

District 16 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

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From the Editor

Most October tournaments have been cancelled and those that are being held are averaging <50% of pre-pandemic attendance. The Delta variant has started to decline so there is cause for optimism that the Austin NABC will be held.

Fall is a great time to take lessons and many teachers have them ready for you.

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Better Bridge Habits

Managing your time at the table

Developing good habits at the table is an important part of learning bridge. Let's start with the bidding box. ACBL says:

“A player is obligated to choose a call before touching any card in the box. A call is considered made when a bidding card is removed from the bidding box and held touching or nearly touching the table or maintained in such a position to indicate that the call has been made.”

We've all seen players fiddling with the bidding box while trying to decide what to bid. Unfortunately this may give information to their partner; thus it is an irregularity and may result in an adjusted score.

Players are allowed to correct their bid IF it's a result of a mechanical error rather than a change of mind.

Good habits to develop:

1. Make your choice of bid before touching the bidding box.
2. Look at the bid as you place it on the table to verify that it is your intended call. If not, immediately announce that you made a mechanical error.

For more information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bidding_box

Eddie Kantar's Tip

Double an artificial bid for lead direction

You can also use a lead-directing double when the opponents use Blackwood. If the response to 4NT (or 5NT) is in a suit you want led, double! These doubles can be made with a strong three or four card suit. If you don't double, partner will think you want another lead.

You hold: S. xx H. xxx D. KQ10 C. xxxxx

West North East South (you)

1S Pass 2H Pass

3S Pass 4S Pass

4NT Pass 5D ? Double 5D to ask partner for a diamond lead against an eventual spade contract. 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 that seems to occur frequently:

A 10 x

Q x x

Our preference is to have the opponents break the suit for us, but that is not always possible. We can maximize our chances of 2 tricks by leading a small card towards the Q. If that wins or our right hand opponent rises with the K or J, we have our 2 tricks. If it loses to our left hand opponent, then finesse the 10. The probability of taking 2 tricks is 74%.

Demon Defense

Opening Lead -

Auction:				You hold:
N	E	S	W	S – AJ98
1S	P	1NT	P	H - 862
2H	P	P	P	D – A93
				C – J106

What do you lead? In his book on Modern Bridge Defense, Eddie Kantar writes, “Dummy is likely to have one spade and three hearts. Lead a heart to cut down on dummy’s ruffing power. Later, when in with the A of spades, lead another heart. Every trump you lead translates into one less spade ruff in dummy and another eventual spade trick for you. When dummy prefers declarer’s second suit, and you have winning tricks or eventual winning tricks in declarer’s first bid suit, lead a trump to protect those winners.” www.kantarbridge.com

Bidding Tips

Your partner opens 1NT and your right hand opponent passes. You hold:

S – Q952

H – K92

D – J83

C – KQ10

What is your bid?

In his CD on Conventions, Mike Lawrence writes, “With 4-3-3-3 shape the hand will often belong in notrump, even if you have a 4-4 spade fit. In the long run, this rates to be the winning bid. I have faced this situation hundreds of times and the majority opinion of players is that three notrump is best. One of the reasons is that the opponent on lead does not gain much information from the auction.” www.michaelslawrence.com

Its the Law

Announcements

We’ve all heard players make announcements at the table. These are required by Law and tell the opponents what is happening in the bidding. To know which announcements

you must make, refer to your convention card. Some of the more common announcements are notrump range, transfers, and a short club. These need to be memorized since you are not allowed to refer to your card once bidding commences.

Law 40 addresses partnership understandings. Included under that is a section on convention card regulations. The following is from Duplicate Decisions:

40 - Partnership Understandings

[40A1a Partnership understandings as to the methods adopted by a partnership may be reached explicitly in discussion or implicitly through mutual experience or awareness of the players.]

“No agreement” means that the partnership is relying on knowledge and experience of matters generally known to bridge players (see Law 40B5a). “Not discussed” does not necessarily mean “no agreement.” A certain sequence may never have been explicitly discussed, but if the partnership is “on the same wavelength” because of similar situations that occurred in the past, there is an implicit agreement and, therefore, a partnership understanding that must be disclosed when required.

[40.2 Information conveyed to partner through such understandings must arise from the calls, plays, and conditions of the current deal. Each player is entitled to take into account the legal auction and, subject to any exclusions in the laws, the cards he has seen. He is also entitled to use information specified elsewhere in the laws to be authorized (see Law 73C).]

Example: The auction starts with 1NT - 1  (not accepted) which is then

replaced with a Pass. The next player now bids 2  Stayman. The

partnership understanding is that 2  asks for a four-card major, but in

this situation, common knowledge and logic indicates that it is only asking about hearts.

General Guidelines: Players' agreements, whether implicit or explicit, must be available to the opponents. However, this includes intentionally misleading calls or plays that depart from commonly accepted or previously announced conventional practice. [40.3 a player may make any call or play without prior announcement, provided that such call or play is not based on an undisclosed partnership understanding.] In other words, a player may make any bid that will fool partner and opponents equally. ACBL or other sponsoring organizations, however, control the use of psychic bids by controlling the conventional usages which may impact them (for example, within the ACBL "psyching" a



strong, artificial bid like 2 ♣ is disallowed).

Both members of a partnership must use the same system. They must have two identical convention cards made out for the use of the opponents. Players must not refer to their own convention cards or use any other aids to their memory, calculations, or technique.

Not allowed: During a session of play, a system may not be varied, except with the Director's permission (a Director might allow a pair to change a convention but would not allow a pair to change its basic system). However, it is ALLOWED, at the outset of a round or session, for a pair to review its opponents' convention card and alter its defenses against the opponents' special understandings and preemptive bids. This must be announced to the opponents. The opponents, in turn, may NOT vary their system after being informed of these defensive alterations.

Convention Card Regulations

The Laws allow any player to refer to an opponent's convention card: prior to play; during the clarification period; and at their own turn to call or play. In addition, any player may consult the opponent's convention card at RHOs turn to call; and, except for dummy, may refer to an

opponent's convention card at their own turn to play. No player, however, may refer to their own convention card at any time during the auction or play.

ACBL has established the following for all sanctioned events:

- Convention Charts, where it is specified what agreements are allowed or not, for all game levels. The last edition of the Convention Charts was published in Nov 2018 and establishes four types of Chart: Basic, Basic+, Open, and Open+.
- A convention card on which players list their conventions and agreements. All conventions marked in blue on the convention card require an Announcement. All conventions marked in red and all unusual treatments require an Alert.
- The ACBL Alert Procedures, with detailed regulations regarding Pre-Alerts, Immediate Alerts, Announcements and Delayed Alerts

Note: The Open Chart is recommended for Open club games. More advanced clubs might want to use the Open+ Chart, while clubs that cater for newer players may prefer the Basic+ Chart. The ACBL recommends that masterpoint restricted games use the Basic and Basic+ Charts. A 0-750 game, for example, should probably use the Basic Chart, but it's up to the club to regulate this.

Note: Whenever written defenses are required or permitted, they may be referred to by any player whenever it would be appropriate to refer to an opponent's convention card. This is the case for some events played under the Open+ Chart.

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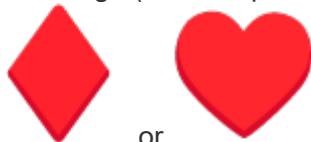
Pre-Alerts are designed to act as an early warning system of any unusual methods for which the opponents may need to prepare. Pre-Alerts must be given before the auction period begins on the first board of a round or match. Types of agreements, treatments, etc., that must be pre-Alerted include, among others, systems based on highly aggressive methods, systems that are fundamentally unfamiliar to the opponents, and leading low from a doubleton.

Immediate Alerts are given at the time partner makes a call which requires an Alert. Using spoken bidding, the partner of the player making an Alertable call says "Alert." Using bidding boxes, an Alert is

made by tapping an Alert card on the table or by tapping the Alert strip on the side of the bid box. In addition, the Alerter must say "Alert."

An Announcement is one word or a short phrase which tells the opponents directly the meaning of partner's call. When bidding boxes are used, the "Alert" strip is tapped also. Announcements are required in the following instances:

- After a natural 1NT opening bid. The partner of the bidder will say aloud the range (for example, "fifteen to seventeen")



- After a transfer response at any level to any natural notrump opening, overcall or rebid. The notrump opener will say aloud, "transfer". This also applies for those methods that initially treat the bid as a transfer even though rarely the bidder will have a strong hand without the next higher suit. When the message is sent that the transfer was not a transfer, just the first step in showing another type of game-going hand, the call that sends that message must be Alerted.



- After a 1NT forcing or semi-forcing response to a 1 opening bid with no interference. The opening bidder will say aloud, "Forcing" or "Semi-forcing," if there was no other meaning attached to the agreement.



- After a non-forcing opening 1 or 1 for which the opener could have fewer than three cards in the suit opened. After the opening bid, the opening bidder's partner says, "May be short."

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Delayed Alert: Once the auction has progressed to the point that the opening bidder has had the opportunity to make a second call, conventional bids at the four level or higher are not Alerted until the auction is over. Other conventional calls (pass, double, redouble) when the auction is at the four level or higher require immediate alerts,

according to the current Alert Procedures.

The declaring side must make their delayed Alerts before the opening lead. Defenders wait until they have made the opening lead and before Declarer has called for a card from the dummy before they explain calls requiring a Delayed Alert (alerting before the lead is turned face-up and the dummy is spread is best). As with normal Alerts, the partner of the person making the Alertable call is the person who makes the delayed Alert and explains the agreement.