



EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

9th EBL Main Tournament Directors Course
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Bad Honnef – Germany

PEOPLE AND TECHNIQUE

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People and Technique

Presented by Rui Lopes Marques

9th Main Tournament Directors Course
Bad Honnef, January 2013



Tournament Directors

Generically, what makes a good TD?

What do we exist for?

Tournament Directors

Create value through

PROACTIVE

CUSTOMER

SERVICE

Preparation

- Content of a TD's bag:
 - Laws, regulations
 - Notepad
 - Pens, pencils
 - Scotch tape
 - Staples
 - Paper
 - Batteries
 - Pills (headache, stomach, ...)
 - Band Aid
 - Stain remover
 - Paper towels
 - Scissors
 - Locker
 - Energy bard
 - Markers
 - Electrical plugs and adapters
 - ... (whatever else that might fit)

Preparation

- Physical fitness is of main importance
- Adequate clothing
- Shoes, socks (our best friends)
- Walking technique
- Mental fitness:
 - Focus
 - Technical preparation
 - Availability

One thousand roles

- Carpenter
- Counselor
- Software engineer
- Hardware specialist
- Psychologist
- Lawyer
- Judge
- Cleaner
- Paramedic
- Controller
- Animator
- Maestro
- Negotiator
- ...etc

Point of view of a player

- **Good qualities**
 - Calmness
 - Good judge of character
 - Neutrality
 - Fairness
 - Sympathy
 - Confidence
 - **Bad qualities**
 - Boredom
 - Starstruck
 - Lack of compassion
 - Judgmental
 - Watchdog
- *Most importantly: A director needs to be “there”, near your table or in line of sight, so that you can summon him easily*

The human side - Players

- It is very important to create a positive environment for players
- We are not the main actors, the players are
- Be there, without being there
- Be calm, assertive, zen-like...

The human side - Players

- Judge the same, act differently when required
 - Protect, teach, coach
 - Discipline, tame, steer
- Don't “sleep on the job”
- Earn the respect from the players

Staff, Spectators

- Make spectators feel welcome and appreciated
- Be helpful
- Caddies and other staff don't necessarily know and understand the game, but **they are doing their best**. Tell them how great they are.

Officials and Organizers

- In a word, exceed expectations.
 - Be there and prepare on time
 - Make the organizers feel that they can “give you the house keys”
 - Don't be a perfectionist. Sometimes the optimum is bad.

The TD team

- The success and performance of the team is the most important item, more than the “Me... Me... Me...”
- Never ever let a colleague slip up if you can avoid it, contribute and complement
- Don't forget that a good team is more than the sum of the parts

As a team leader...

- LEAD...
 - Inspire,
 - Motivate,
 - Energize,
 - Coach,
 - Defend and promote the team,
 - Be an example

Mistakes

- *We never do them, of course...*
- Most mistakes come from an excess of confidence
- Check the laws, check the regulations, don't assume
- If needed and possible, stop the game and confirm with team fellows

Approaching the table

- Very important to not allow a situation to escalate
- Don't allow players to speak all at the same time. Have a method. Whoever summoned the TD speaks first, then partner if relevant, then opps. Don't skip this step...
- With screens, approach from the side that called, discretely. Often the other side doesn't need to know.

Approaching the table

- Don't sit down at a table substituting a player
- Never watch hands
- Stay and look neutral, never demonstrate more familiarity with one side or the other.
- Carefully respect the private space of each player. Maintain proper physical distance.

Taking the facts

- The watermark of a great TD: **Getting the facts right on the first trip to the table**
- Have your law book, paper pad and pen ready
- Don't give information while getting facts.
- With screens, e.g., don't allow your tone of voice, or the player's while responding to you, to pass information to the other side.
- Take players away from the table if needed to secure this

Taking the facts

- Never rely on your memory, write...
- Ask:
 - All the calls, alerts, alerts, explanations.
 - The meaning of each call, from each partner's point of view.
 - Other relevant calls available (e.g. after hesitations)
 - The play, card by card. Use the played cards order if needed, never let players mix them in the process.
 - Carding methods
 - General style and approach, process of reasoning if relevant

Taking the facts

- Learn how to make the good questions.

For example, not

“was it a slip of mind or a slip of finger?”

but instead

“you bid 5C because you didn't notice that you had an ace, correct?”

Taking the facts

- When possible separate the players to ask what each one thought about the meaning of a play or call.
- With screens, close the screen and collect the explanations from each side separately, try to avoid the other side to overhear.
- When a player has a strong voice, consider talking with him away from the table to avoid information crossing over the screen
- Collect written notes if they exist, don't allow players to write on top of them. If relevant, make a copy of the convention card

Taking the facts

- Find the trade off between taking the facts and letting the game flow (harder to do in a pairs game)
- Try to visualize the problem from both sides point of view.
- It's bad when the chief TD asks you what was the meaning of the IC opening and you don't know... Or when you say “the auction was something something and then 3S”...

Taking the facts

- Beware...
 - Facts change with time?...
 - Of course not! Facts are facts but their perception changes a lot. When the hand finishes, it changes, then it keeps changing.
 - This is why it is so important to get them before rather than after
 - Don't take it personally if a player changes his view of the facts as they happened, often he really believes in his perception

Keeping notes

- Use your paper pad extensively
 - Auction, play, explanations
 - Statements by players
 - Your first impressions, gut feelings
 - Table mood
 - Other data even if it seems ridiculous. You never know...

Screens

- Breaks in tempo (BiT)
 - To be approached with special care. Try not to awake the other side.
 - When TD is called from the same side of the screen, take the facts, let game proceed, rule, but we tend to judge that the other side would not have noticed the BiT
 - In any case, always go to the other side and ask if they noticed the BiT.
 - Try to ascertain how long was the BiT (one side will often say 10 seconds, the other 10 minutes)

Screens

- Breaks in tempo (continued)
 - If you ask one of the sides if they noticed the hesitation, you just made them aware of it!
 - My formula:
 - Ask both players on the same side of the screen at the same time
 - "Did any of you in any moment of the auction notice anything unusual, namely in the flow of the tray, from there to here or vice-versa, either too hasty or too slow, or something else worth mentioning"
 - Often the answer is "no", or "yes but it was 10 seconds at most", or "yes, we were writing explanations"

Screens - FAQ

- "Can I know what was explained on the other side?" - No, No, No!
- "My opp says he doesn't remember.." – Use your best judgment and call me back later if needed
- "Help, we are playing at 90'" - RUN! Try to save the board by stopping it from being played in the other room

Alternative actions

- When the course of action might be different (after an alleged wrong explanation, for example), ask a player a.s.a.p. what he would have done and why.
- Do not create UI with the questions themselves but if possible don't wait for the end of the hand to ask

Ruling the game

- Stay at the table, explain and help all the effects to develop normally. A player is entitled to know the consequences before making a decision
 - Penalty cards
 - Lead penalties
 - Enforced calls
- Be watchful. Don't let a player make a mistake. For example, while you are dealing with a LOOT, if you are not careful sometimes the player will say "I wanted to lead this one" and show a card.

Analysing a hand

- Study, understand and use the Code of Practice
- When you have a team don't take judgment decisions single handed
 - Clear, evident ones? Especially those...
- Discuss with colleagues
- When required to ask other players about a hand remove all the elements that might skew the answers (like a BiT, or different explanations).

Giving a ruling

- Delay the ruling to avoid disturbing the players. This gives them time to calm down (and in a pairs game to move away from each other)
- Exception: When you want to show that the case was clear cut give the ruling quickly
- Don't explain a ruling during the game. "After the match I will be more than happy to give you a detailed explanation"
- Don't be judgmental like in "Your bid was based on UI". Instead: "The 2NT bid might have been suggested by what we considered that could have been UI"

Giving a ruling

- Never make a player feel that his view on the game is wrong. Try to understand his point of view and learn to "agree to disagree"
- The way you explain a ruling (or the law) depends on the players.
 - Keep the player in his comfort zone, don't assume he knows, don't tell him that he must know.
 - Go out of your way if needed to ascertain that a player doesn't feel accused, or cheated out of something

Appeals

- Writing the appeal form
 - State ALL the facts
 - Keep out of the form the judgements made
 - Write with capitals, so that everyone understands your writing
 - Double check the write up, with your team leader if possible
- Attending the appeal
 - Be courteous and neutral, speak when asked, don't argue with the players
 - Wait for a decision
- Communicating the result
 - Be neutral, sympathetic

Conclusion

Be calm, sympathetic

Create an enjoyable game

Just flow, and don't panic

You will do fine!

Questions?

Thank you for your attention

For any further questions and compliments you can contact me at:

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