

Region 9 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

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From the Editor

SPRINGING FORWARD!

As of this writing, the Spring NABC is ongoing in New Orleans, clocks have once again sprung forward, f2f table counts appear to be on the rise, and flowering plants are starting to bloom!

Special thanks go to Lucille Armintor for sharing this previously published (just for Unit 201) story by Sue D Freeman for all our readers to enjoy as this month's "Highlight"!

A story of your own, comments and suggestions for this newsletter are always welcome.

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Come One, Come All

Upcoming Tournament Info within our region:

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

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

Especially for Our 0-50 Players

District 16 is offering to all 0-50 masterpoint players a 12-board game on BBO for \$3 every Monday at 4:00. You can ask a partner to play or sign in at the partnership desk and pick up a new partner. Practice, practice, practice -- your experiences at the table can be your best teacher. A director (Ken, Consie or Kim) and assistants will be on hand to offer guidance during the game. Special note: For the past three weeks, this game has had six full tables!

For more information, check out our Frequently Asked Questions [D16 0-50 Game Frequently Asked Questions](#) or email Beginner20Bridge@gmail.com.

Highlight - I/N Player: Sue D and Micky Freeman (Unit 201)



Sue D and Mickey Freeman

My venture into learning bridge began about 15 years ago at Rayburn Lake where Mickey, my husband, and I were living at the time. Marianna Carpenter began teaching lessons and I went, thinking I would learn everything about the game by the end of the lesson series. Boy! Was I mistaken. The same group began playing once a week after the lessons were completed and I thought I was doing so good. About six months later Mickey and I were invited by Marianna and Richard Carpenter to attend a tournament in Lafayette, La. My husband had played a little bit year's earlier, so we agreed to go not knowing what we were getting into. Playing in the tournament we realized we didn't know what we were doing, but lo and behold we came in 3rd in one of the sessions and were totally stunned.

After that I would play off and on at Rayburn but wasn't progressing. I realized I had no card sense as I had never played cards growing up, so I was really struggling. Every now and then Mickey would fill in so we could have a game, but that was about it. Three years ago, we moved back to the Golden Triangle, and I went with Patti Salter, my daughter-in-law, to lessons at the bridge studio in Beaumont and upon completion of lessons would play at the studio once a week with my sister-in-law, Shirley Griffith.

About a year ago Mickey decided he would start being my partner so we could do something together. That has turned out to be very interesting. He doesn't know conventions and I try to use them, so our playing together is always a guessing game. Our ride home isn't always pleasant, but we are getting a little better. Who knows what the future holds for us in bridge.

Better Bridge Habits

Pre-game Preparation

Consider spending at least 10 minutes before each game discussing your conventions and agreements with your partner.

Several good things will happen when you do this. Among them are that you'll get both of your minds focused on bridge, you can refresh one another's memories on the conventions you play, and you'll have clarity on which conventions are "on" over interference.

Eddie Kantar's Tip

Responder's Bidding Tip

From Eddie Kantar's online tips:

When partner opens 1H and you have five spades and three hearts, raise to 2H with 6-9 HCP. With 10-12 HCP, respond 1S and bid 3H at your next opportunity.

a. S. KQ876 H. Q43 D. 65 C. 876
Raise 1H to 2H (See next tip)

b. S. KQ876 H. AJ3 D. 65 C. 876
Respond 1S and if partner rebids 2C, 2D or 2H, bid 3H

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Improved Declarer Play

The Bath Coup

The Bath coup is a coup in the game of contract bridge in which the declarer, who holds AJx(x) in a suit, ducks the left-hand opponent's lead of a king in that suit. The play dates from the days of whist and is presumably named after the English town of Bath.

A simple hold-up of the ace when the jack is also held:

(a)

	4 3 2	
K Q 10 9		6 7 5
	A J 8	

(b)

	A 3 2	
K Q 10 9		6 7 5
	J 8 4	

In each case, the king is led and is allowed to win.

If declarer holds two low cards, as in (b), he should generally play the higher one. This play may cause West to think that East has begun a high-low and induce him to continue the suit to South's advantage.

Source: The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge

Demon Defense

Defensive Signals - Count

Last month we shared Larry Cohen's overview of the three major types of defensive signals - Count, Suit Preference, and Attitude. This month, citing material from Eddie Kantar, here's an example of how using count in play works for the defense.

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 is very important when you have supported partner's suit.

Here is an example:

	N - Q85	
W - AKJ94		E - 10732
	S - 6	

Partner has bid the suit and you supported. Partner leads a high honor and needs to know how many you hold to decide how to continue the defense. Here you play the 7 to show you raised with 4 pieces. Partner knows declarer has a singleton and plays accordingly.

Better Bidding

Bidding Tips

(as published by Karen Walker at kwbridge.com)

Always search for a major-suit fit if one is possible, even if you've already found a fit in a minor suit. If you have a 4-card major you can show at the one-level, always bid it.

Consider playing 3NT instead of 5C or 5D when you have the strength for game, but your only fit is in a minor suit.

Keep the bidding simple. If you have a fit for partner's major, always raise.

If you have a fit for partner's suit, "stretch" to raise, especially in a competitive auction. If you have extra trumps (one more than you need for an 8-card fit), feel free to compete to the 3-level if the opponents bid over your 2-level partscore.

Stay low on misfits. When you have a minimum without support for partner and he doesn't show support for your suit, stop bidding as soon as possible. Unless you have game-going strength, don't bid higher just to show yet another suit and don't bid 2NT. Your goal is to stop in a reasonable contract, not a perfect one.

If you have length in the suit the opponent opened and are in doubt about what to bid, just pass, even when you have opening-bid strength. Don't show your problem by thinking too long about what to do.

Always assume partner has minimum point-count until he tells you otherwise. A minimum range is 12-15 points for the opening bidder, 6-10 points for responder.

If you have a minimum hand (13-15 points for opener, 6-10 points for responder), keep the bidding low until you find a fit. ***Don't bid past the one-level unless:***

- You're raising partner's suit (1H-2H, 1D-1H-1S-2S).
- You're rebidding your own long suit (1C-1H-2C, 1D-1S-1NT-2S).
- You're bidding a second suit that's ***lower in rank*** than your first suit (1D-1S-2C, 1S-1NT-2H).

There are two types of bids that pinpoint your point-count range -- **any notrump bid** and **any bid of an "old" suit** (one that you or partner have bid previously in the auction). If you're making any of these bids, be sure you show your point count by making the bid at the proper level:

- If you know you have 25+ combined points, jump to game in your suit or notrump. Don't give partner a chance to pass below game level.
- If you have an invitational hand (16-18 playing points if you're opener; 10-12 points if you're responder) and you think you and partner ***might*** have 25+ points, make your bid one level higher than necessary. This usually means you'll freely take the auction to 2NT or 3 of a suit (1D-1S-1NT-2NT, 1D-1H-2C-2NT, 1C-1S-3S, 1H-1NT-3H).
- If you have minimum strength, show it by making your bid at the lowest level available.

It's The Law

Information, Please

Law 20, Review and Explanation of Calls, describes the conditions under which we can ask for a review of the auction or an explanation of the opponents' calls.

Under Law 20B, during the auction any player who is not required to pass may, at his turn to call, request a restatement of all previous calls and alerts or announcements. As a practical matter, if there were no alerts or announcements, the player can simply look at the bidding cards displayed at the table.

After the final pass, either defender may ask whose lead it is (Law 20C1).

At the first turn to play, declarer or either defender may ask for a review of the auction (Law 20C2), including alerts and announcements. The restatement must be done by an opponent of the player who requested it. When the auction is restated, it must be restated in its entirety. The requestor may not cut off the restatement; doing so may provide information to partner.

Law 20F, Explanation of Calls, covers situations where a player would like to know more about an opponent's call. Unless required to pass, any player, at his turn to call, may request an explanation of an opponent's call or card play agreements. In face-to-face (F2F) games, the explanation is provided by the partner of the player who made the call. On BBO, clicking the bid in the bidding box sends the question to the bidder.

When responding to a request for an explanation, keep in mind:

- The opponent is entitled "to know about calls actually made, about relevant alternative calls that were not made and about inferences from the choice of action where these are matters of partnership understanding."
- If call being questioned has not been discussed by the partnership, simply respond, "undiscussed" or "no agreement." There should be no guesses or "I take it as..." comments. If the call does have a meaning, but you do not remember what it is, say so. The opponents may want to call the director so that the meaning can be worked out.

And when mistakes are made, how they are handled varies depending on who made the mistake:

- South opens 1N, West overcalls 2C, and East explains that 2C shows a 6-card or longer suit. West actually has a 5422 hand and had forgotten what the 2C bid meant. West has no obligation to inform the opponents that he misbid. The opponents are entitled to know the partnership agreements; they are not entitled to know the cards actually held.
- South opens 1N, West overcalls 2C, and East explains that 2C shows a 6-card or longer suit. West actually has a 5422 hand. East has forgotten the agreement and given an incorrect explanation. When West informs the opponents of the mistaken explanation depends on whether EW is declaring or defending:
 - If EW becomes the declaring side, West notifies the opponents BEFORE the opening lead is made.
 - IF EW becomes the defending side, West notifies the opponents AFTER the board has been played.

So, should we ask for an explanation of bids we do not understand? Many experts suggest waiting until the auction is over to request the explanation. When an opponent is giving us information about his system, he is also giving his partner the same information.

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