

New Law 50E

Robin Barker – 22 May 2017 – revised

Information from a Penalty Card

Current Law 50E (2007)

1. *Knowledge of the requirements for playing a penalty card is authorized information for all players.*
2. *Other information derived from sight of a penalty card is unauthorized for the partner of the player who has the penalty card (but authorized for declarer).*
3. *If the Director judges that the exposed card conveyed such information as to damage the non-offending side he shall award an adjusted score.*

New Law 50E (2017)

1. *Information derived from a penalty card and the requirements for playing that penalty card are authorized for all players for as long as the penalty card remains on the table.*
2. *Information derived from a penalty card that has been returned to hand [as per Law 50D2(a)] is unauthorized for the partner of the player who had the penalty card (see Law 16C), but authorized for declarer.*
3. *Once a penalty card has been played, information derived from the circumstances under which it was created is unauthorized for the partner of the player who had the card. (For a penalty card which has not yet been played, see E1 above.)*
4. *If following the application of E1 the Director judges at the end of play that without the assistance gained through the exposed card the outcome of the board could well have been different, and in consequence the non-offending side is damaged (see Law 12B1), he shall award an adjusted score. In his adjustment he should seek to recover as nearly as possible the probable outcome of the board without the effect of the penalty card(s).*

EBU White Book (2016)

8.50.2 Law 50E: Knowledge of major penalty card [WBFLC]

A distinction must be made between the requirement that the player must play this card and information that the player has the card. Initially the underlead from KQJx to partner's Ax is allowed, but subsequently the Director may decide that 50E3 applies.

The player must convince the Director that he has not gained from the information that the player possesses the card.

[WBFLC minutes 2008-10-10#3]

Example

Dealer West, EW vulnerable:

W	N	E	S
1NT	pass	pass	4♠
pass	pass	pass	

1NT is 15-17. West leads a club, East plays ♠A, East notices this is a revoke, substitutes ♣2, and South ruffs; the ♠A is a major penalty card. South now leads a small spade and West, holding ♠K doubleton, would have a guess (if it were not for the knowledge of ♠A). It appears that it is legal for West to play small but the TD may adjust the score on the basis that West might get this wrong without the information from the penalty card.

Comments

In E1 (and E2), “information derived from a penalty card” is all information, including the fact that offender holds the card, that offender must play the card (E1 only), and how it became a penalty card (for example: that the card was led, that it is a suit offender wanted to lead, it is the systemic honour/pip lead from offenders holding in the suit).

E3 covers information except that offender held the card, and played the card to the later trick, and had to play it (E1 only).

In E4, “without the effect of the penalty card(s)” means as if the card(s) had not been exposed”

This new law may require a change to the spiel for OLOOT – at least for the advanced TD. Before declarer chooses, they should know that if they make a lead restriction, the card is picked up and there is UI; if there is no lead restriction, the card is not picked up there is no UI (but there may still be an adjustment at the end of play).

Re White Book: I suggest that the WBFLC minute is now irrelevant and should be removed; in the text of the example, “It appears that it is legal” should be (simply) “It is legal”.