

From the Editor

First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill was the despair of his partners "... for he played a romantic game, untrammelled by conventions, codes or rules ... to cut with Winston was to both of his private secretaries a severe ordeal. Masterson was a really good bridge player and treated the game with respect. Moreover, though the stakes were low, he could not afford to lose overmuch. He used to sit in agony while Winston declared, doubled and redoubled with wild recklessness, watching his every discard and building reasonable conjectures on the play, only to be disillusioned and dumbfounded again and again. But, First Lord, you discarded the knave... The cards I throw away are not worthy of observation or I should not discard them. It is the cards I play on which you should concentrate your attention."

The New York Times Bridge Book, Truscott, Alan and Dorothy, St. Martin's Griffin, New York (2002) at p. 102 (quoting Violet Asquith, daughter of British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith).

Carol Jewett, Editor

In this Issue

Upcoming Tournaments and Events
Bridge Math
Tournaments - "What's the Difference?"
Eddie Kantar Defense Tips
Plan the Play
It's the Law

Upcoming Tournaments and Events

Regionals:

Houston - Feb 3-9 [Info](#)
 San Miguel de Allende - Feb 25-Mar 2 [Info](#)

Sectionals:

San Antonio - Jan 15-19 [Info](#)
 Denton - Jan 16-18 [Info](#)
 Dallas - Jan 29-Feb 1 [Info](#)
 Austin - Feb 1-2 [Info](#)
 Ajijic - Feb 6-9 [Info](#)
 Puerto Vallarta - Feb 12-14 [Info](#)
 San Antonio - Feb 15-16 [Info](#)
 Fort Western - Feb 28-Mar 2 [Info](#)
 Bridge Academy of West Houston 0-499er - Feb 27-Mar 1 [Info](#)

Events:

District 16 Zoom Spanish Lecture - Jan 18 at 12:30 p.m.
 District 16 Zoom I/N Lecture - Jan 25 at noon
 0-100 masterpoint games every day at 6:00 p.m.
 0-200 masterpoint games every day at 6:00 p.m.

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



Bridge Math

When considering alternative ways to play a hand in bridge, it helps to focus on the percentage probabilities presented by those alternatives. For a declarer, a good starting point is to consider the number of cards held by the defenders in a suit and how those cards are likely divided between the defenders. The number of cards you are generally concerned about ranges from 3 to 6 and the split probabilities for these are:

Number Missing	Division	Percentage
3:	2-1	78%
	3-0	22%
4:	3-1	50%
	2-2	40%
	4-0	10%
5:	3-2	68%
	4-1	28%
	5-0	4%
6:	4-2	48%
	3-3	36%
	5-1	15%
	6-0	1%

How would you play a seven club contract on a low heart lead holding the following hands?

♠ 765
 ♥ A5
 ♦ KJ32
 ♣ K764

♠ AKQ
 ♥ 84
 ♦ A4
 ♣ AQJ832

To get a discard for your heart loser, you can either (1) finesse the diamond jack (this is a straight 50% shot) or (2) play three rounds of diamonds, ruffing the third in hopes the diamond queen will fall. The odds that either opponent has Q-x-x of diamonds are no more than 27% (the chance of a 4-3 split is about 62% and the opponent with three cards will have the queen in 3/7 of those cases). The odds on the diamond queen being doubleton are only about 9% (2/7 of all the possible 5-2 splits, which are 30.5% to occur). So the finesse, unpleasant though it seems, is your best chance.

Material from *Frank Stewart's Contract Bridge Quiz Book*, Stewart, Frank, Prentice. – Hall, Inc., New Jersey (1986).

Tournaments - "What's the Difference?"

At the Bridge Club of Houston, Thomas Rush presented a helpful summary regarding different types of bridge tournaments that are available to players. Here is an abridged and edited version of his presentation:

"What's the Difference?"

By Thomas Rush

There are different kinds of bridge tournaments: sectionals, regionals, NABCs, STaCs, Grand National Teams and North American Pairs. Tournament awards may include black points, silver points, red points, gold points, platinum points and ... clear points. What's the difference? What does it all mean? In this article, I'll explain all of this.

First, you have tournaments. Clear points are won in ACBL tournaments and games online, such as the 12-board ACBL "speedball" tournaments on BBO. They give you points toward rank, but don't count as any of the required colored or black points.

A sectional tournament is generally sponsored by your unit (In the ACBL a unit is a geographic area that helps support a number of clubs and the ACBL members living in that area.) Sectional tournaments often have two-session events (teams and pairs) and pay more points than a similarly sized game at your local club would award. The points awarded at a sectional are silver points. For those who joined the ACBL after 2009, you'll need 75 silver points to make Life Master. Sectional tournaments are generally three or four days long.

A STaC is a Sectional Tournament at Clubs. These tournaments also pay silver points but not quite as many as a regular sectional tournament would. On the other hand, they can be a lot easier for people who live a long way from a big city to get to! Also, they help support your local clubs with needed revenue and we do need to keep the clubs alive!

Regional tournaments are sponsored by your district. Most local clubs in Texas are in District 16, an ACBL district geographically huge, containing all of Mexico and almost all of Texas (excluding areas around El Paso and Amarillo). Regional tournaments pay gold points for overall places in two-session open (and some limited) games; and for section 1st wins in two-session open and some limited pairs games. Red points are awarded for lower section places in pairs games, and for lower team game brackets and some limited pairs games. To achieve Life Master you'll need at least 50 points that are any combination of gold and platinum, and an additional 50 points that can be any combination of gold, red, or platinum (for example: 40 red and 60 gold would meet both requirements). Regional tournaments are generally six or seven days long.

So what are national tournaments (NABCs)? There are three national tournaments held by the ACBL each year: Spring NABC in mid-March, Summer NABC in mid-July, and the Fall, NABC starting the day after Thanksgiving. These national tournaments run for 10 or 11 days! NABCs have both national rated and regional rated games. Regional rated games are two-session events, for both pairs and teams, much like at a regional. NABC regional events pay red and gold points just as they do at regional tournaments. In addition, the nationals have a full slate of free educational sessions (usually two a day), as well as opportunities to take director and teacher certification classes (there is a registration fee to pay for course materials).

What is an NABC event? They're divided into two groups: NABC+ and NABC events. NABC+ events are unlimited. In most cases any member in good standing can enter, and there is no upper limit. Exceptions are events like the Platinum Pairs and the Life Master Pairs, where Platinum Pairs requires you have a certain number of platinum masterpoints, and the LM Pairs is only open to those who have achieved Life Master Status. These events are multi-day events of four or six sessions for pairs, and longer in some cases for teams games. NABC+ events pay platinum points for section places, teams game match wins, and overall places. NABC events are also two-day or longer events, but with a top masterpoint limit. They pay red and gold points; some pay 10% platinum points for overalls.

Two special events in the ACBL are the North American Pairs (NAP) and Grand National Teams (GNT). Both are "grass roots events," designed to let players qualify at the club level and from there earn the right to play against ACBL's best in the NABC GNT & NAP finals. Both grass roots event are divided into flights or brackets, and each event requires that all members of a team or pair be from the same district. Special rules are in place for those in the military, students, and others with multiple residences.

Eddie Kantar Defense Tips

Some valuable defensive playing "cannots" from Eddie Kantar:

- You cannot defend properly unless you remember the bidding.
- You cannot defend properly unless you know what system the opponents are playing.
- You cannot defend properly unless you count.
- You cannot defend properly unless you watch the cards, particularly the little fellows.
- You cannot expect your partner to defend properly if you make faces or show other signs of disapproval.

Eddie Kantar's Tips

<http://kantarbridge.com/>

Plan the Play

You (South) are declarer in 4♥. West leads a trump, East following. You take the trick with the dummy's ♥K. Plan the play.

North
 ♠ Q543
 ♥ KQ
 ♦ 8543
 ♣ 753

South
 ♠ AKJ
 ♥ AJ10987
 ♦ KZ
 ♣ KZ

Recognizing that you need to use dummy's limited entries to lead up to your minor suit kings, you try a low diamond toward your hand. West captures your king, however, with the ace, and plays another trump, East again following suit. How do you play from here?

You could, of course, win the trick in dummy and play a club toward your king. This works as long as West didn't start with both minor suit aces. There's a slightly better line, however, that increases your chances. You start with nine tricks: six trumps and three spades. If either minor suit ace is inside or if spades are 3-3 you can make your tenth, game-going trick. When the ♥A turned out to be on your left, however, a little care is required in which order you play to give yourself the best shot.

The superior play is to overtake the ♥Q with the ace, draw the remaining trump, and play three rounds of spades, ending in dummy. If the spades are 3-3, you're home: Simply cash the 13th spade. If the spades aren't 3-3, however, you can use your dummy entry to play a club toward your king. What happens if both aces are offside and spades aren't 3-3? Simple: You can't make 4♥! ACBL Puzzle Hand (January 5, 2022).

It's The Law

The Perfect Dummy

Laws 42 and 43 of the *ACBL Laws of Duplicate Bridge* provide guidance regarding what the player whose hand has become the dummy may and may not do during the play of that hand.

The Dummy Player may:

- Play the cards of the dummy, but only as directed by the declarer.
- Ensure that the dummy follows suit.
- Keep count of tricks won and lost.
- Give information as to fact or law, but only in the presence of the director.
- Ask the declarer whether the declarer has a card of the suit led when and only when the declarer has failed to follow suit.
- Try to prevent an irregularity from occurring (such as stopping the declarer from leading a card from the wrong hand).
- Draw attention to an irregularity which has occurred after, and only after, the play of the hand is concluded.

The Dummy Player may not:

- Call for the director during play unless another player has drawn attention to an irregularity which has occurred.
- During play, call attention to an irregularity which has occurred.
- Participate in the play of the hand whether verbally or otherwise.
- Communicate anything about the play of the hand to the declarer whether verbally or otherwise.
- Exchange hands with the declarer.
- Leave his seat to watch the declarer's play of the hand.
- Look at the face of a card in either defender's hand.
- Ask a defender who may have failed to follow suit lead whether that defender has a card of the suit led.