

CONGRESS DIRECTOR COURSE
By REG BUSCH

LESSON 1D

Question from Lesson 1A:

1. This situation arose at my own club recently. South is declarer, but East out of turn makes a face down opening lead. South now starts to put her cards on the table as dummy! (It seems that South was a little stressed during the auction). How would you rule, and under what Laws?

Law 54 cannot apply, since that Law applies only to a faced opening lead out of turn. So where do we go? Read Law 17E, which tells us that the auction period has not ended until the opening lead is faced. So clearly we are still in the auction period, even though technically the auction has finished. (It isn't unconditionally finished, because, if some MI comes to light, the TD could reopen the auction and allow East to change his final pass).

So the situation now is (a) East has a card face down on the table during the auction period, and (b) South has several cards face up on the table during the auction period. There is no penalty for (a), though it is a breach of procedure, and in this case, there is no penalty for (b). In the rare event that MI came to light and the TD re-opened the auction with East changing her pass to a call of some kind, then Law 24C would oblige North to pass!

So my answer to this problem: I would tell East to take back her face down card, West to make her opening lead, and South as declarer to pick up her cards. Any cards seen by EW would be authorized information to them.

Reg.