



Sheffield Bridge Club

Customs and Etiquette - part I

Most sports and games develop appropriate rules of behaviour. In Bridge we set high standards that can be difficult to achieve fully. The communication between partners should always be impeccable and the interplay with opponents polite and courteous no matter how contentious any issues may be. More experienced players are asked to be tolerant of those who are still learning the intricacies of duplicate bridge and to provide gentle help and guidance where necessary.

If you can achieve all of these you will be a joy to play with and against:

- Be courteous to all at all times
- Please arrive promptly to a session and don't expect to be accommodated after play has started
- Acknowledge and welcome the opposition, especially visitors or new members of the group
- Avoid remarks or actions that annoy
- Follow correct procedures
- Pay attention to the game
- Do not make gratuitous comments
- A card should not be detached from the "fan" before it is your turn to play
- Do not prolong play unnecessarily
- Do not use different designations for the same call
- Do not indicate approval or disapproval
- Do not indicate the expectation of winning a trick
- Do not draw attention to significant occurrences
- Do not look intently at other players or their hands
- Do not show lack of interest
- Do not vary the tempo to disconcert others
- Do not leave the table needlessly before the round is bid
- Do not throw cards disdainfully onto the table

Summary of Do's and Don'ts

Going to the club can be daunting at first so the following list of tips might help. We know you've already got enough to do remembering when to bid and counting trumps but most of these are common sense. The first two lists of Do's and Don'ts are a list of things for everyone.

Do's

1. Do count your cards face down before looking at them to make sure you have 13 cards.
2. Do put dummy down as soon as the opening lead is made.
3. Do leave the board being played in the middle of the table. This is to prevent the cards being placed back in the wrong slot.
4. If you are declarer, please thank your partner when their hand placed on the table, even if it is rubbish and not at all what you expected. Keep it simple – don't effuse or show surprise.
5. Do turn off your mobile phones before play starts. If you are expecting an urgent call, let the TD know and switch it on to vibrate.
6. Do compliment your opponents when they have played well, also don't forget to compliment your partner when they have played well.
7. Do remember to use the STOP card if you make a jump bid.
8. Do remember to pause for 5-10 seconds over a jump bid (Regardless of whether your opponents remembered to use their stop card!)
9. Do remember to use the ALERT card if your partner makes a conventional, i.e. not natural, bid that is below the level of 4 clubs.
10. Do call the TD if you are unsure about anything or if your opponents are rude to you. They are there to help you.
11. Do make up your mind about what you are going to bid before touching your bidding box.
12. Do remember that we all play this game for pleasure.

Don'ts

1. Don't gloat if you get a good result against your opponents.
2. If you don't make a contract that everyone else has made, it is far nicer to say "Well defended" to your opponents rather than "I must have played that really badly".
3. Don't discuss the hand you have just played in a loud voice as you will be overheard by the table who is next to play it.
4. Don't criticise your partner or your opponent's mistakes. Partners usually know when they have made a mistake and telling them in front of the opponents will only knock their confidence and they are unlikely to play the next hand any better.
5. Don't offer advice unless you are asked for it.
6. Don't put the bidding away until the opening lead has been made.
7. Don't touch anybody else's cards but your own. If dummy is arranged in a way that you find it difficult to see then ask declarer if they would mind rearranging it.
8. Don't kick your partner under the table or give any other signals to him.
9. Try not to look at your partner as your facial expressions may well indicate something to them.

Further Advice

If you make a bid card that is not the one you intended then you should call the TD immediately. They can tell you the circumstances when you are allowed you to change it to the bid you intended which is normally if you pulled out the wrong bid card but not if you changed your mind.

Don't give messages to the opponents or your partners, such as, "Well I don't know what to do now" or "I really don't understand your bid".

If you are on opening lead you may ask for explanations of your opponents' bidding before selecting your lead. When you've asked any questions you want to, select your opening lead and place it face down on the table and ask partner if they have any questions before turning it over.

If you are a defender or dummy you may check with your partner if he does not follow suit, saying "having none?" or (e.g.) "having no hearts?".

If you are declarer or dummy and your partner has given the wrong explanation to a convention bid you should tell your opponents as soon as the bidding has ended.

If you are a defender and your partner has given the wrong explanation to a convention bid you must say nothing until the end of the play, when you must then inform the declarer.