

District 16 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

Volume 10 Issue 5 - May 2024



From the Editor

June brings a unique opportunity for all to participate and give to charity via ACBL's *The Longest Day Alzheimer's Fundraiser*, June 16-23. Please check out how you can get involved by volunteering and participating as we all work together to fight this disease and honor all living with or caring for those with Alzheimer's.

Being a strong believer that we should always be welcoming, patient, kind and considerate whether we are interacting at a club, tournament or table (and especially to our newer players); this month's issue includes some helpful reminders on how to be a good partner. Plus, Rule 74 which covers conduct and etiquette is reviewed in our It's the Law section.

Highlighted this month is Marilyn Knatz. Although we only had the pleasure of meeting by phone this week, I feel I've made a new friend. Her positive attitude towards bridge and all those who play the game is contagious as is her go-getter nature. In the 5-20 MP group last year, she ranked #8 in the D16 Mini-McKenney race and #2 in her unit.

In striving to continuously include material by our various teachers, this month's section on Better Bidding is provided by Jeff Kroll, 2024 District 16 Teacher of the Year.

I've been having a wonderful time serving as your editor of this newsletter and hope you've found the articles provided during my tenure both helpful and entertaining. Due to other obligations, I will soon be passing the torch forward.

As always, your continued feedback, stories, and suggestions for content are appreciated.

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Upcoming Intermediate/Newcomer (IN) Tournaments

Special Event

June 16-23 The Longest Day Alzheimer's Fundraiser Flyer: [Click Here](#)

IN Sectionals

June 1-2 Sun City 0-750 NLM Sectional Flyer: [Click Here](#)

June 20-23 Bridge Club of Houston 499er Sectional Flyer: [Click Here](#)

Regionals

May 13-19 Fort Western Regional Flyer: [Click Here](#)
(Gold Rush Pairs Tues-Sat, Bracketed Team Games Daily)

Aug 22-24 Tyler NLM 0-750 Regional Flyer: [Click Here](#)
*This event takes place concurrent with the Tyler Sectional

GNT (Grand National Teams)

May 25-26 District 16 Flight C Qualifier and Finals Flyer: [Click Here](#)
Pre-registration required. See flyer for more information.
(Flight C - non-life master with under 500 MP, as of Aug 6, 2023)
*This event takes place during the Richardson Sectional, flyer [click here](#)

Upcoming Tournaments in General

For District 16, [click here](#).

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

Weekly Online Game for 0-50 Players

District 16 provides a 12-board game on BBO just for players having 0-50 masterpoints for \$4.50 on Monday afternoons at 4:00. A director and assistants will be on hand to offer guidance during the game.

For more information, check out our Frequently Asked Questions [D16 0-50 Game Frequently Asked Questions](#) or email Beginner20Bridge@gmail.com.



Highlighted Player - Marilyn Knatz (Unit 174)



On Her Way to 100 Masterpoints

Marilyn Knatz started playing a hint of bridge while in her early 20's after being introduced to the game by her husband. Like many in the oil industry, she and her family relocated frequently, spending a significant portion of their time in Latin America.

The 1st time she was thrown into the bridge table was when they moved in 1978 to a small Honduras community. She flew in at 4:15 to have her husband whisk her off to a dinner that included 4 tables of bridge. She prayed, "*please don't let me have any hands with face cards*" as though she could count points, she still hadn't learned how to bid. By the end of the evening, she had made new friends and found someone there to teach her Goren bridge!

Through the social groups she was introduced to in each new community, bridge became an in for social contact and meeting new people.

Fast forward 25+ years - her husband was retired, they relocated to The Woodlands, she joined a neighborhood social group, and a new friend introduced her to the Bridge Club of Houston (BCOH). She found everyone there very welcoming, encouraging and thoroughly intriguing. Upon discovering the huge difference between playing duplicate and "kitchen" bridge, she quickly immersed herself in beginner lessons at BCOH and joined ACBL!

Loving the social aspect as well as the mental stimulation bridge provides her, going to the Houston Regional with her friends, filled with bridge, camaraderie, and laughter, quickly became an annual event.

These days, in addition to continually playing social bridge, she drives to three different duplicate clubs to participate in their 199er, 299er, and monthly mentor games. If the limited game doesn't make, she joins the big game.

Her 2 biggest aha moments thus far?

- Achieving the rank of ACBL Junior Master (5MP) during the 2022 Houston Awesome August Sectional and excitedly thought "oh my gosh, I am now really ready to go to the Bridge Club and learn!"
- Winning 2nd place and her first GOLD points while playing bracketed team games at the 2023 Houston Regional.

Marilyn says she has the best time playing bridge. "I may never be the best bridge player but will be voted Miss Congeniality".

Janice Hardcastle, president of BCOH agrees wholeheartedly, saying "Marilyn is a real asset to our club. She has volunteered to assist with the 299er game on Saturdays by making countless calls and emails in order to get our story out in the 299er community. She is a bundle of energy and the best ambassador a club could have."

Her current goal is to become an ACBL Regional Master (100MP) by the end of June. Go get 'em Marilyn!

Better Bridge Habits

10 Common Errors and Solutions to Avoid Them

Taken from Bridge Bulletin, July 2007, "Fault Signs" by Mary Smith

1. Playing too fast.

Many errors, such as winning the opening lead in your hand when you should have won it in the dummy, can be prevented by just slowing down. If you are the declarer, make a plan. So if you're planning to take an immediate finesse for the king of trumps by leading the queen from dummy, try to win the first trick in dummy!

2. Cashing tricks, especially aces, too early.

Planning ahead is good for defenders, too. Aces should capture kings and queens, not 2s and 3s. When the dummy, on your left, tables a suit such as K-J-5-4, decide ahead of time that when declarer leads toward that suit, you will duck smoothly. You will lose your ace once in a while, but when your partner has the queen, she will score it most of the time. Try to establish extra tricks, not just cash the ones you were dealt.

3. Trump mismanagement.

a) Getting your winners ruffed because you didn't pull trumps. Solution: If your hand or the dummy is going to be full of good tricks after you knock out one of the opponent's high cards, then you should usually pull trumps so your winners won't be ruffed.

b) Pulling too many trumps. Solution: When you're planning a crossruff, or simply need to ruff losers in your hand or dummy, don't pull trumps, or at least not enough to thwart your plan.

4. Bad bidding - part 1.

Tell your partner what you've got instead of making her guess. Example: Opening one bid on your left, double by your partner, pass on your right:

a) With game values (opening hand), bid game or cuebid

b) Jump one level with about 10-11 dummy points.

c) Jump two levels to show length but not much strength.

d) Bid a suit at the lowest level to show a bust up to about 9 points. But with 6-9 points you can bid again if you get the chance.

e) Bid 1NT with 7-10 HCP, 2NT with 11-12, and 3NT with 13-15, showing stoppers in opener's suit.

5. Misusing conventions.

Many people play conventions without knowing the follow-ups. For example:

- a) The unusual notrump and Michaels cuebid were designed to show two suiters with one bid. You need a few high card points and decent suits. If you are vulnerable, your hand should have more strength.
- b) Blackwood and Gerber were invented to keep you out of slam off two aces, not one. If you find you are off an ace, you should bid six.
- c) If responder bids a minor suit at the three level after partner has answered the Stayman inquiry, is it forcing, invitational, or describing a bust? All three treatments are playable, but discuss follow-ups like this with your regular partner, and don't forget to discuss if conventions are on or off in competition.

6. Bad Penalty doubles.

Don't double for penalty just because you have a strong hand. You need tricks and, usually, some trump tricks.

7. Captaincy issues.

When you have basically described your hand, leave the competitive decisions up to partner. Assume your partner is the boss any time you open the bidding or overcall. Why? Consider auctions that begin with 1NT openers. Responder adds her points to yours.

It's usually easy to decide if you belong in a part score, or if you are in game or slam range. Auctions that start with a suit are similar. The opener describes her hand and usually narrows her point range on her second bid, so responder can often place the final contract.

8. Telling the same story twice.

Resolve to stop rebidding five-card suits if there is a reasonable alternative. After a Jacoby Transfer, don't rebid a five-card suit. Rebidding the known five-card suit should promise six!

9. Bad bidding - part 2.

Missing games and part scores because you didn't respond to partner's overcall. Support with support. Treat an overcall as if it were an opening bid until you find out differently. So, even with modest values, raise if you can at your first chance or bid 1NT.

With a traditional limit raise, you should cuebid.

10. Physical or mechanical errors.

Before playing to any trick, take a quick glance at the table, left to right. If you are following to a trick, look to see what has already been played. If you are leading to a trick, make sure you are on lead. Then, as you pull your card out, check again that it's the one you meant to play.

As reproduced: www.bridgewebs.com/richmond/bridgedb/commonerrors.pdf

Eddie Kantar's Tip

10 Ways to Be Kind to Your Partner

Reproduced from the book *Bridge for Dummies* by Eddie Kantar

Most bridge players value a reliable, happy partner above anything else. It's important to the success of your partnership that you work together as a team. You both want to win, so you can't gain anything from getting upset when play doesn't go exactly as planned. It seldom does! In this chapter, I give you tips on keeping your partner one happy camper.

1. Treat Your Partner Like Your Best Friend

Even if you don't know your partner well, treating her with respect improves her play. Treat your partner like your best friend, and you'll be repaid in "spades." Be a pleasant, courteous opponent, and you'll win everyone's "hearts."

2. Tolerate Your Partner's Errors

Don't keep harping on your partner's errors — just forgive and try to forget (at least until after the game). After all, do you want to be reminded of all the mistakes you've made? (Everybody makes mistakes, including you.) If you have constructive criticism, save it for after the session, when you'll both be calmer. Expect (demand) that your partner show you the same respect.

3. Keep a Poker Face

Never make any facial or body mannerisms that indicate whether you're pleased or displeased with a bid or play. You'll lose the table's respect. Facial and body mannerisms can be construed as illegal signals.

4. Deal Well with Disaster

A truly good partnership handles the inevitable disaster with a touch of humor. If your partner doesn't have to worry that you'll have an apoplectic fit whenever something goes wrong, he'll play better.

5. Play Conventions You Both Want to Play

Don't force your partner to play your favorite conventions. A partner worried about a convention inevitably makes more errors in the bidding, play, and defense, not to mention screwing up the convention if it comes up.

6. Pick Up the Slack for the Weaker Player

The better player in a partnership should make the weaker player feel at ease. Make your bids, leads, and signals as simple and clear as possible, and don't give an inexperienced partner tough contracts to play. When you judge that it's going to be a tough hand to play, bid conservatively.

7. Own Up to Your Own Errors

Avoid the human tendency to lay your own errors at your partner's doorstep. It makes a weaker partner feel good to know that you, the stronger player, make errors as well — and are a big enough person to admit them.

8. Offer Words of Encouragement

Give your partner a few words of support after the hand is over, particularly if he doesn't make his contract. "Tough luck" and "Nice try" go over better than "My great-grandmother could've made that hand in her sleep."

9. Treat Your Partner the Same Whether You Win or Lose

When the session is over, win or lose, tell your partner how much you enjoyed playing with her (no matter how you feel). Kind words mean the world to a player who knows that she hasn't played well. It also shows class.

10. Know When to Have Fun

When all is said and done, you play bridge to have fun, and so does your partner. You've done your job if your partner leaves the table happy.

Online link to above: [click here](http://www.kantarbridge.com)
www.kantarbridge.com

Declarer Play

Written by Frank Stewart, published in the NABC Daily Bulletin, Vol 93 No 1, July 2023

Tips for New Players

Note by Frank: "When Eddie Kantar left us last April (2022), bridge lost a treasure. For many years, Eddie contributed material for New Players to the NABC Daily Bulletins with his inimitable style and gentle humor. Nobody could replace Eddie. I feel deeply honored that I was asked to carry on for him..."

When I talk to new players, I often ask what drew them to the game. What about bridge do they find compelling? What do they like about it? Sometimes the answer is, "I like winning." And certainly, to do well is gratifying. But winning is a product of playing well — and applying yourself to the game.

My feeling is that the attraction of bridge lies in problem-solving. During a session, you face a series of problems. Some you can resolve instinctively or mechanically, but others require logical thought. That is what is exhilarating: facing a problem and reasoning out the answer.

New players may tend to view "card reading" — figuring out what the opponents have — as a mysterious process reserved for experts, but many "expert" thought processes are simple in principle. Declare in this deal:

Dlr: East
 Vul: None
 ♠ J 10 9 6
 ♥ A Q 3
 ♦ K 5 2
 ♣ K 10 4

♠ A K 8 7 4
 ♥ J 10 4
 ♦ 7 6
 ♣ A J 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

North's 2NT is a conventional forcing spade raise popularly known as Jacoby 2NT. South has a minimum and jumps to game to discourage any slam adventures. West leads the ♦J, and declarer plays low from dummy. West continues with the ♦10, winning, as declarer plays low again. On a third diamond, East covers the king with the ace, and declarer ruffs. He says a prayer over the trump suit, cashing the A-K, and East obligingly has Q-x: The suit was 2-2.

Declarer next lets the HJ ride, and East produces the king and exits with a heart. Then declarer must locate the ♣Q to make his game. He will finesse against either East or West.

Heard the story about the man who needed a dental procedure and had to be sedated? He was given a choice: They could give him gas or hit him over the head with a boat paddle and knock him out. It was ... an ether-or situation. Well, is this strictly an either-or guess for South? Who has the missing queen?

If South has paid attention, he can't go wrong. East passed as dealer and has shown the ♠Q, ♥K and ♦A Q. How does South know East has the ♦Q? Because West led the ♦J and continued with the ♦10. That shows he started with the J-10-(x)-(x)-(x).

That's 11 high-card points. So West is marked with the ♣Q:

Dlr: East	♠ J 10 9 6	
Vul: None	♥ A Q 3	
	♦ K 5 2	
	♣ K 10 4	
♠ 5 3		♠ Q 2
♥ 9 8 2		♥ K 7 6 5
♦ J 10 9 4		♦ A Q 8 3
♣ Q 8 6 3		♣ 9 7 2
	♠ A K 8 7 4	
	♥ J 10 4	
	♦ 7 6	
	♣ A J 5	

Frank Stewart is a teacher, author, editor, journalist and competitor within the duplicate bridge world. He is a regular contributor to the ACBL and ACBL NABC Bridge Bulletins. Some of his syndicated articles can be found on the ACBL website by [clicking here](#).

To learn more about Frank Stewart's daily column available through Baron Barclay, click [here](#).

Demon Defense

The following comes from Bridge with Larry Cohen and is followed by a quiz. Larry is a 21=5-time NABC champion, and recipient of many awards. He is best known as an advocate for the "Law of Total Tricks" as a guide to bidding. His website includes a learning center on a long list of topics and his writing style is very easy to follow. It also provides information on upcoming bridge lectures seminars, cruises and more.

THIRD-HAND PLAY

When playing 3rd to a trick on defense, the general rule is "Third-Hand High." So, if partner leads low, and dummy plays low (from 762), you put up your king with, say, K94. But, there are exceptions:

- 1) With touching cards, play the cheapest you can afford. Partner leads low, dummy plays low and you should insert the Q from KQxx, the 10 from QJ10, the K from AKx, etc.
- 2) If partner (or dummy) is winning the trick, you won't waste a high card. But, you should signal your attitude. Playing standard signals, the 2 (low card) would say you don't like it and the 10 (high card) would say you do.
- 3) If dummy has the king, queen, or jack and you have the card that is one or two higher than dummy's, save your high one to capture dummy's high one. So, partner leads low and dummy has Qxx. If dummy's queen is played, cover. If dummy plays low, insert the 10 with K10x.

To take the 6-question quiz (with answers provided), [click here](#).

www.larryco.com

Better Bidding

Pearson Points (aka "Rule of 15")

Provided by Jeff Kroll, 2024 Teacher of the Year and Diamond Life Master

Use the guideline of Pearson Points for opening in 4th seat. Pearson points are your high card points added to your number of spades. When it adds to 15 or more, then open. The idea being that it is worth opening marginal hands when you have the spades but not when they have the spades.

Reopening your opener doesn't promise additional points, just a desire not to defend.



The bidding:

S: 1D (I'm in 4th seat with 11 hcp + 4 spades = 15. Using the Pearson points guideline, I open.)

W: 2C (Some would have opened this hand 1C on the first bid. I would have. It's important to get in early and if East should be on lead, I want a club lead.)

N: Pass (Some aggressive players would bid 2S. That should show 10+ points. This hand has 8 hcp and a good 5 card spade suit. Close call.)

E: Pass (Remembering that West is a passed hand and East has only 2 clubs. With 3 clubs, East would bid 3C.)

S: Double (Take out, not wanting to defend against 2C)

W: Pass

N: 2S

Passed out

Not much to the play. I lose:
1 spade

1 heart
1 diamond
2 clubs

5 tricks lost

93% board for just playing basic bridge.

It's The Law

Becoming our Opponents' Favorite Opponent

We all have our favorite opponents and what makes them our favorites usually has nothing to do with how well (or not) we score on the boards we play against them. Our favorite opponents enhance our experience at the table, making that round our most enjoyable 15, 21 or 28 minutes of the game.

We should all strive to be our opponents' favorite opponent. Law 74 Conduct and Etiquette, presented in its entirety immediately below, governs the behaviors and actions which make the game more pleasant for all players. The more enjoyable the game, the more likely the players are to return.

LAW 74 CONDUCT AND ETIQUETTE

Proper Attitude

1. *A player should maintain a courteous attitude at all times.*
2. *A player should carefully avoid any remark or extraneous action that might cause annoyance or embarrassment to another player or might interfere with the enjoyment of the game.*
3. *Every player should follow uniform and correct procedure in calling and playing.*

Etiquette

As a matter of courtesy a player should refrain from:

1. *paying insufficient attention to the game.*
2. *making gratuitous comments during the auction and play.*
3. *detaching a card before it is his turn to play.*
4. *prolonging play unnecessarily (as in playing on although he knows that all the tricks are surely his) for the purpose of disconcerting an opponent.*
5. *summoning and addressing the Director in a manner discourteous to him or to other contestants.*

Violations of Procedure

The following are examples of violations of procedure:

1. *using different designations for the same call.*
2. *indicating approval or disapproval of a call or play.*
3. *indicating the expectation or intention of winning or losing a trick that has not been completed.*
4. *commenting or acting during the auction or play so as to call attention to a significant occurrence, or to the number of tricks still required for success.*
5. *looking intently at any other player during the auction and play, or at another player's hand as for the purpose of seeing his cards or of observing the place from which he draws a card (but it is appropriate to act on information acquired by unintentionally seeing an opponent's card).*
6. *showing an obvious lack of further interest in a deal (as by folding one's cards).*
7. *varying the normal tempo of bidding or play for the purpose of disconcerting an opponent.*
8. *leaving the table needlessly before the round is called.*

What does all this mean in practice?

While much of this seems like common sense, there are several behaviors that may seem innocuous to us but could be perceived otherwise by our opponents. Law 74A2 is broad: "A player should carefully avoid any remark or extraneous action that might cause annoyance or embarrassment to another player or might interfere with the enjoyment of the game."

These actions could be misperceived by opponents:

- If we are playing in a game with travelers instead of Bridgemates, commenting that no one else made as many tricks as we did is the equivalent of pointing out to the opponents that they just got a bottom.
- Complimenting our partner on a well-declared or well-defended board could be perceived as gloating. Criticizing partner's play can make opponents uncomfortable. We should consider reserving comments for partner until only the two of us are at the table.

- When playing with less-experienced opponents, telling one or both of them how a board should have been played differently is not always welcome. Wait for an opponent to ask for advice. Or, after the round (or game), we might approach the player and ask if he/she would like to hear about another way to handle the situation.

Law 74B5 talks about summoning the Director. Even though we know Directors are part of the game, we get a little unnerved when our opponents call the director. In *Duplicate Decisions*, a handbook for club directors, it is pointed out:

"Director, please," preceded by a small explanation to the table of why the Director needs to be called, will usually go a long way towards maintaining a cordial and enjoyable ambiance in a tournament. Calls like "DIRECTOR!!!" should be strongly discouraged.

Behaviors covered under Law 74C Violations of Procedure are those that go beyond making a situation unpleasant. They include actions that can affect the outcome of the board. Infractions of Law 74C can result in procedural penalties.

Let us keep in mind Law 74 as we continue on our bridge journey. Let us become our opponents' favorite opponents.

SK

Better Bidding - Answers

