

October 2017 ACBL Bulletin Notes

Jeff Kroll
Sam Khayatt

The Bidding Box (p. 37 – 39)

Problem 6

After the 2/1 2C bid, and the agreed upon heart contract, it was both correct and safe for East to bid 3S. Since they were in a 2/1 auction, they could not stop short of game. 3S was the best probe for slam; it showed a spade control and kept the bidding low, allowing West to show his hand. Bidding 4N to ask for aces is incorrect when you hold a worthless doubleton (diamonds in this case) in a suit partner hasn't bid.

Problem 7

Gwozdzinsky's and the **Bridge Bulletin's** 4D is a splinter in support of hearts, even though it's not a double jump. The East hand was too weak (less than an opener) for a 2/1 call in either clubs or hearts, so East was forced to bid 1N in response to 1S. Bidding 4D is a splinter. 3D would be to play and would show a weakish hand with a lot of diamonds (maybe 6-9 points and 6+ diamonds). 4D can't be too strong as East has denied 13 points with the 1N call.

Problem 8

Gwozdzinsky's and the **Bridge Bulletin's** 1N bid: The East hand is again too weak to make a 2/1 call over 1S, so 1N it is. The 3H jump bid by the **Bridge Bulletin** shows 10-12 HCP and six hearts. Given the seven-card heart suit and five clubs, it was reasonable to take this hand as strong enough to make the bid with only 8 HCP. East's points are in his long suits and the K Q T combination in hearts upgrade this hand. Gwozdzinsky's 2H bid was very conservative; however, it was also reasonable as partner was bidding the two suits she didn't have. Mismatches call for getting out of the auction early and at a low level. This hand has two contradictory principles (an upgradable hand that is a mismatch), so there is going to be a judgement factor that can go either way.

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

Problem 2

The overwhelming majority of the panel passes, looking to penalize the 1S bidder. Partner is obligated to reopen with a double (note Shi's comment). The strong hand has length in opponent's suit (spades) and shortness in partner's suit. With that hand, it is better to defend 1S than try for an uncertain 3N game. 2D is the second choice for those who aren't confident that they will set this contract.

Problem 3

Lawrence calls 4C a splinter; Sanborn calls 4C a fit showing bid. It depends on your system. The lesson here is that it's important to discuss which bids are splinters and which are not.

Boehm says the 4C bid is preemptive. Meckstroth says it's natural. It's probably best not to bid 4C unless you and your partner have discussed this sequence, which occurs only rarely.

Problem 4

With 10 HCP, it's important to know whether you can redouble with a fit. Weinstein does it despite not liking to redouble with a fit. Sanborn states that the redouble doesn't deny heart support. Another point for partnership discussion.

Problem 5

2S is chosen by the vast majority of the panel despite knowing there is an eight-card heart fit. Six spades to the AK is too nice to suppress. Bid what you're looking at. Korbel points out another advantage of the spade call: it's the suit you want led, should you end up defending.

Page 44, Alder

Column 2, first paragraph: When South wins the CA on the opening lead, West knows East has the CQ. West is looking at the CK (in his hand), so he knows that South isn't likely to win a trick with the A if he has the Q. Plus with touching honors on defense in third position, the proper play is the lower honor J from QJ. The proper lead if East were on lead would be the Jack.

Column 3, second paragraph: This time East knows that South has the CJ, as West should play the Jack from QJx (this assumes that East didn't start with Qx). When he plays the Q, he denies the J.

Column 3, last paragraph: When West gets in with the SA, he should not lead a club as that would set up the CJ. A diamond lead puts East in with the K, who should then lead a club through South setting up two club tricks and setting the contract.

Page 45, Shafer

Column 1, (3): In a 2/1 auction, when opener jumps immediately go game (both partners knew they were going to game before the jump), opener shows a minimal opener. Fast arrival shows the weak opener. Going slower gives more time for exploring slam, so bidding 3H instead of 4H shows a good hand.

Column 2, (4) With a strong hand South should explore for slam. However using Blackwood with a small doubleton is incorrect; South should cue bid 4C. It's common to cue bid second round controls when the auction is below game level. Blackwood should be used only when the partnership has at least second-round control of all suits. Its purpose is to keep you out of a bad slam.

(6) After using Blackwood, South still doesn't know if bidding slam is correct.

Column 3, second paragraph: Before playing to the first trick (from either hand) declarer should plan how to play the hand. In this case pulling trump does not work as he won't have the entries to set up the spade suit. The trump suit provides the entries to dummy's spades after they are set up. The entry can't be used before the spades are set up. It's correct to use the KQ to pull trump in this case, that would leave the A of hearts as the entry to the spades.

Page 46, Harrington

Column 1, second paragraph: A major suit limit raise of opener shows a good 10-12 points. With six to a bad ten points and at least three-card support, raising partner to the two-level is correct.

Column 2 top: Hand 1 is better than Hand 2 in support of hearts – despite having only nine HCP, while Hand 2 has ten HCP. The doubleton spade in Hand 1 is more likely to give you a trick via a spade ruff than the unsupported SJ in Hand 2. It's common to subtract a point when you are perfectly flat – no voids, singletons, or doubletons.

Page 47, Berg, column 3, first bidding sequence: 1H – 3H shows 10-12 points by responder.

Page 48, Helms, column 3, top: Even after giving two negative bids following partner's strong 2C opener, the only bids that responder can pass are a re-bid of opener's first suit or a 3N bid.

Page 49, Cohen

Column 2, second paragraph: When opener opens 1D he almost always has at least four diamonds in standard methods. Only a 4-4-3-2 hand would be opened 1D in standard methods with fewer than 4 diamonds. With no four-card (or longer) major, four diamonds, and 6-10 points, responder should bid 2D.

Bottom of column 2, bottom: 2N in response to 1D shows 11-12 HCP, no four-card major and is invitational.

Column 3, bottom: 3NT in response to 1D shows 13-15 hcp and no 4 card major.

Page 51, Lawrence, column 1, second paragraph: Although 1N is not perfect, it's the best bid available. You have too much to pass. You don't have any reasonable two-level bid. And with just a bit of help from partner, you do have a spade stopper. Even without spade help from partner, if they do run five spade tricks, you still have a chance to make it.

Page 52, Cohen, column 1, third paragraph: After you open, partner makes a penalty double of an artificial bid (a Michaels cue bid in the example), and RHO bids at the two-level, your pass is forcing. Partner has already shown reasonable values; he must bid something.

Page 53, Kantar

Hand 1

A double of an artificial bid is lead directing, and absent a special agreement, it's also for penalty.

Hand 3

If you double a suit contract at the one-level for takeout, and you subsequently double it at the two level, it's still for takeout.

Page 54, Boehm

Column 1, first paragraph: Boehm points out the benefit of playing against stronger players if you want to improve your bridge game.

First column, third paragraph: This hand meets the suggestion of 22 to open: 11 HCP + nine cards in the two longest suits = 20. Plus two quick tricks (actually two and a half: - QJxx is a half). Easy opener, the 11 HCP is not a problem with those controls and length.

The rest of the article on this hand asks you to envision likely hands for partner's 2S bid. With most hands that partner can have for this bid, 6S will make. Trump support, and controls are what you're looking for in slam bidding. This hand is near perfect. It might even make 7S.

Column 3, third paragraph: After you open 4S and RHO bids 5H, when partner bids 6H it's clearly not to play hearts. He could have just bid 6S so 6H is asking you to bid 7S if your spades are solid.

Page 56, Challenge of the Month

If the DK is onside, you just win the finesse, draw trump and take your ten tricks.

If the DK of diamonds is offside then you have only nine tricks if you make your hand good. You must play to make dummy good (a dummy reversal). You are looking to take three spades, three spade ruffs in the long hand, two diamonds and two clubs. You are going to throw a losing club on the fourth diamond. If West chooses to ruff, he will do so at the expense of a natural trump trick. You will lose either two spades and a diamond; or one spade, one diamond and one club.

Page 62, Stewart

Column 1, second paragraph: At IMPS you must push for vulnerable games. If you have a reasonable shot take it, 40% games are worth it at IMP (teams) but not at match points (pairs).

The rest of the article points out that the ST and S9 are great cards. The 4S contract can be made similar to the Challenge of the month hand. Dummy reversal, trump with the long trumps and use the T and 9 of trump to pull the outstanding trumps after you are done ruffing in the long hand.

Page 63, Dear Billy, column 3, first paragraph of the answer: If opener bids 2C and then bids 2S, and gets a negative response from partner, he can make a non-forcing 3S bid. This fits with Helms article on page 48.