

New Alerting and Announcing Rules

No doubt some of you will already be aware that the English Bridge Union (EBU) are changing the rules on alerting, and introducing the new concept of "announcing"

There will be a one year period of grace to allow players to get used to the new rules but basically you will be expected to observe the new rules in any competition organised under the auspices of the EBU from next August onwards. That includes next year's league matches.

So what's it all about? Hopefully this article will tell you. Please note that this is my interpretation based upon careful study of the new rules. I believe it to be correct but cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions. The definitive (if slightly legalistic) description of the new rules is in the EBU "Orange Book". At the time of writing, the final draft of the revised Orange Book was available at <http://blakjak.com/download.htm>

Announcing

Announcing means making a short specific statement about the meaning of partner's bid. The new rules require you to announce in the following circumstances:

Partner bids	You announce
1NT opener	The agreed point range, for example by saying "12-14". In addition, if your partnership methods allow you to open 1NT with a singleton you must add the qualification "possible singleton".
Stayman	Just say "Stayman". Note that this only applies opposite a 1NT opener, when Stayman is used in the traditional manner (asking partner to bid a 4 card major), and only if there has been no intervention. In all other circumstances, Stayman should be alerted. When Stayman has been announced, a subsequent 2 [♣] from opener should not alerted.
Red suit transfer	Announce by saying "Hearts" or "Spades" as appropriate. Note that this only applies opposite a 1NT opener, if the bid shows at least five cards in the target suit, and only if there has been no intervention. In all other circumstances, transfers should be alerted as before.
Opens 2 of a suit	If natural then you must announce the strength with one of the following statements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Strong, forcing"• "Strong, not Forcing"• "Intermediate"• "Weak"

Note that artificial 2 openers, such as Acol 2 \S are not announced but alerted as before.

Changes to the alert rules

There have also been some changes to the rules for alerting. Some of the announcements (for example when you announce partner's transfer) replace an alert. If you announce, don't alert. There are two other significant changes:

Bids above 3NT With a few minor exceptions, you must now never alert any bid above 3NT. No more waking partner up to the fact that you've taken his 4NT as Blackwood! The only exceptions are artificial opening bids, lead directing passes and

doubles/redoubles which ask for a suit *other than* the suit doubled.

Doubles

Doubles of natural suit bids are assumed to be for takeout. Takeout doubles are therefore not alerted. The corollary is that penalty doubles of suit bids (at the 1, 2 or 3 level) must alerted.

Doubles of artificial suit bids are assumed to show the suit doubled. Only alert if your partner's has a different meaning.

Doubles of NT bids are assumed to be primarily for penalties. This includes the double of a 1NT response (eg. 1[©]-pass-1NT-double). This must be alerted if for takeout and not alerted if for penalties.

Summary

Unless you play a very exotic system...

- **1NT, Stayman and Transfers are all announced, not alerted.**
- **All 2 of suit openers must either be announced or alerted as appropriate**
- **Don't alert 2^{♦♦} response to Stayman.**
- **Don't alert *anything* above 3NT.**
- **Only alert low level suit doubles if for penalties.**
- **Only alert doubles of NT bids if not for penalties.**

I hope that all makes perfect sense. If you don't like it, please don't blame me, it's all down to the EBU's Laws & Ethics committee. Happy bridge .
