



## **ETIQUETTE and ETHICS at BRIDGE**

Much of the popularity of Contract Bridge is attributed to the high standards of both ethics and etiquette observed by players. There are many points which are important to know and observe.

Violations in this regard of course are quite common from inexperienced players either through inadvertence or insufficient knowledge. A well mannered opponent who is the victim of a violation by such a novice player will, if comment is considered necessary, be at pains to make it clear that the comment is intended to be helpful and will never make a newcomer feel ill at ease.

The Laws of Duplicate Bridge 2007 deal with proper behaviour at Bridge viz. under Law 72 General Principles, Law 73 Communication and Law 74 Conduct and Etiquette.

Ethics relates to the rules of conduct aimed at avoiding all unfair practices, which fall short of deliberate cheating. Unethical conduct is illegal.

Etiquette relates to the requirements of good mannered behaviour (Law 74).

### **ETHICS**

- Always play in strict accordance with the laws.

- If an irregularity, i.e. departure from correct procedure occurs the Director should be called immediately attention has been drawn to it. Players should not attempt to correct the irregularity or assign penalty.
- The responsibility for penalising irregularities rests solely upon the Director and the laws, not upon the players themselves.
- A player may not refer to his/her partnership's convention card during the auction or play of a hand.
- Until the session ends, discuss scores and hands only with your partner and the opponents for the hands just played, and in a way not audible to any other player.
- Avoid unnecessarily slow calling and play.
- Even after an offending side has been penalised for an infraction, it is inappropriate for the partner of the offender to make any call or play which may appear to have been based on unauthorised information.
- Communication between partners during the auction and play should be effected only by means of proper calls and plays. Avoid any communication by eye contact.
- Calls and plays should be made without special emphasis, mannerism or inflection and without undue hesitation or haste. Bid and play as nearly as possible in even tempo.
- When a player has available to him unauthorised information from partner, e.g. via a remark, gesture, smile of approval, undue hesitation, etc. he/she must carefully avoid taking any advantage based on this information. Sometimes for example, you or your partner may have a difficult problem in bidding causing a distinct pause before the call. When this happens the obligation falls on the

partner of the 'pauser' who must never take advantage of the information conveyed in this way.

- Any conventional bid or other call, which has a special meaning to your partner and is not self-alerting, must be promptly alerted. It is correct procedure to say 'alert' and circle the call.
- Ask about alerted or self-alerting calls only on a 'need to know' basis.
- In responding to an opponent's enquiry regarding the significance of a partner's call or play, a player should at all times provide full information of his/her understanding of the partnership agreement or partnership experience. If you don't know, say: "That hasn't been discussed."
- It is highly unethical to attempt to mislead an opponent by means of haste or hesitancy of a call or play (as in hesitating or fumbling before playing a singleton or a card from a worthless doubleton) or by the manner in which a call or play is made.
- It is improper to a player to knowingly to accept a score for a trick that his/her side did not win.
- A player may not attempt to conceal an inadvertent action as for example by committing a second revoke or mixing the cards prematurely.

## **ETIQUETTE**

- Always be courteous to partner and opponents.
- Always be courteous to the Director, and co-operative.
- Carefully avoid any remark or action that might cause annoyance or embarrassment to any other player, or which might interfere with their enjoyment of the game.

- Always follow correct procedure in calling and playing. Adhere strictly to the standard bidding notation, e.g. 1S is not ‘a spade’, 1NT is not ‘1N’. Do not use full stops. Do not draw double lines to indicate the end of the bidding.
- Compliments to your partner should not be conveyed at the table. Compliments to your opponents however, are welcome.

**The following actions are considered a breach of good manners:**

- Failure to promptly greet new opponents as the table in a friendly manner, failure to thank them when the move is called.
- Continuing conversation while sorting a hand or later in the auction. The auction period begins when a player looks at the face of the cards.
- Using different designations for the same call.
- Looking intently at another player during the auction or play.
- Commenting or acting during the auction or play so as to call attention to a significant occurrence, or to the number of tricks still required for success.
- Indicating the outcome of a trick before the trick is complete.
- Volunteering information that should be given only in response to a question. For instance, following partners double, straightaway and out of turn telling the opponents that it is for penalties.
- Asking for information when it is not your turn to call or play.

- Indicating approval or disapproval of a call or play.
- Varying the normal tempo of bidding or play for the purpose of disconcerting an opponent.
- Looking at a player's hand for the purpose of seeing the cards or observing from where the card is drawn.
- Detaching a card before it is your turn to play.
- Failure, as declarer, to wait for an opponent to play a card before calling for a card from dummy or before playing from his/her own hand.
- Tapping the table to signify 'alert'. The correct procedure is simply to say 'alert' and to circle the alerted call.
- As dummy, touching a card in the open hand before receiving instruction from declarer.
- Leaving the table needlessly before the round is called.
- Showing an obvious lack of further interest in a deal (as by folding one's cards).
- Criticism of an opponent's bidding or any implication of bad faith on the part of the opponents without having previously called the Director to the table.
- Looking at another player's hand after it has been placed in the board.
- Commenting favourably when your side obtains a good result or complaining after a bad result.
- Taking offence at inadvertent breaches of etiquette by other players, especially inexperienced ones.
- Criticising partner or an opponent. Never try to 'teach' anyone at the table. Don't give advice unless it is requested.

- Discussion between partners or a board just played when there is another board to play. Discussion should be postponed until the round or session has been completed.