

## February 2019 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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### Three Great Articles

**Page 44. Alder** - exceptions to second-hand low: first deal

Second hand low is right most of the time on defense, but there are exceptions. You need to think about the whole picture and keep in mind what you are trying to do on defense. You are trying to establish your long suit. Based on partner's lead, it looks like spades is your long suit.

Partner has led the SQ and SJ, presumably from QJT. So partner has one more winner, and possibly two, if he has five spades. All that needs to be done is to knock out declarer's SK. When defending a no trump contract, and partner's suit is one lead from being established, you should win the next defensive trick and lead partner's suit. That way partner won't have to burn what might be the only entry to his hand (as is the case here). So, win the CK (second-hand high), return a spade and wait for partner to get in with the CA to run his spades.

**Page 53, Kantar** – delay pulling trump against a forcing defense

South is playing a normal 4H contract in South's nice 6 card suit, with A 7 of trumps in dummy. South has 9 top tricks, 6 hearts, one diamond and 2 clubs. The only play for South to make another trick and the contract is to set up the fourth diamond. If the diamonds go 4-1 or 5-0, there is no chance to make this contract without a gift. But most of the time they will split 3-2.

The best defense is for East/West is to keep playing spades whenever they get in with a diamond winner, trying to shorten declarer's trump. They will get in twice, forcing declarer to ruff three times: once on the second spade lead (the opening lead is a spade and they are continued), and twice when the defense gets in with their two diamond winners.

If hearts are 3-2, that's fine, and most of time they will be. However, this is not the case here, as you can see by the full diagram. Declarer will lose control of the hand if he pulls trump right away. He needs to first (before pulling trump) work on establishing the tenth trick, in his second suit.

Delaying the pulling of trumps allows you to ruff the third round of spades in dummy, rather than in your hand. You still retain four trumps in your hand to pull defenders' trump later. Also in this case, since you have all the high trump, an over ruff is not a problem.

Playing diamonds (declarer's second suit) instead of pulling trump right away is the key to this hand. Delaying pulling trump is often the remedy to a forcing defense.

**Page 54, Boehm** – anticipating the next call

A famous chess saying is "If you find a good move, look for a better one." The same is true for bridge. Sometimes there's an obvious bid, but if you thought about how the auction is likely to go you can find a better one.

Boehm's article is all about anticipating where the auction is likely to go and how to plan your bids accordingly. In column 1 he shows a deal that many players would open 1C. They would then have a problem over partner's likely 1H bid (there are 12 hearts out – it is likely that partner will have 4 or more and bid them). You cannot follow up with a 2D bid (that shows 17+ points – a reverse – that might force partner to bid 3C if he liked club as much or better than diamonds). So the best you could do is bid 2C on your raggedy club suit. Many would anticipate this problem by opening 1D and then bidding 2C over the likely 1H response. But then partner will likely return you to diamonds if he likes diamonds as well as clubs. You could end up in a 4-3 diamond fit when clubs would be better. Boehm suggests a 1 NT opening to avoid this problem.

The next hand Boehm shows has a big fit for partner's hearts, a good club suit, and a void in spades. So when partner bids 1H, you bid 4H (preemptive, lots of hearts, but no slam interest). Not surprisingly the opponents find a 4S bid. Partner passes (he would have doubled if he liked defending spades). With your void in spades, and likely only one defensive trick in clubs, you don't want to defend spades either. The quick, non-thinking bid is 5H. But the better bid is 5C. Partner should convert this to 5H – you've already shown a bid fit for his hearts so you don't want to play clubs. But by bidding 5C you've told him what to lead should you end up on defense (the opponents may go to 5S).