

Library Corner



Three Books by Audrey Grant

Grant is an award-winning educator and author of bridge books who has been inducted into the Bridge Hall of Fame for her contributions to the game through books, lectures, software, and the Online Interactive Daily Bridge Column. Three books are being added to the Bridge Center library. One book is from her Declarer Play Series 1, another is from her Declarer Series 2, and a third is from the Defense Series 1. As time goes on, more books will be added. These three books include *Five Tips to Simplify Entries* (2018), *Five Tips to Simplify Card Combinations* (2018), and *Five Tips to Simplify Defense* (2019). Grant begins each book with five lessons related to the book's topic. The majority of each book's pages then contain a series of hands for the reader to study. Discussion includes the suggested bidding, the opening lead, and planning the play. At the bottom of the main page, Grant adds food for thought in the form of a question related to the hand. On the back of each of the pages, the full deal is shown along with the bidding sequence. Grant then suggests what the line of play should be. As with all things Audrey, these books are a great source for improving one's game.



ALERT!!

A publication of ACBL Unit 206

October, 2023



Editor: Sandy Cervantes

Features Editor: Cheryl Whitfield

A message from the president...

October is when we hold our semi-annual Sectional Tournament at the Bridge Center. The tournament is set up to accommodate a broad range of players, so all players are welcome. Don't forget to register with Margie Moses ahead of time. Betsy Caldwell is also coordinating snacks and lunch for each day of the tournament. Be on the lookout for the email where you can register to help with providing snacks, food and drinks at the games. Donations towards the cost of providing these items to players are also appreciated!



We also will have quite a few special games over the next few months that award extra points. Look for information about these events on the website or in emails from the Club.

Congratulations to Dan and the team for a successful *Learn Bridge in a Day* event! We had 25 people attend the session, and many have returned for subsequent lessons and games at the bridge center. **VERY EXCITING.** Hopefully soon we will see them at our sanctioned games.

Hope to see you soon at the bridge center!

Richard Spangler



Chattanooga Open Sectional

Fri–Sun, Oct 20-22, 2023

Chattanooga Bridge Center

1103 Dayton Blvd. Chattanooga, TN 37405



PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED TO PLAY. LIMITED CAPACITY.

Enroll via email to Margie Moses

Tournament Chair:

Richard Spangler (805) 231-8917
raspangler58@gmail.com

Pre-registration:

Margie Moses (910) 620-4582
margie.moses1@gmail.com

Partnership Chair:

Jan Alexander (423) 883-4610
janalexander@epbf.com

Host Hotel: Variety of hotels in or
near downtown.

Fee All sessions: \$12

Friday, Oct 20

9 a.m / 1:30 p.m...Open Pairs, single sessions

9 a.m / 1:30 p.m...NLM/499er Pairs, single sessions

Saturday, Oct 21

9 a.m / 1:30 p.m...Open Pairs, single sessions

9 a.m / 1:30 p.m...NLM/499er Pairs, single sessions

Sunday, Oct 22

9 a.m.Swiss Teams, counts as 2 sessions

Strats for pairs games: 3000+/3000/1000 (open games), 500/200/50 (NLM/499er games) - stratification for all games based on attendance and pair/team average.

ACBL guidelines at time of tournament to be followed for COVID protocols. See our website for latest information.



Can you believe that these photos were taken at our 2009 Halloween party—that's an unbelievable fourteen years ago. Despite the passage of time, not much has changed except for a few wrinkles and some "lighter" hair! The smiles are still just as sweet. What's even more impressive is that the friendships built around our favorite game are still strong and continue to this day. Pictured left above are **David Vine** and **Sandy Cervantes** and below are **Stephanie Felker** and **Linda Smith**.



How To Be A Better Partner



Use bridge Zen—close your eyes, clear your mind, give in to "The Force" and trust your partner. Forgive and forget the sins of the past. Do your best to remember and adhere to your agreements including style.



Thanks to the District 6 Bridge Newsletter



Can You Believe She's 93?!

If your doubting friends tease you when you tell them that health benefits are the reason you play bridge, show them this photo. Nooga Bridge was delighted to help **Barbara Creagan** celebrate her 93rd birthday with a delicious cake. Ninety-plus is nothing for Barbara. She's still going strong—both in life and in bridge.

Happy, happy birthday to a lovely lady.

The Sandwich NT Bid

Your left-hand opponent opens the bidding, and your partner passes. Your right-hand opponent responds to his partner in a different suit. You hold at least 5 cards in each of the unbid suits and are "sandwiched" between your opponents. A 1NT overcall in this position is called the Sandwich NT and is the baby sister of the Unusual 2NT bid. Both bids show two-suited hands, but the Sandwich NT's purpose is to interfere when holding a much weaker hand (usually 5 to 9 or 10 points) because you do not need to jump to the two-level as you would with the Unusual 2NT bid. This is particularly beneficial at certain vulnerabilities (red on white) when it would be dangerous to overcall 2NT to show this type of hand. Of course, this bid forfeits a natural strong 1NT overcall, but this rarely occurs after both opponents have bid and partner has passed.



Here's an example:

♠ 6
♥ 97
♦ A9543
♣ K8742

West
1♥

North
Pass

East
1♠

You
?

Bid 1NT. This bid would indicate 5/5 distribution in the unbid suits (clubs and diamonds) and would suggest a weak hand. Bidding the Unusual 2NT here would show better values. A takeout double would imply more strength and less distribution.

Another hand you might hold:

♠ K97542
♥ 3
♦ AT985
♣ 6

North
1♣

East
Pass

South
1♥

You
?

Bid 1NT to show spades and diamonds. You're trying to interfere and "cramp" your opponent's bidding.

Responding

If your left-hand opponent passes, partner is expected to bid one of the indicated suits. Any jump raise is preemptive and is not forcing. It shows at least 4 cards in that suit.

PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

**NEED
HELP?**

Now that the weather has cooled down, do you find yourself with some extra time on your hands? Since sunbathing and gardening are no longer on your schedule, why not fill in those extra hours with by adding a couple of bridge games to your calendar. We guarantee you'll find challenge and excitement at the bridge table. Are you worried you can't find a partner? No problem. Email Partnership Committee Chair **Jan Alexander** (janalexander@epbfi.com). Her committee matches players looking for partners, so before you can say, "Sullen Sally's slam succeeds," you'll be having the time of your life at the bridge table.



Fairyland Duplicate Bridge Club

If you're looking for an enjoyable time at the bridge table, look no further. Come join us in a fun and relaxed atmosphere at the Mountain City Club. We meet every Thursday at 10:15 A.M. The game starts at 10:30 A.M., and we break midday for a delicious buffet lunch. To make it even sweeter, someone usually brings an incredible dessert to share. You can count on the game to be over by around 2:30pm. We have a great time, so give us a whirl and contact Susie Crouch at susancrouch54@gmail.com to reserve your spot. Please come join us!

We've been able to secure a date for our annual meeting and holiday party. It will be held on December 14 at the Mountain City Club. Make sure you save the date! This is always a festive and joyful day with a delicious menu and great company. Prior to the party, we will have a business meeting and the election of 2024 officers. If you are interested in running for a position, please contact a member of our Nominating Committee (Sandy Cervantes, Cheryl Whitfield, David Vine) to let them know.



TUESDAY ONLINE 399er GAME

A marvel of technology is that from the comfort of our homes, we can enjoy a great game of bridge and earn ACBL masterpoints in the process. If you have fewer than 400 masterpoints, you are eligible to play in our limited Tuesday evening online game. All you need to do is sign on to BBO (bridgebase.com) at 6:45 P.M. The game starts at 7:00 P.M. and is usually over by 9:00 P.M. so you can still get a good night's sleep. Don't have a partner? Not a problem. Text or call either **Anne Donnovin (423.605.2996)** or **Stewart Lawwill (423.718.0791)**, and you'll get help to find a partner.

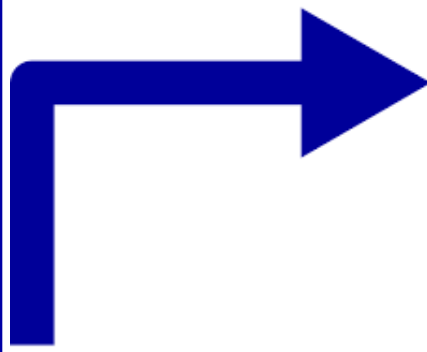
Bridge Etiquette

If your partner fails to alert or announce your bid, do not say anything! When the auction is over, if you are declarer or dummy, you should tell the opponents before they lead. If you are defending, you should tell the opponents at the end of the hand. For example, you can say, "There was a failure to announce my two-heart bid, which was a transfer to spades." In either case, call the director if you think you may have been damaged by the failure to alert or announce.



Balloons, Flowers and Big, Warm Hugs

Sending our most heartfelt wishes for a very speedy return to the bridge table to Anne Donnovin who is recovering from several health problems. Anne is always such a sweet addition to any game, bringing her sparkling smile and kindhearted personality that always elevate the surroundings. We miss you and hope to see you soon!



Arnie's Angle

By Arnie Meagher

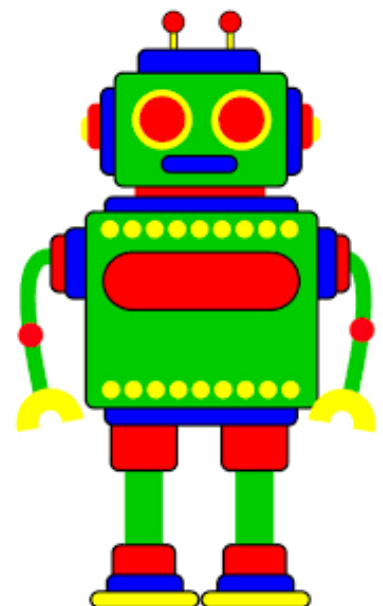
Could Robots Reproduce Themselves?

As a child I had scary thoughts of seeing ghosts, the devil, and the little people. Now as a 90-year-old I have scary thoughts of robots coming alive and taking control of our lives and eventually ruling our planet. Is that the plot of a fictional novel or is there some basis in reality for my fears? We think of robots as made of metals or ceramic, not as living organisms.

This is what we know. In 2020 a team of scientists from the University of Vermont, Tufts University and the Harvard Wyss Institute of Biological Inspired Engineering in research funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) took stem cells from an African clawed frog and let them loose in a petri dish, and lo and behold they developed into tiny living creatures that the scientists called xenobots. And then the scientists sat back and watched something totally new happen in the lab. The tiny living xenobots or robots, less than a millimeter long (.04 of an inch) made copies of themselves. These scientists discovered an entirely new form of biological reproduction unknown in the animal or plant world. When I read this I was speechless—almost swallowed my tongue. Were my worst fears coming true?

These same scientist rushed to tell us not to worry. The xenobots are very early technology and do not as yet have any practical applications. They noted that these tiny living machines are entirely contained in the lab and could be easily extinguished as they are biodegradable and are regulated by ethics experts—assurances that are not entirely reassuring. And then the scientists go on to tell us that these tiny living machines, enhanced by a combination of molecular biology and artificial intelligence could be used in a host of beneficial tasks such as collecting micro-plastics from the oceans and inspecting regenerative medicine. They say nothing of the potential bad uses. Both your imagination and mine can come up with some.

I am not a pessimistic person, but thankfully I will not live to see the development and eventual outcome of this new technology. A very selfish thought!





MANNERS ARE IMPORTANT!



Respect the time of others

- ♦ We recommend that you arrive at least 15 minutes before starting time.
- ♦ Watch the timer and be considerate of others; move when the round is called. Don't move early or late; move only after the round is called.
- ♦ Have a completed Convention Card (both you and your partner).
- ♦ Make your opening lead or table the dummy before you enter the contract in your private score sheets or the BridgeMates. Remember the opening lead is to be led face down to allow for questions!
- ♦ Bid and play in a timely manner.
- ♦ When moving to a new table, make sure you are at the right table with the right opponents.
- ♦ Also check to see that Bridgemates and Place Card agree.

How would you fill in the blank? "To me bridge ____."

Thanks to Myra Tatum for her contribution this month.

To me bridge is an addiction which provides many intangible benefits.

After retirement, I showed up at the bridge center ready to play with absolutely no foundation in duplicate bridge. I was a "numbers person" with a background in accounting and finance and thought I could transition from a workaholic to a bridge player easily. I was wrong! I had much to learn. Patient and kind club members served as my teachers, mentors, and partners. Because of others' love of the game, I became addicted and enjoy the challenge of the game the more I play.

Each of us plays bridge to keep our mental facilities intact. I certainly benefited by the distraction of learning bridge as I served as a caregiver for my mother who suffered with Alzheimer's, and I appreciate the bridge community's ongoing support of the Alzheimer's Association with The Longest Day fundraising activities.

Finally, we have fun as we support one another in the pursuit of our passion. Good food and fellowship often accompany our games. We are rewarded with new acquaintances and growing friendships. Bridge is a good addiction!



Bridge Tip for October

As defender, make sure you aren't dangerously breaking suits and helping declarer. Unless there is something about the bidding or in dummy which suggests you need to make a dangerous/attacking/risky/aggressive play, don't do it!

Larry Cohen

Myra's Box

Hi all,



Let's take a minute to talk about the Bridgemates. In the bridge world, they are our key to life. They contain all the information you would ever need to move and score a bridge game. It is unfortunate that of late, we seem to be taking them for granted. I want to implore North to very carefully key in the score and West to equally carefully verify the score (the contract entered and the amount it made or went down). Also, the Bridgemates tell you where to move at the end of the

round. This should also be checked, as well as the table mats. And, when you arrive at the new Table, North should verify that the correct people and boards have arrived. Let's please take extra diligence in this arena. Thank you.

To move up through the ranks of ACBL, you will have opportunities to earn various colors of points. Black points are earned at the Club, in Virtual games on BBO, and in tournaments. Silver points are earned at Sectional tournaments and STaCs at the Club. Gold and red points can be earned at NABCs or Regionals. Platinum points are earned at NABCs.

For those of you interested in moving up in rank, on the following pages there are two charts showing the number and color of point requirements for each ranking. As you will see, even after one achieves the coveted life master ranking, besides earning more points, there are additional color requirements necessary to move up the ladder.

Hope to see you soon at the CBC.

Myra

Nooga East Bridge Club

Every Monday at 12:30 P.M., there's a bridge game at Christ United Methodist Church located at 8645 East Brainerd Road across from Hurricane Creek Shopping Center. You are asked to arrive no later than 12:15 P.M. so the game can begin promptly. For those of you in Cleveland or North Georgia, we are just a hop, skip and a jump away. We are a very welcoming, fun group and are always looking for new players of all levels. Interested? Just email noogabridgeeast@gmail.com to make a reservation. Need help finding a partner or have a question? You can text or call **Sue Riddle (423.509.3583)** or **Sharon Lewis (423.240.5360)**. We are happy to help, although we do hope for some extra time to help you find a partner. And, after you have asked to some help, if you are lucky enough to find someone to play with on your own, please let us know so we can sit back and enjoy our weekend.



Watch your email for food and fun days. If you are not receiving our emails, please let us know by emailing us at the above address. We have lots of special games planned for the rest of the year—remember special games mean extra points. Hope to see you there.

ACBL rank requirements for members who joined before January 1, 2010

Rank	Masterpoint requirements
Rookie	Fewer than 5
Junior Master	5
Club Master	20
Sectional Master	50 At least 5 are silver
Regional Master	100 At least 15 are silver At least 5 are red/gold/platinum
NABC Master	200 At least 25 are silver At least 20 are red/gold/platinum At least 5 are gold/platinum
Life Master	300 At least 50 are black At least 50 are silver At least 50 are red/gold/platinum At least 25 are gold/platinum
Bronze Life Master	A Life Master with 500
Silver Life Master	A Life Master with 1000 At least 200 are silver/red/gold/platinum
Ruby Life Master	A Life Master with 1500 At least 300 are silver/red/gold/platinum
Gold Life Master	A Life Master with 2500 At least 500 are silver/red/gold/platinum
Sapphire Life Master	A Life Master with 3500 At least 700 are silver/red/gold/platinum At least 350 are gold/platinum
Diamond Life Master	A Life Master with 5000 At least 1000 are silver/red/gold/platinum At least 500 are gold/platinum
Emerald Life Master	A Life Master with 7500 At least 1500 are silver/red/gold/platinum At least 750 are gold/platinum
Platinum Life Master	A Life Master with 10000 At least 2000 are silver/red/gold/platinum At least 1000 are gold/platinum At least 100 are platinum
Grand Life Master	A Platinum Life Master with a victory in an eligible NABC+ or WBF event

ACBL rank requirements for members who joined after January 1, 2010

Rank	Masterpoint requirements
Rookie	Fewer than 5
Junior Master	5
Club Master	20 At least 5 are black
Sectional Master	50 At least 10 are black At least 5 are silver
Regional Master	100 At least 15 are black At least 15 are silver At least 5 are red/gold/platinum
NABC Master	200 At least 20 are black At least 25 are silver At least 20 are red/gold/platinum At least 5 are gold/platinum
Advanced NABC Master	300 At least 50 are black At least 50 are silver At least 50 are red/gold/platinum At least 25 are gold/platinum
Life Master	500 At least 75 are black At least 75 are silver At least 100 are red/gold/platinum At least 50 are gold/platinum
Bronze Life Master	A Life Master with 750
Silver Life Master	A Life Master with 1000 At least 200 are silver/red/gold/platinum
Ruby Life Master	A Life Master with 1500 At least 300 are silver/red/gold/platinum
Gold Life Master	A Life Master with 2500 At least 500 are silver/red/gold/platinum
Sapphire Life Master	A Life Master with 3500 At least 700 are silver/red/gold/platinum At least 350 are gold/platinum
Diamond Life Master	A Life Master with 5000 At least 1000 are silver/red/gold/platinum At least 500 are gold/platinum
Emerald Life Master	A Life Master with 7500 At least 1500 are silver/red/gold/platinum At least 750 are gold/platinum
Platinum Life Master	A Life Master with 10000 At least 2000 are silver/red/gold/platinum At least 1000 are gold/platinum At least 100 are platinum
Grand Life Master	A Platinum Life Master with a victory in an eligible NABC+ or WBF event

Online Mentor/Mentee Game

Every 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, we have an online Mentor/Mentee game at 7 P.M. on BBO. **Bert Shramko** is standing in for **Anne Donnovin** as she recovers from some health issues. If you are interested in playing, let Bert (stdoms48@gmail.com) know early so he can match up mentors with mentees, and he is able to send out assignments with plenty of time for you to develop a convention card. You are asked to sign on to BBO (bridgebase.com) by 6:45 P.M. This month the games are on October 9 and 23.

This is the perfect opportunity for more seasoned players to provide on-the-spot, useful, constructive suggestions to help our newer players develop their game. Everyone has a chance to come out on top, so it just might be you earning those masterpoints.



Friday Face-to-Face Mentor/Mentee Game



Just in case you haven't made the connection, there is no face-to-face mentor/mentee game this month as our Chattanooga Fall Sectional begins on the third Friday, October 20. Since space is limited at the tournament it is important to reserve your spot by emailing Margie Moses at

margie.moses1@gmail.com or texting her at 910.620.4582.

As usual, next month's game is on our regular 3rd Friday, November 17. There will be a sign-up sheet at the club, but if you are unable to do so in person, text or call **Sandy Cervantes** at 423.315.1953 if you would like to play.

Congratulations to the September winners:

North/South

First	Richard Spangler/Barbara Anderson
Second	Doug Cart/Linda Metz
Third	Cheryl Whitfield/Joyce Boatwright

East/West

Earl Rothberger/Donna Bloemker
Tom Trivers/Myra Tatum
David Vine/Mary Robertson

Do You Know...

What's a Yarborough?

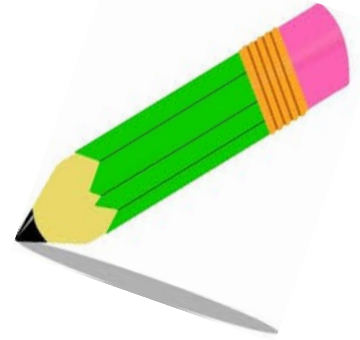
In whist or bridge, a Yarborough is a hand which contains no card above a nine, so called because a former Earl of Yarborough made a practice of betting 1,000 to 1 against any player's holding such a hand. What are the true odds against a Yarborough?

Odds against a Yarborough: **1827 to 1.**

Odds against both members of a partnership receiving a Yarborough: **546,000,000 to 1.**



dates to Remember



October 3, 4, & 6
Tuesday, Wednesday,
Friday

Club Appreciation Games—Extra Points
Chance for Gold at club
Noon CBC

October 2-8
Monday-Sunday

Grand Ole Regional Vanderbilt Bridge Center
Vanderbilt Bridge Center, Nashville, TN

October 9 & 23
Mondays

Online Mentor/Mentee Game
7:00 P.M. BBO

October 9-15
Monday-Sunday

Macon District 7 Regional
Marriott Macon City Center, Macon, GA

October 13
Friday

Senior Game (65+)
Noon CBC

October 20-22
Friday-Sunday

Chattanooga Fall Sectional
Chattanooga Bridge Center

October 25
Wednesday

Fall Instant Matchpoint Game
Noon CBC

October 28
Saturday

Gold Team Game—Club Appreciation
Noon CBC

November 23-
December 3
Thursday-Sunday

2023 Fall NABC
Marriott Marquis
Atlanta, GA

Remember: Due to the Chattanooga Fall Sectional, there will be no Thursday evening game on October 19 and no face-to-face mentor/mentee game on October 20.

Hats off to...

October hats are off to **Anne Donnovin** for her support of the club! Our mentor/mentee games are always fun and well attended. We hold one face-to-face game and two online games each month. Anne coordinates the online games. It's never easy to fill the spots for any of these games, but especially for Anne having to match mentors and mentees twice a month. This type of game is very helpful to advance the skills and confidence of our newer players. We very much appreciate the support of the more experienced players to help move other people long. Thanks to Anne for her support.



One Last Thing...

By John Friedl

The Dreaded Penalty Double



This month's column is about penalty doubles. Why do I call them "dreaded"? Two reasons, really: first, we all are filled with dread when we put down on the table what we expect will be our final bid, and out comes the Big Red X – the penalty double. We're in trouble, and we're going to get clobbered and get a bottom board.

Second, we all share the same fear of doubling the opponents, except in those relatively rare cases where we have enough sure tricks in our own hand to set them and we know they have nowhere else to run.

So let me ask you a question: thinking back over the last month or so, how many times have you doubled an opponent and then watched helplessly as they fulfilled their contract? My guess is the answer is somewhere between zero and none.

Now ask yourself another related question: how many times in an average 27 board match do the opponents prevail in the auction but fail to make their contract? Here my guess would be somewhere between several and more than a few. It is not at all uncommon for the opponents to go down in their contract against us, but extremely rare for them to go down doubled.

Any experienced bridge teacher will tell you that if your opponents never make a doubled contract against you, it isn't because they are such poor players – it is because you don't double often enough. Most players only want to double when they are sure the contract will be set, and they are afraid of the zero score that will surely happen if they double and fail to set the contract.

But think about the flip side of that viewpoint. If we set our opponents by one trick and get an average score because most other pairs had the same result, then if we had doubled the contract we would have earned a top score. A couple of those in a round will make the difference between a good result and a great result.

Let's consider a couple of fairly common situations where a double might be appropriate but all too often doesn't happen. Say our side opens one of a major, the opponents overcall in a minor suit, and in a contested auction up through the four level we bid four of our major and the opponents carry on to five of their minor. We are vulnerable and they are not. If we stand to make 10 tricks in our major we'll score 620 points; they can go down three tricks in their minor and we score only 500 – if we double. We have to double and set them four to score 800 and get a better result than making our major suit game. So unless you know something more about the hand from the cards you hold and the bidding, a double is obligatory. Down 3 or 4 undoubled for 150 or 200 will surely be a bottom board.

Here's another situation to consider for a semi-obligatory double. Opponents open one spade, we bid two clubs, they raise spades, we raise clubs, and they persist to three spades. After two passes it's your bid. Do you press on to four clubs or pass? If you pass, the auction is over and there's nothing to discuss about doubles. But if you bid four clubs, what do you do if they push on to four spades? They weren't going to bid that game until you pushed them into it. Are you prepared to double them? If not, you should have thought of that when you decided to bid rather than pass. What if they make four spades? They get 420 or 620 instead of 170, and you get a bottom board. So if you had the combined values to aspire to taking ten tricks in clubs (or to sacrifice by going down only one trick doubled), then you ought to have the values to take four tricks on defense. This one almost always calls for a double.

Are there situations where you have some values but aren't sure whether to double or not? Yes, that is often the case. Say partner opens one club, your right hand opponent overcalls 1 No Trump (15 to 18) and you have a balanced hand with 8 high card points. You should be able to set 1 No Trump, but do you double or pass?



One Last Thing...continued

Another example: partner opens one club and your right hand opponent jumps to four spades. It would be nice if you held KJ98 of spades, and with three sure trump tricks you would want to bang your fist on the table and yell "penalty double!" But of course, all you can do is quietly place the red card in front of you and hope partner passes. But what if, instead, you hold a hand such as this:

♠7

♥KQ642

♦AJ10

♣Q532

You were definitely thinking about what game you would be in when partner opened, but now you're not sure if you want to bid 5 hearts, 5 clubs, or double. Can you beat 4 Spades? Probably, but that has to be balanced against the question of whether you can make game in clubs or hearts.

A double here, while it might be made with three spade tricks, is more likely what is termed a "cooperative" double or a "values double." It says to partner "I have some values here, and I think we can set this contract, but I'm not sure what to do. So I'll leave the decision to you – you can pass for penalty or bid on to a better contract for our side."

To confirm my belief that we don't double enough, I went back over the scores in a recent game. First I counted the number of contracts that went down, i.e., the declarer failed to take the necessary number of tricks. The total number of hands played was 324, of which 124 (38.3%) resulted in the declarer failing to make the contract. Of those 124 hands, only 9 were doubled (7.3%). There were no hands in which the declarer was doubled and made the contract. Hence my conclusion that if you can't remember the last time your opponents made a contract that you doubled, you aren't doubling enough.

Epilogue

Several years ago I played in a four-person team knockout event at a small regional tournament in Augusta, Georgia. Our team had a combined total of about 15,000 master points. Normally that would have put us in the third or fourth bracket, and in a large regional like Gatlinburg we might have been as low as the ninth or tenth bracket, playing against other teams of comparable master point levels. But because it was a small tournament, the field was compressed and we ended up in the top bracket of the KO event.

My partner and I arrived at the table for the first 24-board match and although I recognized our opponents, I had not previously played against them. I glanced over at the table where our teammates were seated, and also recognized their opponents.

On the first board of the match, my partner and I bid to 3 No Trump without interference, only to see my left hand opponent drop the Dreaded Penalty Double card on the table. I asked his partner if the double had any special meaning within their partnership agreement, and he said "he thinks we can beat 3 No Trump."

In the play of the hand, I needed several things to go right to have a chance to make the contract, and I assumed that every card that had to be in my left-hand opponent's hand would be there. And they were! I managed to squeak by with 9 tricks.

"550. Sorry Pard," was all my opponent said. "It's okay," was the reply. And the play continued. I won't tell you how badly they beat us, only that it was an experience I will always remember as worth the price of admission.

The opponents? Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you. My left hand opponent (the doubler) was Jeff Meckstroth (95,000 master points); his partner was Eric Rodwell (77,000); their teammates were Bobby Levin (48,000) and Steve Weinstein (33,000). Total master points – 253,000.