

March 2022 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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These are the columns that we believe are the most beneficial to our readers:

1. "The Bidding Box," moderated by Josh Donn.
 - a. Problem 2 (p. 38) The 3C bid by Sealy, described as "inventing" a jump shift in a minor, is a standard bid to show a hand of this strength: ♠AQ2 ♥AKT765 ♦A ♣JT5.
 - b. Problem 6 (p. 40) Get out early when there is a misfit.
2. "Card Play 101" by Phillip Alder (p. 46). Use Roman Key Card 3014, not 1430, when the trump suit is a minor.
3. "Ask Jerry" by Jerry Helms (p. 53) In the auction 1♣ – 1♦ – X, responder's double guarantees 4-4 in the majors. In the auction 1♣ – 2♦ – X, responder's double does NOT guarantee 4-4 in the majors.
4. "Chalk Talk: Do it right" by Eddie Kantar (p. 55) Consider the order in which you work on your suits. Tempo is often a critical factor in making your contract.
5. "Better Bridge with Bergen: Improve your bidding judgment – part 10" by Marty Bergen (p.59) In fourth seat, use your judgment instead of strictly adhering to the Rule of 15 (open if the sum of your HCP and number of spades is 15 or more).
6. "Bidding Matters: Relearning bridge – part 24" by Karen Walker (p.60) Improving your hand evaluation will improve your game.
7. "Consults with the Doctor: 4NT after Stayman, Jacoby and Texas" by Dr. James Marsh Sternberg (p. 65). 4NT by responder after a Jacoby transfer response over 1NT or 2NT is quantitative, never Blackwood.

Our Favorites

As we are strong adherents of the importance of hand evaluation to become a better player, and limiting the use of conventions. We chose Bergen's and Walker's columns to discuss.

"Better Bridge with Bergen: Improve your bidding judgement – part 10 by Marty Bergen (p.59)

Bergen evaluates several fourth-seat opening hands:

① ♠43 ♥KQ108 ♦1097 ♣AQ98

Even though this hand has only 11 hcp and not great distribution it should be opened 1♣:

1. Honors with honors add value
2. Honors in the longer suits add value
3. 2 ½ quick tricks (KQ = 1 quick trick, AQ = 1 ½ quick tricks)
4. Great intermediates

② ♠KQ5 ♥K ♦K643 ♣AJ953

Open this 1NT as you won't have a good rebid if you open it 1♣ and partner responds with a likely heart bid. Plan your second bid before making your first bid.

③ ♠2 ♥AQJ97 ♦K1093 ♣1092

Open this 2♥. You have nice distribution, your high cards are in your long suits, you have great intermediates and you want to block the opponents from bidding spades if possible.

④ ♠KJ ♥J65 ♦QJ54 ♣AJ98

Open this 1♣ instead of the normal 1♦ bid as you plan to bid 1NT on your second bid. Plan your second bid before making your first bid.

"Bidding Matters: Relearning bridge – part 24" by Karen Walker. (p.60)

Upgrading your bidding system is useful, but the fastest and most effective way to improve is to learn how to properly evaluate a hand.

Expert players re-evaluate their hands throughout the auction. Fit with partner and honor locations can add to or subtract from the value of a hand.

For example, sometimes a void is worth a lot more than three points and sometimes it's a liability. Depends on what partner holds.

We like Larry Cohen's approach of adding as few conventions as possible. Add what you can remember and what makes sense to you. His approach is described here: <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/read-this-first-what-should-we-play>