

A Bridge Hand Has 13 cards

Are you sure?

Laws 13, 14, 67

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TD Workshop Sofia 2024

*Bridge is a four-player partnership trick-taking game using a standard 52-card deck played by four players in two competing partnerships, with thirteen tricks per deal. **Each player is dealt thirteen cards** from a standard 52-card deck. (Wikipedia)*

But things sometime go wrong - we as TDs know that often there are situations where a player may have 12 or 14 or even 16 cards.

There are Laws that cover these situations:

LAWS 13 A, B, D: 12/14 etc., 2 (or more) players involved

LAW 13 C: where the pack seemingly contains 53 cards

LAW 14: missing card, only one player is involved

LAW 67: All players had 13 to start, but

Law 7B2 states that “each player counts his cards” (also Law 90B7) but this applies before bidding starts. The Laws are silent about counting after play of the deal, but it is good practice to demand this of players.

There are 3 instructions a TD should give which will make dealing with these situations easier.

1. Count your cards

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2. Don't count your
cards

1. Count your cards
2. Don't count your cards*
3. Keep quiet – let the TD do the talking

*Don't count your cards when another player announces a missing or extra card

TDs should make these points clear to players – good luck with that!

LAW 13 – INCORRECT NUMBER OF CARDS

This Law applies when one or more hands are found to contain more than 13 cards, and another hand less than 13. The goal is where possible for the TD to correct the discrepancy and the game continues. There are 6 situations covered by Law 13

No call made

Card not seen → Correct and continue (13A1)

Card seen → Correct and allow to continue (13A2)*

Auction or play started → no change of call → TD judgement (13B1)*
change of call → Adjust (13B2)

Play completed → Cancel and adjust (13D)

Surplus card → Remove and continue (13C)

*adjust if outcome could have been affected

LAW 13A – no call made

By far the most common situation occurs before the auction starts. North sees he has 14 cards and calls the TD. Unfortunately in many cases the other players start counting their cards and invariably one says “I have 12”.

If North has not yet seen his cards there is no problem. The TD corrects and it's back to normal.(L13A1)

But if he has seen his cards he will now know who has that card.
Law 13A2) (Is this UI?)

Many TDs would like to take the easy route: If the card is an honour they don't allow the board to be played and award an adjusted score. If the card is not an honour they allow the board to be played (and perhaps award an adjusted score depending on the result).

Let's look at Law 13A(2)

*13A2 When the Director determines that one or more pockets of the board contained an incorrect number of cards **and a player has seen one or more cards of another player's hand, the Director allows the board to be played and scored.** If he then considers the extraneous information has affected the outcome of the board the Director shall adjust the score [see Law 12C1(b)] and may penalize an offender.*

How do we interpret the word “allows” ?

From the **INTRODUCTION TO THE LAWS 2017**

Established usage has been retained in regard to “may” do (failure to do it is not wrong), “does” (establishes procedure without suggesting that violation be penalised) “should” do (failure to do it is an infraction jeopardising the infractor’s rights but not often penalised), “shall” do (a violation will incur a 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.

So a decision on whether to allow the board to be played or not is not in accordance with the law. The TD allows the board to be played regardless of the rank of the seen card.

Bidding and play continually normally. **The restrictions of Law 16B (e.g. logical alternative) do not apply.**

An adjustment is made only if the TD decides that the extraneous information has affected the outcome of the board.

(Similar principle to Laws 27D and 23C)

Board 3

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ K 10 4 2

♥ Q 9

♦ 9

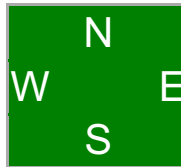
♣ AQ J 8 5 3

♠ 9 8 6

♥ 6 5 3 2

♦ 10 5 3

♣ K 6 4



♠ A J 7 5 3

♥ K 7

♦ 8 7 4 2

♣ 10 9

♠ Q

♥ A J 10 8 4

♦ A K Q J 6

♣ 7 2

*West**North**East**South*

1 ♥

Pass

2 ♣

Pass

3 ♦

Pass

3 ♠

Pass

4 ♦

Pass

4 N

Pass

5 ♣

Pass

6 N

All pass

6 NT by North

North makes 6NT (say with a diamond lead).

If we were to deal with this case as a normal UI case it would be quite easy.

Is bidding 3NT a logical alternative?

If yes, then final contract is 3NT.

If not, then we consider possible results in 6NT.

Board 3
 South Deals
 3^{E-W} Vul

♠ 9 8 6		♠ K 10 4 2
♥ 6 5 3 2		♥ Q 9
♦ 10 5 3		♦ 9
♣ K 6 4		♣ AQ J 8 5 3

♠ Q

♥ A J 10 8 4

♦ A K Q J 6

♣ 7 2

N
 W E
 S

♠ A J 7 5 3

♥ K 7

♦ 8 7 4 2

♣ 10 9

North makes 6NT (say with a diamond lead).
 Do we need to make an adjustment on this hand, (Is a weighted score a possibility?)

North knows that ♣K is with West and it's easier to bid slam. Poll.
 Possibly adjust to 3NT, or 4H or 5D.

If 6NT is allowed

Case 1: North has made 6NT via a heart finesse, no club finesse.

Case 2: North has made 6NT via a club finesse, no heart finesse.

How do we rule in these 2 scenarios?

If 3NT is not allowed then:

- Score stands when made with heart finesse.
- Score stands when made with club finesse. (why?)

Law 13B1: DURING BIDDING OR PLAY

Less frequently, the extra card is noticed during the auction or play. The TD has to **judge** whether play can continue and with no change of call.

PLAY or ADJUST?

Again many TDs would like to take the easy route: If the card is an honour they don't allow the board to be played. If the card is not an honour they allow the board to be played (with the possibility of an adjusted score depending on the result).

Unlike 13A2 the TD has the options of correcting the board and continue playing, or of awarding an adjustment).

Usually the TD should allow the board to be played. A quick glance at the hands may be in order. The TD can always examine the hand later and determine whether an adjusted score is necessary.

Sometimes it may be clear.

For example, North opens 1♠ and another player now realizes he only has 12 cards. The TD determines that North has the extra card. The extra card is a spade and without it he only has 4 spades and would not have opened 1♠. Now the board is unplayable and an adjusted score is awarded.

An example:

North passes. East now calls the TD.
He has 14 cards.

The TD determines that ♠A should be
in West's hand.

Should TD allow the board to be
played? (♠A is certainly an honour
card.)

Board 17

North Deals

None Vul

♠ 6 3

♥ K 10

♦ Q J 10 9 8 6

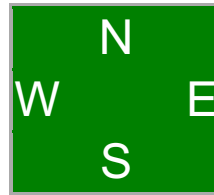
♣ 7 6

♠ K 8 7 5

♥ 8 4 3

♦ 7

♣ Q J 8 4 3



♠ A Q 4 2

♥ Q J 5

♦ A K 3 2

♣ A 5 2

♠ J 10 9

♥ A 9 7 6 2

♦ 5 4

♣ K 10 9

The TD determines that ♠A should be in West's hand.

When we allow the board to be played

This is the corrected deal

Board 17

North Deals

None Vul

♠ K 8 7 5

♥ 8 4 3

♦ 7

♣ Q J 8 4 3

♠ A 6 3

♥ K 10

♦ Q J 10 9 8 6

♣ 7 6

♠ Q 4 2

♥ Q J 5

♦ A K 3 2

♣ A 5 2

♠ J 10 9

♥ A 9 7 6 2

♦ 54

♣ K 10 9

After North's pass, the bidding goes 1NT-3NT. The fact that East knew his partner held the ♠A made no difference at all to the bidding or to the final outcome.

Note that even when the 14th card is seemingly insignificant it may not always be so.

For example: West has seen the extra card, ♣2 and it is replaced in the hand of East.

Play starts and on the first trick involving clubs East plays/discards the ♣3. Now West knows that this is not West's lowest club.

Rather than trying to determine immediately whether the extra card is significant or not we should allow play to continue, and be ready to award an adjusted score if necessary, when we have had time to examine the board.

Law 13C: Surplus Card

This is rare and the Law is very easy and clear:

Any surplus card not part of the deal is removed if found. The auction and play continue without further rectification. No adjusted score may be awarded unless such a card is found to have been played to a quitted trick.

But the Law doesn't address or provide relief for all the possibilities, for example:

The lead is the 53rd card. Dummy has the same (legal) card. The leader now has to lead again, but he has seen dummy

When dummy (north) comes down East remarks that he has the same (legal) card. Is East's card UI, AI, penalty card?

When dummy comes down declarer remarks he has the same (legal) card. AI to defenders?

Law 13D: Play completed.

No problem here. The result is cancelled, an adjusted score awarded but note that in a teams event Law 86 must be considered.

Law 86B1: In team play when the Director awards an adjusted score and the result at the other table between the same contestants is clearly favourable to one side, the Director shall award an assigned adjusted score.....

Note also that in all Law 13 cases a procedural penalty is possible.

This depends on local regulations and practice. I doubt that a procedural penalty is ever awarded except perhaps for repeat transgressions like failure to count cards.

LAW 14: MISSING CARD

Law 14A: Before Play Commences

The TD is not asked to exercise judgement – he searches for the missing card and corrects the hand and play continues without any changes, **even when the offender has made the wrong bid** based on the cards he held.

The missing card is deemed to have been in the deficient hand continuously throughout.

Law 14B: Hand found deficient after the auction period

- If the card is found among the played cards Law 67 applies. Otherwise the TD corrects the deficiency.
- **The missing card is deemed to have continuously belonged to the deficient hand.**
- **It may become a penalty card and failure to have played it may constitute a revoke.**
- **Knowledge about the replacement of a card is UI for the partner of the deficient hand.**

Unlike situations in Law 13, in Law 14 cases Law 16B does apply.

West

♠ A 10

♥ K 10 3

♦ J 10 5

♣ A Q 10 8 2

East

♠ K 9 3

♥ Q 8

♦ K 9 8

♣ J 7 6 3

West, dealer, upgrades his hand and opens 1NT (15-17). North passes and East bids 2NT, South passes but now East says “wait, I’ve only got 12 cards. “

The TD finds the card at a previous table and restores it to East. The auction continues and West bids 3NT.

Should the TD adjust. And if so what adjustment?

Any difference if 3NT makes or is one off?

Is there any difference if the missing card were ♥A or ♥2 ?

West may very well decide to bid 3NT despite with only 14 points because of the intermediate strengths. But passing 2NT is definitely a logical alternative.

Knowledge that East bid 2NT with only 12 cards is UI for West, and made his bid of 3NT a little easier.

Obviously if 3NT goes down we don't adjust, and if made we adjust to 2NT+1

No difference whatever the missing card was.

(Note: West has guessed in making his 3NT bid. If he guessed correctly and it makes, this is not “rub of the green”, it was connected to UI so it is not allowed.)

In his book “A Guide to the Bridge Laws” Jacob Duschek gives an example of application of Law 14 (and Law 64).

Board 11		
South Deals		♠ Q J 6 4 2
None Vul		♥ A
		♦ A J 9 8 6 2
		♣
♠ 3		♠ 10
♥ J 10 6 4 3		♥ Q 9 8 5 2
♦ 7		♦ K 5 3
♣ A Q 10 9 7 6		♣ K 8 4 3
		♠ A K 9 8 7 5
		♥ K 7
		♦ Q 10 4
		♣ J 2

South plays 6♠ on the lead of the ♦7. He wins with the ♦A, pulls trumps with the ♥A, and unnecessarily ruffs a club. Now he wakes up and claims the rest except the ♦K, 12 tricks.

Now the players discover that North held the singleton ♣5 and not a club void. The director is called, and the players agree that North must have had one card too few during the whole board. (The ♣5 was found at the previous table).

South notes that 6♠ always makes. If the club had been in dummy he would have not played a club and would still make 6♠.

How do we rule?

We are still within the correction period, and Law 14B4 simply instructs us to imagine the ♣5 in North's hand **without changing auction or play**. Hence, dummy revoked at trick 3 when South ruffed a club.

The revoke is established, **but no tricks are transferred because it was dummy's revoke**. (Law 64B3). However, E-W are damaged by the revoke; if dummy had followed suit instead of ruffing, South would be down one. Therefore, the director **adjusts the score** to down one. (see Law 64).

(Note: There is disagreement whether Law 64 applies in this particular case).

In passing a word about 12 cards in dummy.
We sometimes hear players say “everyone is responsible for dummy” .

This is wrong. Law 41D establishes correct procedure for dummy. When dummy spreads his hand without a card he has infringed 41D.

No law suggests that a defender should count dummy's cards.

If dummy has 12 cards and declarer is damaged – bad luck! But if the defence is damaged then adjust.

Law 67 : DEFECTIVE TRICK

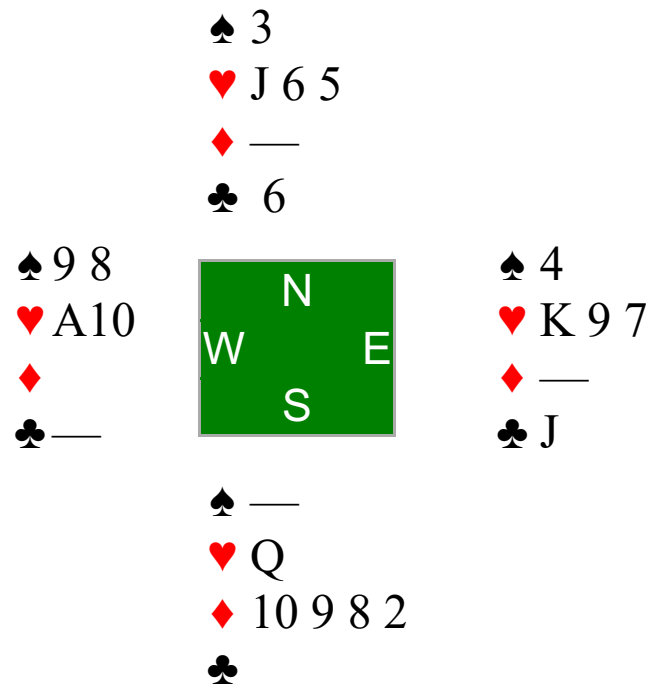
This is one of the more difficult laws to handle. Fortunately it is quite rare.

Determining the facts takes time (and patience).

I recommend not relying on memory – consult the Law book when ruling.

Here is one example of 67B (after both sides have played to the defective trick.)

The TD is called to the table. South has spread his cards and says “a heart for you, making 5 ♦” but then it is noticed that West only has 4 cards – the others have 5.



The TD counts West’s quitted tricks and determines that (at some stage) he had 13 cards. A quick glance in the law book confirms that this is dealt with in Law 67B2

67B2(a) When the offender has played more than one card to the defective trick, the Director inspects the played cards and requires the offender to restore to his hand all extra cards, leaving among the played cards the one faced in playing to the defective trick.Ownership of the defective trick does not change.

And of course

67B2(b) A restored card is deemed to have belonged continuously to the offender's hand, and a failure to have played it to an earlier trick may constitute a revoke.

South is declaring 5 ♦

The card isn't found so it appears that West played two cards to an earlier trick. The TD now has to determine which trick and which cards.

If it's the TD's lucky day there is at least one player at the table who can remember the cards played and in what order, and the players have arranged their quitted tricks in the correct order.

More likely there will be confusion and they will have probably turned over and searched their quitted tricks.

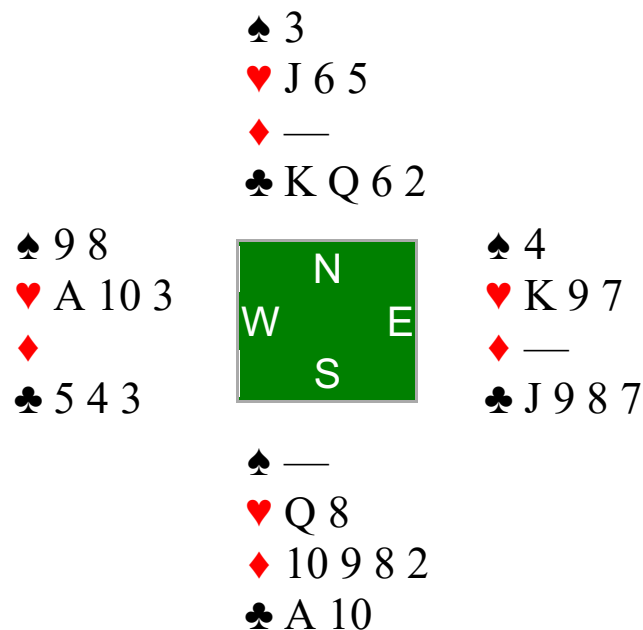
The TD has to determine the play from trick one (if necessary he can look at the hand record).

Board 3	♠ K Q 3 2	
South Deals	♥ J 6 5 4	
E-W Vul	♦ 7	
	♣ K Q 6 2	
♠ J 10 9 8		♠ A 7 4
♥ A 10 3 2		♥ K 9 7
♦ Q 5		♦ 6 4 3
♣ 5 4 3		♣ J 9 8 7
	♠ 6 5	
	♥ Q 8	
	♦ A K J 10 9 8 2	
	♣ A 10	

The first five tricks are confirmed by the players as well as the quitted tricks:

Spade lead and return, 3 rounds of diamonds, leaving this position:

Position
after
Trick 5



South now played ♣A, and the quitted tricks showed all players following suit; then ♣10 to the K , West playing ♣5. Then ♣Q followed by a club from East, heart discard from declarer **but ♠9 from West.**

TD checked the quitted tricks still remaining from West and there was no club amongst them.

It appears that West played two cards (both clubs) in following to the ♣A

It appears that West played

- two cards (both clubs) in following to the ♣A
- a club in following to the ♣K
- A heart in following to the ♣Q

How does the TD rule?

It appears that West played

- two cards (both clubs) in following to the ♣A
- a club in following to the ♣K
- A heart in following to the ♣Q

The TD restores the ♣5 to west's hand

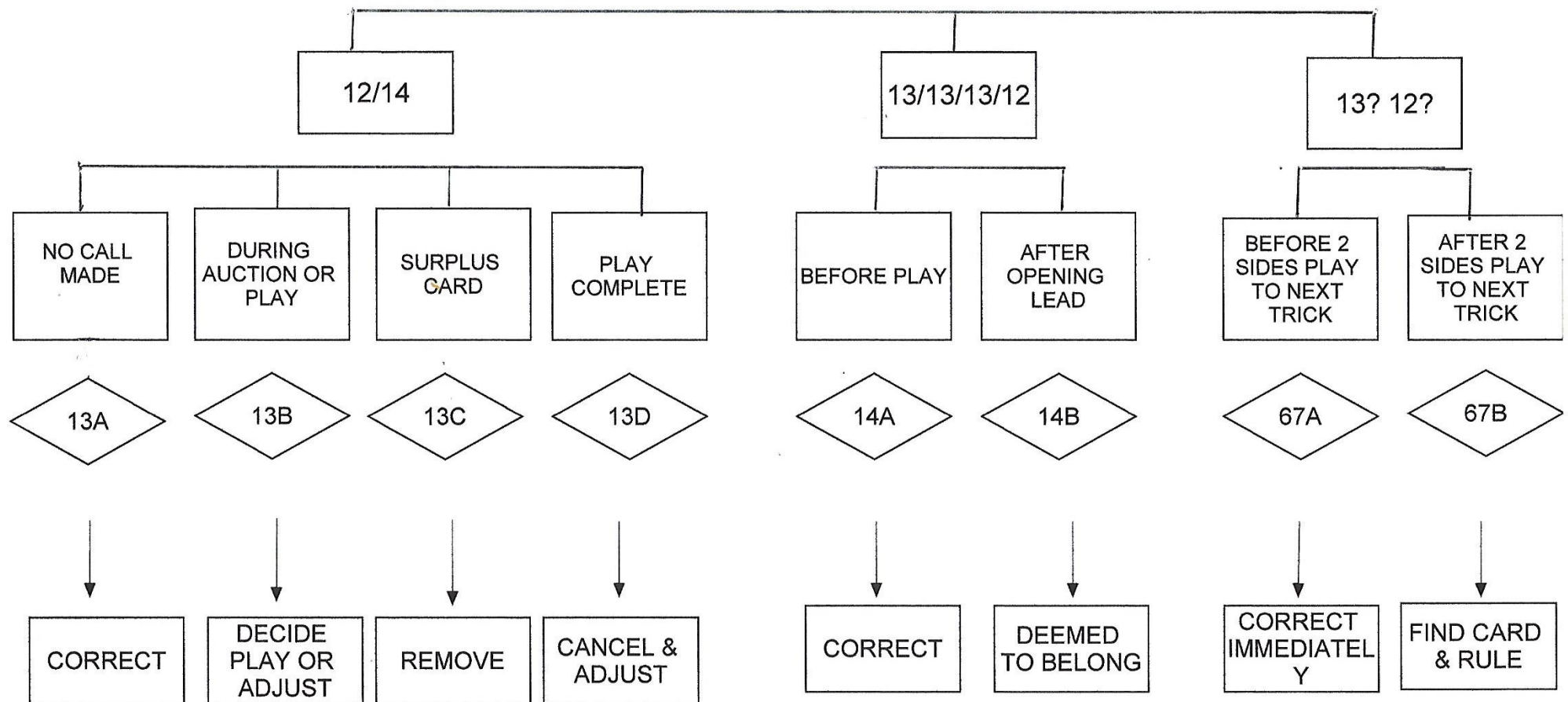
Law 67 B2(b)

A restored card is deemed to have belonged continuously to the offender's hand, and a failure to have played it to an earlier may constitute a revoke.

**All the conditions for a revoke are valid
and one trick is transferred.**

Result 5 ♦ +1 to NS.

IRREGULAR NUMBER OF CARDS



Any
Questions?

The End