

District 16 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

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From the Editor

I hope that all of you are well and continuing to stay safe from Covid 19. It looks less likely that we'll have a significant return to face-to-face bridge in 2020.

I'm enjoying online bridge and hope you are as well. Take some time to encourage other players to join online games and stay connected to the bridge community.

Silver Linings Week returns July 27! Time to rack up those silver points!

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

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Better Bridge Habits

Anticipate

Developing good habits at the table is an important part of learning bridge. This month I want to focus on anticipating your next bid.

As you evaluate your hand, start to think about your initial bid. If you have an opening hand, plan what you will rebid in an uncontested auction in response to partner's responses. That way unless there is a skip bid, you are ready to bid in tempo.

If you are in 3rd or 4th seat, plan your bids in case partner opens the bidding at the 1 level. Plan whether you will make an overcall if the opponents bid. If your initial bid is pass, plan what bids you might make in case either partner or the opponents open.

Repeat this process for every round of bidding and you'll find it much easier to bid in tempo.

Eddie Kantar's Tip

NT Response to a takeout double

A 1NT response to a takeout double shows 6-10 HCP. A 2NT response to a takeout double shows 10-12. Some 10 point hands are better than others because of strong intermediates. You cannot be a slave to point count. Intermediates count!

Notrump responses to a takeout double guarantee at least one stopper (hopefully two), in the opponent's 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 I had in a recent tournament:

A K J x x x x x

x

Play the A and then the K. You have a 53% chance of 8 tricks which is 8% better than finessing. If you only need 7 tricks, finesse the Jack in case East is void. 95% chance of 7 tricks

Demon Defense

Third Hand Play – Eddie Kantar writes in his book “Modern Bridge Defense” about what to do when you win the trick as third hand. If you choose to return partner’s suit, give count by leading back as follows:

With 2 remaining cards lead the higher

With 3 cards return the lowest

With more than 3 cards, return your original 4th best.

With an honor sequence return the higher www.kantarbridge.com

Bidding Tips

Pearson’s Rule

In his book “The Complete Guide to Passed Hand Bidding” Mike Lawrence states : “A rule was formulated many years ago by one of my early partners, Don Pearson. Widely known as Pearson’s rule, his rule for 4th seat openers was this: Add your high card points together with 1 point for each spade in your hand to get your Pearson points. If you have 15 or more Pearson points, open the bidding. Otherwise you tend to pass.” www.michaelslawrence.com

I’ve used Pearson’s rule for years and found it to be very effective. The exceptions usually occur when you are short in spades, but otherwise have a very good offensive or defensive hand. With these, I’ll open anyway. Be careful about violating Pearson’s rule by opening with 12 or 13 HCP where a lot of your HCP are from Queens and Jacks and you have 1 or 2 spades. Frequently you’ll end up with a negative score either by bidding your suit too high or the opponents making a spade contract. PLC

Its the Law

Unauthorized Information

Most new players understand they are required to bid in tempo. Many have a misunderstanding that “as long as my partner makes a bid, I can do what I choose even though it there was a long hesitation”. As you can see from the following, the Law places an ethical burden on the partner of the huddler when this occurs. Here’s an excellent article on the subject: <http://www.jeff-goldsmith.org/bridge/talks/UITalk.html>

ACBL’s Duplicate Decisions explains Law 16 on Unauthorized Information:

“NOTE: Players are authorized to base their actions on information from legal calls and plays; and illegal calls and plays that are accepted; and from the mannerisms of their opponents.

Players may take into account their current score, the traits of their opponents or any tournament regulation. No player may base a call or play on other extraneous information.

Extraneous information from partner: After a player makes extraneous information available to his partner by an action such as a remark, a question, a reply to a question, an unmistakable hesitation, unusual speed, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement, mannerism, an unexpected alert or failure to alert or any other action that suggests a call, lead or plan of play, the partner may not choose from among logical alternative actions one that could have demonstrably been suggested over another by the extraneous information. If the director is called before the recipient of the unauthorized information takes action, he should instruct the recipient to ignore the information and tell the opponents to call him back after the play if they feel the opponents have gained an advantage.

1. At ACBL sanctioned events, competitors may now announce that they reserve the right to summon the Director when extraneous information may have been made available. There is no penalty for calling the Director early.
2. When a player feels an opponent has taken action that could have been suggested by such information, he should call the Director when play ends. Again, it is not an infraction to call the Director earlier or later. The use of the word “DEMONSTRABLY” is intended to remove from consideration logical alternatives that are not obviously suggested over another by the unauthorized information. The Director should not change a result unless the action chosen can be shown (demonstrated) to have been suggested. The actions that will now be removed by Law have to be suggested in an obvious, easily understood way — it must be readily apparent rather than a product of some subtle bridge argument.

Steps in dealing with unauthorized, extraneous information such as tempo variation (e.g., huddles).

1. Was there unauthorized information available? Was there a huddle? If yes, proceed.
2. Were the opponents damaged? If yes, proceed.
3. Were there logical alternatives to the call chosen by the partner of the huddler? (Remember that a logical alternative is a call that, among the class of players involved, would be given serious consideration by a significant number of such players.) If yes, proceed.
4. Could the extraneous information demonstrably suggest the call chosen over a likely less successful logical alternative(s). Is it obvious? Is it readily apparent? Is it easily understood? If yes, proceed.
5. Assign an adjusted score.”