

Commentary on the 2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge : Preface

The WBF Laws Committee is happy to announce the release of its Commentary on the 2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge.

Bridge is a complicated game that requires detailed instructions explaining how it is to be played. The Laws however do not always describe in detail how the Tournament Director should proceed in carrying out his duties. The goal of this Commentary is to help the TD correctly apply the Laws of Bridge. The Laws sometimes describe a default approach, while also offering Regulating Authorities the option to choose a different approach. In much the same way, the interpretation of certain laws may differ between regions and so the Laws Committee has selected the approach they believe to be best. Such choices are not set in stone, and it is possible this may change over time. This Commentary will be a dynamic document, with regular updates. The Committee encourages on-going comment and it welcomes suggestions for possible improvement as well as requests for further interpretation. It hopes that this Commentary will be helpful.

Ton Kooijman (Chairman - WBFLC)

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Introduction

The focus of this document is to highlight the changes from the 2007 Code and to amplify WBFLC interpretations. As such, it is first and foremost a guide for TDs and not part of the 2017 Code.

This commentary addresses each law in numerical sequence; however not all laws are covered. The contents are based upon the WBFLC's corporate view and general understanding of the Laws as they currently stand. The Commentary is not envisaged to be a fixed document, and will over time be periodically updated and/or expanded upon in the light of future experience, discussion and debate. The need to eliminate any possible confusion regarding the application of laws not currently mentioned or a request from an NBO for clarification as to the meaning of a specific law or phrase might also lead to later modification.

General Principles

Unless the context of a law clearly dictates otherwise, the singular includes the plural, and the masculine includes the feminine.

Where two different laws appear to relate to the same factual situation, a law governing the specific subject matter always overrides a law governing only general matters.

Example 1:

Dummy's rights are addressed in Laws 42 and 43. Provisions there for dummy supersede those in Law 9.

Example 2:

A defender revokes and dummy, trying to prevent the establishment of the revoke, asks him about it. Law 9A3 could be interpreted as allowing this, but Law 61B explicitly states that dummy is not allowed to do so.

Example 3:

A defender places his just played card in the lost position when in fact his side has won the trick. Law 43A1(a) says that dummy may not call attention to an irregularity during play, but Law 65B explicitly states that dummy is allowed to point out this irregularity so long as his side has not played a card to the following trick.

Illegal Communication

The WBF Laws Committee could not avoid paying attention to the awful discovery in 2015 that some world class players appeared to have regularly and deliberately exchanged illicit information as part of the way they played our game. No set of Laws can, by themselves, prevent an individual from attempting to cheat; Law 73B2 already makes it clear that, "The gravest possible offense is for a partnership to exchange information through prearranged methods of communication other than those sanctioned by these Laws."

That being said, the Committee notes that playing bridge (at a physical table) includes exercising many manual tasks which should be done in a uniform way. The Laws prescribe such uniform methods; supplemental regulations should do the same. The TD's role is to maintain these orderly procedures. Players need to understand that proper procedures are necessary in order to ensure the honesty of our game.