

Easybridge! Sound Bites

Pregame mini-lesson, designed to sharpen wits and improve winning ways

Smolen? Is that a new dance?

Carol is first into class this morning, with a big problem. Playing in a tournament over the weekend, she heard her partner open 1NT. She held

♠A863 ♥K9763 ♦7 ♣J73

How should she respond? One choice would have been to bid 2♦, transfer. Her pard would have answered 2♥, then Carol would have been stuck. But Carol's been in class before, and she knows the correct bid with 4-5 in the majors is *Stayman*. You want to know if pard has four in either major. If so, you are home free. With Carol's hand, having at least 11 points in support of either major (don't forget those distribution points!), she would just jump to the major suit game. If pard answers 2♦, no 4-card major, then you can bid your 5-card major on the 3-level. This is forcing.

W	N	E	S
1NT	P	2♣	P
2♦	P	3♥*	
*Pard, I'm 4-5 and we're going to game.			

In Carol's case, the "going to game" is a bit of a stretch, but she had red meat at her last meal. You might just elect to bid 2♥, drop dead, or 2NT, inviting to a NT game. Unfortunately there's no heart invitational bid.

Now, all of this isn't what Carol's problem was about. Her concern is that if pard has 3 hearts and bids the major-suit game, a transfer has not been effected. Pard's strong hand would be on the table.

W	N	E	S
1NT	P	2♣	P
2♦	P	3♠*	
*Alert: Smolen. Pard has 4 Spades & 5 Hearts. Game force.			

This state of disarray is easily solved by a little convention called "Smolen." If you play Smolen with pard (and why not?), you jump in your *4-card major*. Then pard bids the *other* major, so HE can bid game and still be declarer. Will wonders never cease!



Presenter Highlights:

Smolen? Is that a new dance?

KEEPING THE BIG HAND HIDDEN

- ◆ When pard opens NT and you have 5-4 in the majors, start by bidding Stayman.
- ◆ The problem arises when, after pard denies, bidding the 5-card suit to show shape. You lose the advantage of keeping the big hand hidden.
- ◆ Smolen solves the problem. You bid the 4-card suit instead. Pard then alerts and then bids the 5-card suit himself. Nifty?
- ◆ The success of this bid is based on the fact that the responder has a very shapely hand with ruffing values.

Today's Easylaugh!

TELEPHONE TAG

After directory assistance gave me my boyfriend's new telephone number, I dialed him—and got a woman! “Is Mike there?” I asked.

“He's in the shower,” she responded.

“Well, please tell him his girlfriend called,” I said and hung up. When he didn't return the call, I dialed again. This time a man answered.

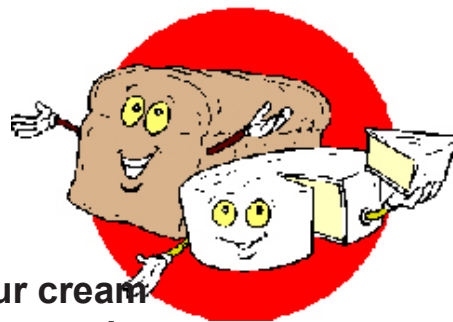
“This is Mike,” he said.
“You're not my boyfriend!” I exclaimed.
“I know,” he replied.
“That's what I've been trying to tell my wife for the last half hour.”



(Bridge tie-in: Do YOU have the right number ... for your bid?)

Today's Easytreat!

APPETIZING LOAF DIP



- 1 pt Sour cream**
- 1 pt mayonnaise**
- 2 TBSP each: dill weed, parsley flakes, minced onion**
- 1 tsp seasoned salt**

Mix all ingredients. A very elegant way to serve this is to take a loaf of round bread, cut off the top and tear out the bread from the inside, leaving the crust like a bowl. Fill the bread bowl with the dip and serve the torn bread and veggies for dipping. Festive, easy, and perfect for a large group of hungry bridge players.