



## And the Law Is:

### Playing cards from Dummy

During the play of the hand, dummy is simply declarer's agent. He detaches and places in a played position those cards nominated by declarer. This should be done without question, comment or reaction. Dummy does not participate in the play, and hence he shouldn't touch or indicate any card without instruction from the declarer. A card is defined as 'played' at the instant it is designated by declarer. Alternatively, declarer may elect to reach across and select the desired card from dummy. This usually only occurs if partner is absent from the table. A card once touched must be played, unless declarer was specifically rearranging dummy's cards, or if he accidentally touches another card, above or below the one he intends to select. There are times when dummy mishears declarer's instructions, and plays the card he thought he heard. When this occurs, the defender next in rotation sometimes also plays a card before the initial misplay can be corrected. For example, dummy may be a bit deaf and hear "eight" instead of "ace". This is covered by Law 45D. "If dummy places in the played position a card that declarer did not name, the card must be withdrawn if attention is drawn to it before each side has played to the next trick, and a defender may withdraw and return to his hand a card played after the error but before attention was drawn to it." So if the "eight" was detached from dummy and a defender follows with the king before dummy's error is pointed out, then the defender can return the king to hand after dummy has exchanged the "eight" for the "Ace".

Sometimes we become a little lazy with how we designate cards from dummy, and say things like "diamond" or "low". Declarer "should clearly state both the suit and the rank of the desired card" (Law 46A). However, when the call is incomplete, these are the restrictions that apply

- "High" means play the highest card in the suit led.
- "Win the trick", means use the lowest card that will win.
- "Low" means follow with the lowest card of the suit led.
- Naming a suit and not a rank requires dummy to play the lowest card in that suit.
- When leading from dummy and nominating just a rank, the laws assume a continuation of the same suit that won the previous trick (providing, of course, there is a card of the required rank available).
- In all other cases, declarer must simply play a card of the rank designated, if one exists, and if two or more exist then declarer gets to decide which one.
- When declarer nominates a card not in dummy, the call is cancelled and declarer gets to try again.
- Finally, if declarer instructs dummy to play 'any card', then this is the only situation where either defender may designate which card is to be played! Law seeks to provide a safety net with which to resolve any difficulty regarding an ambiguous designation. The safest approach, however, is to avoid the problem altogether by following correct procedure, and fully naming the card you wish to play (both rank and denomination). This avoids any potential misunderstanding as to which card was intended, as well as any subsequent claims of dummy involvement.