

Oops! I Want a Do-Over!

"Oh! I didn't see your bid!" "I meant to call for the Ace!" "I pulled the wrong bid card from the box!" I didn't mean to play this card!" "I want to do it over!" We've all heard it; we've all done it; we've all thought it; but how many games actually allow you to "take it back?" Bridge is one of the few that may allow a do-over, but only in a few situations. Even in those situations, limitations, cautions, and possible penalties may still apply. If this happens at your table, what do you do? **Call the director!**

I Meant to Bid 2C

Your partner opened the bidding 1NT. With your ten points, four spades, and four hearts, you decide Stayman is in order and you pull the 2C bid from the box. You hear partner announce, "Transfer," and to your horror, you realize you pulled out the 2D bid instead of 2C! *Until your partner has made a call, you may correct an inadvertent bid, or mechanical error.* Call the director immediately. He or she will ask what you intended, and will examine your hand. If your intended bid is obvious, your inadvertent bid does not match your hand, and the mistake was a slip of the fingers, *not* a slip of the mind, you will be allowed to correct your bid without penalty. Beware if any of these apply.

- ♣ **Do not attempt to change your bid without calling the director.** If you do so, you have introduced *unauthorized information* into the auction, and penalties or score adjustments may ensue.
- ♣ If partner has already made a call before you notice your error, keep a poker face and tough it out. **You will not be able to change your call.**
- ♣ If your error was simply a slip of the mind, for example, you were chatting and pulled out the Pass card without thinking, keep a poker face and tough it out. You will not be able to change your call.

I Didn't Mean to Play This Card

Declarer plays a low heart towards the AQ in dummy. You're in fourth seat holding the King of hearts, and you're trying not to drool. You play the King, and suddenly realize that declarer had called the Ace! Of course, you want a do-over. Tough! *A defender's card held so that it is possible for his partner to see its face must be played to the current trick.*

Despite the popular misconception that declarer can expose any number of cards without penalty, a declarer may also be subject to the "Compulsory Play of Card" law. For example, declarer holds the AQ of diamonds. He detaches the Queen from his hand as he calls for a low diamond from dummy. He starts to play the Queen, but realizes that RHO has played the King. "Oh, I meant to play the Ace," he says. "I can change my card, because it doesn't matter if the defenders see my card." **Call the director!** *Declarer must play a card from his*

hand held face up, touching or nearly touching the table, or maintained in such a position as to indicate that it has been played. (This assumes that the card could be legally played to the trick. If not, other laws come into play - and of course, you should call the director.)

I Meant to Call for the Ace of Hearts

When I began playing bridge, if declarer called for a card from dummy, that card was played. One of the early "Oops!" laws soon came into being: *A player may, without penalty, change an inadvertent designation if he does so without pause for thought.* As a director, judging whether a call was inadvertent can be tricky. Was the attempted change of play really made without pause for thought? I usually allow the change of play if neither opponent has had time to play to the trick. If you're the defender, and declarer wants to change a call from dummy, what do you do? **Call the director.**

Although the laws state that dummy's card should be designated by both rank and suit, they define players' shortcut calls in this manner.

- ♣ If declarer names suit only, dummy must play the lowest card in that suit. If dummy attempts to play a higher card, **call the director**. Dummy cannot play, attempt to play, or indicate the play of any card not named by declarer.
- ♣ If declarer names rank only, dummy must play that rank from the last played suit. For example, the preceding trick was won in dummy with the King of hearts. If declarer now says, "Queen," the Queen of hearts, if in dummy, must be played.
- ♣ If declarer says, "Play anything," either defender can designate the card to be played.

I Didn't See Your Bid

These words strike fear into the heart of the director. First and foremost, *unauthorized information* now exists. The best that can happen is that your poor partner must attempt to bid and play as if you'd never made that comment. It's possible that there will be no way to overcome the problem, and the director will need to adjust the score. Of course, that adjustment will not be in your favor. Keep in mind that this is not a mechanical error, or an inadvertent bid. You intended to make the bid you made, but you didn't intend it to apply over your partner's bid, or an opponent's bid. ***You cannot change this bid without penalty.*** Would you like my advice? Never let the words, "I didn't see your bid," cross your lips. Brush up on your poker face, and tough out the consequences.

The various "Oops!" laws are misunderstood by directors and players both. They are frequently misapplied, or applied inconsistently. Some are also controversial and may be changed in the upcoming revision of the laws. Remember, after any irregularity, **call the director.**