

From the Editor

I hope you're enjoying both face-to-face and online bridge. Take some time to attend your local tournaments as there are opportunities throughout our region.

Recently I've been reading the ACBL's Bridge Feed which has interesting material:

<http://bridgefeed.acbl.org/>

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

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Online Ethics

The ACBL Virtual Clubs have been online for over 2 years now. Unfortunately we're still experiencing unethical behavior which is in excess of normal BBO issues and normal face to face play at clubs. BBO continuously runs algorithms to detect cheating and players report unusual results to the club managers. So who are the people?

There are far too many newer players and married couples who are being accused. Nearly always these cases have unauthorized communications at their core. Simply put, once you can see your hand on BBO, NO communication with partner other than the bidding and signaling on defense may occur. You may not talk or text during the hands. The standard is NO communication outside of BBO!

A club manager noticed that a pair started producing significantly better results than their usual games and confronted them. The response was "we're trying to learn." While the desire to learn is great, communicating information to partner outside of BBO is not learning but cheating.

I'm thankful that we have BBO and the online club games. Let's not let the temptation to cheat to win a few masterpoints overcome us. A clean game is much better for everyone.

Paul

Better Bridge Habits

Playing the "Wrong" Contract

Developing good habits at the table is an important part of learning bridge. We've all had bidding miscues and ended up in a contract that is not the best. When this happens two things are very important:

Don't let your emotions take over. Stay in control and focus on playing the contract you are in. At that point, your job is to take the maximum number of tricks; not to decide how to prevent future bidding problems

Don't telegraph to the opponents your dismay at the contract by making a comment or through your body language. Nothing can be gained by telegraphing your problems to the defense.

Eddie Kantar's Tip

Opener's Rebid

After you open 1H or 1S and partner responds 1NT denying support for your major, don't repeat your major unless you have a six-card suit. 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. Here is a combination from the Encyclopedia that seems to occur frequently:

A 9 8 x

Q J x x

Lead the Queen. If it is covered win the Ace and cash the Jack. If it holds, lead the Jack. Overall probability of 4 tricks is 16%; 3 tricks is 97%.

Demon Defense

Third Hand Play – Eddie Kantar writes in his book “Modern Bridge Defense” about third hand play. We’ve all heard the axiom “third hand high”, but that is not always correct. Partner opened and you bid a spade. You end up defending a suit contract.

W – Q7

E – AJ85 (you)

S- K1092

Eddie Kantar writes: “When partner leads the queen, he probably has a doubleton leaving Declarer with K109x. If you overtake with the Ace and return the suit, declarer can insert the 10 and later lead to the K9 holding you to one trick. If you play low at trick 1, you are sure to get 2 tricks.” www.kantarbridge.com

Bidding Tips

Takeout doubles – How strong do you have to be to double and then bid a new suit?

In his book “The Complete Book on Takeout Doubles” Mike Lawrence talks about the choice of bidding or making a takeout double with a strong hand. He writes: “In general, if you have just one suit to show, you should overcall with 17 or less high card points. If you overcall and partner cannot raise your suit, you are unlikely to have game in your suit.

It is when you have 18 or more HCP that you consider doubling as opposed to overcalling. If you fear that your partner can have enough for game but will not be able to raise, then you need to double first and then show your suit. Points alone will not tell you what to do. Points do not take tricks, and not all points are equal. Some 16 point hands are better than some 18 point hands. “ Here are two examples:

W	N	E	S
		1C	?

S – KQJ96 H – AQ D – AQ96 C – 52

This is a minimum double given that you intend to bid spades next.

S – AKQJ9 H – KQ D – J653 C – Q4

Bid 1 spade. This hand has the same shape and better spades, but the rest of the hand is poor. Many of the honors in this hand have the potential to be worthless.” www.michaelslawrence.com



Its the Law

Claims

Players are encouraged to claim when it becomes obvious to them that they know exactly how many of the remaining tricks will be taken. The claim should be accompanied by a clear statement as to the order in which cards will be played, of the line of play or defense through which the claimer proposes to win the tricks claimed. In a suit contract, do not claim if there are trump outstanding unless you are completely sure that you can draw all of the trump with your line of play. If you are almost sure the trump are in, say “I’m going to play trump from the top to draw the remaining trump” and then complete your claim.

Here’s the discussion of these laws from Duplicate Decisions:

68 - Claim or Concession of Tricks

NOTE: For a statement or action to constitute a claim or concession of tricks under these laws, it must refer to tricks other than the one currently in progress.

A Contestant Makes a Claim Whenever:

1. he announces that he will win a specific number of the remaining tricks.
2. he suggests that play may be curtailed.
3. he intentionally faces his hand.

A Contestant Makes a Concession When:

1. he announces he will lose a specific number of tricks.
2. he abandons his hand.
3. when a defender concedes, and his partner immediately objects, no card exposed is a penalty card, but may be treated as unauthorized information. Play continues.

A Clarification of a Claim:

A claim should be accompanied at once by a clear statement of the order of play. Keep in mind that failure to do so does not in itself void a claim to the tricks indicated. Once a claim is made, play ceases, but see Law 70D.

69 - Agreed Claim or Concession

Agreement occurs when a contestant assents to an opponent's claim or concession and raises no objection before his side makes a call on a subsequent board or before the round ends, whichever is first. The board is scored as though the tricks claimed or conceded had been won or lost in play.

A player may withdraw an agreement within the correction period established by the sponsoring organization if he has agreed to the loss of a trick his side had won; or if

he agreed to the loss of a trick his side would likely have won had the play continued. In either instance, the board is rescored with such tricks awarded to his side.

70 - Contested Claim or Concession

NOTE: Laws 70 and 71 are both footnoted to remind the director that when applying these two Laws “normal” play includes play that would be careless or inferior for the class of player involved. The Director’s Goal in ruling on a contested claim is to adjudicate the board as equitably as possible to both sides, but any doubtful points should be resolved against the claimer.

1. The director should have the claim statement repeated.
2. The director should hear any objections.
- 3 The director may require all hands to be faced.
4. No unstated line, not encompassed in the original statement, should be accepted unless failure to take such a line is inconsistent with the claim.

Play ceases following a claim or a concession. The Director must decide who wins the remaining tricks. However, if any play has occurred subsequent to the claim, the director may take this as evidence of the plays probable from the claimer and from his opponents.

When a claim is made and there is an outstanding trump, the Director should award a trick(s) to the opponents only when all of the following circumstances are present:

1. claimer did not mention the trump(s) in his statement, and
2. there was a chance that the claimer did not realize a trump remained in an opponent’s hand, and
3. there is a normal line of play (which may be either careless or inferior for the class of player involved, but not irrational) that would allow the claimer to lose a trick to that trump.

71 - Concession Canceled

A concession may be canceled by the Director in the following situations when made within the correction period established in Law 79:

1. If a trick has been conceded that has already been won.
2. If a trick is conceded that cannot be lost by any normal play of the remaining cards.