

October 2018 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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Atlanta Action (p. 27-30)

Page 28, Rigal: East's double is a support double showing exactly three spades. The agreement that Martens has is a logical one. If you have your choice of a cards that partner can ruff, play a low one to make it clear that you want partner to ruff, play a high one with you want partner to discard rather than ruff. Ordinarily, the size of the card you lead for partner to ruff is suit preference; in this case, since everyone at the table knows that dummy can trump behind North, South tries to make clear whether or not he wants North to trump or to preserve his high trump.

Page 30 Rigal: 3D looks like a help suit game try. If West has diamonds (the hearts West has are not worth much on this deal), then EW has a double fit and a play for game.

The Bidding Box (p. 37 – 39)

Problem 2

Both Joel and the *Bridge Bulletin* auction open the East hand 1D even though the clubs are longer. The hand isn't good enough to reverse (typically 17+ points). The other choice would be to open 1C and then rebid 2C, but that would lose the diamond suit. Kent's 2S bid said nothing about spades; it's an artificial forcing bid (not clear if it was forcing one round or to game; we play it forcing to game).

Problem 3

Both Joel and the *Bridge Bulletin* auction get to the near-hopeless 3NT contract. At match point (pairs) scoring it is often right to bid 3N as opposed to 5m ("m" = minor). 3N making four scores better than 5m making five. So when you bid 5m, you're betting that 3N can't make with an overtrick. Often that's a bad bet; this time it was a good bet.

Problem 5

This is another awkward hand for East. After a normal 1D – 1S auction, Joel has a problem. Too weak to reverse into hearts, bidding notrump would mislead partner into thinking he had a least two spades. So Joel made what he thought was the best of the bad bids available: he bid 2D, even though he was missing the top three honors. 2D should show six cards not five, but Joel's options were limited. The *Bridge Bulletin* auction made a creative 2C bid. That's a bit too tricky for us.

Problem 6

Both pairs cue bid their way to the small slam in hearts. The *Bridge Bulletin* auction got to 7D, stating that West can count 13 tricks, assuming from the strong bidding that East the HK and HQ. We count one spade, five hearts, five diamonds and one club without peeking at the East hand. So we take it that the 2S bid showed six spades, and the 4S bid showed at least four spades (based on the law of total tricks). So West can place East with a singleton spade, allowing West to ruff his losing spade and pitch the losing club on the fifth heart.

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

Problem 2

There were nine votes for a takeout double of 1H, showing an opener and three-card (or more) support for any of the three unbid suits. There were six votes for the unusual 2N bid, showing five (or more) cards in both minor suits. Karen Walker, the scorer, felt passing was better than 2N. The doublers wanted to keep spades in the picture or find a good fit in one of the minors. The 2N bidders consider their bid practical. Walker considers it dangerous to insist on one of these minors since neither is strong and you are vulnerable.

Problem 3

Most bid 5D to jam the auction. It's a two-way bid. It may make or it may make the opponents choose/guess a poor action.

Problem 4

There is a debate as to whether North's 1N bid denies four-card major. Traditionally it did, but some experts now say with a flat hand you can bypass your four-card major. Weinstein says North can have a four-card major, Colchamiro says he wouldn't suppress a four-card major, and Lee thinks North might have four hearts.

Page 45, Parrish

When you don't have at least second-round control in every suit, it is rarely correct to use any kind of Blackwood because you could be missing an AK in the same suit. It is also usually incorrect to use Blackwood when you have a void; if you are off an ace, you don't know if the ace is in your void. You should cue bid controls. It's common to cue bid second-round controls below game level, but only first round controls above game level. Controls should be cue bid up the line – cheapest control first.

Last paragraph: Sometimes when it appears likely (even though not certain) that partner does have at least a second-round control in a suit where you don't have one, bidding Blackwood can be your best choice.

Page 46, Harrington

Column 1: Duck the first diamond and let the defense have the trick. Then win the DA on the second diamond trick and play a third diamond from dummy. Five diamonds out will split 3-2 about 68% of the time and now the suit is set up. We just need one outside entry to run the suit.

Column 2: The heart finesse is a 50%-50% shot; a 3-2 club split is a 68% chance. We should duck the first club, as we did with diamonds in the previous hand, and see if they split. If they don't, we will rely on the heart finesse. As Eddie Kantar says, *take all your chances*.

Page 47 Berg

Column 2, deal: You have a choice of which opponent you want to finesse against for the CQ. The key factor is that you can't let your right-hand opponent in to lead a heart through your HK. You can let your left hand opponent in because if he does lead a heart, it will be toward your protected king.

So, cash your CA, just in case the CQ is singleton (take all your chances) and then lead toward your KJT club holding, planning to finesse.

A better line still is to play the CJ out of your hand hoping that Lefty will cover, but of course you will have to go up with CA if he doesn't, as you still can't afford to let-Righty in. Note that this line of play works only because you also hold the CT. Missing the CT, leading the CJ may set up the CT for the opponents.

Column 3: There is no point in playing the unsupported Q. If it's covered by Righty you don't set up another card, so all you'll make is your A and maybe the long cards in the suit. Course if it loses to Lefty, it's just as bad. The standard play is to lead low towards the Q and hope Lefty has the K. Cash the A first, just in case the K is singleton. Take all your chances.

Page 48, Cohen

Larry Cohen covers rebids by a 1C opener after partner responds 1H. So, 1C – 1H | ?? Among the bids discussed and what each shows:

1S	Four spades and up to 17 HCP with a balanced hand. With 18-19 and a balanced hand, bypass the spade and rebid 2N.
1N	12-14 HCP and a balanced hand; usually denies four spades. Does not promise stoppers.
2C	Six (not five) clubs and 11-15 HCP. With 16 HCP and a six-card suit, bid 3C.
2D	Four diamonds, five clubs and 17+ HCP. This is a reverse. It's forcing for one round, shows at least 17 HCP and more cards in the first-bid lower-ranking suit than in the second.
2H	Four hearts, 11-15 HCP. It is possible to make this bid with only three hearts if all other bids are worse. For example, if your distribution is 1-3-4-5 and the hearts are KQT, 2H is a better bid than anything else.
2S	Four spades, usually 19-21 HCP. This is a jump-shift and is forcing to game. Longer clubs than spades.
2N	18-19 HCP and a balanced hand. May include a four-card spade suit.
3C	16-18, including distribution, and a six-card suit. Texture matters. The article presents two 15 HCP hands that are worth a 3C bid. However, these 15 point hands can be upgraded because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CA and CQ are together • Aces are worth more than four points and each hand has three • More than a third of the points are in the long suit • The lesser honors (queens, jacks) are in suits headed by the A
	Swap a few cards around and the same point count does not merit a 3C bid.
3H	16-18 HCP and four-card heart support.
3N	A hand capable of taking nine tricks in a running club suit. Stoppers in unbid suits.
4H	19-21 HCP (he did not open 2C) and four-card heart support. This is not a close-out bid; it's quite the opposite. It says that opener can make game opposite 6 HCP and four hearts, the minimum promised by the 1H response.
P	You can pass with minimum values <i>only if partner is a passed hand</i> .

Page 53, Kantar

Problem 1

Signal with the D7 (encouraging, yet letting them have the first trick). Then you can run the diamonds when partner gets in and leads another diamond through the DK. If you win the first trick, you get only two diamond tricks because the only entries to your hand are in diamonds. Once you clear the suit (ensure you are the only one left with diamonds), there is no way to get to your hand to run the good diamonds.

Problem 2

This is an IMPs (team) deal and it's a game bid. You must play as safely as possible to make your game. Win the DA and play a low diamond. Yes, you will lose a diamond and two hearts, but if you don't play it this way, you will lose two diamonds and two hearts for down one. You can't afford to have your DQ ruffed. You have all the high trumps so it's easy to ruff your remaining low diamond with dummy's SK.

Page 54, Boehm

Column 1, hand: This is a zero-point hand when you pick it up. When evaluating your hand, count only useful length, not shortness, until you know there is a fit. When the opponents both bid spades, and you have four of them, you know your partner has, at most, one spade. When your partner bids diamonds, your singleton is now worth three points (maybe more because you have four trumps). You can easily envision a cross ruff situation where you can make ten tricks. Partner must have a good six (or more)-card diamond suit to go to the three-level, vulnerable, when you've shown nothing. The law of total tricks says that on distributional hands, you can get expect to make the same number of tricks as you have trump. Ten trump = ten tricks. If you are lucky, you could make 11 tricks (game). At IMPs we would take a shot at the vulnerable game; at match points we would be happy with 4D.

Column 2, second paragraph: LHO opens 1H and RHO bids Jacoby 2N, showing an opener with at least four hearts. You, too, have opening strength with a good suit and the club AK. The HK might be useful, but it is more likely that the HA is with LHO, behind you. Bidding 3S is likely to be wrong. The opponents are in a game-forcing auction. If one of them has a decent four-card spade suit, he will double your spade bid. Furthermore, you don't really want a spade lead; you would prefer a club lead.

Page 55, Cohen, column 1, third paragraph: As in the Parrish article, the point made is that using Blackwood with an uncontrolled suit (lacking first or second round control) is usually wrong. However, there are times to take a calculated risk. Bergen took that risk. He knew he was off an ace; he hoped he wasn't off an AK. He was. However his bad luck ended up being good luck when the opening leader was not the opponent holding the spade AK. Bergen's skill as a declarer enabled him to find a way to avoid losing any spade tricks. He pitched one on a losing diamond (loser-on-loser play), end-playing West in the process. After winning the DQ, West had to play a minor, giving Bergen a ruff and a sluff. Making 6H.

Page 56, Challenge of the Month: This is the loser-on-loser play in this *Bulletin*. Declarer ducks the spade lead, letting the defense win an undeserved trick. But in return declarer gets to pitch two losing clubs on the spade AK. This cuts communications between the defenders so East can't get in to lead a heart through declarer's king. Eventually declarer sets up the club suit for three heart pitches. 5D makes, losing only one heart and one spade.

Page 60, Lawrence, column 1: West opens a weak 2S, followed by two passes to you. You are in the balancing seat. 2N is 15-17 or 18 in the direct seat but in the balancing seat. 2N is about 14-15 in the balancing seat. So 2N (not forcing) underbids the hand by an ace or king. A 3D bid is also non-forcing and could be made with some 12-point hands. 3N is the only reasonable bid and it could be a disaster. But bid to give yourself a better chance to have a good board.

West leads the S7. When the defense makes fourth-best leads (standard against no trump), you should use the rule of 11 to figure out where the high cards are. The rule of 11 says to subtract the value of the fourth-best card from 11. This result represents the number of cards higher than the fourth-best that are in the other three hands. So... $11 - 7 = 4$. There are four cards higher than the seven in the North, East and South hands. Since you can see all of them between your hand and dummy, you know that East doesn't have a spade higher than the 7 and, therefore, you know that your SJ can win the first trick. Play the SJ, and then take diamond finesse to give yourself the best chance to make your contract. It works.

Page 62, Stewart: Open 1S not 1H. Bid the higher-ranking of adjacent suits of the same length. Suit quality is not a factor.

The H2 lead looks like a singleton. A low card lead could be from an honor, but you're looking at all the honors. The idea is to avoid letting the defense in while they can get a heart ruff. Since you can safely get to the dummy only in diamonds, cash the DA and overtake the DQ dummy's king.

We then see our third loser-on-loser play in this *Bulletin*. The losing club is pitched on the losing DT. West can no longer reach East to get a ruff with his low trump.