

February 2017 ACBL Bridge Bulletin Notes

Jeff Kroll
Sam Khayatt

Page 22, Whitehead Women's Pairs

- Shawn Quinn, #1
- Mildred Breed, #15

Page 27, Column 1, auction: Meckstroth's 2H bid is a limit raise in diamonds; he is cue bidding North's suit. It says nothing about hearts. North's double is a support double, showing exactly three-card support of his partner's spades.

Page 32 -33, Cohen

- Page 32, Column 1, last paragraph: when you open the better minor (as opposed to a short club) and bid diamonds, you will have at least four diamonds 97% of the time. The chance that you will have exactly 4-4-3-2 and have to open a diamond with only 3 of them comes up only 3% of the time.
- Page 32, Column 3, last paragraph: When you are too weak to reverse (roughly 17 points), do not have a no trump opener, and have five clubs and four diamonds, you should tell the least lie and bid your diamonds first, planning to bid clubs on your next bid. It is better to mislead partner about the length of your diamond suit than about the strength of your hand.
- Page 33, Column 1, first paragraph: With five really good clubs (like 3 honors) and four diamonds, now the least lie is to bid 1C, planning to bid 2C on your second bid.
- Page 33, Column 1, second paragraph; with a five-card diamond suit and another five-card suit, always open the higher ranking suit.

The Bidding Box (p. 37 – 39)

Problem 1

The 3C bid is fourth suit forcing (some play it forcing one round, some play it forcing to game). It's an artificial force and says nothing about clubs.

Scores: The 5D bid scores only 1 match point (pretty much a disaster) even though 5D makes. Yet 5H scores 6 match points (average). At match point (pairs) scoring, small differences in scoring can lead to dramatic results. In IMPS (teams), minor suit games are OK, at match point it only pays to bid them when you are reasonably sure neither a major suit nor notrump game is making.

Problem 2

Bridge Bulletin auction: The East hand is suit-oriented as aces although always useful, are particularly useful in suit contracts. This hand has bad intermediate cards (10s and 9s) and a long weak suit. That all makes it more suitable for a suit contract than no trump.

Problem 3

Once Brod knows that Rengstorff has a singleton or void in spades, he re-evaluates his hand and it becomes much stronger. He doesn't know his partner has the SA (spade ace), but he does

know that there won't be more than one losing spade, and his honors in the other three suits will fit well with partner's hand. So, the East hand became much stronger.

Problem 7

With the opening heart bid by South, the West hand got stronger as the A J 10 of hearts are behind the heart bidder. Once East makes a strong bid, it is likely that either East has the SK or that South has it (There are only 40 hcp in the deck and the bidding leaves almost no room for North to have the SK). The West hand has strengthened enough to help the partnership find the notrump slam.

Problem 9

Bridge Bulletin auction: The 1S bid is fourth suit forcing. It says nothing about spades.

It's Your Call (p. 40-43)

Problem 1

North's 2N is the unusual no trump, promising at least 5-5 in the two lowest unbid suits (clubs and diamonds).

Problem 3

If South passes it would be a forcing pass, meaning North would have the choice of doubling for penalty or bidding on. The reason East bid 5H (instead of 4H) is to preempt NS out of a game (or even a slam). EW cannot be allowed to play there undoubled – even if it should make (highly unlikely).

NS must protect their plus score; NS has the shown most of the points and likely has a spade game. EW bids are pre-emptive. When you are likely making game on power, you cannot allow them to steal undoubled. Here it's a particularly easy double as you have three quick tricks outside the spade suit. But most chose to bid 5S with their known 8+ card spade fit, prime values (A, AKJ) and a void in hearts.

Refer to Berg's column on page 47 for more on this topic.

Top Scores for December: Daniel Jackson, 480.

Page 44, Alder, last paragraph: When playing in a suit contract it is almost always correct to ruff in the hand that is short in trumps when that play is available. Trumping in the long trump hand is often incorrect as you may lose control of the hand by doing that. And you are trumping with a long trump that was probably going to be good anyway.

Page 45, Shafer, Column 2, second paragraph: Playing standard methods, 1NT is 15-17 HCP, opening 2NT is 20-21 HCP, and opening one of a suit and then jumping to 2NT is 18-19 HCP.

Page 46, Harrington

- Column 2, fourth paragraph: The balancing seat is the position where the auction will be over if you pass. In contrast, the direct seat means your partner has a bid coming. In the direct seat, you are expected to have the appropriate values for your bid in your hand. In the balancing seat, you are bidding for you and your partner, so you can add 3 points (borrow a king) to your

holding. A good rule of thumb is to balance in the auction shown with 8+ hcp. The bullets at the bottom of the column 2 describe the fundamentals of balancing.

- Column 3, second full paragraph: Partnership bridge requires you to pass in the direct seat (even with some openers), but you need to be able to trust your partner to balance.

Page 47, Berg, Colum 2-3: You can get a better score by pre-empting and going down, even doubled, than by giving opponents a chance to communicate. Vulnerability matters, though. Assuming opponents can make a game, you will get a better score going down, doubled:

- 3 or fewer tricks at favorable vulnerability (they are vulnerable; you are not)
- 2 or fewer tricks at equal vulnerability (both vulnerable or neither vulnerable)
- 1 trick at unfavorable vulnerability (you are vulnerable; they are not)

Page 54, Cohen

South is playing a 3 NT contract. East has opened a heart. Therefore you know that East has 5 hearts and most of the points. The only way South can make this contract is if both the K and Q are with East. This is fairly likely – East did open and NS have 26 HC, That doesn't leave much for West.

The declaring side's hearts are 3-2. Therefore it is most likely that the defenders' hearts are 5-3. A 5-3-3-2 distribution is more likely than 6-3-2-2; plus, the heart bidder did not re-bid his hearts. To make the contract, let East have the HQ on the opening lead. South will take the next two heart tricks, and when West gets in with the SK, he won't have a heart to return. Making 3NT.

Page 56, Bergen: Six situations where opener can rebid an unsupported 5 card suit.

- #5 is when you have two five card suits. When you rebid your second suit, partner should take you for 5-5.
- #6b, after a 2/1 game-forcing response with three honors in your major, you can rebid it. You are willing to play in a 5-2 fit.

Page 58, Walker, Column 2, third paragraph: It is often right not to preempt in second position as you are only preempting two people and one is your partner. Preempts in second position are fine, as long as they are clearly a correct bid, but when there is a choice of bids in second position, it is often right not to preempt.

Page 60, Lawrence, Column 2, second paragraph. Leading a singleton in an unbid suit in a suit contract is a recommended lead.

Page 64, George's World, Column 3, first paragraph. Before doing a lot of ruffing, it is usually good technique to cash your side suit winners first. This prevents the defenders from discarding in those suits and later trumping your winners.

Rank Advancements (beginning on page 71)

- Chuck Michalski: Gold Life Master (page 71)

Page 81, It's Your Call, 2016 Online Top 100: Daniel Jackson, 405