

UNAUTHORISED INFORMATION: Hesitation.

There has been some discussion and comments made regarding hesitation before bidding at the club recently and I would like to address this.

Firstly, it is quite ok to hesitate and think before you bid, it is not illegal to do it and if you watch the top players they often think about their hand a long time before bidding.

Secondly it is not illegal or incorrect to pass after your hesitation, and it also happens all the time.

Thirdly it is not illegal and is fine for your partner to bid after you have hesitated and passed, however they must ignore your hesitation and have the proper values for their bid as if you had passed in tempo.

Hesitation is covered in the rules under LAW 16 unauthorised information and is any extraneous information from your partner that might suggest a call or play. It includes, Remarks, questions, failure to alert, unmistakable hesitation, unwonted speed, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism.

So, a long hesitation is part of the game and if your partner passes after hesitating you have unauthorised information that your partner was thinking of bidding so has some values. *Your opponents also receive this information, and it is perfectly legal for them to use it to their advantage.* You as their partner must not use it and make your bid assuming there was no hesitation and your partner had passed. You must have the values for your bid and if you were thinking of maybe passing or maybe bidding, then you must pass.

If you are the opponents and there has been a hesitation and then their partner bids you are entitled to note that everyone agrees to the hesitation and play out the hand. At the end of the hand after you see the cards and tricks made, if you think the partner of the hesitator should not have bid, call the director to make a judgement at the end of the hand. The director may look at the cards and decide the partner had a valid bid or should not have bid. If it is questionable he or she will poll other players of similar ranking what they would bid and if any of them would have passed, then an adjusted score with a penalty for the offending team will be applied.

If there is dispute over whether there has been a hesitation or not call the Director immediately.

Two situations where hesitating is illegal are 1) When you have a singleton and hesitate before playing it. And 2) where you obviously have no bid and hesitate which gives the impression you do have a bid.

If you are worried about anything at the table, call the Director they are there to help you.

