

December 2018 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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Page 16, column 3, auction: The 1S bid by Brock is an artificial bid. It's fourth suit forcing (FSF) and doesn't confirm or deny spades. FSF can be played forcing for one round or forcing to game. We prefer it forcing to game. It also typically asks for a stop in the suit. West's 1N bid showed a spade stop.

Page 22, *Tricks of the Trade* by Larry Cohen, column 2: Discussing and understanding partner's style (we are conservative in the direct seat and aggressive in the balancing seat. We won't let the opponents' buy 2H in a known eight (or more)-card suit, and we stretch not to let them play 2S in a known eight (or more)-card suit...) is more important than discussing bidding agreements.

Page 34, **Ruling the Game**, first question and answer: We suggest that you ask your opponents what their bids mean only when it affects your bid. If the explanation will not affect your bid, wait until the auction is over. Asking mid-auction gives an opponent the opportunity to speak and may help him clarify the situation for his own partner

The Bidding Box (p. 35-37)

Problem 2

Paske (East)'s 3S bid is a delayed raise that generally shows exactly three spades. There are some cases when you would make a preference call with two spades, but most of the time it shows three. With four spades, East would have supported on his second bid, instead of bidding 1N. If you had four diamonds and doubletons in both black suits, you would probably bid 2D on your second bid. Allfrey (the other East) judged to bid 2S on his second bid. He was avoiding a notrump call since he didn't have either of the unbid suits (clubs and diamonds) stopped.

Problem 4

Bridge Bulletin auction: The double of 2S is a matchpoint action because:

1. Doubling them into a vul game that they might make is IMPS suicide
2. If we beat them one trick we score the magic matchpoint score of 200
3. At matchpoints we want our double to work 2/3 of the time. If they work more than that, then we are not doubling enough. If they work less than that, we are doubling too much.

Problem 5

Bridge Bulletin auction: Unsupported queens are generally not worth two points. However, since partner bid spades, that queen might be valuable.

Problem 6

Bridge Bulletin auction: The 3S bid shows 10-12 points and six spades.

It's Your Call (p. 38-41)

Problem 1

Most of the panel bids 2S on the second bid. Most feel the hand is too light to reverse into hearts. However, Meckstroth points out that at IMPS, he would overbid and reverse into hearts. Push for vulnerable games at IMPS.

Problem 2

2N and 2S are the highest scoring bids. The point is to push for a vulnerable game at IMPS.

Problem 3

We like Shi's comment on bidding 5D. Don't make marginal doubles of contracts that your opponents seem happy with when you have a reasonable second choice.

We also like Cohen's and Boehm's observation that partner probably has four spades, as we only have one, and neither opponent bid spades. Most good pairs don't miss bidding in their nine-card major suit fit.

Problem 4

Despite having 22 HCP, most panelists open 1C. They don't open 2C as the singleton DQ is of questionable value. And they foresee a rebid problem after opening 2C.

Page 42, Alder, column 1: Lead toward the AJ95, and put in the 9 if RHO plays low. This will give you two tricks when LHO has the T and either the K or Q. Putting in the J wins only when LHO has both the K and Q.

Page 43, Parrish: great column, but it's the same column as last month.

Page 44, Harrington

First deal: West has led the H6 and likely has the HK (a low card indicates an honor and you can see the Q and the A). If you (East) win the A and return a heart, it will be the only two tricks the defense takes. After drawing trump, declarer can set up the clubs (by ruffing the third club and returning to dummy with the DA) and win the rest of the tricks. A better play is to return the DJ, knocking the diamond entry off the board. And it's your lucky day as it also traps declarer's Q. Now the defense gets two diamonds and two hearts, setting the contract.

Second deal: When West leads the HA, East must discourage (even though he has the Q), as he needs a club switch through the CA to make his CK. If West doesn't find the club switch, eventually declarer will pitch a losing club on the dummy's fourth heart.

This is Harrington's last column. However you can find all of her columns back to 2009 at path2bridge.com.

Page 45, Berg

Column 1, second paragraph: Support doubles are a good way of showing exactly three card support for partner's suit. Some play support doubles for any suit; others for the majors only. If you had four of partner's hearts and a minimal opener, you would bid 2H.

Column 2, auction: The 1S bid by dealer on his second call "limits" their hand to 11 - 18. That's a big range. Responder needs to bid with 8 or more points, but can pass with fewer.

Column 3, last paragraph: If partner's hand is either unlimited or limited to a wide range, try to keep the bidding open.

Page 46, Helms

Column 1, response: In the auction 1H - 1S - 2S, the 2S bid is a cue bid. It shows a limit raise or better in hearts. It shows nothing about spades.

Column 3, three hands: After the auction 1C - P - 1H - 1S, all three hands have game going values opposite partner's unforced response. With hands 1 and 2, do not bid 3C. You are too strong. 3C shows 16-18 points and a 6 card suit. It is invitational (not forcing) and can be passed. Do not make invitational bids unless you are prepared for partner to pass. No matter which of the three hands you hold, the proper bid is a forcing cue bid of 2S. We don't know where we want to play but we surely don't want partner to pass.

Page 47, Cohen

Column 1, sixth paragraph: It is usually wrong to open and rebid a five-card minor. A rebid generally shows at least six cards in the suit.

Column 2: After you open 1C by and partner responds 1N, 2D, 2H and 2S are all reverses that show 17+ points. As we saw on page 38, problem 2, you can take small liberties with this guideline at IMPs when you're pushing for game – but you can't go completely off the reservation.

Column 3, 1C-1NT, 3NT shows a strong (nine tricks) hand highlighted by a running minor suit headed by the AKQ. It does not show a balanced hand. With a balanced 18-19, you would rebid 2N. With a balanced 20-21, you would have opened 2N. And with a balanced 22+, you would have opened 2C and rebid some number of NT. So 3N in this situation can be used for a different kind of trick-taking hand.

Page 49, Lawrence, column 2: Your best bid is 2D (a cue bid) showing a limit raise or better in partner's heart suit. Says nothing about diamonds. See the Helms question on page 46.

Page 51, Kantar, hand 6: Partner has opened 2N, showing 20-21 points (as we saw in the Cohen column on page 47), we have a flattish 13. That should be enough for small slam (33+ points for slam without a long suit). Just bid 6N. Any further bidding just helps the opponents. A grand slam with 33-34 points and no long suit is unlikely.

Page 52, Boehm

Column 1, second paragraph: Add one point each for your 5th, 6th, and 7th cards in a suit when you expect it to be trump, or to run in notrump.

Column 1, third paragraph: Transportation to the length is vital. Often that means giving up a trick in your long suit to establish the rest of your suit.

Column 3, deal: Playing 6H, you need to set up the fifth spade, as bad as that suit is. We saw something similar in Harrington's column on page 44. In her last deal, the key was not to let declarer set up the fourth heart in dummy's awful heart suit. So you need lots of entries. And to get them you must ruff spades in your hand with high cards, so the HT, H9, and H 8 become precious entries to the horrid spade suit.

Page 54, Challenge of the Month: This is a typical strip and end play deal. Draw trump. Play the DK, DA and ruff a small diamond, eliminating diamonds. Finesse the SQ. Cash the SA. Then throw in East with the SJ to his SK. All he has left are diamonds and hearts. If he plays at heart, you let it ride to your HQ. If he plays a diamond, you get a ruff and a sluff. Ruff in your hand and pitch dummy's small heart.

Page 56, Walker

Column 2 second paragraph: Never let the opponents know that you think they are too good for you. It gives them an undeserved edge. Besides, no one can do what the cards won't let them do. Most deals are routine if you do the basic things right – no matter who your opponents are.

Column 2, fourth paragraph: Play in tempo. When you hesitate you communicate information about your hand that your opponents can use.

Page 58, Lawrence: When East opens 4S, it is highly likely that suits will split badly for you in 6N. And sure enough, West has five hearts to the nine. Fortunately, he also has three clubs to the Q. When you run all your diamonds and hearts, he has to unprotect either clubs or hearts. Yes, you always have 12 top tricks, but if you squeeze West you have a good board in matchpoints. And if you don't, you won't.

Page 61, Miller, column 1, last paragraph: When you have a misfit, keep the bidding low.