

The *Dummy* certainly is an interesting participant at the bridge table. For a character who is just a *Dummy*, his role can be confusing. It is doubtful that we all even have the same understanding as to when you actually become the Dummy: Dummy, declarer's partner, becomes Dummy when the opening lead is faced. It is not necessary for the Dummy to put a card on the table. Even if the lead is out of turn, he has still become the dummy, (unless declarer elects to become the Dummy).

Even though bridge is a partnership game, things can get a little confusing when you are sitting across from your partner and you are now officially the *Dummy*. Being as you are a partnership it is hard not to think in terms of how to help your partner. How many times are we just trying to help out our partner when sure enough someone pipes up and says: "*Sorry, as the Dummy, you can't do that!*"

Once you become the Dummy, for the sake of the partnership, just what can you do to help your partner? I am hoping that the following will help sort out, as the Dummy how you can help out your partner, and of course, when you must stay quiet and leave your partner to sort things out for himself. Let's start with what the Dummy's limitations are.

Dummy should not:

1. Should not initiate a director call during play unless **another player** has drawn attention to an irregularity. However, there are times that dummy may call the director. An example would be if a player is being rude or obnoxious, even if no other player says anything. Also, if any player in the event draws attention to an irregularity at the table, Dummy may call for a director. It does not have to be a player at the table. For example, this could happen if a player from another table notices a card on the floor.
2. May not call attention to an irregularity during play.
3. May not participate in, or comment on play: It is not within the rights of Dummy to touch **any** card until so directed to do so by the declarer. Dummy should not touch (except for purpose of arrangement), or in any way indicate any card to be played without being instructed by the declarer. This means that even if there is only one card on the table, or a sequence, say J, 10, 9, the Dummy may not touch the card until directed to do so by the declarer.

The Dummy is obligated to play the card indicated by the declarer even if the Dummy suspects the declarer really meant to play a different card; (example: the declarer plays 3H, opponent plays QH, and declarer calls for the 2H when on the board his hearts are: K, 9, 2. When the declarer says 2H, and shows no indication that he meant the KH, as the Dummy you must play the card the declarer called for without hesitation. I find keeping my hands in my lap helps me from touching the Dummy's cards inappropriately.

If declarer leads and calls a card from Dummy before declarer's LHO has played, Dummy **must** play the card immediately. The player on dummy's left now has the right to play even if his partner has not yet played.

4. When all the cards to the last trick have been turned over the Dummy may not remind the declarer which card was just played from the Dummy's hand
5. The Dummy may not put a card (even a singleton) into play before his RHO has put a card into play **unless the card has been called by declarer**.
6. May not look at the face of a card in either defender's hand on your own initiative.

Further Dummy may not:

- Ask for a review of the auction
- Request an explanation of a specific bid
- Request an explanation or extended explanation of the defenders' carding agreements
- Ask or state the contract on your own initiative
- Ask a defender about a possible revoke during play

Dummy may:

1. Play Dummy's cards as instructed by the declarer.
2. Keep track/count of tricks won and lost.
3. Draw attention to a card pointed incorrectly, but only before the lead to the next trick is made.
4. Ask the declarer (but only the declarer) about a possible revoke
5. Attempt to prevent an irregularity by the declarer; e.g. by pointing out which hand is on lead. (If the declarer has already played/called from the "wrong" hand, it's a played card; it is now too late for Dummy to point out the "wrong" hand led to the trick).
6. Give information, in the presence of the Director, as to fact or law.
7. Draw attention to any irregularity after play of the hand. Objecting to a claim or concession is permitted. By law, play ceases after a claim or concession, so Dummy may object and call the Director.

To summarize once Dummy becomes Dummy, during the play of the hand, he may:

- make limited, discrete inquiries of declarer to prevent an irregularity
- may ask to see a card **played by any player**, if it was hidden from his view when played
- may provide factual information during a Director Call (i.e. only when the Director is at the table)

Researched and written by Pamela Keim
Reviewed by Doug Rankin for authentication