

LAW 12 - DIRECTOR'S DISCRETIONARY POWERS

A. Power to Award an Adjusted Score

On the application of a player within the period established under Law 92B or on his own initiative the Director may award an adjusted score when these Laws empower him to do so (in team play see Law 86B). This includes:

1. The Director may award an adjusted score in favour of a non-offending contestant when he judges that these Laws do not prescribe a rectification for the particular type of violation committed.
2. The Director awards an artificial adjusted score if no rectification can be made that will permit normal play of the board (see C2 below).
3. The Director may award an adjusted score if there has been an incorrect rectification of an irregularity.

B. Objectives of Score Adjustment

1. The objective of score adjustment is to redress damage to a non-offending side and to take away any advantage gained by an offending side through its infraction. Damage exists when, because of an infraction, an innocent side obtains a table result less favourable than would have been the expectation had the infraction not occurred.

2. The Director may not award an adjusted score on the grounds that the rectification provided in these Laws is either unduly severe or advantageous to either side.

C. Awarding an Adjusted Score

1. (a) When after an irregularity the Director is empowered by these laws to adjust a score and is able to award an assigned adjusted score, he does so. Such a score replaces the score obtained in play.

(b) The Director in awarding an assigned adjusted score should seek to recover as nearly as possible the probable outcome of the board had the infraction not occurred.

(c) An assigned adjusted score may be weighted to reflect the probabilities of a number of potential results, but only outcomes that could have been achieved in a legal manner may be included.

(d) If the possibilities are numerous or not obvious, the Director may award an artificial adjusted score (see C2 below).

(e) If, subsequent to the irregularity, the non-offending side has contributed to its own damage by an extremely serious error (unrelated to the infraction) or by a gambling action, which if unsuccessful it might have hoped to recover through rectification, then:

(i) The offending side is awarded the score it would have been allotted as the consequence of rectifying its infraction.

(ii) The non-offending side does not receive relief for such part of its damage as is self-inflicted.

2. (a) When owing to an irregularity no result can be obtained [see also C1(d)] the Director awards an artificial adjusted score according to responsibility for the irregularity: average minus (at most 40% of the available matchpoints in pairs) to a contestant directly at fault, average (50% in pairs) to a contestant only partly at fault, and average plus (at least 60% in pairs) to a contestant in no way at fault.

(b) When the Director chooses to award an artificial adjusted score of average plus or average minus at IMP play, that score is plus 3 IMPs or minus 3 IMPs respectively. Subject to approval by the Regulating Authority, this may be varied by the Tournament Organizer as provided for by Laws 78D, 86B3 and (d) hereunder.

(c) The foregoing is modified for a non-offending contestant that obtains a session score exceeding 60% of the available matchpoints or for an offending contestant that obtains a session score that is less than 40% of the available matchpoints (or the equivalent in IMPs). Such contestants are awarded the percentage obtained (or the equivalent in IMPs) on the other boards of that session.

(d) The Regulating Authority may provide for circumstances where a contestant fails to obtain a result on multiple boards during the same session. The scores assigned for each subsequent board may be varied by regulation from those prescribed in (a) and (b) above.

3. In individual events the Director enforces the rectifications in these Laws, and the provisions requiring the award of adjusted scores, equally against both members of the offending side even though only one of them may be responsible for the irregularity. But the Director shall not award a procedural penalty against the offender's partner if of the opinion that he is in no way to blame.

4. When the Director awards non-balancing adjusted scores in knockout play, each contestant's score on the board is calculated separately and the average of them is assigned to each.

WBF Law Committee's Commentary on Law 12:--

Law 12 – Score Adjustment

In most situations where a TD is called upon to make a ruling, the application of the Law itself is sufficient to settle the matter. Law 12B1 reminds us that the objective of a score adjustment is to take away any advantage gained by an offending side through its irregularity and to redress damage to a non-offending side. When the offending side obtains a higher score than would otherwise be expected without any infraction, the offenders are deemed to have gained through that infraction and Law 12C applies.

Occasionally, the provisions in the Laws do not sufficiently compensate the non-offenders for the damage they suffered. Law 12A1 handles such cases. Law 12A2 handles the similar case that while the Laws may provide a rectification, sometimes what would follow would not really be bridge. The Law describes this as when “no rectification can be made that will permit normal play of the board.”

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish situations which call for Law 12A1 from those where we apply Law 12A2

Example 5:

In a high level competition the auction went:

1♣	Pass	Pass	Pass
1 NT	All Pass		

After 1NT was played out, the players realized what had happened. If they had noticed before play started, the ruling would be a simple application of Law 39A. (Everything after the third pass is cancelled; the contract is 1♣.) In this case, it doesn't make sense to let them replay the board in 1♣. Law 12A1 allows us to adjust the score when the Laws do not cover the

particular sort of violation committed by an offender. But here there is no non-offending side, so Law 12A1 is not actually applicable and for this particular case Law 12A2 applies; no rectification will allow the contestants to achieve a normal result in 1♣

Assigning an artificial adjusted score of average minus to both sides is the correct way to handle it.

An example of applying Law 12A1 is the following: declarer asks dummy to play the spade ten at trick 3. Dummy picks up that card but then leaves it face up on the table and it is still there at trick 10. If this creates confusion and induces an error from the defenders, there is now sufficient reason to adjust the score using Law 12A1.

There are many irregularities where immediate rectification is not possible. The most common examples are misinformation and unauthorized information. The players have to reach a result on the board before the TD can determine whether there was damage to the non-offending side. Law 12C1(e) has been rewritten to help TDs understand when the non-offenders might not receive redress. It clarifies that damage which is a consequence of the irregularity is redressed, but not self-inflicted damage that is subsequent to the irregularity. The non-offending side is only denied redress if they commit an unrelated extremely serious error, such as a revoke; or take an unsuccessful gambling action (i.e., a ‘double shot’).

In these cases, the offenders are to receive an adjusted score to remove any advantage they gained through their infraction. The non-offenders lose the part of the adjustment that represents self- inflicted damage. On the other hand, damage such as taking a line of play consistent with (hard to believe) misinformation is always related to the infraction and thus cannot be used as a basis to withhold redress from a non-offender.

In a ruling such as this, the TD splits the damage caused by the infraction (consequent damage) from the subsequent damage and compensates the original non-offending side only for the consequent damage.

Example 6: IMPs, N/S vulnerable

North (of Team A) bids 4♥. East (of Team B) passes after a long hesitation. After South's pass West bids 4♠. N/S then continue to 5♥. They make 9 tricks. The TD later determines that West's 4♠ was a violation of Law 16 and also that 5♥ was a gambling, not normal action. He further determines that the play in 4♠ (not doubled) would have resulted in 8 tricks and the result in 4♥ is 9 tricks. The result at the other table is 3♠ down one for E/W

In almost all cases, we distinguish between the actual result (Ra) and the normal result (Rn): that is, the outcome of the board with or without the infraction. When the actual result for the non- offending side is worse than the normal result, there is damage (Law 12B1) and the TD adjusts the score to the normal result for both sides. As it is not always possible to determine a single normal result, Law 12C1(c) tells us to weight the possibilities in our adjusted score.

On occasion, the actual result is not the one that would be achieved had the non-offending side continued playing normal bridge. Perhaps the non-offenders commit an extremely serious error (such as revoking), or make a gambling action, such as in this example where there was no bridge reason to bid again. Some of these gambling actions might be considered a double shot—if the action was successful, no rectification would be needed, but if it failed, the side expected to have its result adjusted anyway.

In these cases, we distinguish among three results. R_n is the normal result had the infraction not occurred, R_e is the expected result after the infraction when play continued normally, and R_a is the actual result, including the infraction and the unrelated serious error or the gambling action.

If Team A had not made its gambling $5\heartsuit$ bid, they would have beaten $4\spadesuit$ by two tricks and gained two IMPs (+100, -50). After the $4\spadesuit$ bid they were in a better spot: they were going to lose four IMPs without the infraction when they went down in $4\heartsuit$, (-100, -50). Therefore, Team A was not damaged by the infraction; they were damaged by their gambling $5\heartsuit$ bid. They have to keep their score and lose 11 IMPs (-500, -50). Team B is not allowed to gain from its infraction; it receives a score based on the expectation had the irregularity not occurred (+100, +50 and +4 IMPs).

Example 7:

The facts are the same except for one, this time $4\spadesuit$ would have been made (teammates $3\spadesuit + 1$). The calculation now becomes:

With normal play after the infraction by Team A (i.e., when they don't bid a gambling $5\heartsuit$) their expected result (R_e) is -6 IMPs (-420, +170); Without the infraction the normal result (R_n) is +2 IMPs (-100, +170);

The difference between those two IMP results, 8 IMPs, is the portion of the damage which was caused by the infraction. Since Team A lost 8 IMPs on the board (-500, +170), they get eight IMPs back for 0 IMPs on the board.

Team B receives -2 IMPs (+100, -170), the score they would have expected to receive had the irregularity not occurred.

Average plus

The new Law 12C2(d) allows a Regulating Authority to specify what happens when a pair misses several boards during a session. The WBF Laws Committee recommends average plus not be used simply for a sit-out in a movement, and it suggests restricting average plus to two boards per session for a contestant (at pairs or teams). Additional missed boards can be scored as average or, in extreme situations, as if they were not scheduled to be played in the first place.

Weighted scores

In teams, if a contestant receives an adjustment on a board based on more than one possible outcome, the result on the board is the weighted average (expressed in IMPs) of the scores involved.

Example 8:

The adjusted score for Team A on a board is $2/3$ of $4\spadesuit$ making (+620) and $1/3$ of $4\spadesuit$ down one (-100). The result at the other table is $3\spadesuit$ making three (+140).

Team A receives $2/3$ of 10 (+620, -140) plus $1/3$ of -6 (-100 - 140) = $6\frac{2}{3} - 2 = 4\frac{2}{3}$ IMPs.

At matchpoints, the weights of the results involved in the adjusted score need to be added to the frequencies on the board and dealt with as described in Law 78A. Ideally, every pair will have its score matchpointed against the subcomponents of the weighted score at the table with the adjusted score. Not all scoring programs can handle this sort of adjustment. Sometimes a TD has to manually calculate the adjustment and then enter it into the scoring system, but this can be time-consuming for all but the smallest fields.

Example 9:

Here is an example of making a weighted adjustment both at the table where the adjustment occurred and at all the other tables in the field:

Pair A receives an assigned adjusted score on a board: $1/3$ of 3NT making (+400), $1/3$ of 3NT down 1 (-50), $1/6$ of $4\spadesuit$ making (+420) and $1/6$ of $4\spadesuit$ down 1 (-50).

The frequencies not including this result show 4 times +420, 2 times +400, 1 time +170, 1 time +150 and 3 times -50.

The TD-decision changes these frequencies to $4\frac{1}{6}$ times +420, $2\frac{1}{3}$ times +400, 1 time +170, 1 time +150 and $3\frac{1}{2}$ times -50, which gives as matchpoints $18\frac{5}{6}$, $12\frac{1}{3}$, 9, 7, $2\frac{1}{2}$. For pair A the relevant matchpoints have to be multiplied by the appointed chance: $1/6 * 18\frac{5}{6} + 1/3 * 12\frac{1}{3} + 1/2 * 2\frac{1}{2} = 8\frac{1}{2}$ MP.

The matchpoints of all other pairs should also be based on this calculation, a result of +400 being converted to 12 1/3 MP.

If a weighted score is given in case of a cancelled bid due to the existence of UI, only scores that can be obtained in a legal manner may be taken into account [12C1(c)]. A given result may be able to be obtained via legal and illegal means; it can only receive weight for the legal means.

Example 10:

After a hesitation a pair bids 6♠. The TD does not allow this call because some of the consulted players choose an alternative call. Such alternative calls may still be part of the weighted adjustment but the cancelled 6♠-bid may not be included even if a majority of consulted players also make it.

Benefit of Doubt

The aim of a weighted score is to provide a realistic outcome that takes account of the probabilities of a number of potential results. In most situations the best approach is for the Director to poll players so as to obtain a cogent view of the range of possible outcomes. A pool of five players of a standard similar to those at the table in question is considered to be the absolute minimum number that the TD should poll.

Unfortunately any poll based upon a small sample-space inherently possesses a high variance. This is best illustrated by considering the potential effect if one of the five individuals were to change their opinion, i.e. this would equate to a shift in the raw percentages of the order of 20%. Hence the degree of uncertainty associated with this particular TD poll is at least +/- 0.2.

When the TD elects to award an artificial adjusted score, Law 12C2 explicitly incorporates the concept of awarding a superior score (average plus) to the non-offending side as a means of compensation in respect to any margin of doubt. When the TD elects instead to award an assigned adjusted score, exactly the same principles apply in that Law 84D now instructs the TD to restore equity, while still resolving any margin of doubt in favour of the non-offending side.

As a reflection of the uncertainty associated with the raw percentages obtained via polling, the TD should award a weighted result that slightly favours the non-offenders, but the final adjustment should never deviate by a factor greater than 0.2 from the raw data obtained from the consultation process. This means that on those rare occasions where both sides are non-offending (or offending), the TD may need to award a non-complementary (split) weighted final adjustment.

Example 11:

A pair is misinformed and ends up in 3NT going down one instead of playing in a making 6♦ contract. If the polling shows that it is easy to get to 6♦ with correct information, then the TD should assign 100% of 6♦. If however the polling shows only a ~50% chance of the pair getting to 6♦, then the TD should assign a percentage of 6♦ making together with a proportion of the various (successful and non- successful) game-level contracts. After factoring in the associated uncertainty the TD obtains an adjusted frequency of: $0.50 \times 1.2 = 0.60$ (which equates to 6♦ making ~60% of the time).

Now let us suppose that for 6♦ to make the declarer has to find a queen and it is a pure guess. We therefore don't know if he would get it right or not, so it is now normal to include a proportion of both 6♦ making and 6♦ going down as part of the final weighted result (again giving some consideration to the margin of doubt associated with the process). Hence, if it seems that getting to 6♦ is 100% certain and making it is only a ~50% chance; the assigned score would be 6♦ making ~60% of the time ($0.50 \times 1.2 = 0.60$) and going down ~40% of the time.

If the TD discovers that only ~50% of the players polled would get to 6♦, and that those in 6♦ would only make it ~50% of the time then, based upon the raw percentages, we would expect the non-offenders to get the score for 6♦ making ~25% of the time. But since they are the non-offending side, it is entirely appropriate to give them some benefit of doubt and assign 6♦ making ~30% of the time ($0.25 \times 1.2 = 0.30$). This means that the remaining ~70% would need to include those occasions when 6♦ fails, as well some proportion of 5♦ making and 3NT failing.

Serious error

In bridge it is normal to make mistakes; they are part of the game. When considering the damage related to an infraction a player should not be punished for making a mistake unless it is considered truly egregious.

Example 12:

S/NS	North ♠K8 ♥K ♦AQ62 ♣AK10863		The bidding has gone, with EW passing throughout: 1♦ - 3♣ - 3NT - 4♦ - 4♥ - 4♠ - 4NT - 5♠ - 6♦ - 7♦ - All Pass N/S play 5-card majors with better minor. 5♠ shows 2 aces and the ♦Q. South has hesitated before bidding 6♦.
		East ♠J976 ♥10874 ♦J97 ♣52	The lead is the ♥Q to dummy's ♥K. Declarer continues the ♣AK from dummy, then ♣3. The grand seems unbeatable, South will just overruff. So East discards a heart, but with an unexpected ♦K84 in South, East ruffing with the ♦9 or ♦J defeats the contract by promoting the ♦10(xx) in the West hand.

If the TD decides that pass is a logical alternative to 7♦ he should consider the misplay by East within the range of normal bridge and adjust the score for both sides to 6♦ making seven. This is not an example of a serious error which limits E/W's right to redress.

Example 13: High level

N/Both	♠K7 ♥53 ♦A964 ♣AKJ102	
♠1096 ♥A84 ♦KQJ752 ♣Q		♠J532 ♥J1072 ♦103 ♣942
	♠AQ84 ♥KQ96 ♦8 ♣8765	

W	N	E	S	
--	1NT	Pass	2C	South, having discovered a minor-suit fit, hesitated before bidding 5♣.
Pass	2D	Pass	3C	West leads the ♦K to dummy's Ace. Declarer plays a small heart to the King and Ace. West continues diamonds, ruffed by declarer. He plays two rounds of trumps and leads another diamond from dummy for his 12th trick. East does not realize that his trump nine is higher than all declarer's trumps and that ruffing will defeat the contract. He discards, and declarer makes his contract.
Pass	3D	Pass	3H	
Pass	3S	Pass	4C	This should be considered a serious error in most competitive environments.
Pass	4S	Pass	„,5C	If the TD decides that pass instead of 6♣ is a logical alternative for North he will adjust the score for NS to 5♣ making 12 tricks. But he should also decide that the damage for EW was not caused by the infraction committed by North but the fault of East who could easily have defeated the contract. This means that the difference in result between 6♣ down 1 (the expected outcome after the
Pass	6C	All Pass		infraction) and 6♣ making (the actual result) is considered to be subsequent damage. The way to calculate this would be to give E/W the matchpoints for 5♣ making 12 tricks, and then subtract the matchpoint difference between 6♣ making and 6♣ down 1 from what they earned.

Depending on the experience level of the players, this ruling might be different. In a very low-level event we could decide that there was no subsequent damage and in that case simply adjust to 5♣ making 12 tricks for both sides.