

NEW REGULATIONS

Announcing is now part of the ABF and QBA regulations, and the rules apply at all club sessions and congresses from 1st August 2013. This means that whenever your partner opens 1C or 1NT, you must make an announcement to the table.

For 1C openings, the announcement depends on your system. For natural systems like Standard American, simply state the number of clubs it promises e.g. "2 plus clubs" or "3 plus clubs". For Precision players, state "strong, 16 plus" to show the minimum point count.

For 1NT openings, it is just the range that should be announced e.g. "14 - 16" or "15 -18".

It is important that no further information is included in your announcement. The opponents can ask if they need to know.

It is also important not to make unsolicited announcements about other bids like a 1D Precision opening, or a 1NT overcall or 2NT opening bid. They will be alerted if necessary, and the opponents can ask.

An announced bid does not need to be alerted.

In the next few months, I would encourage players to give the opener's partner a gentle reminder if they fail to make an announcement required under the new rules.

UNINTENDED BIDS

If you find you have made a wrong bid, you are not necessarily stuck with it. In some cases, the Director can allow a cost - free correction under Law 25A -

Unintended Calls.

What sort of mistake can be considered "unintended"?

For it to be considered unintended, it must have never been in the player's mind to make that bid. If they opened 1NT with a 16 count then suddenly remembered they're playing a weak NT, that's not unintended - they meant to write 1NT at the time they wrote it. Neither is it unintended if they made a bid because they misread partner's bid, or didn't see RHO's intervening bid, or miscounted their points, or had a spade in with their clubs.

Typically, unintended calls result from a disconnect between brain and hand.

The brain said "write 1H" but the pen wrote "1S", and the first the player knows about it is when he sees what was written on the bidding pad. A recent example I've seen: partner opens 1H, RHO overcalls 1S and the player intends to write 4H as they have a weak freak with 5 hearts, but writes 4S. Another example: a player passes in first seat with 16 HCP because he heard a player at the neighbouring table say the word "pass" at the precise moment he was about to write 1NT. Both these could be corrected under Law 25A.

A devastating example of when a correction would probably not be allowed: assume you have agreed spades and initiate an ace -ask with 4NT and get the answer of 5D showing one ace. You decide there's no chance of slam and plan to sign off in 5S, but you pass instead. It is likely in this case you were thinking "pass" but at that instant you drew that oblique line you had forgotten that the last suit to be bid by the partnership wasn't the agreed suit.

In most cases, the director will take you away from your table, and ask what you had intended to bid, and ask you where you think the bid you made came from. They will make their decision based on the facts -it will not be relevant to them whether or not your pen left the paper. Nor will it be open – and -shut if you didn't realise the problem immediately, though a sudden realisation is more likely to reflect the inadvertent nature of the bid.

It's important to remember that just because your RHO has subsequently bid, your fate is not necessarily sealed. An unintended call can be corrected at any time up until the time your partner makes a call.