

Bridge Etiquette

At tournaments, some people will be real “sticklers” and inclined to call the Director on just about any provocation. Fortunately, few people are like that. If someone calls the Director on you, do not feel defensive. **The Director is there to protect everyone’s rights—including yours.** Just state what happened when it is your turn to speak. Tell the Director if this is the first time you have ever played in a tournament.

General Guidelines:

- 1) During the auction and play, try to **maintain a “poker face.”** Grimaces, irritated tapping, snapping cards, and other emotional cues should be avoided. Some people like to chit-chat at the table. Many do not. It is polite to greet people as you come to their table, or they come to yours, but it is not necessary to engage in small talk. And any small talk should cease when the bidding starts. Do not kid around with “playful” remarks or “pretend” bids. People will take you seriously.
- 2) You are allowed to think about your bids, but do **try to keep an even tempo** as much as possible. That is, if you usually think for at least 10 seconds, try to take a few seconds for every call. If you think extra long at some point and your partner then bids, the opponents may call the Director feeling that your partner is bidding on the basis of your hesitation.
- 3) Make sure you are the dealer before you make a bid. **Be sure you know what you want to bid before you touch the bidding box.** (If you make an error, if you catch it immediately, “Oh, I pulled the wrong card,” you are allowed to change it.)
- 4) If you think you are the opening leader, put the card you want to **lead FACE DOWN** on the table and inquire: “Any questions, partner?” This allows everyone to confirm that Yes, you are the opening leader and avoids the embarrassment (and Director call) and penalties of a “Lead out of turn” (by the wrong person). Your partner may ask any questions about the bidding BEFORE making his/her last bid or AFTER you make the face-down lead (before it is turned face up).
- 5) It is perfectly legal (and a very good idea!) to **ask your partner, every time s/he shows out of a suit:** “No more _____, partner?” This avoids the problem (and Director call and penalties) when you or your partner revokes (does not follow suit, but should have—still had a card to play in that suit).
- 6) It is a kind gesture to **wish people luck** after your round with them (as you leave their table or they leave yours). You may also offer sincere compliments on nice play, bidding, or defense by them. Gloating is inappropriate. If you are happy with a result, celebrate with your partner AWAY from the table.
- 7) Your **convention card should include ALL the special** (nonstandard or artificial) **bids that you and your partner use.** It is illegal for you and your partner to have any special understandings that do NOT appear on your convention card. Technically, you are supposed to KNOW your card and not refer to it, but in practice, an unobtrusive glance periodically at your card is considered OK, even during the auction. (Of course, you can double-check at any other time.)
- 8) Remember, that **the person making an artificial bid is NOT the person to notify the opponents. It is the PARTNER who must notify the opponents.** With a Jacoby transfer sequence: John bids 1 NT. His LHO passes. Mary bids 2D. As soon as the bid “two diamonds” leaves Mary’s hand, John says the word: “Transfer.” Then Mary’s LHO will bid. (Or, if LHO is confused, s/he may ask for an explanation, in which case John says that Mary’s bid asks him to bid 2 hearts.) If Mary’s LHO passes, John then bids 2H.
- 9) Players must now **announce the no trump range** they play. Therefore, when John opens 1 NT, as soon as the bid “one no trump” hits the table in front of John, Mary says “15 to 17.”
- 10) Some people use a “STOP” card or a “skip bid” warning before making a jump bid (such as a weak two or a jump shift). That is not necessary. **Consistency** is! Either use the STOP card every time, or never use it.
- 11) If an opponent asks for an explanation or a bid or a lead, **the PARTNER of the person who made the bid or made the lead is supposed to provide the explanation.** Keep your explanations as simple and brief as possible, and stick to what is on your convention card. For example: “We make 4th-best leads against NT.” Or: “We play 2D as a weak hand and a 6-card suit.” You are NOT required to—nor should you—share

information about your hand that is relevant to the question—only about what the lead or bid should mean. If they ask about 4NT, say it is Blackwood. If they want more, say partner's response shows ___ Aces. Do **not** reveal how many aces YOU have, or accidentally note: "We have all the aces."

12) It is polite to make your opening lead **FACE DOWN** before you write down the contract. This allows everyone to study dummy and think about their play while you write down the opening lead.