

Bridge

By PETER CRONIN

FOR the third time in the last five years, Toronto's Eric Murray and Sammy Kehela, perhaps the world's greatest pair, have won one of the most coveted events in North American bridge, the Spingold knockout teams.

In 1964 and 1965 the all-Toronto team of Murray, Kehela, Bruce Elliott and Percy Sheardown scored back to back victories in the Spingold. Last week in Minneapolis Murray and Kehela teamed up with the well known U.S. stars Edgar Kaplan, Norman Kay, Sidney Lazard and George Rapee to win it again.

It is somewhat of an understatement to say that this six-man team won the Spin-

gold with ease. In point of fact they won their six knockout matches by margins of 39, 102, 87, 57, 92 and 76 IMPs respectively, six consecutive blitzes against some of North America's best teams.

To cite one match in particular, the Murray-Kehela team defeated the Dallas Aces by 57 IMPs. The Aces are a high class team formed specifically to win back the world championship for North America.

Members of the Aces squad finished first, second and fifth in the life masters pairs in Minneapolis but were KO'd easily by Murray, Kehela et al.

Here's a Spingold deal which Eric Murray displayed a few of the skills that make

him one of the most feared players at the bridge table.

South deals:

N (Kehela)
 ♠ A 3 2
 ♥ 10 9 3
 ♦ K 10 5
 ♣ A J 7 4

West East
 ♠ 9 7 ♠ K J 4
 ♥ K Q 7 6 ♥ 5 2
 ♦ 8 7 4 3 ♦ Q J 6
 ♣ K 6 2 ♣ Q 10 8 5 3

S (Murray)
 ♠ Q 10 8 6 5
 ♥ A J 8 4
 ♦ A 9 2
 ♣ 2

S	W	N	E
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: ♠ 9

East won the trump lead with the king and shifted to a heart which Murray ducked. West won his queen and returned another trump, declarer winning his 10. Murray now led a club to the ace and ruffed a club.

A trump was led to the ace and a heart back to the jack, losing to the king. When West now returned a heart, Murray was able to win in dummy and ruff another club creating this end position:

♦ K 10 5
 ♣ J

♦ Q J 6
 ♣ Q

♥ A
 ♦ A 9 2

Declarer now played off the ace of hearts, pitched a diamond from dummy and East, unable to guard both minors any longer, was forced to concede. West, of course, could have broken up the squeeze by leading a diamond at any one of his three opportunities but then West was just West and not an Eric Murray.

From here, it's on to the North American team trials in the fall for Murray and Kehela. There they will qualify for the 1969 Bermuda Bowl world championship in which they will once again meet Italy in the finals. At that point my crystal ball becomes somewhat hazy.

Bridge

Even experts may grieve, when they practice to deceive

By ALAN TRUSCOTT

RULES of thumb have some value for the beginner, but they have to be hedged with if's and but's for the more experienced player. "Third hand high" is a rule for beginners. "Third hand high when dummy's holding is weak" is the version for intermediate players. And even that modified rule has an expert exception.

NORTH		EAST	
♠ 9 7		♠ A Q 5	
WEST		SOUTH	
♠ J 8 6 4 2		♠ K 10 3	

West leads the spade four in a no-trump contract, and the routine play for East is the ace. He continues with the queen, and South can hold up his king, shutting out West's long spades if East has an entry and West does not.

If East is an expert, however, he is more apt to play the queen on the first trick, breaking the third-hand-high rule; he thus forces South to win with the king, thereby preserving the defenders' communication in the suit. (At double-dummy, of course, South would play low on the first trick, but he can hardly afford that when West's lead might have been from A J x x x.)

But as often happens, the exception itself has an exception. The play of the queen is unnecessary and actually undesirable if East has no prospect of regaining the lead—it may fool West as well as South. If West gains the lead, he may give up playing spades, fearing to give South a trick by leading into an ace-ten holding.

A slight variation of this exception to the exception occurred on the diagramed deal from the Spingold Knockout Team Championship final in Minneapolis last month. It was also an example of one of the ironies of the game, for the winners of the title reached an inferior contract and made it while their opponents reached a superior contract which failed.

The inferior contract was reached after Sam Kehela of Toronto, one of the world's greatest players, chose to open the South hand with one no-trump. He quickly regretted his bid when West led the heart two against three no-trump and the dummy appeared. He could count eight tricks with a normal diamond distribution, but it was clear that before he could make his ninth trick in spades the defenders would get at least five tricks. It also seemed that

NORTH		EAST	
♠ 9 5 3		♠ 8 2	
♥ 6 4		♥ A Q 10 7 5	
♦ A K 10 8 2		♦ 5 3	
♠ 9 8 5		♠ J 10 7 4	
WEST		SOUTH	
♠ A Q 7		♠ K J 10 6 4	
♥ 9 8 3 2		♥ K J	
♦ J 6 4		♦ Q 9 7	
♠ Q 6 2		♠ A K 3	

East and West vulnerable.

South (D)	West	North	East
1 N.T.	Pass	2 N.T.	Pass
3 N.T.	Pass	Pass	Pass

West led the heart two.

four spades would have been a better contract.

Luckily for Kehela, the East player made a play on the first trick which was cunning but not clever. Instead of the normal play of the ace, he put on the queen. Thus West knew that South held the heart jack. He also knew, or thought he knew, that South held the heart ace. So he believed that South held two more heart stoppers when, in fact, East was sitting with four more tricks in the suit.

South, too, was deceived about the position of the heart ace. It was pointless to take eight tricks, for he would have no chance of a ninth that way, so he led to the diamond king in dummy and finessed the spade jack. He hoped that this would force the ace, and that West would then fail to continue hearts. For if West held the heart ace, as appeared to be the case, he would be reluctant to continue the suit, fearing to establish the jack in the South hand.

West was reluctant to continue hearts, but not for the reason South supposed. It seemed to West that South was thoroughly guarded in hearts, a misapprehension resulting from East's play of the queen at the first trick, so West looked elsewhere for tricks and led the club two.

South took East's club ten with his ace and led the spade four from his hand, giving West the last chance for the defense. If he had put up his spade ace and led a heart, the defenders would have had six tricks; but he was still under the spell of his partner's play to the first trick. He played low on the spade, the nine won in dummy and South ran for home with nine tricks—five diamonds, two clubs, one spade and one heart.

When the hand was replayed, South opened the bidding with one spade and eventually reached game in spades after North had supported the suit. Four spades was a perfectly good contract which would have made if East had held the spade queen. As it was, West led the club two, and the defenders made two spade tricks, a club and a heart. ■

"Contract Bridge"—news about the game and how the experts play it, by Alan Truscott—appears daily.

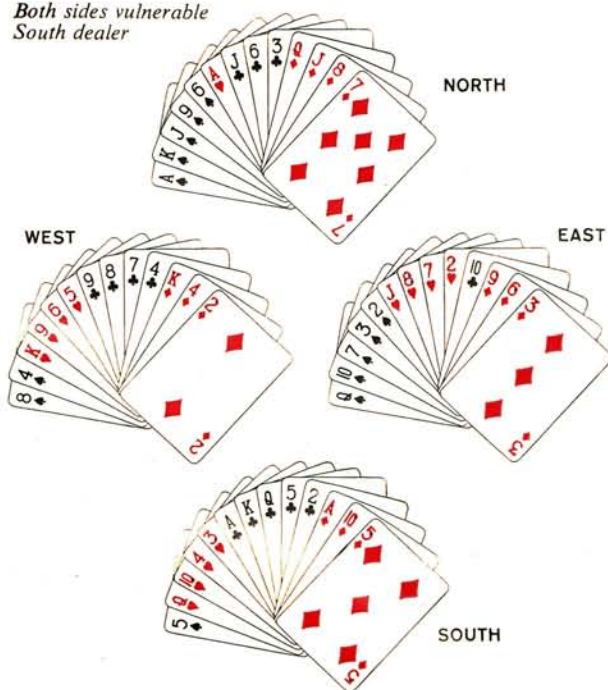


Three double takes on a Spingold slam

The Summer National Championships in Minneapolis were the last to drag on for nearly two weeks, and no one, not even the winners of the final event, will be sorry. Competition started on a Friday and ran for 13 days and 800 boards before George Rapée's team defeated B. Jay Becker's squad in the Spingold finals. Beginning next year the Nationals will end on the second Sunday, alleviating the exhaustion in evidence at Minneapolis.

Young players made their presence felt in the Spingold as never before. Mike Becker and Steve Altman, both 24 and members of the Becker team, were the youngest pair ever to reach the final, and Milt Rosenberg of Chicago, who reached the semifinal, is a year younger. Five of the others in the semifinal were around the 30 mark and, with only Becker and Rapée in the elder statesman category, the average age of the last four teams was the lowest ever.

Both sides vulnerable
South dealer



SOUTH (Walsh)	WEST (Kehela)	NORTH (Swanson)	EAST (Murray)
1♣	PASS	1♠	PASS
1 N.T.	PASS	2♦	PASS
2 N.T.	PASS	3♣	PASS
3♦	PASS	3 N.T.	PASS
4 N.T.	PASS	5♥	PASS
6♣	PASS	PASS	PASS

Rosenberg's team found the experience of the Rapée squad too much to handle in the semifinal, losing by 92 points, but one of the losers had the satisfaction of making a slam that needed good bidding and skillful play.

Dick Walsh of Los Angeles bid his way up to six clubs by an unorthodox route. After the one-no-trump rebid, North's bid of two diamonds would be weak in standard methods, but it was forcing in the style of this partnership and made a careful slam exploration possible.

West led a trump against six clubs and Walsh had a difficult planning problem. The obvious route was to ruff two hearts in dummy, but Walsh was short of entries to the closed hand and would run into an overruff when he tried to ruff the third round of spades low in his hand.

The natural play was to win the first trick in dummy, but South won in his hand. This was a slight error, but it nevertheless gave him the opportunity to make a spectacular play at the second trick. He led the diamond 10 away from his ace, spurning the diamond finesse, with the idea of forcing out the diamond king immediately and keeping control of the hand.

West took his diamond king and returned the club eight, leaving dummy with only one trump for ruffing purposes. But one ruff was enough for the declarer. He won the trump lead with dummy's jack, cashed the heart and spade aces and ruffed a low spade. A heart was ruffed with dummy's remaining trump, and the closed hand was reentered with the diamond ace.

Walsh drew the missing trumps and claimed his slam, announcing that he would discard the two remaining heart losers on the diamond and spade winners in dummy. He made, in all, five trump tricks in his hand, one ruff in dummy, one heart, two spades and three diamonds for a total of 12 tricks.

During the next deal Kehela was dummy and began to wonder whether he would have beaten the slam by refusing to take his diamond king at the second trick. Analysis showed that he would not, for South would then have discarded a diamond on the second round of spades and crossruffed in the red suits. By careful timing he could discard his fourth heart on the fourth diamond in dummy and West would make the defense's only trick by ruffing.

Three days later, the analysts pointed out that Kehela would have beaten the slam by winning the diamond king and returning a diamond, forcing South to use a diamond entry prematurely. But, the contract could *always* be made by winning the first trick in dummy, cashing the heart ace and leading to the diamond 10.

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