

## MISINFORMATION GUIDE FOR ACBL PLAYERS

When opponents have not provided complete and correct information about their bidding and play agreements, as required by the Laws of Duplicate Bridge and the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), that constitutes “misinformation” (MI), which is an infraction.

Whenever opposing MI is detected and you call attention to it, summon the Tournament Director (TD) immediately. If it was revealed during the auction, or before your side’s opening lead was faced, the TD will permit a change of your partnership’s last call and/or a change of the opening lead if the MI affected one or both of those actions. You can even change a played card later in the play for that reason (MI revealed by an opponent at that time), but not if a card has subsequently been played to the trick.

The TD will take the non-offending player(s) away from the table to ask if they want to change the call, lead, or play because it was affected by the MI. There is no reason for this when a change is not possible, but you may not refuse to leave the table. When questioned just say, “I don’t know what I would have done.” Some TDs may say that there will be no redress later if you don’t answer. This is illegal, justifying an appeal of that non-ruling if you later suspect you were damaged by the MI.

If your side has not called attention to the MI, as when there is no desire to change an action or it is too late to do so, the TD need not be called until the end of play. Often the MI is harmless and can be overlooked. At the end of play, the score for both sides is adjusted if the TD rules the MI caused damage.

The “Clarification Period.” is the time between the end of the auction and the start of play (opening lead faced). Any undisclosed MI created earlier, e.g., failure to Alert or Announce, or an incorrect explanation, must then be corrected, but a defender waits until the end of play to correct partner’s MI. (Players who realize their own MI, e.g., a failure to Alert, or a wrong explanation, must call the TD immediately when they realize it.) This is also the time when both sides are required to “Post-Alert” any Alertable bids for which an Alert was not permitted during the auction. \*

In addition to such Delayed Alerts, before the opening lead declarer and/or dummy should disclose anything about their auction that might be unknown to the other side because it was not previously disclosed (e.g., major suit bypass possibility, negative inferences, the meaning of responses to ace or key-card asking bids), even those not requiring an Alert. This is not required, so defenders would do well to ask for such information. The declarer may also use this period to obtain information from the defenders. A TD call is required if MI is revealed, even if a change of call is not desired. Why? Because MI is an infraction, and the TD should be summoned for any infraction to which attention has been called by either side.

Unnecessary Alerts or Announcements, while irregularities, do not constitute MI unless the explanation or Announcement is incorrect. They do, however, constitute unauthorized information (UI) for partners, telling them “I haven’t forgotten.” You can ignore both this MI and the associated UI, but if you draw attention to MI the TD should be called. Alerts made immediately that should be delayed until the Clarification Period are more serious and may justify an immediate call to the TD.

If both you and partner know the meaning of a call or play whose meaning was not disclosed, that is not MI. Players who, by experience or expertise, recognize that their opponents have neglected to Alert or Announce a special agreement are expected to protect themselves by getting a clarification.

\* Conventional bids above the level of three notrump, starting with opener’s first rebid, are Alerted during the Clarification Period, not immediately. This applies only to bids, not to conventional doubles, redoubles, or passes, which must be Alerted immediately. Transfer Announcements, if immediately following a natural notrump bid, are not included. Complete information on the ACBL Alert requirements is posted on [www.marvinfrench.com](http://www.marvinfrench.com), under Bridge Laws and Regulations

