

October 20023 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 6 (p. 38-41). The *Bridge Bulletin* auction agreed with the Zhang/Ge auction where the West hand invited the heart game despite having only five HCP. The invitation was based on holding six hearts and four clubs. The hearts were headed by the JT and the clubs the AT. Thinking tricks instead of points makes this bid easier.
2. "Card Play 101" by Phillip Alder (p. 46). On the first deal, Alder explains why the plan to set the contract must be made at trick one. If East reflexively gives West the heart ruff at trick two, East will never get the club ruff needed to set the contract. Entries are key.
3. "Ask Jerry" by Jerry Helms (p. 53). Choosing to ignore a known major suit fit in favor of a notrump contract is best done when you have double stoppers in all the unbid suits.
4. "Build Better Bridge: Just don't do it! Finesse, that is." by Maryann Boardman (p. 56). On the second deal, given that West did not lead a club, he does not hold the ♣AK, ♣KQ or even ♣QJ. Therefore, West must have the ♦K for his opening bid. So, do not finesse East for a card he cannot have. Play on spades to take all the tricks. Luckily, they split 3-3. A 3-3 split is only 36%, but any realistic chance is better than any unrealistic chance.
5. "Boehm on Bridge: Card School favorites – part 7" by August Boehm (p. 58). Both deals show the importance of planning at trick one. Both require an unblocking play.
6. "Dear Billy" by Billy Miller (p. 69) First letter: Holding five clubs and five spades, most experts open 1♠. Second letter: When looking for slam, cue bid first or second round controls to avoid two quick losers.
7. "Bridge with the Abbot: Brother Xavier's brilliancy" by David Bird (p. 68) This is a planning-on-defense deal. West should rise with the ♣Q, preventing declarer from reaching dummy in time to pitch the losing diamond.
8. "George's World" by George Jacobs (p. 70) The proper way to bid the three-loser hand at the top of the second column is to double first and then bid the long hearts

Our Favorites

“Card Play 101” by Phillip Alder (p. 46)

		♠ Q 10 9 7 ♥ Q J 10 9 ♦ 6 ♣ A K Q J		
♠ 6 5 ♥ 2 ♦ 10 9 7 4 3 ♣ 10 9 7 4 3	N W — † — E S	♠ A 4 ♥ A 8 7 5 4 3 ♦ K J 8 5 ♣ 2		
		♠ K J 8 3 2 ♥ K 6 ♦ A Q 2 ♣ 8 6 5		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>		<i>South</i>
Pass	4♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass		1♠ 4♠

West's 4♦ is a splinter, showing 0 or 1 diamond; East's 4♠ denies interest in slam.

West leads the ♥2. Most Easts will realize the ♥2 is a singleton and will instinctively win the ♥A and give West ruff. This will doom the defense, as EW will not have the timing to get the club ruff that sets the contract.

East must set up the club ruff by returning the ♣2. When East gets in with the ♠A, he plays the ♥3 (suit preference for a club return). West gets his heart ruff and gives East the club ruff. Two ruffs and two aces set the contract.

East can see 27 HCP and North opened. West has close to 0 HCP. The only way West is getting in is with a ruff and EW must maximize this one entry.

“Build Better Bridge: Just don't do it! Finesse, that is.” by Maryann Boardman (p. 56)

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

West leads the ♥J, unwilling to underlead an ace or a king. Based on the lead, declarer knows that West does not hold a two-card honor sequence in clubs – not the ♣AK, not the ♣KQ and probably not the ♣QJ. With any of these holdings, West might have led a club.

Declarer identifies West's points for the opening bid: three in spades (the ♠K), one in hearts (the ♥J), seven, at most, in clubs (the ♣AQJ). It is almost certain that West also holds the ♦K. Therefore, finessing against East for the ♦K is a losing proposition.

It is best for declarer to finesse against West for the ♠K. When this works, declarer should return to his hand and take a second spade finesse. When the second spade finesse also works, declarer should cash the A, hoping for a 3-3 spade split, which happens 36% of the time.

Declarer takes five spades, six hearts and one diamond for 12 tricks and a great score.