

Good behaviour requires both social manners and proper bridge ethics. *A guide to fairer play at Bath BC tables.*

Bath BC demands **good manners** at the table from all players. We want a friendly, welcoming atmosphere so that we can all enjoy our bridge. Directors and the Committee are committed to achieving this goal. We've all seen bad manners in action:

- STOP** We fail to greet and thank opponents.
- STOP** We carry on our discussions with partner.
- STOP** We cause delays by recording contracts.
- STOP** We discuss outcomes before the end of the round.
- STOP** We call the director in an accusing manner.
- STOP** We gloat over our success or the demise of our opponents.

Players' behaviour can also be affected by the **poor bridge ethics** of others - you and me. Directors will make allowances for those not familiar with the laws' requirements, but most experienced club players should know better.

In the bidding language we have 5 denominations, 7 levels, plus pass, double and redouble. **There are no dialects, no sighs, no add-ons, no bidding-box fumbblings and no changes of timing - slow or quick.** It is cheating if you do any of these things deliberately. However, we all fall short inadvertently from time to time, and if this happens partners must not take advantage: *they are required to make a call that the majority of the room would make* – even though this might not be what they had intended to call. Clearly if you hesitate and pass you were thinking of bidding: *your partner must not bid using the knowledge that you have extra points.* This doesn't mean you can't take time to think: if your partner has offered you a choice of bids (3N or 4H; 3H or 4H) then of course you can take time to decide. But then it is your decision and not for partner to correct afterwards.

Don't ask questions about unalerted bids – you are in effect saying 'I have that suit'. Bids below 3NT are natural unless alerted or announced.

Don't ask questions about any bid unless the answer might affect your call. Instead, ask for a review of the bidding at the end of the auction.

Alerts are for the benefit of your opponents. They are entitled to a full explanation of your system – at the right time. If you had forgotten the system, the alert or explanation should not wake you up. *You must bid on as though you had not been reminded of the correct meaning.*

When defending, you are entitled to think at any point during the contract, *providing this is in order to solve a problem and not to deceive an opponent or to inform partner.* The best time to think is when dummy goes down. If possible plan your plays as defence and declarer then. Try to follow to tricks at a constant speed, not too fast and not too slow. If you pause *during* a trick you are saying you have a high card you might play. If you don't have such a card and you pause then you are illegally deceiving your opponent and the director may adjust the result. Your partner must not 'use' the delay – that is, play using the information that you have that high card.

You should not look at your partner, only at your cards. Mannerisms are hard to conceal sometimes, particularly when you expect partner to lead back to your singleton! If you become aware in such a way – don't lead it back!

Finally, the Director is not some sort of 'punisher', but is there to sort out any difficulties you may have. So if you need help or an irregularity occurs, *call the Director.*

Trevor Purches, Chief Club TD
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If you would like to know more about any of the issues addressed above, please feel free to contact the CCTD or any director.