

October 2022 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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These are the articles that we believe will benefit our readers the most.

1. “The Bidding Box” moderated by Josh Donn (p. 38-41)
 - Problem 5. Both the contestant auctions and the *Bridge Bulletin* auction use a 4♦ cue bid to show a choice of suits – and not just the majors. Both *Bridge Bulletin* auction and one contestant auction found the difficult-to-find highest-scoring spot: 6♣.
 - Problem 6. In the *Bridge Bulletin* auction the opener self-splinters to find the highest-scoring 6♠ contract.
 - Problem 7. The *Bridge Bulletin* auction jumps to 3NT (in response to a 1♦ open) with a stiff ♥K. The defense has no clues from the bidding as to what to do. Holding the ♥A and length, Righty will likely lead a fourth-best heart making the ♥K good.
2. “Parrish the Thought: Partner didn’t lead a singleton” by Adam Parrish (p. 47). Side-suit singletons, if they exist, are almost always led against a suit contract. So, if partner does not lead a certain suit, it is unlikely that partner holds a singleton in it. An unsupported ace is generally a poor opening lead. However, later in the deal (after you have seen the dummy) it is sometimes the best lead as you can make declarer guess the location of missing honors.
3. “Reasoning with Robert: Third-seat opening bids” by Robert S. Todd (p. 48). In third seat we can open hands that we would not open in first or second seat. One reason for doing so is to suggest partner lead a specific suit on the opening lead – even if that suit is a very good *four*-card major. A second reason is simply to take the opponents’ bidding room – especially if our suit is a major. At favorable vulnerability, some players might pre-empt with a decent *five*-card suit.
4. “Challenge of the Month,” (p. 52). As is often the case, the key play is made at trick one. In this case declarer must unblock the ♠A at trick one to create a spade entry to dummy’s good clubs.
5. “Ask Jerry” by Jerry Helms (p. 53). While commenting on reverses, Helms gives an example where he would open 1N with a singleton K rather than reverse.
6. “Mike’s Bridge Lesson: A complete balancing auction” by Mike Lawrence (p. 54). When, as a defender, you have natural trump tricks, do not try to ruff with them. Instead, try to set up tricks in the other suits.
7. “Better Bridge with Bergen: Improve your bidding judgement – part 17” by Marty Bergen (p. 59). Bergen presents an example of when to open 1NT with a stiff ♠K.

8. “Mike’s Advice: Opening bid problems with follow-up bids” by Mike Lawrence (p. 62). Lawrence makes a case for passing some hands that could be opened but where a descriptive rebid may not exist. He notes that you will likely have another chance to bid and doing so in the context of other bids will enable you to make a more accurate bid. He also gives examples of bids that are not textbook-perfect, but are the best you can do: a 1N rebid with the singleton ♠T, after partner responds 1♠ to your 1m open, and an opening 1N with two major-suit doubletons, one of which is a weak doubleton.

Our Favorites

“Parrish the Thought: Partner didn’t lead a singleton” by Adam Parrish (p. 47).

	♠ K J 6 2										
	♥ K Q J 8 7										
	♦ 5 4										
	♣ 8 7										
♠ 4 3	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">+ - +</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	+ - +	E		S		♠ A 5
	N										
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	S										
♥ 10 5		♥ A 9 4 3 2									
♦ Q 10 8 6		♦ A 7 3 2									
♣ K 6 5 3 2		♣ 9 4									
	♠ Q 10 9 8 7										
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	♦ K J 9										
	♣ A Q J 10										

You are East, defending against 4♠ by South after a 1♠ – 3♠ (limit raise) | 4♠ auction.

Partner makes the unfortunate lead of the ♣2 (we would lead a fourth-best ♣3; it would still be unfortunate). Declarer wins the ♣Q. You know that partner, a strong defender, would not underlead an ace, so declarer has the ♣A. Therefore, partner is not winning the club honor strongly suggested by the lead as the dummy will be void in clubs after the second round.

Your three aces hold declarer to the ten tricks he needs for his contract. Where will you get the fourth trick to set him? The only possible loser declarer has is a second diamond. If you cash your three aces and lead a diamond, you will set the contract if partner has the ♦K. However, cashing the ♦A will hand declarer the contract on a silver platter if declarer has the ♦K.

The proper play is a small diamond. It forces declarer to guess who has the ♦Q and who has the ♦A. Most declarers would play West for the ♦A. Holding the ♦A, West would not have led away from it on the opening lead. Since West did not lead a diamond, there is a good chance he has the ♦A. When you lead a low diamond, South will likely play the ♦Jack, hoping to get West to play the ♦A and make South’s ♦K good. That action will not work out in this instance and South will lose two diamond tricks.

If declarer does guess to play in the ♦K, at least you have given yourself a chance to set the contract.

“Reasoning with Robert: Third-seat opening bids” by Robert S. Todd (p. 48)

♠10 9 2 ♥A K J 9 ♦K 2 ♣9 8 7 2

In third seat, you hold the hand above. The auction proceeds with two passes to you.

Most would stretch to open this hand in third seat. We are not interested in game on this hand as partner has already passed. However, we should open this hand 1♥ to get a heart lead; we definitely do not want a club lead.

If partner should raise we have a reasonable chance of making 2♥ in a 4-3 fit with such a strong trump holding. If we end up defending, we get the heart lead we want.

Challenge of the Month, Page 52.

The key decision on many deals is made at trick one. If you carelessly win the ♠J or ♠T, East will hold up the ♣K when you run the ♣T at trick two. On the third trick you can either take the

♠ K 9 8 5 3 ♥ J 9 7 2 ♦ A 10 4 ♣ 6	N W —+— E S	♠ Q 7 2 ♥ 8 5 ♦ 9 2 ♣ A Q J 9 8 4	♠ 6 4 ♥ Q 10 3 ♦ J 7 6 5 ♣ K 7 5 2
♠ A J 10 ♥ A K 6 4 ♦ K Q 8 3 ♣ 10 3			
West North East South Pass 3NT All Pass 1NT			
West leads the ♠5. What's your plan?			

losing club finesse or win your ♣A. Either way you go down. If you take the losing finesse, you will not be able to use spades as transportation to the dummy. If you win the ♣A, you will get that trick, but East will win the next club trick and you will again not be able to use spades to get to dummy.

If instead you win the ♠A at trick one, you will be able to knock out the ♣K and then use the ♠Q as an entry to the rest of the clubs.

West's ♠5 lead is probably fourth-best and West probably has the ♠K. When East does not play the ♠K at trick two, he likely does not have it.

The ♠Q, likely sitting behind the ♠K, will be the entry to the clubs.