

# BRIDGE ETIQUETTE and PROTOCOL

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

## TABLE MANNERS

### General

Cards should not be taken out of the board before all players are at the table.

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 it 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.) And 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! (It 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. 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 bid 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 bid.

**Do not** ask what a bid means unless you are intending to bid. Asking for explanation without bidding could in certain circumstances be construed as passing unauthorized information to one's partner. If one doesn't intend to bid, questions of the opponents, should be made after 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. Do not pull up a card, push it back into your hand, and then pull up another card. Nor should you detach a card and then replace it to play 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 maneuvers provide additional valuable information to the declarer.

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 can ask to see the cards that were 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 traveler, 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.

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

## DUMMY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

You may not call declarer's attention to anything except that he is about to lead from the wrong hand 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, he is deemed to be continuing the suit in which dummy won the last trick. Otherwise, be silent during the play.

Dummy is not allowed to call the Director.

## 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 inquires 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 inquiry to ask about any bid 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. (But 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 player makes 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 bids 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 the proper thing to do.

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, finish playing the trick then stop. You must pass the played boards to the next table before you restart play.