



New Laws of Duplicate Bridge 2017



The laws are updated about every ten years, and the latest version will come into effect in EBU events from start of August. From a player's point of view, there are no changes to the mechanics or scoring of the game, so you can essentially continue to play your familiar game and allow the TDs to worry about dealing with any irregularities that arise. There have been and will continue to be a number of courses offered around the country for TDs to get to grips with the new laws. They will also be well advised to ensure they first check all their familiar rulings in the new book.

There are however a couple of changes that players would gain from being aware of. The first is that under the new laws, if a claim or concession has been made play is only **suspended**; if the non-claiming side suggest playing on and if all four players agree to it they may do so. This is not recommended because if they do, the TD will not get involved at all if the claim is subsequently doubted: the outcome at the table will be final.

The big change that will affect players is the introduction of the new concept in Law 23 of a *comparable call*:

A call that replaces a withdrawn call is a comparable call, if it:

- 1. has the same or similar meaning as that attributable to the withdrawn call, or***
- 2. defines a subset of the possible meanings attributable to the withdrawn call, or***
- 3. has the same purpose (e.g. an asking bid or a relay) as that attributable to the withdrawn call.***

This is similar to the existing idea for allowing replacements bids for insufficient bids but it has been a bit more clearly explained and most importantly **its application has been extended to apply to Calls Out Of Turn** as well as insufficient bids. In most instances, replacing an insufficient bid or a call out of rotation with a comparable call will allow the auction just to continue.

This should reduce the occasions on which one partner or another is barred from bidding, which has tended to leave the pair concerned to guess, leading to the undesirable situation that the result is largely dependent on luck.

One of the beneficial effects of this change is that the frequency of lead penalties under Law 26 will be greatly reduced and much easier for the TD to implement.

Do note though that **if you appear to have gained** by an insufficient bid or a call out of turn, **the TD always has the ability to adjust the score at the end of the hand.**



Examples of Comparable Calls

First an example of how the new law might work when a player makes an opening pass out of turn at partner's turn to call, not accepted by the opponents.

N S

P

1♥ 2♥/3♥/4♥/1NT would all be comparable calls in most systems because they all show less than opening values and so are **subsets** of an opening Pass. In contrast,

1♠ or 2♦ responses would not be considered comparable calls in this situation because they are unlimited, and the knowledge that the player had less than opening values would be additional information beyond that legitimately provided by the replacement bid.

N E S W

1NT 2♦ transfer bid out of turn, not accepted.

 2♠ 3♥ or 4♥ would both be considered to be comparable calls, as indeed would any other call that shows five or more hearts (e.g. a 3♦ transfer), since that is all that the out-of-turn 2♦ bid showed.

However, a Lebensohl 2NT bid, intending to bid hearts on the next round, would not be comparable since the 2NT bid (on its own) does not contain the information that the hand has five hearts, and so it is not a **subset** of the dis-allowed 2♦ bid.

For insufficient bids, here are a couple of examples:

N S

1♥ 4NT Blackwood

5♦ 4NT Insufficient, not accepted. This could be replaced with a 5NT call and it would be considered comparable because it **has the same purpose as that attributable to the withdrawn call.**

N E S W

2♠ 1NT East tries to open a strong NT (15-17) not having noticed that North has opened a weak 2♠. A 2NT overcall would be seen as comparable call because it would be considered to have a **similar meaning**, even if they play it as showing 15-18hcp.

In any of these cases where a comparable call has been used, lead penalties do not apply if the player ends up defending. When a comparable call has not been used, declarer may prohibit the offender's partner, at their first turn to lead, from leading any one suit that was not specified by the offender in the legal auction.