

District 16 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

Volume 5 Issue 2

From the Editor

Congratulations to D16 Teacher of the Year Robert (Buck) Buchanan from Arlington!!!

Beginning this month Master Teacher and World Champion **Donna Compton** will have an article. When you see Donna, thank her for contributing to the newsletter and all she does for bridge!

D16 has lots of tournaments scheduled this spring. I hope you take advantage of the opportunity to earn those Silver points in the Sectionals.

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

Paul Cuneo
ACBL District 16 Director

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Free ACBL Masterpoint Game for 0-20 Players

Beginning on Thursday February 21, there will be a free 12 board game for people with less than 20 masterpoints at 8 pm. Look for Apple DBC 0-20 in the ACBL World after you log onto BBO (Bridge Base Online). You'll need to have a BBO user name and fill out your profile with your ACBL number so the black points you win can be awarded to you.

The game will continue weekly on BBO at least through March. For more information go to appledbcs.com and hit the Thursday Night button.

Better Bridge Habits

Completely Learn Your Conventions

Developing good habits at the table is an important part of learning bridge. This month I want to focus on learning conventions. As new players, many of you are eager to learn and try conventions. All too often newer players only learn the first step response to a convention they are playing. The tip this month is to learn the complete set of responses, the defenses against the convention AND the methods to cope if the opponents interfere.

Donna Compton - World Champion and Master Teacher

Follow (Don't) the Squirrel

Declarer play is mystical in many ways and psychology of the mind is often a factor. A lot of Declarers find themselves in trouble because their minds follow the squirrel instead of the plan.

Trick one often makes or breaks a hand for Declarer because trick one is where Declarer develops a plan. Trick two, three and four is where Declarer's plan is diverted by the squirrel effect. At this point, you may be thinking, "what does a squirrel have to do with Declarer play?" Good question!

Have you ever wondered why there are so many flat squirrels on the roadway? I believe it is because the squirrel starts across the road, gets distracted, freezes and heads in another direction! Attempting to cross the street does not flatten the squirrel. The changing of directions is what results in a squished squirrel! So how does Declarer avoid being a squirrel? Our minds like to play games ~ especially as Declarer! To counter the fate of the squirrel, Declarer must stay focused on the plan. Yes. The plan Declarer made at trick one.

Let's say Declarer is in 4♠s with a four-four trump fit and Declarer's hand has four losers. To make the contract, a loser in Declarer's hand must be trumped in dummy. That's the plan ~ trump a loser in dummy. Unfortunately, the squirrel gets distracted, freezes and after trumping a loser in dummy, the squirrel trumps a side suit back to Declarer's hand! Now, Declarer pulls trumps with three trumps remaining in each hand. Once the opponents' trumps are gone, the declaring side is out of trump too. Trumping the side suit back to Declarer's hand was not a part of the plan. It was the squirrel distracting the mind and diverting the plan.

The next time you declare a hand, make your plan at trick one and watch out for the squirrel trying to sneak into your sub-conscious. When it does, tell your mind to go back to trick one. Bring the plan back into focus and proceed through the remainder of the tricks. A plan at trick one ~ good or bad ~ is sure to avoid the squirrel effect! Stay tuned for the March District IN Newsletter, where we will "Just Breathe!" Be sure to visit my teaching website www.PlayBetterBridge.com for tips, lessons, videos and bridge history.

Eddie Kantar's Tip

It is dangerous to count extra points for short suits or long suits before the bidding starts. (Don't stop reading!)

"If partner bids your short suit, that reduces, not increases, the value of your hand. If one of your opponents bids your long suit, that also decreases the value of your hand. If you let the bidding develop, you will see whether your long or short suits are working for or against you.

You hold: S. Axxx H. x D. Qxxxx C. xxx

What is this hand worth? If partner opens 1H, it is a minus 6 point hand. If partner opens 1S, it has blossomed to a 9-point hand (3 points for the singleton with four-card support). If LHO opens 1D and partner overcalls 1H, the DQ has lost its value, not to mention the fifth diamond, or the singleton heart! You are now looking at a minus 4 point hand!

Hands that have eight-card fits or longer add extra distributional points; however, until a fit has been uncovered, distributional points should not be added. It doesn't make sense. Hands that are misfits should be subtracting points, not adding them!" www.kantarbridge.com

Improved Declarer Play

Improving Declarer Play

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:

A 10 x x

Q 9 x x

You are the declarer and need 3 tricks from this suit. Finesse the 10 and if it loses to the Jack, finesse the 9. 78% chance of 3 tricks.

Demon Defense

Signaling against Suit Contracts – Eddie Kantar writes in his book “Modern Bridge Defense” that defensive signals come in 3 packages:

1. Attitude: how you feel about the suit partner has led
2. Count: how many cards you have in a particular suit
3. Suit Preference: which suit you want partner to lead

Count signals are used to tell partner and declarer how many cards you hold in the suit being led by declarer or dummy. If you play Standard signals, a relative high card shows an even number of cards and a relative low card shows an odd number. Once your partner knows how many cards you have in the suit, he knows how many declarer has and can improve his count of the distribution of all 4 suits around the table.

Giving count at the 5 or 6 level. The opponents are declaring a 6 level contract. At the 5 or 6 level, lead K from AK. Partner leads the K:

N – Q85

W – K

E – 10732

S – ?

Partner leads the King and needs to know how many you hold to know whether to play the A. Here you play the 7 to show 2 or 4 pieces. Partner can decide whether declarer will trump the Ace and play accordingly. www.kantarbridge.com

Bidding Tips

A book worth owning and reading is “**A Treasury of Bridge Tips**” by **Eddie Kantar**. In it he offers the following advice:

Downgrade Jacks and Queens in suits bid by your opponents unless Partner makes a natural notrump bid. You hold:

S – KJ4 H – QJ87 D- 654 C - 1043

Your partner opens 1 Spade and your RHO overcalls 2D. Bid 2S. But if your RHO overcalls 2H, you must pass as your heart honors are worthless in a spade contract. www.kantarbridge.com

Its the Law

Laws 72, General Principles, 73, Communication, and 74 Conduct and Etiquette

These laws deal with what are considered the proprieties of bridge. From Duplicate Decisions:

72 - General Principles

1. Duplicate bridge tournaments should be played in strict accordance with the Laws. A more casual, sporting attitude may be tolerated in a club duplicate game.
2. The objective of the game is to achieve a higher score than the opponents while complying with these Laws.
3. A player must not infringe a Law intentionally, even if there is a rectification he is willing to accept.
4. There is no obligation to draw attention to your own infraction, except as noted for misinformation and in Laws 62 and 79.
5. A player must not conceal an infraction, as by committing a second revoke.

73 – Communication

Proper Communication Between Partners

1. During the auction and play, communication between partners should be effected only by means of calls and plays themselves.

2. Calls and plays should be made without special emphasis, mannerism or inflection and without undue hesitation or haste.

Note : The ACBL has authorized the use of the skip bid warning.

A player should either use the warning all the time or never use it.

Nonetheless, when a player skips one or more levels of bidding, the next player should pause about 8 to 10 seconds, even if the warning was not given, and he should appear to be thinking about his next call.

Inappropriate Communication Between Partners

Partners shall not communicate through the manner in which calls or plays are made, through extraneous remarks or gestures, or through questions asked or not asked of the opponents, through Alerts and explanations given or not given to them. To do so is an infraction of the Laws.

The gravest possible offense against the Proprieties is for a partnership to exchange information through prearranged methods of communication other than those sanctioned by these Laws. A guilty partnership risks expulsion from the sponsoring organization. When player has available to him unauthorized information from his partner's remark, question, explanation, gesture, mannerism, special emphasis, inflection, haste or hesitation, he should carefully avoid taking any advantage that might accrue to his side.

Variations in tempo, manner or the like may violate the Proprieties when the player could know at the time of his action that the variation could work to his benefit. Inadvertently varying the tempo or manner in which a call or play is made does not in itself constitute a violation of the Proprieties, but inferences from such a variation may properly be drawn only by an opponent, and at his own risk.

It is grossly improper to attempt to mislead an opponent by means of a remark or gesture, through the haste or hesitancy of a call or play (such as a hesitation with a singleton), or by the manner in which the call or play is made.

It is desirable, though not always required, for players to maintain a steady tempo and an unvarying manner.

Any player may properly attempt to deceive an opponent through a call or play, so long as the deception is not protected by concealed partnership understanding or experience. It is entirely proper to avoid giving information to the opponents by making all calls and plays in unvarying tempo and manner.

When a violation of the Proprieties as described in this Law results in damage to an innocent, the Director may:

1. award an adjusted score (Law 12) if an innocent player has drawn a false inference from an action for which there is no demonstrable bridge reason and the opponent could have known that such action could work to his advantage.
2. award an adjusted score (Law 12) if a player has chosen from among logical alternative actions one that could demonstrably have been suggested by his partner's tempo, manner or remark.

74 - Conduct and Etiquette

Proper Attitude

1. A player should maintain a courteous attitude at all times toward his partner and his opponents.
2. A player should carefully avoid any remark or action that might cause annoyance or embarrassment to another player or might interfere with the enjoyment of the game.
3. Every player should follow uniform and correct procedures in calling and playing.

As a matter of courtesy, a player should refrain from:

1. paying insufficient attention to the game.
2. making gratuitous comments during the auction and play.
3. detaching a card before it is his turn to play.
4. prolonging play unnecessarily (as in playing on although he knows all of the tricks are surely his) for the purpose of disconcerting an opponent.
5. summoning or addressing the Director in a manner discourteous to him or to other contestants.

The following are considered violations of procedure. The Law indicates that these are examples, not an exhaustive list, of procedural violations.

1. Using different designations for the same call.
2. Indicating approval or disapproval of a call or play.
3. Indicating the expectation or intention of winning or losing a trick that has not been completed.
4. Commenting or acting during the auction or play so as to call attention to a significant occurrence or to the number of tricks still required for success.
5. Looking intently at any other player during the auction and play, or at another player's hand in order to see his cards or to observe the place from which he draws a card (but it is appropriate to act on information acquired by inadvertently seeing an opponent's card). (See Law 73 D.2. when a player may have shown his cards intentionally.)
6. Showing an obvious lack of further interest in a deal (as in folding one's cards).
7. Varying the normal tempo of bidding or play for the purpose of disconcerting an opponent.
8. Leaving the table needlessly before the round is called.