

Just because...

by MATTHEW MCMANUS



Matthew McManus has been the Chief Director of the NSWBA since 1995. He officiates at a number of events around the country and in New Zealand in his capacity as a National Director, and is a very occasional bridge player.

Continuing on from the last article, here are some more common misconceptions and examples of inaccurate conventional wisdom. Just because you think you know the laws, be prepared....

Just because an opponent concedes one more trick to you, it does not mean that you will get it if there is no possible way that you could win it. For example, declarer claims saying, *"I have got the rest apart from your high trump"*. Declarer has forgotten that neither you nor you partner has any more trumps. It is unethical to accept this trick which you could not possibly win. And similarly....

Just because an opponent claims a certain number of tricks, it does not mean that that is the result if they have already won more than that. For example, declarer is in 1NT and takes the first seven tricks. He then concedes the rest, saying, *"One off"*. You have a responsibility to correct him – *"No, you made your contract."*

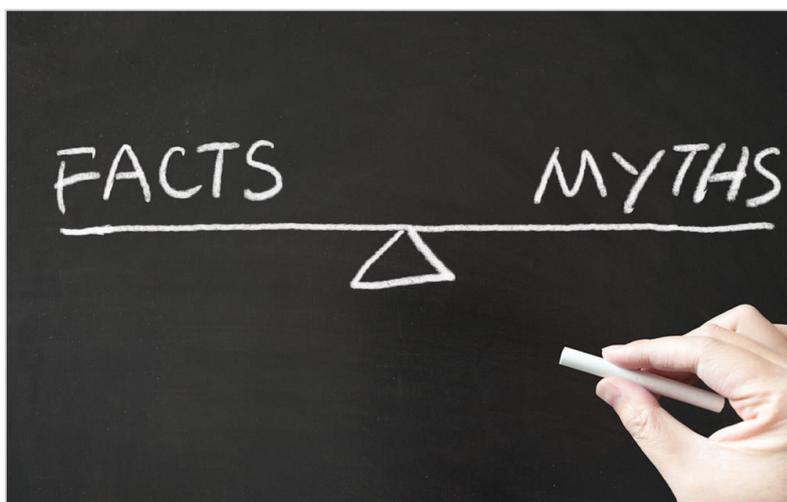
Just because you say you counted your cards, it doesn't mean that you will have 13 of them at the end of the hand. The Laws require players to count their cards before looking at them at the start of the hand. It also requires that this count ensures that you have 13. Many players either don't count or count carelessly. If at the end you find you are missing one or more, expect the worst when the director comes.

Just because the opponents gave you the wrong information about the meaning of one of their calls, it does not mean that the director will adjust the final score in your favour. For the director to award an adjusted score, first he has to establish that the explanation you were given was not according to their system, and then you have to demonstrate how the wrong information adversely affected your side. Only then will the director consider changing the score.

Just because you think it is freezing cold, it doesn't mean everyone else does. Please remember!

Just because everyone has turned over the cards, it is not too late to correct a revoke. In fact, a member of the non-offending side may even have led to the next trick and it can still be corrected. The moral of the story is: if you revoke, say something as soon as you realise it. The sooner you say something, the less bad it is likely to be for your side.

*So you think you know
the law?*



Just because you have a board left to play in the round, it doesn't mean that you have the absolute right to play it. If your table is slow, the director has the power to – and should – tell you not to play the board and take an average, or make some other ruling about the board (eg. maybe average plus or average minus). The biggest and most frequent complaints that the director usually encounters are about slow play. One of his responsibilities under the Laws is to ensure the orderly movement of the session. If you are told not to play a board, you should accept this gracefully.

Just because a player hesitates, this does not mean that you call the director. A hesitation, a break in tempo, longer than usual thinking are all a normal part of the game. They do not constitute an infraction or mean that the player has done anything wrong. If you do wish to draw attention to the hesitation, you can ask the partner if they agree that a break in tempo occurred. If they do not agree, it is THEIR responsibility to call the director at that point.

Just because a player hesitates, it does not mean that his partner must pass. This is one of the most misunderstood and misquoted aspects of the Law. There is a responsibility on the partner to not take advantage of any information they get from the hesitation, but there is definitely no requirement to pass.

Just because a player hesitates and his partner makes a bid after that, it does not mean that you call the director then. The appropriate time to call the director is when the player's hand is revealed and you believe that he may have taken an action influenced by the hesitation. Occasionally, it will be when dummy comes down, but most of the time it will be at the end of the hand.

Just because a defender leads a card after you tell them it doesn't matter what they play, it doesn't mean that you will benefit if it turns out there is a better lead. Your statement that it doesn't matter constitutes a claim under the Laws. When a claim is made, there is no more play. If it is disputed, the director determines the result of the hand. The fact that the opponent may have subsequently played the wrong card will probably not affect the director's decision.

Just because the opponents revoke, it does not mean that you will do better than you would have normally done. Again, there is a set of rules which the director applies. In many cases (and ideally), this will mean that the result which should have happened is also the final result. There is no automatic penalty simply because there has been a revoke. Telling the director *“but that's what we would have got anyway”* is not going to get you anywhere. The director's primary responsibility is to ensure that the opponents do not benefit when they revoke against you.

Just because, as dummy, you can clearly tell that partner has forgotten that your two of clubs is good, you can't play it for them. Nothing more to say! ❤️