

Law 40 – Partnership Understandings

The Regulating Authority has the power to regulate partnership agreements. It may define what constitutes a special partnership understanding and then regulate (or forbid) its use. It also may restrict the use of any psychic artificial call.

To vary one's agreement because partner has asked a question of the opponents or because of partner's answer to a question, remains an infraction of Law 16. Pre-arranged understandings in respect to subsequent actions following one's own infraction are also prohibited.

A regulating authority may disallow the variation of agreements following an irregularity committed by the opponents [Law 40B2(a)(iv)]. A partnership however is always allowed to vary an agreement in relation to the meaning of an opponent's legal call.

It is very poor form to only ask a question when one's own holding suggests a surprise. A common example of this is:

Example 41:

W N E S

Pass 1♦ 3♣

3♣ is not alerted, but South has KJ1073 of clubs and nothing much in the majors. He suspects that East meant to show a two suiter in the majors and asks for the meaning. A player only has to do this twice and his partner will figure out what this question shows. This is not allowed; there should not be any predictable correlation between the decision to ask and the player's holding.

There is a new condition added to Law 40B2(c) as to when a player is allowed to consult the convention card of an opponent: when RHO asks the meaning of partner's call, the answer to which depends on the meaning of an opponent's prior call.

The option for a Regulating Authority to allow a member of a partnership to play one or more elements of the system differently from his partner has been removed.

Law 40B4 describes the approach to use in cases where agreements that are not allowed have been employed by a partnership. Apart from a possible procedural penalty the score is adjusted if the TD judges that the opponents are damaged. This means that the TD should not give an automatic artificial adjusted score but instead wait for the actual result and then adjust only if necessary.