

2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge Guideline for players

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

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

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.

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.

Law 23 – Comparable Call

This is a significant change in these Laws and introduces the concept of a Comparable Call.

This 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A call that replaces a withdrawn call is a comparable call, if it: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 has the same or similar meaning as that attributed to the withdrawn call, or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 defines a subset of the possible meanings attributable to the withdrawn call, or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 has the same purpose (eg an asking bid or a relay) as that attributable to the withdrawn call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A call with a same or similar meaning as that attributed to the withdrawn call.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.

Players will need to come to understand what comparable calls are.

Law 25 – Legal and Illegal Changes of Call

This law has become more stringent and loss of concentration is specifically mentioned and is not a justification for changing a legal call.

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	
¹ transfer 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

As mentioned earlier, if the call made out of rotation can be replaced with a Comparable Call then there is no further rectification.

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 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...".

Summary

There are a lot of changes in the Laws but many are simple rewording and renumbering of clauses and so I haven't included them in this discussion.

There are a number of other changes which I haven't discussed here because they are more relevant to Directors.

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.

Murray Wiggins

Chief Director

NZ Bridge

murray.wiggins@nzbridge.co.nz