

Page 9, CEO Column: Almost a third of the ACBL games were online in 2015. About one million online tables.

Page 17

- Dave Russell #4 in the 500-1000 masterpoint category
- Jeff Kroll #4 in the 1000-2500 masterpoint category
- Bill Daniel #18 in the 1000-2500 masterpoint category

Page 36: Al Cupps and Jeff Kroll had a 75.16% game

The Bidding Box (p. 37 – 39)

Problem 2

The 2D bid by West is Michaels, showing at least 5 spades and 5 hearts. Since E/W are not vulnerable and N/S are vulnerable, the Michaels bid does not promise a hand nearly as good as this one. East bids 3S (roughly 9-11 points), the 4th spade is a bonus as East knows West has 5+ spades. East would bid 2S with less, and cue bid diamonds with more. West now has an easy 4S bid.

Problem 3

Bob B's 3C bid is New Minor Forcing, asking West if he has 3 spades or 4 hearts. The 3H answer shows 4 hearts. West's 2 NT bid shows 18-19 hcp. West can bid notrump as East has bid spades.

The Bridge Bulletin Auction for this problem takes a different route. Over the 1S bid, West reversed into 2H showing approximately 17+ hcp to a strong 2C bid, and longer diamonds than clubs. The two ways to bid this hand are a matter of style.

Problem 4

This problem shows the different strategies in Match Points (pairs) vs IMPS (teams). At Match Points every point on your score is important, so playing Notrump often scores a little better as the tricks are worth more. Games should only be bid at Match Points if they are likely to make. That's why Bob settled for 1 NT. At IMPS, you don't want to miss games – especially vulnerable games. If you have a fighting chance, bid vulnerable games. The other pair did bid to the excellent 5C contract (hearts are wide open).

Problem 5

This shows different styles of bidding. Bob B just bid 3 NT over 1 H to protect his K of hearts. Planning on taking 2 spades, 1 heart and 6 diamonds, and hoping partner has clubs stopped. The opening lead cannot come through the K of hearts. If the suit is led on the opening lead, the K of hearts will take a trick.

Milgrim doubled and that lead to a 4S contract in a 5-2 fit, with all the high spades except the Queen.

The Bridge Bulletin auction led to 3NT despite the initial double by East. The 3H bid is a Western Q asking for a heart stopper. The 3NT response shows the heart stopper. West jumps to 2S because

the fifth spade makes it a 9-point hand. And the A and K in the same suit are worth more together than if they were in separate suits.

None of the auctions found the excellent 6D contract. Minor suit slams are hard to find – especially playing match points.

Problem 6

First paragraph: This shows hand evaluation. A 5-card suit is worth an extra point – it's better than an unsupported Jack. So now the East hand is worth 15 points - worth opening 1 NT. However, East's spots are terrible and the doubleton Q of spades could be a problem, so devalue the hand a point, now it's worth 14 hcp, so open it 1D like Bob did.

Note the comment at the end of the Bridge Bulletin auction. IMPS bidding is more aggressive as you are looking for those close games.

Problem 8

When you make a take out double with your first bid, and then partner is forced to bid and he doesn't jump or Q bid, then he has 8 or fewer points. If you now bid 1 NT that shows 18-19 hcp. If you open 1 of something and partner bids 1 of something, 1 NT shows 11-14 hcp.

Page 44, Lawrence: This is a basic article on leads against suit contracts. Read it. Among the points made, it is sometimes right to lead from a King, but rarely right to lead from an Ace. Leading from a 3-card sequence headed by an honor is a natural lead. Leading from a 2 card sequence is also good, but not as good. Leading from QJ small is not often good. Leading from QJ9 is fine, although if you're unlucky you will give away the suit. See the top of the second column.

Page 45, Shafer: South is too strong to open 1 NT. Aces are worth more than 4. Add the point for the 5th spade and this is at least an 18 point hand. When West leads the K of diamonds, assuming West is not a novice, it shows he has the Q also. So, South should lead toward the J to make it good.

Page 60, Lawrence: When West leads the 9 of spades (again, assuming West is not a novice), it denies the 10 (don't lead the lower of cards in a sequence in standard methods). A high card denies an honor so West does not have the Q of spades, either. Declarer should play East for both of these cards.

Page 63, Miller, first deal: responding to a strong 2C over interference some (I think most) people play a double to show a bust, while a pass shows values. Once the opponents overcall a heart – that shows 5 or 6, and the supporter should have 3, so if you're looking a 3 hearts in your hand, you know partner only had 1 or 2.

Rank Advancements (beginning on p. 65)

- Barbara Dabney: Life Master (Page 65) and Bronze Life Master (Page 68)
- Jeff Kroll: Sapphire Life Master (Page 66)
- Sonia Bryant: Ruby Life Master (Page 67)