

December 2021 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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We think most players will find these articles useful:

1. "It's Your Call" by Sue Munday and Karen Walker, page 42, Deal 1. Thinking tricks and proper hand evaluation gets South to the likely making small slam.
2. "Card Play 101" by Philip Alder, page 46. The second deal is an example of when to make the hand with the shorter trumps as the master. This is rarely done, but when the hand with the shorter trumps is able to pull the opponents' trumps, then a dummy reversal could be the correct way to play the hand. It is in this case.
3. "Bidding Basics" by Larry Cohen, page 51. Cohen lists the essential conventions, and conventions that are important but not essential, and advanced conventions. Cohen recommends that 99% of ACBL members should limit their conventions to those on his lists. Having said that, we are huge IDAK fans.
4. "Ask Jerry" by Jerry Helms, Page 53. Helms explains the difference between a responder and an advancer and the differences in responses and advances.
5. "Mike's Bridge Lesson," by Mike Lawrence, page 54. Lawrence describes how to identify and handle the danger hand.
6. "The Real Deal, Cohen, Page 57. Cutting communications between the defenders to make the contract.
7. "Bidding Matters: Relearning Bridge" by Karen Walker, page 60. Walker describes common errors when playing Stayman, and why doubling to show a "stolen bid" is an ineffective use of the double.

We recommend the system described Michael Berkowitz in his "Lessons Learned" column on page 48 of the February 2021 ACBL *Bulletin*.

8. "Test Your Play" by Eddie Kantar, Page 61. In deal 2, Kantar explains the difference between declaring this hand at IMPS and declaring it in matchpoints.

Our Favorites

“It’s Your Call” by Sue Munday and Karen Walker (p.42) – Hand evaluation, Kaplan/Rubens style

The hands in this month’s column are evaluated using the K & R evaluator, which can be found at <http://www.jeff-goldsmith.org/cgi-bin/knr.cgi> . Using this technique enables players to get to slam on the first deal.

1. Upgrading the upgrade			
Matchpoints. None vulnerable.			
♠A Q 5 ♥A 6 ♦K Q 7 4 2 ♣A 10 9			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	4NT	Pass	2NT
?			?
<i>Call</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Award</i>	
6♦	4	100	
5♦	4	90	
6NT	3	70	
5♠	1	70	
Pass	3	60	

Many will view this as a 19-point hand and open it 1♦, planning to bid 2NT (18-19 pints) on the second bid. For advanced players, it’s a clear 2NT opener. An advanced algorithm shows this at a 19.85 count.

We would evaluate it as follows:

- 19 HCP
- +1 for the three aces (per Bergen)
- +0.5 for the AQ combination in spades
- + 1 for the fifth diamond in a suit

21.50 is a tad strong for a typical. 20-21 2NT opener. But we like to open notrump whenever we can, as it makes the bidding easier and “right sides” the contract more often.

4NT bid is quantitative, inviting slam.

Larry Cohen, one of the panelists who got the top award for bidding 6♦, noted that this is a great trick-taking hand. Steve Robinson, another 6♦ bidder, observes that without a four-card major, partner should have diamond support. Those that bid 5♦ noted that it was natural and forcing. It doesn’t commit to slam, but it is looking for it. Jeff Meckstroth makes the matchpoint call of 6NT.

Those that took the low road and passed did so because of the poor spots in the diamond suit. They got the bottom award for being so timid.

“Ask Jerry” by Jerry Helms (p.53) – Plan a second bid before making your first

Dear Jerry,
My LHO opened 1♦, partner doubled, and holding:

♠K 6 4 3 ♥A 10 8 4 ♦6 3 2 ♣J 5,

I followed the rule by responding “up the line,” bidding 1♥. When my LHO rebid 2♦, and partner passed, I was reluctant to bid again. We had a 4-4 spade fit, and could easily make 2♠ even though partner held minimum values for his double. Where did we go wrong?

Confused

Up the line bidding only applies to when you are responding to the opening bidder. As Jerry says, *Always plan a second bid before you choose a first.*”

In this case Confused needs to bid a spade in response to partner’s double. That way, on Confused’s second bid, he can bid 2♥. Then partner can choose between 2♥ and 2♠ at the two level. If Confused bids hearts first and then spades, partner will be forced to go to the three-level if he prefers hearts.

The main point is if you plan ahead, you can make it easier on yourself by not having to memorize too many rules.

“Bidding Matters: Relearning Bridge” by Karen Walker (p. 60) – How not to respond to 1N

Walker makes the following points:

1. Do not use Stayman if a possible rebid by partner puts you in a position where you are forced to make a bad bid.
2. With a weak hand and 5-4 in the majors, it’s best to just transfer to the five-card major than to make a Stayman call. If make a Stayman call and partner bids 2♦, bidding a major (spades, in the example) shows invitational values.
3. When opener rebids the “wrong” major in response to your Stayman call, do not show the “right” major. Partner know you hold at least one four-card major or you would not have made the Stayman call.
4. It is almost never correct to transfer to a five-card minor. You do not want to be playing at the three-level in a 5-2 fit.
5. “Stolen bid” - aside from X of 2♣ for Stayman – is not the best use of a double. Some players use them as takeout at all levels. Walker prefers:
 - a. Penalty at the two-level
 - b. Takeout at the three-level