

June 2019 ACBL Bulletin Notes

Jeff Kroll
Sam Khayatt

Smooth Operators | Third quarter, page 15-16

Both expert Easts (Becker and Weinstein) made a weak 2H bid on a five-card suit, holding only three HCP (the HK). This a routine bid when you're in third position and non-vulnerable opposite vulnerable opponents. The opponents almost certainly have a vulnerable game (if not a slam) and you need to get in the way of their auction. Take up the bidding room and make them guess.

Beginning players are taught to pre-empt at the two-level with a six-card suit, at the three-level with a seven-card suit and at the four-level with an eight-card suit. This is good general advice. But there is more to preempting than that. Just as advancing players move beyond strict adherence to high-card point counts, they also move on to more flexible pre-empts.

Spring Fever | A cut above, page 24

This hand is a clear example of trump promotion. Trump promotion – also known as an “uppercut” – occurs when you ruff high, or put yourself in a position to ruff high, in order to set up a trump trick that you otherwise wouldn't get.

North makes a normal HQ lead against 4S. Since good players rarely underlead an ace on the opening lead (although it is often correct to underlead them later in the play), declarer plays low from dummy. Now North makes it easy on South by cashing the CA. Doing this, setting up the KQ in dummy, shows that North does not want a club return. Since dummy is void in diamonds, a diamond return also looks wrong. North then plays the HJ (high-low), and South understands that North is now void in hearts.

South makes the good play, rising with the HA and returning a heart. This promotes a trump trick for North/South. If West does not rise with the SA or SK, North will get a ruff, setting the contract: two hearts, the CA and a ruff. If West does rise with a spade honor, he just delays the inevitable. Now South's SQ or SJ will be high on the second round of trumps for the setting trick.

It's Your Call | Problem 2

This is an example of using negative inferences to figure out the distribution around the table.

In third chair, partner opens a diamond. Righty bids a spade, you pass with what looks like a weak hand, lefty passes and partner bids 3C. When partner jumps in clubs, it is likely he is at least 5-5 in the minors. When LHO doesn't raise his partner's spade overcall, it is likely that he has two or fewer spades. You only have only one spade. East bid only 1S and didn't rebid them. So, partner should have at least three spades and very few, if any, hearts. Sanborn, Boehm, Korbel and Cohen figure that out. With diamond and club support, the aggressive bidders bid 5D for the top score. More cautious bidders bid 4D to invite. The super-aggressive bidders cue bid spades, looking for slam.

Parrish, Page 45

This column discusses when to pass after you have previously bid in a competitive auction.

If you are in the direct seat (meaning your partner has a bid coming) and your previous bids have already described your hand, pass. Your partner is in a better position than you to make the decision on when to bid on. He knows more (or at least as much) about your hand than you know about his.

If you are in the balancing seat (meaning partner does not have another bid coming), you are now forced to make the decision for the partnership. Often it is still right to pass if you have completely described your hand; partner has the information and has chosen not to act. However, if you judge that you will get a poor result by passing (e.g., your opponents have stopped in in 2H with a known eight-card fit), you should take a chance and bid on.