

CONVENTIONALLY SPEAKING // GAME TALK // A TO Z BRIDGE

# Bridge Life

AMERICAN CONTRACT BRIDGE LEAGUE



MEMBER  
BENEFITS

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Masterpoints

**EXCLUSIVE  
MONTHLY**

Bridge Bulletin magazine

**ELIGIBLE**

for discounted  
tournament play

**WELCOME**  
TO THE REAL  
SOCIAL NETWORK



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## From *the* CEO

A

fter playing kitchen table bridge with my family as a teenager, I felt it was time to take my game to the next level. My first hands-on duplicate bridge experience took place during my senior year of high school when I participated in lessons offered by a local bridge teacher. I continued to learn new facets of the game and my mentor took me to play in my first duplicate club game. Dorothy was

kind and patient while she put up with all my playing snafus, and she removed the intimidation factor that is natural when we try something new.

After finishing college, I had more free time for leisure activities. Bridge was a natural as I always had a love for the game. I subsequently joined the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) and set out on my quest to become a Life Master. This accomplishment took more than a decade. Recently, I received the opportunity all nine-to-fivers dream of – to combine a passion with a profession – and I accepted the Chief Executive Officer position at the ACBL.

While my experience pales in comparison to many players, I've learned that regardless of the skill level, style of bridge or number of masterpoints earned, bridge players share many undeniable traits. We are intelligent, curious, perceptive, analytical, supportive and life-long learners. We are not afraid of a new challenge, because that is what we eagerly anticipate with each new deal of the cards.

As a member of the ACBL, bridge becomes more than just a game – it is a social network, a passion and a way of life. Additionally, our members support a host of education programs through their dues that help grow the next generation of bridge players. I hope you enjoy this complimentary magazine of bridge education articles and stories. It's a wonderful example of what our members receive each month in the *Bridge Bulletin*.

I look forward to welcoming you into the ACBL bridge-playing family.

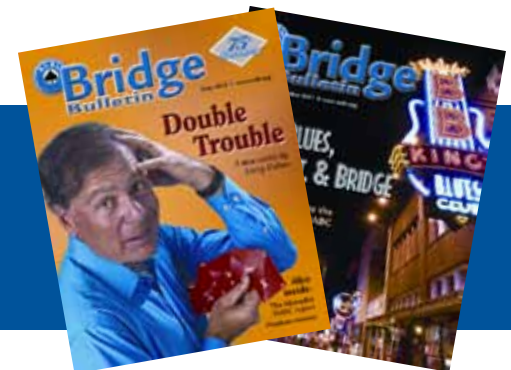


Robert Hartman, CEO



Robert Hartman // CEO

*Bridge Life is a collection of modified and reprinted articles from the ACBL's monthly publication the Bridge Bulletin. In addition to feature articles, the Bridge Bulletin helps you improve your game with education articles for players of all levels. Join the ACBL and start receiving the Bridge Bulletin in your mailbox!*





## Member Perspective

### HAD A BLAST

I just returned from my first experience at the North American Bridge Championships (NABC) in Memphis. As a newer player, I felt excited but nervous. Would I find a partner? Play well? Have fun? The answers: Yes, yes and yes. I loved it. I attended free lessons and met many of the great players you read about in the *Bridge Bulletin*. To any new player thinking about attending an NABC, I say just do it!

— FRED SPITZERI, *Naperville IL*

### GOOD AMBASSADORS

Still in my first year of membership with the ACBL, I've read with interest comments in the *Bridge Bulletin* about how newcomers should be treated in order to promote the game and the rules.

At the Dallas Labor Day Regional, my partner and I played in our first knockout on a team with an average of 27 masterpoints per player. In the third round, we had a handicap of 53 IMPs against opponents with an average of 13,737 MPs.

We did our best to hold the cards steady as we faced Nagy Kamel (Wernher Open Pairs winner in Atlanta) and Derrell Childs on the first 12 boards. Though we were in way over our heads, we began to hold the cards a little steadier and enjoy the game as they treated us with the utmost courtesy and respect.

Because they tried not to intimidate us, they serve as an example to those who want to promote the game for all players regardless of level. Losing to them was an honor we will always remember.

— HILDA LACHER, *Dallas TX*

### BIG IMPACT

When I was a teenager and my parents introduced me to bridge, I never dreamed that the game would have such an impact on my life. The network provided me with friends and business contacts, even some free advice from people who fit both categories, a few boyfriends in my single years and, most important, a marvelous husband and bridge partner in Al Duncker.

In spite of masterpoint inflation, tournament schedules, expenses and other complaints I may read about in the letters section of the *Bridge Bulletin*, I still feel sorry for people who don't play this game!

— ANN LINDLEY, *Alexandria VA*

## TAKE YOUR PICK

At the Southwest Florida Regional in Naples, I encountered one of the most unusual deals I have ever seen, a view shared by many other players. Check it out:

<b>Dlr: East</b>	♠ A 9 8 3	
<b>Vul: Both</b>	♥ J 6 3	
	♦ K 6 3	
	♣ K 8 4	
♠ K Q 10	N	♠ J 7 4
♥ K 9 7	↑	♥ Q 8 4
♦ 10 8 5	W ● E	♦ A Q J 2
♣ Q J 10 5	↓	♣ A 9 6
	S	
	♠ 6 5 2	
	♥ A 10 5 2	
	♦ 9 7 4	
	♣ 7 3 2	

East-West, with 25 high-card points and 3=3=4=3 opposite 3=3=3=4, can make game in every suit and 10 tricks in notrump. This includes game in both 3-3 major fits (careful play is required in 4♥). Deep Finesse confirms the makeable contracts, but nothing overly complicated is required. They actually play out in a pretty normal way.

— LEON LYDAY, *Clearwater FL*

## WHAT GOES AROUND

Keep playing with these bad actors and eventually you will get your revenge. I recall the oft-repeated story about a man who was known throughout the club as one of those cranky players. He managed to bid himself up to 7NT, and his left-hand opponent doubled. Incensed, the grouchy player glared at his opponent and said, “Do you know who I am?”

LHO replied, “Yes, I do. Do you know how many aces I have?”

— RICHARD STARK, *Commack NY*

## STUDENT OF THE GAME

I have been playing bridge all year at Lester Elementary School with the help of my teacher, Mrs. Marilyn Norenberg. She is the best! Thank you for letting kids learn about bridge and whist.

My teacher asked me to pick a card and write about it. I chose the queen of hearts because it reminds me of what a big heart Mrs. Norenberg has for teaching us all the rules and strategies of bridge.

I hope that through the ACBL, I can play bridge again next year and in the years ahead. Thank you for making it possible for kids like me!

— BEN KRISTENSEN, *Duluth, MN*

*Ben has since gone on to become a Life Master, won events at the Youth North American Bridge Championships that earned him two \$1000 college scholarships. He represented the U.S. in the 2012 World Youth Teams Championships in Taicang, China.*

## HAVING FUN

Bridge is a cross-generational game. I last played in an NABC when the tournament was in Seattle in 1993. I played with my father and we had a good time. I now regret having not coaxed him into participating in another NABC before he passed away. It would have been fun to stay at the host hotel and participate in the multi-session events.

I played in the recent Seattle NABC with my 15-year-old daughter. I would like to thank the NABC/ACBL for the youth discounts. I believe the club games and the sectionals that we participated in throughout the Great Puget Sound Regions prepared us to play within and outside of our stratification.

My daughter was able to play hooky for a couple of days. We really enjoyed the Argosy Cruise and would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to all who made the event possible. It reminded me of the informal environments in which I learned how to play bridge. It really was a wonderful way to spend the day.

— NICK DANIGGELIS, *Indianola WA*

## THE LIVES OF OTHERS

In his April *Bridge Bulletin* column, CEO Robert Hartman noted, “...I’m sure we have all played against an opponent we later found out was ‘somebody.’”

Our club breaks for lunch in the middle of the game. We were playing the round immediately following lunch against two older women one might describe as LOLs (Little Old Lady). I made a blunder on defense and, to explain my mistake, announced, “Postprandial drowsiness.” I was being a wise guy, using this unusual word. The LOL on my right responded, “For that reason, I used to skip lunch whenever I had to do surgery.”

To quote the CEO, “Many of our members lead very interesting lives.”

— MARVIN LEVINE, *New York NY*



# Game Face

A glimpse inside a true social network

In a world more technology-driven than ever, it's becoming common place for our social interactions to occur on the Internet. Websites like Facebook and Twitter allow us to communicate with our friends and followers at the drop of a hat. But is social media actually making us anti-social? Bridge players know that the club is where real friends are made—where a network of like-minded individuals gather to be social and have fun. So forget about choosing a photo for your profile picture. The only face you need at a bridge club is your game face.



It is half an hour until game time at the In-Between Bridge Club in Sarasota FL. The orderly room begins to buzz as players arrive. There is a special feel of old home week as snowbirds and year-round residents reunite after the summer. Whether it's been a day or a week or a season since the last time two people saw each other, there's always a lot to say.

Some of the noise is the inevitable bridge banter. "You have 16 points with five spades, three hearts, three diamonds and two clubs" . . . and "What's 2NT by you if I open 1♥?" and "He bid what?!" There's a lot of laughter, too.

The director, Michelle Golden, is everywhere, greeting everyone by name, asking after their health, their families. . . She has received dozens of phone calls from players needing partners, and she has put careful thought into the matchups, weighing skill level and personality among other factors. Everyone who called has a partner, and she takes time to introduce members of the new pairings to each other.

Just as the kitchen is the hub in a home, so, too, is the snack bar at any local club. Coffee, decaf, tea, peanut butter and crackers, pretzels, popcorn, cookies and hard candy greet players as they come in. Later there will be fresh vegetable trays, potato chips and dip, egg salad or cheese dip, sliced pepperoni and cake. Sure, Golden has received a couple of complaints that there isn't enough food. But, really?

As the buzz crescendos to a roar, Golden takes the microphone. "Please

take your seats."

The players move to their assigned places. One of the things they appreciate about Golden's game is the pace — it starts on time and ends on time, and most do what they can to stay on schedule.

"We have 14 tables in sections A and B, 13 tables in section C and 15 tables in section D," Golden announces. "Let's remember Zero Tolerance."

Zero Tolerance is an ACBL policy that basically requires players to behave themselves: be friendly, praise opponents' good play, don't gloat over good results, avoid dressing down partner, no intimidation, profanity, threats or badgering.

Golden continues, "Let's have a pleasant afternoon, and good luck today." It's game time.

**RICHARD REED** grew up in the U.K. He played bridge when he was in college, then took up the game again when he retired. A friend invited him to play duplicate and he discovered he liked it much better than social bridge. "Duplicate takes all the luck out of bridge," he says. He admires Golden's enforcement of the Zero Tolerance policy because "people can't be too unpleasant. She kicks them out."

**EARL LEVIT** has been playing bridge for one year. He is taking lessons "because my lady friend insisted." The 91-year-old gentleman adds, "My lady friend also makes me work out three times a week and I hate it!" How about bridge? "Truthfully? You don't want me to lie? I love it!"

**SANDY AND BILL NELSON** appreciate how Golden's club game "runs right on time." They vastly prefer duplicate-style bridge to social or kitchen or home bridge. "I love duplicate bridge," Bill says. "It's about what you do with

the cards you are dealt while home bridge depends totally on the cards you are dealt."

**THE MUNSONS** Tony and Ann retired and decided to take up something they could do together — and stumbled into the bridge club. "We have made wonderful friends here," Ann says. The Munsons also travel, and eagerly route themselves to ACBL tournaments on their way to or from various destinations. They joined the ACBL primarily for the masterpoints: "We're hooked!" they exclaim together.

**CAROL AND KEN LINDHOLM** have been playing bridge for three and a half years. They took — and continue to take — lessons from Golden. They like the fact that Golden uses pre-duplicated boards and hand records are available after the game for players to study. "Michelle is always trying to improve things." They joined the ACBL when they started playing because it seemed "the natural thing" to do. They wrestle with each other for the *Bridge Bulletin* — ACBL's monthly magazine — when it comes in the mail. "It is the most popular magazine we receive at home."

**SUSAN MAIER** has been playing bridge off and on for three years. She started lessons and playing regularly at the In-Between Bridge Club a year ago. "I turned 50," she says. "I garden and play tennis, and I knew one day I wouldn't be able to do those things. I picture myself playing bridge with three little old ladies at a club somewhere sipping tea." Maier's husband plays also, but at a much higher level. They don't play together. "He says he'd rather stay married."

**CARYL LANAHAN**, who has 10.5 masterpoints, is dating a man with 4500 masterpoints. Learning how to play bridge gives them something more in common, she says. They look forward to bridge cruises together. "I just joined the ACBL to be a part of the deal," she adds.

**LENORE BUMSTEAD** says, "For most of us, bridge has become our social core. Without duplicate bridge, we'd have to hold up gas stations for excitement." The retired New York secretary returned to bridge after 20 years away from the table. She especially appreciates the club environment — "serious but fun."

**BUDDY JOSEPHSON** originally learned to play bridge in college. After a 50-year hiatus, he and three friends invested in lessons. While he plays both social bridge and duplicate, "Rubber bridge is not as satisfying or challenging." He joined the ACBL when he retired from his dental practice. Why? "Why not?" he counters. "It's the thing to do if you play duplicate."

**CYNTHIA MURPHY** (not pictured) who serves on her local unit board of directors and volunteers at the club, calls the In-Between Club her "home away from home." Her parents played duplicate bridge and taught both Murphy and her brother. "When we played after dinner, dummy had to do the dishes, which made for some strange bidding." She recalls, "When I got married, we moved around a lot, and bridge was my salvation. That's how I met my friends." She joined the ACBL to become a Life Master. She looks at her gold card now as a learner's permit. "You accumulate the requisite number of points and suddenly you know that you don't know anything."

1. Richard Reed
2. Earl Levit
3. Sandy and Bill Nelson
4. Ann and Tony Munsons
5. Carol and Ken Lindholm
6. Susan Maier
7. Caryl Lanahan
8. Lenore Bumstead
9. Buddy Josephson

I knew that if I asked the question, I wouldn't be able to take it back. I turned to my Grandpa Pegg, who was drumming his fingers against the edge of his hospital bed, and said, "Would you teach me to play bridge?"

"Are you sure?" he asked. "It might take a while."

I assumed that the days leading up to his quadruple bypass surgery would be plenty of time to learn a card game, but it wasn't until weeks into his recovery that I began to understand just what he meant. For six months I dedicated my Wednesday afternoons to bridge lessons at Grandpa's house. I would

made complicated logical processes, like math and chess, difficult for me. When I took my college entrance exams, the score reports would suggest honors classes in English and remedial classes in math.

I learned to count cards only after months of practice and to this day will sometimes slap myself halfway through a board and say, "I thought there were no more clubs out!" Memorizing the complicated bidding combinations and their meanings was tricky, too.

In the end, I made a set of flash cards and took them with me to work. Anytime the hotel desk got slow, I would bewilder my cowork-

friendly. There aren't many games in which the other players directly benefit from going up against the inexperienced, but I think their kindness was more than just delight in a guaranteed set of good results. They were simply good people.

I was so nervous at first that I had to concentrate hard on regulating my breathing, causing me at times to forget whose turn it was, which suit was trump and what an opening bid of 1♣ meant.

The other players couldn't understand why I was having trouble remembering the difference between a takeout and a penalty double. How could I

# Great Expectations

sit in a kitchen chair opposite his recliner at a moss-green, vinyl-covered card table while he dealt out hands he had prearranged to teach specific lessons.

Then we would deal the cards out over and over again for new bidding situations, or study card games from the newspaper for pointers. He lent me books by Kantar, Grant and Sontag. I jotted down bidding strategies in a notebook.

Although I had a brilliant teacher and partner, I would have no easy introduction to bridge. There were no beginner games in our area at the time, and I would start by challenging Life Masters who had been playing bridge since before my parents were born. I didn't want to win as much as to avoid humiliation.

That wouldn't be as easy as it sounds. I'm not a very methodical thinker, a fault that has always

ers by pulling out my cards and mumbling about takeout doubles and diamond voids.

When the day finally arrived for my debut, Grandma packed some peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for us, Grandpa went over some last-minute reminders in the car, and we walked into the Gleneden Beach Community Center.

I was petrified. The players who had already arrived sat around folding card tables in a huge room with a smooth wooden floor designed for roller skating. As we walked in, several of Grandpa's friends, who hadn't seen him play in months, greeted him enthusiastically.

When one of them mentioned how nice it was to see young people learning to play the game, I replied in a flash of tension-inspired lunacy, "That's why I brought him."

Every table was inviting and

explain that they were lucky I was following suit?

Bridge is like math, my childhood nemesis, in that it's hard for advanced players to remember how hard the first steps were to learn. I felt like a first grader entering an algebra class. Not only did my classmates know more about variables, but they couldn't comprehend how complicated long division was for me.

At the end of a deal, a fellow player might ask how many spades I'd started with. They might as well have asked what my mom wore to my first birthday party. I generally smiled a lot and faked my way through their well meant advice, most of which might as well have been given in Chinese for all the information I gleaned from it.

By the time we got into the car to head home, my head felt like a



field of grass trampled by an elephant stampede. I tried to listen to the advice Grandpa was giving me about this hand or that, resisting the urge to yell “No!” when he asked if I remembered the hand with the long diamond suit.

When I arrived home, I released my tension in a perfect storm of tears and poured my anguished heart into my husband’s ears. He told me, quite logically, that I should quit. “It’s a game,” he reasoned, “why do this to yourself?”

He had a point, of course, but I was too stubborn to quit. Instead, I began bringing a deck of cards to work to practice bidding on random

hadn’t been so patient.

Our second major advantage was the element of surprise, a benefit I also have when playing chess. When one has no idea what the correct (or even plausible) move is, one can seriously confuse an opponent.

I can’t count how many times, as we shuffled our cards and replaced them, the other players would say, “I was sure you had another club because you led the ace,” or “I thought your three of hearts meant that you had at least another spade.” It was like aiming for the corner pocket in a game of billiards and making the opposite pocket instead.

Our third advantage was that I was

third-to-last, and later still sometimes, although very rarely, made it into the top three. It was enough. I had proved to myself that I could do something that didn’t come naturally, that I could beat the left half of my brain into submission with a hard enough stick. The day I realized I had proved myself was a confusing one, because it was then, for the first time, that I knew I was hooked. It no longer mattered that I’d probably never be a great (or even very good) player. I *liked* playing.

I could sit around in almost complete silence for four hours, discuss hands that were played the week before, and laugh about redoubling

## A young woman discovers the adventure of learning bridge By Catherine Businelle

hands. I played mock games, trying to recall which cards had been played and which hand had bid which suit. I made up bidding scenarios in my head and played a computer bridge game in my off hours.

I began to feel less nervous at each game we played, and over the course of several weeks, I discovered that Grandpa and I enjoyed three distinct advantages.

The first one was simple: Grandpa is a brilliant bridge player. I felt immense relief when he won the bidding and I knew my job was simply to move cards around. He was too kind to show any relief himself. We sometimes took top boards simply because he was doing all the thinking.

It must have been frustrating for such a talented player to place last every week, but he never brought it up or traded me for another partner. I never would have stuck with it if he

Grandpa’s sole creation. Unlike many partners who have to adjust their bidding styles for a perfect fit, we were on the same page from day one. We didn’t have to figure out what the other was doing because my rules were his rules.

Of course, he often had to wonder if I remembered what he’d taught me, but he gave me the benefit of the doubt every time and bid as though I knew what I was doing. When I finally began keeping it all straight, the benefits he reaped from taking me at my word were enormous.

Finally, after a few weeks of playing, we achieved heady success. We placed *second to last!* It was like a taste of Olympic gold. I sailed into work the next day and announced our victory to my confused coworkers not caring that they didn’t understand why I was so thrilled.

A few weeks later we advanced to

a bid (and not just laugh to fit in, either). I’m *still* surprised.

A few weeks later, I was practicing bidding on piles of cards at work when my manager, Sean, walked over. “What are you doing?” he wanted to know. It was a slow night and I knew he was just curious.

“Practicing bridge,” I answered.

“Teach me how to play,” he said. “and I’ll help you practice.”

I paused, thinking of Grandpa’s cautious reply to a similar question months before in the hospital.

“Are you sure?” I asked with a smile. “It might take a while.”

**Catherine P. Businelle**

is a free-lance writer  
in Lincoln City OR.



BY LARRY COHEN

# Learning to Improve

*In this article, I wish to provide “universal” information on learning how to get better at bridge. Sure, you can take many lessons and read many books. A good memory is useful, but it is not the key ingredient to improving your bridge game.*

## Here, in a nutshell, are my thoughts on how anyone can grow their game:

- 1.** Concentration at the table is the number-one ingredient to playing well. Some days are just bad-hair days. Your brain won't be in high gear (personal issues, medication, aging, etc.). On those days, you will make errors. Just accept it. Some days are worse than others. When you are having such a day, stop lower in the bidding and hope the other players are going down in game/slam.
- 2.** Logic is much more important than memory. Don't try to solve bridge problems by rote. Face each decision (in bidding, play or defense) by using a logical checklist. It goes to the tune of, “If A, then B.” “If not C, then D.” Translated to bridge terminology, your thinking needs to go: “Since he bid hearts twice, he has six of them, so I should not insist on notrump.” Or, “Partner didn't lead diamonds, so he probably doesn't have the ace and king. Declarer must have one of the high diamonds.”
- 3.** Memorizing and learning new conventions is not the way to improve your game. Sure, if you have a good memory and lots of time to thoroughly study and learn high-tech methods (and a partner who does the same), it will be a slight help. But, I see this to be a poor use of time and effort. It is much better to understand completely the most important conventions. Yes, you all know Stayman and Blackwood, but even those methods are often misunderstood and abused. Negative doubles and even something as basic as takeout doubles/responses are important fundamentals to master.
- 4.** At-the-table attitude and demeanor is crucial to playing well. Keep partnership harmony. No faces. No negative comments to partner. Be nice to the opponents. Try to actually enjoy this great game. It will clear up your mind to think more clearly and logically.
- 5.** When you do take bridge lessons (or read bridge literature), be realistic. Go easy on yourself. Even a college student can't memorize tons of information and accurately recall it weeks and months later. When learning bridge, try to just grasp a few key issues clearly — don't bite off too much at once. When I teach a two-hour session, and give, say, 15 “pointers,” I'm happy if my students walk away and have learned three or four of them well. Until you've heard the same lesson over and over, it is not reasonable to expect to get it all.

These come up lots of times every session. Thorough understanding of all doubles and basic bids on the one and two levels would be infinitely more useful than learning “transfer lebensohl” just to keep up with the Joneses.

There isn't much technical bridge advice in this article. However, I feel that if you work hard at these concepts and don't fall back into old habits, you will get instant gratification. Your game will improve as will your experience. **Good luck!**

**Larry Cohen** is one of the world's most popular bridge lecturers. People enjoy his simple teaching style — always with a dose of humor — on cruises and at country clubs all over the world. His 26 NABC championships include four Blue Ribbon Pairs victories, two Life Master Pairs, a Vanderbilt, two Spingolds and two Reisingers. The ACBL's 2002 Player of the Year, Cohen wrote *To Bid or Not to Bid: The Law of Total Tricks*, the best-selling bridge book of the '90s with more than 90,000 copies sold in six different languages. Cohen's column, *The Real Deal*, is a monthly feature in the *Bridge Bulletin*. This column comes from the author's website, where you will find a wealth of bridge information: [larryco.com](http://larryco.com)

THE ACBL FROM

a  
to  
z



a

## ALERT

Saying “Alert” is a method of drawing the opponents’ attention to the fact that partner’s call has a conventional or unexpected meaning. An Alert is made by saying the word “Alert” aloud and tapping the Alert card on the table or by tapping the Alert strip on the side of the bidding box. Either opponent can inquire as to the meaning of the call at their turn, or they can reserve the right to inquire at any later turn to call or play.

b

## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

The main benefits of ACBL membership are:

- The opportunity to win masterpoints, have them recorded and advance in rank
- Monthly receipt of the *Bridge Bulletin*, the world’s most widely distributed bridge magazine
- No upcharge for most tournament play, including three North American Bridge Championships per year
- Access to a listing of more than 3200 bridge clubs across North America
- Discounts with bridge-related and other major retailers

- \* 10% discount at Baron Barclay Bridge Supplies
- \* FedEx Office discount on color and black-and-white printing
- \* OfficeMax Discount Card
- \* Hertz® Member Savings
- \* Delta Airlines Discount

**Note: New members are allowed to record a maximum of 20 masterpoints earned in the 12 months prior to joining ACBL.**

# c

## CONVENTION CARD

A convention card is a form filled out so that the opponents know what system a partnership has elected to play. It lists generally used conventions and treatments and provides space to indicate other non-standard bids and defensive carding.

# d

## DOUBLE DUMMY

When a deal is played in a way that it could not be improved upon, as though declarer were looking at all four hands, it is said to have been played double dummy. The term can also be used to refer to perfect play by the defenders.

# e

## ETHICS

In bridge, ethics equals fair play. Breaches of ethics are generally thought of as unfair or illegal practices that could include deliberate cheating. *The Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge* deal with the question of proper behavior at bridge.

# f

## FACE-DOWN LEADS

Face-down opening leads are required in tournament play. Once the lead is made face down, partner may ask questions about the auction. This ensures that the partner of the leader will not influence the opening leader's choice of lead. A face-down opening lead made by the wrong player may be picked up without penalty upon instruction of the director.



# h

## HAND RECORDS

The sheets distributed to the players at the conclusion of a game on which all of the deals from that session are printed.

# g

## GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS (GNT)

A major ACBL team championship conducted at the grassroots level, with qualifying rounds in clubs, units and districts, leading to a final round held in conjunction with the Summer North American Bridge Championships. Players compete within their own masterpoint category.



# i

## INTERMEDIATE NEWCOMER PROGRAM (IN)

ACBL has developed a slate of games and activities designed to make duplicate experiences fun and comfortable for newer players. All NABCs offer an IN Program as do many regional and sectional tournaments. Activities may comprise:

- Games for players with 0-5, 0-20, 0-50 and 0-100 masterpoints
- Celebrity speaker programs
- Hand records with copies and analyses of the deals played
- Social events
- Trophies for overall winners
- New Player Services Program
- A special area for all IN activities
- Directors trained to run games for newer players
- Guaranteed partners

A woman with blonde hair and glasses is looking down at a fan of cards. The background is a soft-focus image of her face and hands holding the cards.

# j

## **JANE JOHNSON CLUB APPRECIATION MONTH**

Jane Johnson was an ACBL employee beloved by members and known for her superb customer service skills. During the month of October, clubs may hold one club appreciation pair game and one club appreciation Swiss team game per sanctioned session.

# k

## **KNOCKOUT TEAMS**

In a knockout team event, one team plays an entire session against another team. The winning teams advance to play the next round and the defeated teams are eliminated.

# l

## **LIFE MASTER**

Life Master is a highly sought level of bridge achievement. A Life Master is a player who has earned 500 or more recorded masterpoints, of which 50 must be gold or platinum, 50 red, gold or platinum, 75 silver and 75 black.

# m

## **MATCHPOINT**

A matchpoint is a unit used to score duplicate contests in which two or more results are compared. A pair receives one point for each result it bests and one-half point for each result it ties.

# n

## **NORTH AMERICAN BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Also called NABCs, these 10-day tournaments are held in the spring, summer and fall, and are rotated around the United States and Canada. Each NABC offers events for all levels of players.

# o

## **ONLINE BRIDGE**

More and more players are gravitating to online play as the number of bridge tournaments available on a daily basis increases. Sites like Bridge Base Online, Swan Games and OKbridge Online offer ACBL members the opportunity to win masterpoints in online play.

# p

## **PENALTY CARD**

A card that has been prematurely exposed by a defender and which must be left face up on the table until legally picked up or played. Please call the director when this type of infraction occurs at your table in a duplicate game.

# q

## QUACK

Quack is a term to indicate the queen and the jack together in the context of hand evaluation: possession of “quacks” usually means the hand holding one or more of them without higher honors is not as good as the high-card point count might indicate.

# r

## REGIONALS AT SEA

The ACBL sponsors three Regionals at Sea annually. Each of the seven-day excursions is hosted by a bridge celebrity/instructor. Sailing from both the east and west coasts, Regional-at-Sea cruises feature fully sanctioned tournaments with games at every level, team and pairs contests, all with the opportunity to win gold points.

# s

## SECTIONAL TOURNAMENTS

Units are the sponsors of sectional tournaments, which usually run from three to five days. Units also may run Intermediate-Newcomer Sectionals and STaCs (Sectional Tournaments at Clubs). Masterpoints won at sectional tournaments are silver.

# t

## TABLE PRESENCE

One of the things that separates a good bridge player from an expert is the indefinable something that is referred to as table presence. It is a combination of instinct, the drawing of correct inferences from any departure from normal rhythm by the opponents, the exercise of discipline in bidding, the ability to coax maximum performance from partner and the ability to make the opponents feel that they are facing a player of a higher order.

# u

## UNAUTHORIZED INFORMATION

Law 16 of the *Laws of Duplicate Bridge* says that a player may not make a call or play that could have been suggested over another by information the player has received extraneously from partner. Extraneous information includes actions such as a remark, a question, a reply to a question, an unmistakable hesitation, unusual speed, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement, mannerism, etc.

# v

## VULNERABILITY

This is a condition of play in which premiums and penalties are increased. In rubber bridge, vulnerability comes about by having won one game toward rubber. In duplicate bridge, vulnerability is assigned following this pattern: none, North-South, East-West, both. The duplicate board will signify non-vulnerable (or “white”) or vulnerable.

# w

## WEBSITE

The ACBL website ([www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)) is a vital source of information for all bridge players and members. Here you can view your game results, find upcoming tournaments, locate new bridge clubs, read your *Bridge Bulletin* online and look up past issues, compete in the magazine’s monthly bidding contest, “It’s Your Call,” and of course, check your masterpoints.

# x

## ‘X’

A lower-case “X” is a symbol used in bridge literature to signify an insignificant low card in any suit, a card lower than a 10. Thus K-x-x means the king and two low cards in that suit.

# y

## YOUNGEST LIFE MASTER

To become a Life Master is a goal of many serious bridge players. Some never make it; others seem to have a special gift for the game and become Life Masters within a very short time. The record for becoming the youngest Life Master is currently held by Zach Garrison of Spring TX, who attained the rank at the age of nine years, two months and seven days.

# z

## ZERO TOLERANCE

A policy recommended by ACBL and followed at many clubs and tournaments, Zero Tolerance promotes a friendly atmosphere at the table, eliminating unacceptable behavior, including rudeness, intimidation, gloating, profanity and a variety of other offenses. Automatic penalties are part of the program. If you feel an infraction of Zero Tolerance has occurred at your table, you should call the director.



# Boehm on Bridge

BY **AUGUST BOEHM** Originally appeared in December 2011 *Bridge Bulletin*.

One common error of average defenders is to be too active. If their opening lead doesn't strike gold, they switch to a second suit, maybe a third, hoping to "find" partner. As often as not, each thrashing-about costs tricks.

Sit over my shoulder as we defend with this collection:

**♠A95 ♥KJ106 ♦82 ♣Q1063.**

First, the auction: matchpoints, only the opponents vulnerable, I deal and pass. Two more passes and RHO opens 1♦, I double. LHO bids 1♠. Partner responds 2♣, and RHO doubles. I wait for an Alert but none is forthcoming, so I pass. We're happy to play 2♣ doubled – partner bid voluntarily. Now, LHO offers a belated Alert; the double showed three-card spade support. At this point, I'm entitled to change my call. Taking advantage of the vulnerability and passed-hand status, I raise to 3♣, showing four trumps. This is passed around to RHO who bids 3♦, ending the auction.

West	North	East	South
<i>You and I</i>		<i>Partner</i>	
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
Dbl	1♠	2♣	Dbl <sup>(1)</sup>
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♦
All Pass			

(1) Three-card spade support.  
I lead a low club and dummy tables:

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

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

Partner plays the ♣K and ♣A to the first two tricks; declarer, an expert, follows low and ruffs the second. At trick three, declarer advances the ♠Q. Should we win or duck?

The auction makes it plain that the missing spades are divided 3-3, so it is safe to duck; declarer may have trouble accessing dummy's fourth-round spade winner. At trick four, declarer plays a low diamond to dummy's queen and ruffs the last club. Any decisions?

Unblock the queen. When a competent declarer uses a precious dummy entry to ruff a club, that's a tell-tale sign that he is preparing for an end play. Declarer is known to hold three spades, one club, and

presumably at least six diamonds. If his distribution is 3=3=6=1, declarer might choose to draw one more trump and play spades. If I win the third spade, it is handy to retain the ♣10 for exit – partner can overtake with the jack, taking me off the hook.

At trick six, declarer reverts to spades, and I win the third round. Here's the ending:

♠ K  
♥ 8 5 3 2  
♦ 10  
♣

♠ –  
♥ K J 10 6  
♦ 8  
♣ 10

What next? Clearly, don't play a club, which surrenders a ruff-sluff. Is it time to break the hearts? It's neither safe nor necessary. Declarer must have the ♥A; if partner held it, along with his known ♣A-K-J-x-x, he would have opened the bidding. The diamond exit is safe. If the ♦10 is an entry and declarer started with seven diamonds, there is no way to prevent a heart discard on the spade. If declarer holds six diamonds, partner has a third trump to ruff the spade winner.

Declarer wins the ♦10 and leads a heart to his 9, losing to the 10. Continue our passive defense and exit with the club. Declarer, who started with:

**♠Q84 ♥AQ9 ♦AKJ763 ♣7,**

is held to nine tricks; we denied him dummy's fourth spade or the ♥Q.

**The moral of this deal and many like it:  
When tempted to win an ace or break a fresh  
suit, ask yourself, "What's the rush?"**

**August Boehm** is a teacher and professional bridge player who lives in the New York area. He is the author of six books on bridge, a regular *Bridge Bulletin* columnist and a contributing editor for *The Bridge World*.



# Good fences make Good Partners

MY BRIDGE AND YOURS WITH **FRANK STEWART**

Originally appeared in May 2007 *Bridge Bulletin*.

This is a deal in which my partner made a mistake — but I was there, aiding and abetting. In a sectional Swiss teams, only the opponents are vulnerable, I'm East with:  
**♠A92 ♥Q108 ♦A5 ♣Q8432.**

South, the dealer, opens 1♠ and North responds 1NT, forcing in their style. Despite my 12 points, I can't act. South rebids 2♥, and North jumps to 4♥. Everyone passes, and West leads the ♦Q.

♠ 84  
 ♥ AJ542  
 ♦ 107  
 ♣ KJ97  
 ♠ A92  
 ♥ Q108  
 ♦ A5  
 ♣ Q8432

North's jump to 4♥ is aggressive, but vulnerable at IMPs, North wants to be in game even if South will have slightly less than a 50% chance. North could have invited with a raise to 3♥ (and might have chosen that action at matchpoints), but he had a sound invitation, so he just bid game, put down the dummy and asked South to make it.

I take the ♦A and, being in somnolent state of mind, return a diamond. Declarer takes the king and leads a club, and when West plays low, South puts up dummy's king. He leads a spade to his king, takes the ♥K and ♥A and leads another spade. I take my ace and cash the ♥Q, and South claims. The full deal:

♠ 84  
 ♥ AJ542  
 ♦ 107  
 ♣ KJ97  
 ♠ 1076  
 ♥ 6  
 ♦ QJ9863  
 ♣ A106  
 ♠ A92  
 ♥ Q108  
 ♦ A5  
 ♣ Q8432  
 ♠ KQJ53  
 ♥ K973  
 ♦ K42  
 ♣ 5

Wonderful! We have let declarer make 4♥ off four top tricks. It occurs to me that my partner should have grabbed his ♣A. If South's hand were, say:

♠KQJ93 ♥KQ73 ♦K4 ♣52

he wouldn't have led a club. Instead, he'd have gone after the spades. If he set up four spade tricks, he could have discarded three clubs from dummy and avoided a club guess.

Still, the fault was more mine. West had to make a snap decision in clubs, and I put him in that position. West couldn't know that I held the ♠A as well as a surprise trump trick. At the second trick I should have led a club. If West had the ace, I wanted him to take it.

The idea of "building a fence around partner" has been treated extensively in the literature.

♠ AQ107  
 ♥ 5  
 ♦ K84  
 ♣ KQ1084  
 ♠ 85  
 ♥ KJ742  
 ♦ AJ93  
 ♣ 63  
 ♠ 43  
 ♥ AQ10963  
 ♦ 10  
 ♣ A752  
 ♠ KJ962  
 ♥ 8  
 ♦ Q7652  
 ♣ J9

West	North	East	South
	1♣	1♥	1♠
2♣	3♠	4♥	4♠
All Pass			

West leads a heart against 4♠ and East takes the ace and shifts to the ♦10, hoping for a ruff. But when South plays low, West will scratch his head: Does East have a singleton diamond or does he have 10-x (in which case West should signal with the 9)? A thoughtful East cashes the ♣A at the second trick and then leads a diamond, giving West no losing option.

Even if your partner is a world champion, save him from making a mistake if you can.

**Frank Stewart** is a bridge journalist, author, editor and teacher. His popular syndicated column, "Daily Bridge Club," appears in more than 130 newspapers throughout North America and overseas.





## Conventionally speaking.....

A convention is a call that may be artificial, or a defensive card play that has a defined meaning. Because everyone at the table is entitled to know what everyone else's bids and carding mean, players are required to fill out a form called a convention card.

Filling out a convention card is an excellent opportunity for you and your partner to discuss what you want to play – your style of bidding (light or conservative) as well as the conventions you use. The form may seem intimidating, but you'll find that it's logically organized and already includes conventions that many social bridge players use, such as Stayman and Blackwood.

Once the game starts, your convention card is placed on the table face-up for your opponents' reference, not yours. Just as you and your partner are both expected to have identical convention cards completed, so, too, are your opponents.

**THE ACBL STANDARD AMERICAN YELLOW CARD (SAYC):** provides a simple, modern method slightly more advanced than the fat-free system. When play began on the Internet, casual partners needing a quick way to establish a system adopted the SAYC. It is also frequently used by players who meet at the partnership desk a few minutes before the game starts.

**CONVENTIONAL WISDOM:** How to fill out the convention card line by line with advice from ACBL editors.

**COMMONLY USED CONVENTIONS:** Explanations of how to play commonly used conventions from the *Bridge Bulletin's* Bidding Toolkit series.

### OTHER CONVENTION CARD RESOURCES

AVAILABLE : [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)

THIS IS THE  
**“FAT-FREE  
 CONVENTION  
 CARD.”** IT IS  
 AVAILABLE ON  
 THE ACBL WEB  
 SITE UNDER  
 CONVENTIONS  
 & CARDS, TOOLS  
 & SUPPLIES.

**JUMP TO 2NT** Many players have agreed that a jump to 2NT over an opponent's opening one-level bid is an “unusual notrump,” showing a two-suited hand — either the two lowest unbid suits or the minor suits.

**NO TRUMP OVERCALLS** If right-hand opponent opens one of a suit and you overcall 1NT, what does 1NT show? Most pairs define a 1NT overcall as showing the same type of hand as a strong 1NT opener.

**SIMPLE OVERCALL** Use the space provided to describe the strength of your one-level overcalls. A commonly used range is 6–17 high-card points. With less you'd pass, and with more, you'd double first and then bid again to show a strong hand.

**JUMP OVERCALL** Most pairs treat a jump overcall as showing a weak hand with a long suit — something resembling a weak-two bid or an opening three-level preempt. If you play this way, check the “weak” box. If, however, you play that these jumps show strong or intermediate hands (opening values and a long suit), check the appropriate box and Alert the opponents.

Bids shown in blue require an “**Announcement.**” For example, when your partner bids 1NT, you **Announce** “15–17” or “16–18” — whatever range you're playing — when partner places the 1NT bid card on the table. Similarly, if you and your partner are playing Jacoby transfers, you would **Announce** “transfer” when partner places the 2♦ or 2♥ bid on the table.

Unusual conventions are shown in red on the card. Those calls are “**Alerted**” by saying the word “**Alert**” and using the “**Alert**” card in the bidding box. You may ask for an explanation when it is your turn.

On the reverse side of the convention card is a personal scorecard for you to keep track of contracts and results. Always keep this side folded or facedown on the table so that your results are not visible to your opponents.

1. If you follow the “Rule of 500,” meaning that — if doubled — your suit is good enough that you expect to go down no more than two vulnerable or three nonvulnerable, check “Sound.”

2. If you preempt on most reasonable (i.e., some high-card concentration) seven- or eight-card suits, mark “Light.”

3. If your style is to preempt even with a bad seven- or eight-card suit, or if you will preempt with fewer cards than is typically expected, check “Very Light.”

**VS OPENING PREEMPTS DOUBLE IS TAKEOUT THRU** The most popular way to play a double of a preempt is takeout, asking partner to bid his best suit. To prevent misunderstandings at high levels, good partnerships establish an upper limit for the takeout double of preempts.

<b>SPECIAL DOUBLES</b> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> thru _____		<b>NOTRUMP OVERCALLS</b> Direct: <u>15</u> to <u>17</u> Systems on* <input type="checkbox"/> * Use same as over opening 1NT Jump to 2NT: Minors <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Lowest <input type="checkbox"/>																													
<b>SIMPLE OVERCALL</b> 1 level <u>6</u> to <u>up</u> HCP (usually) often 4 cards <input type="checkbox"/> very light style <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Responses</b> New Suit: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Forcing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<b>DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP</b> vs: <u>N</u> <u>A</u> <u>T</u> <u>R</u> <u>A</u> <u>L</u> 2♣ _____ 2♦ _____ 2♥ _____ 2♠ _____																													
<b>JUMP OVERCALL</b> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<b>OVER OPP'S T/O DOUBLE</b> New Suit Forcing: 1 level <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 level <input type="checkbox"/> Jump Shift: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>																													
<b>OPENING PREEMPTS</b> 3/4 bids    Sound <input type="checkbox"/> Light <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Light <input type="checkbox"/>		<b>VS Opening Preempts Double Is</b> Takeout <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thru _____ Penalty <input type="checkbox"/>																													
<b>SLAM CONVENTIONS</b> Gerber <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4NT: Blackwood <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>																															
<b>LEADS</b> (circle card led, if not in bold) versus Suits                      versus Notrump <table border="0"> <tr> <td><b>X</b> <b>X</b></td> <td>x x x <b>X</b></td> <td><b>X</b> <b>X</b></td> <td>x x x x</td> </tr> <tr> <td>x x <b>X</b></td> <td>x x x x <b>X</b></td> <td><b>X</b> x x</td> <td>x x x <b>X</b> x</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>A</b> <b>K</b> x</td> <td><b>T</b> 9 x</td> <td><b>A</b> <b>K</b> J x</td> <td><b>A</b> <b>Q</b> J x</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>K</b> Q x</td> <td><b>K</b> <b>J</b> T x</td> <td><b>A</b> <b>J</b> T 9</td> <td><b>A</b> T 9 x</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Q</b> J x</td> <td><b>K</b> T 9 x</td> <td><b>K</b> Q J x</td> <td><b>K</b> Q T 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>J</b> T 9</td> <td><b>Q</b> T 9 x</td> <td><b>Q</b> J T x</td> <td><b>Q</b> T 9 x</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>K</b> Q T 9</td> <td></td> <td><b>J</b> T 9 x</td> <td><b>T</b> 9 x x</td> </tr> </table>		<b>X</b> <b>X</b>	x x x <b>X</b>	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>	x x x x	x x <b>X</b>	x x x x <b>X</b>	<b>X</b> x x	x x x <b>X</b> x	<b>A</b> <b>K</b> x	<b>T</b> 9 x	<b>A</b> <b>K</b> J x	<b>A</b> <b>Q</b> J x	<b>K</b> Q x	<b>K</b> <b>J</b> T x	<b>A</b> <b>J</b> T 9	<b>A</b> T 9 x	<b>Q</b> J x	<b>K</b> T 9 x	<b>K</b> Q J x	<b>K</b> Q T 9	<b>J</b> T 9	<b>Q</b> T 9 x	<b>Q</b> J T x	<b>Q</b> T 9 x	<b>K</b> Q T 9		<b>J</b> T 9 x	<b>T</b> 9 x x	<b>DEFENSIVE CARDING</b> vs SUITS vs NT Standard: <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Standard is defined as: <b>ATTITUDE</b> is generally used when following to partner's lead or discarding. Playing a high card says you like the suit; playing a low card says you don't. <b>COUNT</b> is usually applied when following to declarer's lead. Playing a high card first and then a low card (high/low) shows an even number of cards in the suit and playing a low card first then a high card (low/high) shows an odd number of cards in the suit.	
<b>X</b> <b>X</b>	x x x <b>X</b>	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>	x x x x																												
x x <b>X</b>	x x x x <b>X</b>	<b>X</b> x x	x x x <b>X</b> x																												
<b>A</b> <b>K</b> x	<b>T</b> 9 x	<b>A</b> <b>K</b> J x	<b>A</b> <b>Q</b> J x																												
<b>K</b> Q x	<b>K</b> <b>J</b> T x	<b>A</b> <b>J</b> T 9	<b>A</b> T 9 x																												
<b>Q</b> J x	<b>K</b> T 9 x	<b>K</b> Q J x	<b>K</b> Q T 9																												
<b>J</b> T 9	<b>Q</b> T 9 x	<b>Q</b> J T x	<b>Q</b> T 9 x																												
<b>K</b> Q T 9		<b>J</b> T 9 x	<b>T</b> 9 x x																												
<b>LENGTH LEADS:</b> 4th Best vs SUITS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Primary signal to partner's leads</b> Attitude <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Count <input type="checkbox"/>																													
<b>SPECIAL CARDING</b> <input type="checkbox"/>		<b>PLEASE ASK</b>																													

**DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP** There was a time when anyone who opened 1NT could expect to have a nice, quiet non-competitive auction. Not any more! Many pairs assign special meanings to 2♣, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠ and double. All of these conventions are Alertable.

**NAMES** One of the easiest ways to create a pleasant playing environment — and to make new friends — is to introduce yourself and your partner to opponents you haven't met.

**FORCING OPENING** What's your systemic "big bid" — the demand bid that partner can't pass? Do you play strong two bids? Or do you use the popular 2♣?

Most duplicate players use the 2♦ and 2♥ responses to 1NT as Jacoby transfers, promising five or more cards in the next higher suit. Opener is expected to accept the transfer by bidding the indicated suit at his next turn if there is no interference. Announce "transfer" when partner bids 2♦ or 2♥ if you are playing this convention.

**MAJOR OPENING** Although most North American players open 1♥ or 1♠ with at least a five-card suit, some Goren adherents may prefer to play four-card majors.

**MINOR OPENING** When you or your partner opens 1♣ or 1♦, how many cards do you promise in each suit? Note that it's common for Standard bidders playing five-card majors to check the "3" box for both clubs and diamonds.

2♣ Most players use a 2♣ response to a 1NT opening as Stayman, an artificial bid that asks opener if he has a four-card major.

2NT Many people play that a jump to 2NT shows a game-forcing hand in the 13–15 HCP range. If you do, make note of that here.

2♦ **RESPONSE** to 2♣ When your partner opens 2♣ (strong), what does 2♦ mean? Does it show a bad hand? If so, check the Neg (negative) box. If 2♦ is simply a waiting bid to allow opener to describe his hand, check the Waiting box. Neither treatment is Alertable.

2♦, 2♥, 2♠ Most modern players use these opening two bids to show a weak hand — 6–11 HCP with at least a six-card suit. If, however, you like to play strong-two bids, check the "strong" box and Alert the opening.

2♣ Many players, especially those who employ Standard systems, use 2♣ to show any hand that is very strong: everything from big, balanced hands to powerful one-, two- or three-suiters.

ACBL

NAMES \_\_\_\_\_

GENERAL APPROACH  
STANDARD AMERICAN

FORCING OPENING: 2♣  Other  \_\_\_\_\_

NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS

15 1NT to 17  
to

3♣ \_\_\_\_\_  
3♦ \_\_\_\_\_  
3♥ \_\_\_\_\_  
3♠ \_\_\_\_\_

2NT 20 to 21 \*  
\* Use same as over opening 1NT

3NT 25 to 27

2♣ Stayman   
2♦ Transfer to ♥   
2♥ Transfer to ♠   
2NT Inv. Other \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR OPENING		MINOR OPENING	
Expected Min. Length	4 5	Expected Min. Length	4 3 0-2 Conv
1st/2nd	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1♣	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3rd/4th	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1♦	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES		RESPONSES	
Double Raise: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>		Double Raise: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>	
After Overall: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>		After Overall: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>	
1NT	6 to 10	1NT/1♣	6 to 10
2NT	11 to 12	2NT	11 to 12
3NT	13 to 15	3NT	13 to 15
Other _____		Other _____	

	DESCRIBE	RESPONSES/REBIDS
2♣ 22 to + HCP Strong <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		2D WAITING
2♦ 5 to 10 HCP Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/>		2NT Force <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2♥ 5 to 10 HCP Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/>		2NT Force <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2♠ 5 to 10 HCP Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/>		2NT Force <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

OTHER CONVENTIONAL CALLS:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Chalk Talk

Eddie Kantar

## What can go wrong?

Originally appeared in  
December 2006 *Bridge Bulletin*.

Most readers of the *Bridge Bulletin* are primarily matchpoint duplicate players. Given that form of scoring, there is a high priority on not only making your contract, but scoring overtricks as well. In fact, it is almost de rigueur to risk your contract for the almighty overtrick(s) if the odds favor taking the chance.

On the other side of the fence is the play at:

1. Rubber (or money) bridge,
2. Any IMP-scored event,
3. Any doubled or redoubled contract,
4. Any superior contract reached playing matchpoints that the field is unlikely to reach.

Given any of these scenarios, overtricks are not the top priority — making the contract is first and foremost. This article presumes that your primary objective is making the contract. Here are two head-starting hints:

1. Ask yourself what can go wrong.
2. Assuming you spot an unhappy possibility, ask yourself what, if anything, you can do about it. If there is, do it!

### Let's start with this one:

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

♠ Q 5  
♥ A 6 5  
♦ A 8 7  
♣ K Q J 8 7

After you open 1NT, partner gently raises you to game. West leads the ♠3. Do you see anything here that we've been talking about?

You should. What can go wrong is this: Say you play low on the spade and East, that scoundrel, has the king, takes the trick, and shifts to a heart. Now, unless the hearts are blocked, if the player with the ♣A has four or more hearts, then down you go. Could you

have prevented this? Yes. Win the ♠A (you still have a spade stopper) and drive out the ♣A. Even if they find a heart shift, it's too late. You have nine tricks: four clubs, three diamonds and two major-suit aces. Now try this one, and remember "the question."

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

♠ J 10 6  
♥ K 3  
♦ K J 4  
♣ A K Q 10 4

You decide to treat this 17-point hand as an 18-point hand and open 1♣. Partner responds 1♦ and raises your jump rebid of 2NT to 3NT. West, a broken record, leads the ♠3. See any trouble ahead?

You should. What if East wins the opening lead and shifts to a heart and West has the ♥A? Suddenly a cascade of hearts will be heading your way. Can you do anything about it? Clearly you can't if East has the ♠A and West has the ♥A. However, if you play the ♠K at trick one you can at least save the day when East has the ♠Q and West has the ♠A.

### Try this deal:

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

♠ K J 7 5  
♥ A J 10 2  
♦ A 10 9  
♣ 10 8

Partner opens 1♣, you try 1♥, partner rebids 2♣ and you head for everyone's favorite contract, 3NT.

West leads the ♦3 (what, no spade?) East plays the ♦Q, followed by the ♦K and then a third diamond to your ace as you pitch a spade from the dummy. West, if he can be trusted, has shown a five-card diamond suit. Can you see anything that can go wrong?

Well, if the club finesse loses (what else is new?) and a low spade comes back, you are not exactly a happy camper. Assuming this happens, your thinking should be: If West has the ♠A, I can't make this contract, but I don't want to blow this contract if East has the ♠A, so rise with the king. If it loses and West takes two more diamonds, big deal. You go down three instead of two if West has the ♠A and East the ♠Q. But you make the contract if East has the ♠A.

Before leaving this deal, say you take the club finesse at trick four and it works! When you lead a second club to dummy's queen, East discards a heart. Now what? You can't set up clubs for five tricks because it means giving the lead up to West who has the setting tricks in diamonds. Recount your tricks: You have three clubs, four hearts and a diamond. You need one spade trick. Lead a spade to the king because you can't make the contract if West has the ♠A.

**Eddie Kantar** is one of the best-known bridge writers in the world. He has more than 20 bridge books in print and is a regular contributor to the *Bridge Bulletin*, *The Bridge World*, *Bridge Today* and many foreign publications. A two-time world champion, he is one of the game's greatest ambassadors.

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# Ask Jerry



**Jerry Helms**

Dear Jerry,

*My partner and I come from two different bidding schools. She learned "college" bridge 40 years ago (maybe Goren style), while I have been learning the "modern" methods of hand evaluation.*

*My partner's books say that both opener and responder should add points for short suits. This is not the way I was taught, but when I asked several other players they all agreed with her. I believe you once addressed this issue at a mini-lesson that I attended. Can you elaborate?*

*Distributionally Disturbed*

Dear DD,

Can I elaborate? A good friend, Jerry Cartright, once compared me to CNN ... once you get me started, I just go on and on and on.

First, a little background: Charlie Goren and I have been at odds over hand evaluation for years. Most, if not all, of his literature suggests that opener should add 3 points for any void held, 2 points for a singleton, and 1 point for a doubleton. I respectfully but vehemently disagree!

## Consider this hand:

♠A873 ♥ — ♦AK862 ♣QJ75.

Per Mr. Goren: 14 HCP plus 3 distribution points (for the void),

creating a 17-point, medium-strength opening bid. Per Jerry: What response is most likely when holding this hand? Wouldn't it be shocking if partner's longest suit was hearts? If the bidding were to conclude with any number of hearts as the final contract, would it ever occur to you to table dummy, proudly proclaiming 17 support points? Similarly, if the bidding ever ground to a halt at any level of notrump, is this hand really worth 17 points? Methinks not!

Hand evaluation might better be called "guesstimation." Using some type of guideline, you attempt to guess the probability of the cards you hold to help you take tricks on both offense and defense. Quality of points matters, concentration of points matters, 10s and 9s matter, long suits matter and short suits may or may not matter. Aces and kings are slightly undervalued by traditional point-count systems, queens and jacks, slightly overvalued. Connected honors are more valuable than scattered honors. A good long suit is better than a bad long suit. Sometimes, in a suit contract, shortness merely stops a loser, but other times it stops a loser *and* creates a winner.

I would consider the example hand to be worth a hefty 15 points or so: three quick tricks, plus connected honors in a five-card suit. After opening 1♦, if partner were to shockingly reply 1♠, my emotions would skyrocket, perhaps resembling the classic James Brown song, "I Feel Good"! From my perspective, spades are now established as trump, making the heart void clearly valuable. In fact, I would reevaluate this hand and add a full 5 points for the void, bringing the total from a sound minimum, past medium and into a maximum 19- to 20-point hand with which I would insist on game opposite what could be a meager 5 to 6 points. Why 5 points for the void? If the ♥A were led, dummy's void is

worth more than that particular ace! Enough about basic evaluation.

Perhaps the crux of your question is this: Is shortness equally valuable in both dummy and declarer's hand? Usually not. Compare these two seemingly similar yet very different six-card layouts where spades are trump:

Declarer	Dummy
♠AKQJ10	♠987
♥7	♥832

Exactly five tricks are available. If the opening lead is ♥A followed by ♥K, declarer can ruff to prevent a loser, but declarer cannot create a winner.

Declarer	Dummy
♠AKQJ10	♠987
♥832	♥7

On this layout, seven trump tricks are available (or six if the opponents lead trumps) since by ruffing in the short hand, losers are prevented and winners are created.

Except for something called a "dummy reversal," ruffing in the hand with the most trumps stops losers, but doesn't create winners. Ruffing in the short hand stops losers *and* creates winners. For this reason, I think it is a mistake to automatically add full value to short suits in the hand with the longer of the two trump holdings.

**Jerry Helms**, who lives in Charlotte NC when he isn't at sea or on the road lecturing, is a full-time player and teacher. He is a featured columnist for both *Better Bridge* magazine and the *ACBL Bridge Bulletin*. More articles by Helms as well as information about seminars and cruises are available at [jerryhelms.com](http://jerryhelms.com).



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