

When should the bidding sequence be removed from view?

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.

Question from a player

Part 6.2.5 of the NSWBA Tournament Regulations relates to dummy removing the bidding slip from view after third player has played to the first trick. At our club this is done by covering the slip with the board. What is the situation if a player subsequently lifts the board to view the slip?

How Matthew interprets and executes the law

Part 6.2.5 of the NSWBA Tournament Regulations attempts to put in a procedure so that the Law (20C) relating to reviews of the bidding can be effectively applied with written bidding. Law 20C says that a player may request a review of the auction up until the point at which he has played a card to the first trick. So, for the opening leader, it is when the lead is chosen. For Declarer, he may ask up until he calls for a card from dummy. For the other defender, he may ask up until he plays a card to trick one.

So, for a player to lift up the board and look at the bidding at time after this is an infraction. In the first instance, as Director, I would not be inclined to do anything other to explain the rules to the players and tell them not to do it again. If a player is a common infractor, then the Director could impose a procedural penalty on the pair. That would be a penalty against their final score - some number of matchpoints (10% of the value of a top is a common penalty).

Note that, during the play, at their own turn any player is entitled to ask what the actual contract is. 

