

Region 9 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

Volume 9 Issue 4 - April 2023



From the Editor

Spring is here. There are a lot of upcoming tournaments with which to attend and enjoy. Most offer daily speakers and the opportunity to create new partnerships.

Note that on the D16 calendar, 12 of these events are just for NLM (non-life masters).

Speaking of partnerships, highlighted this month is Janice Hardcastle's story about some of her experiences using the partnership desk. *(Just now being published, it was written in February.) FYI - Janice recently achieved her Life Master.*

A story of your own to be highlighted in a future issue as well as comments and suggestions for this newsletter are always welcome.

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Spring into Some Fun Tournament Play

Upcoming Tournament Info within our region:

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

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

Especially for Our 0-50 Players

District 16 provides a 12-board game on BBO just for players having 0-50 masterpoints for \$3 every Monday at 4:00. A director (Ken, Consie or Kim) and assistants will be on hand to offer guidance

during the game.

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

For Unit 174 IN players, please check out the Future Life Masters (FLM) website, flm.org.



Highlight - I/N Player: Janice Hardcastle (Unit 174)



ADVENTURES IN SURFING THE PARTNERSHIP DESK

I started playing bridge 5 years ago, from scratch! I never had parents that played (mine played poker) or grandparents that played. I always wanted to learn but didn't have time. So, this became part of my retirement plan. Shortly after I took lessons and started playing, Houston had a tournament at the Marriott. I didn't know the difference in the tournaments, I just knew it was a big gathering of players from all over the area. The folks I played bridge against at Westside encouraged me to go. They said I would find a partner at the "Partnership Desk". Sounded great so I went! The first day I found out a reality at the partnership desk. NO ONE WANTS TO PLAY WITH SOMEONE WITH NO MASTERPOINTS! I went home dejected and angry that I was deemed unworthy and didn't go back to that tournament.

Next tournament I attended in Houston a few months later I had 5 masterpoints but alas again no one wanted to play with me until a team of 3 came in disparate for a fourth, their fourth player had become ill that morning. Since I was the last man standing at the desk, they decided to use me! We came in second in the overalls for the day in the A strat and I doubled my masterpoints! I also saw something called a Blue Ribbon appear on the ACBL website. I certainly didn't know what that meant. I thought it was for a job well done! So, tournament after tournament I showed up and sometimes, I played and sometimes not, but I kept accumulating MP's. So here are a few of the great opportunities I had surfing the desk.

I was at the Houston Regional when I had 20 Mp's getting ready to go home when this very nice man came up to me and said he was told I was looking for a partner. I said yes but I only have 20 MP's. He said that was OK, but we would have to play in the Side Game because he had more than that. Of course, our game was very low due to my lack of knowledge playing against "experts" (everyone was an expert compared to me). He was very gracious and gave me some wonderful tips and said he enjoyed playing with me. Later someone asked me if I knew who I was playing with...no. Turns out he was the 5th ranked player of Canada!

My first national tournament was Austin in 2021. Again, I was surfing the partnership desk desperate to play. I saw a lady just sitting there quietly so I thought I would strike up a conversation to pass the time. As it turns out, she was surfing the desk too, so we agreed to play together, of course in the Side Pairs again because of HER masterpoint level, not mine. While we were playing, I mentioned I had just started dating a bridge professional and he was playing in the big boy games upstairs. She asked me his name and I told her. She got so excited! It turns out she was one of the master teachers he had helped over the phone when she presented in the Saturday District I/N Lessons. She asked me to introduce her to him because he was so nice and kind to her, so she

wanted to meet him in person. Small world!

My last story involves lasting friendships found at the desk. I was in Reno, again surfing the desk, when I met this very nice lady from Maine who had roughly the same amount of MP's as I did at the time. We played different levels of games, but her favorite was Fast Pairs! I had my doubts but with her encouragement I agreed. We came in first in C and won GOLD! Now I am hooked on "playing up". I met up with her again in Providence and Phoenix Nationals and she is so much fun. We occasionally play on BBO but we both prefer f2f games. I am looking forward to playing with her in New Orleans this spring.

So, the moral to my story is, don't be afraid of the partners you meet at the desk. Everyone started this game with nothing, but most are improving. Put yourself out there and realize sometimes you might strike gold!

Better Bridge Habits

The Auction - Etiquette and Protocol

Bidding boxes are designed to reduce the possibility of information being communicated between partners by voice intonation or other mannerisms such as eye contact. When using a bidding box, decide what your bid is going to be before reaching for or touching cards in the bidding box. An extreme example of this impropriety is when you touch a 2H card and then pull out a pass card.

Do not ask for information from your opponents unless it is your turn to bid.

Do not ask what a bid means unless you are intending to bid. Asking for explanation without bidding could in certain circumstances be construed as passing unauthorized information to one's partner. If one doesn't intend to bid, questions of the opponents, should be made after the auction has concluded.

bridgewebs.com

Eddie Kantar's Tip

Defensive Lead Tip

From Eddie Kantar's online tips:

You do not lead the same against 3NT (or 4NT) as you do against 6NT. For example, say you have:
S: K10764 **H:** Q84 **D:** Q76 **C:** 83

If the bidding goes 1NT- pass- 3NT (or 4NT) - all pass, you have an automatic spade lead.

However, if the bidding goes 1NT-pass-6NT- all pass, a spade lead is horrible. Why? The opponents presumably have about 33 HCP to contract for 6NT which means your partner is busted. There is no point in leading away from an honor. Lead a club and hope to make two tricks if declarer finesses into you

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.

This month:

With 8 trump and missing both the K and J:

A 10 x x x 4
K 9 3

As declarer, you need to 4 tricks from this suit. If you lead low to the nine, you will have a 92% chance of achieving this (and a 61% of making 5 tricks).

Source: The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge

Demon Defense

Defensive Signals - Suit Preference

In February we shared Larry Cohen's overview of the three major types of defensive signals - Count, Suit Preference, and Attitude. In March we discussed count. This month here is Eddie Kantar's simple explanation of suit preference.

Suit Preference signals are the simplest and the most elegant of the signals, yet the average player has more trouble with them. Here is the first case of using suit preference signals playing standard signals. You are defending a 4H contract. Partner leads the A of spades:

	N - J975 (dummy)		
W - AK102		E - Q (you)	
	S - ?		

You play the Queen and partner knows it is either a singleton or doubleton. He continues with the K, and you discard a low Diamond. Partner then leads the 10 of spades. He plays the 10 to tell you to return a Diamond so he can give you a 2nd ruff and defeat the contract. If partner wanted a Club, he would lead his lowest remaining spade.

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Better Bidding

The Negative Double

(As presented by Ed Rawlinson, past D16 Teacher of the Year)

Suppose you hold 32/K865/K743/Q97. Partner opens 1♣ and RHO bids 1♠. What do you do? Bidding a new suit at the two level requires 10+ points and a 5+-card suit. Bidding 1NT requires a stop in the opponent's suit. Partner may have only 3 clubs, so raising to 2♣ generally requires 5. BUT...you have 8 points and would have bid if RHO had passed.

Fortunately, there is a conventional bid which describes your hand perfectly: the negative double. It gets its name due to the fact that it is NOT a penalty double. It merely means "I have 6+points and the unbid suits".

If the overcall is in a major suit, the negative double will always show at least 4 cards in the other major (you are looking for a fit in the other major).

There are some special cases:

- If the overcall is 1♦, the negative double shows BOTH majors. If you only have one major, bid it.
- If the overcall is 1♥, the negative double shows exactly 4 spades. If you have 5+spades, bid 1♠.
- If the overcall is 1♠, you will always have 4+hearts. You may not necessarily have 4 cards in the unbid minor. If so, you will either have longer hearts (in which case, if partner bids the unbid minor, you will then bid 2♥, showing 5+hearts and less than 10 points) or you will have support for partner's minor (in which case, if partner's rebid is the other minor, you will raise his first minor).

You and partner need to reach agreement on "how high" you will play negative doubles. In the original example, suppose the overcall was 2 or 3 spades rather than 1♠. Most experienced players play negative doubles through 3♠ or 4♥. If partner can respond to your negative double at the 2 level, you only need 6 points to make the negative double. If partner must go to the three level to respond, then you need at least 9 points to make the negative double. If partner must go to the four level, then you need at least 11 points.

On the vast majority of hands, after you make a negative double, partner will "bid something" (i.e., bid one of the unbid suits, rebid her suit, bid NT). Suppose opener has **S**:QJ92 **H**: A32 **D**:K1086

C:A5, and the bidding goes 1♦-(3♠)-X-(P). You and partner have agreed to play negative doubles through 4♥, so you know she has 4+hearts and 11+points. You have two reasonable choices, 3N or pass. You are likely to win 4-5 tricks, and partner should win at least 2. Your decision might be influenced by the vulnerability. If the opponents are vulnerable, pass (expecting to be +500 or +800). This is called “converting” the negative double to a penalty double.

It's The Law

Oops! I have a spade...

We have all said something like this. A spade was led, and we did not play the spade (or one of several) from our hand. Our usual explanation is that it was mixed in with our clubs (or hearts, but that is less credible). However, the usual reason is that we were just not paying attention. For whatever reason, we have revoked. Now what?

The Revoke - Law 61 (mostly)

Law 61A, Definition of Revoke, partly defines a revoke as “failure to follow suit in accordance with Law 44...” Law 44C states the requirement to follow suit. There are other situations in which revokes occur, but most revokes occur when playing from our hand to a trick. That is the situation on which we will focus.

When a player fails to follow suit, the other players may inquire about a possible revoke as described in Law 61C, Right to Inquire about a Possible Revoke:

- Declarer may ask either defender
- Either defender may ask declarer
- Defender may ask partner (at the risk of creating unauthorized information)
- Dummy may ask only declarer

NOTE: it is not required that anyone call attention to possible revoke. Even if we realize we have revoked, we are not obligated to announce it. However, it is usually better for us to call attention to and correct an unestablished revoke before it becomes established. We call the director to ensure that all aspects of the correction are handled properly. The director will instruct us to place the played card face-up on the table and to play a card of the correct suit. The played card becomes a major penalty card, and the director will most likely remain at the table until the card is played.

Law 63, Establishment of a Revoke, states that the revoke is established once the offender or partner leads or plays to the following trick. Declarer’s call for a card from dummy establishes a revoke by the declaring side. Once the revoke is established, it cannot be corrected until the end of the hand.

Therefore, if we think a revoke has occurred, but it occurred too long ago to correct, we keep silent until the end of the hand. (“Too long ago to correct” is after one or two cards have been played to the trick subsequent to the possible revoke, depending on who may have revoked.)

After the hand is complete but BEFORE anyone picks up his or her cards, we inform the table that we think there is a possible revoke, and we call the director. The director will determine what adjustment, if any, is appropriate.

About Equity

Established revokes can result in an automatic one- or two-trick adjustment. A two-trick adjustment is made if the offending player (not side) wins the trick on which the revoke occurred, and the offending side won another trick after that. As a practical matter, the offending player will win the trick on which the revoke occurred when he trumps instead following suit. A one-trick adjustment is made when the offending side wins the trick on which the revoke occurred or wins any subsequent trick.

Therefore, if the revoking side wins neither the revoke trick nor any subsequent trick, there is no automatic adjustment. However, if the revoke causes damage (for example, if declarer is prevented from running a long suit), the director may issue an adjusted score to restore equity for the damage caused.

