

Hastings Bridge Club

A Guide to Ethics and Etiquette

The game of Duplicate Bridge is governed by an internationally recognised set of laws. These are published worldwide and the current version that governs our game is “The Laws of Duplicate Bridge 2007”. Laws 73 and 74 are the ones that specifically cover Ethics and Etiquette. Laws 90 and 91 deal with the powers that Directors have when infractions of Laws 73 and 74 are drawn to their attention. This document is intended to remind all members of Hastings Bridge Club exactly what these laws say, and how they have been further interpreted by NZ Bridge. Hastings Bridge Club urges its members to become familiar with the detail of laws 73 and 74 and to model their conduct at the bridge table so as to follow both the spirit and letter of these Laws.

Law 73 – Communication

As we are all aware, when we communicate with other people in life the words we use form only a small part of the overall message; a huge amount of information is passed through the way we say and do things, the manner in which we speak, whether we hesitate, the body language we use, whether we smile or frown, and this list could go on for quite a while...

In Bridge communication is only permitted between partners in very specific and tightly defined ways. Law 73 defines the methods that partners may use – Authorised information – and seeks to outlaw most of the additional communications tools we take for granted in everyday life – hesitation, gestures, body language, changes of emphasis – to name but a few. Law 73 reminds us that communication effected by anything other than the bids we make and the cards we play runs the risk of conveying Unauthorised information to our partners which may result in our opponents being disadvantaged.

Laws 73A&B sets out the overarching principles defining what is and is not allowed in terms of communication between partners.

Reference	What the law says	How this should be interpreted
73.A	Appropriate Communications between Partners	
73.A.1	Communication between partners during the auction and play shall be effected only by means of calls and plays.	This is further defined in the NZ Bridge manual (page B14) During the bidding and play of a deal, Players may properly gain information from: (a) admissible calls – no bid (pass), double, redouble and bids of 1 to 7 inclusive in the five denominations: clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades and no trumps;

		<p>(b) cards properly played to each trick; (c) alerts by an opponent; (d) explanations by an opponent in response to an enquiry concerning the meaning of a conventional call.</p> <p>Information conveyed by any other means is unauthorised information, and, if it influences the subsequent bidding or play, will require an adjusted score.</p>
73.A.2	<p>Calls and plays should be made without undue emphasis. Mannerism or inflection, and without undue hesitation or haste. But Regulating Authorities may require mandatory pauses, as on the first round of the auction, or after a skip bid warning, or on the first trick.</p>	<p>The use of Stop Cards is authorised by NZ Bridge for all A Point Tournaments and is strongly recommended for use in all other Tournaments.</p>
73.B	Inappropriate Communication between Partners	
73.B.1	<p>Partners shall not communicate by means such as the manner in which calls or plays are made, extraneous remarks or gestures, questions asked or not asked of the opponents or alerts and explanations given or not given to them.</p>	<p>Communicate only through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently written bids • Consistently played cards
73.B.2	<p>The gravest possible offence is for a partnership to exchange information through pre-arranged methods of communication other than those sanctioned by these Laws.</p>	

Laws 73.C,D,E&F provide further information and guidelines

73.C	Player Receives Unauthorised Information from Partner.
	When a player has available to him unauthorised information from his partner, such as from a remark, question, explanation, gesture, mannerism, undue emphasis, inflection, haste or hesitation, an unexpected alert or failure to alert, he must carefully avoid taking any advantage from that unauthorised information
73.D	Variations in Tempo or Manner
73.D.1	It is desirable, although not always required, for players to maintain steady tempo and unvarying manner. However players should be particularly careful when variations may work to the benefit of their side. Otherwise, unintentionally to vary the tempo or manner in which a call or play is made is not in itself an infraction. Inferences from such variation may be drawn only by an opponent, and at his own risk.
73.D.2	A player may not attempt to mislead an opponent by means of a remark or gesture, by haste or hesitancy of a call or play (as in hesitating before playing a singleton), the manner in which a call or play is made, or by any purposeful deviation from correct procedure.
73.E	Deception
	A player may appropriately attempt to deceive an opponent through a call or play(so long as the deception is not protected by concealed partnership understanding or experience
73.F	Violation of Proprieties
	When a violation of Proprieties in this law results in damage to an innocent opponent, if the Director determines that an innocent player has drawn a false inference from a remark, manner, tempo or the like, of an opponent who has no demonstrable bridge reason for the action, and who could have known, at the time of the action, that the action could work in his benefit, the director shall award an adjusted score.

Law 74 – Conduct and Etiquette

Law 74A provides general overarching guidelines for the conduct of players generally at the table, and during the auction and play.

Reference	What the law says	How this should be interpreted
74.A	Proper Attitude	
74.A.1	A player shall maintain a courteous attitude at all times.	<p>This means being courteous and polite to everyone in the club at all times. Everyone includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your partner • Your opponents • The director • Caddies, helpers, spectators and visitors
74.A.2	A player should carefully avoid any remark or action that might cause annoyance or embarrassment to another player or might interfere with their enjoyment of the game.	<p>There are many things that cause embarrassment and discomfort to others at the bridge table. The following list contains some of the things that commonly occur. It is by no means comprehensive. You should not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criticise your partner at the table • Argue with your partner at the table • Criticise your opponents • Provide unsolicited advice to your partner at the table • Provide unsolicited advice to your opponents at table
74.A.3	Every player should follow uniform and correct procedure in calling and playing.	<p>It is important to develop a consistent and repeatable style of writing on the bidding pad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example the diagonal stroke denoting a pass should look roughly identical on every occasion it is written by the same player. <p>It is equally important to develop a consistent manner of playing the cards – particularly in defence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be no perceptible difference in the way a card is played whether it is to the first trick, final trick or to any trick in between, whether leading or following. Your partner should not be able glean any unauthorised information from your manner in playing each card.

Law 74B provides specific guidance on etiquette. All of these are self-explanatory.

74.B	Etiquette As a matter of courtesy a player should refrain from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paying insufficient attention to the game.• Making gratuitous comments during the auction or play.• Detaching a card before it is his turn to play.• Prolonging play unnecessarily (as in playing on although he knows that all of the tricks are surely his) for the purpose of disconcerting an opponent.• Summoning and addressing the Director in a manner that is discourteous to him, or to other contestants.
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Law 74C provides some common examples of violations of procedure. These are also self-explanatory.

74.C	Violations of procedure The following are examples of violations of procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using different designations for the same call• Indicating approval or disapproval of a call or play• Indicating the expectation or intention of winning or losing a trick that has not been completed• Commenting or acting during the auction or play so as to call attention to a significant occurrence, or to the number of tricks still required for success.• Looking intently at any other player during the auction and play, or at another players cards or of observing the place from which he draws a card (but it is appropriate to act on information acquired by unintentionally seeing an opponent's card• Showing an obvious lack of further interest in a deal (as by folding one's cards)• Varying the normal tempo of bidding or play for the purpose of disconcerting an opponent• Leaving the table needlessly before the round is called
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Law 90 – Procedural Penalties

Reference	What the law says	How this should be interpreted
90.A	<p>Director’s Authority The Director, in addition to implementing the rectifications in these Laws, may also assess procedural penalties for any offence that unduly delays or obstructs the game. Inconveniencies other contestants, violates correct procedure, or requires the award of an adjusted score at another table.</p>	<p>The Director has wide ranging powers to ensure that bridge sessions run smoothly and in accordance with the Laws. Hastings Bridge Club expects our members to comply with the spirit and the letter of Laws and in particular Law 74 and will encourage our directors to apply procedural penalties if this Law is ignored.</p>
90.B	<p>Offences Subject to Procedural Penalty The following are examples of offences subject to procedural penalty (but the offences are not limited to these):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. arrival of a contestant after the specified starting time 2. unduly slow play by a contestant 3. discussion of the bidding, play or result of a board which may be overheard at another table 4. unauthorized comparison of scores with another contestant 5. touching or handling of cards belonging to another player (see law 7 (and law 45)) 6. placing one or more cards in an incorrect pocket of the board 7. errors in procedure (such as failure to count cards in one hand, playing the wrong board, etc) that requires an adjusted score for any contestant 8. failure to comply promptly with tournament regulations or with the instructions of the Director. 	<p>These examples are largely self-explanatory. But this is not an exhaustive list. Some of the examples of bad behaviour outlined in Hastings Bridge Club Ethics and Etiquette policy (reproduced here below) are also considered to be offences which may attract a procedural penalty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badgering, rudeness, insinuations, intimidation, profanity, threats or violence. • Negative comments concerning opponents’ or partner’s play or bidding • Constant and gratuitous lessons and analyses at the table • Loud and disruptive arguing with a director’s ruling

Law 91 Penalize or Suspend

Be aware that the Director has the power to suspend or disqualify.

91.A	Director's Powers In performing his duty to maintain order and discipline, the Director is empowered to assess disciplinary penalties in points or to suspend a contestant for the current session or any part thereof. The Director's decision under this clause is final and may not be overruled by an appeals committee (see law 93B3).
91.B	Right to disqualify The Director is empowered to disqualify a contestant for cause subject to approval by the Tournament Organiser.