

April 2022 ACBL *Bridge Bulletin* Notes

Jeff Kroll
Sam Khayatt

These are the articles that we believe will help our readers the most:

1. “Bridge By Numbers” by Simon Cocheme (p.28) When playing a strong 1 NT bid (15-17), the notrump bidder is almost twice as likely to have 15 points as 17 points. When responder has a poor nine count, game is against the odds.
2. “The Bidding Box,” moderated by Josh Donn, Problem 4 (p.39) The *Bridge Bulletin* auction shows a reasonable way, missed by both contestant pairs, to find 6NT, the best matchpoint score.
3. “It’s Your Call” by Sue Munday and Karen Walker, Deal 3, (p 43) The majority of the panel won’t bid 1♠ in response to partner’s 1♥ opener with ♠T983 ♥Q83 ♦K ♣AJT75. Cohen and Meckstroth are the two 1♠ bidders; Robinson states that 1♠ is the worst response.
4. “Parrish the Thought: Feign a Pitch” by Adam Parrish (p. 47). As declarer, use deception to mislead the defense as to your actual holding. In this example, Parrish makes it look like he will get a needed pitch. If true, the defenders need to take their tricks in a hurry (an active defense). However, in this case, the opposite is true and the defense would be better-served with a passive approach.
5. “Reasoning with Robert: Defense – more third hand play at trick one” by Robert Todd (p. 48) Sometimes, instead of automatically playing “third hand high”, it is better to hold up on the first lead of your suit in notrump to keep communications open with partner.
6. “The Real Deal: Even the best” by Larry Cohen (p. 57) Ruff losers as high as you can afford before drawing trump. After drawing trump, discard the remaining losers on side-suit winners.
7. “Challenge of the Month” (p. 57) The lead of a king usually promises the queen. Duck the ♣K opening lead and later finesse against the ♣Q.
8. “Boehm on Bridge: Trump management – part 2” by August Boehm (p 58) If the trump suit is the entry to a long side suit, delay drawing trump until after that suit is set up.
9. “Better Bridge with Bergen: Improve your bidding judgment – part 11” by Marty Bergen (p. 59) Upgrade your hand when appropriate to arrive at the right contract and take all your chances to make the contract.
10. “Mike’s Advice: A proper order for everything” by Mike Lawrence (p 62) This column describes a nifty strip-and-end play deal where both opponents are end-played, allowing declarer to take two club tricks.

Our Favorites

“The Bidding Box,” moderated by Josh Donn, Problem 4 (p.39)

Problem 4

West deals. Both vulnerable.

West

♠ A 10 9

♥ K

♦ A J

♣ K Q J 10 5 3 2

East

♠ K Q 2

♥ A 7 5 2

♦ K 9 7 5 3

♣ 7

The opponents are silent. We like *Bridge Bulletin* auction:

West	East
1♣	1♦ (a)
3N (b)	4N (c)
6N (d)	

Notes

- (a) Some would skip the diamond suit and bid 1H, but we like showing the longer diamonds when we have a good hand (a good 10 point minimum), as we are strong enough to bid the hearts on our next bid.
- (b) This is the key bid in the sequence. It is not standard, but it is the best bid available. The hand is definitely going to game after partner responds. The hand is too strong for 3♣. In this sequence, 3N should show solid clubs; these clubs are almost solid. A singleton king in a major often works as a stopper in notrump, as the aces are often underled. 3N does show the strength of the hand – and roughly shows its shape.
- (c) 4N is quantitative, inviting slam.
- (d) This is close to a 2♣ opener, so West accepts.

“Better Bridge with Bergen: Improve your bidding judgment – part 11” by Marty Bergen (p. 59)

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

You upgrade your 19 HCP to 20 because of the three aces. And the ♦T is likely to be useful in a four-card suit headed by the AJ. Furthermore, you want to declare NT so that the likely spade lead is coming to your ♠K, not *through* it.

Partner raises to 3N and the opponents’ lead an expected spade, the ♠7. You win the ♠K.

You have six top tricks: one spade, two hearts, one diamond and two clubs.

To pick up the extra tricks in clubs, you need the ♣Q to be onside and the suit to split 3-2; a 34% chance.

To pick up the diamond suit you just need the ♦K to be onside; a 50% chance.

So, to take all your chances, you play the ♣A and ♣K, hoping that the ♣Q falls. That’s about a 40% chance. When it doesn’t fall, abandon clubs and take the diamond finesse. Take all your chances.

When you take the diamond finesse, start with the ♦9 so you can continue with the ♦Q on the second diamond lead. This guards against East holding ♦K8xx. You will need to finesse against East three times if that is East’s holding. This works. Making.

“Mike’s Advice: A proper order for everything” by Mike Lawrence (p 62)

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

West leads the ♥4. Declarer has three certain losers: ♠AK and the ♣A –unless the defense crashes the ♠AK.

The key to this deal is not to lose a second club and to take: three spades, two hearts, two heart ruffs, one diamond and two clubs, for a total of ten tricks.

The only way to take both the ♣K and ♣Q is not to pull trump immediately. The first order of business is to take all the red winners, and trump all the red losers before letting the defense in. Strip the hand.

Then throw in West with a trump. West must either lead a club or give declarer a sluff and a ruff by leading a red suit. If he leads a club, declarer ducks in dummy and wins East’s ♣J with the ♣Q.

Next, declarer throws in East in with the ♠K. East either gives declarer a sluff and a ruff by leading a red suit or makes dummy’s ♣K good by leading the ♣A. Making.