

## **Ruling and Review Procedures for the Open Playoffs**

Most players are reasonably aware of the process that takes place when there has been a potential infraction of the laws. The Tournament Director is called and told why a player believes that there may have been an infraction. The Director will ascertain what has occurred. Simple problems such as revokes, leads out of turn and similar are dealt with immediately and the game continues.

In more complex situations such as those involving unauthorised information, incorrect explanations or a failure to alert, the Director who is called to the table will collect the evidence of what occurred. The Directors then discuss the matter amongst themselves before deciding if an infraction has taken place and whether it resulted in damage to the non-offending side. Where the matter involves bridge judgment the Director will consult approximately 5 players of an appropriate standard and typically ask, "What would you bid/do on the following hand after the bidding/play has gone...?" The answers given by the players then assists the Director to determine what the ruling should be. Sometimes this may lead to a weighted score adjustment that reflects the probabilities of a number of potential results.

The Directors have been made aware of the importance of following the approved process before delivering a ruling. Players must also be conscious of the need to notify the Director of all the relevant facts when the evidence is being gathered.

During the Playoffs because of the absence of on-site non-involved players (both as potential consultees and as appeals committee members), the following alternative procedure will be in place: A list of non-involved players of the appropriate standard (together with their phone numbers and email addresses) will be drawn up by the National Event Coordinators after the close of entries. This pool will consist of (10-15) individuals who have previously agreed to make themselves available as part of the consultation process. Additional players may be augmented to the original pool once they have been eliminated from the event.

Recipients of a ruling from the Director will also be entitled to ask for the matter to be reviewed by a person who was not involved in the original decision (rather than by a committee). The Reviewer will check that the Director has gathered the necessary evidence of what occurred when the infraction arose. The Reviewer will then need to be satisfied that the correct law was applied and that other Directors were consulted where appropriate. In matters requiring the exercise of bridge judgment the Reviewer will clarify that suitable players have been asked appropriate questions to enable a clear judgmental view to be obtained. Finally the Reviewer will check that the ruling issued (based upon all the information available) was within the bounds of reasonableness. Note however that the mere fact that the Reviewer might have determined a slightly different ruling will not be a good enough reason in itself for the ruling to be varied.

The usual time limits for appealing a ruling will apply to the seeking of a review of a ruling. If a review is sought the matter will be referred to the Reviewer who will consider it in accordance with the protocol outlined above. The captain challenging the ruling will be required to write a simple statement on the Review Form as to which part of the process they believe was flawed and how that would have affected the ruling. In the event that the Reviewer determines that the process has not been followed properly or that the ruling is defective in some other material way, he will instruct the CTD to correct the previous failings. The CTD may then in turn need to re-poll players, prior to issuing a new ruling.

It is hoped that players will understand that rulings given by the Director are arrived at only after a proper consideration of all relevant issues and consultation between fellow Directors, followed by the polling of appropriate players. The opportunity to request a review has been instituted in order to provide a safeguard and thus avoid any failure of process. It should also be noted that in cases where a request for a review is without merit, the Reviewer has the power to impose a penalty, which will be quantified in IMPs or VPs as appropriate to the stage of event being played.