

December 2017 ACBL Bridge Bulletin Notes

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Page 17

Column 1, third paragraph: Passell and Mina both duck the SQ in the notrump contract. This is the Rule of 7: West has 6 spades; $7 - 6 = 1$. Therefore, West should duck once and both Wests do so.

Column 3, deal: Comella preempts 3S in third position with favorable vulnerability. Preempting at the three-level generally shows a seven-card suit. However, when you are in third position after two passes and they are vul and you are not, that is the time to push. 3S is the obvious call.

Column 3, auction at the bottom of the page and discussion following: When East opens 2D, and NS end up in 3N, the key to making the hand is to find the CQ. Buratti can finesse either way. But the proper way to finesse for a missing honor in a side suit is to play the partner of the pre-emptor for the missing honor. So, Buratti made the standard play of finessing West for the CQ and made his contract.

Page 18

Column 1, auction: Despite having only 19 HCP, NS found the excellent heart game. It makes because the NS have a big double fit in hearts and spades. Those kinds of hands usually generate a lot of tricks.

Column 3, auction: Berkowitz made a nice 3D bid despite having 13 HCP. His partner had already passed making it unlikely that they had a game. His black kings are singleton and doubleton, making them a bit suspect. So he had a soft 13 HCP, and pre-empted. The pre-empt made it easier for NS to make the bidding mistake they made.

Page 22, Colchamiro

Losing Trick Count works best after a trump fit has been agreed on.

You count one loser for every card in a suit that is not an A, K, or Q through the three highest cards in the suit. An obvious weakness is that it treats A, K and Q the same unless you adjust.

It's not for notrump or misfit contracts. It doesn't replace point count and other evaluation systems it works with them. After a 1H-2H, or 1S-2S auction, Losing Trick Count says to go to game with a five-loser hand, invite with a six-loser hand, and pass with a seven-loser hand.

The Bidding Box (p. 37 – 39)

Problem 1

Bridge Bulletin auction: Although the East hand is flat with 15 HCP and four spades, bidding 1N over the 1S opener is a poor bid. East does not have spades stopped. North is likely to run at least five spade tricks right off the top. A doubleton SK instead of the four small pieces would make 1N a routine bid.

Problem 6

Controls (quick tricks, voids and to a lesser extent singletons) are best for suit contracts. Good intermediates help more in notrump.

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

Problem 1

Most panelists choose to preempt 3S with their horrible six-card spade suit. This is the same principle Comella used on page 17. Third seat, favorable vulnerability (they're vul, we're not), preempt aggressively. Some choose to do something else given their five-card club suit. Almost surely you are not making game with this hand opposite a passed partner. Clubs might be better, but most want to make it as hard as possible on West.

Problem 2

Although most of the panel doubles, Hampson chooses to bid 4D (Michaels – major suits). He makes the same points that were made in Problem 6 on page 39. The hand is suit oriented (quick tricks, and a singleton, not much in the way of intermediates). He also points out that that if they end up in a 4-3 Moysian fit, it's OK, as partner will surely be short in diamonds, and the hand with three trump will be ruffing – not the hand with four trump. It is almost always right to ruff in the hand with fewer trump.

Problem 3

This is an example of picking these least flawed bid. The majority of the panelists bid 2 NT. As Hampson says, it is right on points, and he has a spade stopper, but he is a heart short.

Problem 4

Weistein and the majority open 2H looking to bid diamonds later.

Problem 5

2D is fourth suit forcing to game, so no panelist votes for that. The majority choose 2NT, a slight overbid – showing 10 HCP (there are 9). A significant minority choose to rebid 2S. Hampson says 2N is an overbid, and his spades are solid enough to play in a 5-1 fit if necessary. But as Cohen states (last paragraph), repeating a suit as responder should show a six-card suit.

Page 45, Shafer, column 2, first paragraph: On defense win/play the lower of touching honors. Second paragraph, lead the top of touching honors. Also, as declarer, take the trick with the higher of touching honors so as not to let the defenders know that you hold the lower honor.

Page 46, Harrington

Column 1, third paragraph: High cards that fit with partner's high cards and high cards behind the opponent's high cards in that suit are worth more than their assigned point count. High cards in front of an opponent's high cards in that suit are worth less than their assigned point count. The K J x of spades are worth more when partner bid spades and they are worth more when they are behind the spade bidder; they are worth less when they are in front of the spade bidder.

Column 2, third paragraph: High cards working together are worth more than when they are isolated. The AQ of diamonds are worth more than the HA without another honor and the DQ without another honor. High cards are worth more in long suits than short suits. It makes it more likely that you will be able to set up your long cards in a suit when you have honors in it.

Page 47, Berg

Column 1, fourth and fifth paragraphs: When you preempt you should have no more than one A or K in an outside suit. Having two big cards means you are likely to set them. Also if your points aren't in your long suit, you are likely to get partner off to a bad lead when he leads your suit.

Column 3, second paragraph: As long as you're in a forcing auction, it is usually best to keep the auction low so as to give the partnership the maximum room to explore.

Column 3, fourth paragraph: Don't preempt in 4th position to go down. Just pass it out. Berg suggests a decent six-card suit and 12-16 points.

This advice about 4th seat preempts from Larry Cohen (<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-learning-center/detail/187>) is pretty standard:

The normal range for a weak 2-bid is 6-10. But, after three passes, surely you wouldn't open the bidding with 6 points (nor 7, 8, or 9). Really, the range for a 4th-seat weak two should be about 10-14.

After three passes, I'd be happy to open 2♠ with: ♠ K Q 10 9 6 5 ♥ K 3 ♦ 9 8 ♣ K J 5

This combines preemption with description. Of course, you can't open this hand 2♠ in any other seat, because it is too strong. Three-level preempts in fourth seat also show close to opening-bid values.

Page 48, Helms

Column 2, box: Sometimes there is no bid that describes your holding. The best you can do is make the bid that is the least flawed. See problem 3 on page 41.

Column 3, last paragraph: Transfer into your five-card major no matter how horrible your hand is. If you do, you will get tricks from your hand, if you don't you won't. Sure nothing works all the time.

Page 49-50, Cohen

Page 49, column 2, second paragraph: A 1N response to 1 of a major in 2/1 is just a waiting bid. It does not promise or deny a balanced hand or stoppers.

Page 50, column 2, 4C/4D response to 1 of a major: This is a splinter bid. Promises a void or singleton in the bid suit, 4+ trump, and 13-16 support points.

Page 51, Lawrence, column 1, bullet points: Two sound suggestions for an auction that starts 1H – 2H:

1. 3H is invitational if RHO passes
2. 3H is competitive (non forcing) if RHO takes bid

Page 53, Kantar

Hand 1: Double. You have the majority of the high cards and you're behind the notrump bidder with your honors.

Hand 3: Four card support is always worth an extra point or two

Page 54, Boehm

Column 2, last paragraph: When you double (or bid) in a non-forcing auction in the direct/live seat (as opposed to the balancing seat) you are showing extra values.

Column 3, third paragraph: Pull to 3S. You have extra spade length (a 5th spade) and clubs with partner – a double fit. Double fits often produce a lot of tricks when you declare.

Page 56, Challenge of the Month: As declarer, play for a defensive layout that gives you a chance to make it, rather than just giving up. Some chance, even a small one is better than none.

Page 59, Kantar, deal 1: Plan to lose one spade, one heart and one club. Get East to play diamonds – an end play. You are looking to get four spades, three diamonds, and three clubs. You need a 3-2 club split and West not to have the KQ of diamonds (unlikely with his 3H preempt).