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BRIDGE AXIOMS AND
LAWS

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Bridge Axioms and Laws

The best Bridge players are undoubtedly those who can draw inferences quickly and correctly.



Observation is an art enabling one to discover what other people's play conceals – as well as reveals.



Observation always infers, and one inference will lead to another.



Each card played speaks through its silence, and its language must be understood.



To converse intelligently through the medium of the cards, each must be seen as it falls with eyes that grasp its meaning.



Failure to note the play of a card is not lack of memory, but lack of heed.



Situations are kaleidoscopic and constant, and success may only be achieved by being perpetually alert to note them.



All time at Bridge should be devoted earnestly to what confronts a player, not to what is past.



It is better not to play at all, than to play without earnestness.



One careful game is worth any number of slipshod, careless efforts which are disconcerting to your partner, and the delight of your adversaries.



Bridge abounds with situations which must be learned.



Promptness in making a conclusion is a mental inspiration as well as an aid to expeditious play.



Hap-hazard play, first from one suit and then from another, will not induce a successful campaign in Bridge.



Haste and waste are anti-types in Bridge, as they are in everything.



To improve your Bridge, theory and practice must go hand in hand.

Bridge is a game of which much is learned through the mistakes made and heeded.



Do not fail to profit in future games by the mistakes that you discover in present play.



When you see clever plays that are new to you, analyse the motives that underlie them.



The soundest play will sometimes lose, and the worst will sometimes win.



Uniform good play, no matter what the luck may be, will ultimately triumph over bad play.



Tricks heedlessly lost mar the successful enjoyment of Bridge.

That you happily did not lose on a hand, is no palliation for the bad play of which you may have been guilty.



Do not overlook the tricks which may be gained by the use of a little card strategy.



Memory is simply a matter of observation and practice.



Careful Bridge cultivates memory.



What is done with a hand cannot be undone.



A successful partnership game must be based on perfect faith and confidence between partners. Combined play in Bridge is absolutely essential to success.



When you accept a partner, you accept him as he is, not as you might wish him to be.



A trust in your partner's Bridge ability will overcome many obstacles in the way of drawing inferences.



If your partner objects to moving, do not advise him to change.



Do not begin by abusing your partner for the make; you practically say your hand is weak and the situation hopeless.



Your partner will play a better game if he does not fear your adverse criticism.



Do not tell your partner, after seeing all the cards, what he should have done; but think what you would have done in your partner's place.



The chronic complainant is a pessimistic partner and a peevish adversary.



One grain of encouragement is worth a pound of scolding in Bridge.



If you take advantage of your partner's breach of etiquette, you lay yourself open to adverse criticism.

The moment that you show subserviency you admit superiority.



Cards do not carry with them a license to be unfair or rude.



It is more important to inform your partner than to deceive your adversary.



Be generous with your praise of a well played hand.



Play the weak hands as interestedly as the strong.



Do not criticise at all; but – if you must – criticise fairly.



Never call attention to the score after the cards have been dealt.

No matter how cleverly the cards are managed, the player who underestimates the attention the state of the score demands will unnecessarily lose many a rubber.



The necessity for keeping the score constantly in mind grows upon all players as their experience in Bridge increases.



Know the requisite number of tricks to be taken, both to win and to save the game.



When you are a game behind, do not hesitate to gamble.



When you are a game to the good, make none but a conservative and sound declaration.

When the score is 18 to nothing against you on the first game, or when you are a game to the good, avoid a doubtful declaration which may enable the adversaries to win the game on your deal.



When the make is passed to you at a score of 24 all on the rubber game, declare your best suit.



When the game is saved, but cannot possibly be won, the seventh trick should be the objective point.



When you cannot reach game, never hazard the odd trick in an attempt to win two odd.



Many times the game can only be won or saved in case the cards lie in a certain position. Assume that the cards are favourably placed and play the hand accordingly.



When the game is seemingly lost, take the one chance of finding in your partner's hand the cards that will save it.



It is surprising how often a desperate expedient will overcome a desperate situation.



To force luck is to attempt to make it – a most idle task.



Human nature tempts mortals to lose more than they can win, sometimes more than they can afford.

Press good fortune while it lasts and do not linger when it refuses to smile.



If you win with invincible cards, your victory is cheap.



Do not ascribe to bad luck the result of bad play.



Whoever is favoured by luck may usually take all manner of chances and succeed.



More rubbers are lost by bad makes than by bad plays.



Often the result of one hand, which proves nothing, will encourage the tendency toward unsound makes.

The question "What will be the probable make if I pass?" is of great assistance in determining the declaration.



It is remarkable how many passed "no-trumpers" go astray; and the number proves the necessity for more cautious passes.



A good player can take more chances with the make because of his ability to play the cards properly.



No-trump play is an effort to establish and bring in small cards of a long suit.



Many a hand is ruined by careless and hasty play at the first trick.



Do not play your adversary's game for him, lend him no aid in establishing his suit.



Take all your finesses against the player who holds an established suit.



If, as dealer, you wish to make four tricks in a suit with but three in sight, give the adversaries a chance to discard.



When there are tricks that the adversaries must win, try to make this necessity a benefit to your hand.



Rid yourself of any high card which may interrupt the continuation of your partner's suit.



The dealer's main plan of a trump hand should be to exhaust trumps and bring in a suit.



Be cognisant of what you should accomplish and then decide how best to do it.



Pitfalls in the form of false leads, false cards and clever under-play should be dug for your adversaries at every opportunity.



Too much haste in showing ability to ruff in the weak trump hand frequently brings disaster.



When you are reasonably assured of every trick but one, lead your remaining trump.



As a rule avoid an inclination to ruff in the strong trump hand.



Remember that the partner who doubles usually has trump strength, and do not strew his pathway with obstructions by forcing him.



It is unusually bad play to double when you need only an odd trick to win the game.



The card led by your partner is a message of his holding in that suit.



Many a rubber is lost which the prompt lead of a high card might have saved.

It is too late to force when the adversaries hold the remaining trumps and an established suit.



Ruffing with a commanding trump rarely loses a trick and often gains one.



The temptation to over-trump should frequently be resisted.



Clear your long suit before you part with your card of re-entry.



Cultivate uniformity in your style of play, let there be no remarkable haste or hesitation in making or passing, and look as cheerful as possible.



Hesitation and mannerisms in Bridge should be carefully avoided.

Emphasise no play of your own, and show no pleasure or displeasure at any play.



Superiority of skill is shown by the play of the cards, not by mannerisms.



Continued hesitancy and nervous indecision are serious faults in Bridge.



Make up your mind to do your best with the cards that have been dealt you.



The occupant of the "high-chair" usually has a monopoly for giving advice.



Let your manner be uniformly such that no one can tell from it whether you are winning or losing.



Play Bridge with an eloquent silence; it will command both respect and admiration.



An occasional mistake is preferable to an irritating delay.



Slow play is, more or less, a habit. Its effect amounts to a fault.



When there is an unusual distribution of the cards, remarks are superfluous.



Indecision may tell your adversaries exactly what they are most eager to know.

Deliberation at the beginning of a hand is permissible and should be encouraged.



The player who interrupts the game to discuss the play should be ostracised from the card room.



Make no overt remarks during the play which may tend to give the adversaries information.



It is usually the inexperienced player who offers an astonishing amount of gratuitous and unsought-for advice.



It is often difficult to refrain from showing pleasure at the accomplishment of a desired purpose, but consider that undue elation is most aggravating to the adversaries.



Post-mortems have their interest and, as a rule, are unmistakably convincing.



Do not venture upon a post-mortem unless you are certain of what the scalpel is going to reveal.



Do not continue to talk of harassing details when another hand is awaiting play.



General rules are formulated as an assistance to intelligent play.



Many brilliant plays are made in contravention to rules.

—◆—

Certain laws that govern the technicalities are absolute, but rules in general are not the masters of Bridge.

—◆—

Rules should be considered second to circumstances and to the fall of the cards.

—◆—

There are hands in Bridge which may be said to play themselves.

—◆—

All Bridge penalties should be strictly enforced.

—◆—

You gather the cards when your partner takes the first trick.

—◆—

Do not ask to have the cards placed unless it is solely for your own information.

A player has not the right to have the cards placed after they have been touched for the purpose of gathering them.

—◆—

It is unfair to revoke purposely, or to make a second revoke in order to conceal the first.

—◆—

The revoking side cannot win the game on that hand, nor score more than 28 points.

—◆—

Clubs is a safer declaration, holding four with two honours, than spades, when but one or two are held without an honour.

—◆—

Luck is a false friend and only stays with you until you are in trouble.

A poor player is most a poor player when he knows not that he is a poor player.

—◆—

Lost tricks yield a crop of experience attained at the expense of rubbers.

—◆—

Inattention is a companion that will never travel alone.

—◆—

People who find it easy to decide for friends find it hard to decide for themselves.

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