

WORTHING BRIDGE CLUB

POINTS OF LAW, ETIQUETTE AND PROCEDURE

This list is based on one provided by the EBU and is mainly for the benefit of new members. Most existing members will already be aware of most of these points, but we hope the list will be a useful reminder. More experienced players are asked to be tolerant of those who are still learning their way around the intricacies of duplicate bridge and to provide gentle help and guidance where necessary.

General procedure and keeping to time

- Please arrive 15 minutes before the start time of the session. If you arrive after this, you may not be able to play. If you are on your way but are delayed (e.g. by traffic) please phone the club on 01903 239234.
- Please switch off your mobile phone or set it to silent.
- Greet your opponents at the beginning of the round.
- Always count your cards before looking at them. If you don't have 13 cards call the director. [Counting them below table level is a suggestion just in case one or more cards have been inadvertently faced]
- Leave the single board in play on the table, pointing in the right direction, until the hand is finished. This makes it much more difficult to put the hands back in the wrong slots afterwards!
- When you are on lead, make your lead face-down in case your partner (or declarer) wants to ask a question.
- It is good practice to make a lead **before** putting your bidding cards away or writing the contract on your score card or entering a contract on the Bridgmate. Similarly, when you're dummy, put your hand down first, then put away the bidding cards and write down the contract.
- Try not to take too long over calls or when playing a card. Best practice is to always try and play in tempo.
- Unless dummy has left the table, declarer should never touch dummy's cards, even to rearrange them. This avoids arguments about whether a card has been played or not.
- At the end of a board, make sure that all players are agreed on the result before putting the cards away.
- Do give credit when opponents make a good bid or play.
- Be polite at the table - it is rude to criticise partner or opponents, to gloat over good results or to object to a call for the director.

- Don't spend time talking about a hand until you have finished all the boards in that round. And if you do want to discuss a hand at the table, do it **very quietly** (otherwise people who haven't yet played it might hear you).
- You should not touch other players' cards. You may ask them to show you. Declarer can ask dummy which hand they may be in, but dummy CANNOT show the card.
- You should shuffle your cards after the hand before returning them to the board.
- Thank your opponents at the end of the round and move promptly to your new table when the director tells you to.
- It is North's responsibility to make sure the boards are passed on to the correct table (or relay as appropriate) at the end of each round. When passing the boards to another table, do not turn them upside down, as cards may fall out.
- When playing a Howell movement, **both** pairs should check at the beginning of each round that they are playing at the correct table, against the correct pair, and using the correct boards.
- Don't forget to enjoy the game!

Bridgemates

- Know your club ID (or EBU number) to input on the Bridgemate at the beginning of the session.
- North is responsible for entering the scores but may delegate this to South.
- East is responsible for verifying the entry but may delegate this to West. **Note you are checking that it is the right board, and the right contract played by the right player, and that the result is correct. You are NOT checking the score or the percentage.**
- If there is a mistake, North should cancel the entry and re-enter it, and this should then be verified by East.
- If an incorrect entry has been verified, call the director as soon as you realise so that it can be corrected.
- The other players may ask to see the overall percentage and other scores. Best practice is for East (or West) to hold the terminal in a way that all the other players at the table can see these.
- If you are not sure about something on the Bridgemate, ask the director.

Bidding and Play

It's very easy to pick up inferences, known as 'unauthorised information', either from an unguarded comment, from a facial expression, or even from the speed at which someone bids or plays. You are perfectly entitled to try to take advantage of this if your opponents do it, but NOT when it's your partner – and of course you should try to avoid doing something yourself which might give away any information of this sort to your partner.

- Both players should have an identically completed convention card giving details of the basic system that they play, together with the meaning of all artificial calls, and their system of leads, signals and discards. These should be left on the table throughout the bidding and play, so that your opponents can consult them. Note you are not allowed to consult them yourself!
- Don't touch the 'bid' cards in the bidding box and then take out a card from the other section, or vice versa. Best practice is to not touch the bidding box at all until you are sure of your bid.
- Use the 'STOP' card when making a jump bid (including an opening bid); take it out, leave it on the table for 10 seconds, then put it away. The next player cannot bid whilst the 'STOP' card is still on the table. This automatically creates a short pause for thought, avoiding the inference that a player who passes quickly has nothing to think about.
- When alerting a call, it is your responsibility to make sure that both opponents see the 'ALERT' card.
- At Worthing Bridge Club we follow the EBU rules on Announcing and Alerting – see separate sheet.
- During the bidding you can only ask an opponent for an explanation of a bid made by their side when it's your turn to call. And you must ask the partner of the player who made the bid, not the player who made it.
- Avoid asking questions about the bidding while it is continuing, unless you really need to know the answer in order to decide what your next call should be - if you then pass, your partner might draw an inference about your strength, or your interest in the suit bid, and this could be 'unauthorised information'. If you don't understand a bid, wait until the auction is finished before asking what it meant.
- The opening lead should always be made face down. At that point the leader's partner, and declarer has/have the opportunity to ask questions about the opponents' bidding. If there are none, the partner/declarer should say 'No questions'. Once the opening lead has been made it can't be changed, but it shouldn't be turned over until partner has asked anything he/she wants to know. For this reason, all four players should leave the bidding cards on the table until any questions have been asked and the opening lead has been faced. [Even a faced down card can ONLY be changed by the Director.]
- If there has been a misunderstanding during the bidding by declarer or dummy, this should be explained to the opponents after the final bid has been made but before play starts. If the defenders think they have been damaged they should call the director. However, defenders mustn't say anything about misunderstandings in their own bidding until the play of the hand has finished, when they should call the director.
- If there is any hesitation in the bidding or the play, the partner of the player who hesitated must be very careful not to draw any inference from this and must bid/play as he/she would have done if there had been no hesitation. This is particularly the case if a player hesitates during the bidding and then passes.
- You should not say **anything** about the hand while the auction is in progress or during the play – unless asked for an explanation of a call, or lead/signalling/discard system by an opponent.

Calling the director

- Do call the director any time there is a problem (not just related to a ruling/infraction) during the bidding or the play, don't try to sort things out for yourselves. The director has been trained to help you when something goes wrong and will use the Laws and guidance from the EBU to make decisions. The Laws of Duplicate Bridge change from time to time – there were major changes in August 2017 - so players may think they know how to sort it out for themselves, but the Laws could now be different! So always call the director.
- If you have a concern, do say to your opponents and your partner "I'm not sure about something, do you mind if I call the director?". When you call the director use a calm, measured and polite tone using the phrase "Director, please", not just the single word "Director". This will avoid upsetting the opponents in any way.
- Please do not argue if the director makes a ruling you do not agree with. You do have the right to make an appeal if you so wish.