

May 2023 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 Problem 4 (p.41). The *Bridge Bulletin* auction shows how thinking ahead and a bit of creativity result in the best contract. Both pairs had the same auction: East forced to game with 2♣ and then supported spades. West signed off in 4♠. With these holdings, 3NT is superior contract to 4♠. With an aceless 14-HCP flat hand, East must offer notrump as a possible contract, if not insist on it. The *Bridge Bulletin* auction demonstrates one method to get there.
2. "It's Your Call" by Sue Munday and Karen Walker, Deal 1 (p.44). Despite South holding only 14 HCP, the winning call was a jump to 3♥. Think tricks, not points. The hearts are solid. When LHO passes behind you and RHO bids in front of you, it increases the chance that your honors will be good. This is the case with the spade honors in the South hand.
3. "Parrish the Thought: Third hand high" by Adam Parrish (p. 49). Play third hand high to establish a trick for your side. If nothing can be established for your side, just play low.
4. "Reasoning with Robert: Which type of hand do you hold?" by Robert S. Todd (p. 50) Todd compares offensive-oriented hands to defense-oriented ones. Long suits with high cards are offensively oriented; long suits usually take a lot of tricks. However, these same cards are likely to be ruffed on defense. Honors in short suits (especially the opponents' suit) will be more valuable on defense.
5. "Lessons Learned: How to use dummy" by Michael Berkowitz (p.52). Identify the safest way to make your tricks. Setting up dummy's five-card suit will work 100% of the time; a finesse works only 50% of the time.
6. "Bidding Basics: Negative doubles continued" by Larry Cohen (p. 53). When partner opens and RHO bids your suit, it is usually correct to pass. This is a "trap pass." You are expecting partner to make a re-opening double, which you will convert to penalty by passing. You have length and strength in the trump suit behind the presumed declarer. Partner opened, so he has values.
7. "Ask Jerry" by Jerry Helms (p. 55). Helms recommends fourth-suit forcing to game (rather than for just one round) to conserve bidding room when exploring for slam.
8. "Chalk Talk" by Eddie Kantar (p 57). When you have a slow loser, your priority should be to get rid of it (usually by discarding it) before the opps convert it to a fast loser. In this case, the opps can get in twice in trump (spades), so you must delay drawing trump until after the discard has been established.
9. "The Real Deal: Better than double dummy" by Larry Cohen (p. 59). When planning your play (as declarer or as defender), remember that the opponents cannot see through the cards. They must make decisions based on imperfect information; you might cause them to make a wrong one.
10. "Better Bridge with Bergen: Improve your bidding judgement – part 24" by Marty Bergen (p. 61). This is another "tricks, not points" column. When deciding whether or not to super-accept Jacoby transfer, consider quick trick, aces, quacks (queens and jacks) and intermediate spots.

11. Consults with the Doctor: The art of balancing in the 21st century (continued)” by Dr. James Marsh Sternberg (p. 67). This article includes a nice discussion of a scrambling 2NT advance of partner’s takeout double.
12. “Dear Billy” by Billy Miller (p. 69). At matchpoints, it is sometimes worth the risk to play NT instead of a known eight-card major.

Our Favorites

“The Bidding Box” moderated by Josh Donn Problem 4 (p.41)

Both pairs had the same wooden auction, ending in the doomed 4S contract which loses a heart and three clubs.

Problem 4
 West deals. Both vulnerable.

<p><i>West</i></p> <p>♠ AK985 ♥ J2 ♦ A9 ♣ J985</p>	<p><i>East</i></p> <p>♠ QJ2 ♥ KQ108 ♦ KQJ ♣ 1074</p>
<p><i>Dahl</i></p> <p><i>Jenkins</i></p> <p>1♠ 3♣ 4♠</p>	<p><i>Oshlag</i></p> <p><i>Winestock</i></p> <p>2♣ 3♠ Pass</p>

The key to getting to the right spot is for East to bid notrump. The recommended auction:

	W	E	
Standard	1♠	1N	An underbid. Waiting to see partner’s next bid before setting contract.
Standard	2♣	3N	Best spot based on solid red suits and a flat hand

If East’s first bid is 2C, the second bid should be 3N.

“The Real Deal: Better than double dummy” by Larry Cohen (p. 59)

Dlr: South ♠ J 4								
Vul: Both ♥ A 10 7 5								
♦ A Q 6								
♣ A Q 9 4								
♠ 7 5 2		♠ K 8						
♥ K Q 8 6 3	W <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>N</td></tr><tr><td>+</td></tr><tr><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>S</td></tr></table> E	N	+	-	E	S	♥ 9 4	
N								
+								
-								
E								
S								
♦ 3		♦ K J 10 7 5 2						
♣ 10 7 6 2		♣ K 8 3						
		♠ A Q 10 9 6 3						
		♥ J 2						
		♦ 9 8 4						
		♣ J 5						

South is declaring 4♠ after a quick 3♠-4♠ auction. West leads the singleton ♦3; East wins the ♦K and returns a low diamond, ruffed by West.

The contract is now cold. Depending on what West leads, declarer can pitch a losing club on a heart, or a losing heart on a club. So, declarer will lose only three tricks, making 4♠.

West leads a low heart. Declarer assumes that East has one of the missing heart honors. If East is allowed to win that heart honor, he might lead a diamond for another ruff. Declarer cannot afford to lose a heart trick and another ruff. Therefore, he goes up with the dummy's ♥A.

Declarer must now depend on the kindness of finesses. After winning the ♥A, he takes the spade finesse. It works! After drawing trump, declarer takes the club finesse. It does not work. Declarer has lost a club and must lose another heart for down one.