

## Slow play- bullet points for TD training weekend seminar/discussion

There are more complaints from players about slow play than any other single issue, even though in general our events run to their scheduled time. Obviously different people play at different speeds and as well as chasing up slow players it's important to ensure that those who want to use up all their allotted time are allowed to do so without being harassed by fast players.

- Practical matters for TDs
  - Start as you intend to continue: slow first rounds are hard to recover from
  - Keep up gentle pressure on slow players
  - Walking around your section moving boards in pairs events keeps you in touch with what is going on and gives you an early warning of slow areas developing
  - Encourage players not to waste time between rounds –
    - get them to enter the main details in the Bridgemate while play is going on so that completing the score is a rapid task
    - suggest that they make the opening lead before writing down the contract
    - stop them from discussing hands if they are running behind
    - players who are habitually disorganised and take a long time to move (especially due to age or infirmity) might be better given stationary positions. They can be marked on the EBU database to be routinely given sitting positions.
  
- Taking boards away:
  - Harder in teams when the other table has played the board (except in Point-a-Board where there is a procedure for the other table's score to count)
  - Slow tables in Swiss Pairs slow down the whole event. Should we be assigning before the final table has finished? We can temporarily award 60/60 to avoid mismatches, but need to be sure we are really saving time by doing this.
  - In pairs it's only a couple of tables that are affected by one slow table (more in a Howell movement) so we tend to hope they will all catch up on the next round. Players usually promise to do this but are often incapable of it. We must also remember that two of the pairs being asked to catch up will not have been responsible for the situation and may feel resentful at being asked to play fast
  - Once a board has been started (once any of the players has seen their hand) it must be allowed to be completed. Boards may only be taken away when they have not been started (or have been started contrary to the TD's instructions).

- Scoring – never score an unplayed board as Not Played – use L12 to give 40/50/60% according to fault. We shouldn't be awarding more than 100% in total unless there was an outside agency involved in the slowness. Conversely it is acceptable to give less than 100% in total. Take that message back to your clubs/counties! Many of them think they can do as they like in this regard and they must be disabused of that notion.
- Fining
  - This is something we rarely do for slow play, but perhaps we should do more. The Schedule of Standard Penalties in the [White Book](#) tells us to give a warning for the first offence and then to fine for subsequent offences
  - If we are giving fines, we need to have warned the pair/s concerned and must be consistent in issuing them.
- Fast players shouldn't be allowed to habitually start late, eg after a cigarette break, as it puts pressure on their opponents who may not be such fast players. Such players should be considered responsible for lateness even if they are not themselves slow.
- We tend not to hurry along tables that are slow on the last round of a session, because they don't hold anyone else up. In general I think players accept this, though I have had it questioned by one player who asked me: "What about other tables who might have hurried unnecessarily to finish in time?" If we are going to be more lenient on the last round, we should inform players who might be affected.
- Consistency in a large Swiss field:
  - We need to ensure all boards have been given out before starting the timer
  - If we are to take boards away with 3 minutes on clock we need to have announced it and do it for all tables. We also need to consider whether both sides were equally responsible. It's rare to get a pair who will accept that the lateness was entirely their fault.
  - One problem in taking away boards is that often a table will have started by the time we get to them to tell them not to. This is especially difficult in a large field.