

Proprieties

Do you ever get the feeling that you'll never learn all the little ins and outs of duplicate bridge? You're not alone. Although many of the proprieties are described in the *Laws of Duplicate Bridge*, most players never read that book. You're left to absorb the proprieties and ethical considerations on your own.

Active Ethics

The Palo Alto Bridge Center has a Zero-Tolerance Policy in effect. Players must behave in accord with the ACBL's *Active Ethics* concept. Active ethics is basically the Golden Rule at the bridge table. Here are a few easy rules.

- ♣ Don't yell at your partner or the opponents.
- ♣ Don't gloat.
- ♣ Duplicate bridge allows no hidden understandings between you and your partner. If an opponent asks for an explanation of a bid, explain your partnership understanding clearly and completely.

The Bidding Box

- ♣ Don't touch the bidding box until you're ready to make a call. If you start to make a bid, then change your mind, you may be giving partner unauthorized information.
- ♣ The use of the Stop Card is optional, but if you use it, you must use it all the time. ***You cannot use the Stop Card to wake up your partner or differentiate between weak and strong hands.***
- ♣ The use of the Alert Card is ***mandatory***. If partner makes an alertable bid (in red on the convention card), say, "Alert!" and tap the center of the table with the Alert card. If partner makes a bid that must be announced (in blue on the convention card), make the appropriate statement ("Transfer," etc.) and tap the center of the table with the Alert card.
- ♣ You and your partner are responsible for knowing what bids in your system must be announced or alerted.

Asking Questions

- ♣ The review of the auction must be complete and must include all alerts and announcements. ***This review cannot be curtailed.***
- ♣ You can ask for a review at your turn to bid; before you make the opening lead; and at your first turn to play. (If you're the declarer, this is at your first play from dummy.)

- ♣ When asking for the meaning of a specific call, unless instructed by director, direct your questions to the partner of the bidder. You can ask for an explanation of a specific call at your turn to call or at your turn to play.

Proprieties During the Play

- ♣ After all four players have played to a trick:
 - You cannot ask to see any cards once you've turned your card facedown.
 - If your card is stilled turned face up, you can ask to see the other players' cards, but you cannot ask to see a specific player's card.
 - If all four cards are turned face down, you can look at your own card, ***but only until the first card is played to the next trick.***
- ♣ If partner's facedown card is turned in the wrong direction, you can point this out, ***but only until the first card is played to the next trick.***

Bridge is a Timed Game

- ♣ Don't discuss any hands until the round is over! In fact, it's a good idea to save your discussions until after the game. This saves time, preserves partnership accord, and you never run the risk of a procedural penalty because you told the entire room what a hand looked like.
- ♣ If you're on opening lead, make your lead first, ***then*** write down the contract in your private score. ***Don't forget that the opening lead must be made face down!***

Miscellaneous Tips

- ♣ If you're the dummy, put down your cards in the opening lead suit last. This forces your partner to look at the remaining cards before making an automatic play at trick one. Automatic plays are usually mistakes!
- ♣ If you're the dummy and partner is playing a no trump contract, place your longest suit to your left - as far away from the usual trump position as possible. This will help remind partner that he's playing no trump.
- ♣ If partner bid a suit, but the final contract is no trump, it's a good idea to keep your cards in partner's bid suit out of the usual trump position.
- ♣ ***Never take out more than one hand after a board has been placed!*** If you are responsible for fouling a board, the director can penalize you and your partner.
- ♣ ***Always count your cards face down before looking at your hand.*** Call the director immediately if you don't have thirteen cards.

Don't forget our theme: When an irregularity occurs, call the Director!