

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2017 LAWS OF DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Duplicate Bridge is continually evolving and changing which is why the World Bridge Federation has charged its Laws Committee with the task of “at least once each decade making a comprehensive study and updating of the entire laws structure.”

This latest review, begun some five years ago, is the most comprehensive to date. Suggestions and comments were sought from interested individuals and National Bridge Organisations and Zones.

After these were all collated they were considered by the Committee in depth with the relevant law, which then was either amended or left alone. The discussions occurred at a number of WBF Championships and some thousands of emails were exchanged over a five year period.

The purpose of the Laws remains unchanged. They are designed to define correct procedure and to provide an adequate remedy for when something goes wrong. They are designed not to punish irregularities but rather to rectify situations where non-offenders may otherwise be damaged. Players should be ready to accept graciously any rectification, penalty, or ruling.

The trend, begun in 2007, to give Tournament Directors more discretion in enforcing the Law has been continued and attempts have been made to clarify interpretations. The Committee intends to prepare a separate official Commentary containing examples to help in this respect.

Established usage has been retained in regard to “may” do (failure to do it is not wrong), “does” (establishes procedure without suggesting that violation be penalised) “should” do (failure to do it is an infraction jeopardising the infractor’s rights but not often penalised), “shall” do (a violation will incur a penalty more often than not) “must” do (the strongest word, a serious matter indeed). Again “must not” is the strongest prohibition, “shall not” is strong but “may not” is stronger – just short of “must not”.

For the avoidance of doubt, this Introduction and the Definitions that follow form part of the Laws.

Finally, unless the context clearly dictates otherwise, the singular includes the plural, the masculine includes the feminine, and vice versa.