

February 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. 41-43).
 - a) Problem 4: Cavalier/Jolly had a standard auction, finding the 4-4 heart fit and bidding the 4 \heartsuit game. The Ginossar/Berkowitz auction began the same way, but Berkowitz opted to bid 3N rather than look for a major suit fit. Her decision was based on the following points:
 - i. The partnership has 30-31 HCP, making it likely that there would be overtricks in a 3N contract. Overtricks matter when playing match points.
 - ii. All of her tricks are "slow" tricks – queens and jacks – which are typically more useful in a notrump contract.
 - b) Problem 7: The *Bridge Bulletin* auction gets to an excellent 6 \spadesuit contract, missed by both pairs. The key bid in the *Bridge Bulletin* auction is the 4 \clubsuit control bid. In this sequence, 4 \clubsuit agrees to spades and shows a club control. When East skips over hearts to bid 4 \spadesuit in the next round, West knows there are no wasted values in the heart suit.
2. "Parrish the Thought: Dummy's long suit" by Adam Parrish (p. 49). When defending a notrump contract and there is a long suit in dummy, take your tricks ASAP, especially if declarer is not working on dummy's suit. Declarer likely not setting it up because it is already running.
3. "Bidding Basics: What distribution" by Larry Cohen (p. 53). This piece discusses when to make a negative double and when to bid a major.
4. "Challenge of the Month" (p. 54). Don't risk your contract on a 50%/50% diamond finesse when you can make your contract 100% of the time by stripping the hand and throwing the defense in with the diamond.
5. "Ask Jerry" by Jerry Helms (p. 55). A negative double is not available over a 1NT overcall. A double in that situation is a penalty double showing 10+ points. You expect the partner of the 1NT overcall to have nothing or close to it.
6. "Mike's Bridge Lesson: A difficult balancing moment – part 1" by Mike Lawrence (p. 56). If you are thinking about bidding four of a minor, consider bidding 3NT. A 3NT bid shows a stopper in the opponents' suit – but not necessarily a stopper in all four suits.
7. "Chalk Talk" by Eddie Kantar (p. 57). Counting your opponents' points (hand 1) and taking all your chances (hand 2) are frequent themes in this column.
8. "Consults with the Doctor: The Art of Balancing in the 21st century" by Dr. James Marsh Sternberg (p. 67). When the opponents have found a fit but are stopping at the two-level, it is usually correct to bid. Minus 110 is rarely a good score.

Our Favorites

"Parrish the Thought: Dummy's long suit" by Adam Parrish (p. 49)

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

W - E
N - S

You are East, defending 3NT by South. Both sides are vulnerable and the scoring is IMPS.

West (partner) leads the ♠J. Declarer wins the ♠A and leads a heart. Of course, you had looked at dummy, considered the lead and given the hand some thought before playing to the first trick.

On this deal, it's OK to think now, if you had not done so at trick one. At IMPS, you make every effort to set the contract; giving up an overtrick does not matter that much.

Now you are looking at dummy, considering partner's lead and trying to determine declarer's plan. It seems logical that declarer would try to set up the long club suit, but he is not working on clubs, he has led a heart. Why? The most likely reason is that clubs are already set up; declarer holds ♣Axx or better.

It appears declarer has eight tricks in the black suits: five clubs and the three spades (partner's lead of the ♠J denies the ♠Q, so declarer must hold that card). Therefore, declarer is trying to score a heart for trick number nine. The only chance you have to set the contract is to win the ♥A and hope to pick up the diamond suit. It is likely that partner has the ♦A; if declarer held the ♦A, he would have eight more tricks and would have taken them.

So, you rise with the ♥A and lead a low diamond. Partner does have the ♦A; you set the contract by taking the ♥A and four diamonds.

“Challenge of the Month” (p. 54, 59)

<table border="0"> <tbody> <tr><td>♠ K Q 8 3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♥ 8 5 3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♦ 7 6 5</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♣ Q 8 4</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♠ 10 6</td><td>♠ 7</td></tr> <tr><td>♥ AK 10 2</td><td>♥ J 9 7 6 4</td></tr> <tr><td>♦ Q 10 8 2</td><td>♦ 9 4 3</td></tr> <tr><td>♣ J 9 2</td><td>♣ K 7 6 5</td></tr> <tr><td>♠ AJ 9 5 4 2</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♥ Q</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♦ AKJ</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♣ A 10 3</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td></tr> <tr><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td><td>4♠</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	♠ K Q 8 3		♥ 8 5 3		♦ 7 6 5		♣ Q 8 4		♠ 10 6	♠ 7	♥ AK 10 2	♥ J 9 7 6 4	♦ Q 10 8 2	♦ 9 4 3	♣ J 9 2	♣ K 7 6 5	♠ AJ 9 5 4 2		♥ Q		♦ AKJ		♣ A 10 3		West	North	East	South	Pass	2♠	Pass	1♠	All Pass			4♠	
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West leads the ♥A and ♥K, East following. What is your plan to guarantee the contract?

You can count nine tricks: six spades, two diamonds and a club. There are finessing positions in both diamonds and clubs; either can work for trick number ten. Unfortunately, both are off in this layout.

The way to guarantee the hand is to:

1. Ruff the second heart
2. Draw trump, ending in dummy
3. Ruff dummy's last heart, stripping NS of the suit
4. Play the ♦AK, then lead the ♦J
5. The player who wins the ♦Q must either break clubs or give you a ruff/sluff for the tenth trick

“Chalk Talk” by Eddie Kantar, Hand 1 (p. 57)

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You are South, declaring 2♠.

West cashes the ♥AK; East plays high/low, showing a doubleton. West leads the ♥2, East ruffing. East returns the ♣5, suggested by the low heart West led as well as by the weakness in the dummy.

Which club do you play?

Consider the fact that West is a passed hand and has already shown five hearts to the AKJT. There is no room in that hand for the ♣A. Holding 12 HCP, a strong five-card suit and three quick tricks, West would have opened. So, East holds the ♣A; you must play the ♣K.