

FOR THE NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK.....

Life Master Requirements Are Changing

If you have a friend who has not yet joined ACBL, now would be an EXCELLENT time to join. The requirements to attain the rank of Life Master are changing as of January 1, 2010. You currently need 300 master points to qualify but in January you will need **500 master points**. Of these, 50 must be gold or platinum, 50 must be red, and 75 must be silver. If you are receiving this newsletter, you are already an ACBL member and needn't worry about the change because it will not affect you. Encourage your nonmember friends to join now if there is any chance they may want to play in sanctioned games in the future. They'll be glad they did! And an ACBL membership would make such a nice holiday gift for them ☺.....

It's a Partnership game (This is from Marty Bergen, Champion Bridge Player)

Never "result" (criticize your partner for normal action just because it did not work this time).

Unless your intent is to clear up a misunderstanding, avoid discussing the hand just played. If you cannot resist, be discreet.

Remember that you and your partner are on the same side.

Do not forget that your partner wants to win just as much as you do.

Back to the Basics---It's not only for school children!

Some new players ignore **the most important suit of all, the TRUMP suit**. An outstanding trump in an opponent's hand just might capture one of your sure tricks. Pay special attention to your trump suit as soon as you get the lead. The question is this—Should you draw out all of the opponent's trumps, or should you delay? The answer depends on this—Do you need any of dummy's trumps to ruff the losers in YOUR hand? If you have one loser in your hand that you need to trump with dummy's trump, just one will do. Draw all the trumps out and count them. Just leave 1 trump in dummy to take care of that loser. If you don't plan to do that, you should pull trumps at once! If you need dummy's trumps to ruff losers, then delay drawing out the trumps. So you see, it depends upon DUMMY'S trumps, not those in your hand. **DUMMY'S TRUMPS ARE FOR RUFFING LOSERS AND THE TRUMPS IN YOUR HAND ARE FOR PULLING TRUMP**. That is why we count DUMMY points (5 for a void, 3 for a singleton, and one for a doubleton) when you know you have the hand that is going down on the table.

Defense--you do it half the time

When leading to **suit contracts** there are NONOs, NOs, and might be OKs.

The big NONOs are:

- Lead of an Unsupported Ace
- Under lead of an Unsupported Ace
- Lead of a Singleton Trump

- Lead of any suit bid by Declarer
- Lead of trump when defender holds 4 trumps

The Nos are:

- Lead of a doubleton in any indicated strong suit by dummy
- Lead of a King from Kx or Q from Qx

You Might Survive:

- Lead from a 4 card holding from 9's and 10's
- Lead from a holding of three small cards

Director Please---When to Alert

The Convention Card is a helpful guide for when to alert a bid, when to just announce the bid, and when no alert or announcement is necessary. There are three different colors of print on the card. Bids printed in black need not be alerted, bids printed in blue are announced by partner, but not alerted such as “transfer” or saying “forcing”.

The bids printed in red are alerts. When your partner makes one of these bids, tap your bid box alert card and announce “alert”.

Lord of the Manners

A player wrote, “I’ll never forget the lady who taught me an important lesson about bridge etiquette. In our monthly social group we drew for partners. My partner that night played a different bidding system with her husband (precision), but in our group she played Standard American. I took her to 6 NT. When I laid down the dummy she said, “Oh s—t!” Then, taking a deep breath, she said brightly, “Thank you, partner”. Always say “Thank you, partner” when your partner lays down the dummy. ☺

Conventions- -We all need a FEW good ones

Jacoby transfers are used on the 2-level and Texas on the 4-level. A Jacoby transfer guarantees only five but could be made with a longer suit. A Texas transfer is “always” at least a 6 card suit. A Jacoby transfer could be made with 0 points! A Texas transfer means the responder has enough for at least game. If you have only a 5 card major, you will NEVER use the Texas transfer but when you have 6 pieces in a suit, you will “always” want to play in your 8 card fit.

Jacoby 5-to 6+ cards 0+ points transfer and pass with a weak hand

Texas 6+ cards “enough for game” Texas transfer and pass

Jacoby 5 pc & Texas 6 pc and invitational hand: transfer and then rebid no trump with 5pc or your suit to invite at the 3 level

With slam interest Jacoby transfer and then jump to Game. With a slam interest we always go slower (Jacoby) and then the no trump opener can let you know if there is a good fit and a good hand.

With slam interest and a singleton or void, transfer and then bid your singleton or void at the 4 level (splinter)

Top player, Larry Cohen suggests that Jacoby followed by 4NT is quantitative but Texas followed by 4NT is RKC.

Volunteer opportunities within the unit

The big Houston Regional tournament is coming up in February. It will be run by volunteers. Help is always appreciated. To help in the new player area, contact Kathy Hughes at 281-437-1339. Get involved—it's fun!

Upcoming events:

The Gold Rush Pairs

A new event is coming to the Houston Lone Star Regional. We're calling it Gold Rush Pairs because it gives newer players an unprecedented opportunity to earn gold points in a pairs event. Players will earn gold points by either placing 1st in their sections or by finishing in the overall awards in the **two** session event in the "B" stratification.

Two things make this event unique. First is that it is "strati-flighted". That means that all players who enter and have masterpoints above the "B" stratification play in their own sections and win their awards separately. The second is that the "B" stratification is set with a masterpoint limit of 750. In all other pairs events at the Regional, "B" is 750 to 2000 masterpoints.

New England introduced the Gold Rush Pairs event this summer at their Regional Tournaments, and it has been very popular with their newer players.

The Gold Rush Pairs will be played on Saturday, February 6, beginning at 1:15 pm. The second session will start at 7 pm. So get your partners and join the Gold Rush!

Lynne Graham and Mary Lee Bentley Teacher Appreciation Day

Thursday, February 4, will be a salute to Lynne Graham and Mary Lee Bentley, two well loved Houston bridge teachers. Novice players are planning lots of special surprises to celebrate Lynne and Mary Lee's legacy to the Houston bridge community.

Please send comments regarding this newsletter to jryan9620@sbcglobal.net. If you would like to be added to the mailing list just give ACBL your e-mail address and you will get it automatically.

See you at the tables

Joyce Ryan