

District 16 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

Volume 2 Issue 2

From the Editor

District 16 has reported growth for 7 of the last 8 months after a decline that began in 2012. Help us continue to grow by inviting your friends to join you at bridge events and lessons. Help out at your clubs and lessons by volunteering. By volunteering, all of us can help improve the bridge experience.

I'm interested in your feedback, so please send your comments to paulcuneo@sbcglobal.net.

Paul Cuneo

District 16 Education Chair

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From Unit 174 - Nancy Strohmer



JOINT ABA-ACBL PAIRS CHAMPIONSHIP GAME...

Saturday, March 5 @ 10:30am: Trini Sosa Mendenhall Community Center, 1414 Wirt Rd, Houston. Bring you favorite dish to share. \$3 Entry - Trophies Awarded! Players can choose to receive ABA or ACBL masterpoints.

For more information, please contact: Nancy Strohmer @ nastrohmer@yahoo.com / 713-882-0626 or Gloria Cooper @ gjcooper99@aol.com / 281-468-1822.

ANNUAL MEETING...

On Sunday, April 3, we will have our next Annual Meeting for the membership which will take place between the morning & afternoon sessions (after the lunch break) at the Election Sectional.

In the interest of making sure that the Board has time to study the benefits of any topic for discussion/motion presented, we ask that you give us your topic/motion at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting. If you have a topic/motion that you would like to present now, please do so. We will publish it in the President's Post AND the Unit Newsletter every month between now and April's meeting. We want feedback...we want your opinions...we want to continue to improve & grow our Unit with your help.

The sooner we receive your topics/motions, the more exposure they will have and we can all be better informed for the Annual Meeting. We will allocate the following times for topics/motions: 2 minutes to present topic / 3 minutes to discuss / 5 minutes total per topic...this can be extended with approval of a motion from the floor. Why are we doing this...to ensure a smoother, more productive & more time-effective meeting.

We have also changed the layout of the meeting area that day to ensure that everyone can hear easily.

UNIT 174 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION...will take place at the April Sectional. The

candidates are:

Mildred Breed
William Daniel
Dianna Gittelman
Ken Hudson
Bill Riley
Janet Seifert

Better Bridge Habits

Thinking at Trick 1

Developing good habits at the table is an important part of learning bridge. Thinking at trick 1 is a very important habit to develop. Last month, I focused on Declarer's thinking; this month is thinking by the defenders.

Defense is much harder as a defender can only see $\frac{1}{2}$ of the assets of the defense, where declarer can see all of the cards his side possesses. The following steps will help with the thinking process:

- Think about each bid as it is made. What is indicated:
 - Strength as defined by High Card Points
 - Distribution
 - Fit with bidders partner
 - Memorize the auction prior to the last pass.
- While waiting for the opening lead, mentally review what you've learned thus far.
- Once the opening lead has been made and dummy is faced:
 - Estimate the high card points for each side.
 - Were there clues from the bidding about their possible distribution?
 - Any clues from the opening lead?
 - Look at the distribution of each suit.
 - How are the missing cards most likely to be distributed?
 - Count your probable winners.
 - Estimate both Declarer's hand and your partner's hand

- At his point, you are ready to make your plan for the defense which will have one of two objectives:
 - Defeat the Contract if it looks probable that your side has enough assets
 - Avoid giving overtricks to the declarer if it appears that declarer will have no problem making the contract
 - Ask “What can go wrong and how can I modify the plan to cope with that possibility if it happens?”
 - Determine what is critical to count during the play to know if your plan will succeed.

At this point, you are prepared to play your first card if you are in 3rd seat. Do not allow the Declarer to rush your thinking process. One technique if you need more time is to select your card to play to trick one and place it face down on the table. You do not need to say anything. It should be obvious that you need more time to think about the entire hand and the defense. Turn it face up when you are ready to play.

Over time you'll find that the process gets easier and you will make better plans.

Improved Declarer Play

Card Combinations

As declarer, many times the ability to make our contract depends on playing one of the suits in a way that maximizes our chance to take tricks. The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge by ACBL has a section on playing card combinations. Here is a combination from the Encyclopedia that seems to occur frequently:

A Q x x x

J x

We can maximize our chances of 3 tricks by leading a small card towards the J. If your right hand opponent rises with the King, you have your 3 tricks. If it loses to the K on your left, play the J and then the A. Overall there is a 93% chance of 3 tricks.

If the J wins, play the small card to the Ace. If your right hand opponent has a doubleton K, it will fall. If not, hope for a 3-3 split. Overall chance of 3 tricks when the Jack wins is 56%.

Demon Defense

The Rule of 11

Eddie Kantar writes in his book “Modern Bridge Defense” about the “rule of 11”. The rule requires that your side leads 4th best; let’s say partner leads the Spade 5 against 3NT. Subtract the size of the card your partner leads from 11 ($11-5=6$). 6 is the key number. It tells you there are 6 cards higher than the 5 in the other 3 hands. You count the number of cards higher than the 5 in the dummy and your own hand to know how many cards declarer has that are higher than the 5. Here is an example with partner leading the 5 against 3NT:

N – 976

W - AQ854

E – J103 (you)

S- K2

At trick 1, you play the 10 which loses to the King. The rule of 11 tells you that declarer has only one card higher than the 5 and you’ve seen it. If you can gain the lead, you will lead the suit and partner will take all of the rest in the suit. Remember that declarer can also use the rule of 11, but that story is for another book. www.kantarbridge.com

Bidding Tips

Negative Doubles

In his book "Double! New Meaning for an Old Bid" Mike Lawrence talks about negative doubles. This is one of the conventions that in an important part of all major bidding systems. You can find lots of books and articles about negative doubles. Mike Lawrence writes:

W	N	E	S
1C	1D	?	

How many hearts does East need to bid 1H? How about Spades?

East needs just 4 Hearts to bid 1H and similarly 4 Spades to bid 1S. East cannot double 1D without at least 4 cards in each major suit. This means that East must bid with some poor hands if he holds 4 cards in a major suit and has 6 HCP (High Card Points).

Rule: 4 cards in both majors are needed to make a negative double of a 1D overcall. www.michaelslawrence.com

Its the Law

Laws 48 thru 52 are about Penalty Cards. The following is from Duplicate Decisions published by ACBL:

"48 - Exposure of Declarer's Cards: Declarer is not subject to penalty for exposing a card, and no card of declarer's hand or dummy's hand ever becomes a penalty card. Declarer is not required to play any card dropped accidentally.

When declarer faces his cards:

- After an opening lead out of turn has been faced, he has accepted the lead and there is no penalty. Play continues with dummy as declarer.
- After a lead out of turn but before it has been faced; declarer's cards are treated as exposed during the auction because the auction is not completed until the lead is faced. (See Law 22B.)
- Intentionally at any time other than immediately after an opening lead out of turn, he

may be deemed to have made a claim or concession of tricks and Law 68 applies. NOTE: When declarer intentionally plays a card, it cannot be changed (even if the wrong card was pulled) unless provided for in Law 47. Changes of mind are not permitted.

49 - Exposure of a Defender's Cards: A card prematurely exposed, but not led, becomes a penalty card:

1. When a defender holds it so that it is possible for the defender's partner to see it;
2. Or when it is named as being in the defender's hand;
3. Or when it is played by the defender before he is legally entitled to do so. However, per the footnote to Law 68, when a defender makes a statement about the trick currently in progress (such as saying "it does not matter what you play" to a declarer who is pondering), cards exposed or revealed by a defender do not become penalty cards. Law 16, Unauthorized Information, however, may apply.

50 - Disposition of a Penalty Card:

Definition of a Penalty Card: A card prematurely exposed (but not led — if prematurely led, see Law 57) by a defender is a penalty card unless the Director designates otherwise. (The Director should be called whenever this happens.)

A minor penalty card is a single card 9 or lower and exposed by accident (as in playing two cards to a trick or dropping one accidentally). It is not an "accident," however, if a player accidentally plays a club instead of a spade. The following facts are true about a minor penalty card:

1. It must be left face up on the table.
2. It does not have to be played at its first legal opportunity.
3. It must be played before any other card, 9 or lower, of the same suit is played.
4. It is permissible to lead or play a card, 10 or above, in the same suit before playing the minor penalty card.
5. It is permissible to play another suit.
6. The offender's partner is not subject to lead penalties, but Law 16 A., Unauthorized Information, may apply.

A major penalty card is a single card, 10 or above, exposed accidentally, or any card exposed through deliberate play (as in leading out of turn or correcting a revoke), or two or more penalty cards (note that the same defender cannot have two minor penalty cards)

belonging to one defender. The following facts are true about a major penalty card:

1. It must be left face up on the table immediately in front of the player to whom it belongs until it is played or until an alternative option has been exercised.
2. It must be played at the first legal opportunity (leading, following suit, discarding, ruffing). Declarer has no options when the player with the major penalty card is on lead, it must be led.
3. The obligation to follow suit or to comply with a lead or play penalty takes precedence over the obligation to play a penalty card.
4. When a player has a major penalty card, his partner may not lead to a new trick until declarer states which, if any, of his three options he is selecting.
 - a. He may require the lead of the suit of the penalty card, just once, and all penalty cards in the suit are returned to the player's hand.
 - b. He may prohibit the lead of the suit of the penalty card for as long as the partner retains the lead, and all penalty cards in the suit are returned to the player's hand.
 - c. Declarer may choose to allow the offender's partner to lead any suit, in which case the penalty card(s) stays on the table and the partner leads anything.
5. Except for the fact that the offender must play the penalty card, other information arising from exposing the card is unauthorized to the offender's partner. An example is that the partner may not use the knowledge to help place other cards unless he has that knowledge from the auction or the play up to that point. NOTE: When cards are returned to a defender's hand after being major penalty cards, there are no further restrictions on the offender unless he still has penalty cards in another suit. However, information arising from seeing the card(s) is unauthorized information to the offender's partner until such information becomes available from legal sources, such as the play of the cards.

51 - Two or More Penalty Cards

1. If a defender has two or more penalty cards that can legally be played to the current trick, the declarer may designate which card shall be played.
2. If a defender has two or more penalty cards in one suit when it is his partner's turn to lead, declarer may:
 - a. Require the lead of that suit. Defender's cards are no longer penalty cards. He may pick them up and make any legal play.
 - b. Prohibit the lead of that suit. Defender's cards are no longer penalty cards. He may pick them up and make any legal play.
 - c. Allow the lead of any suit, in which case the cards remain penalty cards.
3. If a defender has penalty cards in more than one suit when it is his partner's turn to lead, declarer may:

a. Require the lead of one of the suits in which there is a penalty card. Defender's cards in that suit are no longer penalty cards. He may pick them up and make any legal play subject to the restrictions on any remaining cards.

b. Prohibit the lead of one or more of the suits. Defender's cards in that suit (those suits) are no longer penalty cards. He may pick them up and make any legal play, subject to the restrictions on any remaining cards.

52 - Failure to Lead or Play a Penalty Card: When a defender fails to lead or play a penalty card as directed by Laws 50 or 51, he may not, on his own initiative, withdraw any other card he played. When a defender plays a card from his hand rather than his major penalty card:

1. Declarer may accept the play. (The un-played penalty card remains a penalty card)

2. Declarer must accept the play if he has subsequently played from his own hand or dummy. (The un-played penalty card remains a penalty card)

3. Declarer may require the defender to substitute the penalty card for the card illegally played or led. Every card illegally led or played by the defender in the course of committing the irregularity becomes a major penalty card.