

# Playing Directors

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The Unit 550 Board has approved having Board members direct and play in Unit Games. These individuals are official ACBL directors; in 2011 they donated their time and expertise to increase the net income from Unit Games. (As many of you know, Unit Games are major source of revenue for the Unit; the other is the two Sectionals hosted by Unit 550.) Unit 550 uses these funds to acquire bridge products, such as the scoring devices and dealing machine enhancing our members' enjoyment of the game; to maintain the facility; and, to underwrite a large portion of the lease, which allows lower table fees.

When the Unit hires non-playing directors, their fee often amounts to 30% of the gross income from a Unit Game. The \$80 fee for a non-playing director is not a large amount for their time, effort and expertise. However, over the course of a year, these fees represent a significant expense.

Beginning in January, 2012, the Unit Board has adopted a new policy for paying directors:

- 1) Play and direct. 15% of the \$7 table fees collected plus playing the game at no charge.
- 2) Direct only. \$70 and \$10 additional if the director makes up the boards.

Having a playing director raises legitimate concerns. The Unit Board and the playing directors themselves are sensitive to the general issue or even the perception of a playing director gaining an unfair advantage.

## **Does the director see the cards or hands while operating the dealing machine?**

At no time during the process of dealing hands using the dealing machine does the operator see the cards or the hands themselves unless he takes explicit action to do so.

## **Does the director see scores from other pairs?**

Prior to installing the Bridgemate scoring system, playing directors would see other scores if they entered them during the session. The Bridgemate system almost entirely eliminates the need for the director to see scores other than his scores. Even if another table enters a score incorrectly, the playing director can wait until the session is over or until he has played that board, before making the correction.

## **A director call is more disruptive when the director is also playing.**

A director call impacts two tables when there is a playing director. The playing directors are sensitive to this additional impact. Experience plus player feedback will ultimately determine if this issue overrides the financial benefit of having a playing director.

## **Certain director calls, e.g. a disputed claim, may cause the playing director to see a hand in advance.**

The playing directors must exercise special care in these situations so as not to gain any advantage. The most common director calls: bid out of turn, lead out of turn and hesitations do not necessarily involve seeing the hands. In other cases, the playing director might call on other directors who are playing and

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who have already played the hand or defer the decision until after the session is over. In those rare cases where the decision cannot be deferred, the playing director will take a “no-play” on the board.

## **Making an unbiased decision when the director call is against the playing director or his partner.**

Unless everyone at the table agrees with the decision made by the playing director, these situations require one of two courses of action: (a) Another director makes the final decision, preferably after the session is concluded; (b) If there is no other director, either at the game or who can be reached via phone, the playing director should assemble an Appeals Committee who will make the final decision.

## **Procedure when a hand has an incorrect number of cards and the playing director has not played the hand.**

If the hand has already been played, the playing director can have the previous table correct the error. If the hand has never been played (rare), the playing director should fix the problem and take a “no-play” on the board.

## **Does the ACBL or the Western Conference (STaC games) allow playing directors?**

The ACBL allows playing directors. For STaC games, written permission must be obtained from the Western Conference, as it was in 2011.