

May 2019 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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Page 26-29, Colchamiro – *Side-suit bidding*

After we agree on a major

After major suit agreement, any bid other than spades is typically a help suit game try in the agreed-upon major. For example: 1♠-P-2♠-P | 3♣. With “help” —useful honors or shortness—in clubs, you (responder) bid game, 4♠. Lacking “help,” bids 3♠.

In the auction 1♠-P-3♠-P | 4♣, auction (3S is a limit raise), 4♣ is a control bid in clubs showing slam interest. No “help” is required for game; spades has already been established and partner (opener) has placed the contract at the game level (but not actually in game). If game were all that partner was interested in, he would have just bid 4♠. So the 4♣ shows interest in slam.

After we agree on a minor

After you have agreed on a minor and then bid a major, you are not showing length in the major; you are showing stoppers up the line. With both majors stopped, bid notrump. With only one major stopped you would bid the major you have stopped. Both partners bid the majors up the line to show stoppers as you would prefer a notrump contract to a minor contract if possible. Notrump pays much better.

Typically we don’t show/worry about a stopper in the unbid minor. Opponents usually lead a major against the notrump contract because they know you don’t have a major fit. Course, if the opponents bid the minor then you need to have it stopped. If you are short in the unbid minor, you should keep both the agreed upon minor and notrump as options as you bid the hand.

Identifying the danger suits for notrump

When we are exploring for a notrump contract we should look for stoppers in the suit(s) the defense is likely to lead. If you want to ask partner if he has a stopper in a suit that an opponent bid, you should cue bid their suit. This does not confirm or deny a stopper on your part, it merely asks about partner’s stop. Sometimes one stopper is enough, and sometimes it’s not. Partner should bid notrump with a stopper.

If there are two danger suits (e.g., the opponents have made a two-suited overcall of some kind), when you bid one of the danger suits you are showing you have that one stopped and are looking to see if partner has the other one stopped.

If there are two danger suits, a bid of one of them shows a stop; if there is only one danger suit, bidding it asks partner to bid notrump with a stop. It is critical for you and partner to understand when you are showing and when you are asking.

Don't worry, be happy

You hold: ♠KJ5 ♥972 ♦A873 ♣KQ6. If partner opens 1C, without any bidding by the opponents, you would bid 3N (13-15 HCP, flat, no four-card major). If RHO overcalls 2♠, weak, (or 1♠, not weak), you would still bid 3N. Although you could get hurt in hearts, it's not likely. Opponents are probably leading spades, given the spade call, and your partner has an opener. It is likely that partner has some points in hearts.

Page 45, Parrish – *Passing*

First deal

When you have already shown your values and you are in the direct position (your partner has a bid coming), don't show the same values twice. Pass.

Second deal

Even though you have an opening hand, you may not have a bid after RHO opens. Holding ♠A9 ♥KQ73 ♦KJ76 ♣854, you have no bid after RHO opens 1♣. You must pass. A double promises a big hand (about 17+ points) or an opener with at least three-card support for the all three unbid suits. Your hand does not meet these criteria (no third spade, no 17+ points). You also lack a decent five-card suit in which to overcall, so you must pass.

If LHO also passes, partner must balance any time he has at least 8 points. He can reopen with a double if he doesn't have a suit worth bidding.

Third deal

Having opened this 4333 minimum hand, you might be tempted to pass after RHO calls over partner's 1♥ bid. Do not pass when you have four cards in partner's major. You have an added feature in a heart contract. Often with eight trumps you can take eight tricks and make your two-level contract.

If you had only three hearts, you would make a support double, showing exactly three-card support for partner's suit. With fewer than three hearts, you couldn't pass fast enough.

Page 48, Helms – *Leading a singleton (or not)*

A singleton is often the best lead against a trump contract. The idea is that you will get a ruff in that suit when declarer gets in. However, it is usually wrong to lead a singleton when the auction and your hand suggest that partner will not be able to get in to give you the ruff. The more points you have, the fewer points available for partner to have.

You should not lead a singleton when you have natural trump trick. You don't want to ruff with a trump that would have been good anyway. You are making it easier on declarer by shortening your long trumps.