriction

Lead penalties are referred to in the Insufficient Bid, Pass out of Rotation, Bid out of Rotation and Double or Redouble out of Rotation Laws.

If the withdrawn call is replaced by a comparable call there are no lead restrictions.

If the withdrawn call is replaced by any other call then there may be lead restriction. On offender's partner's first turn to lead, declarer can forbid the lead of any one suit not bid in the *legal* auction.

Example:

W	N	E	S
2NT	2H ¹		
¹ H and a higher suit			
W	N	E	S
2NT	3S	3NT	

On South's first turn to lead, declarer can deny the lead of a Heart, Diamond or Club. The insufficient bid, 2H, was a DONT response showing Hearts and Spades. This isn't accepted by E and so N bids 3S. Although Hearts and Spades were shown with the 2H bid only Spades was shown in the *legal* auction. Therefore, West can forbid a lead of a Heart, Diamond or Club on Souths' first turn to lead.

Law 27 - Insufficient Bid

An insufficient bid can be accepted and bidding and play continues (as in the current Law)

If the bid is not accepted then there are 3 legal options.

The bid can be corrected with the lowest sufficient bid that specifies the same denomination and bidding and play continues. There is no further rectification although an assigned adjusted score can be awarded if the non-offenders are damaged.

The bid can be corrected with a sufficient comparable call. There is no further rectification although an assigned adjusted score can be awarded if the non-offenders are damaged.

The bid can be corrected by any other legal call and partner must pass for the rest of the auction. There may be unauthorised information (UI), lead penalties and awareness of potential damage to be considered.

Note that first option refers to replacing the bid with *the lowest sufficient bid that specifies the same denomination*.

Example:

W	N	E	S
1NT	2S	2D ¹	
W	N	E	S
1NT	2S	3H	

¹transfer to H

2D by East is a transfer to Hearts but is an insufficient bid. 3H specifies the same denomination at the lowest sufficient level. Bidding and play continues with no further rectification but an assigned adjusted score can be awarded if the non-offenders are damaged.

Law 30, 31 & 32 - Pass out of Rotation, Bid out of Rotation, Double or Redouble out of Rotation

The treatment of these 3 infractions are now all very similar. In each case, the Law considers the situation were the infraction occurs at RHOs turn to call and when the infraction occurs at LHOs or partners turn to call.

The call out of rotation can always be accepted by LHO (unless it is an inadmissible double or redouble).

RHOs turn to call

If the infraction occurs at RHOs turn to call and RHO passes, then the pass, bid, double or redouble must be repeated, unless the double or redouble are inadmissible.

A player who passes at RHOs turn to call must pass for one round regardless of what action RHO takes. Law 72C (awareness of potential damage) needs to be considered.

When a player bids, doubles or redoubles and it is not accepted, then if the RHO bids, doubles or redoubles, the player must make a legal call.

If the withdrawn call can be replaced by a comparable call, then there is no further rectification, but an assigned adjusted score can be awarded if the non-offenders are damaged.

If the withdrawn call is replaced by any other call then the offender's partner must pass when it is next their turn to call. There may be UI, lead penalty and awareness of potential damage consideration.

LHO or Partners turn to call

In the infraction occurs at LHO or Partners turn to call then the offender has taken away partner's opportunity to call. The 2017 Laws give offender's partner that right back.

If a pass, bid, double or redouble is made at LHO or Partner's turn to call, and if it is not accepted, then the partner can make any legal call at their turn to call (they must ignore any unauthorized information (UI) they have received).

The offender, at their turn to call, can make any legal call.

If the offender's call is a comparable call then the auction continues, there is no rectification, but an assigned adjusted score can be awarded if the non-offenders are damaged.

If the withdrawn call is replaced by any other call then the offender's partner must pass when it is next their turn to call. There may be UI, lead penalty and awareness of potential damage considerations.

If a player makes a call and then, at LHO's turn to call, makes another call, this infraction is dealt with by Law 25 – Legal and Illegal Changes of Call.

Law 42 - Dummy's Rights

Dummy can now attempt to prevent any irregularity, subject to Law 43. However, Law 61, prevents them from enquiring about whether a defender has revoked.

Law 45 – Card Played

If Dummy plays a card that Declarer didn't name, then it must be corrected if it is discovered before each side has played a card to the next trick. Any card played subsequent to the misplayed card, and prior to attention being drawn to it, may also be withdrawn. (Law 16C applies)

If it is too late to correct the misplayed card, then play continues normally without any alteration of cards played.

If the card misplayed by Dummy is the first card to a trick and one or more players fail to follow suit **to the misplayed card** then that failure to follow suit may constitute a revoke.

Example:

Declarer wins a trick in Dummy with King of Clubs.
The Ace of Spades and Ace of Clubs are in Dummy and Declarer calls for the Ace of Spades.
Dummy places the Ace of Clubs in the played position.
One of more players 'follow suit' by playing a Spade – the suit called for but, in so doing, may have revoked if they hold a Club.

Law 50 – Disposition of a Penalty Card

Information pertaining to a penalty card is authorised to offender's partner while the penalty card remains on the table but becomes unauthorised once it is replaced in offender's hand. Once the card has been played, the reason it occurred remains unauthorised to Offender's Partner.

Information about the Penalty Card is authorised to Declarer at all times.

If the Directors judges that the non-offending side are damaged by the information gained from the exposed card then he shall award an *assigned* adjusted score

Law 64 - Procedure after Establishment of a Revoke

This law now refers to *automatic trick adjustment* when a revoke has been established.

The law about how many tricks (1 or 2) are transferred hasn't changed.

The law refers to *redress of damage* rather than restoring equity, if there has been more damage done by the revoke.

Law 66 – Inspection of Tricks

Players can now look at, but not expose, the card they played to their last trick, until either player from their side has played to the next trick.

Law 68 - Claim or Concession of Tricks

A hand can now be played out following a claim but only if:

A member of the non-claiming or non-conceding side requests the hand to be played out, and

All four players concur (if dummy is not at the table then they are deemed to have concurred)

The claim or concession is void and lead penalties and UI do not apply.
The result achieved at the table shall stand.

If there is an objection by any player (including dummy), then the Director must be called and will apply Law 70.

The hand can not be played out once the Director has been summoned.

Law 75 – Mistaken Explanation or Mistaken Call

It is now an infraction to state there is a partnership agreement when there isn't one, for example, by stating an opinion as if it were an agreement, or "I'm taking that as...".

Law 86 – Team Play

When the Director awards an adjusted score and the result at the other table is clearly favourable to one side, then the Director shall award an *assigned* adjusted score.

This only applies if there is a single result.

If there are multiple results at one or more tables then the Director awards *artificial* adjusted scores.

The application of this law is confusing and it is expected that the WBF Laws Committee will clarify this in the near future.

Summary

This is not a complete summary of the changes in the 2017 Laws. If Directors, you should obtain a copy of the laws and acquaint yourselves with the changes. Copies can be downloaded from the WBF website or purchased from Bridge NZ. Your clubs have all been sent a copy.

The key to these changes is understanding what a Comparable Call is.

If the Laws permit, replacing an Insufficient Bid, Pass out of Rotation, Bid out of Rotation or Double or Redouble out of Rotation by a Comparable Call allows the auction and play to continue without further rectification.

However, if the non-offending side is damage then you can award an adjusted score. You should, in the first instance, attempt to replace the result with an *assigned* adjusted score – ie a **bridge result**.

Remember, that although Law 27 does not allow replacement of an Insufficient Bid with a double or redouble, this does **not** apply if the double or redouble is a Comparable Call. In other words, if the double or redouble is a Comparable Call then Law 23 applies – the call is

allowed, there is no further rectification but you may have to award an adjusted score if the non-offenders are damaged.

The Laws are available on line for anyone who wants to look at them.
<http://www.worldbridge.org/rules-regulations/2017-laws-of-duplicate-bridge/>

Printed copies can be purchased from Bridge NZ.
<https://bridgenz.co.nz>

If you have any questions, feel free to email me.

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