



## EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

### 4<sup>th</sup> EBL TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS COURSE

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#### The Perfect TD Ruling

Directing should be done using a strict procedural approach, supporting the TD in his work, helping him to make the right decisions and bringing order in a situation which is not always easy to handle. This is a description of the things to be done in nine steps, with emphasis on one or another depending on the kind of irregularity to solve.

1. **The TD addresses the player who took the initiative to call for him.** Quite often the ruling is initially confusing because more than one of the players starts telling what happened and others react. If the dummy called for you, please check whether he took the initiative himself, since normally speaking he is not allowed to do so. And tell the other side that you will ask their view as well.
2. **Let the player give his full story.** Avoid interruptions from the other pair, if necessary explaining once more that their turn comes later. And ‘translate’ what is told in such a way that relevant additional information can be asked, so be an active listener. If a player tells you that his opponent made an opening bid out of turn, you want to know if LHO made a call thereafter. And if a player hesitated then try to find out for how long.
3. **Then ask the opponents whether they agree with the facts as given.** If necessary give a summary to emphasize the really important things. If a player does not agree with his pause for thought being 30 seconds, ‘help’ him by asking how long he thought the pause was, or by ‘understanding’ that he needed some time to consider his call in this complicated or competitive auction. Establishing the fact of the hesitation is more important than the precise length of it. It often helps to ask a player why he decided to make that call. If it deviates from the agreements and the answer is that there was no other call available, then you found a leak in the system, and not a accidental deviation.
4. All facts being clear **the TD is able to make the decision, always with the help of his law book.** The advice is to use the law book as much as possible, reading to the players what has to be done. This prevents mistakes, convinces the players of the correctness of the ruling and might even assure the TD in his job, not forgetting important details such as the possible application of L16, L26 or..... It is nothing to be ashamed of when the TD needs to use the contents or index to find the right law to be used, though it is preferable to know where to go at once.

- Only in the most 'regular irregularities' it is acceptable to rule by heart. For a lead out of turn it is even 'mandatory', to be able to finish the ruling in time.
5. **The TD 'translates' the applicable laws to the specific situation**, replacing the general descriptions for the factual data in this irregularity. 'East' instead of RHO or offender's partner, and 'hearts' instead of the specified suit. It is impossible to let the players understand what to do if the TD barely understands what he is reading himself. Be aware that your own law book in your familiar language is much easier to handle than the English law book, where everything is somewhere else on another page.
  6. **Be complete, without exaggerating.** Give all the options (but don't start explaining a detailed application of L23, unless you already have the feeling that it might be relevant). But mentioning lead penalties is necessary to let a player make the right choice between withdrawing and repeating.
  7. **The TD checks whether everyone has understood what he said.** Only then the player with alternatives has to decide which one to choose. Once that is done the TD reminds the players of its consequences.
  8. **If part of the application is delayed, as with a lead penalty, the TD stays at the table.** Don't believe they really did understand you, so try to stay at the table if the progress in play depends on that understanding. Lead penalties and penalty cards are good examples. The number of tricks to be transferred in a revoke is not, since they can call you back at the end of play if they need assistance.
  9. **This description is less useful in judgment cases**, though finding the facts is as important as in technical rulings. Often the play has finished, and if not almost all the time the TD will instruct the players to continue play after he has established the facts. If a player calls him to reserve his rights the TD should ask him what irregularity he is referring to (and see 3). Decisions in which judgment is involved need consideration and may take some time. Let them write down the actual score as a provisional result. When giving the decision inform the players about the possibility to appeal your judgment decision.

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