

Law 25 – Legal and Illegal Changes of Call

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Law 25A. Unintended Call

1. If a player discovers that he has not made the call he intended to make, he may, until his partner makes a call, substitute the call he intended for the unintended call.

The second (intended) call stands and is subject to the appropriate Law, but the lead restrictions in Law 26 do not apply.

2. If the player's original intent was to make the call selected or voiced, that call stands.

A change of call may be allowed because of a mechanical error or slip of the tongue, but not because of a loss of concentration regarding the intent of the action.

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Unintended calls happen when a player decides to make a particular call but for some unconscious reason he makes a different call.

Get the player away from the table and listen to their story. Ask them to leave their cards at the table – it is rare that you should look at them at this stage. All you need to know is what was in their mind when they made the call.

“Table feel” may also play a part in deciding a player’s intentions. They may appear shocked or bewildered, unable to understand how that call got there.

You, as the Director at the table, are in the best position to make such a judgement.

If you later realise you allowed a change to an erstwhile intended call, then it is a Directors error and Law 82C empowers you to adjust.

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- I was thinking about the previous hand and **hadn’t decided** what to write.
- I decided that 3S was **high enough so I passed**. (After partner had bid 3H agreeing spades and inviting game in spades.)
- We were cuebidding towards slam. I decided **not to bid the Grand Slam and passed** 6H when I should have bid 6S. I never intended to play in 6H.
- I opened 1NT with 5 spades **and we don’t do that in our system**.
- **I thought partner had opened 3C and passed**. I now see that it is 2C and I must bid.
- I was **trying to decide whether to bid 1H or 1S** and wrote 1S when I had decided to write 1H.
- My **pencil has not left the paper**.
- I **changed my mind** immediately.

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Law 25A. Unintended Call

4. No substitution of call may be made when his partner has made a subsequent call.
5. ... no substitution is allowed after the end of the auction period.
6. If a substitution is allowed the LHO may withdraw any call he made over the first call. Information from the withdrawn call is authorized to his side and unauthorized to the opponents.

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Law 25B. Call Intended

1. A substituted call not permitted by A may be accepted by the offender's LHO. It is accepted if LHO calls intentionally over it. The first call is then withdrawn, the second call stands and the auction continues (Lead restrictions may apply regarding the withdrawn call).
2. Except as in B1, a substitution not permitted by A is cancelled. The original call stands and the auction continues (Lead restrictions may apply regarding the attempted changed call).
3. Law 16C "Unauthorized Information" applies to any call withdrawn or cancelled.

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