

Laws of Contract Bridge updated...now *Laws of Rubber Bridge* by Al Levy

The first International Laws of Contract Bridge became effective March 31, 1935, and was used in Rubber Bridge clubs and by Rubber Bridge players wherever they played. These Laws were written by the Whist Club of New York in collaboration with the Card Committee of the Portland Club of London and the Commission Française Du Bridge of Paris. Harold S. Vanderbilt and Ely Culbertson were chairs of the committees that established these Laws. Today there are three organizations that publish a version of the Laws of Contract Bridge. The copyright in the Western Hemisphere belongs to the ACBL, the copyright in the British Commonwealth belongs to the Portland Club, and the copyright in the non-English speaking European countries belongs to the English Bridge Union.

The American Edition of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge is also promulgated by the ACBL. The two codes, one for Duplicate Bridge and one for Rubber Bridge, are similar, so far as the nature of their respective games makes it possible. In 1947 the ACBL became the sole promulgating body in the Western Hemisphere for both the Laws of Duplicate Bridge and Laws of Contract Bridge.

Currently, the Laws of Duplicate Bridge is updated every 10 years, with the last revision in 2007, and the Laws of Contract Bridge are updated sometime after that taking into account the revisions made for Duplicate Bridge. The WBF Laws drafting committee, with ACBL input, is now drafting the 2017 the Laws of Duplicate Bridge.

As a member of the ACBL Laws Commission and the WBF Laws Committee, I led the effort of updating the 2003 Laws of Contract Bridge, working with fellow Laws Commission member and longtime Laws contributor and rubber bridge expert, Roger Stern, and collaborating with the Card Committee of the Portland Club of London which in turn had input from the Advisory Committee of the English Bridge Union. Early this year the Portland Club published their version effective April, 2014. The ACBL drafting committee, consisting of Roger Stern and myself, continued to revise the ACBL code to cover a broader range of Laws including a section referring to *Alternate Club Laws* which allows for an Arbiter, similar to a Director in Duplicate Bridge, to oversee and make the rulings in a rubber bridge game.

Reflecting on some of the updated changes...in the 2007 Laws of Duplicate Bridge, the word *rectification* replaced *penalty* everywhere except for penalty card and for penalties associated with disciplinary infractions. These changes were not adopted in the Laws of Contract Bridge. As such, the word *rectification* does not appear in the Laws of Contract Bridge. Penalties are penalties, as in most sports.

The other changes made in the 2007 Laws of Duplicate Bridge were incorporated in the updated Laws pertaining to Rubber Bridge. One new addition, and one that will appear in the 2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge, is due to a youngster who approach me when I was on-sight coordinator of the 2013 World Youth Championships in Atlanta, is disallowing a lead out of turn at trick 13.

A number of updates in the ACBL version reflect a Westernization and a modernization of the code. The language in all versions has always had a British influence, until now. Two small changes in the 2014 ACBL updated version reflect this, namely, playing with a *Deck of Cards* not a *Pack of Cards* and elimination of the term, *odd tricks*, referring to tricks in excess of six. Across the pond, where they play bridge with a Pack of Cards, they still refer to tricks as *odd*.

The biggest change to the Law book governing Rubber Bridge occurred just before the manuscript was to be published. The name was changed from Laws of Contract Bridge to the more suitable and obvious name, *Laws of Rubber Bridge*. It is surprising that such a simple and obvious change took the ACBL 67 to make! Note, that in 2007 the word *Contract* was finally removed from the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge, as the need to distinguish it from earlier version of bridge, such as Auction Bridge, was long past.

The Laws of Rubber Bridge 2014 is now published and the online version appears on the ACBL website.