

The origin of Zero Tolerance

One of the delights of having a web site is the contact one has with other people, not only in this country but also around the world. From China in the East to the Canada in West the messages arrive. It really is amazing to think that our little web site, created in a poky basement office, on a small computer, by an insignificant bridge player, attracts interest from countries far and wide. Little did I think when Barbara first gave of her blood, sweat and near tears to put together the original few pages that they would ever be read by but a few of our members.

Now and again I get the impression that some of you think that Zero Tolerance was my idea but that is far from reality. It is true that when I started the club at Whatlington I would say that duplicate bridge was often played as if on a battlefield and that that was not how I intended it to be at our club but it was not until some while later that I first came across Zero Tolerance as a written policy, and even then I did not realize how it all came about.

What in fact happened was that three well known players in Canada, Paul Cronin, Hans Jacob, and Barbara Seagram agreed that something had to be done to eliminate the rudeness and unpleasant behaviour so often found in duplicate bridge as they considered those to be the major reasons for the alarming decline in duplicate bridge and why there was such a problem hanging on to new players. That is how Paul Cronin explains the origin of Zero Tolerance to me in an email.

The above three players are of no small repute. Paul Cronin is a professional bridge player of the highest ranking, Barbara Seagram operates the largest bridge club in Canada (Kate Buckman's), has Master Teacher status with the ACBL, and is the author of some of the most popular bridge books as well as having held senior positions within bridge in Canada, as has Hans Jacobs. So you see, it is not just minions such as me that see the need to protect the average duplicate bridge player.

Zero Tolerance has been a tremendous success in Canada and been accepted and promoted by the American Contract Bridge League itself. What a pity it is that our own ruling body, The English Bridge Union, does not do the same.

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