



American Contract
Bridge League

Unit 174 Newsletter May 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.

- ◆ [President's Message](#)
- ◆ [Board Business](#)
- ◆ [New Members and Rank Advancements](#)
- ◆ [Unit News](#)
- ◆ [Club News](#)
- ◆ [From the Editors](#)

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

As I write my last President's Message and reflect upon this past year, I cannot help but smile at some of the highlights. I am thankful to our unit board, key volunteers and all who have donated their energies towards keeping our unit one of the best in the ACBL.

Newer players were treated to a red-carpet (red balloons) welcome upon arrival to unit events, and both an Ambassador and a Bring-A-Buddy program were initiated in the process. Clear Lake Bridge Club hit out of the park when they held their Member-Guest Social Duplicate Event in September. Members attending the November Galveston Sectional at Moody Gardens touted it as a "must" to do again. And in February 2020, our Lone Star Regional surpassed attendance expectations.

In early March, things became surreal and daily activities previously taken for granted, including playing bridge at our local clubs, came to a halt. The novel coronavirus brought newfound challenges, as caring for ourselves and those we love took a front seat, social distancing became a requirement and lifestyles changed course. Our new normal found many



of us learning to play bridge at virtual unit clubs on BBO, spending time with friends and family via video chat, and waiting on groceries to be delivered.

Speaking of playing online, I must apologize to all my opponents and partners for my lack of chat skill at the table. With voice-to-text as my “part-time assistant”, what one reads is often not what I meant to convey.

I did my best to encourage everyone to be kind, considerate and welcoming to your fellow bridge players regardless of your level of bridge experience, age, background, or other differences. I am convinced that in challenging times, it is that much more important to focus on being kind and finding things that we all have in common to bring us together.

Congratulations go to **Ken Hudson** and **Sam Khayatt** who exemplify this and thus were named our 2020 District 16 Unit Goodwill Award recipients.

I have truly enjoyed serving as your president this year – for you are what makes it all worthwhile.

Please have a wonderful Memorial Day Weekend!

Lauri Laufman, President, Unit 174

llaufman@texas2211.com

Board Business

JUNE SECTIONAL

The June sectional has been cancelled. The Marriott allowed us to cancel without any penalty. We appreciate their cooperation as we navigate these challenges.

ELECTIONS / ANNUAL MEETING

It's time to vote for your newest Unit 174 board members! Online voting is available until June 6th at 3 pm. To get started click on the “Click to Vote” button on the right side of this page. If you are having trouble logging in, send an email to unit174webmaster@gmail.com for help.



The new board members, replacing **Nancy Guthrie, David Henke** and **Nancy Strohmer** (appointed to complete **Daniel Jackson's** term) will be announced on June 7th. We thank the outgoing members for their service.

The annual membership meeting will be delayed until the August Sectional & I/N Regional.

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: **Fuat Y Bingol, Jan W Davis, Alexander W Degroot, Frances M Fisher, Beth Gervais, Mike E Holy, Dustin M Hoover, Mary B Hosking, Mohammad Islam, Janet S La Belle, Barry M Lewis, Gay T McAlister, Rosalind McGaha, Jaime M Moya, Christie Norman, Carol Richardson, Edward Scott, Shelley A Thompson, Steve Vandoorn, Kay D Weyrick**

RANK ADVANCEMENTS

Listed below are the new Unit 174 Masterpoint Milestones reported by ACBL for March, 2018. An explanation of ranks may be found at www.acbl.org.

Junior Master (5 Masterpoints)

Gulten Burdett, Chuck H Drinnan, M K Drinnan, Lynn L Hershey, Jaime M Moya

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Mary R Malone, Mary A Wilson

Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Gretchen Y Lindquist, Felecia Y Peavy, Linda M Spiegelhauer, Russell Thomas, Elizabeth Wise

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Pushpa A Bharani, Michael A Deaver, Phyllis L Maier, Jim R Nicas



Advanced NABC Master (300 Masterpoints)
Gregory Andrews, Paddy R Fiorino, B Haznedar

Life Master (114 in Unit 174)
Susan D Domsalla, Andrew S Farnum, Bob Whitmarsh

Bronze Life Master (291 in Unit 174)
Jay Evert

Silver Life Master (189 in Unit 174)
George R Nelson

Ruby Life Master (172 in Unit 174)
Michael L Novack

Sapphire Life Master (63 in Unit 174)
Mack L Meigs

Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!

174 Unit News

SPECIAL GAMES - EXTRA POINTS: SILVER LININGS WEEK

The week of May 25-31 has been designated by ACBL as Silver Linings Week. Each point won in a virtual club (vClub) game on BBO will be transformed into three silver points by ACBL. Consider this week a "Stay-at-home Sectional."

Please refer to [Club News](#) for our clubs' online offerings that week.



VOTE!!!



Vote online from now until June 6 at 3pm. It's easy! Go to www.acblunit174.org, click the [Click to Vote](#) button and follow the instructions. Winners will be announced on June 7.

Click [Meet the Candidates](#) to view each candidate's statement. We appreciate the willingness of these players to serve our unit: **Dave Becker, B (Binnur) Haznedar, Greg May, Kathleen McDougall, Karen Nussbaum, and Joe Quinn.**

SPECIAL GAMES - EXTRA POINTS: LONGEST DAY

All vClub games on June 20-21 will be considered Alzheimer's games. They will pay double club master points. ACBL will increase sanction fees for those two days and 100% of the proceeds will be donated to the Alzheimer's Association for American clubs and Alzheimer Society for Canadian clubs.

BBO BIFURCATION

BBO is now using two servers in order to handle the increased volume of players. All virtual club (vClub) games are played in Bridge Base Online Home. On the Casual side of BBO, you can play solitaire or you can play in casual games.

If you are on the casual side of BBO, you are not visible to anyone in Bridge Base Online Home. You be shown as offline to your tournament director and you cannot receive chat messages from anyone (like your partner) in Bridge Base Online Home.

AWESOME AUGUST SECTIONAL

We are hopeful that the August Sectional and 0-750 Regional will take place as scheduled August 6-9.

SCORECARD SUSPENDED

The District 16 Executive Committee has decided to suspend the Scorecard due to loss of revenue from cancelled tournaments and closed clubs. They will monitor the situation and decide when and how to resume the publication.



GNT AND NAP 2020 CANCELED

ACBL has cancelled the 2020 finals of both North American Pairs (NAP) and Grand National Teams (GNT).

NAP finals will be moved to the 2021 Spring NABC in St. Louis. The 2019-2020 qualifiers will play then and will receive their travel awards if they attend.

How to handle the GNT qualifiers is a district decision. District 16 has not yet determined whether we will go forward with the teams already qualified or whether we will begin anew.

♣ 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, including additional games for **Silver Linings Week, May 25-31**, are listed below.



APPLE

Regular Schedule

- ♦ Open Pairs: Mon, Wed, Fri at 3:00pm

Silver Linings Week Schedule Changes

Apple will offer open games Monday - Friday at 3:00pm and will add a 299r at 2:45pm on those days, if there is enough interest.

BBO Search Term: **Apple**

BRIDGE CLUB OF HOUSTON

Regular Schedule

- ♦ Open Pairs: Mon–Fri at 10:30am
Sat, Sun at 12 noon
Thu at 7:00pm
- ♦ Limited: 199r: Mon, Wed, Fri at 10:00am
299r: Tue, Thu at 10:00am

Silver Linings Week Schedule Changes

BCOH will add two evening open pairs games at 7:00pm on Tuesday and Saturday.

BBO Search Term: **BCOH**



CLEAR LAKE / GALVESTON

The Clear Lake and Galveston clubs have combined to form an online "virtual club".

Regular Schedule

- ◆ Open Pairs: Mon, Wed, Fri at 10:00am
Sat 1:15pm
- ◆ Limited: 99r: Tue at 10:15am
0-750: Tue at 10:30am
499r: Thu at 10:15am

Silver Linings Week Schedule Changes

The club will add a Sunday game at 1:15pm on May 31.

BBO Search Term: **CLBC-GBC**

WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY

Regular Schedule

- ◆ Open Pairs: Mon–Sat at 10:15am
Mon–Sat at 2:15pm
Sun at 1:15pm and 4:15pm
- ◆ Limited: 499r: Mon, Wed, Fri at 10:10am
0-20: Tue at 10:10am
299r: Thu at 10:10am; Sat at 2:10pm

Silver Linings Week Schedule Changes

WBA will offer the same full schedule during Silver Linings Week.

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 May 2020 article of the month is "Lessons Learned" by Michael Berkowitz on page 47. The author points out several subtleties sometimes missed by players. We are East, defending 3S; partner's opening lead is the DA, promising the DK.

<i>North (Dummy)</i>			
Dlr: South	♠ 6 3 2		
Vul: None	♥ K Q 10 9		
	♦ Q 6 3		
	♣ K J 5		
<i>East (You)</i>			
	♠ J 7 4		
	♥ 8 6 4 3		
	♦ 7 2		
	♣ A Q 10 3		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	1NT ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	3 ♠	All Pass	

(1) Forcing.

Holding the 7-2 doubleton, it is almost automatic to play the D7, beginning a high-low sequence that will encourage partner to continue diamonds, giving us a diamond ruff on the third trick. However, once we get our two diamonds, a diamond ruff and a club, that will be it for us. Declarer will make the contract.

If we are going to capture more than one club trick, we need to get partner to switch to clubs now, before declarer can pitch away losing clubs on the high hearts. So, we play the D2, discouraging partner from leading the diamond and hoping he finds the club switch.

If partner finds the club switch, we win as cheaply as possible and return a diamond so West can lead through dummy again. We now get three club tricks in addition to the two diamond tricks, setting the contract one.

However, we are killer defenders, and we don't settle for down one. We return the last club. Usually a sluff and a ruff is good for declarer, but not always – certainly not in this case. Looking at dummy, we are hopeful that partner has a trump higher than the dummy's S6.

If declarer ruffs high (so that West cannot overruff), he promotes a trump trick for us. Down two. If declarer discards, West trumps with the ST and continues with a diamond. We get our diamond ruff for down three.



These results are possible because we did not automatically play the D7 at trick one. We let partner know there was something more important to do than continue diamonds.

We also considered these:

- ♦ Problem 4 of "It's Your Call" on page 38. The experts came up with four different responses. Almost all of them would have preferred to make an "old fashioned" redouble, but in the situation presented, a redouble would show three-card support for partner's spades, which the hand did not hold. Conventions can be useful but they can also take away a useful natural bid
- ♦ "Mike's Bridge Lesson" by Mike Lawrence on page 48. He discusses end plays.
- ♦ Eddie Kantar's "Chalk Talk" on page 49, also an end play situation.
- ♦ "Test Your Play" by Eddie Kantar on page 55. Making your contract by resisting the temptation to take the club finesse at trick one.
- ♦ "Bridge with the Abbot" by David Bird on page 60. He explores a dummy reversal situation.

RESPONDING TO 2C

We recently received the following question:

Partner opens 2C and I bid 2D, waiting. Partner now bids 2M (major). Assuming 3M is a stronger bid than 4M, how much do I have to have to bid 3M? I had only four points so bid 4M, but it made six tricks. Partner was not happy; he said that he would have bid on with a positive response from me.

Most 2C opening bids show a hand that, at worst, is 1 1/2 tricks short of game. At best, the hand can make game, or even slam, all on its own.

As responder, your 2D bid is automatic and denies at least eight HCP and a five-card suit. (Opinions vary on how strong the suit must be and whether or not it must be a major). The 2D bid was correct.

Not all four-point hands are the same. An ace is a much better holding than a queen and two jacks.



Using standard bidding, the cheaper minor, 3C in this case, shows a "bust" hand. A bust contains no ace or king; a hand with two queens is borderline. Borderline hands depend on shape, intermediates and support for partner's suit.

If we do have a positive bid to make after the initial 2D bid, then we like to use fast arrival if we have a trick or maybe a trick and a half for partner. So, we would jump to 4M just like you did. It shows a trick to trick and a half, trump support, but nothing extra.

With at least at least two tricks for partner and trump support, we would bid 3M. Partner will either bid game with a minimum (again - fast arrival), or make some other bid with more than a minimum. The other bid would give you room to further describe your hand. Go slow to explore.

You made a positive bid when you didn't use the cheaper minor.

There are other systems of responses to a 2C open. Some players show the number of controls they hold (A = 2 controls, K=1); others show the number of points they hold in three-point increments. The latter approach is usually referred to as step responses. We prefer the good old standard 2D waiting responses. So does Larry Cohen, so we figure we are in good company.

BBO: FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Last month we identified tips and tricks that might make your online BBO experience as a player a little smoother. This month we are going to look behind the scenes at a BBO vClub game from the director's perspective and identify ways you, as a player, can make the director's experience a little smoother.

GAME SETUP

When setting up the game, the director specifies, among other things, the number of boards and the number of boards per round. Most BBO vClub games are set up for 18 boards. The director has the option of placing into the description certain codes which tell BBO to run a Howell movement if there are six tables or fewer and another code that instructs BBO not to start the game until all the pairs are available. You may have noticed these codes if you look at the details of a game during the registration period.



Masterpoints: BBO
Restrictions: Friends / Include web list
Description: 18 Boards / 7 min per board /
 Trouble registering? Send BBO
 mail or chat to vacb251264. /
 +allavail+ +MPLIMIT=199+
 +howell+ +hm18+

Wait for players who are not available

Limited game (199r)

Optimize Howell or Mitchell for 18 boards

Run a Howell

vClub games are usually hosted by a BBO username beginning with VACB and ending with the six-digit club identifier. If you would like to more easily see the games hosted by your club, add its VACB username to your friends list. The button will appear darker than the others when scroll through all the pending tournaments.

BLOCKED PLAYERS

When the vClub games first began, by far the most common reason a player was blocked was because his BBO profile did not contain a valid ACBL number. Now, the blocked player is usually a guest of an eligible player. In order for the guest player to play, the director must add the guest's BBO username to friends list of the host account (the VACB account). Then the director must resubmit the tournament information to the database so that the tournament will now "see" the addition to the list.

Make it work better If you are planning to play with a guest, please notify the director as early as possible. Send a chat message to the VACB account hosting your tournament so that the director can add your guest to the list. It is much easier for the director to do this two hours before the game begins than two minutes before the game begins.

Note: ACBL did away with the program where a club can permanently admit a player if the home club gave permission. That program was replaced with the member-guest guidelines described above.

STARTING THE TOURNAMENT: THE MOVEMENT

In a perfect world, the tournament will automatically begin with the optimal number of full tables for the number of boards and movement selected. We do not live in a perfect world.

Some clubs play six rounds of three boards no matter how many tables they have. Other clubs switch between Howell and Mitchell movements and between two and three (and, in one case, four) boards per round depending on the number of tables. The codes that are placed into the



description work well for 4-8 tables and 16-17 tables. Some clubs opt change to the codes or the number of boards based on the number of tables. For a three-table game some clubs will run five rounds of four boards, 20 total, rather than six three-board rounds that include a revenge round. At 9 - 15 tables, some clubs prefer to play two boards per round so that each pair plays the greatest number of opponents possible. At 16 tables, BBO divides the tournament into two sections, so six rounds of three boards is best.

Make it work better Register at least 15 minutes before the game begins so that the director can make any necessary changes to the movement. It is much easier for the director to make these changes 10 minutes before game time than 10 seconds before game time.

STARTING THE TOURNAMENT: THE OFFLINE PLAYER

If a club has elected to hold the start of the tournament until all players are available, the tournament will not start if a registered player is offline and, therefore, unavailable. A player will appear offline if he is (1) not logged into BBO, (2) logged into BBO as invisible or (3) logged in and in the casual area of BBO.

Recognizing that you do not always have complete control of your internet connectivity, the director may wait a minute for you to log in. During this time, he will also probably be communicating with your partner and asking your partner to try and figure out what the situation is. If it is not possible for you to get back online, the director may have to unregister you and your partner from the tournament. The tournament cannot start with a registered player offline.

Make it work better About 10 minutes before game time, ensure that both you and your partner are and ready to play. Ensure that you are in the Bridge Base Online Home section and NOT in the Casual section. Then send a chat message to your partner. If he does not respond, contact him outside of BBO. If he does not respond to your chat, he may be offline (or appear to be offline for reasons described above) and will not be automatically seated in the tournament.

STARTING THE TOURNAMENT: THE UNAVAILABLE PLAYER

If a club has elected to hold the start of the tournament until all players are available, the tournament will not start if a registered player is unavailable. All offline players are unavailable, but a player who is playing in another tournament is also unavailable, but he is not offline. BBO does NOT prevent you from registering for multiple tournaments that take place at the same time (otherwise it would not be possible to play in a daylong tournament and a vClub tournament on the same day).



The only way for the director to resolve this conflict is to remove the piece of code that holds the start of the tournament until all players are available. Unfortunately, if you happen to be offline at the time this code is removed, you and your partner will be unregistered for the tournament.

Make it work better. Refer to the offline player section, above. Ensure that you can chat to your partner and that your partner responds.

SUBSTITUTES

If the game begins with a half table, the director must find substitutes so that a minimum of 18 boards are played by all players. A substitute is also needed when a player is disconnected from the game and does not return within a reasonable amount of time. Finding a substitute appropriate to the game is probably the director's biggest challenge.

There are no rules governing substitutes; any player can be used as a substitute in any game. A Grand Life Master with 25,000 points can be used as a substitute in a 0-20 game. Clearly this not ideal, but the pool of substitutes is usually mostly made up of very experienced European players. By the time our morning games begin, it is early evening in Europe. Their daytime games have finished and some players offer to sit in as substitutes in the games that are starting over here.

Make it work better Some clubs have a program to arrange "standby subs" for each game. If your club has such a program, volunteer for it. You might get to play for free. If you are logged into BBO and are willing to be a substitute, add your name to the substitute list. You can add your name to the list for any tournament or you can add your name for a specific tournament, once it has started.

SCORE ADJUSTMENTS

If the round ends before you have finished the last board, BBO determines the result for you. If you do not agree with the BBO result, you may call the director and ask him to review it. The director will see your call added to the list of other calls. Disconnected players also come up on the list of director calls. For each call, the director sees the BBO username that made the call and whatever information the player typed. Typically, a director will try to find a substitute for a disconnected player before he will address any score correction requests.

When you make the director call, you are probably looking at the board (or looking at it in History) and so you know exactly what result you are questioning. "I should make 5", typed in context as you are looking at the board, makes sense to you. However, that same phrase taken



out of context is not as meaningful to the director. The director can usually figure it out, but it takes time.

Make it work better Include the board number in any request for a score adjustment. If possible, state the line of play by which you would achieve the result you are claiming.

Anything you can do to make it easier on your directors will be much appreciated.

Hope to see you online.

Jeff Kroll & Sam Khayatt
texas.blue.hen@gmail.com