

District 16 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

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From the Editor

"In 1857, when he was just 26, [Henry] Jones ... devised a method of proving that whist was a game of skill. He took four good players and made them play what would now be called a match against four ordinary performers. The good players held the North/South cards at one table, and the East/West cards at the other. A series of deals were played, and by comparing the results, he proved his point: The good players had taken considerably more tricks, in total, than the lesser lights.
He had invented the first duplicate game."

The New York Times Bridge Book, Truscott, Saint Martin's Press, NY, 2002 at 6 & 7.

Carol Jewett, Editor

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Upcoming Tournaments and Events

Sectionals:

Austin - Jan 2 - 5 [Info](#)
San Antonio - Jan 16 - 19 [Info](#)
Denton - Jan 16 - 18 [Info](#)
Dallas - Jan 29 - Feb 1 [Info](#)

Events:

District 16 NAP Final (Austin) - Jan 11 - 12 [Info](#)
District 16 Zoom Spanish Lecture - Dec 21 at 12:30 p.m.
District 16 Zoom I/N Lecture - Dec 28 at noon
0-50 masterpoint games every Monday at 4:00 p.m.
0-100 masterpoint games every day at 6:00 p.m.
0-200 masterpoint games every day at 6:05 p.m.

For Information on Other Tournaments in General for District 16, [click here.](#)

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣



Bridge Math

Have you ever noticed how really good bridge players seem to have an eerie ability to guess (a) that one of the two hands that he or she cannot see is holding the last two or three cards in a given suit and (b) which hand it is? This is

because such a player, from the moment bidding on a hand begins, is evaluating the hands around the table in terms of probable shapes by combining information from the bidding on the hand with knowledge regarding the probabilities of bridge hand shapes.

The first step in generating a hand of bridge involves dividing a deck of 52 cards among four hands. A deck of cards consists of four suits of 13 cards, split among the four bridge hands as the deck is dealt. When groups of cards are split, the following applies: an even number of cards tends to divide oddly and an odd number of cards tends to divide evenly.

Thus, the first split of a 13 card suit would tend to split evenly into one group of seven and one group of six. When those two groups of cards are then split again, the following applies: the seven card group would tend to split evenly into one group of four and one group of three and the six card group would tend to split oddly into one group of two and one group of four. The result would be four groups consisting of two four card groups, a three card group and a two card group.

Taking it one slight step further, if there is to be a deviancy in the split away from the probable pattern, it is more likely to be a deviancy of one card as opposed to two or more cards. With the foregoing as background, consider the following table of the five most likely bridge hand shapes, and the probability of each as compared to all other possible bridge hand shapes.

Shape	Probability
4-4-3-2	0.21551
5-3-3-2	0.15517
5-4-3-1	0.12931
5-4-2-2	0.10580
4-3-3-3	0.10536

In total, there are 39 possible bridge hand shapes. If you add up the percentages of the five most probable shapes shown above, you find that they constitute nearly 70% of all bridge hands. It takes a little focus and practice, but once you get familiar with these most likely hand shapes, you can use the information that you get from the combination of (a) the bidding on a given bridge hand and (b) what you see in the two hands that you can see to give you some guidance on how the other cards in a hand are likely distributed between the other two players at the table.

Material from *The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge*, Truscott, Alan F. ; Francis, Dorothy A., (5th ed.). Memphis, TN: American Contract Bridge League..

Opening Leads In Suit Contracts

At the 2024 Lone Star Regional in Houston Robert Morris gave a presentation on opening leads in suit contracts. Here is an abridged and edited version of his presentation:

Opening Leads in Suit Contracts

A Few Tips & Suggestions

By Robert Morris

Best Leads In General

- Honor sequences: these holdings make both safe and attacking leads.
AKQ QJ10 AKJ QJ9 KQJ J109 KQ10 J108
- Singletons (not trump) will often result in a ruff or two!
- Partner's bid suit – especially an opening major or if it was an overcall.
- Small doubleton – can lead to a ruff for you.

When to Lead Trumps

- Lead trumps when dummy has taken a preference to declarer's second suit. Example:

1♠ - Pass - 1NT - Pass -
2♥ - Pass - Pass - Pass

Lead a heart!

- If the opponents have taken a sacrifice and your side has a majority of the high cards, trump leads may limit the number of ruffs for the declarer.
- Part score auctions when you hold xxx or xxxx in trumps and dummy can score ruffs. Example:

1♠ - Pass - 2♠ - Pass -
Pass - Pass

When to Lead "Passive"

- Against low level contracts.
- Against "thin" games. Examples:

1NT - Pass - 2♣ - Pass - 2♣ -
Pass - 3♣ - Pass 4♠ - Pass - Pass - Pass

1♥ - Pass - 2♥ - Pass - 3♣ - Pass -
3♦ - Pass - 3♥ - Pass - 4♥ - Pass - Pass - Pass

- Very weak dummy and very strong declarer. Examples:

2♣ - Pass - 2♦ - Pass -
2NT - Pass - 3♣ - 3♥ - Pass - Pass - Pass

2NT - Pass - 3♥ - Pass - 3♠ - Pass - Pass - Pass

- You are “stuck” with a dangerous holding (in terms of leads) .in three different suits.

When to lead “aggressive”

- Against confidently bid games and slams.
- If the bidding indicates that there is very likely a strong running suit in the dummy.
Example:

1♦ - Pass - 1♠ - Pass - 3♦ - Pass - 3♠ - Pass - 4♠ - Pass - Pass - Pass

- Against an opening preempt bid that was “happily” raised to game.
- When you can tell that the layout of the hand is very favorable for the declarer because:
 - i. Trumps are splitting for the declarer,
 - ii. Finesses are working for the declarer, or
 - iii. Side suit(s) can be set up easily.

Additional Tips and Ideas

- Be aware of negative inferences from the auction:
 - i. No double of a control bid by partner.
 - ii. A skipped suit in a control-showing auction.
 - iii. No negative double or support double - can help define the distribution.
 - iv. The suit no one can stop if “dancing around 3NT” ending in five of a minor.
- Occasionally it will be right to lead out the Ace from Axxx(x)(x) and hope to give partner a ruff.
- Rarely (it may be spectacular!) you can underlead your Ace when dummy is strong and the declarer is weak. Example:

1♦ - Pass - 1♠ - Pass -
4♠ - Pass - Pass - Pass

Usually the dummy has no shortness, so underleading
Axx in an unbid side suit may elicit a misguess from KJ in the dummy.

- With no attractive lead, trying dummy’s first bid suit will often be the best lead: Example:

1♦ - Pass - 1♠ - Pass -
3♦ - Pass - Pass - Pass

Your hand: ♠ 1098 ♥ Kxxx ♦ Qx ♣ Qxxx

Try the ♠ 10

- If you have to lead away from a King or Queen, choose the shorter suit for your opening lead: Example:

1♦ - Pass - 1♥ - Pass - 3♦ - Pass - Pass - Pass

Your hand: ♠ Kxx ♥ Jxx ♦ Qx ♣ Kxxxx

Here a heart doesn’t look attractive, so choose a spade rather than a club.

Eddie Kantar Hand Analysis

What to Do
By
Eddie Kantar

North
♠ 52
♥ 76
♦ AK86
♣ AJ1086

South (You)

♠AJ4
♥AK3
♦J75
♣Q732

A simple 1NT - 3NT auction lands you in a 3NT contract. West leads the ♠7 and East plays the king. Plan the play.

Solution: The spade holding presents a problem. Should you take the first trick or should you holdup? It all depends upon which opponent is likely to get the lead next. In this case the club finesse, the suit you need to attack, is headed into East. Therefore, you should hold up until the third round of spades and then take the finesse. If it loses and spades were 5-3, East will not have a spade to return and you will take at least nine tricks: Four clubs, two hearts, two diamonds and one spade. If East does have a spade to return, spades were 4-4 and you still have nine tricks after they cash that fourth spade.

If we turn the clubs around, now the club finesse goes into the West hand. Now it is right to win the ♠A retaining your remaining ♠Jx as a stopper in case the finesse loses. It is easy to know whether to win or duck the opening lead when the hand depends upon a finesse. It is not as easy if you have an ace to knock out. Hopefully there has been bidding so you have idea who has the missing ace. If not, you must make an educated guess.

The full deal:

	North	
	♠52	
	♥76	
	♦AK86	
	♣AJ1086	
West		East
♠Q10873		♠K96
♥J982		♥Q1054
♦743		♦Q109
♣5		♣K54
	South (You)	
	♠AJ4	
	♥AK3	
	♦J75	
	♣Q732	

<http://kantarbridge.com/>

Thomas Rush Hand Analysis

About Those Horses

By
Thomas Rush

Your partner (East) opens 3♣ and you (West) raise to 3NT. North and South do nothing but pass.

Your hands:

West(You).	East
♠AQ	♠10
♥QJ4	♥A10
♦KQ1054	♦J62
♣Q73	♣KJ108652

As West, Declarer, you get the lead of the heart 3. What's your plan?

Planning:

First, we count our tricks. In top tricks, we have one spade and one heart - only two! But the heart lead gives us a potential heart trick, we can take the spade finesse, and of course, we have that long club suit that seems to provide six tricks after we knock out the ace. Diamonds will likely develop four tricks if we knock out the Ace (unless they're 5-0, but that's only 4% of the time).

So, we craft a likely path to nine tricks: We'll duck the heart (maybe North has led away from the King?), and when in, work on clubs, hoping to take at least these tricks: six clubs, two hearts, and the spade Ace.

Playing:

The Ten of hearts loses to the King, and the Nine of hearts comes back, with North playing the Deuce. We win the Ace perforce, but our Queen is a second stopper, and we're not in immediate danger from the heart suit. We feel a bit sad that opponents led a heart; that takes out our only certain entry to the club suit, should clubs split 3-0 and an opponent choose to hold up his club Ace until the third round. We note that the heart 9 looks like South started with two or three hearts (he would lead back his original 4th best to give his partner the count of the heart suit, had he

started with four or more), and the play of the three followed by the two makes it look like North started with five hearts and had led 4th best, so hearts are likely 5332 around the table.

We lead a club to our Queen at trick 3 and are disappointed when North shows out. We lead a second club to dummy's King, and South ducks again. What now?

Revisiting the Plan:

First, let's face reality: the club suit is dead. If we lead another club, the suit will be established when South takes his ace, but we have no entry to the suit to cash the four winners we need (we would have one spade, two hearts, and only two clubs established and cashable). If North has the diamond Ace, he will get in, and the defense will take three hearts, the club Ace, and the diamond Ace, for a one-trick set!

So, what can we do? In the old proverb, we're told, "Don't switch horses in the middle of the stream," but we know that the horse of the club suit won't get us across the stream (in fact, it leads to down 1), so we have no choice but to alter our plan.

We have these tricks: Ace of spades for one, the Ace of hearts in and the good Queen established for three, and two clubs for five total tricks. Where can we get four more tricks? When dummy first hit, we noted that we had the chance to develop four diamond tricks, joyfully we note that four diamond tricks are just what we need!

So, at trick five, we abandon clubs and lead a low diamond to the King. If both opponents follow, diamonds split, and we'll continue with a diamond to the Jack and then more diamonds until they take their Ace. The spade Ace is a certain entry to the remaining diamonds and the heart Queen. We take our nine tricks and go home happy. The complete deal is:

♠9542	
♥87632	
♦A983	
♣	
♠AQ	♠10
♥QJ4	♥A10
♦KQ1054	♦J62
♣Q73	♣KJ108652
♠KJ8763	
♥K95	
♦7	
♣A94	

As declarer, don't be afraid to switch horses when it's clear that your Plan A won't work!

It's The Law

I know (more or less) what should and should not be alerted and when, but what do I do if my partner doesn't alert something that should have been alerted, or alerts something that should not have been alerted?

Law 20 of the *Laws of Duplicate Bridge* responds to this inquiry and provides, in pertinent part:

"A player whose partner has given a mistaken explanation may not correct the error during the auction, nor may he indicate in any manner that a mistake has been made. 'Mistaken explanation' here includes failure to alert or announce as regulations require, or an alert (or an announcement) that regulations do not require."

So, when confronted with some nature of alert error on the part of your partner:

1. Do not indicate in any way that the error has occurred. This means do not announce the error and avoid showing surprise or discomfort or in any way communicating concern about what your partner has or has not done.
2. Do not make allowances for your partner's error. This means do not adjust your actions to "correct" the situation and do not adjust your own bidding to reflect concern that your partner has misunderstood what you bid because he or she either erroneously alerted or erroneously failed to alert it. At each subsequent step in the auction, you must continue to act as if your partner had acted properly.

Call the Director

You should call the director and inform him or her that, in your opinion, your partner has committed an alert error but you should *only* do this at the "first legal opportunity" which is after the auction has been completed and:

1. If you are the declarer or the dummy for the hand, after the final bid in the auction and before the defenders have led.
2. If you are a defender for the hand, at the end of the play of the hand.

