

## From the Editor

The Bridge Clues website is fully functional again, but facing financial difficulties. If you enjoy using the site, please consider either subscribing for \$4/mo. or making a donation.

Our face-to-face clubs continue to reopen and they need your support. I've played in 8 different clubs and all have seen a slow return to F2F. Reach out to your partners and schedule a game or two at the club.

Online is here to stay, but there's nothing like F2F bridge and seeing your friends at the club.

My e-mail is [paulcuneo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:paulcuneo@sbcglobal.net).

Paul Cuneo

ACBL District 16 Director

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## Better Bridge Habits

### **Managing your time at the table**

Developing good habits at the table is an important part of learning bridge. Let's start with the bidding box. ACBL says:

“A player is obligated to choose a call before touching any card in the box. A call is considered made when a bidding card is removed from the bidding box and held touching or nearly touching the table or maintained in such a position to indicate that the call has been made.”

We've all seen players fiddling with the bidding box while trying to decide what to bid. Unfortunately this may give information to their partner; thus it is an irregularity and may result in an adjusted score.

Players are allowed to correct their bid IF it's a result of a mechanical error rather than a change of mind.

Good habits to develop:

1. Make your choice of bid before touching the bidding box.
2. Look at the bid as you place it on the table to verify that it is your intended call. If not, immediately announce that you made a mechanical error.

For more information: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bidding\\_box](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bidding_box)

## Eddie Kantar's Tip

### Double an artificial bid for lead direction

You can also use a lead-directing double when the opponents use Blackwood. If the response to 4NT (or 5NT) is in a suit you want led, double! These doubles can be made with a strong three or four card suit. If you don't double, partner will think you want another lead.

You hold: S. xx H. xxx D. KQ10 C. xxxxx

West North East South (you)

1S Pass 2H Pass

3S Pass 4S Pass

4NT Pass 5D ? Double 5D to ask partner for a diamond lead against an eventual spade contract. [www.kantarbridge.com](http://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. 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 10 x

Q x x

Our preference is to have the opponents break the suit for us, but that is not always possible. We can maximize our chances of 2 tricks by leading a small card towards the Q. If that wins or our right hand opponent rises with the K or J, we have our 2 tricks. If it loses to our left hand opponent, then finesse the 10. The probability of taking 2 tricks is 74%.

## Demon Defense

### Opening Lead -

Auction:				You hold:
N	E	S	W	S – AJ98
1S	P	1NT	P	H - 862
2H	P	P	P	D – A93
				C – J106

What do you lead? In his book on Modern Bridge Defense, Eddie Kantar writes, “Dummy is likely to have one spade and three hearts. Lead a heart to cut down on dummy’s ruffing power. Later, when in with the A of spades, lead another heart. Every trump you lead translates into one less spade ruff in dummy and another eventual spade trick for you. When dummy prefers declarer’s

second suit, and you have winning tricks or eventual winning tricks in declarer's first bid suit, lead a trump to protect those winners." [www.kantarbridge.com](http://www.kantarbridge.com)

## Bidding Tips

Your partner opens 1NT and your right hand opponent passes. You hold:

S – Q952

H – K92

D – J83

C – KQ10

What is your bid?

In his CD on Conventions, Mike Lawrence writes, "With 4-3-3-3 shape the hand will often belong in notrump, even if you have a 4-4 spade fit. In the long run, this rates to be the winning bid. I have faced this situation hundreds of times and the majority opinion of players is that three notrump is best. One of the reasons is that the opponent on lead does not gain much information from the auction." [www.michaelslawrence.com](http://www.michaelslawrence.com)

## Its the Law

### Announcements

We've all heard players make announcements at the table. These are required by Law and tell the opponents what is happening in the bidding. To know which announcements you must make, refer to your convention card. Some of the more common announcements are notrump range, if **NOT 15-17**, transfers, and a short club. These need to be memorized since you are not allowed to refer to your card once bidding commences.

Law 40 addresses partnership understandings. Included under that is a section on convention card regulations. The following is from Duplicate Decisions:

"ACBL's Specific Convention Card Regulations:

1. Both members of a partnership must use the same system. They must use identical methods. Style may be different and, of course, judgment may vary. During a session of play, a system may not be varied, except with permission from the Tournament Director. The Director might allow a pair to change a convention but almost never their basic system.
2. Partnerships are required to have two convention cards identically and legibly filled out. These cards must be accessible to the opponents throughout the session.
3. All conventions marked in blue on the convention card require an Announcement. All conventions marked in red and all unusual treatments require an Alert.
4. A player is not entitled, during the auction and play periods, to use anything to aid his memory, calculation or technique. However, players may consult any written defenses to methods permitted by the convention charts.
5. At the beginning of a round or session, a pair may review their opponents' convention card and alter their own defenses against their opponents' conventional calls and preempts. Opponents may not vary their system after being informed of these alterations in defenses."