

District 16 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

Volume 5 Issue 4

From the Editor

Spring is here and we all enjoy this time of renewal and new life in the plant and animal worlds. It can also be a time of renewal in the bridge world.

Take some time to think about your game. What area needs the most improvement? How can you acquire those skills? How are your partnerships? What can you do to be a better partner?

Bridge is an opportunity for continuous learning. Take advantage of the next few months to improve your game.

I'm always interested in your feedback.

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Better Bridge Habits

Attend lectures at tournaments

Developing good habits at the table is an important part of learning bridge. This month's tip is to attend the I/N speaker sessions at the tournaments. Tournament organizers work hard to recruit good speakers and this is a great chance to pick

up valuable tips from top players and teachers. At the Houston Election Sectional this past weekend, Gil Micheletti talked about "special doubles" and Barbara Phillips provided an introduction to "Squeezes". You can find the notes on the Unit 174 website.

From Donna Compton - Master Teacher and World Champion

At any level of play, the key to success is taking the emotion out of the game. I learned this early in my bridge career from Bob Hamman who took me on as a mentee. If you ask him the key to his success, he tells you that it is two-fold: 1) He wins more than anyone else because he has lost more than anyone else; and 2) When a bad result happens on board 7, make sure that a bigger disaster

doesn't happen on board 8 while you are still thinking about board 7. Since Bob was the #1 player in the world for over two decades, it is going to be difficult for any of us to achieve number 1. So, let's focus on number 2.

How do we remove the emotion and move on to the next hand? The answer is music! When I was preparing for the 2010 World Mixed Pairs, one of my mental practices was to make sure that I focused on the current board. Once the cards were returned to the board, the hand was over! I chose a song which I could hum in my mind no matter the result ~ good or bad. It's particularly important at the World level because you see your standing on each board at the time the score is entered in the BridgePad. Yikes! Talk about ups and downs. My chosen song was "We are the Champions" by Queen. Depending on the result, I began the song on a specific line from the song. The result was that it removed the emotion from the result and reset my mind for the next board. It worked! My partner and I went on to win the 2010 World Mixed Pairs in Philadelphia. This was a good thing, because I announced several years earlier that I would win the event. No pressure!

Taking the emotion out of the game of bridge is easier said than done. It takes great focus and determination even for the expert player. Share this idea with your partner and work on it like your bidding and defense agreements. Pick a song that “speaks” to you and at the end of each hand, hum a line from your song in your mind. It can be the same line or different lines depending on the result. By resetting your thoughts, you will consistently move on to the next board. To this end, instead of getting a zero on board 7 and board 8, you will limit your zero to board 7 only. Progress!

Stay tuned for the May District IN Newsletter, where we will explore “Human Nature to be in Control.” Please visit my teaching website www.PlayBetterBridge.com for tips, lessons, videos and bridge history. Also, visit www.UltimateBridgeVacations.com for upcoming Bridge Land Cruises and Power Bridge Retreats.

Eddie Kantar's Tip

When leading partner’s supported suit, lead your highest card with three or four small headed by the 9 or lower. The lead of a low card in a supported suit shows an honor.

When leading partner’s unsupported suit, lead high from a doubleton but low from any three or four cards not headed by a sequence. With the ace, if you lead the suit, lead the ace. 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. Here is a combination that frequently appears. You are declaring 3NT and your left-hand opponent is on lead:

5 ??? Q x ???

A 10 x

You expect the opponent is leading from one of the following: K, KJ, or only small cards in the suit. Your goal is to hold them to one trick in the suit. You should play low from the dummy and win the trick with either the 10 or the A depending on what East plays. This gives you two stoppers in the suit.

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

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 5S contract. Partner leads the 7 of hearts:

	N – H – KQ93	
W – 7		E – S - 93
		H - 86542
		D – A742
		C - 643
	S – ?	

Partner’s lead looks like a singleton as only A, J, 10 are missing and if he had a doubleton, he’d lead the highest card. With 3 to the Ace, he would either lead the Ace or another suit. Usually partner has a trump entry and is looking for a ruff. Play the 8 of hearts signaling that your entry is in Diamonds. 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:

With 3 card major support and a hand that is **not** strong enough for a cue bid raise of partner's overcall, do NOT introduce a new suit, as it is not forcing and denies 3 card support. West opens 1H and your partner bids 1S.

East passes and you hold S – Q87, H- 54, D – KQJ87, C 652. You should bid 2S. Do not bid 2D. www.kantarbridge.com

Its the Law

Alert Procedures

ACBL has published a document on the Alert procedures

- <http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/AlertProcedures.pdf>

The principles behind the procedures are:

- Both pairs at the table have the right to equal access to all information contained in any auction.
- Ethical bridge players will recognize the obligation to give complete explanations. They will accept the fact that any such information is entirely for the benefit of the opponents, and may not be used to assist their own partnership.
- The opponents need not ask exactly the "right" question. Any request for information should be the trigger. Opponents need only indicate the desire for information - all relevant disclosure should be given automatically.

The alert procedure requires a delayed alert of conventional bids above 3NT on or after the opening bidder's 2nd turn to call. All too often players at all levels are not providing the required explanations and the defenders are forced to ask questions to get an understanding of the auction. The following is from the alert procedure:

"Delayed Alerts (or Post-Alerts)

Once the auction has progressed to the point that the opening bidder has had the opportunity to make a second call, conventional calls at the four level or higher are not Alerted until the auction is over.

These delayed Alerts are required to be made by the declaring side before the opening

lead. The defenders are required to Alert declarer after the opening lead but before declarer makes a play from dummy (Alerting before the lead is turned face-up and the dummy is spread is best).

The declaring side must make their delayed Alerts before the opening lead. Defenders wait until they have made the opening lead before they explain calls requiring a Delayed Alert. 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.

Example: 1♥-P-1♠-P-4♦ (splinter)

There is no Alert at the time for the 4♦ bid.

After the auction, the 1♠ bidder must Alert and explain, as required, the meaning of the call.

Example: 1♣-P-1♥-P-2♥-P: 4♣, 4♦ or 4♠

If there was a conventional meaning attached to any of these calls—ace-asking, splinter or something else—the Alert takes place after the auction."