

Recorder Process

The Laws of Duplicate Bridge detail the process and procedure for bidding and playing Duplicate Bridge, how to deal with errors that happen during that process and how to deal with situations that may arise when there is unauthorised information. They also discuss the importance of conduct and etiquette, and the role of the Director and disciplinary options.

In the heat of the moment, players may make a gesture or something the intentionally, or otherwise, upsets or offends another person. This could be partner, opponents, other players in the room, spectators or an official. Oftentimes, that player will recognise their error and make an unreserved and honest apology which will usually be accepted.

Unfortunately, there are times when this is not the case and this is the time that the Director and/or Recorder may be called upon.

The Role of the Recorder

The purpose of the recorder system is to establish a method for dealing with complaints that may arise from incidents that occur at tournaments or other competitive events run under the auspices of New Zealand Bridge that:

- Do not meet the expected standard of conduct and proprieties but not serious enough to require a ruling by the director at the table or outside the purview of the director or
- Are serious but there is only an implication of wrongdoing without substantial evidence to bring a formal complaint to the Director or the Conduct, Discipline, and Disputes Committee or
- Should be addressed by counselling and/or education.

An outline of duties and responsibilities follows.

Appointment of Recorders

The Chief Director is delegated to secure the services of a National Recorder and 7 Regional Recorders and is guided by the Regional Committees in the appointment of the Regional Recorders.

The appointment of club Recorders is a matter for each of the clubs. Their processes for managing discipline within their clubs will likely be outlined in their constitutions. NZ Bridge does not have any direct input into these appointments but can provide advice on the process, procedures, role and responsibilities of a club Director.

Scope of Recorders

The role of the recorder is an important and integral part of the NZ Bridge process for dealing with matters of conduct and etiquette.

In many cases, when these instances occur, the Director is able to deal with them at the table. They can act as independent witnesses to a situation and are they able to adjudicate and will ensure that play continues in a seemly manner. However, The Director may decide to refer the matter to the Recorder and will provide a written report to that end.

There will be other occasions where a player feels affronted but not able to raise the matter at the time. They may feel intimidated or uncertain about what their 'rights' are. These situations may not be serious enough to warrant action from the Director, there may not be independent witness to substantiate the concern or the person may not want to escalate the situation but is only seeking advice. These are all situations in which it is appropriate for the matter to be raised with the relevant Recorder.

Once a matter has been referred to the Recorder, they will assess it and may decide to investigate further, depending on the wishes of the referrer.

In all cases they will keep a confidential record of the referral and what action, if any, was taken.

They may decide to do nothing more than record the matter. Or they can decide to provide advice or assistance to the referrer, they can refer the matter to the Chief Director and/or they can speak with the offending player(s).

In addition, the National Recorder, can refer a matter to the Chairman of the Conduct, Discipline and Disputes Committee, for them to consider whether they think a formal review by the CDDC should proceed.

Historically, the National Recorder and Regional Recorders have met with the Chief Director yearly at National Congress, to discuss any referrals they have received and to note if there is any pattern of behaviour by individuals that need to be dealt with.

Duties and Responsibilities of the National and Regional Recorder

Recorders receive, assess, evaluate and, if they consider it to be appropriate, investigate all incidents arising directly or indirectly from any tournament or other competitive event involving more than one participating club held in New Zealand, brought to their attention by a player, a director, other official, or any regional or club report recorder.

On completion of the assessment, evaluation and or investigation, the recorder may:

- provide assistance or advice to the complainant to record the matter without further comment or action, or
- may refer the matter to the Chief Director or the Director in charge or
- counsel the offending player or players.

In addition, a Regional Recorder will

- maintain a confidential register of complaints and incidents brought to their attention either directly or through club recorders
- assist the national recorder with the preparation of evidence to the conduct discipline and disputes committee
- provide guidance and assistance to club recorders or officials in their region.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who Appoints the regional recorder?

- *The chief Director, guided by advice from the regional committee*

To whom does the regional recorder report?

- *They can escalate matters to the Chief Director and/or the National Recorder*

What powers and action does a regional recorder have?

- *They can provide assistance or advice to the complainant, record the matter without further comment/action; refer the matter to the Chief Director or, in his/her absence, the Director in Charge; counsel the offending Player or Players*

What matters should be referred to a regional recorder, by whom and what is the process?

- *Incidents in Tournaments or other competitive events run under the auspices of NZ Bridge that do not meet the expected standard of conduct but are not serious enough to require a ruling by the Director or are outside the purview of the Director.*
- *Are serious enough but there is only an implication of wrongdoing without substantial evidence to bring a formal complaint to the Director or the Conduct Discipline and Disputes Committee*
- *The referral can be made by any player, the Director or any other official.*

Is there an expectation / requirement to have a club recorder? If so, under what mandate, ie affiliation to NZB?

- *There is no expectation or requirement for a Club to appoint a recorder*
- *If a club chooses to appoint a Recorder, then it is suggested that their roles, responsibilities, and powers should be in line with those for the Regional Recorder*
- *They would have the power to escalate a referral to Regional Recorder.*

How does one handle the situation when the complaint/incident involves the club recorder or regional recorder or their playing partner?

- *Clubs should have their own policies and processes for the management of complaints which should consider complaints against officials.*
- *E.g. a complaint against a Regional Recorder could be referred to the National Recorder for their consideration.*

Does a director refer matters up the chain to the recorder, the club committee, the regional committee, NZB?

- *Clubs should determine their own processes for dealing with behavioural issues during club sessions. If the event is a Tournament, then matters can be referred to the Regional Recorder. The Director can always refer matters to the Recorder and is always able to seek advice from the Chief Director.*

How does a player raise issues about the director?

- *A Player should accept a ruling by the Director when it is given. If it is clearly an error (the Director having not got the facts correct for example) then that should be raised at the time and a corrected ruling sought. Players may have to accept an incorrect ruling at the time and seek a review or an appeal at the end of play. The Laws cover the situation where there is a 'director's error'. If the matter is not about a ruling but rather the Director's behaviour then that should be referred to the Recorder. If there is substance to the referral then the Recorder should refer the concern on to the Chief Director.*

In an event involving a break between sessions, are issues arising from the break considered still "the table"? Issues between sessions?

- Yes

What expectation is there for clubs to advise NZB of any suspension?

- *They should advise the Secretary. If a player is suspended, then NZB would want to know the circumstances and whether it warrants referral to the CDDC. If so, then that process would run its course. If not, then it is unlikely that NZB would advise other clubs*

What expectation is there for clubs to advise any other club of any suspension?

- *This should be clearly identified in the Constitution or Rules of the Club.*

If a player is suspended from one club, are they restricted from playing at another club?

- *Not unless the rules of the other club state this.*

Is there any difference between the suspension imposed by the home club, or secondary club?

- *No*

Is a player with dual membership restricted from tournament participation - if so, what is the process?

- *NZB can only stop a member participating in a tournament if the CDDC has made a ruling to that effect.*

If a player is involved with a complaint at one club, and has had a similar situation occur at their second club, can there be any link between subsequent penalties imposed?

- *This is the reason that we have the Recorder process. To record episodes of unacceptable behaviour. If clubs advise their Regional recorder, then they will become aware of any trend. At a national level, the Regional recorders should advise the National Recorder of any concerns about a player or players.*
- *The annual meeting is intended to provide the opportunity for the Regional recorders to all become aware of 'difficult' players causing problems at club and regional events.*