

# Directing with Screens

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# Goal of This Lecture

To give you useful tips to handle various situations with screens correctly and efficiently, without having to look up the rules.

Basic knowledge about the mechanics of screens and trays is required.

# Insufficient Bids and Calls Out of Turn

Insufficient bids and calls out of turn are easy to handle:

- If not passed through the screen, they are cancelled with no further rectification. No option to accept (not even if they were accepted!).
- If passed through the screen, they have become accepted.\*)

Accepting an insufficient bid or a call out of turn is not allowed! This means that both sides are always\*) offending when pushed through the screen.

\*) If someone pushes the tray immediately after their own infraction, there is only one offender, and so the normal Laws apply. This is very rare because it requires a second offence that players would rarely commit (N/S pushing the tray without waiting for a call from E/W, or E/W pushing the tray after their own call).

# Insufficient Bids – Examples

West	North	East	South
2♠	2♦	TD!	

2♦ is cancelled, no further rectification.

West	North	East	South
2♠	2♦	pass	
		TD!	

Tray not pushed. 2♦ and pass are cancelled, no further rectification.

West	North	East	South
2♠	2♦	pass	
			TD!

Tray pushed. 2♦ stands as accepted.

West	North	East	South
	2♠	2♦	
			TD!

Tray not pushed. 2♦ is cancelled, no further rectification.

West	North	East	South
	2♠	2♦	TD!

Tray pushed. 2♦ stands as accepted (unless it was East who pushed the tray).

# Calls Out of Turn – Examples

West	North	East	South
(dlr)	I ♥	TD!	

I ♥ is cancelled, no further rectification.

West	North	East	South
(dlr)	I ♥	pass	
		TD!	

Tray not pushed. I ♥ and pass are cancelled, no further rectification.

West	North	East	South
(dlr)	I ♥	pass	
		TD!	

Tray pushed. I ♥ stands as accepted.

West	North	East	South
(dlr)		I ♥	

TD!

Tray not pushed. I ♥ is cancelled, no further rectification.

West	North	East	South
(dlr)		I ♥	TD!

Tray pushed. I ♥ stands as accepted (unless it was East who pushed the tray).

# Board Rotated by 180 Degrees (I)

Normally, rotating a board by 180 degrees causes no problems. Essentially, everybody has simply swapped seats with their partner. The board is played as normal, no reason to intervene.

However, when playing with tablets, a new problem arises.

# Board Rotated by 180 Degrees (2)

What the tablets see:

N/None	♠ 853		
	♥ K752		
	♦ AQ94		
	♣ Q7		
♠ 642	N	♠ AJ	
♥ JT9	W	♥ Q863	
♦ 76		♦ T853	
♣ AKT94	S	♣ J65	
	♠ KQT97		
	♥ A4		
	♦ KJ2		
	♣ 832		

West North East South  
 ?

What the players see:

N/None	♠ KQT97		
	♥ A4		
	♦ KJ2		
	♣ 832		
♠ AJ	N	♠ 642	
♥ Q863	W	♥ JT9	
♦ T853		♦ 76	
♣ J65	S	♣ AKT94	
	♠ 853		
	♥ K752		
	♦ AQ94		
	♣ Q7		

West North East South  
 ?

The player holding South's cards is about to open 1♠, and then we have a problem.

# Board Rotated by 180 Degrees (3)

When the board is rotated, the tablets suggest that the wrong hand starts the bidding. When this happens, we treat it as a call out of turn.

The tablets automatically “push the tray” when E/W has made a call, so:

- If calls were visible on the other side of the screen: The calls have been accepted, and the board is finished with no further rectification.
- If not: Any call made is cancelled, and everybody swaps tablets with their partner (do not forget to swap back before the next board!).

# Opening Leads Out of Turn (I)

The reasoning after opening leads out of turn is similar to calls out of turn: They must not be accepted, and the screenmate must try to prevent them!

However, whereas E/W virtually never push the tray, defenders often open the screens themselves. Therefore, always ask who opened the screen! If the players don't know, assume it was declarer or dummy.

- If declarer or dummy opened the screen, we have two offending sides, so the lead is accepted. No change of declarer. No options.
- If a defender opened the screen, we have only one offending side, so the Laws apply (“5 options”).

If the lead is accepted and declarer showed some of his cards, believing he was dummy – too bad!

# Opening Leads Out of Turn (2)

**Special case 1:** Both defenders made an opening lead.

- Both face up: In this case, we apply the Laws – regardless who opened the screen. The correct lead stands and the other becomes a major penalty card.
- Only one face up: That lead stands, and the other is taken back. See the previous page.
- Both face down: The correct lead stands, and the other is taken back.

**Special case 2:** A defender was wrongly informed by the opponent that he was on lead: L47EI applies (the lead is taken back, etc.).

# Remember Law 72C!

Law 72C should always be considered when an insufficient bid, a call out of turn, or an opening lead out of turn has been accepted. Note that both sides are offending, i.e.:

If the player **making** the offending call or lead could have been aware that his action might well work to his advantage, then the score should be adjusted if it actually did.

If the player **accepting** the offending call or lead could have been aware that his action might well work to his advantage, then the score should be adjusted if it actually did.

In practice, the conditions for applying L72C are rarely fulfilled in these situations.

# Inadmissible Calls

An inadmissible call, usually an inadmissible double, is easy to handle.

West	North	East	South
			2♠
X	pass	X	TD!

North pushed the tray. We cannot say that he accepted East's double on South's behalf, because an inadmissible call cannot be accepted, but the thinking is similar: Law 36A applies, the double (and anything after) is cancelled, but no further rectification.

Both sides are offending, so the cancelled calls are UI for both sides.

# Another Insufficient Bid

West	North	East	South
	1♥	1♥	TD!

The tray was pushed, so 1♥ was accepted?

Not so fast! The TD peeked into East's hand, which looked like a normal 1♠ overcall, and pointed to the 1♠ card still in East's bidding box. East leapt a metre in the air!

Remember that there is no option to accept an unintended call. Law 25A applies as if there were no screens. Therefore, East can change an unintended call until West has made a subsequent call (whether that call has been passed through the screen or not).

# Change of an Intended Call

Law 25B also applies when playing with screens. The TD should not allow a player to change an intended call, and the player's partner will often have UI. If the call was already changed, the screenmate can accept the change (but rarely will). Lead restrictions do not apply.

To apply Law 25B, we need to know when a call is considered made (with tablets it is obvious):

- Without screens: When the call is removed from the bidding box.
- With screens: When the call placed on the tray and released.
- Removing the bidding cards means “pass”, but only if it was done with an intention to pass. This is true with and without screens.

# Intended or Unintended Call?

When using bidding boxes, the approach for judging whether a call was intended or not is the same when screens are in use. Unintended calls will be infrequent because more effort is needed to make a call, but they do occur.

With tablets, unintended calls are more frequent, e.g.:

- Passing as dealer when the click was intended to select the next board.
- “Symmetry errors”, e.g., bidding 2♠ instead of 2♣, or bidding 7♠ instead of 2♠ after partner’s INT opening. Such mechanical errors would not happen with bidding boxes because players are used to bidding boxes.

Still, the TD must judge whether a call was a misclick or a genuine mistake.

# Misexplanation

W/N-S	♠ 873		
	♥ T63		
	♦ Q85		
	♣ QT62		
♠ KJT5		N	♠ 42
♥ 942			♥ K5
♦ J32	W		E
♣ 943		S	♦ T64
			♣ AKJ875
	♠ AQ96		
	♥ AQJ87		
	♦ AK97		
	♣ -		

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	INT	X
pass	2♣	3♣	

North alerted 2♣, so East asked about the meaning of the double and of 2♣ and was told “Woolsey” and “to play in partner’s minor”, respectively.

After North pushed the tray, he asked about the strength of INT and was told 10-13. “Oh, then partner’s double just shows strength.”

East shouted to South to return the tray and called the TD; she wanted to change her bid to pass. But the tray has been pushed.

Your ruling?

# Misexplanation – Ruling

Again, the fact that the tray has been pushed does not mean that it is too late to call it back.

This is a normal L2IBI case. East gets to pass – clearly the situation is different when having a strong hand behind you – and the players are told that information from the 3♣ bid is unauthorized for N-S and authorized for West.

Remember that the fact that North has apparently misbid must not be East's reason for a change of call.

# Premature Lead

W/E-W	♠ 4		
	♥ QT976543		
	♦ 96		
	♣ T8		
♠ KQ9532		N	♠ AJ
♥ K	W		E
♦ 853			♥ A2
♣ Q63		S	♦ KQJ72
			♣ K954
	♠ T876		
	♥ J8		
	♦ AT4		
	♣ AJ72		

West	North	East	South
2♦	pass	4♣	pass
4♥	pass	4♠	pass
pass			

West opened 2♦ Multi, and East's 4♣ asked him to transfer to his suit.

South led ♥J, and West put down his hand as dummy and opened the screen. However, North called the TD because the auction was still in progress!

South and West are both offending, so Law 24 applies for both. In other words, North is required to pass, and the lead stands.

We must consider Law 72C for West.

# Not Seeing the Entire Auction

West	North	East	South
(I♥)	pass	INT	

East "opened" INT, not seeing partner's I♥ opening because South had not pushed the tray very far.

Both sides are responsible for ensuring that the whole auction is visible on each side of the screen. While pushing the tray is South's task, East is responsible himself for making sure that he sees West's call. The INT bid stands, no further rectification or adjustment.

# Hesitations in the Bidding

Normally, a hesitation below 20 seconds is not considered noticeable, except if the players generally bid faster. If the TD is called from the wrong side of the screen, it takes more to establish UI, say, 45 seconds.

Suppose East calls the TD, claiming that South hesitated. If it was West who hesitated, or if South did not spend time thinking (only explaining or inquiring about system), there is no UI case to consider.

What if North could not tell who hesitated? This is debated. Our approach is to consider UI whenever South indeed hesitated, i.e., whether South spent more than 20 seconds (in the normal case), regardless what West did.

# Call from the Wrong Side

N/N-S		♠ A5		
		♥ Q975		
		♦ KJT		
		♣ AJ54		
♠ KJT873		N		♠ Q2
♥ AJ6	W		E	♥ T842
♦ 753				♦ A984
♣ Q		S		♣ K98
		♠ 964		
		♥ K3		
		♦ Q62		
		♣ T7632		

West	North	East	South
	INT	pass	pass
2♦	pass	2♠	3♣
pass	pass	3♥	X
3♠	pass	pass	X
pass	pass	pass	

2♦ was a Multi overcall, 2♠ and 3♥ pass-or-correct. 3♠X went down one.

East called the TD because North had hesitated for a long time over 3♣. It would have been better if West had called.

South agreed there had been a hesitation (the timing shows 1'20").

Four players were polled. Everybody would have passed throughout as South.

Your ruling?

# Call from the Wrong Side – Ruling

East called the TD, but it is only when there is doubt that we discard the case. When the hesitation was 1'20", South cannot have failed to notice the hesitation even if West failed to call the TD.

And South even admitted that there was a hesitation (thank you for your fair play!).

To decide whether pass is a logical alternative, we need to find players who bid as aggressively as South did, and that was not possible. We must use our judgement.

South doubled 3♥ holding Kx of the suit opposite a strong notrump. From that perspective, xxx of trumps is at least as good. Therefore, the double was allowed. Score stands.

# Whose Hesitation?

N/None	♠ J76		
	♥ J982		
	♦ 7		
	♣ KJT87		
♠ AK82		N	♠ T
♥ 6			♥ QT73
♦ AKQJ943	W		E
♣ 6			♦ T2
		S	♣ A95432
	♠ Q9543		
	♥ AK54		
	♦ 865		
	♣ Q		

West	North	East	South
	pass	pass	1♠
3NT	4♠	pass	pass
6♦	pass	pass	pass

South called the TD because it took at least a minute before the tray came back with 4♠ and pass. The TD asked the players to play on.

North did not find the trump lead, so the contract made, and the TD was called back.

It was established that North had taken more than a minute to decide on 4♠, and East had passed within 5-10 seconds. Therefore, no UI, score stands.

# Explanations

Players are supposed to do all questions and answers about agreements in writing. In practice, a lot of it is done in different ways (whispering, signs with fingers, etc.).

If players misunderstand each other and we have no reason to believe that misinformation was given, e.g., if the player demanding an explanation misheard, then we indeed rule no misinformation and score stands.

“Asking through the screen” is *never* allowed (until the hand is over). Not even when a player gets the explanation, “we have an agreement, but I don’t remember it”, or if a player is certain that the explanation was different on the other side of the screen.

# Alerting Procedure

- Players alert both their own calls and partner's calls, also when playing with tablets (self-alerting only works online).
- Nobody follows the correct alerting procedure. This is fine. The important part is whether the screenmate sees the alert.
- When a player says that he has not seen the alert: Ask the screenmate if he checked if the alert was noticed, e.g., by seeking eye-contact. The answer will almost always be “no”!
- With tablets, all alerts are made on the tablet, so we know for a fact whether a call was alerted and whether this happened before or after the opponent's call.

# Different Explanations

W/None	♠ 6		
	♥ QJ853		
	♦ J83		
	♣ T973		
♠ QJ92		N	♠ T743
♥ T42			♥ K9
♦ K75	W		E
♣ K65		S	♦ T9642
			♣ QJ
	♠ AK85		
	♥ A76		
	♦ AQ		
	♣ A842		

1♣ was Polish. No alert of either 1♣ or 1♦ from North. In that case, 1♥ showed either ♠+♦ or ♥+♣. However, when 1♣ was Polish, 1♥ was natural. North alerted everything when the tray came back with 2♥, then East called the TD.

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	pass	1♣
pass	1♦	1♥	X
2♥	X	XX	pass
2♠	pass	pass	3NT
pass	pass	pass	

The TD instructed the players to carry on. 3NT made nine tricks. East called the TD back because he would not have bid 1♥ if correctly informed, after which N-S might get to 4♥-1. Your ruling?

# Different Explanations – Ruling

After receiving the alerts, East told the TD that playing on made no sense. Regardless, the players must play it out. Maybe there turns out to be no damage. In the event, East's SOS redoubled saved E-W when N-S did not double 2♠ for penalties.

The damage is rather indirect. East's 1♥ bid with West's subsequent raise was the reason why N-S could not find their heart fit.

If East had received alerts from North, we assume that he would have inquired about the meaning of 1♣ or 1♦, and he would have passed. After that, who knows what would have happened. Adjusted score: A-/A+, unless E-W got a better score from 3NT=.

# Not Agreed

N/E-W	♠ 9842		
	♥ 3		
	♦ 32		
	♣ K96532		
♠ AQ76	N	♠ T53	
♥ K987	W	♥ T652	
♦ K94	E	♦ QT65	
♣ AQ	S	♣ 74	
	♠ KJ		
	♥ AQJ4		
	♦ AJ87		
	♣ JT8		

West	North	East	South
	pass	pass	INT
X	2♠	pass	pass
pass			

2♠ was not agreed. North thought it was "system on", i.e., transfer to clubs, South thought it was natural.

The play: ♥5 to the ♥J and ♥K, the ♣A cashed, the ♣Q to the ♣K, a spade to the ♠J and ♠Q, a heart to the ♥Q, the ♠K ducked, a club ruffed by West, and now the contract made.

West felt misinformed, though he was not proud of not noticing that East discarded on the third club too.

Your ruling?

# Not Agreed – Ruling (I)

When the two partners have each their opinion about the meaning, a common approach is to “rotate the screen”. There are two practical advantages with this approach:

- Easier to judge what would happen without the infraction.
- We make sure that the non-offending side is sufficiently compensated.

What happens if West is told “2♠ shows clubs”? Surely he will not play clubs, and then the contract will very likely be down two.

So the ruling should be down two. Or should it?

# Not Agreed – Ruling (2)

L75D3 says, “if the Director determines that the call has no agreed meaning, he awards an adjusted score based upon the likely outcome had the opponents been so informed.”

In this case, N-S have never discussed the continuations after INT-(X), so the correct explanation of the partnership agreements is “we have not agreed whether 2♠ is natural or a transfer to clubs”.

This is more difficult to judge. West will have to guess what to play for. A poll is required.

# Cameras

When cameras are in use, watch the videos when in doubt about the facts.

- Was there a hesitation? (also in the play)
- Was a card played? (but a preliminary decision is needed at the table).
- What happened when a claim was made? Who claimed?
- How did the play go?
- What was the final contract? (Yes, this has also happened)
- Who was responsible for slow play? (use tablet timings and replay at 3x)
- Et cetera.

# Summary

- Insufficient bids, calls out of turn, and inadmissible calls are “accepted” if passed through the screen when both sides are offending (but an inadmissible call must be cancelled).
- A similar reasoning applies to opening leads out of turn.
- If there is only one offending side, the laws apply as if without screens.
- L25 on intended and unintended calls applies as if without screens.
- The same applies to L21B on misinformation.
- In hesitation cases, check if the TD call was from the right side.
- In misinformation cases, often only one player is misinformed.