

District 16 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

Volume 11 Issue 3 - March 2025



From the Editor

In 1929, John and Myrtle Bennett became upset with each other while playing bridge:

"She raised an opening bid of one spade to four spades with a hand that justified only two spades. When he failed, she called him a "bum bridge player" and he slapped her. She left the room....[and] reappeared, carrying her mother's loaded gun, and John quickly locked himself in a handy bathroom. This proved insufficient protection, for she got off two effective shots. Out, she fired two more shots. He slumped into a chair, muttering as he died, 'she got me.'... At the trial 17 months later, Myrtle was defended by Senator James A. Reed ... The jury deliberated for eight hours, partly because they insisted on learning how to play bridge, and finally acquitted her ... Alexander Wollcott, who described the episode in *While Rome Burns*, claims that she eventually found a partner who did not know her story: When he put down an inadequate dummy and announced, 'Partner, you'll probably want to shoot me for this,' "she fainted."

The New York Times Bridge Book, Truscott, Alan and Dorothy, T. Martin's Griffin (2002) at 37 and 38.

Carol Jewett, Editor

In this Issue

- Upcoming Tournaments and Events
- Bridge Math
- Defensive Signals
- Eddie Kantar Story
- The Rule of 20
- It's the Law



Upcoming Tournaments and Events

Regionals:

Longview Apr 8-12 [Info](#)

Sectionals:

- San Antonio - Mar 26-29 [Info](#)
- San Miguel de Allende - Mar 27-29 [Info](#)
- Houston - Apr 4-6 [Info](#)
- Austin 0-200 - Apr 5-6 [Info](#)
- D16 Royal STaC - Apr 14-20 [Info](#)
- Spring (Houston) 499er - Apr 24-26 [Info](#)
- Dallas - Apr 30-May 3 [Info](#)
- Austin 0-50 May 1-4 [Info](#)
- Fort Worth May 16-18 [Info](#)
- Austin May 17-18 [Info](#)

Events:

- Houston GNT Flights A&C - Apr 5-6 [Info](#)
- District 16 Zoom Spanish Lecture - Third Saturday of Each Month at 12:30 p.m.
- District 16 Zoom I/N Lecture - Fourth Saturday of Each Month at Noon
- Dallas GNT Flights B&C May 2-3 [Info](#)
- 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

Here is another look at percentage play:

♠ AK43
♥ 765
♦ J54
♣ 543

(You)
♠ 8752
♥ Aj10
♦ AK62
♣ Q6

You are in a 1NT contract. West leads the ♦ 7. You play the ♦ J from the dummy and it holds the trick. Plan the play of the contract.

Solution:

Your options are: (1) play off the A and King of spades, planning to continue with a third round to set up your seventh trick if the suit breaks 3-2 (this will work about 70% of the time), or (2) play a heart to the 10, intending to use a spade entry to take another finesse in the heart suit. the second option should be selected, since the double finesse in hearts is about 75%-76% to win two tricks. The full deal of the hand:

♠ AK43
♥ 765
♦ J54
♣ 543

♠ J
♥ Q982
♦ Q10873
♣ K108

♠ Q1096
♥ K43
♦ 9
♣ AJ972

(You)
♠ 8752
♥ Aj10
♦ AK62
♣ Q6

Editor Note: Your expected percentage of success when you need to make:

One finesse = 50%
One of two finesses = 75%
Two of two finesses = 25%

Material from Frank Stewart's Contract Bridge Quiz Book, Stewart, Frank, Prentice - Hall, Inc. (1986)

Defensive Signals

Here is an abridged and edited tutorial that Ed Rawlinson gave on defensive signaling:

The declarer has a big advantage over defenders in that he can see both his hand and the dummy and can play the hand based on that knowledge. A defender cannot see his partner’s hand. However, defenders can play their cards in a manner which conveys information. For example, when one defender leads a queen at trick one in defending a notrump contract, partner knows that the opening leader also holds the jack and probably the 10 as well, but not the king. The circumstances in which defenders can signal information to partner fall into three main categories: Attitude, Count, and Suit Preference. Just as there are multiple bidding systems in bridge. There are also multiple signaling systems. For this discussion, “standard signals” (which have been in use for decades and continue to be widely used) will be used.

Attitude Signals

Attitude signals tell partner whether you have high cards in a particular suit. Partner can use this information to lead

the suit (or not) if he gains the lead. It may also help partner know which suit you will protect and which suit he must protect. In standard signals “high” cards encourage, low cards discourage.

Dummy	
A54	
Partner	You
Lead: 3	K92

If a low card is played from dummy, you will play the king. This is not a signal, it’s a normal play to win the trick. Suppose the ace had been played from dummy. Now you have a choice to play the 9 or the 2. You should play the 9 (a high spot card) to tell partner you like the lead.

Dummy	
A54	
Partner	You
Lead: 3	972

Now if the ace is played from dummy, you should play the 2 (low) to tell partner that you don’t have values in hearts.

Dummy	
753	
Partner	You
Lead: A	Q64

Suppose you are defending a suit contract and partner leads the ace of a side suit. Partner will usually have the king when he leads the ace, but not a guarantee. You should encourage partner to continue the suit by playing your highest *spot* card (the 6). If partner continues with the king, you play the 4, which confirms to partner that you want him to continue to lead the suit (because you played “high” initially). This is called a “high-low” play.

Dummy	
753	
Partner	You
Lead: A	64

Again you are defending a suit contract and you are expecting partner to have the AK. You should play the 6 to encourage partner to continue. When he does and you play the 4, he will lead a third round, which you will ruff.

Dummy	
753	
Partner	You
Lead: A	642

Now you have no reason to encourage partner, so you play the 2 (low). Partner may continue anyway if he has AKQ8, but would switch to some other suit if he had AKJ8. In the latter case, he is hoping that you can gain the lead to lead through declarer’s queen.

Sometimes you may like the suit partner leads but the circumstances cause you to ask her to switch to another suit.

Dummy	
♠K5	
♥10863	
♦86	
♣AKQJ5	
Partner	You
Lead: ♦A	♠AQ74
	♥75
	♦KQ10972
	♣3

If you encourage and partner continues, you are stuck in your hand. You could cash the ♠A, but if declarer has no trump losers, he will take the rest of the tricks. You should play the ♦2 to discourage partner. He will surely switch to a spade (that’s the only reasonable chance for tricks). So you win your ♠AQ and then cash the ♦K. The lesson is to look at the “big picture,” not just the suit being led.

Count Signals

Count signals give partner information about how many cards you have in a suit. Partner can then use this information to judge how many cards declarer has in the suit. While there are many times when you want to show your attitude about a suit by playing an encouraging or discouraging card, there are other times when your attitude is clear-cut, but it is important to signal “count” to your partner. For example, how many cards you have in the suit. It is not always possible to show the exact number of cards you have, but it is possible to tell partner whether you have an odd number of cards or an even number of cards. This clue may be enough to enable partner to determine exactly how

many you have. In standard count if you play “high-low,” you show an even number of cards. If you play “low-high,” you show an odd number of cards.

♠A4	
♥753	
♦KQJ103	
♣653	
You	
♠Q1073	♠K865
♥9862	♥104
♦A75	♦942
♣Q8	♣J1074
♠J92	
♥AKQJ	
♦86	
♣AK92	

Partner leads the ♠3 against 3NT. The 4 is played from dummy and you win with the king. You return a spade, won in dummy. The ♦K is led. If declarer has the ace, what you play is irrelevant, but if partner has the Ace, it makes a difference when he is to play the ace. If partner wins the ace immediately, declarer will be able to take the remaining four diamond tricks. But if partner delays winning the ace until declarer has no more diamonds, then declarer has no other dummy entry to the remaining diamond winners. A partner who knew about hold-up plays but nothing about count signals would probably duck the first two diamond tricks. This would allow declarer to make the contract (one spade, four hearts, two diamonds, and two clubs). If you know count signals, you will play the ♦2 on the first diamond lead, which is clearly the beginning of a “low-high” signal showing an odd number of diamonds. Partner sees five diamonds in dummy and three in his hand, leaving five for you and declarer. So you could have one and declarer 4 (if which case it makes no difference when to win the ace, since declarer will always have an entry on the fourth diamond), or you could have three and declarer could have two (which is the situation here). Thus partner should only duck one diamond and win the second diamond lead. This will hold declarer to one diamond trick, and the contract will be set.

Suit Preference Signals

Suit preference signals tell partner which of two suits you have values in. The two suits involved will be clear from the circumstances. A high card indicates that you want the higher of the two suits, and a low card indicates that you want the lower of the two suits.

♠A1075	
♥8	
♦K842	
♣K842	
You	
♠84	♠92
♥AK92	♥106543
♦J1093	♦765
♣J109	♣AQ3
♠KQJ63	
♥QJ7	
♦AQ	
♣765	

West leads the ♥A against a 4♠ contract. With a singleton in dummy, there is no benefit in an attitude signal or a count signal. The important question for the defense is “what suit should West shift to?” There are only two choices: the remaining side suits (clubs and diamonds). East can use a Suit Preference Signal to answer the question. If East wants a diamond lead, he plays the ♥10 (a high card for the higher suit) on the first trick. If East wants a club lead, he plays the ♥3 (low). In this case, he signals for a club, and West leads the ♣J (top of a sequence). The defense cashes three club tricks and sets the contract. With any other lead, South would eventually throw a club loser on the ♦K. If East had no preference for a lead, he would play a “middle” card if available.

Eddie Kantar Story

Not long ago my good friend John Szeps and I were looking for some tough competition so we decided to play in the mighty side game at a Torrance Sectional. Things were going along smoothly (no revokes) until the next to last round when I picked up this motley collection:

♠Q8 ♥87 ♦AJ4 ♣Q97632

I heard John open 2♦ in the North seat which I immediately alerted. My RHO, PhyLLis* Cook asked about the bid, received an explanation that it showed five hearts and four spades with about 12-15 HCP and passed. Anyway, I tried 2♥ which ended the auction. I did notice that PhyLLis passed slowly and John ... muttered: “I hate Flannery.”My LHO, Audrey Ellis of Manhattan Beach, led the ♣K at which time John asked if he was allowed to bid over 2♥. I said it would be unusual, but would he please put down the dummy so I could see what was bothering him so

much. Finally he produced:

♠A632 ♥AJ1032 ♦KQ6 ♣4

I told him he had done just fine ... that his hand wasn’t worth another bid. He nodded, but I knew he wanted to bid again. And now on to the play ... the memorable play.

North (Disgruntled John).	South (Reasonably contented Eddie)
♠A632	♠Q8
♥AJ1032	♥87
♦KQ6	♦AJ4
♣4	♣Q97632

At trick two Audrey shifted to the ♦10. I decided to win this in dummy and lead a low spade - a play which met with universal approval from the players (two) I dared to show the hand afterwards. What followed can hardly be described. PhyLLis won the ♠K, and Audrey discarded a club. Very well, I thought, if they want to revoke, let them. A spade came back and Audrey ruffed and returned a diamond which PhyLLis ruffed and returned another spade. I decided to discard my now blank ♦A, a big play in a side game and Audrey ruffed. Unhesitatingly she played a third diamond which PhyLLis ruffed with the nine, of course. A fourth spade was returned ruffed by Audrey with the ♥K. She then played a fourth diamond allowing East (I won't write her name again) to make her now blank ♥Q. At this point both opponents cheerfully conceded (“I don't have any more trumps!” “Neither do I.”) Dummy had all trump and nothing else.

It was time to assess the debacle, but it was difficult because everybody (except South) was laughing hilariously. I mentally noted the following:

- (1) I had taken five tricks.
- (2) Trumps were 3-3, the honors divided and I had managed to lose six trump tricks.
- (3) Had I ruffed the third spade with the ♥7, I would have saved two tricks.
- (4) I had probably set a record which I should submit to the *Guinness Book of Records* for most trump tricks lost in a part score contract.
- (5) Drawing trumps immediately is a technique I will consider more carefully in the future.”

*PhyLLis with two ells and one s. I was married to a Phyllis and misspelled it once. Not good.

Eddie Kantar’s Tips
<http://kantarbridge.com/>
Originally Published as “Drawing Trumps - An Idea Worth Considering” in the *ACBL Bridge Bulletin*, June 1979.

The Rule of 20

The Rule of 20 (or 22)

When we are not sure whether to open a hand or not, we may apply the Rule of 20 which is:

- count the length of the two longest suits together (in pieces)
- add that to your high card points (HCP).
- When the total is 20 or more, open the bidding.

It is imperative that you also have 2 ½ quick tricks! (This is why they now call it the Rule of 22.) In addition you must not count wasted doubleton secondary honor values such as Qx, Jx, QJ.

Example Rule of 20 Openers

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 1) ♠AQ543 | 10 HCP |
| ♥87 | plus 5 spades |
| ♦A9852 | plus 5 diamonds |
| ♣4 | Equals 20: Open 1♠ |
| 2) ♠42 | 11 HCP |
| ♥Q737 | plus 4 hearts |
| ♦AKQ875 | plus 6 diamonds |
| ♣9 | Equals 21: Open 1♦ |
| 3) ♠AQ532 | 10 HCP |
| ♥A864 | plus 5 spades |
| ♦532 | plus 4 hearts |
| ♣10 | Equals 19: Pass |

ACBL Community Game Commentary, October 31, 2023.

It's The Law

A player failed to follow suit. What do we do?

The short, simple and absolutely correct answer is to call the director when a player has failed to follow suit – known as a “revoke.” Most bridge players have a general understanding regarding the rules pertaining to revokes but a

revoke situation can, in fact, vary tremendously in terms of corrective measures and the rights of players. That having been said, here is a general summary regarding revokes.

Penalties

The penalty or corrective action regarding a revoke depends upon whether it has become “established.” A revoke becomes established when the revoking player or his partner leads or plays to the next trick. Examples:
(1) your right-hand opponent leads a heart and, holding a heart, you play a club – the revoke is established when you partner plays on that trick.
(2) in a spade suit contract, your right-hand opponent leads a heart and, holding a heart, you ruff the trick with a spade and then lead a diamond – the revoke is established because you have revoked and then played to the next trick by leading a diamond.

Play After a Revoke

If a revoke is discovered before it is established, it must be corrected by means of the revoking player substituting a card of the correct suit. If the revoking player was the declarer, the revoke card is simply returned to his or her hand. There may be additional corrective action needed if the declarer’s left-hand defender played to the trick before the declarer discovers and announces the revoke. If the revoking player was a defender, the revoke card becomes a major penalty card which must be left exposed on the table and played at the first legal opportunity. Further, the declarer may have rights regarding requiring or forbidding a lead of the suit of the revoke card in the event that a defender is on lead before it has been played. If a revoke is not discovered until after it is established, the correction generally involves the award of a trick or tricks to the non-revoking side:
(1) one trick if the revoking player did not win the revoke trick.
(2) two tricks if the revoking player won the revoke trick and at least one other trick.
There are, however, a number of situations which will result in no imposition of a trick penalty for the revoking side (the most notable of these being that the revoking side neither won the revoke trick no any subsequent trick).

Before you Revoke

Most revokes occur as a result of lack of attention or hand disorganization so:
(1) Sort your cards by suit at the beginning of a hand and review the organization of your hand periodically as the play progresses.
(2) Pay attention to game in terms of looking at all the cards played on the table on a trick before your turn to play (i.e., don’t just blindly play the same suit as the one played by the player right before you).
(3) Before playing a card on a trick that is not the same suit as the suit that was led, double check the other cards in your hand that are the same color as the suit that was led as a final precaution.

