

Who's Directing This Table?

Good Table Etiquette and the Role of the Tournament Director

One of the pleasures of StepBridge is that players from many different backgrounds and experience levels can enjoy competitive bridge together. Every day we welcome new members who are learning not only the game itself but also the procedures used in online tournaments.

Occasionally situations arise where an opponent forgets to alert an artificial bid, provides an incomplete explanation, or appears to deviate from their system card. While these situations can be frustrating, how we respond is just as important as the original mistake.

Assume an honest mistake

The overwhelming majority of procedural errors are exactly that—mistakes. Many players are still learning the online alerting procedures or simply forget in the heat of the auction.

A calm reminder is far more likely to improve future behaviour than criticism.

Let the Tournament Director do the directing

If you believe there has been an irregularity:

- Ask politely for an explanation if required.
- If the matter cannot be resolved, call the Tournament Director.
- Once the TD is present, allow them to manage the situation.
- Avoid debating the issue with your opponents during the auction.

The TD's role is to investigate impartially and apply the Laws and StepBridge Regulations consistently.

Resist the temptation to become the "Bridge Police"

Experienced players are invaluable to our club and naturally notice when something appears to be amiss. We appreciate members who care about maintaining good standards.

However, there is an important distinction between **identifying a possible irregularity** and **trying to enforce the Laws yourself**.

If you think something is wrong:

- Ask politely if you require an explanation.
- Call the Tournament Director if necessary.
- Then allow the TD to investigate and deal with the matter.

The Tournament Director will determine the facts, consider any explanations, assess whether any damage has occurred and, if necessary, apply an appropriate ruling.

Well-intentioned attempts to correct opponents, debate procedures or continue discussing the issue at the table can unintentionally increase tension and distract everyone from enjoying the game.

Your job is to play bridge. Our job is to apply the Laws.

Rely on the system card

Remember that opponents are expected to play the methods described on their system card.

Sometimes a player forgets their partnership agreement or simply makes an accidental call. Not every unusual bid or unexpected result is evidence of misinformation.

If, after the board has been completed, you believe misinformation or a failure to alert has damaged your side, the Tournament Director will happily consider whether an adjusted score is appropriate.

Keep the atmosphere friendly

Bridge is competitive, but it should also be enjoyable.

A courteous question is always preferable to a confrontation. Most problems can be resolved quickly when everyone remains calm and respectful.

Today's opponents may well be tomorrow's partners.

We all share responsibility

Experienced players play an important role in helping newer members learn StepBridge procedures.

A friendly explanation or gentle reminder often achieves far more than criticism.

By treating each other with patience and respect, we help make StepBridge a welcoming club where everyone can continue to learn and enjoy the game.

"Good bridge isn't just about playing the cards well. It's about treating opponents, partners and Tournament Directors with the same courtesy and respect we hope to receive ourselves."

Remember

✓ *Ask politely.*

✓ *Call the Tournament Director if needed.*

✓ *Allow the TD to manage the situation.*

✓ *Complete the board without confrontation.*

✓ *If you believe you have been damaged, ask the TD to review the board after play.*