

Polling and Consulting

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- **Consult – with other TDs or Laws experts**
 - To consider which laws or regulations apply
 - To discuss whether a poll is appropriate and if so, who to poll, what questions to ask

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- **Purpose of poll**
 - To determine logical alternatives
 - To determine what is suggested by UI
 - In cases where you believe there was mis-information
 - To check for “extremely serious errors”

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Who would be ideal to poll?

- An exact match of the player who faced the problem (a “peer” of the player)
- Someone who doesn't already know the hand – this can be hard if the event is on vu-graph
- NPCs or sitting out players
- Not usually TDs in international events

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How many to poll?

- You don't need as many to determine that passing is a logical alternative, as to determine that it is not
- If you think passing is a logical alternative and the first two you poll elect to pass without much thought, that is likely to be enough
- Conversely, to show that passing is not a logical alternative, about five people bidding is usually enough, but if one of the five passes you should ask more people

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Follow correct procedures:

- Think out your questions carefully
- Decide which hand/s should be polled
- Take note of who you asked and what questions you asked, but do not name them to the players
- Write down their answers

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- Ask players individually
- Do not ask the player's team-mates, family, close friends or compatriots
- Come prepared with full information about the players' methods – you may be asked about them
- Ask for their call at each stage of the auction for bidding questions, not just the one you think is important

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- Do ask follow-up questions
- Do not be intimidated by stronger players
- Start with a tentative opinion but be prepared to change your mind.
- Do not let this become a search for as many as possible to agree with you!

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For mis-information cases:

- You usually ask what the player would do with the correct information, rather than with the mis-information that was provided at the table
- Occasionally you will also ask what they would do with the incorrect information -
 - To confirm that they are peers of the player
 - To check that the misinformation did make a difference

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For mis-information cases:

- You are not looking for logical alternatives, so you do not need to hold the proposed action to such a high standard – the player who received the wrong information belongs to the non-offending side and deserves the benefit of any doubt
- You are simply trying to assess whether the proposed action is plausible and logical in the given situation

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Extremely serious errors or gambling actions

- If you find your pollee physically recoils when you say what the player did, this might be an indication that you should consider whether it was an “extremely serious error” (I call this the “shudder test”!)
- Remember it also needs to be unrelated to the infraction before you can deny redress on that basis

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Play polls

- These can be hard to do because there are so many options available
- Often it can be enough to just get a broad description of how the play of the hand might go
- Opening leads can more easily be polled to see if they are affected by misinformation

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A very recent case

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vulnerable.

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

| | | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| ♠ K Q 8 5 | W | E | ♠ 9 6 |
| ♥ Q J 9 | N | S | ♥ T 8 3 |
| ♦ T 7 | | | ♦ J 9 5 |
| ♣ K J 6 3 | | | ♣ A Q T 7 4 |

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

| | | | |
|------|-----------|------|-----------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 1♣ | 1♥ | 3♣ | ♣ |
| ♣ | <u>3♠</u> | ♣ | ♣ |
| ♣ | ♣ | ♣ | <u>3♠</u> |
| ♣ | ♣ | ♣ | ♣ |

¹⁾ Both calls after 40 secs

Results of first poll

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vulnerable.

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

| | | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| ♠ K Q 8 5 | W | E | ♠ 9 6 |
| ♥ Q J 9 | N | S | ♥ T 8 3 |
| ♦ T 7 | | | ♦ J 9 5 |
| ♣ K J 6 3 | | | ♣ A Q T 7 4 |

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

| | | | |
|------|-----------|------|-----------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 1♣ | 1♥ | 3♣ | ♣ |
| ♣ | <u>3♠</u> | ♣ | ♣ |
| ♣ | ♣ | ♣ | <u>3♠</u> |
| ♣ | ♣ | ♣ | ♣ |

¹⁾ Both calls after 40 secs

Poll of five players with the South hand:

All agreed with the first Pass

Three did not like the 3♠ bid and would have bid spades instead

All would have acted again over 4♣ except the player who objected most strongly to the 3♠ bid

Second poll, after review

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vulnerable.

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

| | | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| ♠ K Q 8 5 | W | E | ♠ 9 6 |
| ♥ Q J 9 | N | S | ♥ T 8 3 |
| ♦ T 7 | | | ♦ J 9 5 |
| ♣ K J 6 3 | | | ♣ A Q T 7 4 |

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

| | | | |
|------|-----------|------|-----------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 1♣ | 1♥ | 3♣ | ♣ |
| ♣ | <u>3♠</u> | ♣ | ♣ |
| ♣ | ♣ | ♣ | <u>3♠</u> |
| ♣ | ♣ | ♣ | ♣ |

¹⁾ Both calls after 40 secs

Following a review I conducted a poll about what was suggested by the slow double.

All three players polled thought that it suggested an off-shape hand for the double. Two of them explicitly said they thought it showed fewer than four spades. The third also thought the hand might have less values than implied.



Document written earlier for the English Bridge Union is available at

<https://www.ebu.co.uk/documents/laws-and-ethics/articles/notes-on-polling-&-consulting.pdf>