



Region 9 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

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From the Editor

I hope that all of you are safe and healthy! I'm encouraged that the people who are getting Covid have much milder cases and the CDC estimates that 95% of us have some protection against it.

We continue to have too many people cheating online. I want to remind you that once you can see your hand on BBO, NO communication with you partner is allowed. BBO chat should be reserved for answering questions your opponents may ask until the hand is over.

We're getting closer to the launch of EDGAR which is ACBL's active monitoring software to detect cheating. I'm optimistic that it will be very effective at detecting cheating and its data will result in a very high rate of convictions.

I'm interested in your feedback on the newsletter, 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 the play. A common example is that you are defending a contract and declarer is running a 5 card suit. You follow with your two cards in the suit and watch as partner follows as well. You know that declarer will continue to run the suit. Have you estimated declarer's distribution and likely number of tricks? Partner's? Have you planned your 3 discards and the messages you want partner to receive from them? Learning to think about these questions early lets you make a planned response, which is always better than just reacting at the time.

Practice and you'll improve tempo and partnership communications!!!

Eddie Kantar's Tip

When partner bids two suits and you have an equal number of cards in each suit, take partner back to the first suit even if it means increasing the level.

Just do it!

You hold: S- Axxx H-K10x D-Jxx C- xxx

Partner	You
1D	1S
2H	?

Bid 3D. Raising hearts or passing partner's reverse, a one round force, is not to be discussed in mixed company.
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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 club game:

A 10 x x x

K x x

Play the K and then finesse the 10 unless an honor appears. You have an 82% chance of 4 tricks. If you play K and then A, there is a 7% chance of 5 tricks with the QJ being a doubleton.

Demon Defense

Third Hand Play - Eddie Kantar writes in his book "Modern Bridge Defense" about what to do when you are third hand and play before the dummy. "When forcing out a higher card from dummy, play the lower of equals."

N - A 8 4 (Dummy)

W - K 10 9 (you) E - Q 5 3 2 (Partner)

S - J 7 6

Partner has won a trick and switches to this suit by playing the 2 and declarer plays the 6. Don't even think about playing the 10! If you do, you deny the 9.

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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 4-4 in the majors, respond 1H to a minor suit opening bid. With 5-5 in the majors, respond in the higher ranking suit (spades) first."

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I was playing in a club game recently when an experienced player violated this rule and bid hearts first with 5-5 in the majors. They ultimately played in 3NT going down 2 when 4S was cold. His partner could not believe he had 5 spades when hearts was the first response.

Its the Law

Newer player frequently encounter bids by their opponents which seem strange and are alerted by the opponents. When this happens, it is natural to want to understand what is happening, but it is not always wise or appropriate to ask during the auction. A good rule to follow is: "If understanding what a bid means will not affect whether or not you will bid, wait until the auction is over to ask your question."

Asking when you have no intention of bidding can cause bad things to happen:

1. You might help the opponents clear up a bidding misunderstanding
2. You might draw partner's attention to a particular suit in which

you have interest and if partner leads it, be accused of inappropriate communication.

Law 73 Inappropriate Communication Between Partners

Duplicate Decisions addresses these issues as follows:

“Partners shall not communicate through the manner in which calls or plays are made, through extraneous remarks or gestures, or through questions asked or not asked of the opponents, through Alerts and explanations given or not given to them. To do so is an infraction of the Laws.

The gravest possible offense against the Proprieties is for a partnership to exchange information through prearranged methods of communication other than those sanctioned by these Laws. A guilty partnership risks expulsion from the sponsoring organization.”



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