

opponents will be entitled to redress if they go down in the contract which would otherwise have made.

That you would have made the club lead regardless because you don't want to lead away from honour holdings in other suits, or that your partner in fact holds nothing at all in clubs but was simply not concentrating, will cut no ice with the Director or an Appeals Committee. Your partner has fixed you by his careless behaviour.



What happens when you revoke and why

Players often complain that the punishment for a revoke is out of all proportion to the crime. A mistake made absentmindedly, which might have made no difference to the outcome, gives declarer an extra trick and allows him to make a contract for which he had no legitimate play. This seems harsh, especially at teams where the difference between +100 and -620 can decide the match.

The reason for the revoke penalty is simple: if there were no penalty, there would be no disincentive for those who play carelessly or unethically, and over a large number of boards they would be likely to gain some advantage. Also, revoke cards can give unauthorised information. Since it would be unreasonable to expect Directors to decide in any individual case whether the offender intended to revoke, the penalty is applied without exception.



There are two kinds of revoke penalty.

- The first, which is not strictly a penalty at all, is to restore the position that would have existed had there been no revoke: a trick won by a revoke card is restored to the non-offending side; likewise if the procedural penalty for revoking is not enough to compensate declarer for the tricks he would have won without the revoke, the Director will restore equity. So, for example, if a revoke results in declarer's being unable to reach a suit in dummy which would have given him four tricks, those four tricks will be restored.
- The second kind of penalty is a true penalty, in effect a fine for careless play, and transfers to the non-offending side an extra trick over and above the one (if any) they lost on the revoke. Most revokes in tricks won by the revoker will result in at least one penalty trick's being transferred, in addition to any trick won by the revoke card. (A second trick will not be transferred unless tricks were won by the offending side after the revoke. Tricks won before the revoke are irrelevant.)

*Revokes at trick 12 can always be corrected before the cards are returned to the board, but if the revoke card has given the offender's partner useful information, declarer will be able to specify which of his two remaining cards the offender's partner must play to the trick.

Claims and how to avoid making duff ones

Claims are a trap for the unwary. It may seem to you obvious that you have the rest of the tricks, but the defenders can't see what you're thinking and it may not be at all obvious to them.



If you are going to make a claim, you should be absolutely certain that there are no trumps out and no cards higher than any you're claiming in a side suit; and you should state clearly what line of play you intend to take. If you have forgotten that there is a trump out, you will almost always be forced to concede a trick to that trump; and if you don't state a line of play, the Director is obliged to rule that you lose to any normal (but not irrational) line of play, taking account of your standard as a player.

Once you have made a claim, play must stop. Neither you nor the defence is entitled to ask for the hand to be played out.

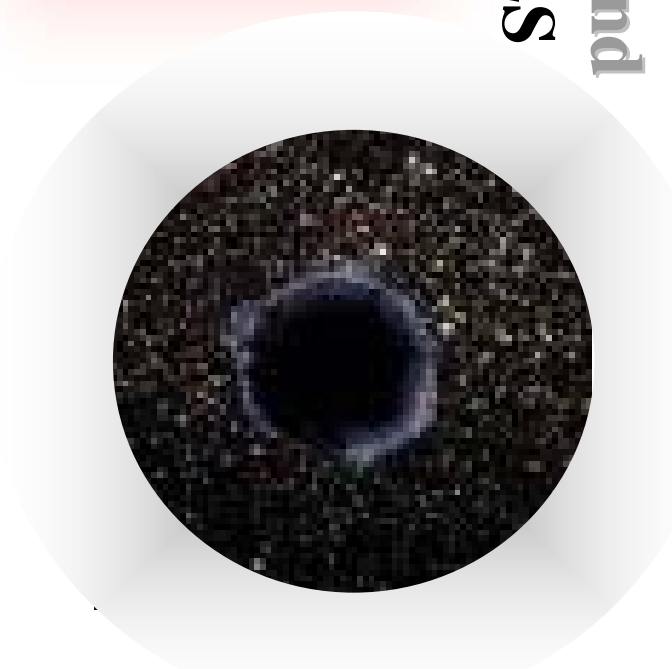
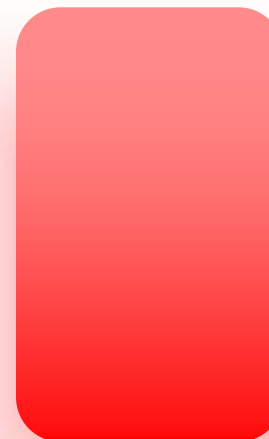
If the opponents dispute your stated line of play, you must call the Director; the Director will consider your claim and award it if your line will succeed, or award the opponents the number of tricks they are entitled to if not. If a trump is still out, the defence will be awarded a trick unless you have stated that you intend to draw trumps OR that you intend to play on a high cross-ruff.

If you have not stated a line of play, or if you now attempt to state a different line of play, the Director cannot accept the claim unless there was no other rational way to play the hand (you are not obliged to throw kings under the opponents' aces, but you are obliged to take finesses the wrong way). You should therefore be sure before claiming that a) you state the line you intend to take and b) your intended line works on any lie of the cards.

Finally, expert players should be cautious about claiming against less experienced players, especially if they intend to claim on an expert play such as a squeeze. It may take more time for the Director to verify the claim than if the contract had been played out, and the opponents are likely to be left feeling baffled and as if some vague injustice has occurred.

If there is anything in this leaflet you don't understand, or if you would like more information about the rule of bridge, please contact Anne Jones, Chairman of the Laws & Ethics Committee, on laws@wbu.org.uk Tel. 029 2065 1407 (11am -11pm)

RED CARDS and BLACK HOLES



BRIDGE RULES: A BRIEF GUIDE FOR PLAYERS OF ALL STANDARDS

Why bridge rules are as they are: a brief guide for players

Have you ever had the director called to your table after your partner has stopped to think during the auction?

Have you ever felt angry, disturbed, or downright miserable after he's left? Then read on.

The rules of any game can be divided into two broad types:

- those that define the game, and
- those that regulate the way in which it is played

In football, for example, there are rules that set out what a football match consists of – size of pitch, length of match, how many players in a side, what constitutes a goal, and so on. There are also rules that govern the way the game is played, so that fair play is observed. These include the offside rule, without which football would be rather dull, and the rules on foul kicks, which dictate that the ball must be won fairly and not by disabling the opposition.

In bridge, the first class of rules sets out the size of the pack, the ranking of suits, dealer and vulnerability on each board, the arrangement of tables and players and the scoring method. The second class governs fair play, and is essentially concerned with unauthorised information. This second class of rules is not universally known, and is generally poorly understood. As a result, players who find themselves on the wrong end of a Director's ruling can feel harshly dealt with.

Why do we have this second class of rules?

The most important of all the rules of bridge is this: you must not communicate with partner other than by making bids or playing cards.

The interest of bridge lies largely in the challenge of reaching the right contract, or finding the right defence, using only clues from the bidding and from cards played during the hand. There would be little interest in the game if you were able to say "Partner, I hold ♠Kxx, ♥AJ97x, ♦10x, ♣AQJ; what have you got?" It would be like doing a crossword by filling in the answers from the printed solution. In essence, this is what the laws are designed to prevent.

- Authorised information is derived from the bidding and from the play of the cards.
- Unauthorised information, such as fiddling with your ring to ask for a ♦ lead, or passing slowly to show your partner that you have some points, is equivalent to saying "I have the ace and queen of diamonds", or "I have a balanced 11-count", and not only makes the game less interesting but gives your side an unfair advantage.



Some forms of unauthorised information are more blatant or damaging than others: a brief pause may be like shirt-pulling to slow a footballing adversary down, whereas using a convention without revealing it is equivalent to breaking his legs.

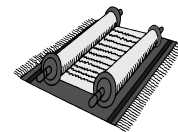
Most people don't do these things consciously. Unfortunately, the effect of unauthorised information is the same whether it is done consciously or inadvertently, so the rules must provide redress for opponents in both cases.

When a Director rules that your opponents have been damaged by your bidding on after your partner has hesitated, he is not accusing you of cheating; he is saying that if someone wanted to cheat he would do what you and your partner have done, so the opponents must be awarded the same compensation. It may seem inequitable that when you revoke the opponents are awarded more tricks than they would have made without the revoke, but the rule is there to deter those who might seek to gain unfair advantage by revoking deliberately.



Bridge enjoys an enviable reputation as a game of honesty and fairness. Without rules to prevent unauthorised information, it would be impossible to maintain this reputation. While, therefore, in social bridge and in local clubs some rules are not rigidly enforced, at tournament level they must be. Any other course would allow unscrupulous or careless players to win, if not money prizes, masterpoints and prestige to which they are not entitled, and would spoil the game for everyone.

Every bridge club should have a copy of the rules, but they are not easy to read and are even more difficult to interpret. Hence this brief guide, which should be made available to all players of whatever standard.



A brief explanation of the rules relating to fair play

What is authorised information?

"Players are authorised to base their calls and plays on information from legal calls and or plays, and from mannerisms of opponents." In other words, you may make any inference you choose from bids made or not made, and from cards played or not played, and also from anything your opponents give away by their demeanour.

What is unauthorised information?

- "...extraneous information that may suggest a call or play, as by means of a remark, a question, a reply to a question, or by unmistakable hesitation, unwonted speech, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement, mannerism or the like ..." (Law 16).

- Exposed cards (including revokes and leads out of turn) and irregular bids such as calls out of rotation and insufficient bids can also constitute unauthorised information, though they are separately dealt with in Laws 21-35 and 49-64, and the procedures for correcting them are generally unambiguous.

What must I do if I think my partner has given me unauthorised information?

Be very careful that your next or subsequent actions are based only on authorised information – legal bids and plays. You will not be given the benefit of the doubt.

Where your actions are marginal, the Director will rule in favour of your opponents. The rule actually requires that *you do not choose any action that could have been suggested by the unauthorised information.* If a logical alternative was available to you, your bid or play will be deemed to be based on the unauthorised information, and your opponents will be entitled to redress.

For example?

Suppose you overcall holding a good hand – something like ♠AQJ987 ♥6 ♦K1097 ♣K9. The auction begins (1♦) - 1♠ - (2♥) - Pass - (3♥). You may be thinking your hand is too good to pass at this point, because you could have made the same bid of 1♠ with the same (or worse) spade holding but no outside cards. If your partner passed in tempo, you are entitled to bid 3♠, or perhaps double, and hope that this will get your side a good score.

If, however, your partner had a little think before passing, or even reached slowly for the pass card, you have, or will be presumed to have, the unauthorised information that your partner holds something useful. It would not have been illogical for you to pass instead, so you bid at your peril and if your side gets a good score as a result of your doing so the opponents will be entitled to redress.

Does that mean I can never bid after my partner has hesitated?

No. If on the above auction you held ♠AQJ1098 ♥void ♦AQJ10 ♣A9, most players would agree it was not logical to pass. There is no prescription for what constitutes a "logical alternative", but there is usually some kind of consensus about it; Directors will often consult other players of your presumed standard if they are in any doubt.

Similarly, if you are defending 3NT after the auction 1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 3NT, and your partner has obviously looked at the opponents' convention card before passing over the 2♣ Stayman bid, you are entitled to lead from ♣KQJ109 because that's probably what you would have done in any case. If, however, you lead a ♣ from three small when you are holding four spades, you will be presumed to have acted on the basis of unauthorised information, and the