

Notes on Q&A Session QBA Director Training Day 2025

These have been done largely from memory and may not precisely match answers on the day.

1. I understand a player should not ask about a bid if he has no intention of bidding. Is that right?

A. Yes and No. The laws give players the absolute right to ask questions at their turn to make a call so, they may ask simply because they want to know what's going on although always intending to pass. However, the usual advice is to avoid asking questions unless one needs to have more information there and then for the purpose of deciding what to call.

ABF Regulations: Hence whilst the Laws grant the right to ask questions, unnecessary inquiries, or questions directed at particular calls, may limit partner's options in the subsequent bidding or play. It is therefore advisable not to ask questions if the intention is to pass regardless of the answer.

2. My query is about Law 61B3 when a defender asks declarer about a possible revoke by declarer. When is that NOT UI?

If the answer is that it is always UI, why is that provision permitted in 61B3?

In asking this, it is acknowledged that it doesn't really make sense for a defender to ask as it allows declarer to correct their possible revoke immediately and therefore the defenders would not potentially gain penalty tricks.

A. Automatic trick adjustment is designed to simply return things to normal. Occasionally declarer may lose a trick that would not have been lost in normal play but possibly not often enough to justify never asking. A defender's play could change when thinking declarer has a void so the position may be worth clarifying rather than trusting a later adjustment to be favourable.

UI may be created when the question comes with a note of surprise. "I'm short. There's two on the table. How can you be out of them?"

3. When asking bidder's partner for an explanation of a bid, may we insist on the inclusion of (a) point count range, and (b) number of cards in the suit?

Before the opening lead is faced, who may ask for clarification of bids (point range and number of cards) - either defender and/or declarer?

Prior to the opening lead card being removed from the hand i.e. before it is selected, may partner ask for an explanation of the bids by declarer and dummy?

When recording the result of a hand, is it critical to record the opening lead precisely i.e. suit and value, as apposed to just the suit?

A. If a player hasn't given this basic information he requires, then he should ask again. If it is still not forthcoming, he should call the Director. Describing a call as "weak" knowing that agreement is 5-9 is not good enough.

The ABF Regulations are clear. "Players should adhere to the principle of full disclosure (as required by the Laws) in following these Regulations and in explanations of calls. The principle is to disclose, not as little as you must, but as much as you can, and as comprehensibly as you can."

"If an enquiry is made, a full explanation of the call must be given. This includes any conventional or partnership agreement, whether the agreement is explicit or based on

partnership experience. Explanations may well include distributions and point ranges specifically excluded by a call, as well as those shown directly.”

The player who is on opening lead may ask questions before choosing his lead. Once the card has been placed face down, the other defender and declarer may ask questions.

The card is faced only after it is clear there are no (more) questions to be asked.

Should the partner not on lead start asking questions before the lead is chosen, then UI could be created. It is also creating UI to say, “Make the opening lead face down. I have a question.” This is a good example of where being taught to follow correct procedure can prevent problems.

Having been asked for the lead to be recorded means that the correct lead is required. It may be useful to solve problems. Now that leads may be checked against the hand record, the habit of recording the D2, or any old card, as the lead is largely a thing of the past.

4. Playing sort of Standard American, if a player opens 1C and partner must respond whatever his points and shape, is that still a green system?

A. No. 1C may not be forcing (i.e. the agreement can't be that responder must *never* pass 1C in an uncontested auction) as part of a green system.

5. To decide if a call is comparable, I need to know what the agreements are.

It often crosses my mind that the offender tells me what he would like the agreement to be, even though it may never have been discussed or used and not general bridge knowledge. There are no system notes.

What do I do having ruled the replacement call to be comparable only to discover that partner believes it has a non-comparable meaning?

A. The Director hasn't made an error. (When the Director rules a call to be comparable, when it is not, is considered to be a Director's error.) It could be the partner who has the agreement wrong. If there is no agreement, then a wide number of calls could be comparable. Perhaps best to continue rather than having UI created within the partnership and use Law 23C or Law 27D to mop up later when more is known.

6. My question is about the interplay between Laws 25 and 27.

East is dealer and passes. South, with a strong hand, opens 1H and West overcalls 3S which is weak and sacrificial. North, with a strong hand intends to bid 4C which their partnership agreement clearly shows is reserved on every occasion for Gerber, but mistakenly grasps 3C.

The Director is called. East (Law 27) wants to accept the bid and pass. North, though, (Law 25), realizes his mistake and shows the Director that with the shape of his hand he clearly did not intend to bid Clubs.

He argues that he reached for the 4C bidding card and didn't notice until it was on the table that he had grasped the wrong one.

It seems to me that one Law should take precedence over the other.

If Director rules that North can change his bid due to a 'mechanical error' and not 'loss of concentration', what prevents all players making the same argument when they make an insufficient bid?

A. When the Director arrives at the table and asks, "What's the problem?", it is up to North to say, "I didn't mean to pull out 3C." If East says at the same time, "3C is insufficient and I want to accept it," then Law 25 is applied first. It simply does not work to apply Law 27 first.

The director doesn't ask whether a call was intended, unless perhaps there are some vibes that it wasn't. (In that case, he takes North from the table before asking any questions.) Players may see the question as offering an escape route or feel indignant over any suggestion that an infraction was intentional.

After North's statement, take him away from the table and find out how the 3C came to be on the table. Have him leave his cards on the table because the Director doesn't need to look at the hand. The first thing players want to do is show the Director their cards. Even with leaving their cards behind, they often can't try to tell the Director fast enough what cards they held.

No one pretends applying Law 25 is easy. The Director should be convinced was not intended. There is difference between what a player *should obviously* have called and what he *decided* to call.

While table feel can be important, it is difficult here to think that North *decided* to bid 3C to ask for aces.

7. A regular player at the club has been observed to frequently detach a card from their hand when playing to a trick, think for a bit, then detach a different card and play that card or revert to the first card & play that card or switch to a third card.

It seems that this will convey UI to their partner regarding the player's holding in that suit and may also result in a line of play that would not be obvious had the UI not occurred. What is the best approach to dealing with this - both from a director standpoint & also to ensure equity is maintained for the non-offending side?

A. Normally a bad habit and education will help. Yes, there could be UI that the decision is difficult, no obvious lead, perhaps more than one unsupported honour. Called at the time the Director could chide the player for his bad habit, warn his partner to ignore any UI that may have been created and advise the opponents to call him back at the end of the hand if they still have concerns.

8. Where can we find a clear set of notes on what to alert and announce in bridge. I have not yet found anything clear on this - it is quite subjective and not precise - unlike the laws.

A. Oops. This one was missed on the day. Sorry. Announcing is clear enough. Only 1C and natural 1NT opening bids are announced so that's a matter of education.

Alerting regulations could be much larger but can't hope to cover the ever-increasing number of modifications to systems and changes to what is considered normal. Especially as "normal" changes with the territory.

The QBA includes in its regulations a number of clarifications that have been made over the years for application in its own events.

9. After East bid 5♠, West produced a sound of surprise and East discovered that he took the wrong bidding card out of the box.

He intended to bid 4♠. Does “unintended call” still apply?

A. Yes, it could be applied if unintended. Law 25A does not distinguish between how the player discovered that he made an unintended call. Many years ago, he had to wake up all by himself but a later clarification allowed him to be woken up by an outside agency.

10. What to do, in a club situation, when players that do not have a system card yet play a very non-standard, complex system? Very experienced players.

A. This will depend on the club rules. If a pair requires one or more properly completed system cards to be available to the opponents, then the Director simply does his job of applying the regulations.

If there is a more relaxed style, then perhaps provide them with a card to be completed and explain that less experienced players are struggling to follow their complex system.

11. Movements & play for Teams events in a club situation.

A club red point event, run over two 3 hour sessions. Anything from 5 to 10 teams - should we go Round Robin or Swiss and why?

Do we need to consider that fact that we are likely to have 1 or maybe 2 really strong teams, a couple of really weak teams, and the majority in the middle? Does that affect the approach.

A. The things you probably wish to avoid are having two sessions of different length and splitting matches over the two sessions.

Smaller numbers lend themselves two sessions of American Whist, New England Relay or Stagger movements. A team's imp from each session are added together to form a single match result and then usually converted to VP.

While a Swiss movement is not totally out of the question for 10 teams, the draw for the last match or two will most likely be between teams widely separated in the results and this is often found undesirable.

As for your 1 or 2 strong teams. Your entry is what it is. At least with running the movements suggested as suitable for small numbers, they are met in smaller doses.

12. My question is about polling. If there has been a call based on UI that caused damage to the opponents, and I want to adjust the score, is it sufficient to look at the results to see what most tables did?

A. Polling establishes whether an infraction occurred and involves the same class of player playing the same system as the suspected offender. Other tables would almost certainly have involved players of different ranks, different systems, different auctions, different opening leads as well as possible infractions like revokes, leads out of turn etc.

So, no, basing the *decision* to adjust a score on the results at other table is not good practice.

Once the Director has decided that an infraction did occur and that damage did occur, and has decided on one or more likely final contracts, it can be useful to look at the other results to get a feel for how successful these might have been.

13. 1s (x) 2d (2s)
 2NT (p) p (3s)
 X (p) p (p)

The 3s bidder did not become aware of what had happened until they started playing. Is the doubler allowed to make her partner aware that she might have misread the bid? The doubler read it as 1s. If so, presumably the 2s bidder can change her bid? If not, should there be a score adjustment?

A. The ABF Regulations say: "The Director is the sole judge and final arbiter in respect to the legibility of any written call. A player has no redress if he has made a call based on his own misunderstanding (Law 21A). If however, in the opinion of the Director, a player has made a mistaken call as a result of an opponent's illegible handwriting, then Law 21B may be applied."

The illegible call is considered misinformation.

Called to the table, the Director decides if 1S looked like 1D from the angle the opponent was viewing it. There seems little partner can do though the fact that he considered the need to ask may lend weight to the claim that it was not legible.

As play has started, an adjusted score would be considered if the Director found 1S to be illegible, and that damage occurred.