

Ton Kooijman, member of the WBF Laws Committee, wrote a commentary to the 2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge. It is a guide for TDs, not an elementary course. This document itself is not a part of the Laws themselves, even though the Committee tried for a clear and faultless description of the Laws. The focus of this document is to highlight changes from the 2008 code and to amplify interpretations from the committee. The 2017 Laws do not attempt to eliminate cheating from our game; 73B1 already makes clear that the “gravest possible offense is for a partnership to exchange information through prearranged methods of communication other than those sanctioned by these laws.” That being said, the Committee notes that playing bridge (at a physical table) includes exercising many manual tasks which should be done in a uniform way. The Laws prescribe such uniform methods; supplemental regulations should do the same. The TD’s role is to maintain these orderly procedures. Players need to understand that proper procedure is necessary in order to ensure the honesty of our game.

This commentary addresses the Laws in numerical order; some Laws will not be covered, normally because they have no significant change.

Law 1

This Law now requires that the back side of playing cards be symmetrical. Older ACBL official cards, for instance, will not comply with this Law, as the single logo on the back looks different when pointed up or down. The committee adds as an interpretation that symmetrical card faces are recommended as well.

Law 6

There are continual inquiries regarding the shuffle and deal. This time the Law is clear: two consecutive cards in the deck should not be dealt to the same player. The recommendation that the cards be dealt in four piles clockwise continues to appear.

Law 7A

The board must be left on the table in proper position. This helps prevent fouled boards and defines a proper procedure.

Law 7B

After a board is played, a player may look at a hand if the opponent agrees or if the TD allows it.

Law 7C

After play the cards should be shuffled before putting them back into the board. This eliminates the transmission of information based on the order of played cards at the previous table.

Law 9A3

The Laws allow any player to try to prevent a player from committing an infraction or irregularity. Once an irregularity has occurred, it can’t be prevented from happening anymore. A common example is dummy stating that declarer has led from the wrong hand. Before declarer leads from the wrong hand, dummy may try to prevent him from doing so; once he has done so, this irregularity cannot be prevented. Dummy cannot be the first to point out an irregularity or summon the director before attention has been legally drawn to the irregularity.

This brings up a recurring Laws concept. The specific supersedes the general. For instance,

dummy's rights are addressed in Laws 42 and 43. Provisions there for dummy supersede those in Law 9.

Two examples:

A defender revokes. Dummy asks the defender whether he has failed to follow suit in order to prevent the revoke from being established. Although 9A3 could be understood to allow this, 61B explicitly states that dummy is not allowed to do this.

A defender puts his played card in the losing position when in fact he has won the trick. This irregularity cannot be prevented; it has already happened. Law 65B explicitly states that dummy is allowed to point out this irregularity until a card is played to the following trick.

Laws 10 and 11

Law 10A states that TDs make rulings, not players. Law 10B says that the TD can overturn a ruling the players have made for themselves or leave it as it is. Remember, Law 12A1 gives the TD latitude to adjust a score when there has been an irregularity for which there is no specific rectification in the Laws, in this case for a side who gains by making its own ruling.

Law 11 deals with players who don't call the director when there is an irregularity. If the non-offenders act before calling the TD, the Law has said for years they may forfeit their right to rectification of that irregularity. Law 11A is changed in the 2017 code. We are to award a split score (two-way bad) when either side gains (previously we would only take it from non-offenders) from doing this. We take away whatever advantage was gained by the side who did not call the TD in time (such as by causing a player to get a second penalty card through ignorance of the obligation to play the first one), but we still apply the Law to the side who committed the irregularity.

Here is an example of making one's own ruling and not liking it later:

	♠ 6 4	
	♥ 8 2	
	♦ J 2	
	♣ ---	
♠ 8 7 3	N	♠ ---
♥ 6 3	W	♥ K J 5
♦ 7	E	♦ 9 8 6
♣ ---	S	♣ ---
	♠ Q J 2	
	♥ ---	
	♦ K Q 5	
	♣ ---	

South is declarer in a diamond contract. The lead at trick 8 from dummy is the ♦J. East plays ♥5 and South and West follow suit. Now declarer plays the ♦2 from dummy and East discovers his revoke. He announces this. Rather than call for the TD, declarer tells him that play continues and there will be a one trick transfer at the end. (even though this is incorrect; the revoke has not been established) South plays his last trump, and the last three tricks are won by East. South figures out that even with the extra trick he is one trick short of a normal result and calls the TD.

Having applied his own ruling South won three of the last six tricks and got one trick transferred. Had he called the TD in time he would have won at least 5 tricks.

The TD rules that South gets four out of the last six tricks and that EW get one trick, as if declarer got five. (two-way bad)

Law 12

In most situations where a TD is called upon to make a ruling, the application of the Law itself is sufficient to settle the matter. Law 12B1 reminds us that the objective of a score adjustment is to take away any advantage gained by an offending side through its irregularity and to redress damage to a non-offending side. Occasionally, the provisions in the Law do not sufficiently compensate the non-offenders for the damage they suffered. Law 12A1 handles this case. Law 12A2 handles the similar case that while the Laws may provide a rectification, what would follow would not really be bridge. The Law describes this as “no rectification can be made that would allow normal play of the board.” Sometimes it is hard to distinguish situations which call for Law 12A1 from those where we apply Law 12A2.

Example: :

Years ago in a high level competition the auction went:

1♣ pass pass pass

1NT pass pass pass

After 1NT was played the players realized what had happened. If they had noticed before play started, the ruling would be a simple application of Law 39A. (Everything after the third pass is cancelled; the contract is 1♣.) In this case, it doesn't make sense to let them replay the board in 1♣. Law 12A1 allows us to adjust the score when the Laws do not cover the particular sort of violation committed by an offender. But who is the offending side here? Law 12A2 applies in this case; no rectification will allow the contestants to achieve a normal result in 1♣. Assigning a score (potentially a weighted adjustment) in 1♣ seems more appropriate.

There are many irregularities where immediate rectification is not possible. The most common examples are misinformation and unauthorized information. The players have to reach a result on the board before the TD can determine whether there was damage to the non-offending side. Law 12C1e has been rewritten to help TDs understand when the non-offenders might not receive redress. It tries to clarify that damage that is a consequence of the irregularity is redressed, not damage that is subsequent. It tries to limit that to an extremely serious error such as a revoke or a wild gamble such as a double shot. In these cases, the offenders are to receive an adjusted score to remove any advantage they gained through their irregularity. The non-offenders lose the part of the adjustment that represents self-inflicted damage.

In a ruling such as this, the TD splits the damage caused by the infraction (consequent damage) from the subsequent damage and compensates only the consequent damage.

Examples:

1)

IMPs, NS vulnerable

NS (team A) play in 5♥X after a competitive auction, where the opponents (team B) bid to 4♠ (NS having bid 4♥) after a long hesitation. They make 9 tricks. The TD decides that bidding 4♠ was not allowed and that 5♥ was a gambling, not normal action. He further decides that the play in 4♠ (not doubled) would have resulted in 8 tricks and the play in 4♥ in 9 tricks. The result at the other table is 3♠ minus 1 for EW.

If team A had not made its gambling 5♥ bid, they would have beaten 4♠ two tricks and gained two IMPs (+100, -50). After the 4♠ bid they were in a better spot: they were going to lose four IMPs without the infraction when they went down in 4♥. (-100, -50) Therefore, team A was not damaged by the infraction; they were damaged by their wild and gambling 5♥ bid. They have to keep their score of lose 11 IMPs (-500, -50). Team B is not allowed to gain from its infraction; it receives a score based on the expectation had the irregularity not occurred. (+100, +50 for win 4 IMPs).

2)

The facts are comparable but for one, this time 4♠ would have been made (teammates 3♠ + 1). Then the calculation becomes:

With normal play by team A after the infraction (but not bidding the gambling 5♥) it would have received - 6 IMPs (-420 +170);

Without the infraction it would have received + 2 IMPs (- 100 + 170);

The difference between those two IMP results is the portion of the damage which was caused by the infraction.. Since Team A lost 8 IMPs on the board (-500, +170), they get eight IMPs back for 0 IMPs on the board

Team B receives - 2 IMPs (+ 100 - 170), the score they would have expected to receive had the irregularity not occurred.

Average plus

The new Law 12C2d allows a regulating authority to regulate what happens when a pair misses several boards during a session. The WBF Laws Commission recommends average plus not be used simply for a sit-out in a movement, and it suggests restricting average plus to two boards per session for a contestant (at pairs or teams). Other missed boards are scored as if they were not scheduled to be played in the first place. (In ACBL parlance, NP rather than A+.) We do not yet have a regulation in ACBL to this effect.

Weighted scores

In teams if a contestant receives a score on a board based on more than one of the possible results, the result on the board in IMPs is the weighted average of the outcome in IMPs of the results involved.

Example:

The adjusted score for team A on a board is $\frac{2}{3}$ of 4♠ making (+620) and $\frac{1}{3}$ of 4♠ down one (-100). The result at the other table is 3♠ making three (+140).

Team A receives $\frac{2}{3}$ of 10 (+620 – 140) plus $\frac{1}{3}$ of -6 (-100 – 140) = $6\frac{2}{3} - 2 = 4\frac{2}{3}$ IMPs.

At matchpoints, the weights of the results involved in the adjusted score need to be added to the frequencies on the board and dealt with as described in law 78A. Ideally, every pair will have its score matchpointed against the subcomponents of the weighted score at the table with the adjusted score. ACBLScore cannot yet handle this sort of adjustment. A TD could manually calculate these adjustments and enter them via ADJ. For all but the smallest fields this would be time-consuming.

Here is an example of making a weighted adjustment both at the table where the adjustment occurred and at all the other tables in the field:

Pair A receives an assigned adjusted score on a board: $\frac{1}{3}$ of 3NT making (+400), $\frac{1}{3}$ of 3NT down 1 (-50), $\frac{1}{6}$ of 4♠ making (+420) and $\frac{1}{6}$ of 4♠ down 1 (-50).

The frequencies not including this result show 4 times +420, 2 times +400, 1 time +170, 1 time +150 and 3 times -50.

The TD-decision changes these frequencies in $4\frac{1}{6}$ times +420, $2\frac{1}{3}$ times +400, 1 time +170, 1 time +150 and $3\frac{1}{2}$ times -50. Which gives as matchpoints $18\frac{5}{6}$, $12\frac{1}{3}$, 9, 7, $2\frac{1}{2}$. For pair A the relevant matchpoints have to be multiplied by the appointed chance: $\frac{1}{6} * 18\frac{5}{6} + \frac{1}{3} * 12\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{2} * 2\frac{1}{2} = 8\frac{1}{2}$ mp.

The matchpoints of all other pairs should also be based on this calculation, a result of +400 being converted to $12\frac{1}{3}$ mp.

If a weighted score is given in case of a cancelled bid due to the existence of UI only scores that can be obtained in a legal manner may be taken into account (12C1c). A given result may be able to be obtained via legal and illegal means; it can only receive weight for the legal means.

Example: After a hesitation a pair bids 6♠. The TD does not allow this call because some consulted players choose for an alternative call. Such alternative call may be part of the weighted scores but the cancelled 6♠-bid may not be included even if a majority of consulted players also make it. If there were some other route to 6♠ we could give it weight—perhaps even 100% of the weight when appropriate. (in other words, ruling there was no logical alternative and not adjusting the score)

Serious error

In bridge it is normal to make mistakes; it's just part of the game. When considering the damage related to an infraction a player should not be punished for making such a mistake, unless it is considered to be really unacceptable.

Example 1:

S/NS

♠ K8

♥ K

♦ AQ62
 ♣ AK10863

♠ J976
 ♥ 10874
 ♦ J97
 ♣ 52

The bidding has gone, with EW passing throughout, 1♦ - 3♣ - 3NT - 4♦ - 4♥ - 4♠ - 4NT - 5♠ - 6♦ - 7♦ - pass

NS play 5 card majors with better minor. 5♠ shows 2 aces and ♦Q. South has hesitated before bidding 6♦.

The lead is ♥Q to dummy's ♥K. Declarer continues the ♣A,K from dummy. Then ♣3. The grand seems unbeatable, South will just overruff. So East discards a heart, but with an unexpected ♦K84 in South, East's ruffing with the ♦9 or J defeats the contract promoting the ♦T(xx) in west.

If the TD decides that pass is a logical alternative for 7♦ he should consider the misplay in east within the range of normal bridge and adjust the score for both sides to 6♦ making seven. This is not an example of a serious error which limits EW's right to redress.

Example 2:
 High level

		K7	
N/both		53	
		A964	
		AKJ102	
1096			J532
A84			J1072
KQJ752			103
Q			942
		AQ84	
		KQ96	
		8	
		8765	

W	N	E	S
	1NT	pass	2♣
pass	2♦	pass	3♣
pass	3♦	pass	3♥
pass	3♠	pass	4♣
pass	4♠	pass	...5♣
pass	6♣		

South has asked for majors and minors and hesitated before bidding 5♣.

West leads the ♦K to dummy's Ace. Declarer plays a small heart to the King and Ace and A. West continues diamonds, ruffed by declarer. He plays two rounds of trumps and leads another diamond from dummy for his 12th trick. East does not realize that his trump nine is higher than all declarer's trumps and that ruffing will defeat the contract. He discards, and declarer makes his

contract.

This should be considered a serious error in a high-level match.

If the TD decides that pass instead of 6♣ is a logical alternative for North he will adjust the score for NS to 5♣ making 6. But he also should decide that the damage for EW is not caused by the infraction committed by North but the fault of East who could easily have defeated the contract. This means that the difference in result between 6♣ down 1 (the expected result after the infraction) and 6♣ making (as the actual result) is treated to be subsequent damage. One way to do this would be to give EW the matchpoints for 5♣ making 6, subtracting the difference between 6♣ making and 6♣ down 1 from what they earned. A simpler view is to assign EW the score for 6♣ making. This is not truly equitable to EW—they should never have been in the position to defend 6♣.

Depending on the experience level of the players, this ruling would be different. We would decide that there is no subsequent damage in that case and simply adjust to 5♣ making 6.

Laws 13 and 14

If one player has more than 13 cards and another has fewer, but no player with an incorrect number of cards has called, then the TD is to restore the board to unfouled condition. He normally directs that play continue, standing by to award an adjusted score if the information has influenced the score. Under previous versions of the Laws, knowledge of that card is considered unauthorized. Now it is authorized; the TD can adjust when he thinks the information influenced the outcome without dealing with the standards imposed by Law 16.

If a player with an incorrect number of cards has made a call already the TD has to decide whether he deems the board to be playable after restoring it. Calls already made may not be changed. The TD keeps the possibility to adjust the score after the play.

If more than 52 cards are dealt the surplus is removed and play continues. If a surplus card is found amongst the played cards, the director adjusts the score if the play of a surplus card affected the outcome.

Law 15

A)

A player has taken the cards from a wrong board and has made a call with it. As long as his partner has not made a call, the board is restored and the player makes a call with the right hand, otherwise an artificial adjusted score is given. If his LHO has already made a call it is cancelled and creates UI for the opponents.

If the board from which the wrong cards were taken still has to be played, the TD allows play to continue without rectification if the offender makes a comparable call (see new Law 23).

B)

When the wrong pair is at the table, as long as they have not yet played the board, now we leave them there, ending the annoying procedure of seating the proper pair and hoping the auction goes the same. Sometimes this doesn't work out properly when the improper pair is not scheduled for the board at all. If they are scheduled for that board, the pair denied the opportunity to play it

against the right opponents plays it with their counterpart. (the other pair who will miss it)

If the event is played as a barometer we consider a pair seated at a wrong table still to have played the right boards. This means that the TD may solve that problem in any reasonable way he prefers, for example by altering the movement.

Law 15A (additional discussion)

The auction only continues normally when the call with the right hand is the same as the call with the wrong hand and the hand reasonably fits that call. Above that only LHO may have made a call after the irregularity. When for example a player bids 1NT (15-17) with a wrong hand he may bid 1NT with 14 or 18 points without destroying the board; he may repeat 1♥ when the agreement is that it shows at least 5 hearts and he has only 4 (and the strength meets more or less the systemic requirements). The provisions of this Law lived inexplicably in Law 17 for years.

Law 16

Normally the TD will not act immediately when a player makes available unauthorized information (UI), for example by a hesitation or by an unexpected answer for partner on a question from an opponent. Such cases are generally speaking not (automatically) infractions. The infraction occurs when the partner chooses from among logical alternatives one that could have been suggested by the hesitation or the unexpected answer. We already explained that an action not being accepted because of the existence of a logical alternative may not be included in a weighted score.

The unexpected answer itself becomes an infraction if it is not in accordance with the system the partnership has agreed upon. An unexpected answer creates UI for partner. The answer given by partner may be wrong or the action taken may be not in accordance with the partnership agreement. Whether it is a mistaken bid or a mistaken explanation the answer creates UI. A wrong answer on a question is an infraction, not following a partnership agreement is not. The difficulty might be finding out what the partnership agreement is.

If the partner does not choose an action that could be suggested by the irregularity no infraction occurs. There is no justification for adjusting the score.

Law 17C

W	N	E	S
pass	pass		pass

Law 17C applies but not anymore if all four hands are put back in the respective pockets.

If the TD is called he should give West the option to accept the pass out of turn (we are not yet in the position where there are three passes after a call has been made). When he does and passes again the bidding goes back to East (the passes made by S and W are removed). This should carefully be explained to West. When West does not pass but bids 1♦ (for example) the auction continues normally.

If the auction goes:

W	N	E	S
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pass	1♥	pass	pass
	pass	pass	

this law still applies, with the first pass of East being the call after which three passes have been made of which one was out of rotation.

The fact that East (in this example) passes after the pass out of turn does not make him an offender, he is allowed to accept that pass out of rotation. Only the pass by North creates UI.

Law 20

This law tells us that players have the obligation to inform opponents of their partnership agreements, even when they do not necessarily cover their holding and might create confusion. Let us take the following example:

W	N	E	S
1♥	3♣*	pass	3♠**

North has Q6 6 953 AQJ8652 and thought he showed a weak hand with long clubs. But the agreement is that it shows ♦ + ♠, so 3♣ is a mistaken bid. This is not an infraction. South alerts 3♣ and bids 3♠. Without having seen the alert it is likely that North will interpret 3♠ in accordance with his own understanding of his 3♣ bid: it shows long spades. But having seen the alert he realizes his mistake and knows that 3♠ shows preference for spades over diamonds. It is his obligation to alert the 3♠-bid and to explain it as such. [This would not be an alert at an ACBL tournament, but this is still a good example.] This means that he has put himself in the awkward position that he has created unauthorized information which limits his choices in the auction, but which also helps him to give the right information about the partnership agreements. In that respect the knowledge about his mistake is not considered to be unauthorized.

We take the same start of the auction but now North has KJ874 94 AQ1083 6. This time it is South who appears to have forgotten—he does not alert 3♣. That is an infraction, but North is not entitled to draw attention to it explicitly: by telling the opponents that partner should have alerted 3♣. It might be unavoidable to inform his partner about his mistake in which case probably their opponents become aware of it as well.

Suppose the auction continues:

W	N	E	S
1♥	3♣	3♥	4♣*

Given the non-alert of 3♣ North may assume that S supports his supposed club holding, but according to the agreements 4♣ shows a strong hand with trump support in either ♦ or ♠. So he should alert it and if asked explain it as such. This obligation supersedes the demand described in 20F5(a) not to indicate in any manner that a mistake has been made. That sentence tells the player to conform to Law 73A1: ‘communication between partners during the auction and play shall be effected only by means of calls and plays’.

This implies that giving alerts and answering questions is not considered to be a way of communicating with partner but solely with the opponents. Shaking one’s head or frowning one’s brow does tell partner that something strange has happened, which is not allowed. It would

create a situation where both partners had UI. Nonetheless partner hears what is said and then has the obligation to call the TD and to tell him that he failed to alert the 3♣ bid. After which he must forget that he heard that alert. To be more precise, he cannot choose from among logical alternatives one that could be suggested by the UI.

There are misconceptions about restrictions when asking for explanations of calls made. It should be obvious that asking such questions should not automatically be related to a decision about one's own action, though the answer of course might influence that decision. But demanding that a request for an explanation should not be made if the player asking will pass anyway cannot be right. Such approach creates unauthorized information by definition. Players do need to be aware that the content and manner of their questions creates UI even when the questions themselves are legal. Remember, in ACBL tournaments asking a properly-worded question of an alerted call (including a self-alerting cuebid) is deemed not to create UI for the side asking the question.

Added to this law is that a player may not ask about a call if the purpose is to provoke a mistaken explanation. There are calls known to be maltreated regularly, for example those showing two suiters. If a player is familiar with such agreement he should not ask about the meaning. The laws already said in a previous version that asking for the benefit of partner is not allowed.

Law 21

If a player has explained his partner's call incorrectly and this becomes clear before the auction period has finished the opponent who made the last call of his side is allowed to change it if the TD is convinced that he would not have made this call, having received the right information and not being wrongly informed.

This has led to a major change in the laws. Where a player becoming aware of his own wrong explanation was obliged to call the TD immediately and correct it, he now is allowed to do so after the final pass of the auction and still may do this immediately. This diminishes for example the possibility to place a lucrative penalty double.

Example:

W/EW

W	N	E	S
2♥	pass	4♥	pass
pass			

North has asked about the meaning of 2♥ and was told by East: 'strong'. With North on the brink of closing the auction with a final pass, East corrects his explanation telling that 2♥ shows a weak two. It does not need a Sherlock Holmes to interpret that East doesn't have much, only bidding 4♥ after the strong bid of 2♥. And now it appears that west is also weak. So north suddenly has an automatic double, including values he knows his partner must have. Assume North has something like AQ7 8 KT984 QT52. There is no use of L21 in this situation.

If East waits to correct his mistaken explanation until after the final pass by North the TD will give North the option to change this pass. But also tells that he only may do so with just the right information available. This makes it impossible to come to the same interpretation. If 2♥ is

explained as weak East's holding can be anything from preemptive up to just less than the values for a slam. A double now becomes less obvious and it should not be surprising if the TD will not allow the choice for a double.

This is another place in the laws where the TD has to decide whether he allows a player to change a call. Just as in Law 16, the TD should not make that decision at that moment. If the TD uses his judgement of the hand, he weights it and therewith gives UI to the other players. In this example allowing the change into a double after having seen the cards involved, tells declarer that North has a very good hand. And such information coming from the TD would probably make it authorized!

The right procedure here is to tell the player under which condition he is allowed to change his call made after the misinformation. If the opponents think he would not really have changed his call, they can call the director after the play. Or, as in Law 16, he can tell the players on his own initiative that the change of call should not be allowed. He would then revert the contract to what it was in the original auction.

The advantage of this approach is that the TD gets time to make a well-considered decision; he will ask other players for example. While the player does not automatically get to change his call, he is not held to the same standard of a UI case. After all, the player who was misinformed is the non-offending side. In fact, he should be allowed to do so if the second call fulfils the conditions for a logical alternative: if a significant proportion of the players would consider the call, and some of them actually would choose it.

Law 23

This is a completely new Law. Old Law 23 dealt with damage from things such as enforced passes. Its content is now in Law 72.

New Law 23 defines a new concept: the comparable call. The concept was introduced in the 2007 laws in relation to Law 27 (insufficient bid) and is now implemented in a more general way. The concept is broadened to say that a call replacing another normally does not create harmful information if it is more precise. The application of this concept means that after such call the auction may continue normally without damaging the other side. In this approach the emphasis is more on the suits shown than on the strength. If the strength differs too much the calls cannot be considered comparable.

To deem a call comparable, it must be one of the following:

- It must have the same or similar meaning as the replaced call
- It must define a subset of the meanings of the replaced call, or
- It must have the same purpose (such as a relay or asking bid) as the replaced call

If the replaced call has the same purpose, then it doesn't even matter that the strength or suits referred to are the same; the is comparable by definition. This means there is no unauthorized information when the cancelled and subsequent call are comparable.

Examples will be given when explaining the applications of the relevant laws, applying this new

provision. There is a supplemental document which gives us a framework for deeming calls comparable. It is provided along with this one.

Law 25

Players are not allowed to change an intended call. If a player has already done so, then 25B1 applies. A TD should not give a player the opportunity to change an intended call.

This leaves us to deal with unintended calls, a regular phenomenon when playing with bidding boxes, where a wrong card is pulled out of the box and put on the table. As long as partner has not made a call after such irregularity the mistaken bidding card can be put back and replaced by the intended call. Such action in itself does not create unauthorized information since the wrong card doesn't carry bidding information. It is deemed never to have happened. However, if LHO has already called over the unintended call (mechanical error), he may retract that call without penalty. The information related to that call is unauthorized for his opponents and authorized for his partner.

An auction would normally end after four passes. If one of them is unintended, then it can be corrected until all four hands are put back in the board (Law 22B2)

It is sometimes not easy to determine whether a call is unintended. The TD should only decide it was unintended if he is convinced that the player never, not even for a split second, wanted to make that call. The mistake has to be entirely one of fingers, not brain! An example of a call that certainly is a big mistake but nevertheless was intended is the following:

North opens 1♥, a pass in East and South bids 4♣, a splinter showing slam interest in hearts. West passes and North thinks for a while, resulting in the conclusion that he is not going to encourage partner to bid the slam. But he forgets that even game is not reached yet and passes, immediately discovering his mistake and calling the TD.

North will tell the TD that he never intended to pass, but the TD should not accept this statement. For a split second North thought that pass was closing the auction in 4♥. He never intended to play in 4♣, that is a certainty, but not the relevant consideration. Another argument to support this decision is that the pass did carry information, the player told his partner that he was not interested in slam.

In previous editions of the laws another condition was that there could not be a pause for thought. That condition was removed because it created misunderstandings. The question whether the call was unintended is not related to a pause for thought. It is possible that a player absent-mindedly pulled a bidding card out of the bidding box without having decided what call to make. Such call would be a surprise for himself. In the 2017 laws he is allowed to change that call.

Back to the subject of unintended vs. intended. The TD, not normally being a mind reader, is not always able to make that distinction. Still it is part of his job to judge and interpret the facts and circumstances and to decide what has happened. If a partnership has specific calls to show details and uses asking bid or relays, mistakes in the bidding are easily made and a player should not escape by claiming that he made an unintended call. But if the TD really cannot find any reason to explain why a player could have decided to make the disputed call it is not unreasonable to

decide that it was unintended. Such things happen.

That brings up the question what exactly the procedure should be when deciding whether to allow a Law 25A change. Compare the discussions of how to avoid giving information to the table in rulings with UI and MI; we try not to give away a player's hand with our comments. It is a little different with Law 25; if the call was unintended it doesn't carry any information. If it was intended, the TD won't allow a change. So applying Law 25 the TD will make his judgement immediately, applying the provision for intended or unintended.

The previous footnote that an unintended call may be changed irrespective of the way the player became aware of making it, is now incorporated in the laws (A3).

Law 26

This law describes the rectifications in the play when a call is cancelled and replaced by another. It has changed considerably in the 2017 code. When the two calls are comparable, there are no lead penalties. If not, declarer may prohibit the lead in any one suit that is not shown in the legal auction. This includes suits completely unrelated to the withdrawn call. (see examples)

Examples:

1)

North is the dealer, but East opens 2♥ showing 5 hearts and a minor, weaker than a one-level opening. South does not accept 2♥ and North opens 1NT. East overcalls with 2♥. This pair plays that 2♥ shows hearts and a minor. This basically has the same meaning as his withdrawn call though it could be stronger now. It is reasonable to deem these calls comparable. That means there are no lead penalties.

2)

Same situation but now the legal 2♥ does show just hearts.

The legal auction becomes

W	N	E	S
	1NT	2♥	2NT
pass	3♣	X	3♦

All pass

2NT is Lebensohl; the double shows clubs

In this case the two 2♥ calls are not comparable, so Law 26B applies. The fact that East showed both suits in the legal action does not remove the lead penalty, but restricts the rectification to either prohibiting or requiring a lead of spades or diamonds. In the previous code, we would likely deem that there were no lead penalties, as East had shown his two suits legally during the auction.

L27B

Law 27B1 is a little different in the 2017 code. The provision in 27B1a to allow a penalty-free correction to of a natural call to the cheapest sufficient call in the same denomination is changed to be broader. Now a penalty-free correction is permitted to the lowest sufficient bid which specifies the same denomination or denominations. 27B1b allows a penalty-free change to a

comparable call, but 26B may apply lead restrictions.

The intention is to allow the auction to continue normally if the insufficient bid does not carry disturbing unauthorized information. Laws 16 (UI) and 26 (lead restriction) do not apply to the B1a correction of an insufficient bid. Law 26 may apply to a correction to a comparable call, although to be honest your editor does not understand why the Law says so.

If this information appears to be essential information for the contract to be reached, or for the result of the contract, Law 27D tells the TD to adjust the score. Think of this as, could what happened not have happened without an insufficient bid? If the answer is yes, we apply 27D and adjust the score.

Let us look at some examples (West opening the bidding and the insufficient bid not accepted):

- 1) 1♣ - 1♠ - 1♥ (showing 4 or more hearts and 6+ high card points). The TD accepts the replacement by double which either has the same meaning or in other partnership agreements shows hearts plus diamonds and then is contained in the meaning of the 1♥-bid, just showing hearts. He also accepts 2♥ under B1(a).
A take-out double normally does not show specified suits. When West opens 1♠ and North follows with 1♥, not accepted, we would not allow a change to double. We would allow a change to 2♥ with no further rectification. (If the convention card shows that such a double promises 4 hearts it is acceptable if the 1♥ opening bid - which North thought he was making – can be made with a 4-card suit, not if it promises a 5-card suit)
- 2) If West opens 1NT and North bids 1♣ (meant as an opening 16+), not accepted, the replacement by a double showing the same strength or 16 – 18, is in accordance with B1(b).
- 3) 2NT – pass – 2♣ (acting as if it was a 1NT opening; asking for majors, not accepted). A sufficient call asking for the majors, even when asking for 4- or 5 cards while 2♣ asked for 4 cards, is a comparable call.

In an irrelevant auction South asks for aces with 4NT with an overcall of 5♦ by West. North does not notice this and bids 5♣ which shows 1 or 4 key cards. If NS play the convention that pass now shows 1 ace the TD allows the auction to be continued without restrictions, both calls by South showing the number of aces and showing 1 ace being more precise than showing 1 or 4 aces. (With 5♣ showing 0 or 3 key cards, a double now has the same effect)

Notice that a double or redouble is not automatically forbidden. This was a change in the 2007/8 code.

- 4) 1NT – 2♠ - 2♦ (transfer to hearts, not accepted). If East now bids 3♥ the auction continues normally. This is a feature of the new 27B1a.
- 5) 1NT – 2♠ - 2♦ (transfer to hearts, not accepted). NS play Lebensohl which allows East to show the hearts by bidding 2NT, asking partner to bid 3♣ after which East bids 3♥. These

- two bids (2NT plus 3♥) do have a similar meaning as the insufficient 2♦ bid but the 2NT-bid in itself does not. Therefore it does not comply with the condition described in B1(b). We cannot allow a correction to 2NT without barring the insufficient bidder's partner.
- 6) 2NT – 2♠ (north thought he was overcalling a 1NT opening; it shows exactly 5 spades and an unknown 4+ minor suit). When 3♠ shows the same holding (i.e. they play the same agreement over 1NT and 2NT) the auction continues normally, but when it only shows spades partner has to pass throughout.
 - 7) 1NT – pass – 2♦ - 3♣
2♥ (replying to the transfer, not noticing the 3♣ bid). If 2♥ after the 2♦ transfer is automatic it does not carry any information. It may be corrected by any legal call, even pass. But if 3♥ now shows a maximum while the 2♥ call denied that maximum there is a problem. [To your ACBL editor that seems a bit harsh, treating 2♥ as showing “not a superaccept” as opposed to showing basically nothing means we could not allow a correction without barring partner. This feels contrary to the spirit of the Law change.]
 - 8) 1♣ - pass – 1♥ - pass
1♠ - 2♦ - 2♦ meant as '4th suit' not having seen opponent's call. Bidding 3♦ now should allow the auction to continue normally. It has the same meaning (asking, forcing) as the 2♦ bid. It might be stronger but those hands are also included in the 2♦-call.

When a player attempts to replace the insufficient bid without the TD being called the second call stands if it is legal unless LHO accepts the insufficient bid. The TD then decides whether it is a comparable call. If it is not, partner has to pass throughout. Otherwise the auction continues normally. Doubles or redoubles not allowed in accordance with B1(b) are cancelled and partner is forced to pass the rest of the auction.

All of the above notwithstanding, after a player makes an insufficient bid his LHO gets the choice to accept it. It might be relevant for him to know whether the offender has a call available with which the auction continues undisturbed. He is allowed to ask the TD about it. This means that the TD needs to ask the offender what he meant to do when making the insufficient bid. The TD should do this away from the table, to avoid creating UI. If the offender wants to know whether a replacement call fulfils the conditions of B1 the TD should tell him, also away from the table.

27D is worth a look as well. It may happen that the irregularity gives the offenders a better result than the one expected had this irregularity not occurred. If one makes an insufficient 1NT bid replaced by 2NT partner is allowed to take into account that there are at most 9 points, the contract might become 2NT where this would not be reached without the insufficient bid. The information in the insufficient bid is authorized, but if there was no way for this partnership to reach 2NT without an insufficient bid, we have to adjust the score. Or what if declarer and dummy end up reversed which leads to a profitable first lead for them? In that case 27D tells the TD to adjust the score, bringing it back to the expected result had the irregularity not occurred.

Example:

N/none									
		♠ J 10 8							
		♥ 9							
		♦ Q J 10 6							
		♣ A J 8 5 4							
♠ A K			N		E			♠ 9 7 2	
♥ 10 7 6 5								♥ A K Q 3	
♦ 8 5 3			S					♦ 9 7 2	
♣ 10 9 3 2								♣ K Q 7	
		♠ Q 6 5 4 3							
		♥ J 8 4 2							
		♦ A K 4							
		♣ 6							

W	N	E	S	
	pass	1♣	2♣	2♣ shows 5/4+ in the majors.
1NT		TD!		
2NT	all pass			

West did not see the 2♣ bid. He makes his bid sufficient with 2NT and the auction continues without any restriction.

The TD stays nearby and watches 2NT go quietly down two. Is there anything left for him to do?

If he stays at the table he might be able to decide whether the same thing would have happened without the insufficient bid. A super pro might even mention the possibility for an adjusted score when dealing with the irregularity. More experienced pairs will themselves sometimes suspect they have been damaged; less experienced pairs might think something is wrong but not know how to describe it. Look what happens without the 1NT bid. West hardly has another option than to pass after which North will bid 2♠, which becomes the contract to play. The probable outcome is nine tricks, reason enough to adjust the score.

Law 28

With South being dealer West opens the auction with 1♥ after which South bids 1♦. It is obvious that South did not notice the 1♥ bid, or didn't care, and wants to use his right to open the auction. This is allowed via Law 28B. The 1♥ bid is withdrawn and it is now West's turn to call following the 1♦ opening. The information from the withdrawn call is unauthorized for East. But if similar information becomes available via the legal auction, for example by an overcall of 1♥ this removes or reduces the unauthorized information.

Assume that with South being dealer East has opened the auction with 1♥ and South thereafter bids 1♠. The situation is less clear now. It is possible that South noticed the bid out of turn and made an overcall, but it is also possible that he ignored the 1♥ bid and wanted to open the bidding. The TD has to ask South about his intentions. Did he want to accept 1♥ and make an overcall, or was he opening the bidding 1♠? With an overcall the auction just continues, otherwise the 1♥ bid is withdrawn and creates unauthorized information for West.

When South is dealer and passes out of turn after which South bids 1♦ the situation is not different. If the TD is called he has to find out what South's intention is, to open the auction or

not, which leads to removing the pass or not.

The TD has to understand that Law 29A does not supersede Law 28B. The choice to take one's proper turn when at the offender's left does not forfeit rectification of the call out of rotation.

Law 29C

As a reminder, see L31A2 for an example of Law 29C in action.

In the examples used in laws 30, 31 and 32, West is dealer and the call out of turn is not accepted. We assume that no special agreements are used.

Law 30A (passing at RHO's turn) is the same: if LHO does not accept the pass out of turn, the offender will simply pass at his turn when it comes. Law 30B is completely different. There is no restriction on partner, except that he has UI from the cancelled pass out of turn. Even the offender is not required to pass. Now he can make a comparable call and have the auction continue normally. If he chooses something else, partner will have to pass for one turn.

Law 30B

1)

With North dealer the auction goes:

W	N	E	S
	pass	(not accepted, auction reverts to West)	

pass

If West's pass is not accepted his partner may make any call he wants, there is no restriction and he does not need to worry about an unexpected end of the auction because his partner may make any call that describes a hand for his pass out of turn. Let us assume that partner opens 1♥ and RHO passes. Then he has available calls such as pass, 2♥, 1NT, 3H, 2NT (depending on its meaning), some Bergen raises. If he chooses to make a non-comparable call partner has to pass once. These are all considered comparable as they are subsets of the universe of hands that would have passed to begin with. (Well except for Pass, which is considered comparable because it has the same meaning.)

2)

W	N	E	S
		pass	(not accepted, auction reverts to West)

1NT pass

East now is allowed to make any call he wants. We consider the fact that such call might show a strong hand in the partnership agreements is not really important. The main strength is within the pass range.

Law 31

The general approach is similar to the Law 30 (and Law 32) applications.

With RHO to call (31A)

If the legal call is comparable to the bid out of turn there is no restriction in the auction. If not partner has to pass once.

31B

With partner to call partner is not restricted and for the offender the same approach as in A applies.

W	N	E	S
1NT		2♦	(bid out of turn meant as a transfer for hearts)
	2♦	2♥	(real auction continues this way, East's bid shows hearts)

(see also Law 29C) Auction continues normally.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	(natural, not accepted)
1♠	X		

If East bids:

XX 10/11+ hcp comparable call; 2NT 10/11 not a comparable call;

W	N	E	S
1)		1♣	cancelled
1♠	X		is a comparable call; 2♣ is a comparable call

2)		2♦	Multi cancelled
1♦		2♥	weak is a comparable call

3)			
Pass	1NT	pass	2♥ transfer
		2♠	out of turn
3♣			North may make any call he wants; they are all comparable calls since 2♠ is meaningless.

Law 32

If a (re)double out of rotation is inadmissible the TD deals with it using Law 36B.

Otherwise the approach is similar to the one in Law 31: If the offender succeeds in making a comparable call the auction continues normally, if not partner has to pass once.

W	N	E	S
1S			X
	pass		South is in the lucky position that whatever call East makes a double now looks like a comparable call, expressing a similar or more precise meaning.

Law 40

The regulating authority has some possibilities to control the partnership agreements used. It may define special partnership understandings and regulate (also forbid) their use. It also may restrict the use of any psychic artificial call.

An interesting possibility is described in B2iv: disallowing anticipation in the system (varying the agreements) in case of questions asked, answers given or irregularities. In Law 27 a pair could for

example decide to use the double as the substituted call in case of any insufficient bid and to give this double the same meaning as the insufficient bid. That results in the auction to be continued normally. The regulating authority has the power to prevent such 'clever solutions'. A partnership of course should always be allowed to vary its agreements depending on the meaning of an opponent's call.

It is very poor form indeed to ask a question only when one's own holding suggests a surprise. A common example of this is:

W	N	E	S
pass	1♦	3♣	

3♣ is not alerted, but South has KJ1073 of clubs and nothing much in the majors. He suspects that East meant to show a two suiter in the majors and asks for the meaning. A player only has to do this twice and his partner will figure out what this question shows. This is not allowed; there must not be any predictable relation for a player between the decision to ask and his holding.

There is a condition added to 40B2c being allowed to consult the convention card of an opponent: when RHO asks the meaning of partner's call, which depends on the meaning of an opponent's call before.

The possibility for a regulating authority to allow a member of a partnership to play one or more elements of the system differently from his partner has been removed.

In 40B5 the approach in case of use of agreements that are not allowed is described. Apart from a possible procedural penalty the score is adjusted if the TD judges that the opponents are damaged. This means that the TD should not give an automatic artificial adjusted score but wait for the actual result and then adjust it if necessary.

Law 41

The last moment for declarer to ask for a review of the bidding is when he plays a card from dummy to the first trick (lead from LHO). Asking for explanations about a call he may do whenever he has to play a card, either from dummy or from his own hand.

41C tells us that once the opening lead has been faced up it is impossible to go back to the auction. Law 47 tells that it is still possible to replace the opening lead, faced up or down, as long as dummy has not faced any card.

41D has been made more specific about the way dummy spreads his hand. Not just towards declarer in lengthwise columns but also in descending order. It used to say "lowest ranking cards towards declarer," but apparently more explicit wording was needed.

Law 42A3

Added is that dummy has the duty to prevent declarer from revoking in dummy.

Law 43

43A3 says that a defender may not show dummy his hand. If dummy loses his rights, then the penalties specified in 43B2b and 43B3 are described more explicitly as follows:

43B2(b)

There will be a penalty of one or two tricks transferred to the defenders, starting the count of the number of tricks won (after restoring the revoke) with the trick dummy asks about.

43B3

Both sides create an irregularity. Dummy violates one of the limitations described in A and a defender violates the proper procedure, for example leads out of turn or plays a card before his partner has played one. If dummy draws attention to it there is no rectification, but if this leads to a better score for the defending side the TD takes this advantage away (assigns an adjusted score). The score for the declaring side is not altered. This creates a split score.

Implicitly this also states that if dummy draws attention to an irregularity by a defender without offending one of the limitations listed in A, the TD should apply the relevant law or laws and could award a procedural penalty.

Law 45

45C4b

The possibility to change a designated card in dummy is restricted to declarer and to cases where declarer has named the card. If he has played by touching the card and placing it in the middle of the table, the card cannot be changed anymore. The conditions are comparable with those in Law 25A. Declarer must not for the shortest possible moment have considered to play the card, and declarer's side must not have played a card thereafter. The reason for this different wording is that the bidding proceeds in a strict rotation, while the play in every trick starts at the winner of the previous trick. So it is possible that dummy plays two cards in a row without declarer playing a card in between.

Clearly a defender may withdraw a card he has played after the unintended designation and before attention is drawn to it. Such card creates UI for declarer.

L45D1

This law tells us that it is possible that 5 cards have to be withdrawn in case dummy plays a card that declarer did not designate to be played. That is because the play must be corrected if attention is drawn before both sides have played to the following trick. Declarer calls for a card from dummy but a wrong card is played; the trick is completed and the lead to the next trick is put on the table. If declarer now notices the mistake he is allowed to play the intended card from dummy. The TD should carefully explain to RHO that if he does not change his card declarer is not allowed to change his card either. LHO is allowed to change it anyway. Though the laws don't mention it explicitly, the card led to the next trick can be taken back. Withdrawn cards from the defenders cause UI for declarer.

L45D2

The laws no longer keep silent about the case when declarer does not notice in time that dummy did not follow the instruction and played a wrong card. In that case the trick stands and play continues, no card being withdrawn. If the lead was from dummy, not following suit might be a revoke and not following suit in dummy when playing a card not designated by declarer might also be a revoke.

When applying 45F's last sentence the TD should not decide that the defenders are damaged if

the suggested card would have been played by declarer anyway, or more strictly stated: if declarer did not have a logical alternative for the play he chose.

Law 46

This is one of the most misunderstood and misapplied Laws. It is important to notice and understand the phrase in parentheses in the heading of B: ‘except when declarer’s different intention is incontrovertible’.

An example:

dummy

♣KJ6

declarer

♠6

♣73

Declarer is in 4♠ and has won 8 tricks, the last in his hand. ♣ A and Q are not played yet and there are still 5 clubs in the remaining cards of the defenders. He plays a small club from his hand and west contributes the ♣8. He starts thinking for a while, shrugs his shoulders and says: ‘I don’t know, play one’. The defenders now want the TD to apply 46B5, giving them the choice for the card to be played from dummy, which then will be the ♣6 of course. That is not a reasonable ruling. It is completely obvious that South is going to play either the J or the K to fulfil his contract and has no clue which of those two to play. So that is the choice the TD is offering the defenders. Of course the remark by declarer is stupid, reducing the chance to make his contract from 50% to 25%. A more common example of applying this provision is “play anything”. Declarer’s intention is almost certainly, “play anything small”. An Ace would not count.

Law 50D

It’s now explicit in the law that in case both defenders have penalty card lead restriction caused by partner takes precedence over the obligation to play one’s own penalty card.

Example:

LHO to lead has the ♠J as penalty card while his partner has the ♠7 as a major penalty card. Declarer now prohibits the spade lead. This means that the ♠7 is put back in the hand, that LHO cannot lead his penalty card and that in case he retains the lead he cannot lead the ♠J to the following trick(s) either.

If declarer demands a spade lead, the ♠7 goes back and LHO has to play the ♠J. Although it sounds odd, it might be to declarer’s advantage to choose this option, so we still offer it.

If declarer doesn’t exercise his options related to the ♠7 being a penalty card, LHO has to lead the ♠J and RHO has to play the ♠7. The ramifications of each defender having a penalty card are not obvious even to experienced players, so it is incumbent on the director to explain them clearly.

Law 50E

The knowledge that a penalty card has to be played at the first legal opportunity is AI for both sides and has a remarkable consequence. Declarer is playing 4♥. If LHO has ♠KQJ5 and RHO has the ♠A as a penalty card (first lead from the wrong side) and declarer does not prohibit a spade lead, LHO is allowed to play the ♠5. He is not allowed to use the information that his

partner seems to have Ax in the spade suit. If this results in an extra trick for the defending side the TD should use his discretionary powers as described in Law 12A1 to adjust the score.

Laws 53 and 55

In case of declarer's lead from the wrong hand, either defender may accept that lead and does so by making such a statement. If no such statement is made the TD offers the player next in turn to the seat from which the wrong lead was played the opportunity to accept it.

In Laws 55B and 55C the assumption is that the 55A was applied, but the defenders did not accept declarer's lead out of turn.

In 53C the TD follows the same procedure as in Law 28B. If North leads and it was the turn of East to lead, then if East plays a card the TD has to find out whether he followed or wanted to lead. The case becomes quite obvious if North leads and West is on lead and plays a card. It's not as if West was following (anti-clockwise!) to the trick started by North. West was herself intending to lead. This law does not apply in cases where partners both play a card, the first out of turn and the second by the proper player. In that case the TD starts by offering the LHO of the player who led out of turn the chance to accept that lead. If he does, the other card becomes a major penalty card. If he does not accept it, the first played card becomes a major penalty card and the second becomes the lead to that trick.

Law 58

Assume that LHO being on lead 'produces' 2 cards on the table, both small. The TD asks him what his intention was (away from table if it seems appropriate):

1. If the defender in fact intended to play a third card (not one of the two he dropped), then both cards become major penalty cards. Declarer chooses one of them to be led.
2. If the defender intended to play one of the two dropped cards, then the director lets him play the card he wanted to play and the other becomes a minor penalty card.

Practically speaking the TD should not get into position 1) by assuming that the player wanted to play one of the cards when this happens. This also avoids the possibility of creating UI. It is safer to ask rather than assume.

Compare what happens but with an honour and a small card. Now the TD should tell the player that by playing the honour the remaining card becomes a minor penalty card, while playing the small card leaves him with a major penalty card. The director will explain what that means for subsequent tricks.

Law 61B3

The storm created in an earlier version of the code which prohibited defenders from asking each other whether they revoked is finally over. The default position in the Laws is that players are allowed to ask. The laws mention the possibility of creating UI by asking partner. This normally will not be the case; it might happen when the object of the question is not to avoid a revoke but to draw attention to an unexpected situation, declarer still having cards in that suit for example. If players ask routinely, it is hard to picture UI being transmitted when defenders ask each other about a revoke. If they ask rarely, or the tone of the question indicates surprise, then there is UI.

Example:

W	N	E	S
pass	pass	pass	1NT
pass	2♥	pass	2♠
pass	3NT	pass	4♠
pass	pass	pass	

West starts ♦Q; the dummy has K9873 K94 632 A95.

When RHO discards a club West asks: ‘no diamonds partner?’. Don’t be surprised if declarer appears to have AJ4 A7 AK10854 J6

Law 62C2

If one defender revokes, and it is early enough to correct it, declarer might choose to change her play (from hand or dummy). If she does so, and the other defender has already played to the trick, that defender might also change his play. Note that the defender is withdrawing a play as a member of the offending side; this withdrawn card becomes a penalty card.

Law 62D2

Just because there is no penalty for a revoke on trick twelve does not mean that the other defender gets to defend knowing both of his partner’s cards. This knowledge is UI.

Law 64

Remember that the only way for an automatic two-trick revoke penalty is for the offender to ruff the revoke trick and win it. All other revokes are a one-trick penalty. In either case, the penalty cannot exceed the number of tricks won by the offending side beginning with the revoke!

We always have to restore equity, applying Law 64C. If the revoke costs the non-offending side more than the number of tricks to be transferred, the director has to transfer enough tricks to restore equity. A small change was made to 64B—there is now no rectification when both sides have revoked on the same board only when both revokes have become established, and a reference now appears in 64C2b requires the TD to adjust the score when there is damage from this lack of penalty. He adjusts to the likely result with no revoke at all.

A similar situation arises when there is a second revoke by the same player in the same suit. It asks for the application of Law 64C if the result on the board for the non-offending side would have been better without that second revoke.

Example:

	AKQ5	
1074		J9
	8632	

South is declarer in a NT contract. He plays to the Ace, East does not follow suit: one trick will be transferred later. He continues with the K and East revokes again. Later East wins a trick with the J.

If East had not revoked a second time declarer would have made 4 spade tricks and an extra trick

as rectification for the revoke. Due to the second revoke he only makes three spade tricks. Applying 64C2a the TD adjusts the score by giving him the tricks he would have received with only one revoke made (4 plus 1).

Law 65B

Any player other than declarer, may draw attention to a wrongly-pointed played card until there is a lead made to the next trick. Thereafter he creates UI by doing so. Declarer may do so anytime he wants.

If for example declarer plays 3NT and has made 7 tricks with still a finesse available to win his 9th trick and dummy partner warns him illegally that he has a card turned wrong the TD has to consider that declarer might have thought he already had 8 tricks. He might not want to finesse, avoiding risking his contract. At IMPs, that seems an almost automatic ruling, at matchpoints, it might be more complicated.

Law 67

Creating a defective trick by not playing a card to it is treated as an established revoke costing one trick if the mistake is discovered after both sides have played to the next trick.

If a player played too many cards to a trick, that might also create a revoke: when the restored card should have been played following suit after the infraction (67B2b).

Law 68

A claim and/or concession is an initiative to curtail play. It is the task of the opponents to agree or not with such claim/concession. Play ceases with one exception: if a defender concedes one or more tricks (claiming the other, if there are) and his partner immediately objects the TD will decide that play continues. And he will warn the conceding player that he may not gain any advantage from the knowledge that partner thinks our side may still have a trick coming. If a logical alternative play (by the conceding player) exists that leads to fewer tricks than end up being taken, that would lead to an adjusted score. This case shows another exception in the creation of penalty cards. Shown cards by the defenders to support or contradict the claim/concession can be taken back and do not become penalty cards. The information arising from those is authorized for declarer and unauthorized for partner-defender.

The footnote to this laws refers to cases like the following:

Dummy: KJ8 (with possibly cards in other suits)

Declarer plays the 5 to this holding in dummy and starts thinking for some time. If RHO now puts down or shows the AQ in this suit, he's just letting declarer know that it doesn't matter: he will play the appropriate card to win the trick. These cards do not become penalty cards, but it might be wise for RHO to cash both A and Q on this and the next trick--the possession of these cards is now UI for LHO. If declarer continues a line of play through which he might not lose a second trick in this suit (LHO getting the lead and having a logical alternative), the TD could be called upon to adjust the score.

Law 68D

There is a big change here. Now the Law complies with what often happens at many tables after a claim is contested. The Law now says that, at the request of the non-claiming side, and with the concurrence of all four players, play may continue. No UI, no penalty cards, just let 'em play. If someone objects, it is handled as a traditional contested claim.

Law 69

The 2007/8 code became more lenient towards the agreeing side's later discovery that it conceded a trick too readily/hastily. When the TD decides that it is likely that the agreeing side would have won this trick had play been continued it gets it back.

Example 1:

	♥8	
	♦6	
♠8		♠7
♥J		♦8
	♠96	

South plays a spade contract and when leading the ♥8 from dummy he claims the last 2 tricks without showing any card (he knows that West has the ♥J, so can't overruff). East assumes that South has both 98 in trumps, so everybody is happy and play of the next board starts. Only when seeing the hand records East notices that South made an invalid claim. The TD should assume that East when play had been continued would have ruffed and award a trick to EW.

Example 2:

	♠KQJ6	
	♥--	
	♦--	
	♣--	
♠52		♠A3
♥3		♥8
♦7		♦--
♣--		♣2
	♠7	
	♥A	
	♦A	
	♣A	

South is declarer in a NT contract. And by leading ♠K from dummy and showing his three aces claims three tricks.

Case 1: Both defenders accept the claim. But if one of them before their side makes a call on the next board discovers that not playing the ♠A now, squeezes declarer, Law 70A applies and the claim should be denied.

Case 2: After that time, but within the correction period EW discover that the three tricks are not automatic. The TD should decide that they are too late to change the result. If East does not discover this play at the table it is probably correct to rule that EW would not have won extra tricks had play been continued.

Law 70

When judging the validity of a claim it is important to follow and understand the reasons for the claim at that specific moment.

1096

AKJ87

The only problem on this board for declarer is to find the Q in this suit. He plays the 10 from dummy, RHO follows suit, the 7 from hand and LHO discards. Reaching for the 9 and claiming four more tricks in this suit now without further explanation might not be what the laws prefer but should not be penalized by awarding a trick to the defenders. If declarer does not play the 9 and does not have an entry to dummy, claiming now is sloppy.

Hopefully superfluous, but doing no harm, unchanged 70D2 tells that a claim by a defender which only succeeds when partner-defender makes the right non-obvious play should be denied.

Law 79

A scoring error is defined as a registered result which is not in accordance with the agreed-upon result (normally related to the number of tricks won and lost, (re)doubled or not). Examples are: score entered in the wrong direction, wrong vulnerability, wrong contract, or a mistaken correction of an adjusted score.

The correction period for both scoring error and miscounted number of tricks won or lost normally is the same: 30 minutes unless decided otherwise. Law 79 allows the tournament organizer to make a distinction and to increase the period for correction of a scoring error. Regulations need to explain how to handle this possibility. Organizers should be encouraged to be liberal in getting the score recorded which accurately represents what took place at the table, particularly when the only reason it is not recorded that way was an error reporting the result.

Law 80

In these laws the regulating authority needs to define the circumstances under which bridge is played in its territory in case the laws offer a choice. It may decide to delegate or assign this choice to the tournament organizer.

Law 86D

When in team play a board for whatever reason cannot be played at a table and it has already been played at the other table it is possible to deviate from the routine artificial adjusted score. To do this we check to see whether there was an unusual result on the played board. The TD works with a range of normal results on a board, which do not ask for the application of this law. Given the fact that the innocent side would receive some IMPs anyway (such as +3 for average plus) a couple of not doubled overtricks are not considered an unusual result.

When the innocent side received a very good score and the board is made unplayable at this table (by the other side) it is critical to give an assigned adjusted score with full weight to this result. In the other case: the team that got a good score at one table caused the board to be cancelled at the other, if the TD gives an assigned adjusted score the weight of the good result ought to be small: 30% would be reasonable.

If the board has to be cancelled because of a mistake at the second table, and the innocent side received a very good result at the other table it should get full weight. If the offenders received a very good score the weight can be less (50% seems reasonable). And if no side is responsible the weight could be somewhat higher (such as 60%).

Laws 92 and 93

There is a default description of the procedure for appeals. With reference to Law 80 this procedure has to be followed if the regulating authority does not describe a different approach. Law 93C3(b) tells us that appeals may be dealt with in any way the regulating authority wishes. But the possibility to appeal a decision to the chief TD as described in Law 93A is mandatory and should be maintained.