

THE ROLE OF THE RECORDER

The great majority of duplicate bridge players play the game honestly, ethically and politely. But when occasionally you find situations where this is not the case, what should you do?

All complaints of rudeness and other zero tolerance issues which occur at a club within a unit should be reported to the club owner or manager, not the Recorder. If the issues are recurring or aren't rectified at the club by the director, the recorder should get these complaints at sectional and regional tournaments.

The Recorder should get all complaints involving cheating or other ethical issues, including those that arise in the club.

Many times, an infraction is so clear-cut that it can be quickly rectified by a director ruling at the table. Conduct clearly outside the boundaries of the ACBL's Zero Tolerance policy is an example.

There are many situations, however, where a director call might not be appropriate. Perhaps the rude conduct is subtle. Perhaps the suspicious conduct isn't clearly demonstrable. Or perhaps the player who is offended or suspicious just doesn't feel comfortable with an open discussion at the table or feels the offending opponent might not feel comfortable with a director call.

Here are some examples:

1. Subtle low-level, but repeated, rudeness;
2. Repeated, unwanted lessons for partner or opponents;
3. Stronger players intimidating the opponents (consciously or unconsciously) by glaring at them after a call or a play, making a claim without stating a line of play or showing their cards, or turning over a played card so rapidly the opponent doesn't get a good look at it;
4. Weaker or beginning players unintentionally telegraphing their holdings to their partners by hesitating before bidding or playing a card or by touching more than one card in the bidding box before making their selection;
5. Any player frequently making unusual but successful bids or plays, especially if they walk about the room often between rounds or seem to overhear information discussed at neighboring tables;

6. Any player who changes a score after the opponent approves it;

7. Stronger players playing with clients or weaker partners who seem to coach the weaker player with body language or who play most of the No Trump and major suit contracts, which might appear to be violating the ACBL rule of both players using the same convention card;

8. A player routinely fielding his partner's frequent psyches.

Here's what you SHOULD NOT do in the situations above. Don't talk about the real or suspected infractions with your friends or other players. This can be equivalent to character assassination by gossip. Things are not always what they seem. After all, expert players can figure out when to drop singleton offside Kings from the auction and the opponents' play. There are occasions where a defender can very legitimately stop to count out a hand before playing to a card led.

The thing to do in these situations is to document your concerns in writing to the Unit or District Recorder. You do this by filling out a Player Memo reporting form which you get from the tournament or club director. The Recorder will accumulate such complaints and concerns and investigate them confidentially as appropriate. The confidentiality applies to both the individual being investigated and those who initiated the reports.

You can fill out the player memo online at:

<https://www.acbl.org/conduct-and-ethics/player-memo/>

or click on this link and print and fill out a [player memo](#).

If the Recorder determines an individual's actions aren't intentional cheating and that the individual would benefit from counseling and/or education to help him modify his behavior, the Recorder will initiate a confidential discussion with the subject. All the examples above except 5 and 6 are situations in which the Recorder will probably respond this way. The Recorder has no disciplinary authority. He will file a complaint with the appropriate disciplinary body if his investigation warrants.

The Recorder will refer matters that could involve major ethical breaches to the ACBL Recorder for evaluation prior to the start of an investigation.

Lou Glasthal is the District 4 Recorder, he can be reached at glasthal@comcast.net.

If you want to file a Player Memo at a club or a tournament outside your unit, just ask the director for a form and the director will help you get the completed one to the appropriate Recorder. Each Unit within the District has its own Recorder. Since, as noted above, most bridge players are routinely honest, ethical and polite, filing a Player Memo through the Recorder should be an infrequent event but, where warranted, it can be very helpful in keeping our game fun and fair for all of us.

SUMMARY OF RECORDER REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

GOAL

The aim of the recorder system is to establish a method of dealing with complaints that: 1) by themselves do not warrant the filing of formal charges; 2) are very serious but there is only the implication of wrongdoing without substantial evidence necessary to bring formal charges or 3) are a request to have the subject's behavior modified by counseling and/or education.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Receives, investigates and evaluates Player Memos.

Educates reporters and subjects about proper behavior and ethics in accordance with the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge and the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations.

Communicates, as appropriate, with those involved with a reported incident, especially the reporter and subject.

Makes or assists with an impartial presentation of evidence to a disciplinary committee during the prosecution of the complaint

LIMITATIONS ON AUTHORITY

A recorder has no disciplinary authority and **MUST** not give any indication to the contrary.

A recorder may file a complaint with an appropriate disciplinary body against a subject as a means to resolve player memo or memos. A recorder may choose to inform a subject that a complaint may be filed in the future should the undesirable behavior continue. In either case, the recorder must ensure that the authority of the office is not abused.

A recorder should handle all allegations of cheating or unethical behavior at games and tournaments within the District. At clubs within the Unit, the Club Owners and/or Directors handle complaints of rudeness and other inappropriate behavior.

TOURNAMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The recorder should be available for any tournament sponsored by the appointing body. If not available, the recorder is responsible to nominate a qualified assistant to perform all recorder functions. While acting as assistant recorder at a tournament, the appointed person is subject to all limitations imposed on the recorder. If no recorder is present, the Director-in-Charge (not an assistant) will act as an on-site recorder. The DIC is responsible for sending any and all player memos to the organization's recorder.