

March 2024 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).
 - a. Problem 2. The *Bridge Bulletin* auction finds the highest scoring contract of 5♣. West's stiff spade and diamond weakness are the key to avoiding 3NT.
 - b. Problem 4. The *Bridge Bulletin* auction finds the highest scoring contract of 5♣. Similar to problem 2, West's red-suit holdings make 3NT a poor contract.
 - c. Problem 7. The *Bridge Bulletin* auction (and the Bauer & Reitman auction) avoids bidding slam despite East and West both having strong hands. The hands don't fit well. Be conservative with a mismatch.
2. "Card Play 101" by Phillip Alder (p. 46).
 - a. Deal 1. By counting the points around the table, East knows that West has no points. The only chance for the setting trick is if East returns a heart that West can ruff with the ♠7. Dummy must overruff, promoting one of East's trumps into a winner.
 - b. Deal 2. Again partner (East, this time) has nothing. West can create the setting trick(s) by forcing declarer to ruff. This time declarer loses control of the hand.
3. "Lessons Learned: Saying too much" by Michael Berkowitz (p. 48). Partner opens at the one-level in something other than spades; you hold a 1♠ opener. Even if you are playing 2/1, bid 1♠; do not make a 2/1 bid. Not bidding 1♠ risks missing a 5-3 (or even 5-4) spade fit. Continue with forcing bids until you reach game.
4. "Challenge of the Month" (p. 52, 57). Use a ruffing finesse to take two spade tricks, six trump tricks, the ♣A, and a ruff to make your contract.
5. "Better Bridge with Bergen: Improve your bidding judgement – part 34" by Marty Bergen (p. 59). When partner opens 1♣, a 1NT response should show 8-10 HCP and a willingness to play a notrump contract from responder's side. When this is not the case, respond 1♦ even with only a three-card diamond suit.
6. "Test Your Play" by Eddie Kantar (p. 61, 63). Keep the dangerous hand, East, from leading through your ♠K.
7. "Dear Billy" by Billy Miller (p. 69)
 - a. Question 1. When partner bypasses clubs to cue bid a diamond control, he is denying a club control. If major-suit controls have been bid and you have a club control, bid aggressively.
 - b. Question 2. A support double is not on when partner responds with a 2 over 1 response in a new suit.

Our Favorites

“The Bidding Box” moderated by Josh Donn (p. 38-41), Problem 7

Problem 7
South deals. Both vulnerable.

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ —	♠ A K J 9 8 5 4
♥ K J 9 6 4	♥ A
♦ A 4	♦ Q J 9 8
♣ K Q J 5 3 2	♣ 8

<i>Bauer</i>	<i>Reitman</i>
1♣	1♠
2♥	3♠
4♥	4♠
Pass	

Opening 1♣ shows longer clubs than hearts. Bidding hearts twice shows 5+ hearts and, therefore, 6+ clubs.

None of West's bidding is going to get East to do anything but bid spades with that strong seven-card spade suit. After West's 4♠ bid, East knows the situation and passes this misfit before bidding a slam that's unlikely to make.

Test Your Play” by Eddie Kantar (p. 61, 63), Deal 1

	♠ 8 5 3		
	♥ K J 9		
	♦ A J 10 6		
	♣ A 7 6		
♠ A Q 7		♠ J 10 9 2	
♥ 8 3		♥ 6 5	
♦ 8 7 4 3		♦ K 9 2	
♣ Q J 10 9		♣ 8 5 3 2	
	♠ K 6 4		
	♥ A Q 10 7 4 2		
	♦ Q 5		
	♣ K 4		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	2♥

West leads the ♣Q. As is often the case, the key play is made at trick one.

This hand makes as long as you do not lose two spades and a diamond. Therefore, East is the dangerous hand. You cannot afford to let East lead a spade through your ♠K.

So, let West win the ♣Q. West cannot hurt you. When you get in win the ♣K, draw two rounds of trump, ending in dummy, and pitch a diamond on the ♣A. Then play the ♦A and get rid of the last diamond in your hand.

Next, lead the ♦J from dummy, taking a ruffing finesse. If East plays low, pitch a spade. If East plays the ♦K, ruff it.

If West gets in, he cannot hurt you. A spade back gives you the ♠K. A diamond to the ♦T allows you to pitch the spade as you were planning to do. And a club back gives you a ruff and a sluff.

In any case you will pitch a losing spade on the ♦J or ♦T. You will lose only a spade, a diamond and a club.