

Law 20

REVIEW AND EXPLANATION OF CALLS

A. Call Not Clearly Recognized

A player may require clarification forthwith if he is in doubt what call has been made.

B. Review of Auction during Auction Period

During the auction period, a player is entitled to have all previous calls restated* when it is his turn to call, unless he is required by law to pass. Alerts should be included when responding to the request. A player may not ask for a partial review of previous calls and may not halt the review before it is completed.

C. Review after Final Pass

1. After the final pass either defender has the right to ask if it is his opening lead (see Laws [47E](#) and [41](#)).
2. Declarer** or either defender may, at his first turn to play, require all previous calls to be restated*. (See Laws [41B](#) and [41C](#)). As in B the player may not ask for only a partial restatement or halt the review.

D. Who May Review the Auction

A request to have calls restated* shall be responded to only by an opponent.

E. Correction of Error in Review

All players, including dummy or a player required by law to pass, are responsible for prompt correction of errors in restatement* (see [Law 12C1](#) when an uncorrected review causes damage).

F. Explanation of Calls

1. During the auction and before the final pass, any player may request, but only at his own turn to call, an explanation of the opponents' prior auction. He is entitled to know about calls actually made, about relevant alternative calls available that were not made, and about relevant inferences from the choice of action where these are matters of partnership understanding. Except on the instruction of the Director replies should be given by the partner of the player who made the call in question. The partner of a player who asks a question may not ask a supplementary question until his turn to call or play. [Law 16](#) may apply and the Regulating Authority may establish regulations for written explanations.
2. After the final pass and throughout the play period, either defender at his own turn to play may request an explanation of the opposing auction. At his turn to play from his hand or from dummy declarer may request an explanation of a defender's call or card play understandings. Explanations should be given on a like basis to 1 and by the partner of the player whose action is explained.
3. Under 1 and 2 above a player may ask concerning a single call but [Law 16B1](#) may apply.
4. If a player subsequently realizes that his own explanation was erroneous or incomplete he must call the Director immediately. The Director applies [Law 21B](#) or [Law 40B4](#).
5.
 - a. A player whose partner has given a mistaken explanation may not correct the error during the auction, nor may he indicate in any manner that a mistake has been made. 'Mistaken explanation' here includes failure to alert or announce as regulations require or an alert (or an announcement) that regulations do not require.
 - b. The player must call the Director and inform his opponents that, in his opinion,

his partner's explanation was erroneous (see [Law 75](#)) but only at his first legal opportunity, which is

- i. for a defender, at the end of the play.
- ii. for declarer or dummy, after the final pass of the auction.

6. If the Director judges that a player has based an action on misinformation given to him by an opponent see, as appropriate, [Law 21](#) or [Law 47E](#).

G. Incorrect Procedure

1. It is improper to ask a question solely for partner's benefit.
2. Except as the Regulating Authority allows a player may not consult his own system card and notes during the auction and play periods, but see [Law 40B2\(b\)](#).

* When the calls are not spoken responders must ensure that it is clear to an enquiring opponent what calls have been made.

** Declarer's first turn to play is from dummy unless accepting an opening lead out of turn

Law 20

This law tells us that players have the obligation to explain their partnership agreements to their opponents. The fact that the explanation might not necessarily concur with their actual holding, might create confusion. Let us take the following example:

West North East South

1♥ 3♣* Pass 3♠**

North has ♠Q6 ♥6 ♦953 ♣AQJ8652 and intended to show a weak hand with long clubs. But the agreement is that it shows diamonds and spades, so 3♣ is a mistaken bid. This is not an infraction.

South alerts 3♣ and bids 3♠. Without having seen the alert it is likely that North will interpret 3♠ in accordance with his understanding of his 3♣-bid: showing long spades. But having seen the alert he realizes his mistake and knows that 3♠ shows preference for that suit over diamonds. It is his obligation to alert the 3♠-bid and to explain it as such. This means that he has put himself in the awkward position that he has created unauthorized information which limits his choices in the auction, but which also helps him to give the right information about the partnership agreements. In that respect the knowledge about his mistake is not considered to be unauthorized.

We take the same start of the auction but now North has ♠KJ ♥874 ♦94 ♣AQ1083 6 and South does not alert his 3♣-bid. That is an infraction, but North is not entitled to draw attention to it explicitly: by telling the opponents that partner should have alerted the 3♣-bid. It might be unavoidable that his partner is informed about his mistake in which case probably their opponents become aware of it as well. (If South bids 3♠, North should alert that call and explain it as showing a preference for spades; that certainly will awake partner who receives unauthorized information).

Suppose the auction continues:

West North East South

1♥ 3♣ 3♥ 4♠*

Given the absence of alert on 3♣, North may assume that South supports his supposed club holding, but according to the agreements 4♠ shows a strong hand with trump support in either diamonds or spades. So he should alert it and, if asked, explain it as such. This obligation supersedes the demand described in Law 5(a) not to indicate in any manner that a mistake has been made. That sentence tells the player to conform to Law 73A1:

'communication between partners during the auction and play shall be effected only by means of calls and plays'. This implies that giving alerts and answering questions is not considered to be a way of communicating with partner but solely with the opponents.

None the less partner hears what is said and then has an obligation to call the TD and to tell him that he mistakenly explained the 3♣-bid. After which he should forget what he heard; more precisely: should not choose from among logical alternatives one that could be suggested by the unauthorized information.