

CLUB DIRECTORS' HANDBOOK

Scottish Bridge Union



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Club bridge would be impossible without TDs and most players appreciate that.

Although roles and experience will vary, a club TD takes on:

- Being expert in using the Scoring Program.
- Setting up the movement
- Recovering from faults
- Maintaining player databases
- Ensuring Master Points are recorded
- Posting results online
- Updating programs
- Being expert with Bridgemates
- Amending scores / fixing errors during tournaments
- Enabling updates
- Understanding movements
- A good knowledge of the Laws
- Collecting entry money
- Tact / Diplomacy / Calm under pressure
- A multi-tasking phenomenon

You don't have to be mad to take this on, but it helps.



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Running a tournament

Be Prepared!

The most important aspect of running any tournament is planning. Club players are always appreciative of directors, however nobody likes to be sitting around at 7:10 waiting for a tournament which was due to start at 7 because the TD is rummaging around looking for movement cards or whatever.

So, know your likely number of tables, have the Howell cards ready if needed. Have the Bridgemates ready and computer set to go (switch on the computer well in advance, they have a habit of going into a 20 minute update just when you least expect it). Have the tables set out, bidding boxes, scorecards available, everything necessary. Finally get the players to sit down!

Once running, try to keep everyone playing to time. This can be the most difficult aspect and your club's situation might govern what you can do. Being a playing director adds to the problems. However:

- Try to announce when 3 to 5 minutes left of round (depends on length) or make an announcement like "You should all be on the last board"
- Keep an eye on those pairs who tend to fall behind.
- Persistent problems (assuming no extraneous circumstances) should be warned and boards removed if they are holding everyone up.
- For removed boards you can award a 60-50 score, if both to blame, 50-50 will do. For subsequent offences 60 – 40, 50 – 40 etc.

After ensuring the tournament is set up and runs properly, the TD has to deal with all the problems that arise.

As a playing director you can't usually jump up to a call but do acknowledge it and let them know you are coming.

Some players can be a little intimidating to newer players, some can be just rude. It is important to keep a friendly atmosphere and Directors should make sure the club committee is fully on board in dealing with any miscreants. It is most helpful if the club has a clear policy on this.

If this is a problem in your club, one tip is to have a Zero Tolerance card in the bidding box (or some use a smiley face). If a player is feeling intimidated or an opponent is just plain rude (or their partner!), they produce the card, leave it on the table for a moment and return to the box.



Most problems will not happen if players follow correct procedure. It is a good idea to have a list of advice on the noticeboard / in newsletters / on websites and get players to follow it.

Examples of advice to your club's players:

HOW TO BE A ♥GOOD♥ BRIDGE PLAYER

- DO be polite at all times
- DO make your opening lead face down and do so before filling in your score card or operating the Bridgemate.
- DO call the TD when something goes wrong.
- DO keep your eye on the timer if displayed and try to keep to time.
- DO make sure your cards are returned correctly to the board.
- DO leave bids on the table until the Opening Lead is faced.
- DO accept all TD rulings with good grace, though if in doubt, you are entitled to politely ask that they double check it.
- DON'T touch the bidding box until you know your call.
- DON'T ask unnecessary questions during the bidding, ask when the opening lead is placed face down (or before you lead).
- DON'T take umbrage if the TD is called, opponents will just be checking that everything is according to the Laws.
- DON'T pick up your cards and return to the board until everybody at the table agrees the result.
- DON'T spend time discussing the hand, get on to the next board.
- Did we mention DO be polite at all times?

Movements

Movements are very simple nowadays with scoring programs and Bridgemates keeping everyone right. There are two main movements:

Mitchell:

N–S remain seated, E–W move up; boards move down. Two winner tourneys.

These are favoured in clubs for their simplicity but also giving the most sitting seats.

Straightforward with an odd number. With even numbers we have two choices:

1. **Share & Relay:** Table 1 shares boards with the last table and a relay set of boards is placed AFTER half way. So with 6 tables, 1 and 6 share the same boards each round and a relay set is placed between 3 and 4.
2. **Skip Mitchell:** boards put out normally, during play the E/W pairs jump a table AFTER half the rounds have been played. So with 6 tables, skip after round 3. So one less round than the number of tables.

There are many variations of the Mitchell, the two most useful are:

1. **Arrow switch:** when you want a one winner tournament. In arrow switched rounds the boards are rotated 90° clockwise so that East is now North. Players have to be careful putting in the scores, East is operating the Bridgemate and it is easy to put in East or West as Declarer when they are playing, forgetting they are now N/S. With 2 boards a table, arrow switch the last two rounds, 3 boards just the last.

2. **Hesitation Mitchell:** this can be useful in three ways. Firstly it allows a one winner tournament while keeping most sitting seats. Secondly it allows an extra round over and above the number of tables. E.g. with 5 tables you can play 6 rounds. Thirdly it can be better than a Howell with say 5.5 tables when you need an extra sitting seat.

Howell:

One winner. Usually only one pair sits, the rest move around as per the table cards. Your club should have sets of Howell cards and if needed they are easily printed from the scoring program.

Advantages of the Howell are

1. Fairest way to score a pairs tournament, everyone playing each other.
2. Shorter sit out with a half table.
3. Mitchell very unsatisfactory for 3 or 4 tables
4. Should be simple for players to follow table cards.

Your club probably has their set movements, here is a possible selection of movements for typical table numbers.

Assumes 20 to 28 boards. BB stands for Baron Barclay, a type of Howell.

S & R: Share & Relay. 6R x 4B : 6 rounds of 4 boards.

A table like this helps when you have an expected number of boards to play, scroll down the number of tables you have, then across to the total boards column and choose the best match for your club.

TABLE S	Type	Rounds x Boards	Total boards	
3 ½	Howell	7R x 3 or 4B or 6R Baron Barclay	21 or 28 24	Or a Mitchell as per 4 tables. Half table at 4, no sharing, long sitout
4	Howell or Mitchell	As for 3.5 4R x 5 or 6 or 7B, S&R	21 or 24 or 28 20/24/28	Relay between 2 & 3. 1 & 4 share
4 ½ And 5	Howell or Mitchell	9R x 3B or 8R x 3B or 7R BB 5R x 4 or 5B Also a 6R Hesitation	27 or 24 or 21 20 or 25 24	
5 ½ And 6	Howell or Mitchell	9R x 3B or 11R x 2B or 8R x 3B BB 6R x 4B S & R or 5R x 4or5B skip 7R x 3or4B Hesitation	27/22/24 24/20/25 21/28	Relay between 3 & 4
6 ½ And 7	Howell or Mitchell	11/12/13R x 2B 7R x 3or4B 8Rx3B Hesitation or 6Rx4B Am. Whist	22/24/26 21/28 24	E/W up 2, boards up 1.
7 ½ And 8	Howell or Mitchell	11/12/13R x 2B 8R x 3B S & R or 7R skip	22/24/26 24/21	Relay between 4 & 5
Etc.				

SBU Regulations

SBU Bidding Box Regulations

<https://www.sbu.org.uk/images/content/tournament-directors/policies/SBUBiddingBoxRegs2022.pdf>

Bidding Boxes

There are SBU rules regarding bidding boxes which all clubs should follow (so that we are all doing the same thing).

Fiddling with cards in the bidding box must be strongly discouraged.

Players must be told in no uncertain terms:

Don't go to the box until you have decided what you are bidding.

An inadvertent bid (e.g. pulling out 2D instead of 2H) can be retracted as long as partner has not subsequently called or the opening lead has been made if the auction ends before partner can call.

Change of mind is not allowed.

After that it is too late and the player must say nothing. If they do say something (Unauthorised Information), the TD must decide how the bidding would have proceeded. This will often be too difficult and an adjusted score of 60-40 or maybe 60-50 is probably best.

SBU Alerting Rules

https://www.sbu.org.uk/images/content/tournament-directors/policies/SBU_Alerting_Policy2022.pdf

Alerting

Again there are SBU rules which we should all follow. Players should learn that bridge is a game of full disclosure. If asked about a bid they should give a full explanation of all agreements.

When partner has failed to alert or given an incomplete or wrong explanation:

Declaring side :- Inform opponents before lead is made.

Defenders:- say nothing until end of hand.

Players don't always understand that they are only entitled to be told partnership agreements, they are not entitled to know what is in a hand.

If I open a weak NT with 11 points or 15 points, opps are only entitled to be told it is 12-14. However if you occasionally do either of these then you must change your explanation because it becomes an agreement.

If I open 3♣ with 6 clubs and my partner informs the opponents that it promises 7, that is fine, because that is the agreement. Though if you do this again, the agreement needs to be changed.

Opening 1NT with a singleton is acceptable IF you inform opps at the beginning, otherwise it is not illegal as a one off, but if you do it again, you must incorporate it in your system description.

2NT with a singleton Ace and possibly a singleton King is acceptable.

Psyches

These can cause great anguish among players, but anyone making any rude comments against someone who psyches is the one who is breaking the rules.

There is no Law against psyches, however the SBU can restrict them and does not allow a psyche with a player's strongest opening (usually 2♣).

On the other hand if a player is known to psyche from time to time, any calls by their partner are subject to scrutiny. Any possibility of 'fielding' the psyche (not bidding the full value of their hand) is a serious matter, the score shouldn't just be adjusted, the pair should be fined as well.

If you are ever unsure whether a psyche might have been fielded, consult with chieftd@sbu.org.uk

Opening a weakish hand is not a psyche, the Rule of 18 usually helps here, length of two longest suits plus points ≥ 18 . Weak third in hand openings are part of 'normal' bridge. So ♠KQxxx ♥Kx ♦Jxxx ♣xx = 18 and opening 1♠ is not a psyche.

Likewise opening a weak 2♥ with AKJT5 and nothing else is not a psyche, you are allowed +/- a card or +/- a point or two for your bid.

Some players think you can bid a big suit as a 'strong' hand, e.g. ten spades to AKQ and nothing else and they open it 2♣. That is actually a psyche because a 'strong' hand has some defence (and you are not allowed to psyche 2♣!).

Likewise strong Acol 2 Major can't just be a good long suit.

Conventions

Clubs are free to ban certain conventions (e.g. multi 2♦). They can also make tournaments 'simple system' etc.

The Law Book

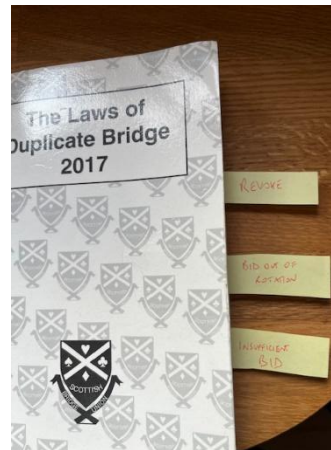
Bridge is a game where most players have no idea of the rules! No matter, the game should always be played according to the Laws and club directors should endeavour to ensure that is the case.

The SBU will run director courses from time to time and will look at the most common laws, in addition there are many helpful books/booklets/flowcharts.

The Law Book is not easy to use, it can be difficult to find what you are looking for and the index is not the most helpful. Unfortunately in a club you are often under pressure to find something quickly.

One useful tip is to use stickers to take you straight to common pages.

Something like this:



Another useful aid is to have printed some common laws (or resume's) on some sheets of paper inserted in the book.

Two examples:

REVOKE (Pages 49/50) Laws 62-64

Check revoke established (has offending side played to next trick)

Did the revoker win the trick?

Did their side win a subsequent trick?

One trick transfer for each YES.

Multiple revokes, auto trick transfer for first only.

Remember to ask if the trick transfer is sufficient.

If both sides have revoked, no automatic adjustment but ensure one side isn't unduly damaged e.g. score 50-50)

If Dummy revokes, no automatic transfer, but score can be adjusted.

OPENING LEAD OUT OF TURN

Declarer can accept by asking partner to put down Dummy

OR

By putting down their own hand as Dummy.

If not:

Says to correct leader:

'You must lead that suit' OR 'You mustn't lead that suit'*

In either case card is picked up**

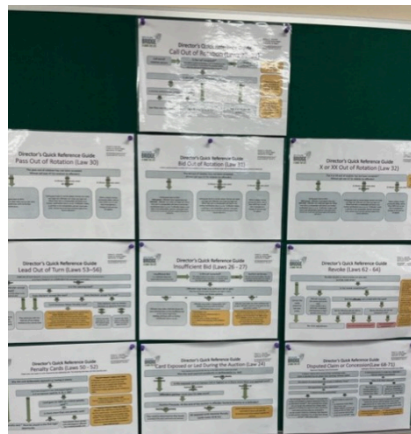
Finally, can say 'Lead what you like', card out of turn remains on table as Major Penalty Card, must be played at first legal opportunity and every time the other hand is on lead Declarer can use the above lead options.

* Can't cash Ace then switch to that suit

** Partner can't use knowledge of that card, though Declarer can.

Here is a selection of helpful books / flowcharts

New Zealand Bridge flowcharts:



<https://www.nzbridge.co.nz/directors-quick-reference-guides.html>

The New Melville have them on a Noticeboard:

LAW 21 - MISINFORMATION

A. Call on Play Based on Player's Own Misunderstanding
No notification or redress is due to a player who acts on the basis of his own misunderstanding.

B. Call Based on Misunderstanding of Opponent

1. A Call for end of the session period (see Law 27D) and provided that his partner has not subsequently acted, a player may discuss a call without other notification for his table when the Director judges that the decision to make the call could well have been influenced by misunderstanding given the player's misapprehension. Failure to do this properly when a doubt is required by the Regulatory Authority or in event of notification.
2. (a) The Director in person (Director's Representative under the Matchplay Call) or the absence of evidence to the contrary.
3. When a player objects to change a call because of miscommunication (as in 1. providing), his LHO may then change the subsequent call in any later deals, but Law 27C applies.
4. When it is too late to change a call and the Director judges that the offending side gained an advantage from the impasse he may award adjusted scores.

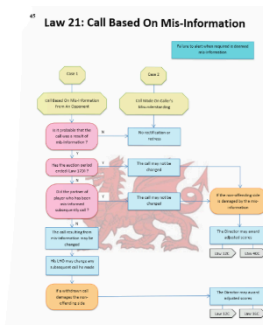
LAW 21 - END OF AUCTYON

no auction may be held.

B. All four players pass (but see Law 27): The hand is awarded to the third highest bidder. These shall not be a result.

Law 27D - End Of Session Period

1. The session period shall continue to the end of the session as in Law 27A, unless otherwise stated in the session card. If the final result of the session is Law 27C, the session between the end of the auction and the end of the session period is designated for Classification Purposes.
2. If the player who has Law 27C (the session period ends) with all the hands dealt has been notified to the board.
3. When a call has been followed by three passes the session ends at the end of play of the first player to pass or of session. Whichever player is the last to call. This law does not apply to the session period in the case of a player who is not a member of the club. In the case of a player who is not a member of the club, it is not applicable to the session period in the case of a player who has passed out of session being an official.



Welsh Bridge Union law book with flowcharts :
£7:95

<https://welshbridgeunion.org/publications>

ACBL ‘Duplicate Decisions’

<https://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/rulings/DD2020.pdf>

SBU Commentary on the Laws

<https://www.sbu.org.uk/images/content/laws-ethics/laws-and-regulations/CommentaryonThe2017Laws.pdf>

Duplicate Bridge Rules Simplified, £6.95

<https://www.bridge-warehouse.co.uk/products/duplicate-bridge-simplified>

There are many others but don't abandon the actual Law Book. By using the book as often as possible you learn your way around it.

So possibly use a flowchart to sort out a bid out of turn but it is a good idea to look up the Law Book later to see how it is covered there.

Most Common Law Infractions

Law 54: FACED OPENING LEAD OUT OF TURN

This should never happen, try to educate players to make opening leads face down and ask 'any questions, partner?'

Declarer has five options: -

Accept the lead

1. Dummy goes down, Declarer plays next with lead going round to Dummy
2. Declarer can become Dummy and partner plays the contract

Reject the lead

which then reverts to your left-hand opponent and Declarer may :-

3. Require them to lead that suit – exposed card is picked up*
 4. Forbid leading the suit for as long as they hold the lead –card picked up*
 5. Let them lead whatever they wish – an exposed card is a major penalty card.
- Knowledge of the card is permitted to the Declarer but not to the Defender. E.g. the Ten of Diamonds was led out of turn, Declarer demands Diamond lead, the Ten is returned to hand. The Defender holds QJ93, they must lead the Queen because this is the normal card, they cannot lead small because they 'don't know' their partner has the Ten.

Summary:

Accept lead, either player can be Declarer, face Dummy now.

Not accepted, demand or forbid* that suit led, card is picked up or lead what you wish**, card remains a major penalty card, must be played first legal opportunity.

* Can't cash an Ace then lead the forbidden suit.

** Each time this defender on lead and penalty card remains, the Declarer can demand or forbid the suit.

LAW 64: THE REVOKE

Try to educate players to ask ‘**having none**’ when their partner shows out.

The first question to ask:

1. Has the offending side played a card to the next trick?

If NO, then revoke is **not established** – see next Law.

If YES: best to tell them to play on and come back at end of hand, then:

2. Did the **offender** win the revoke trick?
3. Did the offending **side** win a subsequent trick?

Penalty is a trick transferred for each YES answer to 2 & 3.

However, there is a fourth question to ask the non-offending side at the end.

Do you think you would have made more tricks if the revoke had not happened?

If so, you restore equity by transferring the required number of tricks, they do not get ‘extra’ tricks, just what they should have made.

Example: a revoke cuts declarer off from Dummy which has 4 winners. Declarer gets a two trick transfer, but that doesn’t make up for the four tricks they lost. The TD should transfer another two tricks to restore equity. (**Law 64C**)

Note **Law 64B** provides a list of cases when there is no automatic trick adjustment. E.g Dummy revokes, you just ensure equity.

Subsequent revokes have no effect. E.g. a player has a heart in with their diamonds and discards spades three times on heart leads. Only apply

automatic penalties to first revoke. However, the Declarer could have been further damaged and, as usual, ensure equity.

THE UNESTABLISHED REVOKE

A player revokes but it is noticed before their side plays to the next trick (see **Law 62/63A**)

1) By a Defender

- a) The card played in error becomes a major penalty card
- b) The offender follows suit with any card

2) By Declarer or Dummy

- a) Card played in error is returned to hand without penalty
- b) Offender follows suit with any card

In other words, the Declarer's side cannot have a penalty card.

If the non-offending side had played a subsequent card, that can be withdrawn without penalty. If the offender's partner (a defender) has also played a subsequent card, they can withdraw it but it becomes a major penalty card.

The unestablished revoke always produces a major penalty card which, of course, must be played at first opportunity.

However, remember that whenever their partner obtains the lead, Declarer can demand or forbid the lead of that suit and the penalty card is picked up.

LAW 27: INSUFFICIENT BID

Was this a **MECHANICAL ERROR**?

If they pulled the wrong card by accident, correct it under **Law 25A** if their partner has not bid.

First option is LHO can accept the bid, the auction continues as normal.

If not, the insufficient bid may be made sufficient at the lowest level or replaced by a comparable* call without penalty (27B1a&b).

Any other call silences partner for the rest of the auction (27B2); offender is not allowed to replace the insufficient bid with a double or a redouble unless it is a comparable call (27B3).

*A call is comparable if every hand that makes the new call would have made the original call or it conveys the same meaning.

See under Advanced look at the Laws.

LAWS 50-52: MAJOR AND MINOR PENALTY CARDS

MINOR PENALTY CARD

1. It must be a 9 or less, AND
2. It must have been exposed accidentally on its own. (**Law 50B**)

For a minor penalty card, you just have to play it when you are following with a small card in that suit. So if it is H7, you can play heart TJQKA if you want, but you can't play a small heart other than the 7. There are no restrictions when your partner is on lead. (Law 50C)

MAJOR PENALTY CARD

1. Any Honour card exposed/played accidentally
 2. Any card played deliberately in error
 3. Any of two or more accidentally exposed cards (**Law 50B**)
- Must be played at **first** opportunity
 - Lead penalties on the partner every time they are on lead while the penalty card remains on the table. Declarer may: -
 - Require partner to lead that suit: exposed card is picked up.
 - Forbid partner to lead that suit for as long as they hold the lead: exposed card is picked up.
 - Let partner lead whatever they wish: exposed card remains as a major penalty card and lead restrictions remain each time partner is leading. (**Law 50D**)

If there are two penalty cards, the Declarer can decide which is played. Lead penalties get more complicated (see **Law 51B**)

LAW 29: PROCEDURE AFTER A CALL OUT OF ROTATION

First option, the offender's LHO can accept it by making a call. If not,

Call out of rotation is cancelled and the auction reverts to the player whose turn it was to call. The offender may make any legal call at their turn, but now Laws 30, 31 or 32 apply.

If the call is artificial (conventional) then these three Laws apply to the denomination specified. E.g. Partner opens 1NT, I bid 2♥ (transfer) before RHO has called, Laws apply to Spades not Hearts.

These Laws 30, 31 & 32 are not easily summarised. Flowcharts are very useful here and the New Zealand series is very useful.

Dummy's Rights

You become Dummy when the opening lead is face up, until then you have the same rights as everyone else.

Now your duty is to:

- Arrange Dummy's cards
- Play cards as directed by Declarer while ensuring Dummy follows suit
- Keep a proper tally of tricks won/lost (though not compulsory)

You may also attempt to stop any infringement. This usually manifested by

- a) Asking the Declarer 'having none' to try to stop a revoke.
- b) Pointing out which hand the Declarer is in if they attempt to lead from the wrong hand.

This last point is the one most players get wrong. Once the Declarer has led or called for a card from the wrong hand, Dummy must say nothing because the infringement has already happened. As per the Laws, it is now up to the Defenders whether they accept the lead out of turn or not (if they disagree, next Defender to play decides).

Now there is no harm done by Dummy saying 'You are in Dummy' after the Declarer leads from their own hand. However, the Declarer should not correct it but ask the Defenders if they wish to accept it.

It is a general rule that after anything insufficient or out of turn, the first option is for the opponents to accept it.

Finally, Dummy must not point out any irregularity by either side until after the hand is finished, which also precludes calling the Director.

Advanced look at some Laws

This is simplified advice, for a better understanding there are Advanced TD Courses.

Sometimes you will get a ruling at the table wrong and realise later. If the score can't be easily fixed, best to just apply an adjusted score. You can use any variation of 60%-40%, 60%-50%, etc.

Likewise if you are really stuck with a ruling, best to apply an adjusted score. Do enquire later through chieftd@sbu.org.uk for the correct procedure.

Comparable calls are tricky. After an insufficient bid is not accepted, it can easily be replaced by making it sufficient, otherwise it can be replaced by anything BUT their partner is silenced, unless it is a comparable call.

A call is comparable if it conveys the same meaning or every hand that bids it would have made the original bid.

You hold ♠xx ♥KQxx ♦Axxx ♣Qxx

Partner opens 1♣, you don't notice RHO's 1♠ and you bid 1♥, not accepted.

You don't want to bid 2♥ as that promises 5, but you play double promises 4. Double is comparable because every hand that would have bid 1♣ – (P) – 1♥ with 4, would double over the overcall if they play that negative double*.

*Almost, you have to take into account any agreement on points required.

You make an opening Pass out of turn when your Partner is the dealer, not accepted. The bidding goes back to Partner who opens 1♥, RHO Passes. You can make any bid not comparable, but your partner is silenced for one round, so you want to make a comparable call.

You hold ♠KQxx ♥xxx ♦Axx ♣Qxx

What is comparable? You want to bid 1♠ but would any hand that bids 1♠ have made an opening Pass? NO, you could have 15 points and bid 1♠.

Comparable would have to be limited to <12 points so these are comparable:

1NT, 2♥, 2NT, 3♥, a pre-emptive 4♥.

Some 2NT or 3♥ bids might open (12 points), but don't be too strict, very few 2NT or 3♥ bids would be opened. With 12 points most players go through a delayed game raise.

So, with this hand, I would allow 2NT or 3♥ as comparable - depending on their system.

Misinformation

Usually arises from a wrong explanation or failure to alert.

Do try to educate players that if they become Defenders, they must say nothing until the end of the hand (and should inform TD).

If they become Declarer / Dummy, they must inform Defenders before the lead is chosen. (this is greatly to their advantage, defenders can't claim they would have played differently if they had known, also last Defender to call can change that Pass).

When misinformation occurs, the affected side must inform you of how they were disadvantaged and what would have happened if they had had the correct information. The TD must then decide if that is the likely outcome and adjust the score accordingly. Do seek advice from other players in deciding these results.

It sometimes happens that one player thinks a bid means one thing, their partner something else. Unless there is evidence to show which is correct, you rule misinformation, though in a club situation you could take their word for it.

When unsure in such cases, it is normal to favour the disadvantaged side, but not unduly. In a club, when it is not clear, it might be better to award an adjusted score. In a more serious tournament, weighted scores are used.

There is a big difference between mistaken explanation and mistaken bid. Players are entitled to know all the opponents' agreements, i.e. the correct explanation. However, if an opponent has forgotten the agreement and misbids, there is no redress, as long as the opponents were told the correct agreement.

So an ad hoc partnership agrees to play Acol Twos, but one is used to playing three weak twos.

So bidding goes :

2♥ – (P*) – 4♥ – AP *asked and was told a strong two.

Turns out Dealer had forgotten and is weak, the 4♥ was a good score but there is no redress. The opponents were given the partnership agreement.

This time Dealer remembers and has strong hand, partner forgets:

2♥ – (P) – P – (2♠*) *asked and was told weak two

Opps compete and end up in a poor, doubled contract. This time there is redress, they were given the wrong explanation. If they knew it was strong they would not have protected, so the contract is changed back to 2♥.

Unauthorised Information (UI)

This is the most difficult to deal with for a number of reasons. However it is also the one that is most ignored by players because they don't understand it.

UI can arise from unexpected alerts, failure to alert, incorrect explanations and hesitations as well as facial expressions and comments.

When UI arises, any call or play by the partner is subject to scrutiny. The easiest way to put this in a club situation is : they must make the normal bid (or play), i.e the bid most people would make (80% is the rule but as long as you are sure it is 'normal' to make that bid).

Example 1: One side is bidding spades, the other clubs. Eventually N bids 4♠ and East thinks for a minute then passes, this goes round to West who now bids 5♣.

This situation can cause a lot of trouble at the table, if N/S take umbrage at this and make any undue comments, they should be warned about their behaviour. All they have to say is 'would you agree there was a hesitation'. Ideally, West should be saying 'I acknowledge my partner's hesitation' before bidding 5♣. Anyway, as long as N/S call the TD, they have nothing to complain about, they get two bites at the cherry.

The rule is "A hesitation followed by a pass implies you wish your partner to take action". So any action taken must be the normal bid without the hesitation.

So, at the end of the hand if N/S would have made 620 but only get 500, they call TD. You have to decide if 5♣ was the normal bid. Best to tell them to enter the score and you confer with experienced players at the end (you can also see what happened at other tables).

If N/S get 800 from the 5♣x or 4♠ doesn't make, of course they don't call the TD.

Example 2: Over opps' weak NT a player bids 2♦ (spades and a minor). Their partner alerts and when asked states 'both majors'. LHO passes and their partner bids 2♥, passed round.

(1NT) – 2♦* – (P) – 2♥ *'both majors'
(P) – ?

and the 2♦ bidder holds:

♠AQxxx ♥Kx ♦QJTx ♣xx

They MUST Pass (or bid 3♥ if they have an agreement it is forcing), they are not allowed to hear their partner's explanation, it is UI. They must bid assuming their partner knows it is spades and minor and is rejecting those suits and has good hearts.

If that hand bids 2♠ and it is passed out, the opps should call the TD and the score changed to 2♥. You are not allowed to be 'woken up' to the system going wrong by hearing your partner's explanation. Though you can be 'woken up' by subsequent bids if they become impossible.

Likewise players are not allowed to see a failure to alert, they must assume their partner is on the same wavelength and bid accordingly.

Sometimes one side says there was a hesitation, the other says they didn't notice anything. Hesitations should be unmistakable according to the Law but the sides can't agree. The TD should consider, did they have anything to think about? If you believe they did, then rule hesitation (**Law 85**) and then decide if their partner's subsequent bid was 'normal'.

UI is more complicated than this involving Logical Alternatives but this advice could suffice in most club situations.

Examples of misinformation / misbids / UI (only one side bidding)

'Inexperienced players':

North South

1NT 2♦

Pass

North forgot they were playing transfers and didn't alert and passed. South informs opponents at the end of bidding and they call TD. This is misinformation, West can change their last Pass, they don't but East says they would have bid. Well tell them to play it out in 2♦ and if they think they were damaged to call you at the end (they might well get their best score by defending 2♦).

If N/S were experienced players, the result should stand for 2♦. Experienced players are expected to recognise standard conventions and if they are not alerted, they can ask if they are thinking of taking action.

North South

1NT – 2♦^a

2♥ – Pass

For this example, South thinks 2♦ is natural to play, however the alert reminds them that they are playing transfers. They must say nothing, the opponents have been given the correct explanation.

Now South knows from the alert that their partner thinks they have 5 hearts when they actually have Kx hearts and 6 diamonds. Normally they must bid on the assumption that both believe 2♦ is to play. However this 2♥ is an impossible bid, how can a weak no trump bid over a 2♦ to play? So South can wake up here. However they are stuck, 3♦ is probably game forcing and they will surely be better to pass. They don't have to inform opps before they lead because they were given the correct explanation.

The likelihood is N/S will get a bad score but sometimes they land on their feet and the score must stand.

Contested Claims

After a claim, if the opponents ask for it and everyone agrees, play can continue and the outcome is final.

If not, you have to decide the outcome, generally favouring the defending side when unsure.

Find out exactly what the claimant said and follow that through. If, as often happens, they just claim the rest but opponents have a winner, you have to decide what happens. You can make declarer play suits in any order (remember they thought they were all winners) but you cannot make declarer do anything silly, e.g. with A2 diamonds and ♦8 outstanding, you cannot make them play the 2. Suits are played from the top with an honour.

Many people think if a trump is outstanding and declarer doesn't mention it, defenders always get a trick, not true. If the declarer is drawing trumps and has KJ5 and a Ten is out, they play the King first. On the other hand if they have 863 of trumps and the 7 is out, they could play a small trump first, so they lose a trick. Small cards can be played in any order if the declarer thinks they are all winners.

When ruffing, it is assumed declarer will ruff small if they think all the trumps are away.

If a Defender concedes the rest of the tricks then, if their partner objects, the concession is cancelled. So play continues, however there could be UI and the TD might have to decide the likely result.

Some declarers think that if a defender concedes they can take all the remaining tricks even if they know they have a loser. That is of course unethical but always wrong as per **Law 79A2**.

Some common problems

12/14 cards, but they've looked at their hands. Fix hands, allow board to be played but warn/check knowledge of the card isn't used.

If found during auction/play, fix it if it is possible to be corrected and played out but normally you can just award an adjusted score. This can be the likely outcome but 40-40 might be best to teach them to count their cards.

Player retains hand from the previous board. If their partner has called, you must award an adjusted score (60-40). If not, then just start again with correct cards.

Card exposed/dropped during auction. If it is a small card, just pick it up. If an honour, their partner is silenced for one round*. Card also becomes a major penalty card during play if a defender. Same rules for two or more cards.

A card played cannot be retracted. There is an exception though, Declarer can change a card from Dummy if it was a 'slip of the tongue' but not a loss of concentration or change of mind. So the Declarer calls 2 of hearts, oh, sorry meant ♦2. That sounds like a slip of the tongue. Meaning to cash ♦A then play a spade but calls for spade first is loss of concentration and can't be changed.

*As a general rule, if a penalty like this damages the opposition, the score should be adjusted. E.g. 1NT passed out because of card exposed, making 8. Other tables bid 1NT – 3NT and go down one, so score should be adjusted.