

Introduction to Duplicate Bridge - Procedures & Etiquette

Revised: July 2, 2019

Etobicoke Bridge Centre

Arrival

- Arrive 15 – 30 minutes before game time, so you have time to settle in, perhaps discuss a few things with your partner. If you are going to be late, call the director or club manager.
- Register with the director, or equivalent fee taker. Most ACBL duplicate games cost between \$9 and \$11. If neither you nor your partner wish the extra burden of scoring, ask to play EW. Note, however, that best is to force yourself to learn how to score (essential eventually) by playing N on occasion
- Take your seat no later than 5 minutes before game time. This allows the director to verify the total table count.

General Advice

- We all want to have a little "fun" while playing, ie, a humorous quip here or there. However, you must be careful not to impart any unauthorized information. For example, "No one is going to call me a wuss after this bid". Perhaps this may get a laugh, but you have just told everyone you are making an aggressive bid, not cool. Good players know what you can say and what you can't. New players do not. My advice; if you are not sure if a comment will be appropriate, don't make it.

Play Mechanics

- The director will put your boards on the table. Typically you will play from 2-4 boards at each table (1 round), Open game sessions are 24 -28 boards in total. Novice games run from 15 - 24
- The cards are contained in a "board", which shows the 4 directions. The board also indicates who is the dealer, and what the vulnerability is. Vulnerability is shown by the word, or by red coloring vs green for not vulnerable.
- If you are North, you have extra responsibilities
 - Be sure the boards are all correct directionally
 - No one else is to touch the boards, that is North's job (but South may assist)
 - You must enter the score into the BridgeMate when the hand is completed
 - After a new round is called, you can help the director by passing your boards (in the correct order) to the next lower table
- Sort your cards into suits
 - Some people like to sort suits red,black,red,black
 - Count your cards, **especially on the first round**, to make sure you have 13.
- Time to start the bidding, check who is the Dealer
- Bids are made by pulling the desired bid from your bidding box, and placing it on the table, facing your partner. When making a 2nd bid, place it to the left of the first bid, so both bids can be easily seen.
- Things that you should not do when making bids



- Do not hover your hand over the box as you decide what to bid.
 - Correct: Make up your mind, then move your hand to the box and pull the bid
- Do not make any comments about your bid, such as "well, I am not sure but here goes"
- You may ask questions about a bid to the partner of the player who made the bid. You may do so only when it is your turn to bid.
- When there are 3 passes in a row, the auction ends, and a final contract has been reached. All players should put their bids back in their boxes.
 - Note, do not pick up your bids, implying the auction is over, unless you are the 3rd pass. Only the 3rd passer may tap on their cards or pick them up, to indicate a pass. All others must play the pass card and let go of your card. If you start picking up your cards w the 2nd last pass, you are "telling" the last player to pass, which is wrong. It is not your place to decide this, even when their bid is "obvious".
- On the back of your convention card is a scoring sheet. This is where you put in the info about each hand. Critical info includes the contract, number made, and the score, be it a plus for you or a minus.
 - It is recommended that everyone fill out the personal score sheet, and one of each pair MUST do so. This is because the director may have to look at your sheet to fix a mistake on a traveler.
 - Some people like to estimate how they did on each hand, using some number system like 0 to 5 or -2 to +2
- As soon as the auction ends, everyone but the leader can fill out the contract on their score sheet. The leader must lead first, then write this.
- The opening lead is made face-down. This helps in two ways. Partner may ask questions about the bidding after you have led. Also, if the wrong player has led, this is easily rectified since the card has not been seen.
 - Ask your partner "Any questions"
 - If no, or after partner asks her questions, turn up your lead
- Dummy now is placed on the table, about a card away from the edge of the table. Trump must go on the declarer's left. Other suits can go in any order, most prefer alternating red and black suits. Be sure the cards are well-spaced so that everyone can easily see them. Proper etiquette is for the declarer to "thank" partner, once the dummy is on the table (even if you don't like what you see). From this point on, the dummy only plays cards as directed by declarer, nothing else. No one but the dummy may play/touch the dummy's cards
- A review of the bidding may be asked by each player before their first play.
- Declarer can call a card in a number of ways, the safest being number and suit, ie, K of Spades. However other calls are allowed
 - "Play small", "play low", "play"=lowest, "spade", "ruff it", "ruff with X", "play high", "up"
 - If you are continuing to play the same suit from dummy, calling only a number means in that suit
- After a trick is completed, place the card in front of face-down, facing the direction of who won the trick.
- You may ask to see the trick just played only if your still face-up. Once a player places their card face-



you,
card is
down

- on their trick stack, you may only look at your own card, and only until the next trick is started
- You may confirm with partner that he is out of a suit when he does not follow suit. ie, "No clubs partner?"
- When the hand is completed, do NOT fold your cards right away. The declarer or defender suggests the final result, ie, Made 4? Once there is agreement on the result, and not until then, may you shuffle and fold your cards together and return them to the tray (board).
- North now scores the hand on the electronic score pad. After North is done, they must show the result to one of the opponents for verification. You may **quickly** look at other results to see how you compared. Some clubs choose not to show other results as they feel it slows down the game.

Scoring a Game

- You are competing against the other pairs in your direction, who hold the same cards as you and your partner. If you bid 4S and make 5, while everyone else makes 4, you get a top board. Specifically, you get a "matchpoint" for each pair that you beat, and a half a matchpoint for each pair that you tied. Your matchpoints for all X hands are added up, then this total is printed as a % score, 50% being average.

ACBL SHORT TRAVELING SCORE
(Mitchell or Howell)

North player keeps score.
Enter E-W Pair No.

Board No. 6

N-S Pair No.	Contract	BY	Made	Down	SCORE		N-S Match Points	E-W Pair No.	E-W Match Points
					N-S	E-W			
1	3N	N	5		460			6	
2	3N	S		2		100		1	
3	3N	N	4		430			3	
4	4S	N	6		480			5	
5	4S	N	4		420			7	
6	4S	S	5		450			2	
7	4S	S		1		50		4	
8									
9									

During the Game

- Dummy should not use this low-level job to excuse herself from the table, the defenders should not have to play the dummy. If you cannot cross your legs till the end of the round, call the director to see if they can play the dummy for a minute or so.
- Take snack breaks only between rounds, and only if you are ahead of the pace.
- Do not discuss hands with (or in front of) anyone but your partner, and keep these at low volume
- Your convention card must remain face-down, so scores cannot be seen by opponents

After the game ends

- One of the biggest excitements in bridge is getting your result right after the game. The director will read out the names of all those teams that placed, which is the top 40% of the pairs.
 - You can take a hand record, which shows all the hands you just played. The small box is a matrix of the contracts that the computer, playing seeing all the hands, can make. Be careful, it is not necessarily best bridge, as the computer drops stiff Kings offside.
 - You may also ask for a paper “summary”, which shows your own contracts and results and match points earned for each hand.
 - Note that both of the above are available online at most clubs, usually posted within an hour of the end of the game. Also online will be the overall results.

Convention Cards

- Each player/pair is to have a convention card filled out (exception is a novice game). This shows what systems the pair plays, and also touches on card play guidelines. In an open game, both players must have identical convention cards. The sole purpose of a convention card is for the opponents to look at, you are actually not allowed to look at your own card while playing.



Announcements and Transfers

- “Announcements” are immediate explanations of a bid, the only example for now is as soon as partner makes an opening bid of 1NT, partner must immediately say the range, usually “15-17”
- A “transfer” bid is one where a bid instructs partner to bid the next suit. The partner of the player who made the transfer bid says “transfer” as soon as the bid is made (and before the next player bids).

The Director

- The director’s main function is to ensure the game runs efficiently and fairly. Do not hesitate to call the director if you need a ruling or are simply unsure about something. The proper way to do this is to say “Director **please**” in a clear, loud, friendly voice and put your hand up. When the director arrives at your table, the person who called should calmly explain the situation needing assistance. Allow the director to elicit the necessary info, and make his/her decision. It is paramount that everyone remain calm and allow the director to do their job. If you don’t understand anything ask, or at the least, ask later.

Note, there is nothing wrong with calling the director, this does not make you a bad person! If someone objects to you politely calling the director, that is **their problem**, not yours.

Zero-tolerance means that if, for any reason, you are uncomfortable at the table, you should call the director, to explain this. Most players (especially new ones) are not willing to do this ,and it means

that someone who is unpleasant continues to be so, as no one will stand up to the "bridge bully". A good director will deal with this and at the very least, note the offender, for future reference.

The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL)

- The ACBL is the governing body for duplicate bridge in North America. There are over 1700 clubs, with over 200,000 members. Your main connection with the ACBL is the recording of master points and receiving the monthly bulletin.
- A Master point is the basic unit of award one gets for success at duplicate bridge. You can win Master points at various types of games
 1. Local club games; In a regular Mitchell movement (NS stay in the same seat, EW move around the room), at the open level, you get 0.1 MPs for each table in play. So, if you come first EW in a 12-table open game, you get 1.2 MPs. If you play in limited games, ie, 0-200 pts, the awards are lower.
 2. Tournaments; There are tournaments you can reach by car about every other weekend. A sectional tournament runs Saturday & Sunday, typically running pairs games on Saturday and Swiss teams on Sunday. A regional is longer, typically Tuesday to Sunday, gives higher Master Point awards and is worth considering as a road trip.
There are 3 North American Bridge Championships (NABCs), that are rotated around big cities. Toronto seems to host one every 8 years or so, in the summer . Flying to a NABC, to stay and play for a week or so is a true bridge player's idea of a fun holiday. Every day a lesson (or two) is offered to novice players by expert players/teachers. The bigger the type of event, the more the master point awards. All tournaments offer games for novice/intermediate players, such as the 199er events.
 3. Online: This new forum is playing in tournaments on the computer. The main site is called Bridge Base Online.
- Now, Master Points are automatically recorded on the club's computer. Then a report is sent by the club owner to the ACBL, so your points are updated monthly. You will see your current MPs on the Bulletin, which is the ACBL's monthly magazine. Also, there is a novice section in the bulletin, you should read these articles each month. You can also see your MPs online at acbl.org; My ACBL. There are various levels one can achieve as you amass points. The most significant level is becoming a Life Master, which now requires 500 total points, which include certain number of coloured points, ie gold, silver, red. Regular points are black.
- It costs about \$60Cdn a year to be a member of the ACBL. This gets you the monthly bulletin, recording of your Master Points, and reduced fees (\$3-\$4) at tournaments.

Keeping pace

- The speed of play varies according to the type of game. In an open game, each hand is to be played in 7.5 minutes. In a novice game, this can be 10 minutes per hand. It is your responsibility to keep up. If you are constantly late finishing, the director will takes steps to speed you up, ranging from verbal encouragement to pulling a board to catch you up. If you are behind too

much, just play faster, or rush one hand. Remember, the director is just doing his job so others don't have to wait too much.

- A great way to save precious time is to learn how to claim. A **claim** is a statement that you have the rest of the tricks, or have all but a specified trick ("I have the rest except you get the A of trumps"). Draw trumps before you claim, or say "Drawing trumps, the rest are mine". A claim saves your opponents from useless thinking, and saves time, allowing more time on harder hands. If you are not sure you have a claim, keep playing.

(Answers at page bottom)

1. The round has been called, but it is okay to have a 30 second discussion of the hand just finished _____
 2. It is okay to say (circle)
 - a. Well played partner
 - b. Good thing they did not find the club switch
 - c. To Opponent; Would you be interested in a comment about your play?
 3. Dummy should play a card only when instructed to by declarer _____
 4. Once the last card is played, fold up your cards and return them to the duplicate board _____
 5. The first lead is made face down so you can change your mind if the dummy is not down yet _____
 6. If the round is called and you have not started a board, it is a Late Play or not played at all _____
 7. A convention card is to remind you what systems you are playing _____
 8. If there is a violation at the table, best to say "Director" _____
 9. After the bidding has ended, the bid cards go away, and everyone writes the contract on their personal score sheet _____
 10. Once the dummy hand is put down, the dummy should play from 2 small cards in dummy right away, since that is your obvious play _____
 11. If the round has not been called, and you are finished your hands, you may go to the washroom or get a snack _____
 12. If you have been behind for 2 or more rounds, you must intentionally play to catch up _____
 13. It is fine to scold your partner for a bad play but never your opponents _____
- Bonus: According to the owner of the Etobicoke BC, what is the most under-rated card in the deck (2...Ace) _____

Score / 13

WHAT A GAME!!

Answers: 1. F 2. ac 3. T 4. F 5. F 6. T 7. F
8. F (Please) 9. F 10. F 11. T 12. T 13. F,
Bonus. Ten of course