

# Region 9 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

Volume 9 Issue 2 - February 2023



## From the Editor

### SPRING IS COMING...

Hang in there, spring is on the way. I've heard a rumor the groundhog may discount his prediction slightly for Texas. Whether fiction or truth, I am hoping for the latter.

Thank you to the two players who have recently submitted an "IN story"... and in advance to those of you who plan to send one my way this month. Topics might include your journey into duplicate, education, lessons learned, partnerships and friends made, or some unique bridge experience... it matters not. I really would like to hear from you!

Comments and suggestions regarding this newsletter are always welcome.

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Upcoming Tournament Info within our region:

For District 16, [click here](#).

For District 15, [click here](#).

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Highlight - I/N Player: Gretchen Lindquist (Unit 174)



After I retired, I started taking bridge lessons in the fall of 2017. The teacher Joyce Ryan invited her students to play in the 0-5 Master point game she was going to direct at the Lone Star Regional in January 2018, and I decided to see what the tournament was like. That is where I played my first ever duplicate game. I had no idea how to score a game or work a bridge pad; heck, I could barely bid! However, I enjoyed it, so I came back and played at the Election Sectional in May 2018 and earned my first master points.

Since then, I've played in the Lone Star Regional tournaments as well as in numerous sectional tournaments. I've even won a 499er tournament at Bridge Club of Houston. At the 2023 Lone Star Regional I played in Gold Rush and in Swiss Team events, and I earned over 15 master points, putting me in the top 1/3 of all persons earning points at the tournament.

I encourage all I/N players to play in mentor games, tournaments, and any time you can play with more experienced players. If I can do it, you can, too.

## Better Bridge Habits

### Keeping Boards on the Up and Up

While still new to the game, my mentor noticed I would turn boards upside down once played having seen others doing the same. She recommended I make a practice of keeping them stacked upright.

"Why?" I asked. She explained that as cards tend to fall out, many times the director has to be called to remedy the situation and that when the hands are not pre-dealt (think team games), it becomes more difficult to sort out.

More recently while playing Swiss team games, my partner placed a card from each board face up to signify that the board had not yet been shuffled and dealt. When someone completed a board and flipped it, she asked they not.

"Why?" they asked. She replied that the bottom indents though small are still large enough that one can tell the type of card that is on the bottom of each stack. Turned over a board and sure enough, the bottom card for West was a face card.

Please, save a director call, avoid an inadvertent peek, and keep those boards upright.



## Eddie Kantar's Tip

### Don't Return My Suit?

From Eddie Kantar's online tips:

When partner leads a suit at notrump and then discards several cards from that suit, he does not want that suit returned; look elsewhere.

Dir: North

Vul: Both

#### North

S. AK1032

H. A762

D. 3

C. J54

#### West

S. Q76

H. KJ93

D. 5

C. A10762

#### East

S. J984

H. 1084

D. Q1087

C. 83

#### South

S. 5

H. Q5

D. AKJ9642

C. KQ9

#### North   East   South   West

1S   Pass   2D   Pass

2H   Pass   3NT   All Pass

Opening lead: C 6

Dummy wins with dummy's jack. South takes a winning diamond finesse. When he cashes the AK of diamonds West discards clubs. When East wins the 4th diamond he should shift to a heart and not continue a club. Had West wanted a club continuation he would not have discarded clubs.

[www.kantarbridge.com](http://www.kantarbridge.com)

## 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. Each month a different combination is presented.

Holding 7 trump and missing the Q, 10 in your trump suit:

A K x x

J 9 x

You've a 78% shot of making 3 tricks by leading the A, and then leading low to the Jack or 9. Chances of West holding the singleton Q and you making 4 tricks with this line of play is 1%.

## Demon Defense

### Defensive Signals Summary

Larry Cohen provides the following advice:

The key to good defense is good signaling tools. There are 3 major kinds of defensive signals:

#### 1) Count

Count is given when declarer (or dummy) leads the suit. (Sometimes we give count when partner leads a high one and we want a ruff). In "standard" hi-lo shows an even number of cards in the suit (2, 4 or 6).

#### 2) Suit Preference

This signal is used usually to indicate a re-entry to give a ruff. A high card says you prefer the highest ranking side suit. There are other applications, but only for very experienced players. For most players, this signal causes more confusion than gain.

#### 3) Attitude

This is a far more important signal than the two above.

Attitude is given when:

A) partner leads a suit (at any point in the hand)--the size of our small (spot) card signals our attitude.

B) we make a discard for the first time--discarding a low spade means we don't like spades; a higher spade would mean we like the suit.

In "standard" (in America, anyway) a high card says you like it and low discourages.

Honestly, "upside-down" which is played in many countries is a slightly better method, but it is a headache to switch.

[www.larryco.com](http://www.larryco.com)

## Bidding Tips

### Premature Blackwood

Do not use Blackwood prematurely with a void. Say you pick up:

**S.** AKQ876 **H.** - **D** KQ8 **C.** AKQ3

<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
2C	2D (waiting)
2S	3S (positive)
?	

Do not bid 4NT! If partner shows you an ace, you won't know which one it is. Cuebid 4C. If partner has the DA, you will hear about it.

P.S If you play "Exclusion Blackwood", where a jump over game (5H) shows a void in the jump suit and asks for aces and/or the king of trumps outside of the jump suit, you could do that with this hand. Responses are: 5S (the first step shows '0' aces. 5NT, the second step shows '1', etc. In effect there are three aces and the king of the agreed suit in play.

Note: Most people have never used this convention in their entire life!

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## It's The Law

## I've **NOT** Got a Secret...

Success at the bridge table is due in part to effective partnership understandings that usually get us to the right contract. Effective partnership understandings are those that both partners understand and remember; they need not be complex.

However, most of us do dabble in a few (more than a few?) conventions to help us address certain bridge situations. Conventions use artificial bids to convey a message that is unrelated to the bidding card placed on the table (or clicked in the BBO bidding box). The meanings behind these conventions must be conveyed to the opponents; bridge is not a game of secret agreements.

The ACBL Alert Procedure ([click here](#)) covers a wide range of alerts and announcements, but the document's purpose is most easily summed up this way:

When partner makes a call, do we know something about partner's hand that the opponents do not? If the answer to that question is "yes," then it is likely that the call should be alerted.

When alerting, do so in a way that describes the holding; do not simply name the convention.

For example,

Say this: Four-card support and a game-forcing hand.

Not that: Jacoby 2NT

Say this: Four spades, five hearts, 11-15 HCP

Not that: Flannery

Say this: Invitational or better hand, five [responder's suit].

Not that: New minor forcing

Alert and announcement procedures differ based on the game mode. In face-to-face (F2F) bridge, we say "alert" when partner makes an alertable call. We provide the explanation only if asked to do so by the opponents. On BBO, we type the explanation in the bidding box before we make the bid. The explanation is visible to our opponents but not to partner.

Alerts are indicated in red on the convention card. Announcements, in blue on the convention card, are explanations that are made automatically, like 1NT opening ranges and the suit shown by a transfer.

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