

Region 9 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

Volume 8 Issue 7

From the Editor

Face-to-Face tournaments are well underway. I'd like to encourage you to support the Sectionals and Regionals in your area. Tournaments create many great memories for players and are an opportunity to meet new people and have interesting experiences.

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

Paul Cuneo
Region 9 Director

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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:

“16 - Authorized and Unauthorized Information

16A 1. A player may use information in the auction or play if:

a) it derives from the legal calls and plays of the current board (including illegal calls and plays that are accepted) and is unaffected by unauthorized information from another source; or

b) it is authorized information from a withdrawn action (see C); or

c) it is information specified in any law or regulation to be authorized or, when not otherwise specified, arising from the legal procedures authorized in these laws and in regulations (but see B1 following); or

d) it is information that the player possessed before he took his hand from the board (Law 7B) and the Laws do not preclude his use of this information.

2. Players may also take account of their estimate of their own score, of the traits of their opponents, and any requirement of the tournament regulations.

Extraneous Information from Partner:

16B1. Any extraneous] (not part of the lawful procedures of the game) information from partner that might suggest a call or play is unauthorized. This includes remarks, questions, replies to questions, unexpected alerts or failures to alert, unmistakable hesitation, unwonted speed, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism.


16B1a. A player may not choose a call or play that is demonstrably suggested over another by unauthorized information if the other call or play is a logical alternative.



Logical Alternative: 16B1b. A logical alternative is an action that a significant proportion of the class of players in question, using the methods of the partnership, would seriously consider, and some might select. The use of the word “DEMONSTRABLY” is intended to remove from consideration logical

alternatives that are not 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 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.

16B2. When a player considers that an opponent has made such information available and that damage could well result he may announce, unless prohibited by the Regulating Authority (which may require that the Director be called), that he reserves the right to summon the Director later (the opponents should summon the Director immediately if they dispute the fact that unauthorized information might have been conveyed).] If the director is called before the recipient of the unauthorized information takes action, they should instruct the recipient that they cannot choose an action demonstrably suggested by that information, if there are logical alternatives. Note that this is not the same thing as “ignoring the information.” As long as there are logical alternatives, calls or plays suggested by unauthorized information are not allowed, even if those calls or plays are majority actions (actions that a majority of players would take). Then, the Director will ask for the auction and play to continue and instruct the non-offenders to call them back after the play if they feel that they might have been damaged.

16B3. When a player has substantial reason to believe that an opponent who had a logical alternative has chosen an action suggested by such information, he should summon the Director when play ends. The Director shall assign an adjusted score (see Law 12C1) if he considers that an infraction of law has resulted in an advantage for the offender. Note that in this situation calling the Director before or later than after the end of play is not an infraction. When a player makes available unauthorized information (through a hesitation, for example), no infraction has occurred yet. Thinking in and of itself is not an infraction. The infraction occurs when their partner chooses an action that is demonstrably suggested by the hesitation when other logical alternatives exist. A frequent case is when there is a lack of an alert, an unexpected alert, or an alert and an explanation that is not according to what the player expected.

Example: East opens 1NT, and South overcalls 2  (showing hearts or spades). North alerts and explains the call as “diamonds and another suit.” For South this is unauthorized information, independently of it being the correct system agreement or not. For all purposes, South must continue as if North

 explained 2  as “one major.” If the Director is called before the end of the play, they should collect as many facts as possible, and let the hand develop until a score is achieved before deciding if the non-offenders were damaged by the unauthorized information or not. When the play finishes, the Director should always go back to the table and ask the non-offenders if they feel damaged in any way. If they say “no” at this time, it will be hard for them to claim damage further down the road (unless new facts come to light), and this way the Director will not be confronted with this type of dialog: “What’s the decision on our case?” “You didn’t call me back, I thought you were ok.” “We didn’t know that we had to call you back.”

Recommended 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.

Information from Withdrawn Calls and Plays

16C: All information arising from a withdrawn action is authorized for a non-offending side, and unauthorized for an offending side. A player of an offending side may not choose a call or play that is demonstrably suggested over another by unauthorized information if the other call or play is a logical alternative. The Director shall assign an adjusted score (see Law 12C1) if they consider that a violation of this restriction has damaged the non-offending side. Note: A remarkable exception to this general rule is when there is an insufficient bid corrected with the lowest bid that shows the same denomination as per Law 27B1a, which states explicitly that Law 16C does not apply. In this case, a fail-safe provision is added (27D) to allow the Director to adjust the score in some situations where the nonoffending side is damaged. Another exception is when an out-of-rotation or an insufficient call is withdrawn and substituted with a comparable call (Law 23).

16D Extraneous Information from Other Sources:

1. When a player accidentally receives extraneous information about a board he is playing or has yet to play, as by looking at the wrong hand; by overhearing calls, results or remarks; by seeing cards at another table; or by seeing a card belonging to another player at his own table before the auction begins (...), the Director should be notified forthwith, preferably by the recipient of the information.

2. If the Director considers that the information would likely interfere with normal play he may, before any call has been made:

a) adjust the players' positions at the table, if the type of contest and scoring permit, so that the player with information about one hand will hold that hand;

b) if the form of competition allows of it order the board redealt for those contestants;

c) allow completion of the play of the board standing ready to award an adjusted score if he judges that the extraneous information affected the result;

d) award an adjusted score (for team play see Law 86B).

Unauthorized information from a traveling score slip, or from overhearing a result: In all situations dealing with the unauthorized information obtained by seeing a traveler from another board, or overhearing a result, the Director must determine whether or not the information gained is sufficient to affect the bidding or play of the hand. In almost all cases, this offense will require an

adjusted score. The Director should talk with the players that received unauthorized information, away from the table, and ask them what information they got. Then, allow the auction and play to begin, reserving the right to assign an artificial adjusted score if the Director finds that the unauthorized information has influenced the result. It is possible the North player may have seen the results but be holding a hand where they would neither enter the auction nor be involved in the play (e.g., East and West may have a cold game with South making a standard opening lead). Or, South may have heard that NS can make some contract, and it turns out that the information was about some other board.

Example: North calls the Director and tells them that they heard that NS could








make 5 , likely on one of the boards they are about to play. The Director instructs the table to play and watches carefully. Turns out that in no auction on that round were spades even remotely considered at the game level. Almost certainly there is some other board during the event where NS





can bid and make 5 ... Score stands. The Director should always try to get a valid result on a board and assign an adjusted score (assigned or artificial) only as a last resort. Polling players: To help in deciding matters of judgement, the Director can (and should, whenever possible) elicit the help of players. Note, for example, the definition of “logical alternative.” How can the Director decide if players of the same class would seriously consider, or choose, a given action? The easiest way is to ask such players about it. During a club event this will often not be easy, but if a Director has a network of contacts available (friends, acquaintances, willing players, other Directors), they can use a multitude of sources to ask for advice about a hand: phone, social networks, etc. The pollees do not replace the Director in deciding if a certain call is a logical alternative, for example, or if it is demonstrably suggested by a break in tempo, but their input is invaluable for the Director’s thought process. Also, the quality of the final decision is vastly improved when players of an adequate level are consulted. When polling, the Director should try to gather unbiased opinions. For that reason, the Director should not

mention the irregularity at the start of the poll. 43 Example: North

has  A987  Q432  432  J3. East opens 1NT (15- 17), South huddles for a while, and passes. West passes. North bids

 2 (showing the majors). The auction continues with Pass, 2

 , All Pass. West leads, and when dummy comes down EW call the Director, questioning North's bid after South's break in tempo. The Director should proceed like this: 1. How long did South think about their call? Players will often say that they didn't "hesitate," but instead "thought for a while" because "after all, this is a thinking game." Establish an opinion about the break in tempo from talking to the players. 2. Collect the auction, explanations, etc. Let the play continue and advise EW to call back if they feel damaged. 3. After the play, EW call back. 1NT would make eight tricks, and 2

 went down one for what seems to be a poor score. 4. Was there damage? Apparently so. 5. Were there any logical alternatives for North? Ask players. 6. "You have this hand. Auction goes 1NT 15-17, Pass Pass to you. What is your bid? Did you consider any other calls?" 7. Could the break in tempo suggest the call made by the player? Within the same poll, 8. "If your partner thinks for a while before passing, what does it suggest?" 9. Think about the information received. Probably several players will choose to pass, and all of them will say that the hesitation implies that partner has values, suggesting to partner: "Do something other than pass." However, if the Director started the poll with "Auction goes 1NT, partner thinks for a while and passes," their opinions would be tainted by this extra bit of information, and the poll would be fatally skewed.