

# BRIDGE ETIQUETTE and PROTOCOL

Above all, avoid any behaviour that would make anyone (especially beginners) feel uncomfortable.

## TABLE MANNERS

### General

Cards should not be taken out of the board **unless a member of each partnership is present**.

Before you look at your cards count your hand and ensure that you have exactly thirteen cards.

**Do** greet your opponents at the table and treat them with respect and courtesy.

**Do not** indulge in post-mortems with your partner directly after a hand is finished. (Save them for after the game.) Not only could a post-mortem undermine partnership confidence, but it may communicate information to players who have not played the hand at other tables.

**Do not** criticize partner. (Keep it to yourself until after the game. You will have cooled down by then.) You may also have figured out that you share some of the blame.

**Do** compliment your opponents for fine bidding or play. (Especially beginners)

**Do not** gloat! (Gloating is ugly.) Be modest.

**Do** say 'Director Please' in a pleasant tone. Keep your hand up so that the Director can quickly determine who called.

**Do** support your partner at all times **within the laws**. She/he is the only player in the room that is on your side

### The auction

Bidding boxes are designed to reduce the possibility of information being communicated between partners by voice intonation or other mannerisms such as eye contact. When using a bidding box, decide what your call is going to be *before* reaching for or touching cards in the bidding box. An extreme example of this impropriety is when you touch a 2H card and then pull out a pass card.

**Do not** ask for information from your opponents unless it is your turn to act **or unless partner or LHO is on opening lead and has placed his card face down on the table**.

**You have an absolute right to ask questions at these times. However, consider not asking questions if your intention is to pass regardless of the answer.** Asking for explanation without bidding/doubling/redoubling could in certain circumstances be construed as passing unauthorised information to partner. **If one intends to pass, questions of the opponents are often best left until the auction has concluded.**

### Play of the hand

**Do** say 'Thank you' to your partner when he/she puts the Dummy on the table. (Even though you are thinking to yourself 'where the heck is the hand my partner was bidding?')

**Do**, when you are on opening lead, lead first and then write the contract on your score sheet. When you are on opening lead, detach a card from your hand and lay it face down on the table. This prevents irregularities...such as leading when it is not your turn to do so and allows questions about the auction and any alerts to be answered. All players, except dummy, may now request a review of the auction and an explanation of any alerted calls. You, as the opening leader, may ask for any review of the bidding before you make your first lead. Other players may also ask for a review of the auction at their first opportunity to play.

**Do not** SNAP your cards down on the table.

**Do not** detach a card from the hand before it is your turn to play. **Avoid pulling out** a card, pushing it back into your hand, and then pulling out another card. **Also avoid detaching** a card and then replacing it with another card. Also do not detach your card before it is your turn to play and never rearrange your hand when you are out of a suit. All of these **manoeuvres may** provide additional valuable information to the declarer **and unauthorised information to partner**.

You have the right to inspect the cards that have been played on the current trick as long as *your* card remains face up. Once all cards have been turned over (face down) no one may ask to see the cards that were played. **Until his side has led or played to the next trick, declarer and either defender may inspect, but not expose, his own last card played.**

At the end of a hand ensure that you do not mix up your cards until the result is agreed with the opponents.

North, when scoring the **traveller**, must present it to East West for their acceptance *prior* to folding and returning it to the board. The same applies when entering the result into Bridgemates. **Both pairs are responsible for only correct data being entered.**

**Do not** look at **an** opponent's or partner's cards after the hand has been played without their permission **or that of the Director**.

## DUMMY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

You may not call declarer's attention to anything except that he is about to lead from the wrong hand, **or that he has the most recently quitted trick pointing the wrong way (time limits apply)** or to ask if he is out of the suit being played.

As dummy you may not play or touch any card in dummy (even a singleton) until declarer calls the card.

If declarer designates a suit, but not the rank, he is deemed to have called for the lowest card of the suit indicated. If declarer designates a rank but not a suit **to be led from dummy**, he is deemed to be continuing the suit in which dummy won the last trick. **These plays are conditional upon it not being incontrovertible that declarer's intention was different.**

**Dummy may try to prevent any irregularity providing his limitations are not exceeded.**

Otherwise, **best to be** silent during the play.

Dummy is not allowed to call the Director **unless another player has first drawn attention to an irregularity or unless play is complete.**

## PRINCIPLE OF FULL DISCLOSURE

The philosophy of active ethics tells us that winners should be determined solely by skill, flair and normal playing luck. Actively ethical partnerships take pains to ensure their opponents are fully informed.

A major tenet of active bridge ethics is the principle of full disclosure. This means that all information available to your partnership must be made available to your opponents.

Let's take a look at "weak two" bids from the point of view of full disclosure. When an established partnership opens a weak two bid, they have a great deal of information of which their opponents are not aware. The convention card discloses the point range, but little else. However, the partners are aware of the range of hands on which the bid can be made (discipline? suit quality requirements? five-or-seven card suits allowed? side four-card major ok? void ok? positional variations? Etc.). Full disclosure requires that all these inferences, restrictions and tendencies be made known to any opponent who enquires about their style. If you are interested in knowing these things about your opponent's bid, merely say to the bidder's partner, "Would you tell me more about your style?" You may use the style enquiry to ask about any call your opponent makes.

The actively ethical player will often go beyond what is technically required in volunteering information to the opponents. Quite often, the declaring side in an actively ethical partnership will volunteer such information before the opening lead is made. (Remember, when there has been misinformation given, such as a failure to alert or a mistaken alert, there is a LEGAL obligation on the player whose partner misinformed the opponents. He, the bidder, must give the opponents the correct information at the end of the auction if his side is the declaring side or at the end of the play if his side is defending.)

New players or infrequent partnerships usually will not have understandings about the items discussed here and, of course, it will be perfectly proper for them to reply, "We have no agreement as to style."

## **SLOW PLAY**

Failure to finish on time can do a great deal to chase players away from the game and is extremely distressing to waiting players. Bridge is a timed event. If a pair takes more than their share of the allotted time for each round, they are inconveniencing their fellow competitors as well as gaining an unfair advantage over them. When a pair has fallen behind it is incumbent on them to make up the time lost as quickly as possible whether at fault or not.

The actively ethical players make a concerted effort to catch up when they have fallen behind, regardless of the reason for their lateness. All players are expected to develop this good habit.

Avoid hesitations by being consistently deliberate in your bidding and play. An acquired habit of playing smoothly and evenly (even on very bad hands) will always give you more time to think. Remember that a hesitation, followed by a pass, places an extra burden on partner as any **calls** by him or her must be very clear cut. Do not be upset if an opponent calls the director to monitor the auction in this situation as it is **allowable to do so**.

Remember: Slow play is subject to penalty, and the penalties are well earned when slow pairs disrupt the normal progression of the game.

Additionally, players should be available to start each subsequent round promptly, avoiding wherever possible, being late to a table for non-bridge reasons.

If you are still playing when the next round is called, **the obligation to ensure your played boards are moved to the next table takes precedence to playing on**.