



EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

**4<sup>th</sup> EBL Tournament Directors Seminar**  
**16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2017**  
**Prague – Czech Republic**

## **Law 15**

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## **LAW 15 - WRONG BOARD OR HAND**

### **A. Cards from Wrong Board**

1. *A call is cancelled (together with any subsequent call) if it is made by a player holding cards that he has picked up from a wrong board.*
2. (a) *If the offender's partner has subsequently called, the Director shall award an adjusted score.*  
(b) *Otherwise, after looking at the correct hand the offender calls again and the auction continues normally from that point.*  
(c) *Law 16C applies to any call withdrawn or cancelled.*
3. *If the offender subsequently repeats the call on the board from which he mistakenly drew his cards the Director may allow that board to be played normally, but the Director shall award an adjusted score when offender's call differs<sup>1</sup> from his original cancelled call.*
4. *A procedural penalty (Law 90) may be assessed in addition to the rectifications above.*

### **B. Wrong Board Discovered During Auction or Play Period<sup>2</sup>**

*If, after the commencement of the auction period, the Director discovers that a contestant is playing a board not designated for him to play in the current round, then:*

1. *if one or more players at the table have previously played the board, with the correct opponents or otherwise, the board is cancelled for both his side and his opponents.*
2. *if none of the four players have previously played the board the Director shall require the auction and play to be completed. He allows the score to stand and may require both pairs to play the correct board against one another later.*

*The Director shall award an artificial adjusted score [see Law 12C2(a)] to any contestant deprived of the opportunity to earn a valid score.*

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<sup>1</sup> *A substituted call differs if its meaning is very different or if it is psychic.*

<sup>2</sup> *This law only applies to pair and individual events – see Law 86B for team events.*

The new Law 15 contains two noteworthy changes: the first relates to Law 15B as it was and second is a relocation and revision of Law 17D: Cards from wrong board. No TD around the world, unless he knew it by heart, was able to find the argument in the Laws, since its placement lacked logic. This second change has become Law 15A, i.e. the first paragraph of Law 15, because we think it makes sense located here, and the revision has simplified the law to make it more understandable (or at least we hope so!).

With this Law, we see once again the WBFLC tendency to achieve bridge results whenever possible: cancelling boards is more difficult now.

As for this aspect in Law 15A, the board need be cancelled only if offender's partner has already called (personally, I'd been even more generous and allow continuation after that point as well, but, after all, there must be a limit, so this is a reasonable compromise). This is perfectly logical: the offender's first call is obviously meaningless, so does not carry any UI, and what you must deal with, should it have already happened, is LHO's call (Law 16C<sup>3</sup>).

More than that, and something that was not covered in the old Law, once more takes the route of trying to save boards from cancellation: Law 15A3.

It covers the scenario where a player has drawn cards from the pocket of a board due to played at some later stage.

Though logic calls for it, the Law lacks a specific reference to the scenario where the offender is the first to make a call (Dealer) or, in general, where the bidding situation in the wrong board is the replica of the already happened: in that case, there should be an obligation by Law to repeat the call when they come to meet the board again, and the TD should not be allowed any discretion. This is because, from experience, I know that a less educated TD tends to cancel boards perforce, whenever they can. I do hope you'll do all you can to educate the TDs of your countries not to do it, explaining clearly that the principle of conservation of bridge results is now spread all over the Laws.

What has to be stressed, is that the TD has always the opportunity to act at a later stage, awarding a belated adjusted score at the end, once it is clear that the infraction has given an advantage to the offending side in the final outcome.

This is especially true whenever the event is Teams: make sure that the continuous reference to Law 86B and its consequences is clearly understood.

As for Law 15A4, I totally disagree with it, as it defies the principle of not punishing involuntary deviations from correct procedure: nobody pulls out cards from the wrong board for fun. Thus, I would not give any discretion for a penalty to TDs here, as it is done in almost all Laws of the same kind. Involuntary errors should never be subjected to disciplinary (discretionary) penalties.

Let's go now to Law 15B, which is as revolutionary as Copernicus's ideas. The base for this important change is, once again, the principle of keeping as many bridge results as possible.

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<sup>3</sup> Take please note that new Law 16C coincides with old Law 16D

Actually, just think about how silly the old Law was, which can be proven through an easy example:

In a Howell movement, poor old board 14 is treated badly by the pairs: In two cases, the wrong pair starts bidding it all the way up to a lay-down grand slam, with one slight difference: At table 3, the correct pair arrives one tenth of a second before the opening lead is faced, while at table 5 they arrive one tenth of a second after the opening lead is faced.

With the old Law, the result at table 3 had to be cancelled, while at table 5 it had to remain. Did that really make sense? I hope you share with me a resounding "No"!

As for the possibility of pairs involved later playing boards they will not have the opportunity to play in this round, there's no difference with the old law, which advised the TDs to try do it. As a result, if you handle the situation perfectly you'll end up with no cancelled boards at all, thus no Artificial Adjusted Scores.