

That fearsome Director

It would bore you to quote chapter and verse of all the responsibilities and powers of a Director, sufficient to say that the Director is responsible for every aspect of a session of bridge: this includes deciding the movement, where players sit, maintaining good order, and interpreting the laws and making rulings.

AMATEURS

What must always be borne in mind is that the Directors are not professionals: they are giving of their time so as to give others the opportunity to play. They make no claim to knowing all the laws, and whilst they will usually consult the Laws book if in doubt it would be unrealistic to imagine that they will always get things right.

PLAYERS OBLIGATION

That said, it must be emphasized that players have an obligation to accept with good grace the rulings of the Director: there is no place or justification for arguing with the Director at the table.

APPEALS

However, any player has a perfect right to query a ruling made by the Director. If a player feels genuinely aggrieved they should simply say that they wish to appeal against a ruling: on no account should they argue their case at the table.

There are times, of course, when a player is not happy with a ruling but has no desire to say they wish to appeal. In that sort of situation a player should talk to the Director later and ask for an explanation of whatever it is that is of concern. Most Directors I know will be only too happy to oblige.

INCORRECT RULING

It sometimes happens that upon having someone query a ruling the Director then finds he was wrong. How he handles that will depend on the Director in question. If he feels the player querying a wrong decision was damaged in the scoring he may make an adjusted score, but only after explaining the position to the other pair involved, but most of the time I suspect he will apologize and explain what the correct ruling should have been, and that will be end of it.

DIRECTOR IN DOUBT

The Laws being what they are, it sometimes happens that the Director cannot be sure as to how he should have ruled on a particular issue. For my part when this happens I contact the EBU and clarify exactly what the ruling should be. If I find I was wrong - as sometimes happens, but thankfully not too often - I will then go back to the players involved and tell them what the ruling should have been.

It is worth mentioning that even at county and international level players appeal against a Director's ruling. Then, an appeals committee meets, hears what both sides and the Director have to say, and then makes a ruling. Mostly, I suspect, they uphold the Director's ruling but by no means always.

CONCLUSION

So, whether you play at the East Sussex or elsewhere, please remember that the Directors are by no means infallible, but they are giving their time and efforts so that you may enjoy your duplicate bridge.