

Commentary on the 2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge

Preface

The WBF Laws Committee is happy to announce the release its Commentary on the 2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge.

Bridge is a complicated game that requires detailed instructions explaining how it is to be played. The Laws however do not always describe in detail how the Tournament Director should proceed in carrying out his duties. The goal of this Commentary is to help the TD correctly apply the Laws of Bridge. The Laws sometimes describe a default approach, while also offering Regulating Authorities the option to choose a different approach. In much the same way, the interpretation of certain laws may differ between regions and so the Laws Committee have selected the approach they believe to be best. Such choices are not set in stone, and it is possible this may change over time. This Commentary will be a dynamic document, with regular updates. The Committee encourages on-going comment and it welcomes suggestions for possible improvement as well as requests for further interpretation.

It hopes that this Commentary will be helpful.

Ton Kooijman
(Chairman - WBFLC)

January 2019

Introduction

The focus of this document is to highlight the changes from the 2007 Code and to amplify WBFLC interpretations. As such, it is first and foremost a guide for TDs and not part of the 2017 Code.

This commentary addresses each law in numerical sequence; however not all laws are covered. The contents are based upon the WBFLC's corporate view and general understanding of the Laws as they currently stand. The Commentary is not envisaged to be a fixed document, and will over time be periodically updated and/or expanded upon in the light of future experience, discussion and debate. The need to eliminate any possible confusion regarding the application of laws not currently mentioned or a request from an NBO for clarification as to the meaning of a specific law or phrase might also lead to later modification.

General Principles

Unless the context of a law clearly dictates otherwise, the singular includes the plural, and the masculine includes the feminine.

Where two different laws appear to relate to the same factual situation, a law governing the specific subject matter always overrides a law governing only general matters.

Example 1:

Dummy's rights are addressed in Laws 42 and 43. Provisions there for dummy supersede those in Law 9.

Example 2:

A defender revokes and dummy, trying to prevent the establishment of the revoke, asks him about it. Law 9A3 could be interpreted as allowing this, but Law 61B explicitly states that dummy is not allowed to do so.

Example 3:

A defender places his just played card in the lost position when in fact his side has won the trick. Law 43A1(a) says that dummy may not call attention to an irregularity during play, but Law 65B explicitly states that dummy is allowed to point out this irregularity so long as his side has not played a card to the following trick.

Illegal Communication

The WBF Laws Committee could not avoid paying attention to the awful discovery in 2015 that some world class players appeared to have regularly and deliberately exchanged illicit information as part of the way they played our game. No set of Laws can, by themselves, prevent an individual from attempting to cheat; Law 73B2 already makes it clear that, "The gravest possible offense is for a partnership to exchange information through prearranged methods of communication other than those sanctioned by these Laws."

That being said, the Committee notes that playing bridge (at a physical table) includes exercising many manual tasks which should be done in a uniform way. The Laws prescribe such uniform methods; supplemental regulations should do the same. The TD's role is to maintain these orderly procedures. Players need to understand that proper procedures are necessary in order to ensure the honesty of our game.

Law 1 – The Pack

This Law now requires that the reverse side of the playing cards be symmetrical. Some older cards might not now comply with this Law. For instance, those with a single logo on the back may look different when pointed up to down. The Committee also recommends the use of symmetrical card faces.

Law 6 – The Shuffle and Deal

This Law is now clear: two consecutive cards in the deck should not be dealt to the same player's hand. There is also a recommendation that the cards be dealt in four piles clockwise.

Law 7A – Placement of Board

The board must be placed on the table in the proper position. The board must then not to be moved after the players have taken their cards out of the pockets until the end of play of that board. This defines proper procedure and helps prevent fouled boards.

Law 7B – Inspection of an Opponent’s Hand

After a board is played, a player may look at a hand if either of his opponents agree or if the TD allows it.

Law 7C – Returning Cards to the Board

After play, each player should mix his cards before returning them to the board. This is to avoid unauthorised information being obtained from the order in which cards were played at a previous table.

Law 9A3 – Prevention of an Irregularity

The Laws allow any player to try to prevent another player from committing an infraction or irregularity. Once an irregularity has occurred, it can no longer be prevented from happening. A common example is dummy stating that declarer has led from the wrong hand. Before declarer leads from the wrong hand, dummy may try to prevent him from doing so; once declarer has done so, this irregularity can no longer be prevented. Dummy cannot be the first to point out an irregularity or to summon the Director before attention has been legally drawn to the irregularity by another player.

Laws 10 and 11 - Assessment and Forfeiture of Rectification

Law 10A states that it is the TD and not the players who make rulings. Law 10B says the TD can either supplant a ruling the players have made for themselves or leave it as it is. Remember, Law 12A1 gives the TD latitude to adjust a score when there has been an irregularity for which there is no specific rectification in the Laws, such as when a side gains by making its own ruling.

Law 11 deals with players who don’t call the Director when there is an irregularity. If the non-offenders act before calling the TD, the Law has said for years they may forfeit their right to rectification of that irregularity. Law 11A has been changed in the 2017 code. The Director is now empowered to award a split score (both sides losing) when either side gains (previously he would only remove the advantage from non-offenders). Now the Director takes away whatever advantage was gained by the side who did not call the TD in time (such as by causing a player to get a second penalty card through ignorance of the obligation to play the first one), but the TD still applies the Law to the side who committed the irregularity.

Example 4:

Here is an example of a player making his own ruling and then not liking the outcome:

	♠ 64	
	♥ 82	
	♦ J2	
	♣ -	
♠ 873		♠ -
♥ 63		♥ KJ5
♦ 7		♦ 986
♣ -		♣ -
	♠ QJ2	
	♥ -	
	♦ KQ5	
	♣ -	

South is declarer in a diamond contract. The lead at trick 8 from dummy is the ♦J. East plays ♥5 and South and West follow suit. Now declarer plays the ♦2 from dummy and East discovers his revoke. He announces this. Rather than call for the TD, declarer tells him that play continues and there will be a one trick transfer at the end (even though this is incorrect; the revoke has not been established). South plays his last trump, and the last three tricks are won by East. South figures out that even with the extra trick he is one trick short of a normal result and calls the TD.

N/S keep their table result: three out of the last six tricks. E/W do not keep their advantage. Had the TD been called in time E/W would have won one of the last six tricks and that becomes the adjusted score for E/W.

Law 12 – Score Adjustment

In most situations where a TD is called upon to make a ruling, the application of the Law itself is sufficient to settle the matter. Law 12B1 reminds us that the objective of a score adjustment is to take away any advantage gained by an offending side through its irregularity and to redress damage to a non-offending side. When the offending side obtains a higher score than would otherwise be expected without any infraction, the offenders are deemed to have gained through that infraction and Law 12C applies.

Occasionally, the provisions in the Laws do not sufficiently compensate the non-offenders for the damage they suffered. Law 12A1 handles such cases. Law 12A2 handles the similar case that while the Laws may provide a rectification, sometimes what would follow would not really be bridge. The Law describes this as when “no rectification can be made that will permit normal play of the board.”

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish situations which call for Law 12A1 from those where we apply Law 12A2.

Example 5:

In a high level competition the auction went:

1♣ - Pass - Pass - Pass

1NT - All Pass

After 1NT was played out the players realized what had happened. If they had noticed before play started, the ruling would be a simple application of Law 39A. (Everything after the third pass is cancelled; the contract is 1♣.) In this case, it doesn't make sense to let them replay the board in 1♣. Law 12A1 allows us to adjust the score when the Laws do not cover the particular sort of violation committed by an offender. But here there is no non-offending side, so Law 12A1 is not actually applicable and for this particular case Law 12A2 applies; no rectification will allow the contestants to achieve a normal result in 1♣. Assigning an artificial adjusted score of average minus to both sides is the correct way to handle it.

An example of applying Law 12A1 is the following: declarer asks dummy to play the spade ten at trick 3. Dummy picks up that card but then leaves it face up on the table and it is still there at trick 10. If this creates confusion and induces an error from the defenders, there is now sufficient reason to adjust the score using Law 12A1.

There are many irregularities where immediate rectification is not possible. The most common examples are misinformation and unauthorized information. The players have to reach a result on the board before the TD can determine whether there was damage to the non-offending side. Law 12C1(e) has been rewritten to help TDs understand when the non-offenders might not receive redress. It clarifies that damage which is a consequence of the irregularity is redressed, but not self-inflicted damage that is subsequent to the irregularity. The non-offending side is only denied redress if they commit an unrelated extremely serious error, such as a revoke; or take an unsuccessful gambling action (i.e., a 'double shot').

In these cases, the offenders are to receive an adjusted score to remove any advantage they gained through their infraction. The non-offenders lose the part of the adjustment that represents self-inflicted damage. On the other hand, damage such as taking a line of play consistent with (hard to believe) misinformation is always related to the infraction and thus cannot be used as a basis to withhold redress from a non-offender.

In a ruling such as this, the TD splits the damage caused by the infraction (consequent damage) from the subsequent damage and compensates the original non-offending side only for the consequent damage.

Example 6:

IMPs, N/S vulnerable

North (of Team A) bids 4♥. East (of Team B) passes after a long hesitation. After South's pass West bids 4♠. N/S then continue to 5♥. They make 9 tricks. The TD later determines that West's 4♠ was a violation of Law 16 and also that 5♥ was a gambling, not normal action. He further determines that the play in 4♠ (not doubled) would have resulted in 8 tricks and the result in 4♥ is 9 tricks. The result at the other table is 3♠ down one for E/W.

In almost all cases, we distinguish between the actual result (Ra) and the normal result (Rn): that is, the outcome of the board with or without the infraction. When the actual result for the non-offending side is worse than the normal result, there is damage (Law 12B1) and the TD adjusts the score to the normal result for both sides. As it is not always possible to determine a single normal result, Law 12C1(c) tells us to weight the possibilities in our adjusted score.

On occasion, the actual result is not the one that would be achieved had the non-offending side continued playing normal bridge. Perhaps the non-offenders commit an extremely serious error (such as revoking), or make a gambling action, such as in this example where there was no bridge reason to bid again. Some of these gambling actions might be considered a double shot—if the action was successful, no rectification would be needed, but if it failed, the side expected to have its result adjusted anyway.

In these cases, we distinguish among three results. Rn is the normal result had the infraction not occurred, Re is the expected result after the infraction when play continued normally, and Ra is the actual result, including the infraction and the unrelated serious error or the gambling action.

If Team A had not made its gambling 5♥ bid, they would have beaten 4♠ by two tricks and gained two IMPs (+100, -50). After the 4♠ bid they were in a better spot: they were going to lose four IMPs without the infraction when they went down in 4♥, (-100, -50). Therefore, Team A was not damaged by the infraction; they were damaged by their gambling 5♥ bid. They have to keep their score and lose 11 IMPs (-500, -50). Team B is not allowed to gain from its infraction; it receives a score based on the expectation had the irregularity not occurred (+100, +50 and +4 IMPs).

Example 7:

The facts are the same except for one, this time 4♠ would have been made (teammates 3♠ + 1). The calculation now becomes:

With normal play after the infraction by Team A (i.e., when they don't bid a gambling 5♥) their expected result (Re) is -6 IMPs (-420, +170);

Without the infraction the normal result (Rn) is + 2 IMPs (- 100, + 170);

The difference between those two IMP results, 8 IMPs, is the portion of the damage which was caused by the infraction. Since Team A lost 8 IMPs on the board (-500, +170), they get eight IMPs back for 0 IMPs on the board.

Team B receives - 2 IMPs (+ 100, - 170), the score they would have expected to receive had the irregularity not occurred.

Average plus

The new Law 12C2(d) allows a Regulating Authority to specify what happens when a pair misses several boards during a session. The WBF Laws Committee recommends average plus not be used simply for a sit-out in a movement, and it suggests restricting average plus to two boards per session for a contestant (at pairs or teams). Additional missed boards can be scored as average or, in extreme situations, as if they were not scheduled to be played in the first place.

Weighted scores

In teams, if a contestant receives an adjustment on a board based on more than one possible outcome, the result on the board is the weighted average (expressed in IMPs) of the scores involved.

Example 8:

The adjusted score for Team A on a board is $\frac{2}{3}$ of 4♠ making (+ 620) and $\frac{1}{3}$ of 4♠ down one (-100). The result at the other table is 3♠ making three (+140).

Team A receives $\frac{2}{3}$ of 10 (+620, - 140) plus $\frac{1}{3}$ of - 6 (-100 - 140) = $6\frac{2}{3} - 2 = 4\frac{2}{3}$ IMPs.

At matchpoints, the weights of the results involved in the adjusted score need to be added to the frequencies on the board and dealt with as described in Law 78A. Ideally, every pair will have its score matchpointed against the subcomponents of the weighted score at the table with the adjusted score. Not all scoring programs can handle this sort of adjustment. Sometimes a TD has to manually calculate the adjustment and then enter it into the scoring system, but this can be time-consuming for all but the smallest fields.

Example 9:

Here is an example of making a weighted adjustment both at the table where the adjustment occurred and at all the other tables in the field:

Pair A receives an assigned adjusted score on a board: $\frac{1}{3}$ of 3NT making (+400), $\frac{1}{3}$ of 3NT down 1 (-50), $\frac{1}{6}$ of 4♠ making (+420) and $\frac{1}{6}$ of 4♠ down 1 (-50).

The frequencies not including this result show 4 times + 420, 2 times + 400, 1 time + 170, 1 time + 150 and 3 times - 50.

The TD-decision changes these frequencies to $4\frac{1}{6}$ times +420, $2\frac{1}{3}$ times +400, 1 time + 170, 1 time + 150 and $3\frac{1}{2}$ times -50, which gives as matchpoints $18\frac{5}{6}$, $12\frac{1}{3}$, 9, 7, $2\frac{1}{2}$. For pair A the relevant matchpoints have to be multiplied by the appointed chance: $\frac{1}{6} * 18\frac{5}{6} + \frac{1}{3} * 12\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{2} * 2\frac{1}{2} = 8\frac{1}{2}$ MP.

The matchpoints of all other pairs should also be based on this calculation, a result of +400 being converted to $12\frac{1}{3}$ MP.

If a weighted score is given in case of a cancelled bid due to the existence of UI, only scores that can be obtained in a legal manner may be taken into account [12C1(c)]. A given result may be able to be obtained via legal and illegal means; it can only receive weight for the legal means.

Example 10:

After a hesitation a pair bids 6♠. The TD does not allow this call because some of the consulted players choose an alternative call. Such alternative calls may still be part of the weighted adjustment but the cancelled 6♠-bid may not be included even if a majority of consulted players also make it.

Benefit of Doubt

The aim of a weighted score is to provide a realistic outcome that takes account of the probabilities of a number of potential results. In most situations the best approach is for the

Director to poll players so as to obtain a cogent view of the range of possible outcomes. A pool of five players of a standard similar to those at the table in question is considered to be the absolute minimum number that the TD should poll.

Unfortunately any poll based upon a small sample-space inherently possesses a high variance. This is best illustrated by considering the potential effect if one of the five individuals were to change their opinion, i.e. this would equate to a shift in the raw percentages of the order of 20%. Hence the degree of uncertainty associated with this particular TD poll is at least +/- 0.2.

When the TD elects to award an artificial adjusted score, Law 12C2 explicitly incorporates the concept of awarding a superior score (average plus) to the non-offending side as a means of compensation in respect to any margin of doubt. When the TD elects instead to award an assigned adjusted score, exactly the same principles apply in that Law 84D now instructs the TD to restore equity, while still resolving any margin of doubt in favour of the non-offending side.

As a reflection of the uncertainty associated with the raw percentages obtained via polling, the TD should award a weighted result that slightly favours the non-offenders, but the final adjustment should never deviate by a factor greater than 0.2 from the raw data obtained from the consultation process. This means that on those rare occasions where both sides are non-offending (or offending), the TD may need to award a non-complementary (split) weighted final adjustment.

Example 11:

A pair is misinformed and ends up in 3NT going down one instead of playing in a making 6♦ contract. If the polling shows that it is easy to get to 6♦ with correct information, then the TD should assign 100% of 6♦.

If however the polling shows only a ~50% chance of the pair getting to 6♦, then the TD should assign a percentage of 6♦ making together with a proportion of the various (successful and non-successful) game-level contracts. After factoring in the associated uncertainty the TD obtains an adjusted frequency of: $0.50 \times 1.2 = 0.60$ (which equates to 6♦ making ~60% of the time).

Now let us suppose that for 6♦ to make the declarer has to find a queen and it is a pure guess. We therefore don't know if he would get it right or not, so it is now normal to include a proportion of both 6♦ making and 6♦ going down as part of the final weighted result (again giving some consideration to the margin of doubt associated with the process). Hence, if it seems that getting to 6♦ is 100% certain and making it is only a ~50% chance; the assigned score would be 6♦ making ~60% of the time ($0.50 \times 1.2 = 0.60$) and going down ~40% of the time.

If the TD discovers that only ~50% of the players polled would get to 6♦, and that those in 6♦ would only make it ~50% of the time then, based upon the raw percentages, we would expect the non-offenders to get the score for 6♦ making ~25% of the time. But since they are the non-offending side, it is entirely appropriate to give them some benefit of doubt and assign 6♦ making ~30% of the time ($0.25 \times 1.2 = 0.30$). This means that the remaining ~70% would need to include those occasions when 6♦ fails, as well some proportion of 5♦ making and 3NT failing.

Serious error

In bridge it is normal to make mistakes; they are part of the game. When considering the damage related to an infraction a player should not be punished for making a mistake unless it is considered truly egregious.

Example 12:

S/NS	North		East
	♠ K8		♠ J976
	♥ K		♥ 10874
	♦ AQ62		♦ J97
	♣ AK10863		♣ 52

The bidding has gone, with EW passing throughout:

1♦ - 3♣ - 3NT - 4♦ - 4♥ - 4♠ - 4NT - 5♠ - 6♦ - 7♦ - All Pass

N/S play 5-card majors with better minor.

5♠ shows 2 aces and the ♦Q. South has hesitated before bidding 6♦.

The lead is the ♥Q to dummy's ♥K. Declarer continues the ♣AK from dummy, then ♣3. The grand seems unbeatable, South will just overruff. So East discards a heart, but with an unexpected ♦K84 in South, East ruffing with the ♦9 or ♦J defeats the contract by promoting the ♦10(xx) in the West hand.

If the TD decides that pass is a logical alternative to 7♦ he should consider the misplay by East within the range of normal bridge and adjust the score for both sides to 6♦ making seven. This is not an example of a serious error which limits E/W's right to redress.

Example 13:

High level

N/both	♠ K7	
	♥ 53	
	♦ A964	
	♣ AKJ102	
♠ 1096		♠ J532
♥ A84		♥ J1072
♦ KQJ752		♦ 103
♣ Q		♣ 942
	♠ AQ84	
	♥ KQ96	
	♦ 8	
	♣ 8765	

W	N	E	S
-	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♠	Pass	...5♣
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

South, having discovered a minor-suit fit, hesitated before bidding 5♣.

West leads the ♦K to dummy's Ace. Declarer plays a small heart to the King and Ace. West continues diamonds, ruffed by declarer. He plays two rounds of trumps and leads another diamond from dummy for his 12th trick. East does not realize that his trump nine is higher than all declarer's trumps and that ruffing will defeat the contract. He discards, and declarer makes his contract.

This should be considered a serious error in most competitive environments.

If the TD decides that pass instead of 6♣ is a logical alternative for North he will adjust the score for NS to 5♣ making 12 tricks. But he should also decide that the damage for EW was not caused by the infraction committed by North but the fault of East who could easily have defeated the contract. This means that the difference in result between 6♣ down 1 (the expected outcome after the infraction) and 6♣ making (the actual result) is considered to be subsequent damage. The way to calculate this would be to give E/W the matchpoints for 5♣ making 12 tricks, and then subtract the matchpoint difference between 6♣ making and 6♣ down 1 from what they earned.

Depending on the experience level of the players, this ruling might be different. In a very low-level event we could decide that there was no subsequent damage and in that case simply adjust to 5♣ making 12 tricks for both sides.

Law 13 – Incorrect Number of Cards

If one player has more than 13 cards and another has fewer, but no player with an incorrect number of cards has called, then the TD is to restore the board to an unfouled condition. He normally directs that play continue, standing by to award an adjusted score if the information has influenced the score. Under previous versions of the Laws, knowledge of that card was considered unauthorized. Now it is authorized; the TD can adjust when he thinks the information influenced the outcome without dealing with the standards imposed by Law 16C.

If a player with an incorrect number of cards has made a call already, the TD has to decide whether he deems the board to be playable after restoring it. Calls already made may not be changed. The TD retains the option of adjusting the score after the play.

Law 13C

If more than 52 cards are dealt, the surplus card is removed and play continues. If a surplus card is found amongst the played cards, the Director adjusts the score if the play of that additional card affected the outcome.

Law 14 – Missing Card

UI exists whenever a missing card is restored to the deficient hand, thus restricting partner's subsequent choices of action. Information regarding the identity of the missing card may also lead to the creation of a penalty card and any failure to play it to a previous trick may constitute a revoke.

Note the difference in approach compared to Law 13 (where there is no UI and Law 16B does not apply).

Law 15A – Cards from Wrong Board

A player has taken the cards from a wrong board and has made a call. As long as his partner has not also made a call, the board is restored and the player now makes a call with the correct hand, otherwise an artificial adjusted score is given. If his LHO has already made a call, it is cancelled and the information from that call is unauthorised for the side that held the incorrect hand.

If the board from which the wrong cards were taken is scheduled to also be played, the TD allows it without further rectification if the offender makes a comparable call (see new Law 23). The assumption in Law 15A3 is that this board is played against the same opponents. If the board can only be played against different opponents (possibly at a later juncture in the movement) then the TD may either allow the later play or alternately award an adjusted score.

Law 15B – Play of Wrong Board

When the wrong pair is at the table, as long as they have not yet played the board, we now leave them there, ending the annoying procedure of re-seating the proper pair and hoping the prior auction will be repeated. Sometimes this doesn't work out properly when the improper pair is not scheduled for the board at all. If they are scheduled for that board, the pair denied the opportunity to play it against the correct opponents plays it with their counterpart (the other pair who will miss it).

If the event is played as a barometer we consider a pair seated at a wrong table still to have played the right boards. This means that the TD may solve the problem in any reasonable way he sees fit, for example by altering the movement.

Law 16 – Unauthorised Information

Normally the TD will not act immediately when a player makes available unauthorized information (UI), for example by a hesitation or by an unexpected answer from partner to a question from an opponent. In general, such cases are not (automatically) infractions. The infraction occurs when the partner chooses an action demonstrably suggested by the hesitation or the unexpected answer, when other logical alternatives exist. We have already explained that an action that qualifies as an infraction, (because of the existence of a logical alternative), may not be included as part of a weighted adjustment [see Law 12C1(c)].

The unexpected answer itself becomes an infraction if it is not in accordance with the system the partnership has agreed upon. An unexpected answer creates UI for the partner of the player giving the explanation. The answer given by partner may be wrong or the action taken may be not in accordance with the partnership agreement. Irrespective of whether it is a mistaken bid or a

mistaken explanation the answer still creates UI for partner. An incorrect explanation is an infraction. Failure to follow a partnership agreement is not. The TD will sometimes find it difficult to determine if an actual agreement exists, and if so, what that systemic agreement is.

If the partner does not choose an action demonstrably suggested by the irregularity then there is no infraction and no justification to award an adjusted score.

Law 17D3 – Player Deprived of the Right to Call (By a Pass Out of Rotation)

Example 14:

W	N	E	S
Pass	Pass	-	Pass

If all four hands have been returned to their respective pockets, there can be no rectification (Law 17D2).

Otherwise, if the TD is called he should give West the option to accept the pass out of turn (we are not yet in the position where there are three passes after a call has been made). If West then elects to pass again the bidding reverts back to East (the passes made by South and West are removed). This should carefully be explained to West. When West does not pass but bids 1♦ (for example) the auction continues normally.

Example 15:

If the auction goes:

W	N	E	S
Pass	1♥	Pass	Pass
-	Pass	Pass	

Again we have three passes, one of which was out of rotation. The fact that East (in this example) passed after the pass-out-of-turn does not make him an offender, he is allowed to accept the pass out of rotation. Only North's pass is a potential source of UI.

Law 20F – Explanation of Calls

This law provides generally that, upon enquiry, players have a duty to explain their partnership agreements in relation to calls made and alternatives available. This obligation is not varied where a player's hand diverges from the partnership agreement. Let us take the following:

Example 16:

W	N	E	S
1♥	3♣*	Pass	3♠**

North has ♠Q6 ♥6 ♦953 ♣AQJ8652 and thought he showed a weak hand with long clubs. But the agreement is that it shows ♦ + ♠, so 3♣ is a mistaken bid. This is not an infraction. South alerts 3♣ and bids 3♠. Without having seen the alert it is likely that North will interpret 3♠ in accordance with his own understanding of his 3♣ bid: it shows long spades. But having seen the alert he realizes his mistake and knows that 3♠ shows preference for spades over diamonds. It is his obligation to alert the 3♠-bid and to explain it as such. This means that he has put himself in

the awkward position that he has created unauthorized information which then limits his side's choices in the subsequent auction, but which also helps him to give the correct information about the partnership agreements. In that respect the knowledge about his mistake is not considered to be unauthorized.

We take the same start of the auction but now North has ♠KJ874 ♥94 ♦AQ1083 ♣6. This time it is South who appears to have forgotten—he does not alert 3♣. That is an infraction, but North must not draw attention to it explicitly. In particular he must not tell the opponents that partner should have alerted 3♣. It might be unavoidable that his partner discovers his mistake implicitly, in which case the opponents will also become aware of it.

Example 17:

Suppose the auction continues:

W	N	E	S
1♥	3♣	3♥	4♣*

Given the non-alert of 3♣ North may assume that South supports his supposed club holding, but according to the agreements 4♣ shows a strong hand with trump support in either ♦ or ♠. So he should alert it and if asked explain it as such. This obligation supersedes the requirement described in Law 20F5(a) not to indicate in any manner that a mistake has been made. That sentence tells the player to conform to Law 73A1: 'communication between partners during the auction and play shall be effected only by means of calls and plays'.

Providing alerts and answering questions is not considered to be a legal way of communicating with partner but solely with the opponents. Shaking one's head or frowning one's brow does tell partner that something strange has happened and is not allowed. It would create a situation where both partners had UI. Nonetheless partner hears the explanation of 4♣ and then has the obligation to call the TD and to tell him that he failed to alert the 3♣ bid, after which he must bid as if he had not heard his partner's alert and explanation. To be more precise, he has UI so may not choose a call or play that is demonstrably suggested over another by UI if the other call or play is a logical alternative.

Requesting an Explanation

There are some common misconceptions about the restrictions associated with the act of asking for explanations of calls made. It should be obvious that asking such questions should not automatically be related to a decision about one's own action, though the answer of course might influence that decision. Discouraging a player from requesting an explanation simply because that player intends to pass anyway cannot be right. Such an approach creates unauthorized information by definition. Players do however need to be aware that the content and manner of their questions may potentially create UI, even when the questions themselves are legal.

A player may not ask about a call if his intention is to induce a mistaken explanation. The laws also prohibit asking for the benefit of partner. Therefore a player should not ask about a call if he already knows the opponent's agreement

Law 21 - Misinformation

If it becomes clear before the auction period has ended (i.e., before the opening lead is faced) that a player has explained his partner's call incorrectly, then the opponent who made the last call for his side is allowed to change his call if the TD is convinced that he would not have made this call having received the correct information

This has led to a major change in the laws. Under the previous code, a player becoming aware of his own wrong explanation (or a missed or slow Alert) was obliged to call the TD immediately and correct it, he is now allowed to wait [Law 20F4(a)] until after the final pass of the auction (which is not the same as the end of the auction period). As before, a player may do this immediately. This diminishes for example the possibility of encountering a lucrative penalty double.

Example 18:

W	N	E	S
2♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass			

North has asked about the meaning of 2♥ and was told by East: 'strong'. With North on the brink of closing the auction with a final pass, East corrects his explanation to say that 2♥ shows a weak two. It does not take a Sherlock Holmes to deduce that East doesn't have much, only bidding 4♥ after the strong bid of 2♥. And now it appears that West is also weak. So North suddenly has an automatic double, including values he knows his partner must have. Assume North has something like ♠AQ7 ♥8 ♦K10984 ♣Q1052. The TD won't need to give North relief under Law 21; he will call at his second turn with full knowledge of the E/W accident.

If East however waits to correct his mistaken explanation until after the final pass by North the TD might not necessarily now give North the option of changing his final call. For N/S to receive redress, they would need to show that they would have changed one or more of their calls with the proper information. This is a more challenging argument to make since neither North nor South are entitled to double just because they know E/W have had a bidding misunderstanding.

This is another situation where the TD has to decide whether he will allow a player to change a call [Law 21B1(a)]. When the TD uses his judgement he needs to be very careful not to provide extraneous information to the other players at the table and he must not reveal anything about a player's hand by the way he delivers his decision.

The correct procedure is to first explain to the player under what conditions he is allowed to change his call. In some situations the Director might then have to investigate further before informing the table that the change either will or will not be allowed. If the TD later decides otherwise, he applies Law 21B3 and awards an adjusted score.

While the player does not automatically get to change his call, he is not held to the same standard as with a UI case. After all, the player who was misinformed is the non-offender. In fact, he should be allowed the change if the second call fulfills the conditions for a logical alternative: i.e., if a significant proportion of the players would seriously consider the call and some would actually choose it.

The wording in Law 21B2 has been changed to reflect the normal UI standard for withdrawn calls by the offending side. Law 21B3 was not changed. While it only refers specifically to the taking away of any advantage gained by the offenders, TDs are reminded that Law 12B1 empowers the TD to also redress the non-offenders for any damage caused by an irregularity.

Law 23 – Comparable Call

This is a completely new Law. The old Law 23 dealt with damage from things such as enforced passes and other situations where the offenders could have known at the time of their irregularity that it could benefit their own side. Its content is now part of Law 72.

Law 23 defines a new concept: the comparable call. This concept was introduced in the 2007 laws in relation to Law 27 (insufficient bid) and is now implemented in a more general way. The concept is broadened to say that a call replacing another normally does not create harmful information if it is more precise. The application of this concept means that after such a call the auction may continue normally without damaging the other side. In this approach the emphasis is more on the suits shown than on the strength. If however the strength differs too much then the calls cannot be considered comparable.

To deem a call comparable, it must be one of the following:

- It must have the same or similar meaning as the replaced call
- It must define a subset of the meanings of the replaced call, or
- It must have the same purpose (such as a relay or asking bid) as the replaced call

If the replacement call has the same purpose, then it doesn't even matter whether the strength or suits referred to are the same; the call is comparable by definition. This also means there is no unauthorized information when the cancelled call and subsequent call are comparable.

Examples of comparable and non-comparable replacement calls can be found in those sections of the Commentary that explain the application of Laws 27B1(b), 30B1(b)(i), 31A2(a) and 32A2(a).

Law 24 – Card(s) Exposed during the Auction

There has been a change in this law. The words 'auction period' in the first line of the 2007 code have been replaced with the word 'auction'. This means that if a card from the board becomes visible before the first call is made, Law 16D1 now applies and not Law 24.

Any card accidentally exposed (not led) after the conclusion of the auction (i.e., during the Clarification Period) by the declaring side should be addressed via Law 48 and any card similarly exposed by the defending side becomes the domain of Law 49, and thus ultimately a penalty card.

Law 25 – Changes of Call

Players are not allowed to change an intended call. If a player has already done so, then Law 25B1 applies. A TD should not give a player the opportunity to change an intended call.

This leaves us to deal with unintended calls, a regular phenomenon when playing with bidding

boxes, where a wrong card is pulled out of the box and put on the table. As long as partner has not made a call after such an irregularity the mistaken bidding card can be put back and replaced by the intended call. Such action in itself does not create unauthorized information since the wrong card doesn't carry bidding information. It is deemed never to have happened. However, if LHO has already called over the unintended call (mechanical error) he may retract that call without penalty. The information related to the withdrawn call is unauthorized for his opponents and authorized for his partner.

Normally if no player bids the auction ends after four passes. If however either the third or fourth pass was unintended, then it can be corrected until all four hands are put back into the board (Law 17D2).

It is sometimes not easy to determine whether a call is unintended. The TD should only decide it was unintended if he is convinced that the player never, not even for a split second, wanted to make that call. The mistake has to be entirely one of fingers, not brain! An example of a call that certainly is a big mistake but nevertheless was intended is the following:

Example 19:

North opens 1♥, Pass by East and South bids 4♣, a splinter showing slam interest in hearts. West passes and North thinks for a while, before coming to the conclusion that he is not going to make a move towards slam. But he forgets that no one has bid 4♥ yet and passes, immediately discovering his mistake and calling the TD.

North will tell the TD that he never intended to pass, but the TD should not accept this statement. For a split second North thought that his pass was closing the auction in 4♥. He never intended to play in 4♣, but that is not the relevant consideration. A theme in the 2017 Laws is improvement in wording. Law 25A2, and its play-period cousin Law 45C4(b), now use phrases such as "loss of concentration" to help Directors explain why they have or have not allowed a player to change a call.

In previous editions of the laws another condition was that there could not be a pause for thought. That condition was removed because it was difficult to interpret. The question whether the call was unintended is not related to the duration of a pause. It is possible that a player might pull a bidding card out of the bidding box without even having decided what call to make. If such a call would be a surprise to the player himself, then in the 2017 laws he is now allowed to change that call.

Returning to the subject of unintended vs. intended; the TD, not normally being a mind reader, is not always able to make that distinction. Still it is part of his job to judge and interpret the facts and circumstances and to decide what has happened. If a partnership has specific calls to artificially describe their holdings and use frequent asking bids or relays, mistakes in the bidding are easily made and a player should not escape by claiming that he made an unintended call. But if the TD really cannot find any reason to explain why a player could have decided to make the disputed call it is not unreasonable to decide that it was unintended. Such things happen.

That brings up the question about what exactly the procedure should be when deciding whether to allow a Law 25A change. Compare the discussions of how to avoid giving information to the

table in rulings with UI and MI; we try not to give away a player's hand with our comments. It is different with Law 25; if the call was unintended it never carried any meaningful information. If it was intended, the TD won't allow a change. So applying Law 25 the TD will make his judgement immediately, applying the provision for intended or unintended.

The previous footnote that an unintended call may be changed irrespective of the way the player became aware of it has now been incorporated into the body of the laws (as Law 25A3).

Law 26 – Lead Restrictions after a Withdrawn Call

This law describes the rectifications in the play when a call is cancelled and replaced by another. It has changed considerably in the 2017 code. When the two calls are comparable, there are no lead penalties. If not, declarer may prohibit the lead in any one suit that has not been specified in the legal auction. This includes suits completely unrelated to the withdrawn call.

For a suit to be exempt from a lead penalty the legal auction must have imparted suit-specific information (i.e., information about the actual holding in that particular suit).

Examples:

20. North is the dealer, but East opens 2♥ showing 5 hearts and a minor, weaker than a one-level opening. South does not accept 2♥ and North opens 1NT. East overcalls with 2♥. This pair plays that 2♥ shows hearts and a minor, which basically has the same meaning as his withdrawn call, although it could now be stronger. It is reasonable to deem these calls comparable. That means there are no lead penalties.

21. Same situation but now the replacement bid of 2♥ just shows hearts.

The legal auction becomes

W	N	E	S
	1NT	2♥	2NT
Pass	3♣	X	3♦
All Pass			

2NT is Lebensohl; the double shows clubs

In this case the two 2♥ calls are not comparable, so Law 26B applies. The fact that East showed both suits in the legal action does not remove the lead penalty, but restricts the rectification to prohibiting the lead of spades or diamonds. In the previous code, we would likely deem that there were no lead penalties, as East had shown his two suits legally during the auction.

22.

W	N	E	S
	Pass	2♦	3♦
X	Pass	2♥	
All Pass			

2♦ showed a 4-4-1-4 shape with 11-15 HCP.

The substitution of a ‘pass’ by East causes us to again examine Law 26B. This time there are no lead restrictions upon West because East’s opening bid of 2♦ has already specified each of the four suits (by guaranteeing length in ♠, ♥ and ♣; and shortage in ♦).

A player who is subject to a lead penalty following a withdrawn call also remains constrained in respect to Law 16, even though no specific cross-reference to Law 16C2 appears within Law 26B. Any such UI constraints remain in effect for the duration of the play, i.e., even after declarer has exercised his Law 26 option by prohibiting the lead of a different nominated suit.

Law 27B – Insufficient Bid not Accepted

Law 27B1 is a little different in the 2017 code. The provision in Law 27B1(a) to allow a penalty-free correction of a natural call to the cheapest sufficient call in the same denomination is broadened. Now a penalty-free correction is permitted to the lowest sufficient bid which specifies the same denomination or denominations. Law 27B1(b) allows a penalty-free change to a comparable call.

For a call to specify a denomination, it should carry or impart information regarding the holding in that particular denomination. This can mean guaranteed length in a certain suit, or alternatively a control in a certain suit, or even shortage in a certain suit. The replacement call may be either artificial or natural. In respect to Law 27B1(a), for partner not to be barred, the replacement call needs to specify the same type of feature in that same denomination.

In the sequence 1♠ - Pass - 3♥ (splinter), 3♥ simultaneously specifies both length in spades and a shortage in hearts. Hence any non-barring replacement call would also need to guarantee length in spades and a shortage in hearts.

The intention is to allow the auction to continue normally if the insufficient bid does not carry disturbing unauthorized information. Laws 16 (UI) and Law 26 (lead restriction) do not apply to the 27B1(a) or 27B1(b) correction of an insufficient bid.

Law 27D has a similar purpose and application to the new Law 23C. If the offenders gained assistance from their insufficient bid in reaching an otherwise unobtainable contract, Law 27D tells the TD to adjust the score. Think of this as, “could what happened not have happened without the insufficient bid?” If the answer is yes, we apply Law 27D and adjust the score.

Let us look at some examples (West opening the bidding and the insufficient bid not accepted):

23. 1♣ - 1♠ - 1♥ (showing 4 or more hearts and 6+ high card points).

The TD accepts the substitution of a double which has either the same meaning, or in other partnership agreements, shows hearts plus diamonds and thus is contained in the meaning of the 1♥-bid, (which just shows hearts). He also accepts 2♥ under Law 27B1(a).

24. A take-out double normally does not show specified suits. When West opens 1♠ and North follows with 1♥, not accepted, we would not allow a change to double. We would

allow a change to 2♥ with no further rectification. (If the convention card shows that such a double promises 4 hearts it is acceptable if the 1♥ opening bid - which North thought he was making – can be made with a 4-card suit, but not if it promises a 5-card suit)

25. If West opens 1NT and North bids 1♣ (meant as artificial opening showing 16+ HCP), not accepted. The replacement by a double showing the same strength (16+), is in accordance with Law 27B1(b).
26. 2NT – Pass – 2♣ (acting as if it was a 1NT opening; asking for majors, not accepted). A sufficient call asking for the majors, even when asking for 4- or 5 cards while 2♣ asked for 4 cards, is a comparable call (Law 23A3).
27. South asks for aces with 4NT followed by an overcall of 5♦ by West. North does not notice this and bids 5♣ which shows 1 or 4 key cards. If NS play the convention that pass now shows 1 Ace (or keycard) then the TD allows the auction to be continued without restriction. Both calls by South show the number of aces, but a call showing 1 Ace is more precise than a call showing 1 or 4 aces. (With 5♣ showing 0 or 3 key cards, a double now has the same effect).

Notice that a double or redouble is not automatically forbidden. This was a change made in the 2007 code.

28. 1NT - 2♠ - 2♦ (transfer to hearts, not accepted). If East now bids 3♥ the auction continues normally. This is a feature of the new Law 27B1(a).
29. 1NT - 2♠ - 2♦ (transfer to hearts, not accepted). N/S play lebensohl, which allows East to show the hearts by bidding 2NT, asking partner to bid 3♣ after which East bids 3♥. These two bids combined (2NT plus 3♥) do have a similar meaning as the insufficient 2♦ bid but the 2NT-bid in itself does not. Therefore it does not comply with the condition described in 27B1(b). We cannot allow a correction to 2NT without barring the insufficient bidder's partner.
30. 2NT - 2♠ (North thought he was overcalling a 1NT opening; it shows exactly 5 spades and an unknown 4+ minor suit). When 3♠ shows the same holding (i.e. they play the same agreement over 1NT and 2NT) the auction continues normally, but when 3♠ only shows spades, partner has to pass throughout.
31. 1NT - Pass - 2♦ - 3♣
2♥ (replying to the transfer, not noticing the 3♣ bid).
If 2♥ after the 2♦ transfer is automatic then it does not carry any information and it may be corrected by any legal call, even pass. But if 3♥ now shows a maximum, while the 2♥ call denied that maximum then 3♥ would not be comparable. This is because the two calls are now mutually exclusive; i.e. 3♥ no longer qualifies under Law 23A2.
32. 1♣ - Pass - 1♥ - Pass
1♠ - 2♦ - 2♦ (meant as '4th suit' not having seen the opponent's call).
Bidding 3♦ now should allow the auction to continue normally. It has the same meaning

(asking, forcing) as the 2♦ bid. It might be stronger but those hands are also included in the 2♦ call.

When a player attempts to replace the insufficient bid without the TD being called, the second call stands if it is legal, unless LHO accepts the insufficient bid. The TD then decides whether it is a comparable call. If it is not, partner has to pass throughout. Otherwise the auction continues normally. Doubles or redoubles not allowed in accordance with Law 27B1(b) are cancelled and partner is forced to pass for the rest of the auction.

Procedure after an Insufficient Bid

All of the above notwithstanding, after a player makes an insufficient bid his LHO gets the option to accept it. It might however be relevant for LHO to first discover whether the offender has a call available that would allow the auction to proceed undisturbed, hence Law 20F1 allows him to ask the offender's partner about the meaning of any potential replacement call, prior to deciding whether to accept the infraction.

The TD might also need to ask the offender what he meant to do when making the insufficient bid. The TD should do this away from the table, to avoid creating UI. If the offender wants to know whether a replacement call fulfills the conditions of Law 27B1 the TD should tell him, also away from the table.

Law 27D – Non-offending Side Damaged

Law 27D covers situations where additional information, available only from the withdrawn call, has assisted the offending side. If an insufficient response of 1NT (i.e., 1♦ - 2♣ - INT) is replaced by 2NT, the information from the insufficient bid remains authorized, i.e. partner is allowed to take into account that there are at most 9 HCPs in the responder's hand. If however there was no other way for this partnership to reach 2NT without an insufficient bid, then we have to adjust the score (assuming the opponents have been damaged).

Similarly, if declarer and dummy end up reversed and a different opening lead produces a more favourable outcome, Law 27D again tells the TD to adjust the score; bringing it back to the expected result had the irregularity (i.e., the insufficient bid) never occurred.

Example 33:

N/None	♠ J 10 8				
	♥ 9				
	♥ Q J 10 6				
	♣ A J 8 5 4				
♠ A K		N		♠ 9 7 2	
♥ 10 7 6 5		W	E	♥ A K Q 3	
♦ 8 5 3				♦ 9 7 2	
♣ 10 9 3 2		S		♣ K Q 7	
	♠ Q 6 5 4 3				
	♥ J 8 4 2				
	♦ A K 4				
	♣ 6				

W	N	E	S	
	Pass	1♣	2♣	(2♣ shows 5-4 in the majors).
1NT		TD!		
2NT	All Pass			

West did not see the 2♣ bid. He makes his bid sufficient with 2NT and the auction continues without any restriction.

The TD stays nearby and watches 2NT go quietly down two. Is there anything left for him to do?

If he stays at the table he might be able to decide whether the same thing would have happened without the insufficient bid. A player well-versed in the laws might even mention the possibility of an adjusted score when dealing with the irregularity. Some other experienced pairs will themselves sometimes suspect they have been damaged; less experienced players might think something is wrong but not know how to describe it. Look what happens without the 1NT bid. West has no option other than to pass, after which North will bid 2♠, which then becomes the final contract. The probable outcome is nine tricks, which is reason enough to adjust the score.

Law 28 – Calls Considered to be in Rotation

With South being dealer West opens the auction with 1♥ after which South bids 1♦. It is obvious that South did not notice the 1♥ bid, or didn't care, and wants to use his right to open the auction. This is allowed via Law 28B. The 1♥ bid is withdrawn and it is now West's turn to call following the 1♦ opening. The information from the withdrawn call is unauthorized for East. But if similar information becomes available via the legal auction, for example by an overcall of 1♥ this removes or reduces the amount of unauthorized information.

Assume that with South being dealer East has opened the auction with 1♥ and South thereafter bids 1♠. The situation is now less clear. It is possible that South noticed the bid out of turn and made an overcall, but it is also possible that he ignored the 1♥ bid and wanted to open the bidding. The TD has to ask South about his intentions. Did he want to accept 1♥ and make an overcall, or was he opening the bidding with 1♠? With an overcall the auction just continues. Otherwise the 1♥ bid is withdrawn and this creates unauthorized information for West.

When South is dealer and West passes out of turn, after which South bids 1♦, the situation is different. It is quite likely South wished to open the auction, but it does no harm to ask South about his intention.

The TD has to understand that Law 29A does not supersede Law 28B. The choice to take one's proper turn when on the offender's left, does not forfeit rectification of the call out of rotation.

Law 29C – Artificial Call Out of Rotation

For an example of Law 29C in action, see the section of the Commentary on Law 31A.

Law 30A – Pass Out of Rotation at RHO's Turn to Call

If LHO does not accept the pass out of turn, the offender will simply have to repeat his pass at his correct turn to call.

Law 30B – Pass Out of Rotation at Partner’s or LHO’s Turn to Call

Law 30B is quite different to Law 30A. Initially there is no restriction on partner, except that he has UI from the cancelled pass out of turn. Even the offender is not required to pass. If the offender makes a comparable call, the auction continues normally. If he chooses something else, partner will have to pass for one round.

Example 34:

With North dealer the auction goes:

W	N	E	S
	Pass	-	-

Pass

If West’s pass is not accepted, East is restricted in his choice of action by UI, but he does not need to worry about an unexpected end to the auction because his partner may make any call that describes a hand comparable to his pass-out-of-turn.

Let us assume that East opens 1♥ and RHO passes. West now has available calls such as Pass, 2♥, 1NT, 3H, 2NT (depending on its meaning), and some Bergen raises. These calls are all considered comparable as they are subsets of the universe of hands that would have passed initially (except for Pass, which is considered comparable because it has the same meaning). It is only when West chooses to make a non-comparable call that partner has to pass once.

Law 31 - Bid out of Rotation

The general approach is similar to the application of Law 30 (and Law 32).

In all the examples that follow West is dealer and the call out of turn is not accepted. We assume that no special agreements are in use.

Law 31A - With RHO to Call

If the legal call is comparable to the bid out of turn, there is no restriction in the auction. If not partner has to pass once.

Example 35:

W	N	E	S
1NT	-	2♦	(a bid out of turn - meant as a transfer for hearts)
	2♦	2♥	(the real auction continues without restriction since East’s bid shows hearts)

Law 31B - With Partner or LHO to Call

Partner is initially restricted by UI and for the offender, the same approach as in A applies.

Example 36:

W	N	E	S
		4♣	(could be short, not accepted)
1♠	X	?	

XX showing 10+ HCP is a comparable call;

2NT showing a balanced 10-11 HCP hand is not a comparable call

Example 37:

W	N	E	S
	4♣ (cancelled)		
1♠	?		

X is not a comparable call; 2♣ is a comparable call

Example 38:

W	N	E	S
	2♦ (Multi – cancelled)		
1♦	?		

2♥ (weak) is a comparable call

Example 39:

W	N	E	S
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥ transfer
-	2♠ (out of turn)		
3♣	?		

North may now make any call he wants if 2♠ was mandatory;
All calls are comparable because 2♠ was meaningless.

Law 32 – Double and Redouble Out of Rotation

If a (re)double out of rotation is inadmissible the TD deals with it using Law 36B. Otherwise the approach is similar to the one in Law 31: If the offender succeeds in making a comparable call the auction continues normally, if not partner has to pass once.

Example 40:

W	N	E	S
1S	Pass	-	X

South is in the fortunate position that whatever call East makes, a double will still qualify as a comparable call, expressing a similar or more precise meaning (providing the double of a higher-level bid would still systemically take-out).

Law 40 – Partnership Understandings

The Regulating Authority has the power to regulate partnership agreements. It may define what constitutes a special partnership understanding and then regulate (or forbid) its use. It also may restrict the use of any psychic artificial call.

To vary one's agreement because partner has asked a question of the opponents or because of partner's answer to a question, remains an infraction of Law 16. Pre-arranged understandings in respect to subsequent actions following one's own infraction are also prohibited.

A regulating authority may disallow the variation of agreements following an irregularity committed by the opponents [Law 40B2(a)(iv)]. A partnership however is always allowed to vary an agreement in relation to the meaning of an opponent's legal call.

It is very poor form to only ask a question when one's own holding suggests a surprise. A common example of this is:

Example 41:

W	N	E	S
Pass	1♦	3♣	

3♣ is not alerted, but South has KJ1073 of clubs and nothing much in the majors. He suspects that East meant to show a two suiter in the majors and asks for the meaning. A player only has to do this twice and his partner will figure out what this question shows. This is not allowed; there should not be any predictable correlation between the decision to ask and the player's holding.

There is a new condition added to Law 40B2(c) as to when a player is allowed to consult the convention card of an opponent: when RHO asks the meaning of partner's call, the answer to which depends on the meaning of an opponent's prior call.

The option for a Regulating Authority to allow a member of a partnership to play one or more elements of the system differently from his partner has been removed.

Law 40B5 describes the approach to use in cases where agreements that are not allowed have been employed by a partnership. Apart from a possible procedural penalty the score is adjusted if the TD judges that the opponents are damaged. This means that the TD should not give an automatic artificial adjusted score but instead wait for the actual result and then adjust only if necessary.

Law 41 – Commencement of Play

The last moment for declarer to ask for a review of the bidding is when he plays a card from dummy to the first trick (lead from LHO). He may still ask for an explanation about a specific call whenever he has to play a card, either from dummy or from his own hand.

Law 41C tells us that any player, at his turn to play, may ask what the contract is and whether it is doubled or redoubled (but not by whom).

Once the opening lead has been placed faced up on the table it is impossible to go back to the auction. Law 47E says that it is still possible to replace an opening lead, if based on misinformation, whether face up or down, as long as dummy has not yet faced any card.

Law 41D has been made more specific about the way dummy spreads his hand. The lengthwise columns in descending order must now each be separate from one another.

Note that only the declaring side is responsible for the correctness of the dummy's hand. For instance, the defenders have no obligation to observe that dummy has too few or too many cards, or that the dummy has played a card not designated by declarer.

Law 42 – Dummy’s Rights

Law 42A3

There is now an additional duty to ensure that dummy follows suit (as in when the card declarer designates would otherwise constitute a revoke).

Law 43 – Dummy’s Limitations

Law 43A3 says that a defender may not show dummy his hand, while Law 43A2(c) prohibits dummy from looking at a card in either defender’s hand. If dummy does violate Law 43A, then the rectifications specified in Law 43B2(b) and Law 43B3 apply:

Law 43B2(b)

Dummy violates one of the limitations described in A2 and then enquires about declarer’s failure to follow suit. The revoke must be corrected, and there is a transfer of one or two tricks to the defenders, but only tricks won from the point forward of when dummy asked the illegal question are eligible to be transferred.

Law 43B3

Both sides commit an irregularity. Dummy violates one of the limitations described in A2 and a defender violates proper procedure, for example by leading out of turn or by playing a card before his partner has played one. If dummy draws attention to the defender’s irregularity, play continues without recourse to the normal remedial actions, (e.g. any lead out-of-turn is now accepted by default, and any other card exposed as a result of the infraction may be returned to hand without attendant restrictions). A non-established revoke must still be corrected, but information arising from any withdrawn action is now authorised for both sides.

If this results in a better outcome for the defending side, then the TD adjusts only the defender’s score. The table result for the declaring side is not altered, so this produces a (non-balancing) split score. Conversely, if dummy draws attention to an irregularity by a defender without first violating any of the limitations listed in A, the TD should just apply the relevant law or laws, (but he might still award a procedural penalty against the declaring side – see Law 90).

Law 45 – Card Played

The criteria for a card to be deemed played by a defender and by declarer are quite different.

Law 45C1

A card from a defender is deemed to be played when it is possible that his partner has seen it. The question is not whether his partner did see it, only whether it was possible that he could have seen it. This means that if both declarer and dummy have seen the face of the card, then it is almost certain to have also been visible to partner.

Law 45C2

For declarer the manner in which he exposes the card is very important. Declarer is allowed to discover that he detached the wrong card from hand and attempt to retract it. Such a card is not necessarily played, even if it has become visible to one or both of the defenders. Bringing the card to the table and retracting it in the same movement also does not make it ‘played’. The definition of a declarer’s played card is only fulfilled at the moment when the card comes to rest.

Law 45C4(b)

The option to change a designated card in dummy is restricted to cases where declarer has named the card. If he has played the card by touching it or by placing it in a played position on the table, the card cannot be changed. The conditions are comparable with those in Law 25A. Declarer must not for even the shortest possible moment have considered playing the card, and the declaring side must not have played a card thereafter.

The reason for the difference in wording is that the bidding proceeds in strict rotation, while the play to every trick starts with the winner of the previous trick. It is thus possible that dummy could play two cards in a row without declarer playing a card in between.

Clearly a defender may withdraw a card he has played after the unintended designation and before attention is drawn to it. The information from such a card is unauthorized to declarer.

Law 45D1

This law tells us that it is possible that five cards may have to be withdrawn in the case where dummy plays a card that declarer did not designate to be played. That is because the play must be corrected if attention is drawn to it before both sides have played to the following trick. Declarer calls for a card from dummy, but a wrong card is played; the trick is completed and the lead to the next trick is put on the table. If declarer now notices the mistake he is allowed to play the intended card from dummy.

The TD should carefully explain to RHO that if he does not change his card, neither will declarer be allowed to change the card he previously played to the trick. LHO will however always be allowed to withdraw his original card and substitute another, irrespective of the actions of his partner and declarer. Though the laws don't mention it explicitly, the card led to the next trick can be retracted.

Since the declaring side is considered to be offending, information arising from any card withdrawn by a defender is unauthorised to declarer (as per the reference to Law 16C).

Law 45D2

The laws are no longer silent about the situation where declarer does not notice in time that dummy failed to follow his instruction and instead played a wrong card; 'in time' being before both sides have played to the next trick. Now the trick stands and play continues, no card being withdrawn. When the lead was from dummy, any player who did not follow suit is now considered to have revoked, but only if they possessed a card of the same denomination as that 'played' by dummy. The TD, if called upon to rectify this type of irregularity, applies Law 64A when declarer is the revoking player, but 64C1 when the revoking player is a defender.

Law 45F

When applying the last sentence of Law 45F the TD should not automatically decide that the defenders are damaged if the suggested card would have been played by declarer anyway, or more strictly stated: if declarer did not have a logical alternative for the play he chose.

Law 46 – Incomplete or Invalid Designation of a Card from Dummy

This is one of the most misunderstood and misapplied Laws. It is important to notice and understand the phrase in parentheses in the preamble to Law 46B: “except when declarer’s different intention is incontrovertible”.

Example 42:

Dummy
♣ KJ6

Declarer
♠ 6
♣ 73

Declarer is in 4♣ and has won 8 tricks, the last in his hand. ♣A and Q are not played yet and there are still 5 clubs remaining in the defenders’ hands. He plays a small club from his hand and West contributes the ♣8. He starts thinking for a while, shrugs his shoulders and says: “I don’t know, play one”. The defenders now want the TD to apply Law 46B5, giving them the choice of the card to be played from dummy, which would of course be the ♣6. That is not a reasonable ruling. It is completely obvious that South is going to play either the J or the K to fulfill his contract and has no clue which of those two to play. So that is the choice the TD should offer the defenders. Of course the remark by declarer reduces the chances of making the contract from 50% to 25%.

A more common example of the application of this provision is when declarer says, “play anything”. Declarer’s true intention is almost certainly to, “play anything small”, hence the TD should not require him to discard an Ace.

Law 47E2 – Retraction of Card Played (Due to Misinformation)

Interestingly, compared to the standard in Law 21B1(a), there is nothing in this Law that says the TD needs to be convinced a player would have played a different card had he received the correct information. He is simply permitted to retract the card played before the correct explanation was given. While this right ends as soon as another card is played to the trick, the same standard allows the TD to adjust the score later. This is not a change in the Law.

What is different and potentially confusing is the parenthetical reference to Law 16C (UI). TDs are reminded that cross-references are designed to be helpful, but they are not always present. There are occasional references to a Law *not* applying, such as Law 26B (lead restrictions) not applying after Law 36A or Law 37A. Even if Law 16C is not mentioned, unless stated otherwise, withdrawn actions are UI to the offending side.

Law 50D – Disposition of More than One Penalty Card

In cases where both defenders have a penalty card, lead restrictions caused by partner take precedence over the obligation to play one’s own penalty card.

Example 43:

LHO on lead has the ♠J as a penalty card, while his partner has the ♠7 as a major penalty card. Declarer now prohibits a spade lead. This means that the ♠7 is put back into the hand, LHO cannot lead his penalty card and in the case where he retains the lead, he still cannot lead the ♠J

to the following trick(s).

If declarer requires a spade lead, the ♠7 goes back into the hand and LHO has to play the ♠J. Although it sounds odd, it might be to declarer's advantage to choose this option, so we still offer it. If declarer doesn't exercise his options relating to the ♠7 being a penalty card, LHO must lead the ♠J, and RHO has to play the ♠7. The ramifications of each defender having a penalty card are not obvious even to experienced players, so it is incumbent upon the Director to explain them clearly.

Law 50E – Authorised and Unauthorised Information from a Penalty Card

The knowledge that a penalty card has to be played at the first legal opportunity is AI for both sides and has a remarkable consequence. Declarer is playing 4♥. If LHO has ♠KQJ5 and RHO has the ♠A as a penalty card (from an opening lead out of turn) and declarer does not prohibit a spade lead, LHO is allowed to play the ♠5.

There is a fundamental change in the 2017 Laws: information derived from the exposure of a penalty card is AI for all players, as long as that card remains a penalty card. In this example, the assumption that the player led from Ax is authorized, even for the partner of the penalty card holder. However, once the penalty card is not on the table (Law 50E2), either from it having been played, or having been retracted upon declarer's exercise of a lead restriction, now information relating to the retracted ♠A is UI for partner.

For example, declarer could require a spade lead. The ♠A is withdrawn, and the leader has the UI that partner has it. That player would not be permitted (Law 16C) to lead a small spade; he would need to lead whichever honour (K or Q) is normal from that combination.

This change might have more of an effect for rulings regarding minor penalty cards, as they often remain faced for several tricks. During all that time, the card is not UI to partner.

TDs are reminded by Law 50E4 that they have to take away any gain the offenders might produce through a penalty card. In our example, if the defenders get four spade tricks through their infraction but without it would only score three, the TD adjusts the score.

Laws 53 and 55 (Lead Out of Turn)

A small change has been made in the 2017 code regarding trick thirteen. After years of TDs making the ruling that "trick thirteen plays itself," now it actually does. A lead out of turn at trick 13 must be retracted; ownership of trick 13 cannot change because of a lead out of turn. This provision assumes someone notices the lead from the wrong hand before the correction period expires.

In the case of declarer's lead from the wrong hand, either defender may accept that lead and does so by making such a statement. When both defenders express an opinion and they appear to be different, the TD rules as if the player to the left of the lead out of turn has spoken for the side (Law 55A). To apply this Law correctly, the TD should offer the options to the side together (not just to the LHO of the irregular action), only applying the provision for different opinions when it is necessary.

In Laws 55B and 55C the assumption is that Law 55A was applied, but the defenders did not accept declarer's lead out of turn.

In Law 53B the TD follows the same procedure as in Law 28B. If North leads and it was the turn of East to lead, then if East plays a card the TD has to find out whether he followed or wanted to lead. The case becomes fairly clear if North leads and West is on lead and plays a card. It's not as if West was following (anti-clockwise!) to a trick started by North. West was herself intending to lead.

Law 53C triggers Law 57 (Premature Play by a defender) in the rare case that the defender to the right of declarer's lead out of turn follows to it. This player would have been second to play had declarer led from the correct hand. After the irregularity, the defender is now supposed to play last to this trick. His play out of turn accepts the lead from the wrong hand, and the restrictions of Law 57 apply to his partner.

Law 53 does not apply in cases where both defenders play a card, the first out of turn and the second by the proper player. In that case the TD starts by offering the opponent the chance to accept the lead out of turn. If he does accept it, the other card becomes a major penalty card. If he does not accept it, the first played card becomes a major penalty card and the second card becomes the lead to the trick.

An example to clarify how TDs might apply Law 55C:

Example 44:

Declarer plays 4♠ with ♠KJ84 in dummy and ♠AT72 in his hand. After winning trick two in hand, he leads the ♠J from dummy. RHO does not accept this lead. He now plays the ♠2 towards the K and leads the ♠J, successfully finessing the Q. The defenders are not amused and call the TD to complain that the lead from the wrong side might have revealed the location of the ♠Q. Since most players would refuse to accept a lead from the wrong hand if it enabled a successful finesse, the TD adjusts the score.

The TD should also consider adjusting the score in the case where the lead out of turn was accepted but the declarer then rose with the Ace and successfully finessed the other defender.

Law 57 – Premature Play

Declarer can simply require the play of a particular suit. This could lead to compelling a defender to ruff his partner's prematurely-played winner (Law 50D).

This is a change in the law. For whatever reason, old Law 57 created a puzzle for the declarer who knew that the defender whose partner played prematurely was going to show out. She could prohibit the play of a suit but not require one.

Law 58 – Simultaneous Plays

Assume that LHO being on lead 'produces' 2 cards on the table, both small. The TD asks him what his intention was (away from table if it seems appropriate):

1. If the defender in fact intended to play a third card (not one of the two he dropped), then

- both cards become major penalty cards. Declarer chooses one of them to be led.
2. If the defender intended to play one of the two dropped cards, then the Director lets him play the card he wanted to play and the other becomes a minor penalty card.

Practically speaking the TD should not get into position 1) by assuming that the player wanted to play one of the cards when this happens. This also avoids the possibility of creating UI. It is safer to ask rather than assume.

Compare what happens with an honour and a small card. Now the TD should tell the player that by playing the honour the remaining card becomes a minor penalty card, while playing the small card leaves him with a major penalty card. The Director should explain what that means for subsequent tricks.

Law 61B3 – Inquiries Concerning a Revoke

The controversy created by an earlier version of the code where the Regulating Authority could prohibit defenders from asking each other whether they had revoked has been removed. The laws now say that players are allowed to ask. The laws still mention the possibility of creating UI by asking partner, but normally this will not be the case. An example where it would be UI is when the purpose of the question is not to avoid a revoke, but to draw attention to an unexpected situation with an opponent still holding cards in that suit. If players ask routinely, it is hard to imagine UI being transmitted. If they ask rarely, or if the tone of the question indicates surprise, then there will be UI.

Example 45:

W	N	E	S
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

West leads the ♦Q; the dummy has ♠K9873 ♥K94 ♦632 ♣A95. When East discards a club West asks: “no diamonds partner?” and declarer turns out to have ♠AJ4 ♥A7 ♦AK10854 ♣J6. The TD should be suspicious of a defender who only asks when he is surprised: this tells their partner that declarer has more cards of the suit than might otherwise be expected.

Law 62 – Correction of a Revoke (Authorised and Unauthorized Information)

Law 62C2

When a defender corrects an unestablished revoke, declarer has the right to change the card played next in rotation to the revoke (whether it be from his own hand or from dummy). If declarer does change the card he played, then the other defender can now also change his card, but only if it was played in rotation to the card that declarer withdrew. Since the defenders are members of the offending side; any cards they withdraw become penalty cards.

Law 62C3

When both sides revoke on the same trick, these revokes become established only when both sides have played to the next trick. Otherwise, the previous trick is reopened, both revokes are

corrected, and any cards exposed by the defenders become penalty cards.

Law 62D2

Just because there is no penalty for a revoke on trick twelve does not mean that the other defender gets to defend knowing both of his partner's cards. This knowledge is UI.

Law 63A

Law 63A3 separates the timing of the establishment of a revoke for the claiming side from that of the non-claiming side (new Law 63A4). Now a revoke by the non-claiming side is not established until agreement is reached (with no further objection) and that side calls on a subsequent board or the round ends.

If a defender revokes and declarer then claims, whereupon a defender disputes the claim so that there is no agreement, the revoke has not been established. The Director must allow correction of the revoke and then determine the claim as equitably as possible, adjudicating any doubtful point against the revoker.

Law 64 – Trick Transfer and Redress of Damage

The only practical way for an automatic two-trick transfer is for the offender to ruff the revoke trick and win it. The exception is the case where a defender does not comply with a lead restriction (when able to do so), which is also considered to be a revoke (see Law 61A - Definition). In either case, the penalty cannot exceed the number of tricks won by the offending side beginning with the revoke trick.

If it appears that the automatic trick transfer does not compensate for the loss of tricks due to the revoke, the TD applies Law 64C, deciding what the likely outcome would have been had the revoke not occurred. This makes it possible to award a weighted adjusted score. In such a case the automatic trick penalty does not apply. Some players have the idea that an established revoke by an opponent results in at least one extra trick for their side. That is not the case. The laws only guarantee that the non-offending side will never be disadvantaged due to a revoke.

Law 64C may also apply if there is no automatic trick adjustment as described in Law 64B. Law 64B8 is new. It describes the case where both sides revoke on the same trick, but only one revoke has become established, after which both of them are corrected. It is clear that in such a case, (as with Law 64B1), Law 64C does not apply.

A good example of the combination of the application of Law 64A and Law 64C occurs when a player revokes for the second time in the same suit. Law 64A applies for the first revoke and Law 64C applies if the second revoke gives the offender an extra trick [Law 64C2(a)].

Example 46:

	AKQ5	
1074		J9
	8632	

South is declarer in a NT contract. He plays to the Ace, East does not follow suit: one trick will be transferred later. He continues with the K and East revokes again. Later East wins a trick with

the J.

If East had not revoked a second time declarer would have made 4 spade tricks and an extra trick for the revoke. Due to the second revoke he only makes three spade tricks. Applying Law 64C2(a) the TD adjusts the score by giving him the tricks he would have received had only one revoke occurred (4 plus 1).

Law 65B – Ownership of tricks

Any player may draw attention to a wrongly-pointed played card until there is a play made to the next trick by his side. The previous Law said that players, other than declarer, could not say anything once anyone had led to the next trick. This update makes the law similar to that regarding establishment of a revoke. Thereafter he creates UI by doing so. While it is not explicit in the Law, declarer may do so anytime he wishes as there is no such thing as UI for dummy.

Example 47:

Declarer is in 3NT and has already made 7 tricks with a finesse still available for the 9th trick. Dummy now warns him illegally that he has a card pointed the wrong direction. The TD has to consider that declarer might have thought he already had 8 tricks and therefore he might not have risked his contract by taking the finesse. At IMPs, the TD should definitely adjust the score on the basis of declarer cashing out; whilst at matchpoints, cashing out would still qualify as a logical alternative.

Law 67 – Defective Trick

Creating a defective trick by not playing a card is treated as an established revoke costing one trick if the mistake is discovered after both sides have played to the next trick. It does not matter whether the player actually did revoke.

If a player played too many cards to a trick, that might also create a revoke: when the restored card should have been played following suit to a later trick after the infraction [Law 67B2(b)].

Finally, there is now a provision (Law 67B3) to cover what happens when the careless player plays a card and somehow the played card gets back among the unplayed cards. If we discover it during the play, we put the played card with the other played cards; if the card somehow gets played twice, we have to adjust the score when there is damage.

Law 68 – Claims and Concessions

A claim and/or concession is an initiative to curtail play. It is the task of the opponents to agree or not with such claim/concession. Play ceases with two exceptions:

1. If a defender concedes one or more tricks (claiming the others, if there are any) and his partner immediately objects the TD will instruct that play continue. He will warn the conceding player that he may not gain any advantage from the knowledge that partner thinks their side may still have a trick coming. This case shows another exception in the creation of penalty cards. Cards exposed by the defenders to support or contradict the claim/concession can be taken back and do not become penalty cards. The information arising from those is authorized for declarer and unauthorized for partner/defender.

The preamble to this Law refers to cases like the following:

Example 48:

Dummy: KJ8 (possibly with cards in other suits)

Declarer plays the 5 towards this holding in dummy and starts thinking for some time. If RHO now puts down or shows the AQ in this suit, he's just letting declarer know that it doesn't matter: he will play the appropriate card to win the trick. These cards do not become penalty cards, but it might be wise for RHO to cash both A and Q on this and the next trick - the possession of these cards is now UI for LHO. If declarer continues a line of play through which he might not lose a second trick in this suit (LHO getting the lead and having a logical alternative), the TD could be called upon to adjust the score.

2. Law 68D. This Law deals with what often happens at many tables after a claim is contested. The Law says that, at the request of the non-claiming side, and with the concurrence of all four players, play may continue. No UI, no penalty cards, just let 'em play. If someone objects, it is handled as a traditional contested claim by calling the TD. The TD should not suggest that the hand be played out, but he may allow the players to play it out if he is satisfied that his presence at the table was simply clarification of this (new) option's existence.

Law 69 – Agreement of Claim or Concession

The 2007 code became more lenient towards the agreeing side's later discovery that it conceded a trick too readily/hastily, in other words, that the claiming side got a trick too easily. The definition of agreement is important. Agreement exists when the non-claiming side has made a call on the next board. Until that occurs, they may analyse and discuss any detail of the claim. Once that point is past, the TD has to determine whether it is likely that the agreeing side would have won this trick had play continued. If so, they get it back.

Example 49:

	♠ -	
	♥ 8	
	♦ 6	
	♣ -	
♠ 8		♠ 7
♥ J		♥ -
♦ -		♦ 8
♣ -		♣ -
	♠ 96	
	♥ -	
	♦ -	
	♣ -	

South plays in a spade contract and when leading the ♥8 from dummy he claims the last 2 tricks without showing any card (he knows that West has the ♥J, and can't overruff). East assumes that

South has both the 9 and 8 of trumps, so everybody is happy and they play the next board.

Only after seeing the hand records does East discover that South made an invalid claim. The TD should rule that had play continued East would have ruffed and award a trick to E/W.

If declarer had actually shown his last two cards (which now is stated as correct procedure in Law 68C), then the TD should not be so generous to E/W. They should have figured out at the time that they could score a ruff, and the TD should not allow them to withdraw their agreement to this claim.

Example 50:

	♠KQJ6	
	♥ -	
	♦ -	
	♣ -	
♠52		♠A3
♥3		♥8
♦7		♦ -
♣ -		♣2
	♠7	
	♥A	
	♦A	
	♣A	

South is declarer in a NT contract. He leads the ♠K from dummy and shows his three aces, claiming three tricks.

Case 1: Both defenders accept the claim. But if one of them discovers before their side makes a call on the next board that, by not playing the ♠A now they squeeze declarer, then Law 70A applies and the claim should be denied (unless declarer already knows that East has a diamond void).

Case 2: After that time, but within the correction period EW discover that the three tricks are not automatic. The TD should decide that they are too late to change the result. If East did not discover this play at the table it is probably correct to rule that EW would not have won extra tricks had play continued.

Law 70 – Contested Claims and Concessions

When judging the validity of a claim it is important to follow and understand the reasons for the claim at that specific moment.

Example 51:

1096

AKJ87

The only problem on this board for declarer is to find the Q in this suit. He plays the 10 from

dummy, RHO follows suit, the 7 from hand and LHO discards. Reaching for the 9 and claiming four more tricks in this suit now without further explanation might not be what the laws prefer but should not be penalized by awarding a trick to the defenders. If declarer does not play the 9 and does not have an entry to dummy, the defenders should be awarded a trick in the suit, unless declarer demonstrates that an endplay or similar stratagem would have almost surely developed.

Hopefully superfluous, but doing no harm, unchanged Law 70D2 says that a claim by a defender which only succeeds when his partner (i.e., the other defender) makes the right non-obvious play should be denied.

Law 79 – Disagreement of Tricks Won and Score Correction

If there is a disagreement about the number of tricks won by each side, the players must call the TD. Law 79B deals with two different situations. In the first, he is called before there is agreement on the result. In the second, there is an agreement about the result, but a disagreement arises later. In the first case, the TD collects the facts, and subject to various laws (such as Law 69 if there was a claim or concession), he has the players record a single result, not a weighted or split score. In the second case, he should change the recorded result of the board only when he is convinced that was the outcome of the board. In this case he is permitted to award a split score, specifically by reducing the score of the side losing a trick or tricks without necessarily rescoring the result for the side who might gain those tricks. In all cases, the TD is bound by the correction period (see below).

A scoring error is defined as a registered result which is not in accordance with the agreed-upon result [normally related to the number of tricks won and lost, (re)doubled or not]. Examples are: score entered in the wrong direction, wrong vulnerability, wrong contract, or a mistaken correction of an adjusted score.

The correction period for both scoring errors and miscounted number of tricks won or lost normally is the same: 30 minutes unless decided otherwise. Law 79 allows the Tournament Organizer to make a distinction and to increase the period for correction of a scoring error. Regulations need to explain how to handle this possibility. Organizers should be encouraged to be liberal in getting the score recorded which accurately represents what took place at the table, particularly when the only reason it is not recorded that way was an error reporting the result. On the other hand, when qualifying phases or prize distribution are complete, it can be awkward to make late changes to scores.

Law 80 – Regulating Authority and Tournament Organizer

In these laws the Regulating Authority needs to define the circumstances under which bridge is played in its territory whenever the laws offer a choice. It may decide to delegate or assign this choice to the Tournament Organizer.

Law 81 – The Director

This law outlines the role of the TD.

Law 81B1 says that in the absence of the tournament organizer or a specific regulation, it is the duty of the TD to make the necessary decisions in order that the event continues as smoothly as possible.

Law 81C3 says that if the Director becomes aware of an infraction that has not previously been dealt with, the TD must address it. If the players have dealt with the infraction themselves by accepting it (Law 27A, Law 29A, Law 53A and others), then there is nothing left for the TD to do. But if the TD discovers a Law 11 case, then he should take action. He is however bound by the time limits described in Law 79 and Law 92.

Suppose that a spectator informs the TD about a revoke for which he was not called and the spectator believes that the offenders benefitted by their revoke. The TD should then find out what happened and use Law 64C to adjust the score if the offending side did indeed gain an advantage.

When he becomes aware of the blatant abuse of unauthorized information he should adjust the score. Another well-known example is the discovery of a very unlikely score. It is the job of the TD to verify what happened.

The option given in Law 81C5 should only rarely be exercised. Most TD's will never use it. A situation may arise between experienced and inexperienced players where education is more important than rectification.

Sometimes the infraction has more or less been induced by the opponents. An example: A player knocks twice on the table with his fingers at his turn to call; his LHO interprets this action as a pass and makes a call. If the TD is asked to resolve this via Law 81C5, he might be able to do so without the need of a more formal rectification.

Law 82C – Director's Error

The TD deems both sides as non-offending. This does not imply that both sides need to get a good score. If the TD makes a wrong ruling and one side is playing in a part score where it should be in a game, with the bidding error not being related to the original infraction, the adjusted score may involve an extra trick (or two), but not an upgrade to game. This means that the TD should try to find an assigned adjusted score and possibly a split and/or weighted score.

Law 86B1 – Non-Comparable Result in Team Play (Singular)

This law is only applicable in those situations where a score has been obtained at one table, with no corresponding score available from the other table. Typical examples where this might occur are when the Director cancels a partially played board due to extraneous information received from an outside source (as per Law 16D); where a table plays a board to completion with one hand containing 14 cards and another containing only 12 cards; or when a table never commences a board due to slow play or misadventure.

When (in team-play) a board for whatever reason cannot be played at a table and it has already been played at the other table it will sometimes be necessary to award an assigned adjusted score (Law 12C1), rather than the more routine artificial adjusted score (Law 12C2). In order to determine the applicability of Law 86B1, the TD must first decide if the single (non-comparable) result obtained fulfils the criterion of being 'clearly favourable'.

The preferred approach is to estimate a weighted result based upon the range of probable outcomes for the board in question [Law 12C1(c)] and then compare it with the existing result

from the first table. If the expected gain (or loss) on the board is greater than 3 IMPs, then we consider the result 'clearly favourable' and apply Law 86B1. Otherwise, the TD should just apply Law 12C2 and award an artificial adjusted score (i.e., +/-3 IMPs depending upon each side's degree of culpability).

Some NBOs may wish to apply Law 86B1 only when the result qualifies as 'unexpected'. This still requires the TD to estimate the likelihood of the non-comparable result being replicated at the second table. If a Regulating Authority prefers this alternative definition of a 'clearly favourable result', then it needs to be formalised via regulation.

As with most situations involving a weighted [Law 12C1(c)] adjustment, if only one side is considered to be responsible for the non-result at the second table, then the TD should adjust the percentages obtained via polling in order to slightly favour the non-offending side (as per the 'benefit of doubt' section).

Law 86B2 – Multiple Non-Comparable Results in Team Play

This Law applies whenever more than one non-comparable result is obtained between the same contestants. This includes any fouled or mis-duplicated board (see Laws footnote 27), as well as any other irregularity that requires the Director to award more than one adjusted score.

Law 86B3 – Authority to Regulate

The WBFLC recommends that each NBO avail itself of the regulatory options allowed by this provision.

NBOs may exercise the RA powers conferred by Law 86B3 for all situations, except those which fall within the remit of Law 86B1. If there is no Law 86B3 regulation in place, the Director applies the default procedures as specified in Laws 86B2(a-c).

Law 87A – Fouled Board - Definition

A board is not necessarily fouled merely because it does not conform with the hand record. The only valid consideration is whether the contestants, who should have had a score comparison, played the board in identical form.

Law 87C – Fouled Board in Team Play

When a fouled board has been played to completion at both tables of a teams match (in two different conditions), the board has by definition two separate results, neither of which is valid for comparison purposes. In such circumstances both the results obtained are of equal validity and/or importance. Therefore the applicable Law is 86B2 and not Law 86B1.

Law 92B – Appeal Period

Law 92B establishes the deadline for when a player may still ask for a ruling from the TD and also the time limit for any subsequent request for a review of that decision

The Appeal Period as specified by the Tournament Organiser may be different from the Score Correction Period specified by Law 79C. However the scores for the session remain provisional until all rulings and potential appeals have been discharged. In cases where the TD does not

deliver a decision to the players until after the end of the session, the Appeal Period for that particular ruling commences from when the players are so informed.

Laws 93 – Procedures of Appeal

Law 93 presents a default description of the procedure for appeals. With reference to Law 80 this procedure has to be followed if the Regulating Authority does not prescribe a different approach. Law 93C3(b) tells us that appeals may be dealt with in any way the Regulating Authority wishes. But the right to appeal a decision to the Chief TD, as described in Law 93A, is mandatory and must be maintained.