



EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE
7th EBL TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS COURSE

1st – 5th February 2010
Sanremo, Italy

THE WBF
LAWS COMMITTEE

by Bertrand Gignoux

The WBF Laws Committee

by Bertrand Gignoux

The WBF Laws Committee

The (WBF) President shall appoint a Laws Committee and shall designate the Chairman of such Committee. The Committee shall consist of not less than seven members representing at least three Zones. The function and duty of this Committee shall be to consider and take account of all matters relating to the international laws of bridge. The Committee shall make whatever changes in the laws it deems appropriate, subject to approval by the Executive. The Committee shall interpret the laws; shall periodically review the laws; and at least once each decade shall make a comprehensive study and updating of the entire laws structure. The Laws Committee shall fix its own rules of procedure and shall act as provided by such rules or by direction of the Executive.

The WBF Laws Committee, comprising the world's experts on the field, works on a continuous basis, providing a new edition of the Laws every 10 years and interpreting the Laws as required.

To enable people to understand the reasoning behind its decisions, the WBF Laws Committee publishes the Minutes of its meetings at

http://www.worldbridge.org/departments/laws/LawsCmteMinutes/cmte_minutes.asp

This document was written in 2010. Laws references included in the following minutes are those applicable when distributed. The Laws book 2007 may have other references.

WBF Laws Committee

Minutes – Commentary

Procedure for awarding assigned adjusted scores

Lille; August 1998

There was discussion of the procedure in awarding assigned adjusted scores following an irregularity. A change was made by the Committee in the interpretation of the law. Henceforward the law is to be applied so that advantage gained by an offender (see Law 72B1), provided it is related to the infraction and not obtained solely by the good play of the offenders, shall be construed as an advantage in the table score whether consequent or subsequent to the infraction. Damage to a non-offending side shall be a consequence of the infraction if redress is to be given in an adjusted score.

The Committee remarked that the right to redress for a non-offending side is not annulled by a normal error or misjudgement in the subsequent action but only by an action that is evidently irrational, wild or gambling (which would include the type of action commonly referred to as a 'double shot')

This minute is incorporated in Law 12C1b with a small difference: the term 'serious error' is used instead of the word 'irrational'.

Sao Paulo 2009

What is commonly termed a 'double shot' is a gambling action within the meaning of law 12C1(b) – as previously affirmed in the minutes of August 2008. In reference to this same Law, the standard for judging a 'serious error' must be extremely high and the calibre of the player is also relevant.

Paris 2001

There was a discussion concerning the situation under Law 15C when the correct pair is seated and one of them makes a call for which no bridge reason can be perceived. It was agreed that such action is not acceptable and a Director who forms the opinion that there is no demonstrable bridge reason for a call by the incoming pair is authorized to treat this as a violation of Law 74A2.

[Secretary's note: the Committee was aware of debate concerning a pair who might open 7NT when substituted at the table for an incorrect pair, with the implication that the purpose was to avoid playing the board.]

The Secretary stated his view that the law can act unfairly to the side that remains seated when it requires them to repeat the same calls against different opponents. The committee referred this question to the WBF Laws Drafting Subcommittee.

Lille 1998

The Committee considered the question of information arising from possession of a penalty card. Information that the player must play the penalty card as the law requires is authorised and partner may choose the card to lead from the suit on the basis of that knowledge (e.g. may lead small from K Q J x when partner's penalty card is the Ace). Information based on sight of partner's penalty card is unauthorised so that, for example, the player may not choose to lead the suit if the suit is suggested by the penalty card and play of a different suit is a logical alternative.

	♠ K J 8 6	
	♥ 8 6 5	
	♦ K Q 6	
	♣ A 9 4	
♠ 7 3		♠ Q 10 9
♥ A K 4 3 2		♥ Q 7
♦ 10 7 5 3		♦ 9 8 2
♣ J 5		♣ 10 8 7 6 2
	♠ A 5 4 2	
	♥ J 10 9	
	♦ A J 4	
	♣ K Q 3	

South plays 4♠; East leads, out of turn, the ♥Q.

1. South lets West free to lead what he wants; the ♥Q being exposed, the latter chooses to lead the ♥2, result*: down one.

2. South demands a ♥ lead. West again leads the ♥2 for the same result

**Law 50D1: the requirement that offender must play the card is authorized information for his partner; however, other information arising from facing of the penalty card is unauthorized for partner.*

1. score stands

2. score adjusted to 4♠, just made

Would the (new) 2007 edition of the Laws change this ruling?

Law 50E3: if the director judges that the exposed card conveyed such information as to damage the non-offending side he shall award an adjusted score.

Law 50E1

	♠ 8 2	
	♥	
	♦ A	
	♣ 7 2	
♠ 4 3		♠
♥		♥ K
♦		♦ 6 2
♣ 6 5 4		♣ A K
	♠ 9 5	
	♥	
	♦ 7	
	♣ 8 3	

♠ contract, South, declarer, needs 4 tricks. West is on lead, ♥K penalized

South had ruffed a heart in a previous trick; West knows his partner has the last ♥; it is not the fact that ♥K is penalized that gives West this information. There's no unauthorized information. West is entitled to know that this card is penalized and that his partner must play it at the first legal opportunity.

West is on lead and South, very cleverly, lets West free to play what he wants; any other option would be a bad play. Without penalized card, West would have played a club for down 2 (♣A, ♦ ruffed, ♣K) but he knows that if his partner wins the next trick, he will have to play the ♥K, ruff and discard. West, respecting totally the code plays a ♠ for down 1.

Beneficial effect of a penalty card

Lille 1998

If possession of a penalty card has a beneficial effect for the offending side, the Director may have recourse to Law 72B1 (1997 Law book; now law 23)

Just for fun.

South declarer, ♥ trumps;
South has only one problem; the queen of hearts

♠ A K x x
♥ J 10 9 x
♦ A x x
♣ A x

♠ Q x
♥ A K x x x
♦ K x
♣ K Q x x

After 10 seconds and with a good rhythm, South continues: ♠K, club to ♣K, diamond to ♦A, heart to ♥A, ♦K on which West discards a spade, revoking.

'Oooops sorry' says West who now provides a diamond.

South goes to dummy to finesse the ♥Q, obviously in East's hand. But West had ♥Q!!!!

Another strange case

South, declarer, plays a spade contract having ♠Q J 10 6 3 in dummy opposite ♠A 9 8 5 2 in his hand. Planning to finesse, he plays ♠Q. East plays two cards: ♠4 and ♠7. All statisticians asked agree that the best play would now be ♠A. But East had played these two cards from ♠K 7 4!

Law 23!!!!

Asking for explanation

Lille 1998

If a player knows that his partner's call is conventional but says he cannot recall what was actually agreed the Director may, in his discretion, send the player away from the table and allow the partner to tell opponents in his absence what the agreement is. The Director must be called and no action may be taken before he arrives.

The partner continues in the action on the basis that the player has understood his call, and does not use the unauthorized information that his partner is uncertain of the meaning.

The Director is strongly urged to remain at the table whilst the hand is completed.

This procedure is only for the exact circumstances described; it does not apply when the player says that the position is undiscussed or that there is no agreement.

Regulations when Screens are in use

Lille 1998

The Committee noted an aspect of the WBF regulations applying when screens are in use. This states that it is acceptable for a player to delay the return of the tray for the purpose of restoring the tempo of the transfer of the tray to 'normal'. It was held this means the normal tempo of play generally and not the tempo of play at that particular table nor the (slow) tempo of a prior movement of the tray on the hand in question. (Players who deliberately retard the return of the board beyond the acceptable norm may be in breach of Law 73 D 2 and 73 F 2 may apply).

Here is a deal from the 1998 World Championships in Lille

♠ A 10 5
♥ A K Q 9 4 3
♦ 7 4
♣ 10 8

♠ K J 8 4
♥ -
♦ K J 8
♣ A K Q 4 3 2

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1 ♣	P
1 ♥	P	1 ♠	P
2 ♣ ¹	P	4 ♣	P
4 ♥ ²	P ³	4 ♠	P
5 ♣ ⁴	P ³	P	P

¹ very slow

² fast

³ tray intentionally delayed

⁴ normal tempo

Strong club; N/S : Maas/Ramondt; E/W : Moss/Schencken

East said he counted 8 seconds before placing his pass card on the tray over 4♥ by North, and 6 seconds over 5♣ in order to restore the North's bid tempo. South said he noticed the slow return of the tray over 5♣ which induced him not to bid 6♣.

Score changed to 6♣ by the TD. The Appeals Committee applied law 12C3 (1997 Laws) judging it was not obvious to bid 6♣; 5♣ would be bid 50% of the time, and 6♣ 50% too.

The term 'average minus'

Lille 1998

Consideration was given to the meaning of 'average minus' where used in Law 12C1 (now Law 12C2a). Having debated the options, the Committee held that 'average minus' means the player's session percentage or 40% whichever is the lower.

Claims – Concessions

The Committee considered the possible interpretations of the footnote to Laws 69, 70 and 71. It was agreed that the footnote has not been worded clearly. The Committee invites the copyright holders to change this footnote when next printing the laws, so that it will read: “For the purposes of Laws 69, 70 and 71, ‘normal’ includes play that would be careless or inferior, but not irrational, for the class of player involved.”

In the meantime the correct interpretation of the current footnote is in accordance with the revision of the wording to be made.

At the request of an Appeals Committee Chairman the Committee considered the circumstances of an appeal which had been adjudicated. A player had made a claim by showing his cards and informing defenders that on the basis of the known information he would make his contract through a double squeeze. His opponent had requested him to play out the cards and, in violation of Law 68D, declarer had done so. In the play that followed, subsequently voided by the Director under Law 68 D, he failed to fulfil his contract as claimed. Declarer now called for the Director who declared the subsequent play of the cards to be void and determined that as between expert players it was clear the statement of claim lacked nothing for clarity, the play of the squeeze being perfectly evident. The opponents stated that declarer had demonstrated that he could be careless in executing the squeeze.

When the matter had come to appeal the Appeals Committee had supported the Director in ignoring all play subsequent to the claim and in finding that the statement of claim, each player respecting the abilities of the other, contained no flaw. The Laws Committee agreed that the voided play in such a situation is wholly null and shall not be given any attention in determining the validity of the claim. When the statement is made an opponent who has any doubt about it must summon the Director at once; play must cease entirely. The questions of irrationality, inferiority or carelessness must be judged in relation to the statement accompanying the claim and the lines of play that are not excluded by the statement. On the occasion in question the Appeals Committee found that the intended play was entirely clear from the statement, but in any case the continuation of the play of the cards was void and could not affect the issue.

Here is the board from a quarterfinal match between England and Belgium (Maastricht 2000).

	♠ 3		
	♥ K Q 10 9 8		
	♦ A 5 4		
	♣ K J 5 4		
♠ 4		♠ Q J 9 8 5	
♥ 7 4 2		♥ A 5	
♦ K Q J 8		♦ 7 6 3 2	
♣ A 9 7 6 3		♣ Q 10	
	♠ A K 10 7 6 2		
	♥ J 6 3		
	♦ 10 9		
	♣ 8 2		
<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
		2♠*	P
2NT	3♥	P	4♥
All Pass			

* 5+ spades and 4+ in a minor, 7-10HCP

Lead: ♣Q

Eventually, the following position was reached:

	♠ 3		
	♥ Q 9		
	♦ A 5		
	♣ K J 5		
♠ 4		♠ Q J 9 8	
♥ -		♥ -	
♦ K Q 8		♦ 7 6 2	
♣ 9 7 6 3		♣ 10	
	♠ A K 10 7 6 2		
	♥ -		
	♦ 9		
	♣ 2		

North, declarer, claimed and explained that a double squeeze would allow the contract to be made. Unsatisfied, the opponents requested him to continue.

South played ♣K and ♣J (East discarding a spade), ♥Q, East discarding a diamond, and the last trump. East was squeezed and had to release a diamond. On ♠A and ♠K, West was squeezed too and discarded a diamond but South did the same, discarding the winning ♦5 from dummy. Down 1!!!!

Consideration was given to Law 70 – Contested Claims. The Chairman drew attention to the matter of a claim in Maastricht (see minutes of September 4, 2000, item 1). He, like the Chairman of that Appeals Committee, had been uncomfortable with the outcome, even if the Appeals Committee had applied its bridge judgment correctly to the laws as they are. Mr Polisner considered that the only true reason for the annulment of any play subsequent to a claim is that declarer must not be allowed to recognize and remedy a flaw in his statement. Mr Cohen saw a possibility that one could change the law to allow an option of calling the Director or playing out the hand. The subject was referred to the WBF Laws Drafting Subcommittee.

The committee agreed that under Law 70 when there is an irregularity embodied in a statement of claim the Director follows the statement up to the point at which the irregularity (as for example a revoke) occurs and, since the irregularity is not to be accepted, he rules from that point as though there were no statement of claim but should take into account any later part of the claim that he considers still to be valid.

An example instead of a long speech

♠ 3
♥ 7
♦ A J 8 6 2
♣ A 10 9 8 6 2

♠ K	♠ J 10 6 5
♥ A Q 10 9 8 2	♥ 6 5 3
♦ K 10 4	♦ 9 7 3
♣ K J 7	♣ Q 5 4

♠ A Q 9 8 7 4 2
♥ K Q J 4
♦ 5
♣ 3

South plays 4♠. IMPs.

♥A led, then ♠K to ♠A. ♠Q is cashed and declarer claimed, giving 2 spades to the defenders. Perfect claim isn't it?

But an observant reader would have noticed that this pack of cards contains two ♥Q. In fact, South holds the ♦Q instead of the ♥Q.

South could make 10 tricks playing ♥K then ♥/♦Q, oops!!!, finessing ♦K and establishing the diamonds.

Another acceptable line of play would be: diamond to ♦A, declarer losing 2 spades, 2 hearts and a diamond for down 2.

That would be the ruling.

Another minute concerning Law 70

Paris 2001

The committee discussed Law 70E. It was agreed that it is assumed declarer would see cards as they would be played and to take account of what he would see.

Example

	♠ 2	
	♥ -	
	♦ A 5 2	
	♣ -	
♠ 10		♠ -
♥ -		♥ J108
♦ J 10 6		♦ K
♣ -		♣ -
	♠ -	
	♥ -	
	♦ Q 9 3	
	♣ J	

South is in a no trump contract and he claims saying: 2 tricks for me; ♣J and ♦A. But, as you can see, ♦K is bare. In addition, West is squeezed. So South could win 4 tricks.

The ruling should be that the wins only 3 tricks. It would be careless or inferior to forget that ♠2 could be a winning card.

Sao Paulo, September 2009

It was agreed that in no circumstances can the application of Law 69B2 lead to a weighted score. The law requires that 'such trick' shall be transferred or not transferred by the director's ascertainment of facts.

Bermuda, January 2000

The committee gave its attention to Law63A3 and noted that if a defender revokes and declarer then claims, whereupon a defender disputes the claim so that there is no acquiescence, the revoke has not been established. The Director must allow correction of the revoke and then determine the claim as equitably as possible, adjudicating any margin of doubt against the revoker.

There was further discussion concerning Law 63 and its relationship with Law 69. It was noted that Law 63 indicates how acquiescence may occur and Law 69 defines the time limits for it.

Bermuda, 20 January 2000

Mr Wignall drew attention to situations when, behind screens, an opening bid is followed by a 'big jump in a suit' and upon enquiry as to its meaning the side which has made the skip bid responds that they 'have no agreement'.

This subject also was deferred for later examination together with generally related issues.

This board made so much noise in France that the WBF Laws Committee was alerted for this situation. Here it is:

♠ 7 4 3
♥ Q J 9 6 5
♦ 10 6 2
♣ J 8

♠ 8 2	♠ A 6
♥ 7	♥ A
♦ A 8 7 4	♦ Q J 9 5 3
♣ K 10 7 5 3 2	♣ A Q 9 6 4

♠ K Q J 10 9 5
♥ K 10 8 4 3 2
♦ K
♣ -

East dealer

<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
		1♦	4♦
P	4♥	All Pass	

Result: 4♥ just made; not a very good result for E/W since 7♦/♣ could be made.

What had happened?

North and South alerted and explained: 'no agreement'. Before bidding, North asked East for the meaning of 1♦ (4 cards except 4-4-3-2) and reckoned that a 4♦ bid with 7 cards only would be 'unlikely'.

Score stood both by the Director and the Appeals Committee.

Was North's attitude correct and legal?

Here is an article written by **Edgar Kaplan** in 1981-1983:

East, dealer, opens 1♥, South passes, West raises to 2♥, and North overcalls 2NT with 5-5 in the minors; East passes, and South replies 3♣ holding 6 points with jack-third of clubs.

Now West asks South whether North's 2NT bid was natural, or unusual. South answers, 'this is the first time we've played – we have no agreement'. Obviously, though, South has interpreted the bid as unusual; has he given misinformation? That depends on how South figured out what North's bid meant.

Case 1

South has no clue; he simply flipped a mental coin and guessed right. *No infraction*: E-W are not entitled to learn what South's guess is

Case 2

South decided to treat the overcall as unusual because he judged that most players use it that way. Also, partner was unlikely to be very strong, since this East never psyches, and West, a Roth-Stoner by early training, always has sound values for a raise. *No infraction*: E-W have no claim to share South's general bridge knowledge, or to learn what inferences South has drawn from their bidding habits.

Case 3

South presumed that 2NT was for minors because he himself held king-jack fifth in hearts. *No infraction*: deductions South draws from his own cards are his own affairs.

Case 4

South judged that 2NT was for minors because he had often played with North's regular partner, who treated most no trump overcalls as unusual. *Misinformation*: South had particular knowledge relating to his partner, knowledge the opponents were entitled to share.

Case 5

South figured out that the overcall was unusual from the fact that North had used an ambiguous no trump bid earlier in the session, intending it as take out for minors. *Misinformation*: South's experience with partner's bidding habits created an implicit agreement; it was the opponent's rights to know of it.

The Committee considered situations where an obscure call is made and the partner informs opponent that his side has no agreement concerning it. It was noted that neither the WBF in its code of practice, nor the ACBL, recognizes 'convention disruption' as an infraction in itself. The Chief Director referred to the requirement for the responder to give full information, including agreements relating to relevant alternative calls. The Committee observed that the Director in forming an opinion as to the existence of a partnership understanding should take into account subsequent action in the auction. In relation to Laws 75C and 75D the Director is required to determine what agreements the partnership has.