



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A call that replaces a withdrawn call is a comparable call, if it: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 has the same or similar meaning as that attributable to the withdrawn call, or***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 defines a subset of the possible meanings attributable to the withdrawn call, or***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 has the same purpose (e.g. an asking bid or a relay) as that attributable to the withdrawn call.***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.**

