


Law 45 C.4.(b)

Changing a Card Called From Dummy

Interpreting, understanding and communicating this Law is no easy task. Directors should undertake a careful reading of the Law and consult Duplicate Decisions for a well-written and thorough examination of the process a Director must undertake in deciding whether or not to allow the change of a called card from dummy.

The following 10 examples should be of help to Directors and to players as to the intent of the Laws Commission as described in Duplicate Decisions.

Board 1 (1)	♠ 9 5 4	
North Deals	♥ 9 5	
None Vul	♦ A K Q J 7 4 3 2	
	♣ —	
♠ 10 2		♠ 7
♥ J 10 7 3		♥ K Q 8 6 2
♦ 9 8 6		♦ 10
♣ K Q J 10		♣ A 9 6 5 4 2
	♠ A K Q J 8 6 3	
	♥ A 4	
	♦ 5	
	♣ 8 7 3	

South is in 7 ♠. The opening lead is the ♣ K. South trumps in dummy, leads the ♥ 5 to his ace, trumps another club, and leads the final trump from dummy to his hand. He draws trump in two rounds and leads the ♦ 5 and says "play." There's a momentary pause and he says "I mean the ace!"

*Clearly this is designed to resemble the famous "Oh, SH**" ruling from Vancouver in 1999, the case that propelled the Law Commission to clearly explain Law 45 C. 4.(b) with its opinions shared in Duplicate Decisions.*

Declarer's intent here is incontrovertible and the ace should be played.

Board 2
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

<p>♠ J 10 4 2 ♥ K 6 3 ♦ J 7 6 ♣ A Q 5</p>		<p>♠ A Q ♥ A Q 9 5 ♦ 10 2 ♣ J 10 8 6 4</p>
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<p>♠ 9 8 6 5 ♥ 7 2 ♦ 9 8 5 4 3 ♣ 9 3</p>		<p>♠ K 7 3 ♥ J 10 8 4 ♦ A K Q ♣ K 7 2</p>
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South is in 4 ♥. The opening lead is ♠ J. Declarer wins on the dummy and leads a diamond to his ace. He plays the ♥ J, West plays low and he lets it ride. He follows by playing the ♥ 10 and says "sma..." when he sees the ♥ K pop from West's hand. He immediately says "Win it."

This hand resides at the other end of the spectrum. Again, making use of Duplicate Decisions:

"Example: It frequently occurs that declarer leads and his play from dummy is intended to be conditional on the play of LHO. He then prematurely calls a card from dummy and, observing that LHO's card makes his choice unpalatable, endeavors to change it. The change must not be allowed regardless of the tempo, for his first designation was not inadvertent."

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

<p>♠ Q 10 9 3 2 ♥ A 5 ♦ Q 5 4 2 ♣ 10 3</p>		<p>♠ 5 ♥ K 9 3 ♦ J 10 8 7 6 ♣ A 9 7 5</p>
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<p>♠ A K 7 4 ♥ Q 8 6 ♦ A K 3 ♣ K 8 4</p>		<p>♠ J 8 6 ♥ J 10 7 4 2 ♦ 9 ♣ Q J 6 2</p>
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South is in 3 NT. West leads the ♠ 3. Declarer wins the ace and cashes the ♦ A and ♦ K. He continues with the ♦ 3 which West wins. West leads the ♠ Q ducked by Declarer. A third round of spades is led and South wins his king. On the two rounds of spades Declarer pitches two little clubs. He now leads the ♣ 4, West plays the 3 and he says "play." He sees the ♣ 9 being pulled and says "The ace!"

Here the director should take declarer away from the table to discuss the line of play that was planned. It seems clear that Declarer has two spade tricks, two clubs tricks, four diamond tricks and will hope to establish a heart trick to make his nine tricks, also hoping the spades break 4-4 for E-W or that East has the ♥ A. It cannot be reasonable to think he is doing anything but trying to get to the dummy to cash his diamond tricks and then establish the heart trick while still holding a club stopper in his hand.

(While declarer will always be down one, forcing the play of small club will result in E/W winning six tricks and declarer will be down two.)

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

<p>♠ 2</p> <p>♥ K 6 4 3</p> <p>♦ K Q 10 6</p> <p>♣ J 7 4 3</p>		<p>♠ A 7 5 4</p> <p>♥ 10 8</p> <p>♦ 4 3</p> <p>♣ A K Q 10 9</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 6 3</p> <p>♥ 9 5</p> <p>♦ J 8 7 5 2</p> <p>♣ 8 6</p>
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♠ K Q J 8

♥ A Q J 7 2

♦ A 9

♣ 5 2

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

<p>♠ Q 8</p> <p>♥ K 7 6 5 4</p> <p>♦ Q J 4</p> <p>♣ 5 4 2</p>		<p>♠ A 5</p> <p>♥ 9</p> <p>♦ A 9 8 6 5 2</p> <p>♣ 9 8 7 6</p>	<p>♠ K 6 3 2</p> <p>♥ J 10 8</p> <p>♦ 10 7 3</p> <p>♣ J 10 3</p>
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♠ J 10 9 7 4

♥ A Q 3 2

♦ K

♣ A K Q

South is in 6 ♠. The ♦ K is led won by Declarer's ace. He takes a few moments to plan his play then leads the ♠K and calls for the ace from dummy. He blurts out, "I mean small."

Similar to Example #3, a director should speak with declarer away from the table to discover the line of play that declarer had in mind. Transportation and timing on this hand are critical. Again, there should be a presupposition that declarer has not just misspoken but has actually lost track of the winning line of play. In determining 'inadvertent' the burden of proof (of inadvertency) is on the declarer. The standard of proof is 'overwhelming'."

This ruling may require applying the final statement of the Laws Commission: "The bottom line is that there is to be a strong presumption that the card called is the card that was intended to be called."

South is 3 NT. The ♥ 5 is led, won by Declarer with the queen. He cashes the ♦K and then leads the ♣ A, ♣K, and ♣Q. He then calls for the ♣9 from dummy as his next lead. The director is called and the defenders choose for him to lead from his hand. He leads the ♥A and calls for the ♣9 to be played to this lead. Immediately he says, "The five of diamonds!" He even starts to laugh and says "I'm so anxious to cash that good club I keep trying to play it early!"

Declarer has solved the bridge problem here and knows the ♣ 9 is good. The Director should allow the play of the ♦ 5 to the lead of the ♥A.

Board 6

♠ 7 6 5 4 3		♠ —
♥ Q 4		♥ A K J 9 8 3
♦ A Q 8 4		♦ J 3 2
♣ 8 6		♣ K Q J 2

♠ Q 10 9 2		♠ —
♥ 6 2		♥ A K J 9 8 3
♦ 9 7		♦ J 3 2
♣ 10 9 7 4 3		♣ K Q J 2

♠ A K J 8		♠ —
♥ 10 7 5		♥ A K J 9 8 3
♦ K 10 6 5		♦ J 3 2
♣ A 5		♣ K Q J 2

Board 7

♠ A K 3		♠ Q 9 5
♥ A 9		♥ 8 7 5 2
♦ K J 5 3		♦ A Q 2
♣ K J 9 3		♣ 10 7 6

♠ J 10 7 4 2		♠ Q 9 5
♥ K J 10 6 4		♥ 8 7 5 2
♦ 9 8		♦ A Q 2
♣ Q		♣ 10 7 6

♠ 8 6		♠ Q 9 5
♥ Q 3		♥ 8 7 5 2
♦ 10 7 6 4		♦ A Q 2
♣ A 8 5 4 2		♣ 10 7 6

South is in 4 ♠ in an auction where East has competed in hearts. West leads the ♥ 6. East wins the Jack and continues with two more rounds of hearts. On the third round West trumps with the ♠ 9 and declarer says "ruff." In the same breath he says "pitch a club."

This is similar to Example #2. The example in Duplicate Decisions addresses this situation almost exactly: "Declarer leads a club, intending to ruff in dummy. As he says "ruff," he notices that LHO has ruffed with a trump higher than any in dummy. Regardless of how quickly he says "pitch a diamond," such a change may not be allowed, because "ruff" was not inadvertent."

Declarers will frequently argue "but it was in the same breath." It is right to remind them that the phrase "in the same breath" has not been in the Law Book since 1963.

South is in 3 NT. The opening lead is the ♥ J. Declarer wins his ♥ Q and leads a small club playing the ♣ K when he sees the queen appear. He cashes the ♣ J and then says "small club." East has the ♣ 10 detached and 2/3 of the way to the table. Almost immediately he says, "NO! I mean the NINE of clubs!"

Again, from the Laws Commission clarification: If declarer's RHO has played and there is any reasonable possibility that information gained from RHO's play could suggest that declarer's play from dummy was a mistake, a "pause for thought" has occurred — no change in designation is to be permitted.

Even if the ♣ 10 has not appeared there is too much evidence that declarer may just now be realizing that the suit will be blocked and a director should ignore the self-serving statement of "I need to unblock the suit," as this notion could easily have hit at the moment after he called "small club."

Board 8


West Deals
None Vul

♠ K 9 6 3 2
♥ J 9 6 5
♦ A Q 6
♣ K

♠ 10 8 7
♥ K 4 2
♦ 10 7 5 4 3
♣ 6 5

♠ Q 5 4
♥ A Q 3
♦ J 9
♣ 8 7 4 3 2

♠ A J
♥ 10 8 7
♦ K 8 2
♣ A Q J 10 9



Board 9


North Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 10 9 4
♥ Q 9 3
♦ A K 10 2
♣ Q J 4

♠ A 8 6 3 2
♥ 8 7 6
♦ J 8 5 3
♣ 5

♠ Q J 7 5
♥ J 10 4 2
♦ 9 7 4
♣ A 8

♠ K
♥ A K 5
♦ Q 6
♣ K 10 9 7 6 3 2




South is in 3 NT. The opening lead is the ♦4. He wins in dummy with the ♦A and leads the ♠2 to his jack. He cashes the ♠A. He then leads the ♣A. On the ♣Q he points to the ♥5 which is way to the right of the dummy, but says "spade." The spades are located on the far left of dummy. His partner starts to pull the ♠6. He says "No, I meant a heart."

The nonverbal cue of pointing at one suit while calling another is strong evidence that the call is inadvertent. The line of play declarer has chosen to this point is another strong indicator. The director should allow the play of a heart.

South is in 6 ♣. West leads ♦3 won in South's hand with the queen. He immediately leads the ♦6 obviously intending to win the King but says "a spade." As Dummy falters in reaching for a card, as dummy is required to follow suit here, declarer says "No, no, no, I meant to say 'a diamond', I mean I meant to say the 'king of diamonds.'"

Here the line of play is so clear that allowing the ♦K to be played is right. Declarer's only path to making the contract is to pitch the ♠K on the top diamond. His intent is clear and incontrovertible. Saying "a spade" clearly refers to his own need to pitch his loser on the high diamond, not to any card that exists in dummy.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

<p>♠ 10 6 2 ♥ A 9 ♦ A 9 6 3 ♣ K J 10 8</p>		<p>♠ A Q J 7 ♥ 8 7 5 ♦ Q J 7 ♣ 7 4 3</p> <p>♠ 9 8 5 4 3 ♥ K 6 ♦ 5 4 ♣ A Q 5 2</p> <p>♠ K ♥ Q J 10 4 3 2 ♦ K 10 8 2 ♣ 9 6</p>
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South is in 4♥ doubled. The opening lead is the ♠2. He barely studies the dummy and says "play." Dummy moves the ♠7 into a played position. East starts to detach a card and declarer says "I meant the ace! I mean, I *said* the ace!"

Declarer's statement of "I meant the ace" and then almost an argumentative "I said the ace" should lead a Director to strongly suspect that Declarer has made a bridge error, and has not misspoken. It is all too possible that he is only now realizing that by playing low he has not used the all important timely entry to dummy.