

## July 2017 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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**Page 14**, column 2: Meckstroth/Rodwell auction: Rodwell voluntarily takes the transfer to spades. He has three spades to the K T and his CK just got more valuable. The CK is behind the club bidder making it more likely that it will take a trick. With a 5-5 hand, and playing IMPs (teams), it's important to push for vulnerable games. Meckstroth did.

Just looking at the East/West hands, the only apparent side suit losers are the HA and CA. So, it looks like the game can be made if the spade losers can be held to one. Unfortunately for Meckstroth/Rodwell, the spades divided 5-0, something that happens about 6% of the time. And the CK gets ruffed. It was a very reasonable auction and game, it was just unlucky.

**Page 18**, column 3: South (Palmer) opens 1S. The hand has only nine HCP, but many would open this 1S, just like Palmer. Her two longest suits and her high cards = 20. Six spades + five hearts + nine HCP = 20. She also has two quick tricks, the two aces. This meets the rule/suggestion of 22. It's a good practice to get into and out of the auction as quickly as possible. This worked out very well for Palmer, making 5S doubled.

**Page 19**, column 3: South, Kislitsyna, made a weak 2H bid. She has only five hearts, while holding four spades. However, the spades are poor, and the vulnerability is perfect: her opponents were vulnerable while she is not. East is in a tough spot, as a double could well be taken for takeout, which could easily result in a minus score. South's bid worked great as the vulnerable diamond game by her opponents was missed.

**Page 22**, Rules of 2 and 3: The rule of three-level preempts is a guideline for how many tricks you can go down when you preempt at the 3 level: two, vulnerable, and three, non vulnerable. However, as penalty doubles of three-level preempts are rare, many players disregard this rule, especially when they are non vulnerable and the opponents are vulnerable.

### **The Bidding Box (p. 37 – 39)**

#### **Problem 3**

Though both expert contestants chose to open the bidding 1S with the West hand, the **Bridge Bulletin Auction** chose to pass it. Passing is a more mainstream bid. Unsupported jacks are worth very little. Both red jacks are of little value. In second position, it is not customary to open light. This would be a fine open in either third or fourth seat, though.

### **Problem 5**

After Bragin opened and rebid clubs, West is looking at a mismatch. King considered passing as the general rule for mismatches is to get out of the auction early. In this case King had two aces and a king so he bid on. He bid diamonds, not spades, as spades would push the bidding up too high if Bragin had a distribution of 2-3-3-5.

### **It's Your Call (p. 40 – 43)**

#### **Problem 1**

Here the decision is whether or not to bid 2H. The case for bidding 2H is that you have six of them; if you don't bid them you are likely to be missing a big fit in hearts. Partner is unlikely to bid your 6 card suit, and if you wait, the bidding is likely to be too high. The case for not bidding them is that if you end up on defense that partner will lead hearts (your suit) and that is likely to be a disaster. Although only a couple voted for 2S, it does get partner off to the right lead if you're on defense.

#### **Problem 2**

This is a misfit. When partner bids 1N and doesn't give you a delayed raise in hearts later on, he has at best two hearts. By bidding 1N over 1H he has at best three spades. When he bids 2N over your 2D bid, he might have no more than three diamonds. So his distribution is something like 3-2-3-5. And he could be shorter in the 3 higher ranking suit giving him more than 5 clubs. Most on the panel pass.

#### **Problem 3**

The HK and HJ are behind the heart bidder, so it is likely that the K will be good. It might provide a pitch for a loser if declarer has a singleton heart. Some bid 4S with the two red kings – having promised nothing. Some pass looking to defend with the KJ3 of hearts behind the heart bidder, and some just try to get out with a plus score with 3S.

#### **Problem 5**

When the opponents bid and support spades, it's likely they have at least eight of them. Since you have four, partner should have at most one spade. When you bid 2H instead of doubling, you show five hearts. When partner doesn't support you, he has at most two hearts. Therefore, partner has at least ten cards in the minor suits. Your red aces and the CK are golden. 5C is the practical bid. Some make the sophisticated cue bid of 4S to explore for slam. Some try for a really good match point score of 3NT – which is pretty risky.

### **Page 44, Alder**

Column 1, fourth paragraph: Do not play the Q from Qx to signal a doubleton when partner leads the Ace or King in that suit against a suit contract.

Column 2, second paragraph: If you can defeat a contract on your own you should do so, and not necessarily follow partner's signals. If you need partner's help to defeat a contract it is almost always right to cooperate with partner and follow his signals.

Column 3, third paragraph: Playing standard signals, play an unnecessarily high card to signal encouragement to partner to play that suit. Some play upside down discards so they can signal encouragement by playing a low card which is less likely to be helpful.

**Page 45, Shafer**, column 2, deal 4: When North opens and then jumps to game opposite a simple response that might show as little as 6 points, North is showing 19-20 points. That would bring the partnership to at least 25-26 points and a fit, enough for game. If South has 13+ points, that would bring the partnership total to 32+ points – enough to explore for slam. North's bid is **not** a close out.

**Page 46, Harrington**, column 1, second paragraph: When deciding whether to open, count HCP and length. As responder, when we have a fit for partner's major, count shortness. Typically five for a void, three for a singleton, and one for a doubleton. This assumes that you have enough trumps to get sufficient ruffs in this short suit.

#### **Page 47, Berg**

Column 2, first paragraph: In pairs it's worth it to risk your contract for over tricks when it's probably going to work for you. In pairs (match points), you get your score based on how many pairs have a score less than yours, so beating the others by just a little is big stuff. This is not true in IMPS (teams).

Column 3, second paragraph: When you're vulnerable and they're not, you can afford to go down one trick when sacrificing against their game; with equal vulnerability you can afford to go down two tricks: and if they're vulnerable and you're not, then you can go down three tricks.

#### **Page 48, Helms**

Column 1, fourth paragraph: Playing Bergen raises, raising partner's opening of a major to the two-level shows exactly three-card support. If you had four or more, you would have made a Bergen raise at the three-level.

Column 2, fourth paragraph: A take out double of hearts does **not** guarantee four spades. It's nice to have 4 spades, but it only promises 3+ cards in the three unbid suits.

Column 3, third paragraph: The double of 3D is lead-directing. The opponents will be playing in their major; the diamond bid was artificial.

#### **Page 49-50, Cohen**

Column 2: The chart shows the proper bid by opener with any balanced hand.

Column 2, fourth paragraph: Most players play gambling 3 NT, this bid is made with at least a solid 7 card minor and no outside Ace or King. Partner should remove you from this bid by bidding 4C if he does not have all the outside suits at least partially stopped. If opener's suit

is clubs, he passes, if it's diamonds, he corrects to diamonds. Usually responder will know what opener's solid long minor is just by looking at his own hand.

Page 50, hand 2: The 2 NT is automatic; it does not require that all four suits are stopped.

Page 50, hand 6: Open 1D; do not make a gambling 3 NT bid with an outside ace or king – partner will pull it if he doesn't have spades partially stopped, plus you may have a slam on this hand.

### **Page 51, Lawrence**

Column 1, second paragraph: The 2S bid shows 15 to 17 support points and 4 card spade support. The 1S bid was forced by the takeout double, so it should show eight or fewer points (with 9-11 South should jump, with 12 or more South should cue bid). South shows only four spades and a weak hand, so North needs a good hand with support to take another bid.

Column 2, fourth paragraph: Now the 2S bid is in competition, it just shows four spades.

Column 3, fourth paragraph: Opponents don't like to double two-level contracts when they are doubling a 4-4 fit.

**Page 52, Horton**, column 1, second paragraph: South opens 1 NT. This is a bid that many wouldn't make with the terrific heart suit. However, opening 1 NT shows 15-17 points. The 5<sup>th</sup> heart is easily worth a point. And by opening 1 NT, it makes it highly likely that the lead will come into the good North hand.

**Page 53, Kantar**, column 1, third paragraph: When either opener or responder makes a limit bid, clearly defining his hand in a narrow range, the other partner is the captain who should take charge of the auction.

### **Page 54, Boehm**

Column 2, fourth paragraph: Hands with 18+ points and a long suit are too strong for a simple overcall. Standard bidding is to double first and then bid your suit.

Column 3, first paragraph: Even though North has limited assets, the ace of diamonds and three-card heart support, he can raise to 3H as he knows that he can ruff a club, and that East's (opener's) high cards are all in front of South. So the hand will play well.

### **Page 57, Bergen**

Point #1: 1S is not forcing. Only a new suit by responder, who has an unpassed hand – and notrump has not been bid by either partner, is forcing.

Point #3: When opener doesn't support hearts he must have three or fewer. Since he didn't open 1S, he is unlikely to have five of them. So, he has at least four diamonds. A likely distribution in 4-3-4-2. He may even have more than four diamonds. If he had three clubs and three diamonds, he would have opened 1C in standard methods.

**Page 61, Kantar**, problem 2 solution: Cash the AK of spades to see if the Q falls (22% probability). If it doesn't, then take the diamond finesse. Combine as many chances as possible to make your contract.

**Page 62, Stewart**

Column 2, second paragraph: When South does not try to set up spades right away, the inference is that he already has them set up and is looking to set up his ninth trick in clubs by playing them first.

Column 2, third paragraph: When the heart lead doesn't draw the A or K from partner, South must have both, so the only chance to set the contract is with a diamond lead to partner's king.

**Page 63, Miller**, column 1, answer: When responder shows a second suit after opener's 1N bid, he is merely describing his hand, it does not show slam interest yet.