

## June 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 (p. 41-44).
  - a. Problem 5: The *Bridge Bulletin* auction finds the best scoring contract by showing the heart length in the first two bids. Both expert pairs got to a poor contract by showing their club length on the second bid. The distribution needs to be shown at a low enough level to avoid a disastrous 4♥ bid.
  - b. Problem 7: The *Bridge Bulletin* auction finds the best-scoring auction by focusing on distribution. Both competitors ended up in a 4♠ contract on a seven-card fit. Spades are unlikely to split well since South has preempted. The experts missed the best scoring nine-card club suit.
  - c. Problem 8: The *Bridge Bulletin* auction finds the best-scoring contract by making an extra bid that finds the grand slam. Both competitors ended up in a small slam that scored well – but not as well as the grand.
2. “It’s Your Call” by Sue Munday and Karen Walker, Deal 3 (p.48). Thirteen of the 16 experts chose the 5♣ control bid, showing an interest in slam and denying a heart control (controls are bid up the line). The 5♣ bid was awarded the highest score. Boehm chose 5♦ as he reasoned that partner does not have a heart control when partner chose to bid 4♦ instead of 3♥ over the 3♦ bid. If partner does not have a heart control, then there is no reason to look for slam when the opponents can cash the ♥AK. Before the 4♦ bid, North has not supported diamonds, so those of us less expert than Boehm would think it would be too early for a control bid in hearts.
3. “Card Play 101” by Phillip Alder (p. 50). Deal 1 presents a common situation where you can use partner’s count to force declarer guess correctly to make his contract. Many novice players would cash the ♦A and then play a diamond, hoping partner has the ♦K. That would hand declarer the contract when declarer has the ♦K. Play a low diamond instead. If partner has the ♦K, you still make the ♦AK. But if declarer has the ♦K, now you make declarer guess when partner has the ♦Q. If declarer guesses that you are leading from the ♦A, declarer puts in the ♦K and makes the contract. But if declarer guesses you are leading from the ♦Q and plays the ♦T, she goes down. Many declarers will play the ♦T and go down as many novice players will cash the ♦A when they have it.
4. “Parrish the Thought: Cover an honor with an honor” by Adam Parrish (p. 51). This is a basic lesson on when to cover. The basic idea is that you should cover an honor with an honor to promote a J, T or 9 to take a trick. If there is no card to promote for your side, do not cover.

5. "Lessons Learned: Don't follow the leader" by Michael Berkowitz (p.54). Don't blindly return partner's lead. Think. In this example, there is a long diamond suit in dummy and an entry to it, the ♣A. Partner's ♥4 lead was made before this information was known. Now it is clear to switch to a club to remove the entry to the long diamonds. And to hold up the ♦Q until there is no longer a diamond in declarer's hand.
6. "Challenge of the Month" (p. 56, 61). Make the contract by setting up the long hearts and paying attention to your entries. Make sure that you save the ♣2 to give yourself the third entry to the long hearts.
7. "Boehm on Bridge: Card School favorites – part 3" by August Boehm (p. 62). Two deals that require proper timing. "Timing" (also called "tempo") is playing your cards in the correct order.
8. "Consults with the Doctor:" The art of balancing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (continued) by Dr. James Marsh Sternberg (p. 69). The topics covered include scrambling 2N, showing two places to play, and balancing with a four-card suit to keep the auction low.

## Our Favorites

### "Card Play 101" by Phillip Alder, Deal 1 (p. 50)

♠ J 10 6		
♥ A 9		
♦ J 9		
♣ A K J 9 6 5		
♠ Q 9 8 3 2	N W—+—E S	♠ A K 4
♥ 5		♥ 6 2
♦ Q 7 6 4 3		♦ A 8 5 2
♣ 10 4		♣ 8 7 3 2
		♠ 7 5
		♥ K Q J 10 8 7 4 3
		♦ K 10
		♣ Q

The auction is brief: South opens 4♥ and everyone passes. Partner leads the ♠3. You win the ♠K and cash the ♠A, partner following with the ♠2. The ♠2 is partner's way of telling you not to continue spades because he holds five of them. Partner knows there is only one more spade out; if you lead it, it will be ruffed.

You need two more tricks to set the contract; they must come from the diamond suit. Resist the urge to lay down the ♦A, hoping that partner has the ♦K. If your side has the ♦AK, you will get your tricks. You need to maximize your chances of getting two tricks when partner does not hold the ♦K.

You must force declarer to guess. Play a small diamond. Declarer must guess whether you are leading from the ♦A or toward it. If declarer puts in the ♦K (just as if she had finessed the ♦K against your ♦A), she makes her contract. If she puts in a lower card, you win when partner holds the ♦Q and leads back to your ♦A.

Many declarers will guess wrong and put in the ♦T, assuming that you would not be leading away from the ♦A, but are likely to be leading away from the ♦Q. Newer players in East's chair might cash the ♦A and newer declarers might be expecting that to happen.

**“Lessons Learned: Don’t follow the leader” by Michael Berkowitz (p.54)**

		♠ 4 3 2	
		♥ 8 7 3	
		♦ A J 10 9 8 3	
		♣ A	
♠ 9 8 7 6			♠ Q J 10 5
♥ J 10 5 4	W	N	♥ A 2
♦ 2	—	—	♦ Q 6 5 4
♣ K J 7 6	E	S	♣ 10 9 8
		♠ A K	
		♥ K Q 9 6	
		♦ K 7	
		♣ Q 5 4 3 2	

South opens 1NT; North bids 3NT, ending the auction.

Partner leads the fourth-best ♥4. Yes, the club suit better but it is often best to lead an unbid major against a notrump contract.

Because you can see both the ♥2 and the ♥3, you know that partner has only four and the opponents have more hearts than your side does. Leading a heart back looks unappealing.

Dummy’s diamonds look like a great source of tricks, so the proper play is to play a club at trick 2 and remove the only non-diamond entry to dummy.

Declarer tries to tempt you by playing the ♦J from dummy. You must duck. You cannot possibly set up a diamond trick for your side by covering. Declarer wins the ♦K and plays a diamond to the dummy. West shows out. So, the only diamond winners for declarer are the ♦AK.

Declarer makes are two spades, two hearts, two diamonds and a club. Down 2.