

April 2017 ACBL Bridge Bulletin Notes

Jeff Kroll
Sam Khayatt

Page 32, Ruling the Game, column 2, last paragraph: It is suggested that declarer look at the defenders' convention card rather than ask about how they defend. This cuts down on misunderstandings, and hides what declarer is looking for.

The Bidding Box (p. 37 – 39)

Problem 1

Bridge Bulletin Auction: After the inverted minor sequence 2D bid, opener's 2S bid denies a heart stopper. Stoppers are bid up the line, meaning if you have a spade stopper and a heart stopper, you would bid 1H. Since responder does not have a heart stopper either, notrump is not a feasible contract. 4S is the proper contract despite having to play in a 4-3 (Moysian) fit.

Note that Korbel and Schwartz (a new partnership) had a misunderstanding in the auction as to whether 4D was forcing. You and your partner should both have the same understanding about which bids are forcing and which are not.

Problem 3

East's 2C response followed by a 4H bid shows at least six clubs and five hearts. The clubs should be longer than the hearts to bid them first, and there must be at least five hearts to introduce them at the four level. That would leave at most two cards in spades and diamonds in East's hand. The opponents have shown nine spades (five by opener; four by responder to jump), so West, with four spade of his own, knows that East is void in spades and has at most two diamonds. With the A Q 9 of clubs and A of diamonds, it's an easy 6C bid by West.

Problem 4

Bridge Bulletin Auction: Like Problem 1, the 2S bid denies a heart stopper. Since East has nothing extra for the inverted 2D bid, East should just bid 3D. West could go on with extra values, but West has a pedestrian opener with the useless HQ, and passes.

Problem 6

Sokolow's, jump to 4S is a splinter (singleton or void in the suit bid). Clubs is the agreed upon trump suit. The singleton spade takes care of East's spade loser. The jump to 5NT asks partner to bid 7 with two of the top three trumps, which is now an easy bid.

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

Problem 1

In this case, South's 2D bid is fourth-suit forcing to game; some play it as a one-round force.

Second paragraph: 2H by North typically shows a 6 card suit. However, there are instances when North must rebid a decent five-card suit, because any other bid is worse. Sometimes there is no right bid and so you do the best you can.

Problem 5

Third paragraph: With the 1NT bid behind South, it is likely that the SK is offside, and maybe the SJ, too. So Meckstroth and others make a conservative 2S bid.

Page 44, Alder, Column 3, last paragraph: This is a case of setting up your long suit for a discard. The long suit is clubs in a heart contract. The hearts are used for transportation and the fifth club is used to discard the losing diamond, making six. This is good technique in both match points (pairs) and IMPs (teams). But it is very important at match points where the extra trick is the difference between a good and a bad board.

Page 45, Shafer

Column 1, first paragraph: (1) North has 10 HCP (and six clubs – a suit to set up) opposite an opener who should have 13 points. That's 23 for the partnership. Give West 16 HCP (the middle of the no trump range), and that leaves only one point for East. A flat 16 HCP hand opposite a one-point partner means West won't make anything close to 1NT. West is unlikely to get a trick from dummy. Plus West is vul, and NS are unlikely to make a game when West has 16 HCP. Easy penalty double.

Column 2, first paragraph: (3) The typical meaning of doubling an artificial bid means to lead it. South should double the artificial 2H bid to get a heart lead.

Column 3, last paragraph: (4) A standard agreement is when partner transfers you, you just take it. But if the opponents double or bid before you bid and you only have two of partner's trump, you pass. Partner can then repeat the transfer if partner's trump holding can play opposite only a doubleton

Page 46, Harrington

Deal 1: (a) One-level overcalls just promise a good suit and not much else; two-level overcalls show a good suit and an opener.

Deal 3: (a) Even though this is an opener, you do not have a bid. You don't have a good suit to overcall. You can't double with only two hearts (a takeout double promises three cards in all unbid suits).

Deal 3: (b) You can balance with this hand in the pass-out seat. Bid 1NT; this typically shows 11-14 HCP and a stopper in the opponents' bid suit.

Deal 4: This hand has 16 HCP, too many to bid 1NT in the balancing seat. Start with a double.

Deal 5: With 19-20 HCP and flat distribution in the direct seat, double and then bid notrump on your next bid.

Page 47, Berg

Column 1, paragraph 2: Rule of 20: you can open in first or second seat if your high card points plus the length of your two longest suits equal 20 – if that is your agreement. Many use the rule/suggestion of 22 or 20 plus 2, which adds the additional requirement that the opener has two quick tricks (20+2=22).

Column 1, Hand 1: This is a clear open under either method. AQ of spades = 1 ½ quick tricks and the DK (even without the DJ) is ½ a quick trick.

Column 3, second paragraph: In fourth seat, a common agreement is the Rule of 15. If your high card points and number of spades equals 15, then open, otherwise don't. The idea being that when the high cards are distributed evenly between both sides, the side with the spades has a big edge.

Page 48, Helms

Column 2, second paragraph: When two balanced hands face each other, typically takes 26 HCP to make a major suit game, 33 HCP for a small slam, and 37 for a grand slam.

Column 3, last paragraph: When evaluating your hand, shape and your fit with partner are as important as HCP.

Page 49, Cohen

Column 1, second paragraph: Add a point for a decent five-card suit, or great intermediates when considering opening a notrump.

Column 1, fourth paragraph: If you get to 18 or above by adding points for length and/or good intermediates you are too strong to open 1NT.

Column 2, third paragraph: Unless you are a very experienced player, do not open a notrump with a singleton, even though the ACBL now allows it. (The singleton must be a singleton A, K or Q and you must not have doubleton.) Boehm has said the opposite, but Boehm writes for more advanced players.

Column 2, last paragraph: Consider your next bid before making your first bid. This will often lead you to a 1NT opener.

Column 3, last paragraph: Never open 1NT with a six-card major, or a five-card major and two doubletons.

Page 51, Lawrence

Column 1, second paragraph: Letting the opponents play 2H in a known eight-card fit almost always leads to a poor match point result. It's even worse if you have spades to bid. Letting them play 2S should in a known eight-card fit is usually bad, but it is sometimes difficult to bid to the three level – especially if vulnerable.

Column 2, first paragraph: Jumping to 3S is invitational. If you had a game-going hand, you would cue bid hearts.

Column 2, second paragraph: This is a responsive double. You are showing both minor suits. If you had four or more spades, you would have bid them.

Column 3, first paragraph: Defending against a two-level partial when they have an eight-card fit usually leads to a poor result. This is especially true if they are playing in an eight-card major.

Page 54, Boehm

Column 1: Boehm makes similar points as the Cohen article: upgrade your notrump hand if you have a decent 5 card suit and/or good intermediates that support higher honors. Boehm describes the situation in the context of whether to accept an invitation to 3NT or whether to stop in 2NT.

Column 2, first full paragraph: Boehm makes a similar point to Helms'. The queens are in partner's long suits, so they fit well with his hand, making this a stronger hand.

Column 3, third paragraph: Figure out partner's distribution. ~~Since~~ He bid diamonds first, then spades, and ran from notrump. He is not flat, so he should have five (or more) diamonds, four spades, three hearts (the delayed heart raise), and, therefore, at most one club. Let partner play 3D in an eight (or better)-card diamond fit.

Page 55, Cohen, column 2, first paragraph: By counting the points in West's hand, you know to try to drop the CQ. West can't have the CQ: He is a passed hand and has already shown up with seven points (SJ, DA, and DQ). He should have the SK for his bid, which brings his total HCP to ten. If he had the CQ, that would bring his HCP total to 12. With 12 HCP and biddable five-card suit, he would have opened.

Page 57, Bergen

Deal 2: Realize that without heart support from partner that your most likely game is 3NT, so make the bid that makes that contract the easiest to reach: 3C.

Deal 4: Get out of the bidding on misfits as quickly as possible. Pass. If you end up being doubled, you can make an SOS redouble (telling partner to run).

Column 2, **Declaration of Independence**: If you have a six-card major suit with four honors, or a seven-card major suit with three honors, make that suit trump. It will play well if partner has as little as a singleton in it. The deal at the bottom of the column plays much better in 4H than 4S, despite the 4-4 spade fit.

Page 58 Walker, column 1 last paragraph: Learn to think about what your partner's hand is most likely to be; don't get completely fixated on your own hand. In the deal shown in column one, partner is likely to have both points and hearts because you are short in both and the opponents have not shown a lot of points.

Page 59, Kantar

Deal 1: The key to this deal is to try to set up dummy's long spades. If you can take four spade tricks, then you'll come to the 12 tricks you need with six diamonds, the HA and the CA.

Deal 2: The key to this deal is to give East a heart trick to which he is not entitled. East has no more clubs or hearts, so he must either return a spade or a diamond. Either way, you get to make the AK of spades that you can't reach without his help.

Page 60, Lawrence: first paragraph: North makes a negative double over the 1S bid. North ends up lucky that South has four hearts and can bid them. Typically if you have a five-card major, the odds are against you that partner will bid it for you. In this case, West's 1S bid was enough of a blocking bid to stop North from bidding hearts. The North hand is too weak, and so are the hearts. This would be a better hand if the A and K were in hearts and not the side suits. Honors in long suits are worth more than honors in short suits.

Page 62, Stewart, column 1, third paragraph: There is no good bid with the South hand. However, the #1 priority has to be to force to game. So a forcing bid must be made. Stewart chooses to jump in his three-card spade suit. That is not my style; I prefer to lie in a minor, even if it is a singleton. I would have bid 2D. This is a matter of pick your poison.