

Club de Bridge de l'Union européenne

Club etiquette and rules of good play

Club Etiquette and Procedure

It is in the best interests of everyone at the club for all members to follow appropriate etiquette and procedure at the bridge table. Bridge is an extremely enjoyable game. Courteous behaviour is an exceptionally important part of that enjoyment. This guide serves as a brief reminder of how to behave at the bridge table. We are sure that all players naturally follow this code of conduct but there are times when concentration and pressure can take their toll and it is for these situations that we issue this as a reminder.

General procedure and keeping to time

- Please aim to arrive by 7.25pm for a 7.30pm start. If you arrive after 7.25, please do not expect to be accommodated since the movement will probably already have been set up.
- There should always be a nominated 'director' or at least a person in charge of the session who is responsible for deciding the movement to be played, ensuring timely flow of play and to whom queries may be referred – know who this is and respect their decisions.
- Please switch off your mobile phone or set it to 'silent mode' before play begins.
- When playing a Howell movement, both pairs should check the Howell card and/or the electronic scorer at the beginning of each round to make sure that they are playing at the correct table, against the correct pair, and using the correct boards.
- Always count your cards before looking at them. If you don't have 13 cards, call the director.
- Leave the board in play on the table, pointing in the right direction, until the hand is finished. This makes it much more difficult to put the hands back in the wrong slots afterwards!
- North is responsible for managing the boards and the scoring – though this may be delegated to South.
- Do not remove cards from the board until all players are seated at the table and North has placed the board in the centre of the table.

Bidding

- Don't touch the 'bid' cards in the bidding box and then take out a card from the other section, or vice versa. Keep your hands away from the bidding box until you have decided on your bid.
- During the bidding, you can only ask an opponent for an explanation of a bid made by their side when it's your turn to call. And you must ask the partner of the player who made the bid, not the player who made it. Avoid asking questions about the bidding while it is continuing, unless you really need to know the answer in order to decide what your next call should be (because if you then pass, your partner might draw an inference

Club de Bridge de l'Union européenne

about your strength, or your interest in the suit bid). Otherwise, wait until the auction is finished.

- Avoid looking directly at your partner or your opponents or their hands during the bidding and play.
- If there is any hesitation in the bidding, or the play, the partner of the player who hesitated must be very careful not to draw any inference from this and must bid/play as he/she would have done if there had been no hesitation. This is particularly the case if a player hesitates during the bidding and then passes.
- Use the 'STOP' card when making a jump bid (including opening bids): take it out, leave it on the table for ten seconds, then put it away. The next player shouldn't bid whilst the 'STOP' card is still on the table. This automatically creates a short pause for thought, avoiding the inference that a player who passes quickly has nothing to think about.
- When alerting a call, it is your responsibility to make sure that both opponents see the 'ALERT' card.

Play

- When you're on lead, make your lead face-down and pause in case your partner wants to ask a question. Better still, ask your partner "Questions?" before turning it over. If there are none, the partner should say "No questions".
- All four players should leave the bidding cards on the table until any questions have been asked and the opening lead has been turned over.
- It is good practice to make a lead before putting your bidding cards away or writing the contract on your score card or entering a contract on an electronic scorer. Similarly, when you're dummy, put your hand down first, then put away the bidding cards and write down the contract.
- Try not to take too long over calls or when playing a card. Best practice is to always try and play in tempo. It is discourteous and unfair to keep other pairs waiting.
- Unless dummy has left the table, declarer should never touch dummy's cards, even to rearrange them. This avoids arguments about whether a card has been played or not.
- As declarer, if you can clearly see that all the remaining tricks are yours, claim them rather than play on. You must specify clearly your line of play, including a statement about drawing any remaining trumps.
- Slow play, for whatever reason, affects all other players and is extremely discourteous. If, after being warned, any players continue to play unduly slowly and have not finished bidding the final board of the round when others have finished playing then the director may decide to stop their play and the board is passed out.

Scoring

- At the end of a board, make sure that all players are agreed on the result before putting the cards away. North should be careful to record the score on the traveller fully and accurately, and East or West should verify it. North should always make sure that all travellers have been returned to the correct boards at the end of the round.

Club de Bridge de l'Union européenne

- Don't spend time talking about a hand until you have finished all the boards in that round. And if you do want to discuss a hand at the table, do it very quietly (otherwise people who haven't yet played it might hear you).
- It is North's responsibility to make sure that boards are passed on to the correct table (or relay as appropriate) at the end of each round.
- You should not say anything about the hand while the auction is in progress, or during the play – unless asked for an explanation of a call, or lead/signalling/discard system, by an opponent. You should not touch other players' cards. You may ask them to show you.
- Do not analyse the game at the end if you have more boards still to play.
- Do not offer advice or criticism to you opponents – it may not be welcome.
- You should shuffle your cards after the hand before putting them back.
- Thank your opponents at the end of the round and move promptly to your new table.
- Don't forget to enjoy the game!