

When and How to Call the Director

1. Introduction

Our Directors are there to ensure that everyone enjoys a fair and pleasant game of bridge, and we all need to call the Director to sort out the slip-ups that are bound to occur from time to time. The Director is not there to “punish” any infraction, but to redress any damage to the non-offending side that may have occurred, and allow as normal a game to proceed as possible. Only the Director is entitled to put right any irregularities by making a ruling to apply the Laws of Duplicate Bridge in the way that is fairest to all the players in the session.

Please read on to discover in which situations it is imperative to call the Director, how this should be done and what happens next.

2. When the Director must be called

There are two types of ruling that the Director may be required to make: Book Rulings, where there is a clear course of action; and Judgement Decisions where there is an element of discretion.

Book Rulings apply to the mechanics of the game: calls, leads or plays out of turn; insufficient bids; revokes; a defender's exposed card; or a disputed claim. Even in these cases, which may seem to be simple situations, the Laws of Duplicate Bridge can be surprisingly complex and it is mandatory to call the Director. Book Rulings are made and applied immediately at the table.

Judgement Decisions apply to situations that are less clear cut, and it may not be obvious what infringement has occurred or whether an unfair advantage has been gained. These include: a) Corrected or conflicting information regarding a call or play by either member of a partnership, including Alerts and Announcements (see * below).

- b) When a player can not or will not answer questions about a call or play.
- c) A discussion overheard about a board at another table.
- d) A bid which may be a Deviation or Psychic Bid.
- e) Possible Unauthorised Information from a hesitation or misuse of the bidding box.
- f) Bad behaviour of any sort at your own or another table.

The result of a Judgement Decision may have to wait till the end of the session for the Director to review the full impact of the event, to consult with other directors, and to adjust any scores.

** The declaring side must make any corrections regarding calls, alerts and announcements before the lead is made: the defending side must wait till the play is over.*

3. Calling the Director

There is no shame or embarrassment in calling for the Director. Nor is it an aggressive action. It is just that something may have gone awry and needs fixing. Any player may call the Director in the auction, but during the play, only the three active participants may, and Dummy must wait until the play is over. When needed, simply call the Director without delay, clearly and audibly, and please not forgetting to say 'please'. Our Directors are also playing and may be head down playing or defending a tricky contract, so hold up a hand to show where the call has come from. The Director will acknowledge your call, but you may have to wait a minute or two to be attended.

The bids or cards should be left exactly as they were when the Director was called. The Director will ask who called him or her, and the person - and only that person - who made the call should explain the situation calmly and clearly. The other players should remain silent even if they think the explanation is incorrect. The Director may ask for clarification, and then for any additional or conflicting information from the other players. Only the Director may touch the bidding or playing cards. The Director may ask you to call him or her back at the end of the hand.

If you disagree with a Director's ruling, or want more information, please say so politely and ask to discuss it at the end of the session with the Director and with the other players involved if necessary. Please do not make a scene at the table, or upset the other players - including the Director. As a last resort, you may lodge an appeal with the Director which will require him or her to consult with other directors to determine whether the initial ruling was correct or not.