

September 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. 40-43).
 - a. Problem 1: The *Bridge Bulletin* auction finds the highest scoring 3NT contract. Opener leaves the door open for 3NT, and responder, holding a hand with no ruffing values, gladly accepts. Both contestant pairs bid a dubious 4♥ contract, which could be set with a possible diamond ruff.
 - b. Problem 2: Sometimes 25 HCP is enough for game. However, opposite a maximum 14-count, 11 HCP is not enough to invite unless the hand includes something more – like a reasonable five-card suit.
 - c. Problem 5: Neither pair got to the *Bridge Bulletin* 6NT contract. When West shows six spades, East can count 12 likely tricks if West has even one key card. If East asks, West shows one and East bids 6NT. Both competitor pairs languished in 4♠.
2. “Card Play 101” by Phillip Alder (p. 48).
 - a. Deal 1: Lead a low heart (1) to get partner in with a ruff and (2) to tell partner what suit to lead next. Down 1 for declarer.
 - b. Deal 2: Discard a high club (1) to shorten yourself in that suit so you can ruff and (2) to tell partner to lead it. Another down 1 for declarer.
3. “Challenge of the Month” (p. 55, 59). Manage your entries and prevent the defense from shortening you in trump to make 4♥ in this 4-3 fit.
4. “Mike’s Bridge Lesson: Preempting and then bidding again” by Mike Lawrence (p. 56). After you preempt, doubling the opponents’ bid gives partner the choice of leaving the double in or to raise your suit. NOTE: this treatment requires partnership agreement before being put into practice.
5. “Chalk Talk” by Eddie Kantar (p 57). An example of a strip and three-suited end play.
6. “Build Better Bridge: passing is not just for motorists – part 5” by Maryann Boardman (p. 58). When you have a misfit, it is usually correct to pass before you get doubled. It is rarely correct to try to improve the contract.
7. “Boehm on Bridge: Card School favorites – Part 6” by August Boehm (p. 60).
 - a. Deal 1: Count your tricks and give up on a plan that won’t work.
 - b. Deal 2: Count their tricks and discard a blocking club.
8. “Vic’s Views: Lebensohl over an opponent’s weak two-bid – part 1” by Vic Quiros (p. 68). A good description of the basic lebensohl structure.

Our Favorites

“The Bidding Box” moderated by Josh Donn (p. 40-43), Problem 5.

Problem 5	
North deals. N-S vulnerable.	
<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ 10 9 7 6 5 4	♠ A J 8 2
♥ A J 2	♥ K 5
♦ 8 3	♦ A K 5 4
♣ J 5	♣ A K Q

The *Bridge Bulletin* auction, below, takes an aggressive approach and reaches 6NT. Both contestant pairs reached an ultra-conservative 4♠, for a below-average score.

	W	E	
		2♣	<i>Strong opening bid (24 HCP +1 for three aces)</i>
<i>Waiting</i>	2♦	2NT	<i>22-24 HCP, balanced hand. A slight underbid, but we don't want to miss a spade fit by jumping to 3NT.</i>
<i>Texas transfer. Shows six spades and points for game.</i>	4♥	4NT	<i>Key-card ask. East's hand just got even better.</i>
<i>One key card</i>	5♦	6NT	<i>One is all that is needed.</i>

If we are East, our hand improves when West shows six spades. We have a ten-card fit and will lose only one spade unless South has ♠KQx behind our ♠A.

- If West has the ♠K, we expect to take six spades (unless one opponent has ♠Qxx and we mis-guess) and five minor-suit winners. We can get a twelfth trick if:
 - A heart is led.
 - West has the ♥Q (expecting both the ♠K and the ♥A might be a bit much)
 - North has the ♥A.
 - West has the ♦Q.
 - West has four clubs to the ♣J.
 - West has four clubs and the fourth one sets up.
- If West has the ♥A, we have:
 - Five spade tricks, unless the spades are ♠KQx behind our ♠A. Maybe six if we can finesse against the ♠K.
 - Two heart tricks
 - Two diamond tricks
 - Three club tricks.

Either way, the hand is worth a 6N bid.

“Card Play 101” by Phillip Alder (p. 48), Deal 2.

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

Alder’s column this month focused on defensive carding.

Looking at 14 HCP in his hand and 8 HCP in dummy, West can expect East to hold an honor. The opponents did not even invite game after finding an eight-card fit.

West begins with three high hearts. East plays high-low on the first two heart tricks and discards on the third one.

The ♣9 discard on the third heart is the key play to setting the contract. The discard does two things:

1. Shortens East in clubs, setting up a potential ruff.
2. Tells West to lead a club (standard signals).

At trick four, West leads the ♣3 to East’s ♣A. East leads back the ♣2 to West’s ♣K. West leads his last club for East to ruff.

Six tricks to EW, setting the contract.