

May 2018 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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Page 23, column 1, first deal: The 1D response by South. The South hand has five poor HCP. Queens are worth less than two and Jacks are worth less than one. Queens and Jacks have less value when they are not supported by higher honors. The South hand is perfectly flat which also decreases its values. The normal bid is to pass with this hand. If you do want to be aggressive with weak hands in this situation, you should have long suit(s). North/South went for 800 on this auction.

Page 33, Ruling the Game: The 3S bid is considered an illegal choice once East breaks tempo and then passes.

The Bidding Box (p. 37 – 39)

Problem 1

Wittes would have made a support double (showing exactly three hearts) if she had had three. Since she passed she denied having three hearts.

Problem 2

Many would pass the East hand, but Wittes opens light so she opened a flat 12 pointer that included two jacks. Course it also included two aces. Paul opened, as he plays 11-14 HCP notrump openers. The *Bridge Bulletin* auction passed the hand. In third position we would always open this hand. And in fourth position it meets the rule of 15:
12 HCP + 3 spades = 15. Open it.

Problem 5

Equal Level Conversion allows you to double a bid other than clubs when you are short in clubs but you have the other two unbid suits (and opening values). If partner should bid clubs, you would bid the lower of the two unbid suits that you have. This does not show extra values. If you do not play Equal Level Conversion, doubling and then bidding does show extra values, perhaps 17+ points.

Problem 6

This is a close call between responding 2C (forcing opener to game) and 1N (forcing for one round, showing 6-12 HCP). Kamenova counted 13 HCP and bid 2C. Linda counted the same 13 HCP but deducted because she had an aceless hand, only one king, and an unsupported doubleton queen.

The *Bridge Bulletin* auction chose 2C.

Problem 7

The 2D bid by Wittes was new minor forcing, asking if opener had four cards in the unbid major or three card support in the bid major. As East had a hand suitable for notrump (good intermediates, all suits stopped, lots of Kings and Queens and only one ace), Wittes chose notrump over exploring for a spade fit. As West also has a notrump-like hand, she did not convert to the eight-card spade fit. If a notrump contract makes the same number of tricks as a major suit contract, the extra ten points are big in match points. Course if it makes a trick less, it's a disaster to have not played in the eight card major suit fit.

Problem 8

Kamenova chose to open the West hand 1N, even though she is one point shy. She has two useful tens (supported by a higher honor) and no isolated honors. All her points are working.

The *Bridge Bulletin* auction opens 1C. They end up in a notrump game also, but they did consider the spade game (seven-card Moysian fit). West has three spade honors, and thinks he might ruff a heart (unless he peeks and sees that East also has a doubleton heart).

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

Problem 1

All the contestants consider their second bid before making their first bid. Most bid 1H because if they bid 1C and partner responds 1S, the hearts will be lost as this hand is not nearly strong enough to reverse into 2H. When Rigal chooses to bid 1C, he is knowingly willing to lose the hearts.

Problem 4

The winning bid is 5N, although what it means can be unclear. Colchamiro states that 5NT is pick-a-slam – but it excludes hearts. Meyers states 5N is pick-a-slam showing clubs and a red suit. Sanborn chooses to bid 4D and states 4N can be misread. Good idea to discuss this bid with your partner before you use it.

Problem 5

The winning bid is 3N, but it is not ideal with only one stopper in hearts that is likely to be knocked out on the opening lead. However, Meyers, Meckstroth, and Grossack all think about the play during the bidding and how they are likely to duck one or two hearts to try to cut communications between the defenders.

Page 45, Berg, column 2, second paragraph: “worrying about a deal at the time it happens is never right.” Save reviewing the problem deal for when the game is over.

Page 46, Harrington

Column 2, third paragraph: South cannot give up the lead because if he does, the defense could take two spades (the ace was knocked out on the opening lead) and a club in addition to the Ace of trump. South must discard one of the losers before letting the defenders in. The place to do it is on the third high diamond. Since there are seven diamonds out, they are likely to split 4-3 and the third diamond will likely not be ruffed. Even if it does get ruffed, it's the only chance – and it will work most of the time. This fits with Lawrence's column (page 52) and Kantar's first “Test Your Play” deal (page 59).

Column 3, second paragraph: Pause, think and plan before playing to the first trick. Count winners and losers, plan how you could eliminate losers, think about ruffing in suit contracts (typically in the short trump suit hand), think about setting up long suits.

Usually trumping in the hand with the long suits is not a good idea. Those long trumps are usually good anyway and you might lose control of the hand. There are exceptions to this.

Column 3, third paragraph, you need a reason not to pull trump right away. Some reasons are:

- You need the trump in the short trump hand to trump with
- You need the trump for entries to follow your plan

Page 48, Helms

Column 2, fourth paragraph: After a one-level opener, many play a 1N overcall as 15-18 HCP. It is dangerous to make light 1N overcalls as your left hand opponent (LHO) has an easy penalty double if he has 10+ points. Opening 1N with 18 points is not standard, as it's better to open one of a suit, planning on a 2N rebid to show your 18-19 count. Note: a 1N rebid by a passing partner also shows 18-19. So if opponents bid and partner does not, consider a 1N rebid if you have appropriate stops in opponent's suit.

Column 3, answer to Tom: The double of 3D is strictly penalty. Partner already told you he has a one-suited hand with spades. There is no need to get him to bid again, as he would have to do if the double were for takeout.

Page 51, Kantar, deal 7, trap pass and hope partner can reopen with a double. This fits with Bergen's column on Page p57.

Page 52, Lawrence, column 2, fourth full paragraph, draw one round of trump, as there are only 3 out there is a decent chance that when you play the Queen of hearts and discard a club that it won't get ruffed. It's worth trying as it's your only chance. Then you would cross ruff the hand, you need the remaining trumps in dummy to ruff with. Fits with Harrington's column.

Page 54, Cohen

Column 2, second full paragraph: In general leading or underleading an ace is a dangerous play. However, if you believe (because you can see where declarer can pitch the cards in this suit) that your ace will disappear, then you need to cash your ace.

Column 3, last paragraph: Playing aces to capture low cards is a common error. Often you get your ace and the other side gets two tricks – typically the king and the queen.

Page 55, Boehm

Column 1, second paragraph: Assume you are declaring a notrump contract, hearts is your weak suit and they win the HA on the first trick. Holding Kxx, you should hold up twice. This may cut communications between the defenders and they might not be able to win their fourth and fifth heart tricks. The hearts are likely to go 5-3. Hope the hand with the 5 hearts doesn't have a side entry. Praying is OK in bridge. However, if they lead a heart and LHO plays the Q or J, you must win the king, since you can't afford a heart through your king.

Column 2, second paragraph: Declaring notrump, if the defenders fail to lead your weakest suit, do NOT hold up and give them a chance to find your weakest suit.

Column 2, fourth paragraph: Duck the diamond lead with AK8 (in notrump) to cut off communications with the long diamonds in the West.

Column 2, last paragraph: Declaring notrump, with seven clubs to the AK and no side entry in dummy, and the J T (or any two cards without the Q) in your hand, duck the first club. They are probably splitting 3-1. Yes, you will have given up a trick if they were 2-2.

Column 3, third paragraph: The only way to make 6H is to reach dummy's spades (after unblocking the Ace). The only way to do that is to lose to the 8 of hearts and let the other heart in dummy be the needed entry.

Bergen, Page 57: Trap passes are effective when you are long in the suit in which an opponent overcalled. When your partner has passed an overcall, you should typically reopen – often with a double – in case partner trap passed. Bergen supplies a table of when to re-open with a double. Course if you have a hand that screams offense, bid what you're looking at.

Kantar, Page 59: The key to the first deal is to not draw the third round of trumps, as you need the third heart to get back to your hand to repeat the club finesse. This fits with Harrington's column.

Lawrence, Page 60

Column 2, third paragraph: On the spade lead, it's best to guess West didn't lead from the king, so duck in dummy. When East wins the T, let him hold it, as he can no longer hurt you with a spade return.

Column 3, Post Mortem: South did not have an opener with his 11 HCP and soft values. He also did not have a 2H overcall over East's 1S bid, as the heart suit is not strong enough to ask for it to be led. Bidding 2H over 1N was an aggressive call that may or may not work. I would have passed and led the HT. North's 4H bid was too aggressive. South had already passed twice and only found the heart bid on the third try. 4H makes on good technique, but it's not a good contract in match points where you don't want to go negative. In IMPs, where games (especially vulnerable) are at a premium, I would push for the heart game.

I also would have doubled the 1C bid with the North hand. North has 12 HCP and 3+ cards in the three unbid suits. And with the club bid in front of the king, it becomes more likely that the K will take a trick.

Bird, Page 63: Paulo shows an odd number of cards in the red suits by playing his lowest card in preparation for playing a higher one in the next round. For an even number, he would have played high in preparation for a low card on his next turn.