

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2007 LAWS OF DUPLICATE BRIDGE

The Laws are designed to define correct procedure and to provide an adequate remedy when there is a departure from correct procedure. They are primarily designed not as punishment for irregularities but rather for the rectification of situations where non-offenders may otherwise be damaged. Players should be ready to accept gracefully any rectification or adjusted score awarded by the Director.

There have been many developments in duplicate bridge over the last ten years and there are no signs that these changes have stopped. The task that confronted the Drafting Committee was to ensure the Laws were updated so as to cope with past changes and to establish a framework that can cope with future developments.

Directors have been given considerably more discretionary powers. There are fewer automatic penalties: they are replaced by the concept of rectification of a situation that unfortunately has arisen. Bridge is played in different ways in different countries so the Laws give more power to Regulating Authorities to make controlling regulations. This is particularly so in the area of Special Partnership Understandings, in itself a new concept. Artificial bidding is a fact of life so an attempt has been made to solve problems, or to allow Regulating Authorities to solve problems, that arise when something goes wrong.

We have tried to clarify the areas of responsibility of Regulating Authorities, Tournament Organizers and Directors and it is made clear that certain responsibilities may be either assigned or delegated.

Many headings present in the 1997 Laws have been removed in the interests of streamlining their appearance. Where headings remain they do not limit the application of any law, nor indeed does the omission of a cross-reference.

Established usage has been retained in regard to "may" do (failure to do it is not wrong), "does" (establishes correct procedure without suggesting that violation be penalized) "should" do (failure to do it is an infraction jeopardizing the infractor's rights but not often penalized), "shall" do (a violation will incur a procedural penalty more often than not), "must" do (the strongest word, a serious matter indeed). Again, "must not" is the strongest prohibition, "shall not" is strong but "may not" is stronger – just short of "must not".

For the avoidance of doubt, this Introduction and the Definitions that follow form part of the Laws. Finally, unless the context clearly dictates otherwise, the singular includes the plural and the masculine includes the feminine, and vice versa.