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bridge *Canada*



THE CANADIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION

The mission of the Canadian Bridge Federation is to promote bridge within Canada and protect and advance the national interests of Canadian bridge, including the selection and support of Canadian bridge teams and players for international bridge competition.



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Editor's Message

NEIL KIMELMAN

Improve Your Game

Bridge Canada continues in its goal to have content that is of value for CBF members at all levels. To complement the new Bridge Basic column, BC introduces the first in a series of articles relating to non-technical issues that will improve your game. This month: **Focus at the bridge table.**

Neil Kimelman
Managing Editor, Bridge Canada

TEST YOUR DECEPTIVE PLAY

Contract: 6♥ Doubled

♠ 5
♥ J 10 7 6
♦ A Q 5 4
♣ A Q 9 8

♠ K Q
♥ A K Q 9 4 3
♦ J 10 9
♣ K 7

The contract is 6♥ after East opened the bidding with 1♠ (West has all three hearts).

Lead: ♠2 (4th best). East wins ♠A, and continues the suit. Plan the play.

Answer on page 23.

KAPLANISM 7 (Quotes attributed to Edgar Kaplan)

Editor's note: This is the seventh in a series of quotes attributed to Edgar Kaplan, one of the game's greatest: He was a bridge writer, teacher, administrator, commentator, coach, journalist, player and lawmaker.

On Tobias Stone: Part II

When Tobias Stone does not open on ♠K 5 ♥A Q 7 6 5 4 2 ♦Q 4 3 ♣4; a game is missed. 'Granted that he believes in "sound" openings; surely he could "take his life in his hands" and open this holding.'



(L to R) Kathie Macnab, Marc Lachapelle, Cathy Walsh, Nader Hanna, Ina Demme, Neil Kimelman, Jerry Mamer, Angela Fenton

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How to Improve your **FOCUS** at the bridge table

Believe it or not you don't have to have a good memory to be a bridge expert

by Jude Goodwin

When I first took up the game of bridge I spent hours trying to discover ways to improve my memory, tricks to help me remember the cards, the conventions, the odds involved in the game. But after a few years of this diligence, I came to realize the game really had little to do with memory. Because when I was sitting at the table holding cards, if I was distracted or dreamy or anxious, my rote understandings of the game did little to help me play well.

Winning bridge is not about memory, it's about focus and the ability to concentrate. "Concentration at the table is the number-one ingredient to playing well," writes bridge expert and author Larry Cohen in his article *Learning to Improve*. "Logic is much more important than memory."

It is said that as much as 50% of your success at the table depends on your ability to concentrate and focus on what is going on. Otherwise, you'll miss important details. You'll forget to count trump. You'll forget what card your partner lead, or what card they played on the second round of your suit. You'll forget what suit your LHO bid before partner's 2NT.

Have you ever been driving your car on a route you've driven hundreds of times and suddenly realize you've been driving the past five minutes without even paying attention – that you took the right turn and the right lane without being conscious of it? Bridge can be like this, especially after you've played for many years. But playing in this 'fog' of muscle memory is what the experts are able to avoid and here are some tips that could help you do the same.



Barriers to concentration at the bridge table often comprise three basic forms: distractions, fatigue, anxiety.

DISTRACTIONS

One evening at a weekly club game in the Kootenays, which was played in a room on top of a Legion, there was a fire in the lounge. Alarms blared and smoke drifted up into the room, but few people noticed, especially Ian who, after a careful auction, had landed in a 6NT contract that required a complicated endplay to make. Ian was so focussed on his hand it took someone physically pulling on his arm to get him out of the room.

Bridge player focus and concentration is legendary. But distractions can be your own worst enemy, and most of those distractions won't come with alarm bells. They'll be thoughts and worries that take up space in your brain, space which needs to be dedicated to the auction or play at hand. To avoid this:



Most of those distractions won't come with alarm bells. They'll be thoughts and worries that take up space in your brain.

1. Agree with your partner to save ALL DISCUSSION about the hands for later.

You might think it a simple enough thing to lightly address the result on a hand, but then your partner says something cryptic and you waste a good portion of the next hand wondering what they meant – or going over the play to see if they are right – or whatever! Don't do it. Lots of time later to discuss the hands and you can do it sitting in a nice comfy chair with a cold drink in your hand.

2. Let go of the last board and move on.

Train yourself to let the last board, whatever its results, pass out of your head so you can focus on the next hand. Worrying about the past result, your play, the bidding, or trying to revisit the play of the cards in your mind will cloud your focus for the cards you are currently sorting in your hand. I've heard that some people have an 'end of hand' mantra which they use to remind themselves to let the last board go and move on. Or maybe you have an elastic on your wrist and you'll snap it just as you pull the cards out for your next hand to remind you to focus. I've seen many 'gamer' opponents make small obscure comments on a past hand just as you're pulling out the cards for a new hand. This is deliberate and designed to distract you. Don't let it happen!

3. Keep chit chat between hands to a minimum.

If you've ever kibitzed expert bridge players you'll notice there is very little, if any, chit chat between hands. Keep your head clear of social distractions. It's startling how quickly your mind can get caught up in some small comment, or gossip, or whatever, when it should be concentrating on the game. There's lots of time for socializing after the game.

Fatigue

The brain has trouble concentrating when it's tired. One year at a regional in Victoria BC Canada we had unknowingly booked a hotel room across the street from a construction site. We had arrived for the weekend and played in a Midnight Swiss, finding our way through the dark streets to our beds around 3:00 am. The construction, which featured massive jackhammers, began at 7:00 am. I remember at one point in desperation sleeping on the floor of the bathroom with the bathtub running. The next day, my concentration was not good! So ya, be sure you get enough sleep.!

However, your brain can feel fatigued even if you've had a good night's sleep. Although studies have shown the connection between thinking too hard and being worn out seems to be entirely in our heads, there are things we can do to avoid brain fatigue.

1. Don't spend too much time on the easy hands.

This is good advice because bridge is a timed event and you don't want to use up all that time on an easy hand. But also, allowing your brain to coast now and then will help prevent fatigue.

When my bridge partner and friend Rob learned about squeezes he wanted to find one in every hand. Even the most routine 4 Spades could take him 20 minutes to play. Back then we were all smokers, and had ashtrays on the table. It wouldn't be unusual to have three cigarettes done by the time Rob would suddenly sit up and say *AhHa!* then proceed to play off the cards successfully engineering some kind of squeeze.

The point of course is that this is a lot of mental toil that wasn't needed! If you can see your hand is straight forward, play it that way. And claim when you can. Don't put your opponents through the ringer.



We all do it – watch partner's play to every card in dummy, try to guess the opponents' play, try to figure out what's going to happen.

2. Relax when you are dummy.

We all do it – watch partner's play to every card in dummy, try to guess the opponents' play, try to figure out what's going to happen. This is using up so much brain energy! But it's hard, you say, to not pay attention when you don't know whether you're in the right spot or not! Truth is, it will make no difference if you're watching or not watching. Take advantage of being dummy and take a mini brain break.

A friend of mine, Peter Cooper, invented a little device years ago called the *Cooper Echo* that was designed to set Dummy's mind at ease so they could relax and give their brains a rest. Let's say you and partner have had an exciting auction and he is declaring a high-level contract. You are dying to know if it's going to make, and you are wasting valuable brain energy and adrenaline watching his play. The *Cooper Echo* is a high-low play from dummy that lets you know that the contract is a good spot. For example, declarer is playing some rounds of a suit and plays the 8 in the first round and the 4 on the second round. There's no real reason for this so it must be a *Cooper Echo*! As dummy you can now relax, sit back, and put your mind at rest. Once during a tournament in Spokane, I was declaring a slam across from Julie Cooper, Peter's wife, and I gave her a mis-judged *Cooper Echo* after which I went down 3 doubled for a bottom board. "What?!" she exclaimed. "You psyched a *Cooper Echo*?"

3. Look for green.

In an article in *Psychology Today* titled *4 Things to Do When Your Brain is Tired* it is recommended that you look out the window at nature if you can. "Just one minute of looking at grassy rooftops reduced errors and improved concentration" the article notes. It might be a garden, a forest, a lawn – try to find something green.

Hypnotists have long known that convincing a person they are sleepy is often as easy as making their eyes tired. They use dangling, swinging objects and ask the client to follow it with their eyes until the eyes tell the brain you're tired. Changing your visual range, such as looking out a window, can help refresh your eyes and avoid feelings of fatigue. Or if there is no window in your playing area, look up and out over the playing site now and then, focusing on something on the far wall.

If you're in a playing area ballroom with no windows, sometimes you can simulate the effects with scent. When the six members of the England women's bridge team won gold medals at the World Mind Sports Games, they admitted in an interview that they used a dab of Lavender Oil to calm their nerves and improve concentration.

4. Stand up.

Standing and even walking a bit will help your systems to recharge. If you find you've been sitting for longer than 20 minutes, when you're dummy, consider leaving the table for a visit to the water fountain or washroom. Or, consider standing to move your body a bit between rounds, even if you're waiting for the next table. You may need to leave the playing area to do this, but be sure to keep your eye on the clock!

5. M&Ms.

Too much junk food sugar can result in overall brain fog. Be sure to eat healthy while attending bridge tournaments! However, a packet of M&Ms could come in handy at the table. A good dose of glucose does boost brain performance especially when fatigue has become a factor.



My brain fogged over, I had no ability to remember auctions or even the play of cards, much less come up with intelligent creative play.

Anxiety or Stage Fright

As a tournament bridge player my biggest challenge has always been my own anxiety. I remember at an NABC one year my women's team had made it into a qualifying stage and up until that moment I had played well and confidently. Then I found myself at a table with some of the most famous women players in the world and suddenly my anxiety exploded. My brain fogged over, I had no ability to remember auctions or the play of cards, much less come up with intelligent creative play. It was awful. If this kind of thing ever happens to you, here are some techniques that might help.

Before the Match

Relax your body. Stretch, take a walk, laugh. These will all help you ready yourself for the big match. Drink Citrus Juice half an hour before game time to lower your blood pressure. In fact, make that part of your 'ritual' before a big match. Rituals can help put your psyche into a rhythm that will keep you focussed. Oh, and they say eating a banana before game time will help keep your tummy settled.

Visualize. It's well known now that if you 'fake it' you can actually 'make it' happen. If you visualize yourself winning, being congratulated by friends, hugs from teammates, interviews with the World Bridge Federation for their youtube channel. Even if you're not feeling confident, you can act like you're the best in the world. Fake confidence. Believe it or not, most of the people you admire are actually faking their confidence.

At the Table

Act and look Confident Do not slouch. Good posture exudes confidence. Slow down. If you're nervous you breath more quickly, talk more quickly, everything speeds up. Take a moment to control your breathing and slow things down. Smile. When you're feeling

anxious and nervous, you're probably looking like it too. Try to think of something that makes you smile.

Your breath

The impact on anxiety can have on your concentration is often due to hyperventilation of some kind. You're breathing in a way that cuts off some of the blood flow to your brain. If you realize this is happening, you can take control by making sure you take at least 5 seconds to breath in, hold for 2 seconds, then take at least 7 seconds to breath out.

Don't Panic

If you make a mistake don't panic! You don't really know how it's going to affect the whole match – maybe the same mistake was made at the other table, or maybe your mistake was the one that wins the board for you, or maybe it wasn't even a mistake. This is not the time to sort all that out. And anyhow, there are many opportunities to recover. Take a deep breath or grab a stick of chewing gum, a drink of water, recite a poem or mantra to yourself, let it go and move on.

Practice practice practice

This is my final piece of advice and it's a big one. The more you play, the better you'll get at concentrating at the bridge table. This is because you will develop and build confidence. My anxiety used to bother me at club games. Then it didn't, but it bothered me at a sectional tournament. Then it didn't, but it bothered me at regional tournaments. You see, the more I played at the different levels, the more relaxed and confident I could be.

Practice so you will feel confident of your abilities. Practice so you will be more accustomed to playing at different levels. Challenge yourself by playing against experts as much as you can. And practice that smile!

A PEACHY TIME IN PENTICTON!

By Bill Treble



Since the early 1990's, the Penticton Regional has continually gained steam and become Canada's best-attended tournament. In fact, it's one of the top five in the entire ACBL and this year surpassed its previous record with 3542 total tables. Many Winnipeggers, such as Barry Pask/Barb Thomasson, Jim Ball/Wendy Richardson, Glen Fidler and Mavis Minuck/Sharron Putter/Dianne Harley/Doreen Demare, attend it regularly. This year, Sam McLean and Dave West also came to it for the first time. I've attended Bridge Week on the two occasions it was held in Penticton, but have never gone for the regional.

Earlier this year, I spoke with my former partner, Dave McLellan from Thunder Bay, and it was agreed that I'd join up with his regular teammates Cliff Campbell, Rollie Laframboise and Ross Cody as a five-person team at the Penticton Regional. I'd play most of the time with Dave and occasionally with Cliff.

With Dave, Cliff and myself all having quite a few masterpoints, we played in the top bracket of the three knockout teams from Monday evening until Saturday. Aside from a very strong field from Alberta, British Columbia and the U.S.A. west coast, we also had the likes of newly-crowned Canadian champions Nick and Judy Gartaganis to deal with. There were also three 'pro' teams that included players that have gone to World Championships such as Geoff Hampson, Mike Passell, Justin Lall and Kevin Dwyer.

Dave and I used to play a very intricate form of 2/1, but elected to strip down our convention card to what he played with Cliff.

In one of our early matches, I picked up: $\spadesuit A \heartsuit J 10 9 8 4 \diamondsuit A 10 6 \clubsuit A K Q 9$, and saw partner open $1\spadesuit$! I responded $2\heartsuit$, and was delighted to have my suit raised.

The auction now proceeded:

Partner	Myself
$1\spadesuit$	$2\heartsuit$
$3\heartsuit$	4NT
5NT	$6\clubsuit$
$7\heartsuit$	pass

Dave's 5NT showed an even number of keycards (2 or 4) along with a useful void. I intended my $6\clubsuit$ as asking for the Queen of trump, but he explained it as "bid seven if this is your void". His hand was: $\spadesuit K 8 7 5 4 2 \heartsuit A K 7 5 \diamondsuit K J 4 \clubsuit -$. So there we were in $7\heartsuit$, missing a key honor of that suit. Despite that, it's by no means a hopeless contract, as it will come home with a 2-2 split or the Queen dropping singleton. However, when I played a trump up to dummy and LHO showed out, any hopes I had were



quickly dashed. Thankfully, when we were doing comparisons and I announced “minus 100”, our teammates said, “push” as our opponents had reached the same contract at the other table. They were disappointed the hand was not a pickup, but we were elated that we hadn’t incurred a big loss. The rest of the set had gone well, and we advanced to the next round. Later on in the hotel room, Dave explained to me that his 5NT was indeed an even number of keycards with a void, but specifically denied the Queen of trumps. Showing that card takes precedence over the void if you have two keycards along with the Queen, and he would have replied 5♠ if he held those values. I would guess that not every partnership has discussed the matter fully.

In our first knockout, we beat one of the pro teams in the second round but lost to the other in the semi-finals, finishing in a tie for 3rd/4th. In the next event that began on Wednesday, we were up against it in the very first round, being down 13 IMPs at the half. This hand occurred very early in the second half, with both sides vulnerable:

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

Our North opened 5♦, which came around to me, and with RHO being an unpassed hand, I chose to hold my tongue. In retrospect, I think I should have doubled. While that shows values and isn’t totally for penalty, two good things can happen in that partner can either pass or bid a rounded suit. You won’t be thrilled if he

converts to spades, but that’s life as he will only do so with a long suit and distributional hand.

So, barring a low spade lead from partner, which is never going to happen, 5♦ was cold for 11 tricks, and we can make 5♥ our way. On top of that, we knew our teammate was going to open 1♦ rather than 5♦, since as little as one spade honor allows his side to make slam. Since this is likely to be 14-16 IMPs away, to add to your 13-IMP deficit, how do you like your chances now?

As the match progressed, we bid a couple of games, one of them routine and another which might be a pickup as it had been razor-thin. In the meantime, both opponents took a slightly conservative view at the same time, coming to rest in a partial when 3NT their way might succeed. And at the mid-point of the second set, Dave and I had this pair of hands:

West (myself)	East (Dave)
♠ 3	♠ K Q 5
♥ A J 7 5	♥ Q 10 9 8 6 3
♦ A 10 8 2	♦ J 4
♣ A K Q 9	♣ 6 4

The auction went:

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	1♥	pass
3♠	pass	4NT	pass
5♦	Dbl	5♥	pass
6♥	All Pass		

My 3♠ bid was a splinter raise of hearts, and by agreement promised first- or second-round control of the unbid suit, clubs in addition to my shortness. The news wasn’t the greatest for Dave, but with a known 6-4 fit, he asked for keycards anyway and then signed off when I had “only” three of them. In the meantime, North made a lead-directing double of 5♦. Since we couldn’t be off two Aces and I thought my clubs would



provide discards for any diamond losers he had, I ventured on to slam. There were no foul splits in the club suit so he could throw away his second diamond and the King of hearts was onside, so the slam fluttered home. Our more sensible opponents stopped in 4♥ at the other table, so this hand was instrumental in completing the rally and we made it to the next round. We then managed to upend the pro team that had defeated us in the first KO and went on to face Nick and Judy Gartaganis along with Danny and Joanne Sprung in the final. Having played against Nick and Judy many times before and relishing the challenge of this tough pair of opponents, we were East-West against them in both segments of the final.

In that match, we were up 10 at the half, but they came back with guns-a-blazing and weren't doing anything wrong. We figured that the gap had either closed or disappeared entirely when the deciding hand came along:

Nick

♠ A Q J 10 8
♥ 9 5
♦ Q J 9 8
♣ K 4

Judy

♠ 5
♥ K Q 8 7 4
♦ A K 10 7
♣ A 10 3

Judy opened a strong club and Nick showed a positive with spades and then showed the diamonds after opener bid her hearts. At this point, she parked the contract in 3NT, making five. We know this deal would be crucial as our teammates might get to 6♦, as they did.

In the diamond slam, you are blessed with all the high spots in the trump suit, so that gives you some choices in the play. On either black suit lead, you can either play to establish dummy by taking either a straight finesse in spades or a ruffing finesse against RHO. The other line is to test hearts first, leading a small one towards the KQ, making if the ace is onside or the suit divides 3-3. Our declarer played the ♠A, and then ran the queen, losing

to the king on his left. That player had everything, including the ♥AJ, but with that major splitting 3-3, testing hearts would have made the contract and won the match.

In our last knockout before regretfully leaving for home, you are North as declarer in 3NT, the auction having gone:

Partner	You
1♣	2NT
3NT	pass

The 4♥ is led and here are the combined hands:

Dummy

♠ A K 10
♥ K Q 5 2
♦ A J 10
♣ 6 4 3

You

♠ 7 6 3
♥ A 6 3
♦ 9 6 4
♣ A K 5 2

Your side was playing weak notrumps, ergo the 1♣ opening by partner. Expecting hearts to be 4-2 or 5-1, you win the first trick in dummy and duck a club. LHO wins the Jack and shifts to the ♠9. You play the ten, losing to the jack on your right and a spade comes back. Preserving all your options, you now play a diamond to the ten as righty takes the queen. Now he exits the Queen of spades to dummy's Ace. Now you try the hearts, and RHO shows out on the third round. On a third club to your remaining honor, LHO discards a diamond. So you're remain stuck on eight tricks and need another one to make the contract. Do you take another diamond finesse, playing for LHO to have the missing honor? The other choice is to get out with the fourth club, attempting to endplay. RHO, who appears



to have started with 3=2=4=4 distribution and has only diamonds left in his hand?

One declarer took the repeated diamond finesse, while the other went for the throw-in. This was the entire hand (hands rotated to put dummy at top):

Dummy		
♠	A K 10	
♥	K Q 5 2	
♦	A J 10	
♣	6 4 3	
♠	9 8 4	♠ Q J 5 2
♥	10 8 7 4	♥ J 9
♦	K 7 5 2	♦ Q 8 3
♣	Q J	♣ 10 9 8 7
You		
♠	7 6 3	
♥	A 6 3	
♦	9 6 4	
♣	A K 5 2	

The play and defense at both tables went the same up to a point. The difference came on the third round of spades. One of the East players played his low spade, and declarer now had a key piece of information as the hand proceeded, namely that his RHO had four cards in each black suit. That made a second diamond finesse the indicated play.

At the other table, on the third round of spades, East played the Queen of the suit, the card he was known to have. This planted the thought in declarer's mind that he might have nothing left but clubs and diamonds and could now succeed against even against ♦ K Q x x offside with the club exit.

Such hands are a matter of guesswork, as it didn't matter what spade East played on the third round, knowing that declarer only had three of them. Perhaps declarer should've got it right, and taken the second diamond finesse, a line that would succeed 75% of the time. However, the Law of Restricted choice would seem to argue in favor of the line that he took. At any rate, it was a pretty effort by East and resulted in his side defeating a contract that seemed to be impregnable.

In the semi-finals of the final knockout teams, we lost a 3-IMP squeaker. On one of the hands in the late going, the opponents were in 4♥ and I didn't lead my singleton spade as it was dummy's first-bid suit. That would have beaten the contract immediately, but we could have still prevailed near the end if partner had ruffed high, building a second trump trick for me. The other team went on to claim victory in the event, while we had to settle for 3rd/4th. For the week, we made two semi-finals and one final, quite a decent showing. Since we were a five-person team, I got to sit out a few segments. Of course, bridge players can never find it in themselves to take a rest and get their minds off the game, so I found a table to kibitz a few hands. Of the five or six I watched, two of them were quite interesting. You are sitting East and partner has opened a 15-17 1NT, your hand being:

♠ K 5 ♥ 10 9 8 7 4 ♦ K 9 8 ♣ K 7 3

Your plan as responder is to transfer to hearts and then invite game with 2NT. But as it turns out, you don't have an entirely free run:

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	2♦
3♦	3♥	Pass	?

Your LHO has butted in with a natural diamond overcall and partner has accepted the transfer at the three-level, suggesting a maximum hand with good support. How do you proceed now? Carry on to 4♥? Downgrade the seemingly misplaced King and pass?

South in fact bid 4♥. My impression as I watched the hand was that he ought to stick to his original plan and give partner a choice of games with 3NT, even though a heart fit had been established. This should confirm a high card in the enemy suit and balanced distribution. Opener will now realize that you have some high-card strength in diamonds and can either pass or correct back to 4♥, depending on his holding in that suit.



The complete hand:

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

Having no diamond to lead against 4♥, North started out with a club and upon winning the first round of hearts, gave partner a club ruff and got Ace and another diamond back, scoring his six of hearts and beating the contract two tricks. 3NT, by contrast, is unassailable, even on a club lead. Declarer works on hearts, giving up two tricks in the suit, and has three winners each in clubs and hearts, two in spades and a spade or diamond for his ninth trick.

The very next hand, the South player had a decision to make on the second round of bidding. His hand was ♠ - ♥ A 10 8 5 2 ♦ A 4 ♣ 10 9 8 7 6 3. The auction kicked off with:

North	South
1♠	1NT
2♠	?

Since N-S were playing 2/1, the 1NT response was a one-round force. The question now is whether South ought to just pass in what seems to be an apparent misfit or bid 3♣, the longest of his rounded suits. Opener has limited his hand, so the game chances are remote and it's mainly a question of whether clubs are a better resting place than spades. Most of the players I've given this hand to would pass 2♠ rather than go any further. However, the occupant of the South chair, a very good player, elected to try 3C. Now let's look at both hands:

♠ A J 8 7 4 3	South
♥ K 4	♠ -
♦ 9 6	♥ A 10 8 5 2
♣ A K 5	♦ A 4
	♣ 10 9 8 7 6 3

As you can see, opener's hand grows to enormous proportions after partner introduces a suit he has excellent three-card support for, and game has become a distinct possibility. Some players would raise to 4♣ on the North cards, while others might keep 3NT in the picture by bidding 3♥. That action should indicate a stopper rather than actual length since he has failed to bid hearts naturally on the previous round. As it turns out, either bid will result in an eventual 5♣ contract, as South would bid 5♣ over the raise, while he'd raise 3♥ to game and opener could correct back to the minor.

An interesting facet to the hand is that if N-S play 3NT, that will go down with a diamond lead, as the clubs split 3-1. However, 5♣ is pretty much cold unless the hearts split badly. The second diamond goes away on the ♠A and after a round of trumps, declarer will play on hearts. That suit divides evenly and one ruff establishes the suit, so there are twelve tricks to be had if the hand is played in clubs.

Editor's note: Experts tend to differentiate weaker and stronger hands with a six card major by rebidding the major with a minimum opener, and rebidding a three card minor with 14-17. Although I personally believe 3♣ is the right rebid for South on the actual auction, 2♣ by North on the previous round would have easily led to a 5♣ contract. The author nor I consider 3♠ as that is usually reserved to 15-17 with a better six card or longer suit.

I thoroughly enjoyed my week in the Okanagan Valley. It's a great place, I met lots of old friends, and it's a wonderful tournament. If you haven't made the trip before, try and put it on your "bucket list".

North



DECLARER PLAY 2

In the **Bridge Basics** series, a variety of writers will add their perspective on the basics of bidding, declarer play and defence. Hopefully these different perspectives will add to your skill set, and allow you to successfully apply these principles at the table.

A final note: Some of these concepts may be a review for you, but this series will also cover more advanced techniques and ideas.

In the first article a Declarer Play Checklist was introduced as a methodology to approach play of the hand. The more you use the items on the checklist, the easier it will become, and your declarer play results will improve!

Addition to the list #1

Yes, we ignored an important consideration in determining your line of play – form of scoring! As most of us know, there is a much greater emphasis in teams/IMPs in playing safe for your contracts, even if this will cost an occasional overtrick. Another way to look at it, you hate to come back to teammates with -100, when you could have guaranteed +620, but tried greedily for +650. Trying to win 1 IMP when jeopardizing 13 IMPs is a short-sighted IMP strategy.

Ok, back to the list – here are the first four:

1. Count your tricks.
2. Look to where you can develop more tricks.
3. Count your immediate losers.
4. What is your priority:

Pulling trumps

Setting up side tricks

Ruffing losers

Last issue we started the discussion of counting your tricks. I introduced some basic concepts, but in reality all of the first four items on the checklist need to be done together. Declarer play is often a race between the two sides to get their tricks set up and cashed before, the other. And each deal can require a different approach and priority in which suit is led first. And in the discussion I introduce some basic percentages on distribution of suits and missing cards.

TIP NO.1

A good investment of time for the aspiring bridge player is to do some homework in finding out the odds for all distributions. These odds will be of great benefit in deciding on the best line of play. There are many resources where you can find these odds, including the Encyclopedia of Bridge. Here is just one good link I found: https://www.bridgehands.com/P/Probability_of_Card_Distribution.html

Example 1: Contract: 3NT by South. Lead: ♥5.

♠ A 4
♥ J 4 3 2
♦ Q J 10 4 3 2
♣ 8

♠ K 6 5
♥ Q 10
♦ K 6 5
♣ A Q 6 3 2

West	North	East	South	
-	-	-	1NT	
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT	
All Pass				
	W	N	E	S
Trick 1:	♥ <u>5</u> *	2	A	10
Trick 2:	K	3	♥ <u>7</u>	Q
Trick 3:	♥ <u>9</u>	J	6	♣2
Trick 4:	8	♦ <u>2</u>	7	K
Trick 5:	♣4	Q	9	♦ <u>5</u>
Trick 6:	♠3	♦J	A	♦ <u>6</u>
Trick 7:			♣5	?

*The underlined card denotes who is on lead.

Here is what I would think as declarer after the opening lead:

'Ok, I have only three top tricks, but once the ♦A is knocked out I will be up to 8 tricks. The opponents may not take the diamond until the 3rd round, but that doesn't matter as I have a guaranteed entry with the ♠A. Actually, I will get a 9th trick with the ♥J, once the ♥AK are gone. Can the opponents get five tricks before I get nine? Yes, If West has five hearts and the ♦A. But E-W are playing standard leads, so it looks like hearts are 4-3. Ok, let's play. Sure enough the hearts are 4-3 and East wins the third round of diamonds, and shifts to a club. Should I take the finesse?'

'Well...I have nine tricks and the opponents have three. If the finesse wins I make at least one overtrick. However if it loses, I will go down losing the ♣K and the long heart. What to do.... Are there any other indicators to determine the better choice?'

- *Let's look at the bidding...*no that doesn't help.
- *Form of scoring?* This is matchpoints. If it was teams I would take the ace of clubs so fast.... Is there anything else than can help me decide? Yes, there are two factors that lead me to the correct answer.
- *The contract* – not many pairs will get to game. Making will give us at least an average plus score.
- *The lead.* A spade lead would have given us more trouble. Let us not squander this gift!

The full deal:

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

Example 2: Form of Scoring: IMPs;

Contract: 4♥ by South. Lead: ♦Q.

♠ 6 3 2
♥ Q J 10 4
♦ K 5 2
♣ A Q J

♠ K 5 4
♥ A K 9 7 5 2
♦ A 6
♣ 9 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Dbl	2♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Ok, we have six heart + 2 diamonds + 1 club = 9 tricks. They have one trick, the ♠A. I have two chances for a tenth trick, the spade king or a 2nd club trick. I will score the ♠K if East has the ace. Actually the latter is a guaranteed extra trick – the ♣Q can force out the ♣K, setting up the jack. If West has the ♣K I can take the club finesse, resulting in 11 tricks.

Is there any danger to my contract? Yes, if West has the ♠A and East the ♣K. In fact, the bidding has improved the chances that West has the spade ace. If East wins the ♣K, he can play spades through my king, with the defence scoring four tricks before I can get my ten. Is there anything I can do to score my 10 tricks first, when these two cards are sitting poorly?

The answer is yes, with an avoidance play. If we switch our potential club loser for a diamond loser! Let's look at how we do this (top of right column):

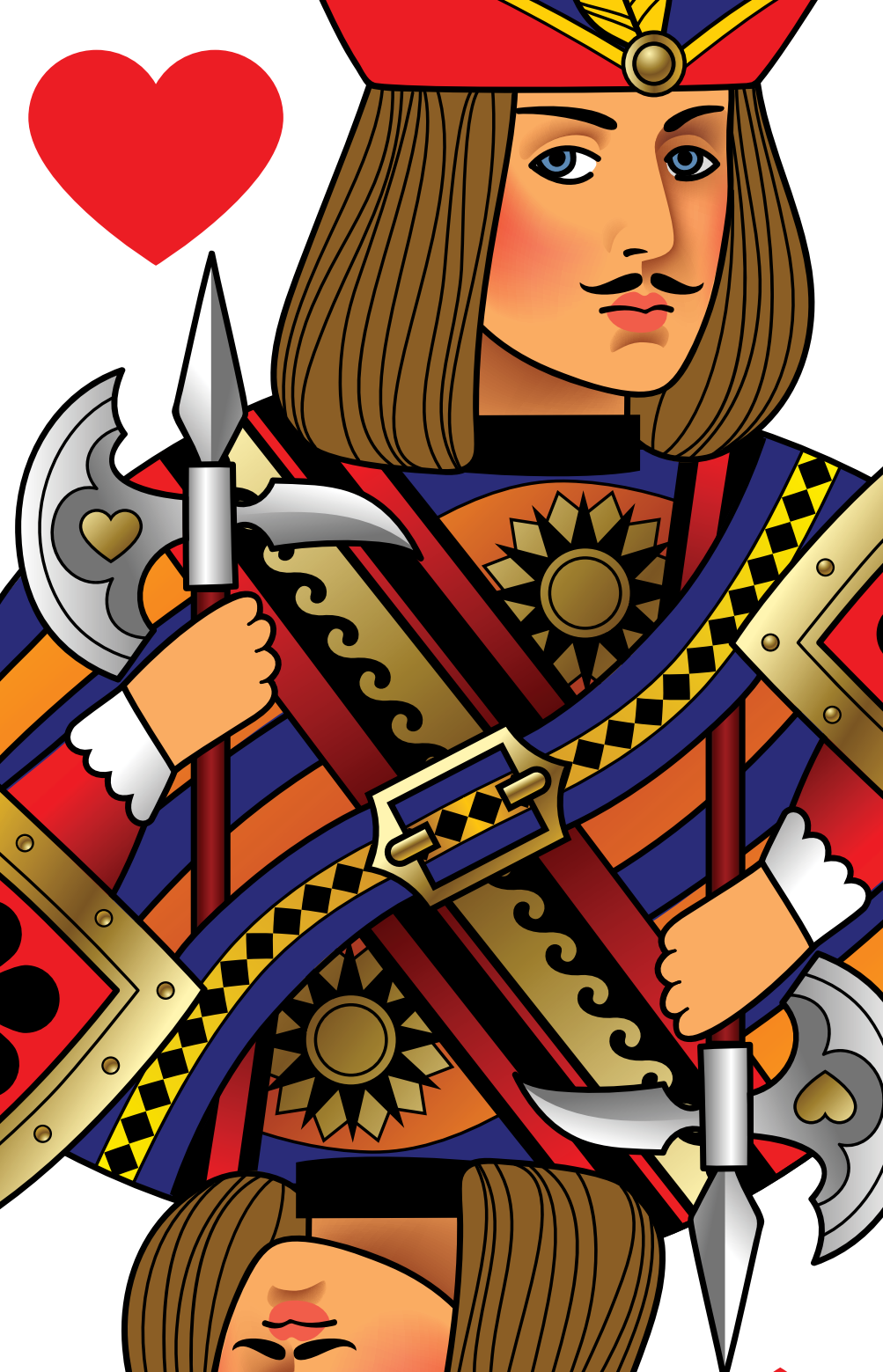
	W	N	E	S
Trick 1:	♦Q	2	8	6!
Trick 2:	♣2	A	6	5
Trick 3:	♠8	♥4	3	A
Trick 4:	♣3	10	6	♥K
Trick 5:	7	5	3	♦A
Trick 6:	♣7	J	8	♥2
Trick 7:	9	♦K	4	Cx9
Trick 8:	8	♣Q	K	♥5
Trick 9:	♠7	Q	♠J	♥7
Trick 10:	10	♣J	4	♠4
Trick 11:	A	♠2	9	K

The full deal:

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

Next instalment: We will continue going down the list and look at the basic rules, along with examples.





BLACKWOOD

This month we are going to have a look at one of a handful of bidding conventions that can be used to get to slam.

When one ventures into slam territory, it's important to know the partnership's ace and king holdings. The way this is done, when heading for a suit contract, is to use Blackwood. The conversation is started by a bid of four notrump. The response is an artificial bid indicating the number of aces you hold. Once that has been determined, a five notrump bid asks for kings, but only if you find you have all the aces.

The responses to a four notrump ask are:

# of aces	Response
0 or 4	5♣
1	5♦
2	5♥
3	5♠

Suppose you are in an auction and want to investigate slam.

by Michael Abbey
THE NEW PLAYER
Spot

NEW PLAYER SPOT: Michael Abbey ... continued

You bid four notrump and what would your partner respond with the following holdings:

1. ♠ A 8 3
♥ K Q 7
♦ 8 7 4
♣ K Q J 2
2. ♠ 9 7
♥ Q 8 3 2
♦ K J 8 7 5
♣ Q 10
3. ♠ -
♥ A K 4 2
♦ J 10 9 8 7
♣ A 6 3 2
4. ♠ A 8 6
♥ A 9
♦ 10 9 7 4
♣ A Q J 3

1. Response is five diamonds, showing one ace.
2. Response is five clubs, showing zero or four aces.
3. Response is five hearts, showing two aces. Voids do not count as aces.
4. Response is five spades showing three aces.

The second response is worth a discussion. At the outset, we wonder whether pard means zero or four. However it is easy to determine whether it is zero or four, based on the auction and your hand.

Once you have discovered that you and your pard have all the aces, you have the option of asking for kings. I wondered at the beginning if I still asked for aces if I had all four of them. The answer is "yes" as it opens up the door to asking for kings.

The responses are the same as for aces, except at the 6-level:

# of Kings	Response
0 or 4	6♣
1	6♦
2	6♥
3	6♠

1. ♠ A 8 3
♥ K Q 7
♦ 8 7 4
♣ K Q J 2
2. ♠ 9 7
♥ Q 8 3 2
♦ K J 8 7 5
♣ Q 10
3. ♠ -
♥ A K 4 2
♦ J 10 9 8 7
♣ A 6 3 2
4. ♠ A 8 6
♥ A 9
♦ 10 9 7 4
♣ A Q J 3

1. Respond five hearts, showing two kings.
2. Respond five diamonds, showing one king.
3. Respond five diamonds, showing one king.
4. Respond five clubs showing zero or four kings.



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NEW PLAYER SPOT: Michael Abbey ... continued

Let's have a look at a few hands and the auction that could lead to a slam try using Blackwood:

EXAMPLE 1

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

West	North	East	South
-	1♠	Pass	3♠ ¹
Pass	4♥ ²	Pass	4NT ³
Pass	5♥ ⁴	Pass	5NT ⁵
Pass	6♠ ⁶	All Pass	

1. Four card support and 10-11 HCP; an implicit suit agreement
2. First round of control in hearts with and ace or a void
3. Asking for aces
4. Showing two aces
5. Since we have all four aces, asking for kings
6. Showing three kings

When North shows three kings, South passes as six spades is as high as they should be. There is no need to correct as this is their agreed upon suit. Had North held two kings and bid six hearts, South would have corrected to six spades.

EXAMPLE 2

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

West	North	East	South
-	-	2♣ ¹	Pass
2♥ ²	Pass	3♥ ³	Pass
4NT ⁴	Pass	5♠ ⁵	Pass
6♥ ⁶	All Pass		

1. A strong hand with 22+ HCP
2. A nice five card heart suit
3. Support for partner's hearts
4. Asking for aces
5. Showing three aces
6. Return to hearts at the six level

Rules and Guidelines when asking for aces

- Asking for kings guarantees all aces.
- Don't ask for kings if you know there are insufficient values for a grand slam. Such as when partner opens 1NT, defining his high card strength very precisely.
- Don't ask for aces when you hold a void, as you won't know if one of partner's aces is opposite your void, thus useless. If you find yourself looking in horror at your hand one more time after bidding Blackwood and remembering you have a void ... welcome to the club. Been there, done that.

Asking for aces usually guarantees first or second round control in all suits.

Next issue we will have a look at Gerber.



by Neil Kimelman
THE INTERMEDIATE
Spot

THE INTERMEDIATE SERIES **DEFENSIVE PLAY 11**

DEFENDING AFTER THE OPENING LEAD

By Neil Kimelman

We continue our study of defending, after the opening lead. In the last few issues I focused on tricks 1-3, which are often the most important. However that doesn't mean you can take a siesta at trick four! Today's focus:

DISCARDING

Defence requires cooperation between defenders. To facilitate this cooperation you need to communicate to partner:

- Did you like the lead.
- Do you want a shift.
- Where your high cards are located.
- What suit are you protecting and what suit you are not.

HONESTY, THE BEST POLICY

As a general rule, you want to be honest with your signals, so partner knows more and can make the best plays and discards. That does not mean to say you can never lie. The art is to recognize the exceptions when deception is the way to go.

Let's get started.

Intermediate Spot : by Neil Kimelman ... Continued

The Smith Echo – many advanced and expert partnerships play this convention, or it's cousin the Reverse Smith Echo. In the standard version, at trick two you tell partner, the opener leader, if you liked the lead: High card says yes, low card says yuck! Sometimes this message is deferred to trick three. This occurs when:

- You have a singleton.
- You have to win the trick or split honours at trick two, or
- You need to give partner a count if declarer tries to set up a long, running suit in dummy that has no outside entry.

Although more of an expert play, discarding is occasionally an opportunity to unblock a suit to the benefit of the defence.

EXAMPLE 1 Playing IMPs

♠ J 8 7 4
♥ K 3
♦ J 7 5
♣ K J 10 9 2

♠ A Q 10 2
♥ 8 5 4 2
♦ 10 8 4 3
♣ 4

Some basic considerations when discarding:

1. Don't encourage in a suit if it will cost a potential trick. It is better to discourage in a different suit. A thinking partner will usually be able to correctly interpret the message you are trying to send.
2. If you can afford it, send an informative discard. For example if you are discarding from QJ1093, discard the queen.
3. Keep equal length in long suits that dummy has, or you infer are in declarer's hand.
4. Try not to void yourself in a suit prematurely. This sure knowledge of where the cards in a suit are located can be a huge benefit for declarer.
5. Before considering a misleading signal, double-check that this cannot backfire and cause partner to make a damaging play or discard.
6. Your first play in a suit is attitude, whether you 'like' this suit. If you discard a 2nd card, most advanced and expert partnerships assign meaning to this play. In my partnership it is count, but some play suit preference for the other two suits.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Partner leads the ♣6.

This doesn't look like the best lead for the defence!! However a successful player learns to not give up, and keep thinking throughout the play on every deal. As usual, East does best by doing some counting. He knows partner can have as many as 10 HCPs, that's not bad. In fact, if the ♠K is one of them, then the defence is in a position to take 5 tricks if West ever gets in. Declarer wins the first trick with the ♣Q and plays a 2nd one back. Partner chooses to win this trick with ♣A, knowing you will make an informative discard. What do you play? Even playing the Smith Echo, it doesn't apply in this situation. It is clear what East thinks of the lead! East wants a spade shift, but cannot afford to play an encouraging spade as this may cost a trick. So they must discourage in a red suit – which one? At the table, playing standard signals, East discarded the ♥2. Now West had to guess: Does partner have AQ10x in spades or diamonds. He guessed wrong, playing the ♦K and declarer now made 12 tricks!! At the other table in the exactly same position, West switched to the ♠K and the defence set 3NT one trick.

Intermediate Spot : by Neil Kimelman ... Continued

Here was the actual deal:

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

♠ 9 5	♠ 10
♥ A Q J 6	♥ K J 9 8
♦ A Q 9 6	♦ J 8 7 6
♣ Q 3	♣ J 10 8 2

What went wrong?

There was several mistakes, and an interesting observation. First, West should not win the 2nd club trick. They know declarer will continue attacking clubs for tricks, so there is no harm in ducking two rounds. Two good things will happen if West ducks one or more rounds of clubs. Partner will give two signals, and declarer will have to discard, giving away in which suit he is not counting on. In this scenario, East will discard the ♥2 at trick #2, and the ♦3 at trick #3, as south discards the ♦6. Now it is easy for West to shift to a spade.

However the West in the other room got lucky shifting to the ♠K. The proper play is to shift to the spade ♠3. The reason can be found if you switch the ♠9 with the ♠10. Now if the 2nd round of the suit is played by West, the defence can only take three spade tricks. Finally, how does East know that West has the ♠K, instead of a red suit honour? The answer lies in which spot West leads. I recommend that a low card is led from an honour, while a high spot denies one. Although declarer can see your spot cards, this information will be much more helpful to partner!

EXAMPLE 2 Playing Pairs

	♠ K 7 2		
	♥ 3 2		
	♦ A Q 9 5		
	♣ Q 9 4 3		

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Partner leads the ♣5.

Declarer plays low from dummy, and wins your eight with his ace. Now he starts pulling trumps. What do you discard?

One way to approach this question is to answer what you cannot discard. My first answer is a diamond. Regardless of who has the ♦K, a diamond discard will give declarer another trick. One common danger holding by declarer is ♦xx. If you throw a diamond, declarer will be able to finesse partner's king, then play ace and ruff da diamond, setting up the 4th round to discard a loser.

So do you discard a heart or a club on the 2nd round of spades? A heart. The club situation is ambiguous. Did partner lead a club from an original holding of ♣K 8 6 5, ♣K x x or ♣5? Well you can eliminate the 2nd option, as declarer with Ax of clubs would have tried the queen from dummy at trick one! So by default you need to discard hearts. However declarer has to pull all four of partner's trumps and you end up needing three discards. Does this change anything? No! You can discard three hearts. Now declarer plays a heart and your stiff king wins! Now what?

Intermediate Spot : by Neil Kimelman

Here is the ending:

♠ -
♥ -
♦ A Q 9 5
♣ Q 9 4

♠ -
♥ -
♦ J 8 7 6
♣ J 10 2

A club is too dangerous. You must lead a diamond, and hope that partner has the king or the ten. West plays the ten, forcing the queen. Declarer makes a mistake and plays a club to his king, and now is held to his contract. The full deal:

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

Declarer could have made five, but it is tricky. After pulling trump, he successfully finessees the ♦Q, cashes the ace and plays a 3rd diamond, pitching a heart. The best west can do is play heart, heart, which declarer will discard the ♣4 from dummy, and ruff in his hand. On this trick you are squeezed:

♠ -
♥ -
♦ 9
♣ Q 9 4

♠ -
♥ -
♦ J
♣ J 8 2

Immaterial

♠ 5
♥ -
♦ -
♣ A 7 6

Next issue: Defensive Strategies.

TEST YOUR DECEPTIVE PLAY SOLUTION

Contract: 6♥ Doubled

♠ 5
♥ J 10 7 6
♦ A Q 5 4
♣ A Q 9 8

♠ 9 8 6 3 2
♥ 8 5 2
♦ 7 6
♣ 5 4 2

♠ A J 10 7 4
♥ -
♦ K 8 3 2
♣ J 10 6 3

♠ K Q
♥ A K Q 9 4 3
♦ J 10 9
♣ K 7

The contract is 6♥ after East opened the bidding with 1♠ (West has all three hearts).

Lead: ♠2 (4th best). East wins ♠A, and continues the suit. Plan the play.

Win, cash the ♥A, and play the ♦J to the ace and a small one back. If west ducks, then the 3rd diamond can be thrown on the ♣Q.





by Paul Thurston
THE **EXPERT**
Spot

WHAT WENT WRONG

By Paul Thurston

For this issue's installment of WWW, I'd like to share three curiously related deals from the recent Syracuse Regional. Related because they all involve the misuse and abuse of one of our most common competitive bidding tools and its attendant follow-ups: the takeout double.

HAND 1

See what you think about this layout and unsatisfactory auction:

Dealer: East Vul: Both

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

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

And so another easy-to-make vulnerable game was missed – WHAT WENT WRONG?

Expert Spot : What Went Wrong? ... Continued

We can easily understand South's reluctance to introduce his heart suit over two spades: a quacky seven-count and the murky waters of a fourth-seat takeout double that would often deliver slightly less than the same action in direct seat.

After the same start to the auction at the other table of this KO match, South did in fact bid three hearts at his second turn and then fought off a slam try to end in the cozy heart game but how would he have felt declaring three hearts if dummy had arrived with: ♠ Q10 ♥ K943 ♦ K873 ♣ A94 or similar?

And could North have pushed the envelope a bit by carrying on to four hearts over his partner's eventual emergence from the bushes with his minimum heart bid?

Dragging a forced-to-bid partner to game with a hand like North's deserves to catch the opposite hand with something like ♠ 876 ♥ Q765 ♦ Q52 ♣ 962 (maybe even less on a really bad day!), so that four hearts is totally without hope.

The solution to this and many similar problems lies in a better understanding and utilization of a concept known as "free bids". If East had passed over North's takeout double, South would have been forced to bid regardless of his hand's strength so that any minimum call he might make would have a nominal strength range of about 0-7 High Card Points, a jump response being expected with greater strength.

In this case, East's rebid removes the Forced-to-Bid stricture on South so that he is free to bid or pass subject to how much strength his hand contains. A common requirement for South to bid would usually be about 8 HCP or more, a threshold this actual hand doesn't quite meet so his pass would usually be based on 0-7 HCP.

Enter North with a second takeout double: "Partner, I saw your pass over 2♠ so I know you have about 0-7 HCP but I'm still interested in competing further."

Given that second takeout double, South should have no further worries about finding a minimum takeout double opposite. Also, for his previous pass, South has a tip-top maximum point count hand and a decent five-card suit in his side's likely fit to make the actual response of three hearts a gross underbid in context.

Verdict: What Went Wrong was South bidding like he had nothing when he actually had a lot given the auction developments up to his third turn when a response of four hearts was clearly indicated.

HAND 2

For our second entry, let's start with a small quiz. You hold: ♠ AQ75 ♥ AQ4 ♦ AQJ63 ♣ 7, and the auction starts:

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
1 ♣	Dbl	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	?		

What now?

There would appear to be two possible choices (although I'm sure a bidding poll might reveal some others!):

2♦, which would typically show a hand with five or more diamonds that was deemed too strong for an overcall at the doubler's first turn, so a hand with 18+ HCP and a very good diamond suit.

2♣. An unassuming cuebid to force for one round while showing a very strong hand for the takeout double without a clear direction, usually containing three-card support for partner's suit and soliciting further input from the known-to-be-weak (no initial jump response) hand with South.

Time for the reveal of the actual auction and the other hands:

Expert Spot : What Went Wrong? ... Continued

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

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	Dbl	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
All pass			

And there our bidding heroes rested in an inglorious part score on a 3-3 fit when three notrump was there for the taking and a less desirable game contract of five diamonds could also be made. WHAT WENT WRONG?

Well, nothing went wrong in the play of 3♥ as South exploited his spot cards and the favourable lie to the extreme by actually rolling home with ten tricks! Declarer won the ♣A to take the spade finesse, cashed the ace and ruffed a spade before leading the ♦10 that West covered to put declarer in dummy. But not for long: a second diamond back to the nine so that South could score dummy's small trump by ruffing a club.

When a fourth round of spades was led from dummy, East spoiled South's intended fun by trumping in with the heart ten to play back a heart but the defender fell from grace by failing to ruff the low diamond from dummy on the next trick. Three diamond winners, two spades, the club ace and four heart tricks for ten in all – just not a game you'd want to be in!

The rot started to set in with South's response of one heart. Yes, he was in a tough position as passing one club doubled didn't seem practical despite his club

length – and this time would have struck gold with one club going down several after a trump lead (what else?) from North for South to win and switch to a spade.

But once his partner did respond one heart, North directed his bidding focus to exploring for a heart game, the desperate heart rebid being just negative-sounding enough for the doubler to give up: after all, If South really did have nothing much, how was he going to get to his hand for the finesses that were going to be needed for any game contract to succeed?

South did have a club stopper but an immediate 1NT response to a takeout double of one club would usually show about 7-10 HCP so that's out.

And if North had rebid 2♦ over the one heart response? That might have drawn a modest diamond raise from South and a further move from North but it's hard to see how either partner could muster up enough enthusiasm for the eleven-trick game in their minor-suit fit.

One possible solution: rather than responding 1♥, I'd suggest South should choose to respond 1♦. At least initially, South's target should be to generate as little enthusiasm across the table as possible and starting with diamonds rates to be better in that regard than the actual choice.

Serendipitously, a one diamond response would very comfortably place the weaker of the two hands in an ideal position to get his side to game! Over that response, North could and should make the most encouraging rebid of three diamonds: "I have a great hand with massive diamond support and want you to consider getting us to game".

Reassured that diamonds would likely be a great source of tricks and that his club stopper could be critical, it wouldn't be a massive leap of faith for the little hand to rebid 3NT and play right there.

Note that this route is far superior to the big hand

Expert Spot : What Went Wrong? ... Continued

dragging his partner kicking and screaming to an unsustainable level. If South happened to be truly broke, three diamonds would likely be a playable spot but game would be reached for all the right reasons: a club stopper opposite a really good takeout double hand with diamonds as a source of tricks.

HAND 3

Finally, a takeout double situation for which one of the pairs involved performed admirably: I don't think you'll have a hard time telling which one!

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

Table One

West	North	East	South
	-	Pass	1 ♥
Dbl	2 ♥	2 ♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Table Two

West	North	East	South
	-	Pass	1 ♥
Dbl	2 ♥	All pass	

The question of WHAT WENT WRONG may be most properly applied to Table One where West coughed up -200 for down two in his vulnerable adventure in 3NT. Why so high?*

***Editor's note:** Bidding by advancer of a takeout double is an area where most partnerships handle poorly. Here East wanted to compete for a partscore and felt they had

enough values to play in a 2♠ contract. West could have invited with 2NT, which makes with a normal club guess.

Back to the concept of "free bid": since North's heart raise removed any forced-to-bid directive on East, when he did choose to take an active role, his partner assumed there'd be something in the range of about 8-10 HCP, maybe just a tad less with some extra distributional values. But definitely not the scraggly 5 HCP East somewhat sheepishly tabled after the final passes.

Maybe West might have headed his rambunctious partner off at the pass by overcalling one notrump in the first place: not such a great 18 HCP with only one four-card suit to use for possible length tricks but the real blame for the unnecessary minus score rests on East.

Look at how easy a pass by the other table's East at his second turn made it for his partner. From West's perspective, no free bid by his partner made it unlikely in the extreme that any game was available for his side and getting a plus score on defense was at least as likely as finding a profitable part score for his side to make a second-round pass, 18 HCP and all, the indicated action.

And after starting the defense with three rounds of hearts, there was indeed a plus score: +300 for down three and a solid team result for the foursome whose East-West pair handled their takeout double effectively.



THE IBPA FILES

The International Bridge Press Association (IBPA) is a world-wide bridge organization of more than 300 members in all corners of the world. Its main objective is to assist bridge journalists in their bridge related professional activities. The IBPA publishes a monthly online Bulletin, which consists of interesting deals involving some of the best players of the world, competing in key international tournaments.



2ND EUROPEAN *Winter Games*

Monte Carlo, Feb 17-23, 2018

Mark Horton, Sutton Benger, Wilts, UK



Editor's note: Continued from the June 1st issue.

Quarterfinals – Lavazza v. Zimmermann; Ventin v. Delta TV Programs; Vytas v. Bernal; Mahaffey v. Netherlands Red

Board 9. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Sementa	Lauria	Bocchi	Versace
—	Pass	1♦	1♥
Pass	4♥	4♠	5♥
5♠	Pass	6♠	7♥
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		

THE IBPA FILES CONTINUED

West led the eight of diamonds. Declarer went up with dummy's ace and played a spade, East putting up the king. There was no way to get a club ruff now, so two down; minus 300.

West	North	East	South
<i>Helgemo</i>	<i>Bianchedi</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Madala</i>
—	Pass	1♦	1♥
Pass	4♥	4♠	5♥
5♠	Pass	6♠	7♥
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

West led the seven of clubs and the ruff meant three down, minus 500 and 5 IMPs for Zimmermann.

West	North	East	South
<i>Nyström</i>	<i>Burgay</i>	<i>Palma</i>	<i>Cima</i>
—	Pass	2♣	2♥
Pass	4♥	4♠	5♣
5♥	6♦	6♠	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South led the king of clubs. Declarer ruffed with the queen of spades, crossed to dummy with the jack of spades and played a diamond. When the king held, he cashed the ace of hearts, ruffed a heart and played another diamond. Now North took the ace – too late the hero – and declarer claimed, plus 1660. At the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Mariani</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Buratti</i>	<i>Wrang</i>
—	Pass	1♦	1♥
Pass	4♥	4♠	Pass
Pass	5♥	Pass	Pass

The contract was one down when West led the jack of spades and switched to the jack of clubs at trick two when East followed with the two of spades; 17 IMPs to Ventin.

Board 19. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Molenaar</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Verbeek</i>	<i>Zia</i>
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East led the queen of hearts. Declarer won and played three rounds of diamonds, pitching a heart and then ruffing with the four of spades. West overruffed (it does not help to pitch a club) and returned a heart, declarer winning and ruffing a diamond with the seven of spades. West overruffed, cashed the ace of spades and exited with a spade. Declarer won, cashed two more spades and played clubs. He did not need to finesse, as East had come down to two clubs, plus 420.

West	North	East	South
<i>Brogeland</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Nab</i>
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦ ¹	Pass	3♥ ²
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 1 or both 4-card majors
2. Spades

Declarer won the heart lead, cashed the ace of diamonds, ruffed a diamond and played a spade to the king, East's discard of the four of diamonds coming as a shock. If declarer now pitches a heart on the king of diamonds he is on track à la Meckstroth but, fatally, he now ruffed a diamond and West simply pitched a club (overruffing works just as well). Declarer came to hand with the ace of clubs, cashed the king of hearts and

THE IBPA FILES CONTINUED

played a club to the king. West ruffed, played a heart to East's jack and, with the ace-jack-ten of spades left, was assured of two trump tricks. That was plus 50 and 10 IMPs for Mahaffey.

Board 13. Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Helgemo</i>
—	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

South led the two of hearts. North took the ace and switched to the seven of spades, South winning with the ten and playing a second heart. Declarer won in hand and played a diamond to the queen. When it held, he cashed the ace and ruffed a diamond with the queen of hearts, claiming eleven tricks, plus 650.

West	North	East	South
<i>Versace</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
—	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

South led the queen of clubs. Declarer won with the ace, played a diamond to the ace, ruffed a diamond, cashed the king of clubs pitching a spade, ruffed a club and played a spade to the queen. South won with the king and returned the jack and declarer won and played his last club. That allowed South to throw the king of

diamonds away and, when declarer pitched a spade on the queen of diamonds, South ruffed and played the ten of spades, ruffed by the jack of hearts and over-ruffed by North, who played the eight of hearts. Declarer could win in dummy, but could not deny South the setting trick with the ten of hearts; minus 100. Almost any other line would have produced at least ten tricks, but this one cost 13 IMPs.

Board 18. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Helgemo</i>
—	—	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♠ ¹	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT ²
Pass	5♦ ³	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Splinter
2. RKCB
3. One key card

West led the ace of diamonds and continued with the five. Declarer won in dummy and played the queen of spades, covered by the king and ace, ruffed a spade and played the queen of diamonds. East ruffed (as he had to) with the eight of hearts (the ten also works) and declarer overruffed, ruffed a spade, cashed the ace of clubs and ruffed a club. It was already clear that the timing was wrong for the trump reduction that was necessary to neutralise East's ten-deuce of hearts and declarer was soon conceding one down and minus 100.

The critical moment was at trick three. Declarer must play a third diamond (the queen is the obvious card) starting the trump reduction immediately.

THE IBPA FILES CONTINUED

West	North	East	South
<i>Versace</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
—	—	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	
1.	Artificial game force		

West cashed the ace of diamonds and continued with the jack. Declarer won with dummy's king and continued with the queen, ruffed by East with the eight of hearts and overruffed by declarer, who now cashed the ace of spades and ruffed a spade. Now the route to 12 tricks is to play the dummy's remaining diamond, then, after ruffing, you cross to the ace of clubs, and cross-ruff the black suits. When declarer cashed the ace of clubs he could take only eleven tricks, plus 650 and 13 IMPs.

Meanwhile Netherlands Red had taken a narrow 5 IMP lead against Mahaffey. The Closed Room had finished play while there were still seven deals to play at the other table. Nothing bad had happened for either team, but there were no obvious deals on which Mahaffey could hope to gain. By the time board 18 settled on the table Mahaffey had narrowed the gap with a couple of overtricks. Close to 4000 spectators already knew the result in the other room:

West	North	East	South
<i>Zia</i>	<i>Verbeek</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Molenaar</i>
—	—	Pass	1♥
2♦	2NT	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the four of spades and declarer won with the ace and played a diamond to the king. When it held, he cashed the ace of clubs, and cross-ruffed spades and clubs, eventually pitching a diamond on the fourth club, finishing with eleven tricks, plus 650.

However ...

West	North	East	South
<i>Nab</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
—	—	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT ¹
Pass	5♣ ²	Pass	5♦ ³
Pass	6♦ ⁴	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The players had no way of knowing that the auction in this room ensured that this would be the deal that decided the outcome of the match. We had quite a few kibitzers in the Bulletin Room. The general feeling was that declarer would be unlikely to find the winning line – after all, the problem had proved too much for Helgemo.

West led the two of clubs and declarer won with the ace. He ruffed a club and played a diamond. West took the ace and returned the jack and declarer won with the king and continued with the queen. East ruffed with the eight of hearts and declarer overruffed, cashed the ace of spades, ruffed spade, ruffed a club, ruffed a spade, ruffed a club, ruffed a spade and played a diamond, collecting East's ♥102.

Bravo Boye from the thousands watching online. The 13 IMPs so brilliantly earned on this deal proved decisive.

This is a fascinating hand, with many complex facets. In simple terms, declarer starts with six trump tricks, two aces and at least one diamond. That makes it clear that declarer will need to ruff some spades, so the drawing of trumps must be postponed.

As it happens the only lead that defeats the slam (in theory, as it is still possible for the defence to go wrong) is a trump. Declarer wins in dummy, cashes the ace of club, ruffs a club and plays a diamond. Say West takes the ace. It is now essential to play a second diamond. If West plays, for example, a spade for the queen, king and ace, declarer ruffs a spade and can then play trumps, squeezing West in the pointed suits (of course it's better to establish the clubs!) A trump lead is an unlikely choice, as it may pick up partner's holding, but there

THE IBPA FILES CONTINUED

is one aspect that is worth noting. Give West the eight of hearts and East the ten-three-two and now the only lead that allows the slam to make is the ace of diamonds!

Declarer will win the diamond continuation, cash the ace of clubs, ruff a club, cash the ace of spades, ruff a spade and play the queen of diamonds, whereupon East has no good move. If West leads a club, declarer wins with dummy's ace, ruffs a club and plays a diamond. Now West must duck, only taking the ace after declarer has ruffed another club and plays a second diamond. A trump switch now is in time to beat the contract, perhaps safer than playing the ten of diamonds, as partner must ruff with the ten of hearts, which brings the heart eight into the game.

Semifinals – Mahaffey v. Vytas; Ventin v. Zimmermann

As the semifinals got under way the question on everyone's lips was, "Who will enjoy a happy ending?"

Board 3. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

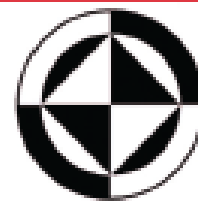
West	North	East	South
<i>Versace</i>	<i>Palma</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Nyström</i>
—	—	—	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

South led the four of diamonds. Declarer won with dummy's king and played the queen of hearts. North put up the king and must have been pleased when it held the trick. He returned the ten of diamonds and declarer won with the ace, played three rounds of spades, ruffing, and exited with a heart to South's ace. When South exited with a diamond (a club was essential) declarer won with dummy's queen and played a spade. Suddenly North's two certain trump tricks had been reduced to one. He could pitch a club, but so would declarer, who would then ruff a spade, cross to dummy with a club and play another club for plus 420.

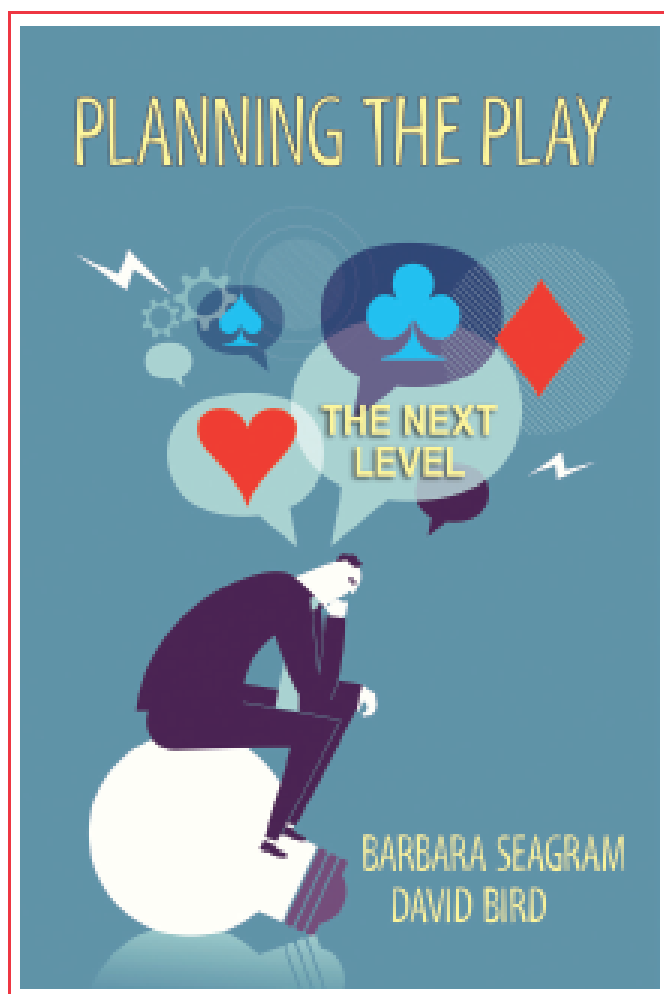
West	North	East	South
<i>Wrang</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Helgemo</i>
—	—	—	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

At this table, South led a diamond. Declarer won in dummy and played the queen of hearts, North winning with the king and returning a diamond. Declarer won in hand and exited with a heart, South winning and exiting with a club. Declarer came to eight tricks, plus 110 – a second double digit loss in the space of three deals.

The eventual winners were MAHAFFEY (Boye Broge-land/Espen Lindqvist and Zia Mahmood/Jeff Meckstroth).



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CALENDAR *of* EVENTS

OCTOBER

COPC Qualification- club level Sept - Dec
CNTC Qualification- club level Sept - Dec

- Oct 11 Canada wide Olympiad Fund Game #2
 Afternoon
- Oct 25 Erin Berry Rookie Master Game
- Oct 25-28 9th World University Championships
 Xuxhou, China www.worldbridge.org
- Oct 31 ACBL-wide Instant Matchpoint Game
 (afternoon)

NOVEMBER

COPC Qualification- club level Sept - Dec
CNTC Qualification- club level Sept - Dec

Nov 22-Dec 2 Fall NABC Honolulu, HI www.acbl.org

DECEMBER

COPC Qualification- club level Sept - Dec
CNTC Qualification- club level Sept - Dec

- Dec 17 ACBL-wide International Fund Game
 (afternoon)

2019

FEBRUARY

- Feb 22 DEADLINE Registration for the
 Canadian Bridge Championships



IMPORTANT 2019 DATES

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Feb 22 | Deadline Registration for the Canadian Bridge Championships |
| Mar 21-31 | ACBL Spring NABC Memphis, TN www.acbl.org |
| May 4-12 | Canadian Bridge Championships Burnaby, BC www.cbf.ca |
| Jul 18-28 | ACBL Summer NABC Las Vegas, NV www.acbl.org |
| Nov 28-Dec 8 | ACBL Fall NABC San Francisco, CA www.acbl.org |