

Hiding the bidding details during play

Question

Could you please tell me the Rule that says the Bidding Slip must be covered after the auction is finished? What about when bidding boxes are being used?

Answer

As written bidding is not used in many parts of the world apart from Australia and New Zealand, it is not specifically covered in the laws of bridge. Rules dealing with written bidding become part of regulations, which are the responsibility of individual clubs. However for the sake of consistency, and because it is easy, most clubs will use the regulations of their State Association by default.

The common rule is that the bidding slip should be removed from view after the third player has played to Trick 1. By doing so, consistency with the relevant Law 20 is achieved. Law 20 says that a player has a right to a review of the auction up until they have played a card to the first trick. So, the opening leader is entitled to review the auction till they make the opening lead, declarer can have a review until they play a card from dummy and the third player can get the review till they play to Trick 1.

With bidding boxes, a similar procedure is used. After the third player has played to Trick 1, all bidding cards should be returned to their boxes except for the final contract. This should be placed face down on the board in case of any dispute at the end of play.

Matthew McManus
For the Australian Bridge Directors Association (ABDA)