

## WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AND LIMITATIONS AS DUMMY?

**Law 41D: Dummy's Hand: After the opening lead is faced, dummy spreads his hand in front of him on the table, face up, sorted into suits, the cards in order of rank with lowest cards pointing towards declarer, and in separate columns. Trumps are placed to dummy's right. Declarer plays both his hand and that of dummy.**

Once Dummy places his cards on the table they should not be moved or touched until declarer designates a card to be played. We have all met the dummy who continually rearranges the cards, and even more annoying the one who moves the columns of cards closer together when a suit becomes void. Defenders keep a mental picture of the shape of dummy to help plan their defence and when dummy is suddenly rearranged it is somewhat off-putting and disruptive. Some dummies are overly fussy about neatness when laying out their cards and take longer than necessary arranging their cards. This is frustrating for the opponents who are waiting to make an assessment of dummy. The other annoying dummy is the one on Bridgemate duty who keeps the table waiting by fiddling with the Bridgemate before spreading his hand. The same applies to the dummy who has to write the contract on his personal score sheet before laying out the dummy.

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MAY AND MAY NOT DO AS DUMMY?

Players need to be careful when in the role of Dummy. So many times I see Dummy taking a greater part in the play than entitled to. Dummy is simply Declarer's agent and plays the cards as indicated by Declarer. It's best if Dummy's hands are off the table until declarer designates a card to be played.

## DUMMY'S ABSOLUTE RIGHTS - Law 42A

1. **Dummy is entitled to give information as to fact of law when the Director is called to the table.** When the director is called to the table dummy may give information as to what happened.
2. **Dummy may keep count of tricks won and lost.** Dummy quits his tricks the same as the other players in order from trick 1 to 13, tricks lost are placed parallel to the edge of the table, tricks won perpendicular to the edge of the table. Dummy may correct declarer's incorrect placement of a quitted trick before the next trick is played. Once there is play to the next trick, dummy may not point out a Declarer's trick has been incorrectly quitted. Dummy may never correct the quitted tricks of either defender.

### 3. **Dummy plays the cards of the Dummy hand as Declarer's agent:**

The opening lead of Ace♥ is faced. Dummy has a singleton 3♥ and immediately picks it up and places it in the played position. Although this is obvious, dummy should not touch the card until called for by declarer. Here is another frequent occurrence with the same A♥ lead. Dummy has the K♥ & 3♥ and immediately picks up the 3♥. Now dummy has exceeded his rights by suggesting a line of play to declarer. He may also have confused declarer as declarer may wish to play the K so that he has a heart entry to his hand. Then there is the dummy who immediately picks up the card he thinks should be played almost every time a card is lead, exceeding his rights once again.

If this occurs at your table ask dummy politely not to touch the cards until directed by declarer. If it continues summon the Director.

### **DUMMY'S QUALIFIED RIGHTS - Law 42B**

1. **Dummy may ask Declarer (but not a Defender) when he has failed to follow suit whether he has a card of that suit:** Do this simply by saying "no spades", "no hearts" etc as the case may be.
2. **Dummy may try to prevent an irregularity:**  
Dummy notices declarer is about to lead from his own hand when the lead is from dummy, he may prevent this irregularity simply by saying "on the table" or "you're in dummy". Once the lead has been actually made from the incorrect hand dummy may not draw attention to it.
3. **Dummy may draw attention to any irregularity but only after the play of the hand is concluded:** If dummy notices an irregularity during the play e.g. if dummy notices a revoke by either defender he may call the Director at the conclusion of play of that hand but may not draw attention to it beforehand.

### **DUMMY'S LIMITATIONS - Law 43A**

- a) **Dummy may not initiate a call for Director during play unless another player has drawn attention to an irregularity:** Only after one of the other players at the table draws attention to an infraction, dummy may summon the Director
- b) **Dummy may not call attention to an irregularity during play:** This law is obvious. If dummy notices an irregularity he may not draw attention to it. The most frequent situation occurs when declarer calls for a lead from dummy when the lead is in his own hand. Once the card has been called for, dummy may not say "it's your lead". Conversely declarer leads from his own hand when the lead is in dummy. Again dummy may not draw attention to this irregularity. At the end of the play of the hand dummy may draw attention to an irregularity, e.g a revoke by either defender.
- c) **Dummy may not participate in the play nor may he communicate anything about the play to Declarer:** We've all seen the dummy who places his hand parallel to the edge of the table communicating to declarer that it's dummy's lead. This is a no,no.  
Then of course there's the dummy who keeps moving his finger along the edge of the table when dummy's on lead. I sometimes wonder if he's trying to indicate to declarer which suit he should play. Again hands off the dummy until declarer calls for a card. Another thing that get on players' goat is dummy announcing, when there's only a few cards left to play, "dummy's good". Again dummy has exceeded his rights. Declarer may not have realised that "dummy's good" or perhaps he does not have an entry to dummy.
- e) **Dummy may not exchange hands with Declarer**
- f) **Dummy may not leave his seat to watch Declarer's play of the hand**
- g) **Dummy may not look at the face of any card in either Defender's hand**
- h) **A Defender may not show his hand to Dummy**

**Dummy may be penalised if he violates his rights. This is covered in Law 43B**