

September 2021 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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The articles that we think are the most beneficial to most players are:

1. "The Bidding Box" moderated by Josh Donn, Problem 6 (p. 38). The ***Bridge Bulletin*** auction shows how to reach the excellent 6S contract which both pairs missed. The key bid was cue bidding clubs twice to show a void.
2. "It's Your Call" by Sue Munday and Karen Walker, deal 1 (p.4). In an auction that has a double call that is not clearly defined but does show extra values, the majority of the panel bids 3NT with a stopper in the opponents' suit (spades).
3. "Parrish the Thought" by Adam Parrish (p. 45) explains the logic in declaring when the defense gets off to a lead you don't expect.
4. "Reasoning with Robert" by Robert Todd (p. 46), explains how playing responder's 1NT response to a major as being semi-forcing has advantages.
5. "Lessons Learned" by Michael Berkowitz (p. 48) explains when to duck and the importance of ducking in tempo.
6. "Ask Jerry" by Jerry Helms (p. 51) explains game-suit help tries and that honors are worth more together than scattered.
7. "Mike's Bridge Lesson" by Mike Lawrence (p.52) discusses when to force declarer to ruff. By paying attention to partner's carding, you can return a card that partner will either win or ruff.

Our favorites

Page 38, "The Bidding Box," Problem 6, by Josh Donn—*Cue bidding*

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ A J 10 7 5 3	♠ K 9 6 4 2
♥ 10 6	♥ K 3
♦ Q J 10 9 3	♦ A K 6
♣ —	♣ 10 9 4

	West	East	
		1♠	
A splinter, showing at most one club, at least four spades, and enough for game. With a known 11 card spade fit, and a decent five-card side suit, West knows there is enough for a spade game, and maybe a spade slam if the hands fit	4♣	4♦	Cue bid, showing a diamond control. With a known nine-card spade fit (or longer) and at most one club loser, West's hand went from being a mediocre opener to a strong hand.
Denies a heart control and shows a void in clubs. Cue bidding the same suit twice shows a void. Controls are bid up the line; holding the ♥A, West would have bid 4♥.	5♣	6♠	West expects to lose just the ♥A. With the club void and the long spades, it is likely West will cover the diamond loser in the East hand.

Page 45, "Parrish the Thought" by Adam Parrish—*Why that lead?*

			♠ 8 7 4
			♥ K Q 9 8
			♦ J 6 3
			♣ A Q 3
			♠ A 3
			♥ A J 10 4 3
			♦ K Q
			♣ J 8 7 5
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♠	2♠	Dbl	1♥
All Pass			4♥

When the defenders have bid and raised a suit, they normally lead it. If they don't, it's generally for a good reason. Good reasons for not leading their suit are:

1. Not wanting to lead or under-lead the ace. Both are usually poor leads.
2. Another lead is even better, such as:
 - Trump if they believe declarer will be ruffing in the short hand
 - A singleton to try to get a ruff
 - The top of a nice sequence

The double of the 2♠ bid is lead-directing. Holding the ♠A, declarer knows West is does not have to consider leading or under-leading it. Looking at his hand and dummy, declarer can see that it is unlikely that West has a nice club holding. So, the ♣4 must be a singleton.

Declarer must win the ♣A and immediately draw trump. Allow the defense the ♣K and discard the losing spade on the ♦J.

Page 52, “Mike’s Bridge Lesson” by Mike Lawrence— Force declarer to ruff

		♠ J 3	
		♥ 10 7 6 4	
		♦ J 7 5	
		♣ 10 9 6 3	
♠ 10 8 5 2			♠ Q 9
♥ A J 3	N		♥ Q 9 5
♦ 3	W † E		♦ Q 10 8 6 4 2
♣ A K J 7 5	S		♣ Q 2
		♠ A K 7 6 4	
		♥ K 8 2	
		♦ A K 9	
		♣ 8 4	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2♣	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	All Pass	Dbl

West, leads the ♣A, picking up the ♣3, ♣2 and ♣4

The ♣A is the proper lead. When we have four or more trumps, we typically do *not* want to ruff. We want to force declarer to ruff in the long hand. Our goal is to get to a point where our trump holding is longer than declarer’s and so declarer loses control of the hand. The ♦3 would be a poor lead.

East should follow with the ♣2. The queen is too important a card to use as a signal on trick one. Many partnerships have an agreement that playing a queen under partner’s ace promises the jack or shows a singleton. Neither applies here.

West, having seen all the club spots except the ♣Q and ♣8, evaluates the suit. Holding three clubs (♣Q82), East would have raised the 2♣ bid to 3♣. Holding the ♣82 doubleton, East would have played the ♣8 on the first trick, not the ♣2 (assuming standard signals). So, East started with either the ♣Q2 doubleton or the ♣2 singleton.

Whatever East’s holding, West now needs to play a low club. East will either win the ♣Q, if he started with ♣Q2, or will ruff, if he started with the ♣2 singleton. Note that we *do* want to ruff in the East hand – the EW hand that is short in trump.

In this case, East would win the ♣Q and return heart, leading toward the weakness in the board. West would continue clubs at every opportunity, eventually setting the contract two or three.