



# Common Laws for Club Directors

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# INTRODUCTION

1. NZ Bridge has 3 levels of Director; Club, Tournament and National Tournament. It should be noted that the Laws of Duplicate Bridge refer to **all** directors as Tournament Director (TD) and for clarity these notes will only refer to TD. It should be remembered that the TD is a servant of the players and that you have considerable powers which should be used with discretion. A good TD should be seen, but rarely heard. Don't indulge in an ego trip. Use your powers to ensure a smoothly run event, and to ensure that all players receive equity.

When deciding on movements, resist the opportunity to display your versatility. Players don't like complex movements and they will often go wrong. Build up a limited armament of simple movements which will cover all contingencies. Be prepared to cope with a last minute pair or table, or a failure to arrive. In pressure situations where you have to make a last minute change to your movement, ask a fellow director to check that your movement and boards are valid. It is easy to go wrong here under pressure.

2. Always carry your Law Book with you, and read the relevant Laws to the players, particularly if they seem doubtful about your ruling. Insist that only one player should speak at a time, and start with the player who called you. Do not let dummy take part in the discussion if the hand is still in progress, unless you specifically want to question them. If the decision is a difficult one and play can progress without it, then you may delay your decision to give some thought to it.
3. A TD is not required to be an expert player. In making decisions requiring bridge judgment, there is no reason why you can't consult an experienced player. It is often desirable to allow play to continue, if possible, whilst consulting, or polling, before making a decision. Players are more likely to accept a bridge judgement ruling if you have taken adequate time to consider the decision, especially if you have sought opinions from other players of a similar calibre to theirs. If they are not content with the ruling then they do have the right to appeal.

On occasions, you will need to make a bridge judgement decision without the time to consult (e.g. whether a call is *comparable* or not). You must make a decision to allow the game to proceed and, if later you decide that it was incorrect, then you will need to advise the players and make an appropriate correction.

4. Carefully read the Introduction in the 2017 Laws book, and understand the use of words such as 'may', 'shall', and 'must'. This will help in deciding on whether to apply a procedural penalty. Also read the definitions to understand the differences, in law, between a 'call' and a 'bid'.
5. Remember that every player has an absolute right to appeal against your decision. The only proviso here is that both players in a pair must concur in the appeal, and the captain of a team must want to appeal. Players may appeal only against a ruling at their own table.

6. The Appeals Committee are not necessarily experts on the Laws. They may even ask you for advice on the relevant Laws. They may not overrule you on a point of law, but may suggest that they disagree and that you reconsider. If you agree that your original decision was wrong, then gracefully change it.

Ensure that the Appeals Committee gives both parties the opportunity to be heard. After the decision is made, ensure that both parties are advised of the result, and don't allow players to carry on debates with members of the Committee.

7. A TD's life is one of constant education and updating of knowledge. I advise all directors to become members of the Australian Bridge Directors' Association, for which they access the ABDA web site ([www.abf.com.au/directors](http://www.abf.com.au/directors)) which is full of useful information on all aspects of directing at all levels.
8. Qualified Directors of all levels are expected to be able to apply the Laws for common infractions, to be able to find laws applicable to the less common infractions, and to have the ability to run club pairs and teams events with a range of field sizes.

# THE LAWS

This is not intended to be exhaustive, but covers those areas of the Laws which may require explanation or clarification, and discusses in some detail the most common infractions.

- Incorrect number of cards (Laws 13-14)
- The auction period (Law 17-22)
- Comparable Calls (Law 23)
- Withdrawn calls – lead restrictions (Law 26)
- Insufficient bids (Law 27)
- Call out of turn (Laws 28-32)
- Card played (Law 45)
- Penalty card (Law 50)
- Faced opening lead out of turn (Law 54)
- Revoke (Laws 61-64)

## 2017 LAWS

Approximately every 10 years, the Law of Bridge are revised. The 2017 Laws were adopted in New Zealand on 1 August 2017.

Common acronyms used in this document:

- AI: Authorised Information
- LHO: Left Hand Opponent
- RHO: Right Hand Opponent
- UI: Unauthorised Information
- MI: Misinformation

## **Incorrect Number of Cards (Law 13) Missing Card (Law 14)**

You are called to the table because a player has an incorrect number of cards. Your first task is to check that all four players have counted their hands. Your ruling will depend on the distribution of the cards.

### **1. 12 or less cards in one hand and 14 or more cards in another. (Law 13).**

In this situation:

A. If **no call** has been made by a player with an incorrect number of cards:

1. and no player has seen a card belonging to another player then you correct the hands and bidding and play continues normally.
2. **but** a player has seen a card belonging to another player then you correct the hand and allow bidding and play to continue. You may adjust the score if you think that the outcome has been affected because one player has seen another's card and you may award a procedural penalty.

B. If a **call has been** made by a player with an incorrect number of cards, then

1. If you feel that the hand can be corrected and played with no change of call then you allow that **but** you may award an adjusted score; **or**
2. If you feel that the hand cannot be corrected and played you award an adjusted score and may penalise a player.

C. If it is established *after play has finished* that there was a 14-12 or worse situation, you will cancel the board and award an artificial adjusted score. If, in checking to see where the fouling occurred, you find that the previous table also played the board in the fouled state, you will cancel that result also.

**Note:** Offenders (i.e. players failing to count their cards, or players responsible for the fouling) may be subject a procedural penalty.

### **2. If one hand has 14 or more cards and the other 3 are correct. (Law 13C)**

The surplus card is removed, and play continue unaffected, although if the surplus card had already been played to a trick, an adjusted score may be awarded.

### **3. Three hands correct, one deficient. (Law 14)**

This is when three hands have 13 cards and one hand has fewer than 13. You do NOT cancel the hand, no matter what stage the bidding or play has reached. You find the missing card, restore it to the hand, and bidding/play continues.

The missing card is found:

- A. Before or during the bidding - restore card to the hand and bidding continues.
- B. During the play - first ensure that the card is not amongst the played cards i.e. player has played too many cards to a trick. If that is so, Law 67 applies.

Otherwise find it, restore it to the hand, and play continues. The missing card is deemed to have been in the hand all the time, so failure to have played the card to a previous trick may constitute a revoke (Laws 61-64).

If partner happens to see it, then for a defender it becomes a penalty card (Laws 49-50b).

## **The Auction, Auction Period And Review Of The Auction (Law 17 - 22)**

### **Auction period starts (Law 17A).**

The auction period starts for a side when either partner withdraws his cards from the board.

### **End of auction (Law 22)**

The auction ends when there are three consecutive passes in rotation after a bid.

**Note:** If one of those three passes has been out of rotation and a player has missed their chance to call, the director will revert the auction to the missed player and bidding proceeds (Law 17E2).

**Or**

If all four players pass.

### **Clarification period (Law 17D1)**

The period between the end of the auction and the end of the auction period is called the Clarification Period. This is the time for the declaring side to make any delayed alerts or to call attention to any mis-explanations or failures to alert. This should be before the face down lead is made as the face down lead may not be changed except at the instruction of the Director, and this will be only when there has been an irregularity e.g. a mis-explanation, or lead by the wrong defender. The opening leader may seek a review of the auction and ask any questions before choosing the opening lead. The opening leader selects the lead and places it face down on the table. Now all other players (except the presumed dummy) may seek a review of the auction, or an explanation of an opponent's call.

What would you do in the case where some MI or inadequate explanation had been discovered through a question asked by partner of the hand on lead? Remember that, whilst these questions are allowed by Law, they do run the risk of conveying UI. If you consider that this question suggested a different lead from the opening leader, you have the right to disallow a change of lead, whilst retaining the option of a later adjusted score.

Realise also that, until the end of the auction period, you have the right to re- open the auction if MI has come to light. But you may revert the auction back only to the non-offending player whose partner has not subsequently called. Even then, the right to an adjusted score remains (Law 21B).

### **The auction period ends (Law 17D)**

The auction period ends when, after the end of the auction, defender faces an opening lead (or, in the case of a passed in board, when all four hands have been returned to the board).

### **Review of the Auction and Explanation of Calls (Law 20)**

These are two different areas and are sometimes a source of confusion for directors. A “review of the auction” is simply a re-statement of all the calls during the auction (including alerts). It does not involve any explanations of calls. Such review must be complete and not partial. Players at their turn to call may at any time during the auction period seek a review of the auction (unless they are required by Law to pass). That right extends into the play period, but only as far as their first turn to play. Thereafter they have lost that right, and then may ask only what the contract is and whether it was doubled, but not by whom it was doubled. This is why the bidding pad should be covered after the third hand has played to trick one.

An “explanation of calls” means an explanation of the meaning of an opponent’s call. All players except dummy have the right to ask for such an explanation throughout the bidding and play, but only at their turn to call or play. But, even though legal, questions do carry a risk of conveying UI. For this reason, we should encourage players not to ask questions about specific calls but to ask about the whole auction.

### **Comparable Call (Law 23)**

This is referenced from four other laws, the call out-of-rotation Laws (30-32), and insufficient bid Law (Law 27). In broad terms, after an illegal call (i.e. an out of turn call or an insufficient bid) if the replacement call is comparable then there is no further rectification.

A comparable call is one that either

- (a) has the same or similar meaning as the withdrawn call; or
- (b) defines a subset of the possible meanings attributed to the withdrawn call, or
- (c) has the same purpose as the withdrawn call.

Let's look at these concepts individually.

**(a) Has the same or similar meaning:**

After an opening pass out of turn, any call that is consistent with showing a hand of fewer than 12 points and any shape is comparable. If partner has bid then 1NT showing 6-10 HCP would be comparable, as would a limit or invitational raise of partners suit/NT. A response of a new suit would not, as those hands are unlimited.

**Some examples –**

1.

W	N	E	S
		4S	
1H	P	?	

East makes an opening bid of 1S, showing 5+ spades and 11+ HCP, at West's turn to call. This was not accepted by South. West now opens 1H and north passes. A replacement bid of 1S showing 4 or more spades and 6+ HCP would not be comparable to the withdrawn opening bid of 1S, however if this pair plays a jump shift response (2S) showing a 6+ card suit and an opening hand, then this bid would be comparable.

2.

W	N	E	S
		4S	
1S	P	?	

Again a bid out of turn by East, not accepted. A bid by South of 2NT would satisfy the criteria if the partnership played some sort of Jacoby sequence where 2NT showed a 4+ spade fit and game-going points. The fact that the withdrawn bid showed a 5 card spade suit is probably not significant enough to fail the test though the director should stand ready to adjust under Law 23C if the offending side gain a benefit from North knowing about the extra spade in South's hand and this information wouldn't have become available in the legal auction.

**(b) Defines a subset of the possible meanings:**

Replacement calls that have "a more precise meaning" are likely to satisfy this test for comparable call.



A set of hands with 5+ hearts and 10-20 hcp might have as subsets:

- Hands with 6 hearts 16-20 hcp;
- Hands with 5 hearts and 4 clubs 10-15 hcp;
- Hands with 5 hearts and a 5 card minor suit 10-15 HCP.

Hands with a 6 card suit and 6-10 hcp will not be a subset. 6-10 is outside the 10-20 range. Hands with 4 hearts are not a subset of hands with 5 hearts.

**Example:**

W	N	E	S
	2C		2D

In this example, South responds 2D before East calls. The auction continues...

	2C	2H	?
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If NS play an automatic 2D bid after a strong 2C opening, any bid made by South would be a subset of South's hand, and therefore any call would be comparable. If NS play that 2D is negative then a pass would be.

**(c) Has the same purpose:**

Stayman and ace-ask bids fit in here.

**Example:**

W	N	E	S
...	4H	P	4C 4NT

In this example 4C was intended as an ace ask so the replacement call of 4NT has the same purpose.

In many cases, you will need to take the player away from the table to determine their systemic agreements and whether they have any calls that would be comparable. You should not make suggestions to the player as to what calls are available but simply ensure that the player understands the consequences of the various options they have available.

Comparable Call provisions require you to exercise judgment. When determining whether a call is comparable, in marginal cases you may lean towards deeming the call comparable. There is provision under Law 23C to award an adjusted result if the offending side has gained a benefit from their infraction.

## **Withdrawn Calls – Lead Restrictions (Law 26)**

General principles: There are many situations where a player's call is withdrawn and replaced by a different call e.g. insufficiency, out of turn call, inadmissible calls etc. When this occurs, the offender's partner possesses unauthorised information about the offender's hand. The Law aims to redress this damage by providing for possible rectification during the auction and also lead restrictions during the play if the offending side become the defenders.

The restrictions apply to offender's partner on their first turn to lead, this can be at any point during the play.

There is no lead restriction for the offender – it is the offender's partner who possesses unauthorised information.

### **Lead restrictions on offender's partner**

When lead restrictions apply, declarer can deny the lead of any **one** suit that was **not** specified in the **legal** auction.

**Note:** A restriction cannot apply to any suit shown by the offender in the legal auction. It can apply to any other suit, even those not shown by the withdrawn call.

There will be some calls which do not relate to a specific suit or suits e.g. NT, X or XX. A Precision 1C would be in this category - it names a suit but has no relation to that or any other suit. These calls do not limit the suits that declarer can prohibit.

In its commentary on the 2017 laws, the WBF Laws Committee state that "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)."

### **Insufficient Bids (Law 27)**

An insufficient bid cannot by definition have any systemic meaning. The circumstances surrounding the making of an insufficient bid can be many and varied. The offender may have missed or misread one or more earlier bids or they may have just been confused about the level of the auction. The Zone 7 guidelines (which carry the full force of Law) recommend that the offender be taken away from the table (to avoid giving UI to others) and asked what they thought they were doing. This may make it easier in reaching a sensible ruling. It will often be necessary also to establish what their systemic agreements are.

When called to the table where an insufficient bid has occurred, the process is:

Step 1: As with most infractions, you first offer LHO the right to accept it.

In doing so, you should also explain the consequences i.e. that bidding proceeds without any rectification to the offending side, and there is no question of UI. You should also explain to LHO what happens if they choose not to accept it, so that they can make a fully informed decision.

Step 2: Insufficient bid not accepted by LHO:

When the insufficient bid is not accepted by LHO then it must be corrected to a legal call (Law 27B). This call will fall under one of three laws (27B1(a), B1(b) or B2), you will need to explain all three options to offender so they can decide which bid to make.

### Option 1. Replacement under Law 27B1(a)

If (and only if) the bid is replaced with the lowest sufficient bid that shows the same denomination(s), then the auction proceeds without rectification.

As long as the suit or suits shown are the same as those shown in the insufficient bid, then a replacement bid can be made under this section. If not, look to 27B1(b).

**Example:** West opens INT and North bids 1D. If both North's 1D bid and a 2D overcall are natural, the replacement would be allowed under this section.

**Important note:** An insufficient bid correctible under 27B1(a) may also be correctible under 27B1(b), with less disadvantage to the offenders. So don't automatically apply 271(a) without first also considering any rights under 27B1(b) and, if applicable, offering the offender those options also.

**Note:** This Law specifically states that the insufficient bid is AI to all, and that Law 16C does not apply. But it also charges you to award an adjusted score if the insufficient bid has allowed the offending side to get a better result than they might have got without the infraction. (Law 27D)

### Option 2. Replacement under Law 27B1(b)

Broadly, this allows for replacement without further restriction if the replacement is a comparable call (Law 23) which is described in these notes.

Therefore, if the offender has a systemic call available that has the same meaning as the insufficient bid, or defines a subset of the bids shown in the insufficient bid, or has the same purpose as the insufficient bid, then they may make that call and the auction proceeds without restriction.

### Some examples.

1.

W	N	E	S
1D	1S	<del>1H</del>	

Without the interposed bid 1D – 1H would systemically mean “I have at least 4 hearts and enough points to respond to 1D”. Law 27B1(b) says that I am entitled to make my insufficient bid good with any other legal call, provided that, at the very least it contains all the information from the insufficient bid. It may contain more info, but it can't contain less. So, if we are playing a negative doubles where 1D – (1S) – X promises responding values and at least four hearts, then I could replace my insufficient bid with a double. On the other hand, if we are playing rather more wide ranging negative doubles showing values which would most times show at least 4 hearts, but not promise this, then I could not legally change my insufficient bid to a double.

2.

W	N	E	S
1H	P	<del>1H</del>	

Seemingly East missed West's opening bid. How do you rule?

At first, let's assume that EW are playing a standard system that opens 4 card majors.

Under 27B1(a), East could bid 2H and bidding could proceed with the proviso that the TD may adjust under 27D. But East may also have rights under 27B1(b). The 1H bid conveys the info "I have an opening hand and at least 4 hearts". Systemically, do they have any other bid that conveys at least that same message? Perhaps they are playing a Jacoby style where 1H - 2NT conveys the same message – an opening hand with 4+ hearts. It may even contain more info re distribution and a more specific HCP range. They could legally replace the insufficient bid with 2NT and bidding proceeds normally. Or perhaps they are playing the older Standard where 1H – 3H shows an opening hand with 4+ hearts, in which case the 3H would be legal. Perhaps they are playing splinters which show a singleton, at least 4 hearts and an opening hand. In this case, with say a singleton club, they could bid 4C. Note that the 4C bid conveys more info than the 1H insufficient bid. This is not the issue. The replacement bid is allowed to show more info than the insufficient bid, but may not convey less.

Now let's assume, in this same sequence, that EW are playing a 5 card major system. The insufficient bid conveys the message that I have 5+ hearts and an opening hand.. Now, unless they have a system that some other call will convey at least that message (most unlikely) then East's rights will extend only to their rights under 27B1(a).

3.

W	N	E	S
P	1S	<del>1H</del>	

What are East's options here. 1H or 2H would be natural, so 27B1(a) will apply. They could bid 2H and bidding will proceed, the 1H bid is AI, but Law 27D may apply.

Does East have any other options under 27B1(b)? They may. The 1H bid says 'I have an opening hand with 5+ hearts'. Is there another bid in their system conveying at least that message? For example, if EW are playing intermediate jump overcalls (at least a good 14HCP) then they could bid 3H. It conveys more info than the 1H, but it does convey all the info from the 1H bid. Supposing that EW are playing Michaels cue bids, which at this vulnerability would show at least an opening hand, at least 5 hearts plus a 5 card minor. Could they now bid 2S to show this type of hand? Yes. The question to ask yourself is this: has West learnt anything about East's hand from the insufficient bid that they don't learn from the replacement bid? If, like most of us, they play Michaels with hands somewhat below opening strength, then the IH insufficient bid could not be replaced by 2S.

4.

W	N	E	S
1C	P	<del>1C</del>	

Again East seemingly has not seen West's opening bid. How do you rule?

You find EW are playing a natural 1C opening – at least 3 clubs. So under 27B1(a), East can bid 2C without further rectification. Any other options under 27B1(b)? East's 1C bid says "I have an opening hand with 3+ clubs". Within the EW system, could East change their bid to 3NT under 27B1(b), thereby allowing West to bid on with say 19-20 HCP? Supposing that the EW agreement was that 3NT would show 13-15 HCP with clubs as the only suit of 4 or more cards. So East in effect would be deliberately misbidding their hand. Are they allowed to do this? Yes, but the result will be subject to adjustment under 27D.

Max Bavin, Chief Director of the EBU, has a good rule of thumb in deciding whether to adjust in these situations. I'll call this the Bavin Rule. He says:

We adjust under 27D if either:

(a) the offender warps his system in order to avoid silencing partner, or (b) the offender's partner responds as though the system has been warped.

Now for the old bugbear, the insufficient bid in response to an Ace ask. At a later stage in the auction you have this sequence.

5.

W	N	E	S
4NT	P	<del>4D</del>	

East wanted to show one Ace. Applying our catechism, we ask does the 4D bid show a denomination? No, so 27B1(a) does not apply. Does 27B1(b) allow a replacement bid of 5D? Yes – the 5D bid has the same purpose as the insufficient bid. Bidding can proceed normally by allowing East to make the replacement bid of 5D.

What about the next situation in a competitive auction?

6.

W	N	E	S
4NT	5H	<del>5D</del>	

East's 5D over 4NT would show one Ace. Applying 27B1(b), do EW have a call giving the same info? EW are playing DOPI whereby, after interference over a Blackwood ask, a double shows no aces and a pass shows one Ace. We would allow East to change their 5D bid to pass. If EW were playing PODI (pass = none, double = 1), we would allow East to change their call to double.

**Note:** 27B1(a) and 27B1(b) specifically says that the insufficient bid is AI to all and Law 16C does not apply. However while the insufficient bid may be AI, any comments made by players at the time of the insufficient bid will be UI. I suspect that, in most cases, the offender will have made some comment before you are called such as 'Sorry, I didn't notice that bid'. Any such comment will be UI. We should educate players, in their own interests (and ours!), to refrain from making any comment at the time of the insufficient bid.

### Option 3. Replacement under Law 27B2

Offender may choose to make a call that doesn't meet the criteria for B1(a) or B1(b), or sometime there is no call available that does meet the criteria, in these cases the offender must make a valid call (except double / re-double), and partner must pass throughout the auction and the lead restrictions of Law 26B apply if they become the defending side.

Note that the provisions of Law 27D (score adjustment) do not apply to 27B2 replacements. The offender has barred his partner and now must take a stab at their best spot. If they thereby get a good score, this becomes a 'rub of the green' situation, However, Law 72B under the 'could have been aware' principle may still apply.

### Premature attempt at correction (Law 27C)

Commonly, the offender has attempted to correct the insufficient bid before you have arrived at the table. What is the approach now?

Firstly, offer the LHO the option of accepting the original insufficient bid. If they choose not to accept it, the replacement bid must stand, and you need to determine the consequences of this, i.e. does it fall within Law 27B1(a) or 27B1(b), thus allowing the auction to continue, or will it fall under 27B2 and bar partner from bidding?

Law 27D – non-offending side damaged

This law requires the director to adjust the score if an offending side could have been damaged as a result of an insufficient bid corrected under 27B1. Even though the insufficient bid was AI to the partner who is entitled to act on it. You will adjust the score if you judge that the offending side got to a better result than they would have done without the insufficient bid. This would apply in a case where the offending side reach a contract that they would not normally have reached without the insufficient bid.

### Example:

1.

W	N	E	S
1S	P	1S	

Assume this is corrected to 2S under 27B1(a). North now might presume that South has spades and an opening hand. This enables exploration for slam starting at the 2 level and they bid and make their slam. If you judge that without the advantage gained they would be unlikely to have reached the slam, you may adjust the score.

2.

W	N	E	S
1D	2C	<del>1NT</del>	

Under 27B1(a), South can correct to 2NT. However, North knows that South will have 6-10 HCP and may not even have a club stopper. If North has 14-15 HCP, they may pass knowing that they won't have game going points. The Law asks us to consider the likely outcome had the insufficient bid not occurred. This does not mean that we consider the auction that occurred minus the insufficient bid, i.e. 1D – (2C) – 2NT). It means that we look at the hands and decide likely auctions if the insufficient bid had never been made, and the offender had made his normal response. For example, 1D – 2C – Pass or 1D – 2C – 2D. That is, the table had just continued to play their normal bridge. If 2NT is an unlikely outcome in this scenario, then we will adjust. Our adjusted score may have to be a weighted score.

The Zone 7 Interpretation Guidelines (mentioned earlier) suggest that if in doubt about allowing a correction under 27B1(a) or 27B1(b), the director should err on the side of allowing the correction and let play continue, but should stand ready to adjust under 27D if necessary. However if you allow a replacement bid as being comparable and it turns out to be not so, you apply Law 82C (Directors error), which would mean Av+ to both pairs. This may be subject to clarification by the WBF and Zone 7.

#### Other relevant Laws

1. Unauthorised information: Law 16C makes it clear that information arising from any withdrawn action remains unauthorised to partner throughout the bidding and play. This does not apply to calls withdrawn under 27B1(a) or 27B1(b) but it will apply to insufficient bids treated under 27B2, any premature attempt at correction which is replaced by a different bid but which is not accepted by LHO, or any attempt to double or re-double.

2. Lead restrictions: Law 26 provides for lead restrictions in respect of withdrawn calls. However, any suit/s shown elsewhere in the legal auction, either before or after the insufficient bid, may not be prohibited by declarer

#### Example:

W	N	E	S
1D	3S	P	P
<del>2D</del> P			

The insufficient 2D was replaced by a pass, you, therefore, have a withdrawn call. Because diamonds have been shown elsewhere in the legal auction declarer may not prohibit the lead of a diamond, but may prohibit the lead of any other suit.

3. Law 72C “could have been aware”: Laws 72C should always be considered in any insufficient bid situation, though you will rarely need to apply it. There is a general principle that a player may not benefit their own side by an infraction of Law, where they could have been aware at the time of the infraction that it might advantage their side e.g. by silencing partner. It is not necessary to decide that the infraction was intentional. The player's motivation is irrelevant. If, in this situation, a player could

have been aware at the time that the infraction might benefit their side, then you adjust for even the most unimpeachable player.

## **Calls Out of Rotation (Laws 28 – 32)**

The various rules can seem formidable at first, but can be summarised readily so as to make them easier to understand and remember.

1. In all calls out of rotation, the first option belongs to LHO. Your first action should be to offer them the choice of accepting the call out of rotation. (the only exception to this is for an inadmissible double out of rotation)
2. If LHO accepts the call out of rotation, they are next to call and bidding proceeds as though the infraction had not occurred. No rectification. LHO's making a call is tantamount to accepting it.
3. If they decline to accept it, the call out of rotation is cancelled and the call reverts to the correct hand. The withdrawn call may be subject to lead restrictions under Law 26 and the future bidding options of the offending player and their partner are impacted by the laws – see below.

The following assumes that LHO has not accepted the call out of rotation. These laws all refer to Comparable Calls (Law 23), which is explained in this document.

### **Pass out of rotation (Law 30)**

Whether the pass out of rotation is an opening pass or a pass during the auction is not relevant, the rectification is the same.

At Partner's or LHO's turn - offender's partner can make their normal call subject to the illegal pass being UI. Then, at the offender's turn to call, they can make any legal call. When this call is comparable to a pass then the auction continues normally, if it is not comparable partner must pass for one round.

At RHO's turn – the offender must pass at their next turn to call.

### **Bid out of rotation (Law 31)**

The rectification varies depending largely on whether partner should have bid before the offender.

At partner's or LHO's turn to call i.e. partner should have called first: Partner makes their normal call, restricted only by the fact that the illegal bid is UI. Then, at the offender's turn to call, they can make any legal call. When this call is comparable to the withdrawn call the auction continues normally, if it is not comparable partner must pass for one round.

At RHO's turn to call: If RHO passes, offender must repeat their call. If RHO bids, offender can make any legal call. When this call is comparable to the withdrawn call the auction continues normally, if it is not comparable partner must pass for one round.



**Note:** The rectification for an out of rotation call at LHO's turn applies only to an opening call out of rotation. During the auction, a call at LHO's turn is a change of call and Law 25 (Change of Call) applies. Any bidding infraction which requires either member of the partnership to pass may be subject to an adjusted score under Law 72C if the opponents are damaged and the offender could have been aware that the infraction could benefit their side.

### **Double or redouble out of rotation (Law 32)**

Double out of rotation at partner's turn to call: Partner can make any call and is limited only by the UI from the double out of rotation. Then at the offender's turn to call, they can make any legal call. When this call is comparable to the withdrawn call the auction continues normally, if it is not comparable partner must pass for one round.

Double out of rotation at RHO's turn to call: (a) if RHO passes, double must be repeated without restriction unless the double was inadmissible, (b) if RHO bids, offender can make any legal call. When this call is comparable to the withdrawn call the auction continues normally, if it is not comparable partner must pass for one round.

**Note:** If the double out of rotation resulted in doubling of partner's bid, this is an inadmissible double – see Law 36.

Any call out of rotation not accepted becomes a withdrawn call, and may be subject to lead restriction under Law 26.

### **Card Played (Law 45)**

Declarer says to defender (or vice versa), after a card has been detached from the opponent's hand: "I've seen that card. You have to play it!" How often have we heard that assertion made confidently, sometimes aggressively and always incorrectly? The claimant has often gone onto prove that they saw it by naming the card! That an opponent has seen the card is quite irrelevant to whether the card must now be played. Law 45 covers this situation, and the criteria are different for declarer and a defender.

#### **For a Defender (Law 45C1)**

A defender's card must be played if it was held so that it was possible for partner to see its face. It is not relevant that partner was not looking. If they could have seen it had they been looking, then it must be played. If a defender detaches a card from their hand then decides to change it, the fact that declarer saw the first card is declarer's good luck but does not compel the play of that card unless fellow defender could have seen its face. However, defender's indecision may give rise to UI, letting partner know that they have an alternative lead in mind – see below.

## For the Declarer (Law 45C2)

Declarer must play the card if it is held face up, touching or nearly touching the table, or maintained in such a position as to indicate that it has been played. What does the last phrase mean? A declarer may, for example, have a (bad) habit of not facing their card on the table but holding it face up several inches from the table, showing its face to the other players. Obviously this is an indication that the card has been played.

If declarer's card does not meet these criteria, then it need not be played even if a defender has seen it. The unfortunate Director called to the table in these situations always gets two disparate versions of how and where the card was held. You can only come to a decision on the best evidence available to you.

Other situations where a card must be played are: where declarer deliberately touches a card in dummy except to rearrange dummy's cards or to access another card; where a player names a card as the one he proposes to play (for declarer this may be retracted if the Director is quite satisfied as to inadvertence); or where a card is a penalty card (subject to Law 50).

**Note:** Law 45D: "If dummy places in the played position a card that declarer did not name..." This applies to a situation where dummy plays a card other than the one declarer named. It does not apply where dummy plays a card before declarer has named one. Law 45F applies here.

Let's go back to Law 45A. "Each player except dummy plays a card by detaching it from his hand and facing it on the table immediately before him." Law 73A2: "Calls and plays should be made without special emphasis, mannerism or inflection, and without undue haste or hesitation." Law 74A3: "Every player should follow uniform and correct procedure in calling and playing". If all players observed these Laws, we would rarely need to make rulings under Law 45. The player who detaches a card from their hand without exposing it, then replaces it and plays a different card, is in technical breach of all three of these Laws. Further, in the case of a defender, they are at risk of conveying unauthorised information to partner.

As defender, I am to make the opening lead. I take out a card, then change my mind and play a different card. What (unauthorised) inferences can partner draw? They know that I do not have a clear-cut lead. So the odds are that I do not hold an honour sequence; against a suit contract that I probably don't have a singleton; against NT that I probably don't have a long suit that I can establish. As play progresses, these inferences may help partner towards a much better picture of declarer's hand than they is entitled to. Of course Law 73C forbids them to act on this information, but it would be very difficult for a Director to establish that they had or even may have done so.

We must continue to educate players on the hazards of these actions at the table, and adjust scores where there is any suggestion that players may have benefited from them.

**Note:** Law 45C4(b) allows declarer to change a card played from dummy if the designation was unintended. That is, it was never in their mind to play this card. The declarer who leads up to the AQ in dummy, calls for the queen, then changes it immediately to the ace when the king appears on their left has not made an unintended call for the queen. When saying “queen” that is what they intended to play. No matter how quickly, they changed their mind. As with an unintended call, the catchphrase “never in their mind” is useful in assessing if the call was unintended rather than careless

## **Penalty Card (Laws 49 - 52)**

### **Law 49**

A card exposed or illegally played by declarer is never a penalty card, because no damage has been done to the defenders. But, whenever a defender is able to see a card in their partner's hand before they are legally entitled to, then there is potential damage to declarer, and any such card becomes a penalty card. The card may have been exposed via an illegal play or by accident, or even by a defender illegally naming the card – in each case, it becomes a penalty card. Note that it does not need partner to have actually seen the card to become a penalty card. If it was in a position where partner could have seen its face had they been looking, then it is a penalty card.

Any penalty card remains on the table until rectification has been selected.

**Note:** The Law does not require you declare that it is a penalty card. It automatically becomes so if the above conditions are met

### **Major or minor penalty card? (Law 50B)**

There is still much confusion amongst players and some directors on this issue. For a card to be a minor penalty card, there are three requirements. It must:

- Have a face value of 2 - 9; and
- have been accidentally exposed e.g. by accidentally dropping or by sticking to another played card; and
- be the only penalty card – thus if you accidentally expose another minor card when you already have one on the table, then both cards become major penalty cards.

### **Minor penalty card (Law 50C)**

The “penalty” is very minor. It is important to understand that:

1. There is no restriction on partner whilst there is a minor penalty card on the table.
2. The minor penalty card does not have to be played at the first legal opportunity e.g. in discarding, following suit or leading.
3. You can play any legal card you wish, to any trick, but the only proviso is that you cannot play a non-honour card (2 – 9) in the penalty card suit until you have first played the penalty card (remembering that a 10 is an honour card).

## **Major penalty card (Law 50D)**

Restraints on offender:

- The obligation to follow suit, or to comply with a lead or play penalty, takes precedence over the requirement to play a major penalty card, unless partner also has a penalty card.
- It must be played at the first legal opportunity, whether in discarding, following suit, ruffing or leading. (In the case of the enforced lead, declarer has no option to forbid the lead).
- If offender fails to meet this requirement by playing another card, (Law 52) declarer may accept this play (it is accepted if they subsequently play from either hand), but the penalty cards remains such. Declarer may refuse the play, in which case it must be corrected, but the card incorrectly played now becomes a penalty card.

Restraints on partner:

- Whilst a penalty card is on the table, partner must not lead until declarer has exercised their options (see below).
- Information derived from the penalty card while it is on the table is authorised for all players. However once it has been returned to hand, any information or inferences drawn from the penalty card are unauthorised information to partner e.g. any play signals or inferences about other cards held by offender. However, knowledge that a penalty card must be played is authorised.

Declarer's options:

- Declarer may require or forbid the lead of that suit by offender's partner. The penalty card is now picked up, and offender may play any legal card. If declarer has prohibited the suit, partner may not lead that suit until they have lost and regained the lead. However, if declarer demands the suit and the trick is held, partner may now switch.
- The other option is to allow offenders partner to lead whatever they like, and the penalty card remains such. If the defender continues to be on lead after that trick, they must again wait to see if declarer chooses to exercise their options before leading to the next trick.

## **Multiple penalty cards (Law 51)**

If a defender has multiple penalty cards, when more than one could be legally played, declarer may specify which one. If they have multiple penalty cards in the same suit, and declarer either forbids or demands the lead of that suit, they are all picked up. If there are penalty cards in one or more suits, declarer may require the lead of any one of those suits and defender picks up all the cards in that suit only. Declarer may also prohibit the lead of any one or more of the penalty card suits, and offender picks up all cards in the suit(s) prohibited.

## Information from a penalty card (Law 50E)

This can be very confusing to read but basically once there is a penalty card there are three states it can have. 1. Exposed on the table. 2. Replaced back in hand, and 3. Played to a trick.

All information from that card is AI to declarer at all times, but for offenders partner the 'state' of the card changes what is AI and what is UI.

1. When there is a penalty card on the table everyone is 'allowed' to know what it is, any extra information it gives and that it has to be played at the first legal opportunity (Law 50E1) which means partner can play their cards differently.
2. When declarer chooses an option that puts the penalty card back into offenders hand, now partner has UI (Law 50E2). Not only what the card is, but all the information that card conveyed is unauthorised to them. The laws allowing a penalty card to be put back in hand always have the card picked up before partner makes their lead, this means that the information from the card is unauthorised when partner is making this lead.
3. Once a penalty card is played partner is allowed to know that is part of offenders hand but the information conveyed when it became a penalty card is still UI.

Some examples

Supposing offender has the ♥A as a penalty card on the table. partner is entitled to know that it must be played at their first legal opportunity, partner is also entitled to know that offender holds the ♥K if they over-lead touching honours. However if ♥A is returned to offender's hand, partner is now not entitled to know that they have the ♥A or ♥K or any other knowledge arising from having seen that card e.g. that this represents 7 HCP that declarer does not hold.

Take another perhaps extreme but not impossible situation.

The bidding

W	N	E	S
	1NT	P	2C
P	2S	P	4S
P	P	P	

West leads the ♥K (showing probably also the ♥A) out of turn. North doesn't accept, making the ♥K a penalty card, and requires that partner (East) does not lead a heart. The ♥K is picked up and East leads something else. East is not entitled to know that partner holds the AK♥. Nor are they entitled to know that, once they add their HCP to dummy's and partner's AK that North started with exactly 12 HCP, and that partner has no other HCP in their hand.

## **Law 58B2**

Whilst on the subject of penalty cards, look at Law 58B2, which applies when a defender accidentally plays two cards to a trick and both are visible. Most players and many directors don't know of this Law. When called to this situation, you don't ask the player what card they meant to play. They have the right to nominate which cards they now choose to play, regardless of what was intended. As an example, playing to a spade lead, two cards appear from their hand, the two and the ten. When they specify which card they intend to play, the other card becomes a penalty card. If they specify the two, then the ten becomes a major penalty card (being an honour). If they specify the ten then the two becomes a minor penalty card, a much less damaging situation. The player is entitled to make their decision after you have explained this.

## **Faced Opening Lead out of Turn (Law 54)**

The Laws require an opening lead to be made face down. This requirement is commonly breached. You are called to the table and offer declarer a confusing array of options. These boil down to two options each with a few sub-options.

Option 1: Accept the opening lead out of turn. This has two sub-options:  
(a) Declarer accepts the lead, sees dummy then play from their own hand, or  
(b) Declarer accepts the lead, but allow partner to play the hand and they become dummy.

Option 2: Declarer doesn't accept the lead, the lead reverts to the correct hand. Declarer now has penalty card rights in relation to the card led out of turn. they may:  
(a) forbid the lead of a card in the penalty suit, or (b) demand the lead of the penalty card suit, or (c) allow lead of any suit.

All the penalty card provisions apply to these choices.  
If declarer plays to trick 1 from their own hand, or starts to spread their hand, they are deemed to have accepted the lead out of turn. If declarer has seen any of dummy's cards (e.g. dummy starts to spread his hand), then declarer must accept the lead..

This last situation may prompt Law 72C. Example:

South is declarer and East leads a small spade out of turn. Before a ruling can be made, North spreads their hand (a breach of correct procedure), thereby obliging South to accept the lead. North's spade holding is the AQ. You may apply Law 72C's "could have been aware" provisions and adjust the score if EW were damaged.

## The Revoke (Laws 61 – 64)

Definition: Failure to follow suit when you could have. Also failure to play a card required by law or in conformity with a rectification. Note that failure to play a faced card (e.g. a penalty card or a card in dummy) when one should have done so is a revoke but does not attract an adjustment automatically. However you will adjust the score if damage occurs.

### Law 61B

Right to enquire about possible revoke:

- Declarer may ask defenders about a possible revoke,
- Dummy may ask declarer but not defenders.
- Defenders may ask declarer and each other. Of course, if a defender did revoke, it will be corrected if unestablished, but the card erroneously played becomes a major penalty card.

### Laws 62 & 63

#### When is a revoke established?

Your first task is to decide whether the revoke is established. This does not occur until the offending side (i.e. either defender, or in the case of declarer, their own hand or dummy) has played to the next trick. Even naming or otherwise designating a card to be played to the next trick establishes the revoke. A claim, concession or agreement is equivalent to playing to the next trick. The fact that the non-offending side has played to the next trick does not establish a revoke.

An unestablished revoke must be corrected. In the case of declarer's revoke, the card is returned to hand without rectification, but the fact that they hold it is authorised information to defenders. In the case of a defender, the revoke card becomes a major penalty card. The non-offending side may retract any card played after the revoke but before it was discovered, and this card is authorised information to them, but not to the offending side. After such retraction by the non-offending side, fellow defender may also retract their card, but the card originally played becomes a major penalty card.

**Example:** South is declarer with spades as trumps:

N	E	S	W
♥2	♠4	♥5	♥7

East now discovers their revoke, and corrects it to the ♥3. South plays ♥Q. West may now play ♥K, but his ♥7 becomes a major penalty card, as also is East's ♠4.

On the other hand, if declarer revokes and this is discovered and corrected after LHO has played, then LHO may retract their card and play another. The card initially played is AI to the defenders but UI to declarer.

**Note:** The general principle that a card withdrawn by the non-offending side after an infraction is authorised information to them, but not to the offending side. A card withdrawn by the offending side is authorised information to the non-offenders, but not to themselves.

### **Rectification after an Established Revoke**

**Time limit:** The non-offenders lose their right to the automatic trick adjustment after either of them has made a call on the next deal or after the end of the round (where the board was the last of the set to be played). A round ends when you call the next move, or, in the case of a late table, once the players have moved. However, they retain the right to apply for an adjusted score until the end of the appeal period established under Law 92B (but only if they were unaware of the infraction at the time.)

The automatic trick adjustment may be, 0, 1 or 2 tricks (never more than 2 for a single offence). You need to be aware of the distinction between 'offending player' and 'offending side'. And that "from the revoke trick on" includes the trick on which the revoke occurred. Whatever the automatic trick adjustment, you must always look to see if Law 64C (covered below) needs to be applied.

- No rectification: If the offending side won no tricks from the revoke trick on.
- One trick transferred: If the offending side won a trick from the revoke trick on, the rectification will be at least one trick.
- Two tricks transferred: The revoking **player** must have won the revoke trick (which predominantly occurs by ruffing), and the revoking side must have won another later trick.

### **Law 64B**

There is no automatic trick adjustment if:

1. The offending side didn't win any more tricks - Tricks won before the revoke cannot be transferred.
2. It is a second revoke in the same suit, by the same player. - The automatic trick adjustments are applied to the first revoke, then, even though there is no additional rectification for a second or subsequent revoke by the same player in the same suit, you need to work out if the non-offenders would have won more tricks if the first revoke had happened but the subsequent ones had not. Law 64C2(a)



3. It is a revoke by failure to play a faced card (including a revoke by dummy). – But see 64C
4. Attention is drawn to it after the non-offenders have made a call on the next board – But see 64C
5. The end of the round has been called. – But see 64C
6. A revoke on the twelfth trick. - Even if established, this revoke must be corrected if discovered before all hands have been returned to the board. Where a defender has revoked on trick 12 before their partner has played to that trick, then partner, holding two suits, may not choose a play possibly suggested by seeing the revoke card (Law 16C2). If you consider that partner has chosen such action, you will adjust the score (Law16C3).
7. Both sides revoking on the same board. – Assess Law 64C as though neither side has revoked.
8. The revoke was corrected under 62C3 – This revoke is not established so 64C does not apply

Multiple revokes: The Law does not provide rectification for repeated revokes in the same suit. But what happens in the case of a second revoke in a different suit? You would treat this as another revoke and apply the rectification as provided by Law. This could become complex, but can be managed bearing in mind that the aggregate rectification should not be more than the number of tricks won from the first revoke trick on. Presumably the law doesn't intend to count any one trick twice in assessing a rectification.

### **Law 64C**

After an established revoke, if you deem that the non-offending side was insufficiently compensated by the standard rectifications above, then you will assign an adjusted score. This may apply, for example, where declarer was unable to reach winning cards in one hand because of a revoke. Similarly declarer may be forced to depart from their planned line of play because of the revoke and this may cost several tricks. You should always advise the players of this right to further adjustment after advising them of the standard rectification.

In all revoke situations, whether a trick adjustment is specified or not, Law 64C requires you to compensate the non-offenders by adjusting the score to the probable result without the infraction. But this extends to only increasing the tricks transferred to the non-offenders. Often the Law applies a trick adjustment when the non-offenders suffer no damage. The you may not reduce the number of tricks transferred on the grounds that no damage was done.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Regulations**

In addition to the laws, sponsoring organisations also have regulations, which have the force of law. These relate to such areas as systems, alerting regulations, written bidding regulations, substitutions etc. NZ Bridge has produced its own such regulations. Directors need to be familiar with these.

All clubs now have an up-to-date copy of these, and should be able to make them available to their club directors. You can also download a PDF copy from the NZB website. You should read and understand particularly the alerting regulations.

### Ongoing education

I repeat here the earlier advice given. Join the ABDA and receive access to the ABDA web site incorporating the bulletin boards and archives of Directors' Bulletins.

However, you cannot become a competent director merely by reading. Get as much experience on the floor as you can, and when you have struck an unusual situation, make sure that you check it out later in the law book.

Seek advice on difficult problems. Share your experiences and difficult situations with other directors via club or national directors meetings, and the ABDA bulletin boards.

Have regular meetings of your club directors to discuss rulings and other technical matters.

Ask an experienced director if you can 'shadow' them when they are directing - take advantage of 'visiting' directors who have come to run a tournament, if asked, most would be happy to have you learning from them.