



Crib Sheet for TD's

Most Common Irregularities requiring a TD ruling

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Remember that the main objective of the TD's rulings is to restore equity, as if the irregularity had not occurred, NOT to penalise.

1. OPENING LEAD OUT OF TURN (Law 54, page 35)

Declarer has five options: -

- 1 Accept the lead, and the hand which should be dummy is immediately tabled. Declarer plays next, with the lead going round to dummy who plays fourth to trick 1 instead of second.
- 2 Accept the lead, and declarer can become dummy by tabling their hand, and partner plays the contract.
- 3 Reject the lead, which then reverts to the correct hand to lead. Declarer can then require the lead of the suit led, and the exposed card is picked up and returned to hand. The defender now leading must not take advantage of seeing the card led out of turn, but declarer may do so. For example, 10 ♦ is led out of turn, declarer demands a diamond lead, and 10 ♦ is returned to hand. Defender say holds ♦ QJ93, he must lead Q ♦ because this is the normal card; he cannot lead small, because his knowledge that partner holds 10 ♦ is unauthorised information.
- 4 Reject the lead, which then reverts to the correct hand to lead. Declarer can then forbid the lead of the suit for as long as he holds the lead. The exposed card is picked up. Again, defender is not allowed to "know" that partner holds the card led out of turn on the opening lead.
- 5 Let the correct defender lead whatever they wish. The exposed card is a major penalty card.

2. REVOKE (Law 64, page 39)

2.1 There are three questions for the TD to ask

- i. Has the offending side played a card to the next trick?

If NO, then revoke is not established – see 2.2 Unestablished revoke

If YES:

- ii. Did offender win the revoke trick?
- iii. Did the offending side win any subsequent trick?

The offending side is penalised one trick for each yes answer.

However, in some cases the non-offending side might lose more tricks because of the revoke, than the above penalty allows for. The TD should also ask the non-offending side.

- iv. Do you think you would have made more tricks if the revoke had not happened?

If so, and this is justified, the TD restores equity by transferring the required number of tricks.

Example: a revoke cuts declarer off from dummy which has 4 winners. Declarer gets a two trick transfer, but that doesn't make up for the four tricks they lost. The TD should transfer another two tricks to restore equity. (Law 64C)

2.2 Unestablished revoke

A player revokes, but it is noticed before their side plays to the next trick (see Law 63A)

(a) By a defender

- The card played in error becomes a major penalty card.
- The offender follows suit with any card.

(b) By declarer or dummy

- The card played in error is returned to hand without penalty.
- The offender follows suit with any card

In other words declarer's side cannot have a penalty card.

If the non-offending side has played a subsequent card, that can be withdrawn without penalty. If the offender's partner has also played a subsequent card and they withdraw it, it becomes a major penalty card.

3 INSUFFICIENT BID (Law 27, page 7)

3.1 Mechanical error

If the offender has pulled wrong card from the bidding box by accident, he can correct it, under Law 25A, if their partner has not bid. A call, once made, may be changed without penalty under Law 25A only if the change is solely due to the player having taken the wrong card in error (ie it is not a change of mind) and the player's partner has not subsequently called.

3.2 Not a mechanical error

Option 1 The LHO (ie the next person to bid) can accept the bid, and the auction continues as normal. So for example after say North opens 1♠, and east bids 1♦ (an insufficient bid), South may accept the bid and then legitimately bid 1♥ if he chooses.

Option 2 The LHO (ie the next person to bid) may reject the insufficient bid.

Options for the offender are then

- i. Make the bid sufficient at the lowest level, without penalty.
- ii. Replace the insufficient bid with a comparable call, without penalty.

A comparable call is a bid which has the same meaning, for example 1♥ – 2♣ – 1♠

Here the 1♠ bid is insufficient, but can be replaced by X, if X would show 4 spades, ie playing negative doubles. The offender also has the option to replace his insufficient bid with 2♠, showing 5 spades.

- iii. Make any other call, except double or redouble, unless it is a comparable call. Offender's partner is silenced for the remainder of the auction.

4 MAJOR AND MINOR PENALTY CARDS (Law 50-52)

Most penalty cards are Major penalty cards.

4.1 Minor penalty card

A penalty card is only minor if it's a spot card (2 to 9), and has been exposed accidentally on its own. The only requirement is to play it when you are following with a small card in that suit. So for example if you've dropped the 6 ♦ when sorting your hand so it was visible (it doesn't matter whether any player actually saw it or not), then you can play any other diamond from the 10 ♦ upwards, but if you are playing a spot card diamond you must play the 6 ♦.

4.2 Major penalty card

This includes

- Any honour card played or exposed accidentally
- Any card played deliberately, but in error (eg out of turn)
- Any of two or more accidentally exposed cards (Law 50B)

A major penalty card must be played at the first legitimate opportunity.

Lead penalties apply to offender's partner every time he is on lead while the penalty card remains on the table. Declarer may

- i. Require offender's partner to lead that suit. The exposed card is picked up and need not necessarily be played.
- ii. Forbid offender's partner to lead that suit. The exposed card is picked up.
- iii. Let offender's partner lead whatever he wishes – the exposed card remains as a major penalty card and lead restrictions remain each time offender's partner is leading. (Law 50D)