



American Contract
Bridge League

Unit 174 Newsletter August 2020



This month's newsletter includes the sections listed below. Click a link to jump to the corresponding section. If your browser does not support these links, scroll down to find a specific section.

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Please visit the Unit 174 Website (www.acblunit174.org) to view updated information about the activities in our Unit and at our Clubs.



President's Message

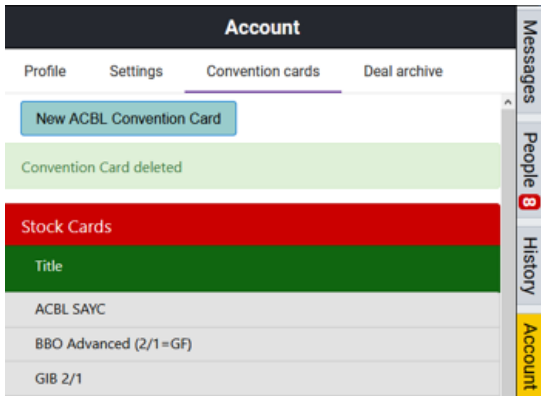
ACBL and BBO and have collaborated to provide Online bridge with Virtual Club games as well as Sectional, Regional and National tournaments. I would like to share with you some tips on how to make the online playing experience more enjoyable for you and your fellow competitors.

BBO login

Use your full real name. Many people put only their first name or no name at all. Bridge is a social game and people appreciate knowing who you really are. Optionally, you may add your picture to your BBO account.

Convention Card

On BBO you can and should fill out a convention card with each of your partners. If filled out properly, the convention card will be automatically loaded when you play.

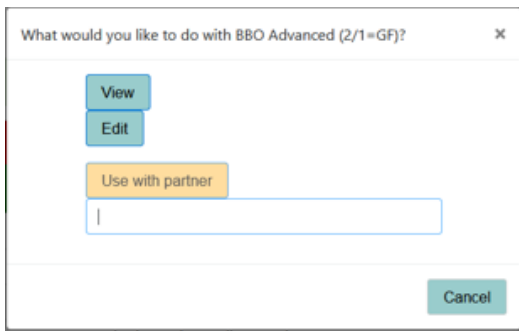


On the right-hand side of the BBO screen there are four tabs: Messages, People, History and Account. Click Account.

Click Convention cards and then New ACBL Convention Card.

At the top of this window are four selections: Profile, Settings, Convention cards and Deal archive.

There are several templates that one might use as a starting place, for example ACBL SAYC or BBO Advanced (2/1 = GF). You may also start from scratch with no template.



The first step is to identify your partner. Put the BBO login of your partner in the provided slot.

Now it is a simple matter of going through the various sections and selection the conventions you play.

A source of frustration is to have spent several minutes filling out the convention card and then losing your work. I strongly suggest that you save the work as you fill out each section (notrump, majors...). Use the Save changes button at the top.

Eventually you will have created a series of convention cards with each of your partners. If you want to make a change, simply select and edit.

Playing

Greet your opponents when you first start. Something like:

Hello, 2/1 with standard carding – CC loaded

While playing practice looking at the opponent's convention cards (their leads and signals will help you as you declare).

If the opponent makes a good play or bid, congratulate them. This is the true *esprit de corps* of competitive bridge.



Wait until the round is complete before chatting.

If you need to discuss the hand with your partner it is recommended that you wait until the game is over. Chats during the game can prove distracting and destructive. If you want to quickly clear up a mix-up with your partner, it can be done privately at the end of a round. When the round is over, select the Table → Private, type in partner's BBO username and have a short chat on clarifying for the future.

Until next month, may you not trump your partner's Ace.

Jack LaVigne, President, Unit 174

jacklavigne@att.net

Board Business

Please join us as we review the past year, thank our key volunteers, recognize member achievements and provide you with the opportunity to ask questions of the Board of Directors.

The meeting will be delivered through GoToWebinar and should last about half an hour. Please register to attend by clicking the button at right. After you register, you will receive a confirmation email with more details.



During the meeting, we will be approving the minutes of the 2019 meeting and the 2019 financial statements. You can review each using the links below:

Minutes: https://acblunit174.org/Minutes/2019_Annual.pdf

Financial Stmt: https://acblunit174.org/Financial_Reports/2019_December.pdf

Please make time to connect with the rest of your bridge community. We are all missing one another.



New Members and Rank Advancements

ACBL notifies us each month about the members new to our Unit and about those who advanced a rank as of the 6th day of the previous month. Below are listed those players who either joined our unit or advanced a rank.

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome the following players to our unit: **Ratan D Bhagat, Elizabeth A Caballero, Richard A Eisenach, Mahlon E First, Sandra G Gross, Michael E Hanna, Susan L Hanna, Linda M Hoyer, Lorna Mura, Shirley A Sullivan**

RANK ADVANCEMENTS

Listed below are the new Unit 174 Masterpoint Milestones reported by ACBL for July, 2020. An explanation of ranks may be found at www.acbl.org.

Junior Master (5 Masterpoints)

Alexander W Degroot, David S Finger, Mahlon E First, Lindy Kahn, Lee Macpherson, Meynard M Nussbaum, Kamal Osman, Maruf Rahman

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Elizabeth A Eisenach, Penny Grassedonio, Linda J Monroe Wall, Joseph E Rogers, Pamela White

Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Gloria L Bazer, Leon J Daily, Judith P Ferguson, Betty J Friedman, Gail A Hoffman, Artie Lane, Jeffry Lehner, Ying C Pan, Nancy K Small, Christine P Spalding, Duncan F Stewart, Utako Tomoeda

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Carolyn B Clapp, Cecil W Ferguson, Larry Hsing, Sharon Kaplan, Harvey L Klein, Jeanie Murray, Cindy Schaefer

NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)

Cheryl D Benash, Joy Cowan, Mike Cowan, Jean J Jardine

Life Master (110 in Unit 174)

B Haznedar, Myra M Marsh, Laura C McWilliams



Bronze Life Master (285 in Unit 174)
Nancy Guthrie

Silver Life Master (190 in Unit 174)
Owen Bunn, Suzanne M Shanley, Ann Sinclair, Joyce R Wormser

Ruby Life Master (167 in Unit 174)
Robert R Graber, Evelyn P James, Eric Sandberg, Carol L Winograd

Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!

174 Unit News

CHARITY, CHARITY, CHARITY!

Charities have been hit hard by the pandemic. What's your favorite charity?
We want to hear from you because it's time to designate the Unit 174 Charity for 2021!

Submit a worthy charity for the Board's consideration to the Charity Coordinator, **Nancy Strohmer** at nastrohmer@yahoo.com by October 1. Please include a copy of the 501 (c) 3 and reasons why your charity should be selected. Any information that you can include such as organization scope, effectiveness and needs will be helpful.

VIRTUAL VACATION TOURNAMENT, AUGUST 27-30

The next online regionally rated event will take place August 27-30 on BBO. Come on out and win some red and gold points. The complete schedule can be found here:
https://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/Virtual_Vacation_Schedule.pdf.

IMPORTANT! The times presented are Eastern, not Central. Make your plans accordingly.

LABOR DAY BONUS

All vClub games on Labor Day, September 7, will award double points, instead of the usual 50% increase.



ONLINE EXPERT TEAMS

On Sunday evenings at 7pm, our Houston local bridge pros and experts will be playing team matches on BBO. The partnerships change each week. Mark your calendar and plan on kibitzing these great matches. It's free so we hope you will plan on watching.

Players include: **Jimmy Breihan, Ira Chorush, Timucin Erkoc, Phillip Grothus, Buddy Hanby, Bob Morris, Dan Morse, Sally Wheeler and Eddie Wold.**

To find the game do a player search for BBO name **Mrace** or **Devilscoup**. Then click the JOIN button in the upper right corner of the profile.

Club News

Below please find information reported to us by the clubs in our Unit. Please send your club's news to Jeff Kroll at texas.blue.hen@gmail.com. Information on all our clubs is available on the [Unit 174 website](#). Check there for the most up-to-date schedules, results and other news.

Houston area bridge clubs are currently closed, but several have an online presence (a "virtual club" or "vClub") on Bridge Base Online (BBO). You can support your club by playing on BBO (www.bridgebase.com). If you play at one of the Houston virtual clubs (see list below), a majority of the table fees go to that club and you get black (Club) points.

If your club does not have an online virtual club, ACBL is offering three special daily online pairs game where you can win black (Club) points -- at 9am, 4:10pm and 6:30pm (Central time). And the majority of your table fee will be returned to your local club. Look for the ACBL SYC games on BBO.



Houston vClub schedules are listed below.

APPLE DBC

Regular schedule:

- ◆ Open Pairs Mon, Wed, Fri at 3:00pm
- ◆ Limited Pairs 299r: Mon, Wed, Fri at 2:45pm

BBO Search Term: **Apple**

BRIDGE CLUB OF HOUSTON

Regular schedule:

- ◆ Open Pairs Mon–Fri at 10:20am **Note new time!**
Sat, Sun at 12 noon
Tue, Thu, Sat at 7:00pm
- ◆ Limited Pairs 199r: Mon, Wed, Fri at 10:00am
299r: Tue, Thu at 10:00am

Mentor games are offered on certain Monday evenings during the month. Please contact **Roxie Walker** (roxie_w@hotmail.com) if you would like to play in one of them.

BBO Search Term: **BCOH**



Mentor/Mentee Games

WBA holds Mentor/Mentee games twice a month on the second Wednesday morning at 10:15 and the fourth Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm. Both games last about two hours.

Mentees are those with less than 300 masterpoints, Mentors have over 300. If you would like to be included, let **Katherine Onstott** know (email kjonstott@comcast.net) and she will pair you with a suitable partner.

The entry fee is \$12 for the pair, which the Mentee is encouraged to pay.

For more information, visit <http://www.westsidebridgeacademy.com/Mentor-Mentee.php>.

BBO Search Term: **WBA**



From the Editors

We are excited to have the opportunity to send out the Unit 174 Newsletter. We have worked together for several years, identifying information that from the ACBL *Bridge Bulletin* that may be useful, especially to I/N players. The last two years of these monthly summaries are available [here, on the WBA website](#).

Bridge Bulletin ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

The August, 2020, article of the month is "Mike's Advice" by Mike Lawrence on page 56. It is both useful and clever. The subtitle alone – “What is partner doing?” - makes it worth a read.

You (South) hold:

♠A Q 9 7 6 4 ♥3 ♦Q 8 7 5 ♣8 4

The auction:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	3♦	4♥	?

Looking at this eight-point hand, players befuddled by North's 3D bid would pass over East's 4H bid in a heartbeat.

The key is to figure out what the 3D means. You do so by drawing inferences from what North did not do at his first opportunity to bid. North did not overcall diamonds, even at the one-



level, so he cannot have a decent five-card diamond suit. Thus, the vulnerable 3D call is NOT to play in diamonds; it shows spade support with a second suit – diamonds.

Now your hand has become much stronger. You have a double fit with partner and second-round control of the opponents' heart suit. It is likely that the opponents also have a double fit, in hearts and clubs. They will almost surely make 4H.

You have a good shot at making 4S. Even if you go down one or two, doubled, it's still much better than letting them score their vulnerable game.

So, your proper bid is 4S and you hope to make it.

Yes, North could have just raised spades by bidding 2S or 3S, but then South would have no idea if his diamond holding had any value. The 3D bid clarifies North's holding for a partner who understands it.

- ◆ "Card Play 101" by Phillip Alder (p. 40) discusses opening leads.
- ◆ "Reasoning with Robert" by Robert Todd (p. 42) examines when to use a negative double.
- ◆ "Startup Bridge" by Lynn Berg (p. 43) on responding to partner's 1NT with a bad hand.
- ◆ "Mike's Bridge Lesson" by Michael Lawrence (p. 48) on which partner should make the ace-asking bid.
- ◆ "Boehm on Bridge" by August Boehm (p. 50) explains how to advance (respond to) partner's negative double.
- ◆ "Better Bridge with Bergen" by Marty Bergen (p. 51) has the answers to the "20 questions" quiz posed in the July issue (p. 53) on whether or not to open 1N.



ON NOT OPENING YOUR FIVE-CARD MAJOR

 7 	N Robot ♠987432 ♥2 ♦87 ♣10853	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>WEST</th> <th>NORTH</th> <th>EAST</th> <th>SOUTH</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	2♥	Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	2♠
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
Pass	2♥	Pass	1NT											
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♠											
W Robot ♠Q ♥K10974 ♦J109 ♣KJ64		E Robot ♠J106 ♥85 ♦AKQ42 ♣A97												
2♠ South NS: 0 EW: 0	S texashen ♠AK5 ♥AQJ63 ♦653 ♣Q2													

There are two opening bids that describe South's hand:

- ♦ **1H**, showing 12-21 points and a five-card (or longer) heart suit. In this case, the hearts are the strength of the hand, and we believe in bidding what you're looking at. The drawback to opening 1H is that you have an awkward second bid if partner does anything other than raise hearts. You would be forced to bid 2H with your five-card suit. While this is acceptable when you are stuck for a bid, it is not optimal. Partner will likely take you for six hearts.
- ♦ **1NT**, showing 15-17 points and a flattish hand. If partner holds five (or more) spades and transfers, you are happy to take the transfer with three spades to the AK. Sure, it's not a perfect bid. You have no stopper in diamonds and only a half stopper in clubs. Although you could miss a 5-3 heart fit and end up in notrump, sometimes even that works out when the opponents attack the hidden unbid major.

We think 1NT is the better call.

Partner is happy to transfer you to 2S and leave you there.

The SQ is led. You win it and then play the HA and HQ. West covers the HQ and you ruff, setting up the HJ.

You lead a low club, hoping to be able to ruff one on the short side, which happens to be the closed hand. The defenders can't see through the cards and are unlikely to find the best defense. East rises with the CA, and cashes two high diamonds. With two diamond out, East is afraid to cash the third one as that might give you a ruff and a sluff. So, he returns a club.



We don't like the club play by the defenders. You had led a club when East won the ace. In general, if it's good for declarer to be playing a suit, it is rarely good for the defenders to work on that same suit.

West wins the CQ with the CK. And now it's over for the defense. West leads the CJ, which you happily ruff. You cash the last high trump and now have tricks to burn as the CT and HJ are both good. East gets the high trump.

You end up making the contract by not pulling trump. This is the key. You don't want to lose three clubs and you need the spades as an entry to the hearts. So, you end up ruffing a club and setting up the CT.

The defense gets only five tricks: one spade, two clubs and two diamonds.

Making 2S resulted in a 96.4% board. Down one would have been 82.1%. Down more than one would have been a bad score, as you would have scored less than the EW part-scores

TABLE MANNERS

As we move into the sixth (!) month of playing bridge primarily online, it is worth revisiting the actions we can take that make the online experience pleasant for everyone.

Alert, Alert

As in face-to-face (F2F) bridge, anything that appears in blue or red on your convention card must be announced or alerted, respectively. These include, but are not limited to: transfers, 1NT ranges and whether or not a 1C opening could be short.

The main difference between online bridge and F2F bridge is that **you are required to alert your own bids before you make them**. Type the explanation in the bidding box before making your bid. Your explanations are visible to the opponents, but not to your partner. Do NOT make explanations to the table. If you do so, you are deemed to have provided your partner unauthorized information, even if you *know*, for example, that partner remembers you play transfers.



When you alert, your explanation should describe what your partner knows about your hand, not the name of the convention. For example:

Bid/Call	Type this	Not that
X	Long suit	DONT
2D	11-15 pts, 5 hrts, 4 spds	Flannery
2H	4-6 HCP	Steps
2S	Spades and a minor, 5-4 or longer	Capp
2N	4 trump, game-force	Jacoby 2NT
3D	6-10 pts, five cards	Inverted

Director, Please

If there is an irregularity that requires the director's attention, the best way to call the director is to click the blue box with white stripes (sometimes referred to as the "hamburger"). It is very helpful to the director if you describe the issue before the director comes to the table. For example, if you would like the director to review a BBO-adjusted board, type something like "Please review board 12; I think we get two hearts." The director will review the board and adjust the score or explain why he is not going to do so.

Items that may require the director's attention:

- ◆ **BBO-adjusted boards**

When you see a message that a board has been adjusted by the director, it is usually the case that the board has been adjusted by the BBO computer. A message is displayed to the director for as long as it takes for BBO to make the adjustment and then it disappears. If the director is not looking for it, he may not even know there was an adjustment



◆ **Failures to alert or announce**

If you can show that the omission of an announcement or an alert by the opponents directly led to your poor result, you might be entitled to an adjusted score. Keep in mind that you must show a connection between the omission and your score; the opponents do not get penalized if there is no effect on the outcome of the board.

Note that you are entitled to know your opponents' agreements, not what cards they hold. Mis-clicks happen, optimistic hand evaluation happens, other things happen that may cause an errant bid or play. The person making the errant play is not allowed to announce it as such and if he does so announce to the table, he has now given his partner unauthorized information

◆ **Zero-tolerance**

If your opponents exhibit behavior that makes you uncomfortable, call the director; do not try to handle it yourself. Directors have access to every keystroke made at every table and the exact second each was pushed. These include bids, cards played, alerts, chat messages (including private chat messages) and slow play

“That was fun”

Keep in mind that your tone, facial expression and gestures do not translate to online play. Therefore, take extra care with the words you use and how you use them. We recently encountered the same phrase — “That was fun” — used in two different contexts. In the first case, a 3N declarer made the comment after going down a few tricks. The declarer was clearly poking fun at herself or himself. In the second case, the declarer managed to make a contract only because the defenders made a mistake. Again, the declarer said, “That was fun.” In this situation, the phrase came across as smug and gloating.

Even innocent comments can be misconstrued, especially by opponents who don't know you. In a recent situation, a declarer who should have been in 3N managed to eke out a five-level contract, missing three aces. Early in the hand, a defender holding one of the aces played second-hand low. Declarer won the king and pitched the remaining cards on another suit. Declarer's partner said something to the effect of “Well done to make the contract missing three aces.” While the sentiment may have been sincere, it comes across as celebrating the defender's error. A simple “well done, partner” would convey the same sentiment without commenting on the defenders' play. You can chat privately with partner at the end of the round and, in a private chat, do all the celebrating you want to.



Re-read your message before you click the Chat button. It takes only a second or two and it might avoid an unpleasant interaction.

Let's Chat about Chat

As a courtesy to the others in your game – your partner, the opponents, and the director – please do keep your chat on during the game. We advise that you turn off Lobby chat, as it can be distracting. When sending a chat message, before you push that chat button, glance at the blue button at the lower left. This is the channel button and indicates where your chat will be sent. If you would like to change the channel, click the channel button and select a different one from the pop-up menu



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