

EBL Tournament Director Seminar 2001

Laws 23 and 72B1

⚡ the 'could have known' Laws ⚡

1 Introduction

It may be helpful to repeat the two relevant Laws:

Law 23 — Damaging enforced pass

Reference will be made to this Law from many other Laws that prescribe penalties for auction-period infractions.

When the penalty for an irregularity under any Law would compel the offender's partner to pass at his next turn, if the Director deems that the offender, at the time of his irregularity, could have known that the enforced pass would be likely to damage the non-offending side, he shall require the auction and play to continue and consider awarding an adjusted score. (See Law 72B1)

Law 72B1 — General principles (infraction of Law)

Adjusted Score

Whenever the Director deems that an offender could have known at the time of his irregularity that the irregularity would be likely to damage the non-offending side, he shall require the auction and play to continue, afterwards awarding an adjusted score if he considers that the offending side gained an advantage through the irregularity.

2 Comment

These two Laws are very similar. In fact, L23 is nearly (but not quite) a specific example of L72B1.

L23 is concerned with the cases where the ability to oblige one's partner to pass works well for the offenders (**and** the player who committed the irregularity could have known, at the time that he did it, that it might work out well for his side).

L72B1 is much more wide ranging, and covers any irregularity at all where the player who commits it could have known at the time that he did it that it might work out well for his side.

There are many cross references to these two Laws, but please note that the Laws may apply in several situations even if there is no specific cross reference to them. In other words, these Laws stand in their own right and do not require a specific cross reference in order to be activated.

The important piece of wording which is common to both Laws is ‘could have known [at the time of the irregularity].’

- (i) so, in applying these Laws, the Director does not have to go as far as to say that the player **DID** know exactly what he was doing (in which case the player would be guilty of deliberate unfair play — a very serious accusation indeed).
- (ii) however, there does need to be some possibility that a clever player might have been capable of seeing in advance how things might develop nicely for him following the irregularity.

In practice, neither of these Laws is used very often. It is as important to know when not to even consider using them as it is to know when to seriously consider using them.

3 Examples of Law 23

- A player psyches, and then does something to silence partner (eg exposes some cards during the auction). A very good way of avoiding a large penalty should partner raise the psyche to some high level!
- Now for a classic example — insufficient bids. A player makes a 1C overcall of a 1NT opening! He corrects the bid to 2C. Unfortunately, he plays Astro so now his partner must pass throughout. However, the player concerned actually holds a long club suit and had no other way of bidding clubs naturally. A clever way indeed to getting to play his clubs, until the Director explains L23 to him!
- Now for a more tricky (and perhaps surprising) example. A player opens 4C with a long club suit, then remembers that he has just shown hearts (SATO or NAMYATS) so makes a purposeful correction of his call to 5C (before LHO has yet bid). LHO does not accept the change. If the player now decides to keep with his original bid of 4C, his partner will be silenced for one round so L23 might

well come into play (by contrast, if the player keeps to his new bid of 5C, there is no enforced pass so no possibility of L23).

- The types of case where L23 does **NOT** apply are the ‘rub of the green’ type cases (good luck) — the cases where the offender could **not** have known that silencing partner might work out well for his side.
- North opens 1H with 19 HCP. South holds 14 HCP with a heart fit, and bids 2NT before East has had chance to call (2NT shows a heart fit). East chooses to overcall 2C, so now South bids 4H and thus silences his partner. As it turns out, 6H cannot be made (worse still for E/W — everyone else in the competition is playing 6H–1). There is no way that South could have predicted an outcome such as this. This is just good luck for N/S — no L23.

4 Examples of Law 72B1

There are some very specific cross references to L72B1. For example, L50 [Penalty Cards] contains a specific reference, as does L30 [Pass Out of Rotation]. Here is an example of the L30 reference in action.

- ‘Self-silencing Passes’. A pair have a confused auction, and South no longer knows whether North is bidding naturally or making cue bids in agreement of one of South’s suits. So, South passes at North’s turn to call — this action will cause South to have to pass throughout. In effect, North is charged with the task of naming the final contract — a clever thing to get him to do if you’ve already bid your hand and are confused about what the trump suit is!
- Now for another classic example. East is **not** on lead against 3NT (West is on lead), but holds a solid five-card suit. Whilst West is thinking about what to lead, declarer takes a look at dummy’s hand (naughty!). Now East is clever — he leads out of turn! Of course, declarer must accept the lead and 3NT is defeated — until we find L72B1, that is!!

Always in this sort of case ask yourselves ‘**could** East have known that to lead out of turn might be a clever thing to do?’ Here, East **could** have known enough about the Laws to know that declarer now had to accept the lead — although not enough about the Laws to know that 72B1 will get him!

5 What adjusted score to give?

Any adjusted score under these Laws is done via L12: technically, according to L23 and L72B1, the type of adjusted score is not specified, so it can be artificial, assigned or even 'weighted'.

In practical terms, you attempt to adjust the score under 12C2 to what is likely to/would probably have happened had the irregularity not taken place (there will be much more discussion elsewhere during this seminar on the subject of adjusted scores). Procedural penalties are also always a possibility.

August 2001

Max Bavin

Co-Chief Tournament Director (EBL)