

Opening Bid Out of Rotation

Question

I was directing a local club game and was called to a table. The problem was a 2S (Benjamin) opening call by West when it should have been South to open. North did not accept the bid out of turn and South (RHO) opened 1C. I ruled that West should re-bid spades at the one level and East should pass for one round. I would like to know what the correct ruling should be when an opening bid is made at the 2-level.

Answer

Your ruling was almost right! When South opened 1C, West had the option of bidding spades (the denomination of his natural bid out of turn) at any level. If he did so, then the penalty is that East must pass for one round. If instead West passes, doubles or makes a bid in a denomination other than spades, the penalty is that East must pass for the remainder of the auction and there may be lead penalties. (Law)

The important thing to remember is that West may make his call in the same denomination at any level to minimise the penalties on his partner. This is often confused with the insufficient bid law (Law 27) where a player must make the bid at the lowest sufficient level in the same denomination, so that his partner is not penalised.

Matthew McManus
For the Australian Bridge Directors Association (ABDA)