

Stop Cards

by Dave Riseborough

Stop cards must be used when a player is going to make a bid which misses out one or more bidding levels.

If you are going to make a skip bid of some sort, such as a 2- or 3-level opening bid, a jump bid in partner's suit or a jump overcall, you must:

- put out the stop card in front of the next player to bid
- make your bid
- count to approximately 10 seconds and then turn the card back down.

The idea is that the next player has some extra time (10 seconds) to consider their action and can call without undue hesitation.

For all players except novices, in pre-emptive and competitive auctions, if you hesitate and then pass, you are putting your partner under ethical pressure.

If you bid after partner's hesitation, you must be able to fully justify your call and show that you have not been influenced by the hesitation! That means that if you have hesitated, it is often better to bid than to pass.

When using the stop card, remember to count about 10 seconds after you have made your bid and then remove the card. Some players turn the card down immediately after making their bid, without giving the opponent time to think. If you do that, you will not be able to complain if there is a hesitation followed by a pass and then a bid from hesitator's partner!

If an opponent places a stop card in front of you, start considering your next bid immediately, expecting a jump bid in front of you. Some players only start to think after the card has been removed!

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