



Bridge Students 'R Us

Complimentary *Highlights* Issue

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Introducing Our FREE *Highlights* Issue!

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Index of back issues available on page 7.
Subscription forms on page 8.

For those of you not familiar with our newsletter, we have put together this *Highlights* issue showcasing a few of our favorite articles. We've attempted to provide a witty and informative new way of looking at bridge, with lots of humorous stories. Our approach to bridge writing is to use a *sound bite* method, where we take one small statement as the core of the article. Bridge is easily digestible if taken one small bite at a time. In each issue of the newsletter, you will find articles on many aspects of bridge, including —

- Bidding
- Play
- Defense
- Etiquette
- Book & Software Reviews
- Psychology of Bridge

Bidding — Is Your Bid Forcing?

Playing at the club recently, my student John and I had the following auction:

Me	LHO	John	RHO
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		



John got a shocked look on his face when I passed his jump to 3♥. "But ... I jumped!" he lamented.

"*Old suits are not forcing* and since you had already mentioned hearts, your jump was in an *old* suit. Also, since I limited my hand by rebidding 1NT, only a jump in a new suit would have been forcing at that point."

"But ... I jumped!" he repeated, shaking his head.

Doesn't matter, folks. When you repeat a suit already mentioned before in the auction, it is not forcing. Look at this one:

Me	LHO	John	RHO
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	??	

Can John pass my 3♣ bid? Yes, because it is an *old* suit. Clubs have been mentioned twice.

Consider these auctions —

Me	LHO	John	RHO
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
??			

Can I pass? No, I have to bid again! John has rebid a new suit and neither of us has limited our hands by bidding notrump.

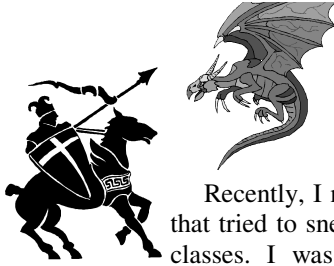
Me	LHO	John	RHO
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
??			

When my rebid is 1NT, is his 2♦ bid forcing? No, it is not forcing. If he has enough values to push to game, he has to jump right to game or jump into a new suit.

A new suit by an unpassed responder is forcing unless the opener or responder has limited his hand by bidding 1NT.



Trouble learning bridge?
Try to relax and remember—
Be glad when you make a mistake — that's the best way to learn!



Recently, I noticed a lot of bridge “myths” that tried to sneak their way into a few of my classes. I was beset by a bevy of abused bridge bromides. (Try saying that three times fast.) Here they are —

1. *When leading partner's bid suit, I always lead the top!*

No, no, no. If you do lead the top, it must be from a doubleton holding or touching honors (e.g., Q-J-x). If you have an honor with two or three baby cards (e.g., K-10-6-3 or K-7-2) you will lead fourth or third best, respectively — **LOW FROM AN HONOR!!** (But don't underlead an ace against a suit contract!) Consider this layout —

	Dummy	
	♣ 8 4	
You		Partner
♣ K 6 2		♣ A J 10 7 3
	Declarer	
	♣ Q 9 5	

If you lead the king, and then over to pard's ace, you have now set up a trick (the queen) for the declarer! Is that your job — to set up tricks for the other side? If so, how much are they paying you? What happens if you start by leading the deuce over to pard's ace? He will then return the jack which will trap declarer's queen under your king! Now declarer gets **NO** tricks in this suit. That's the key — trying not to give the opponents anything for free. You are the only one who can capture the queen. Your partner cannot capture a card that is played **AFTER** him. Always guard the person on your right because they play before you do.



2. *It's bad to lead away from a king!*

I could make up a hand where any lead would be bad! True, you could be leading into the declarer's (hypothetical) A-Q, giving him a free finesse. But if partner has the ace or queen, your king will quickly set up for defensive purposes. I would prefer that we say, “It's bad to lead away from a king when it's wrong.” But leading away from a king is better than leading from a queen, and leading from a queen is better than leading from a jack (do you know how long it takes to set up a jack?) and so on. The better your honor is — the faster it will set up.

3. *After your RHO opens, you must make a takeout double any time you have an opening hand.*

'Fraid not. The two bids you can make after your opponent opens are either A) an overcall; or B) a takeout double.

Psychology — Top 5 Dragon Myths I've Slain This Month

A) An overcall ranges from 7-17 points and shows at least a good five-card suit. (You can also overcall 1NT with a notrump opener and a stopper in the enemy suit.)

B) A takeout double ranges from an opening hand on up. You also need shortness in the enemy suit **AND** support for the three unbid suits. If you fail any of these three requirements, then you probably shouldn't make a takeout double.



If you can't do A or B; then (click your heels together and repeat three times) — **pass**. Pass is not a four-letter word.

4. *When pard opens, I as responder must jump on my first bid if I have an opening hand also!*

Arrrgh. Let me tell you a story that I stole from Edith McMullin. Two bulls were grazing down in the pasture. The younger bull says, “WOW, look at all those beautiful cows up on the hill! Let's run up there and make love to one of them.” The wiser, older bull said, “Why don't we **WALK** up the hill and make love to them **ALL?**” Save your strength showing jump-bids for later, folks.

If you jump on your first bid it should show about 19+ points and a desire to play in a slam. Generally speaking, your first bid explores for a fit at a low level, and you can jump later to show your points. Consider these auctions:

	<u>Pard</u>	<u>You</u>	
	1♣	1♥ (forcing)	
	1♠	2♦ (forcing) . . .	

Your 1♥ response is 100% forcing. A new suit by an **UN-PASSED** responder is forcing (unless opener has rebid 1NT). So we can *walk* up this hill and make love to as many suits as we want. Explore all of our options. No need to jump just because you have an opening hand, too.

	<u>Pard</u>	<u>You</u>	
	1♣	2NT . . .	

In basic standard, responder's immediate jump to 2NT shows an opening hand; **BUT** it also shows stoppers in the unbid suits and denies a four-card major. If responder bypasses a major at the one level to bid notrump, he doesn't have one.

	<u>Pard</u>	<u>You</u>	
	1♣	1♥	
	1NT	3NT	

Pard doesn't like your hearts and he denies spades when he doesn't bid them. Notrump is probably where we are going to wind up so **NOW** we jump to 3NT on our second bid to show we had an opening hand





Myths — Continued



also. Look for a fit at the lower levels and jump to game later. DO NOT jump on your first bid.

5. ALWAYS lead “fourth from your longest and strongest” against notrump.

No, this is a guideline, not a rule. Only one rule in bridge and that is . . . “Always accept a breath mint from your partner.” Everything else is just a suggestion. Your opening lead should depend upon your defensive plan. You do have a defensive plan, don’t you?

All opening leads are blind but none of them are deaf. (Can’t remember who gets credit for that nugget.) Listen and review the auction before making the opening lead.

- Did your partner bid? Leading his suit will at least let you win the postmortem!
- Did the opponents bid a suit? It is generally not a good thing to lead a suit bid by the bad guys. Exception: If you have K-Q-J-10-9 of their bid suit, you probably should lead it since you OWN it, and they don’t.
- Estimate partner’s point count using the auction as a guide. For instance, the opponents are in 3NT so you assume they have about 26 points. You have 13 points, how many points can your partner have? Add them up! You can account for approximately 39 points — pard is broke. Underleading any of your honors (fourth best) will only benefit the opponents. Find a safe passive lead instead.
- If you do decide to lead your longest and strongest suit, remember that sequence leads always take precedence over fourth-best leads — with K-Q-J-8-3, lead the king, not the eight. (From K-Q-J-10-3 one of my students led the 10, thinking “What does it matter?” But that would mislead your partner.) Always lead the TOP of a sequence or broken sequence (K-Q-10-6-3 — again, lead the king). Leading top of a sequence is aggressive and even safer than fourth-best leads.



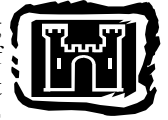
Any of the above lead suggestions can be used on any hand depending upon your defensive plan. When do you lead fourth best? When it feels right and nothing else better occurs to you!

Don’t use well-known platitudes as a substitute for actually thinking!



Defense — A Very Grimm Fairy Tale

Once upon a time, I was at the club playing against Mrs. Fisher and her regular partner of late, Mrs. Price. These ladies are so genteel that it would make you smile. Mrs. Fisher is always very courteous and charming. In fact, she brings to my mind Snow White singing in the meadow surrounded by flying birds and furry animals. And if you looked up the word “nice” in the dictionary, you would find a picture of her partner, Mrs. Price. They are a perfectly matched pair.



On the third hand of the round, I was declarer in a simple-looking 3NT contract. I had eight top tricks and if the clubs split 3-3, the fourth club in my hand would be the ninth trick. The layout was:

Dummy	
♣ K Q 4	
	Me
♣ A 8 5 3	

I won the ♣K and noticed that my LHO (Snow White) played the ♣10. Hmmmm... Then on my ♣Q she played the ♣J. Boy, was I glad I was seeing spots for once in my life! RHO had followed with two insignificant looking clubs. Ahaaaa! The clubs were splitting 4-2 with ♣9-7-6-2 on my right! I promptly finessed my ♣8 on the third trick and ... AAARRRRGGGHHH! Snow White won her ♣9. She had deliberately falsecarded! I looked at her in amazement.

“Nice play,” I murmured to her. “Sorry, partner.”

Partner patted me on the back, “I would’ve played it the same way.”

Snow White started cackling like her evil step-mother. “I love this game!” Was that a wart on her nose?



At dinner that evening, my husband asked about the game. “I got run over today by a tractor-trailer and Snow White was driving. I’m going to run an ad ... warn the other players,” I mumbled. “The Fisher-Price pair unmasked! Who taught her to do that?”

My husband laughed. “Don’t you know you can’t trust fictional characters’ carding at the bridge table? Besides, I’ve seen *you* falsecard before.”



“Yeah, I know, but I don’t have bluebirds flying around my head.”

The moral of this story is that when you have the opportunity to fool your opponents, then do it! With a J-10-9 combination most people would routinely follow with the nine, then the 10 and jack. Next time you’re following suit with equal honors, consider playing them out of normal order. Deliberately playing your cards in an odd manner on defense can have a devastating effect on the declarer (if she’s watching your carding)! But remember you’ll be fooling your partner also — so do it with care!

Bidding — Stretching to Bid that Slam!!

Dealer: South
N-S Vul
Lead: ♦ 6

North
♠ A J 10
♥ A 3
♦ A 10 3 2
♣ J 7 6 2

West
♠ Q 9
♥ K J 7 5 2
♦ J 9 7 6 5
♣ K

East
♠ 7 6 4 2
♥ 10 9 8 6
♦ 8
♣ 10 9 5 3

South
♠ K 8 5 3
♥ Q 4
♦ K Q 4
♣ A Q 8 4



Bidding:

West	North	East	South
			1NT (15-17)
2♥ (1)	6NT (2)	All Pass	

- (1) West interfered with the opponents' notrump auction by making a Cappelletti 2♥ bid. (This convention, named after local expert Mike Cappelletti, Sr., is called the Hamilton convention on the West Coast — and here on the East Coast Mr. Cappelletti himself also calls it Hamilton when it doesn't work out well!) This alertable bid promised at least five hearts and an undisclosed five-card minor as well.
- (2) North got the impression that the opponents were trying to steal something away from his side and jumped to an unrealistic slam.



The slam contract was very pushy. When South showed his 15-17 notrump opener, why would North feel a slam was possible if he could only contribute 14 HCP? That makes a combined range of only 29-31. The small slam range is from 33-36 points, especially when both hands are balanced. 6NT went down one, declarer taking 11 tricks with 30 HCP between North and South.

So what do you need to make a slam? Either —

- 33-36 points for a small slam or 37+ for a grand slam when balanced; or
- A source of tricks!

A few hands later, a similar situation came up. Again, another pushy slam.

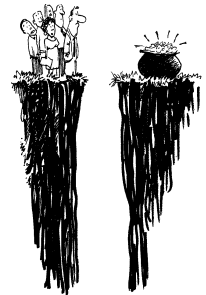
Dealer: South
E-W Vul
Lead: ♥ 10

North
♠ 8 3
♥ J 7
♦ A K Q 6 3 2
♣ J 9 3

West
♠ K 6 5 4
♥ 10 9 8 5 3
♦ 9 7
♣ 7 6

East
♠ Q 9 7 2
♥ Q 6 2
♦ J 8
♣ Q 8 4 2

South
♠ A J 10
♥ A K 4
♦ 10 5 4
♣ A K 10 5



Bidding:

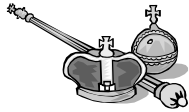
West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	2NT (1)
Pass	6NT (2)		

- (1) South jumped to 2NT, which here showed an 18-19 HCP hand (too strong to open a 15-17 1NT).
- (2) North thought his diamonds would run in notrump and with six tricks in his own hand, decided to push to 6NT.

The big difference between these two pushy slams is that North here had a *source of tricks*, his long diamond suit which he hoped would run. In the first hand, North's points were scattered with no long suit. With a source of tricks you can be a tad more aggressive. The second declarer took 13 tricks when the club finesse worked. Making seven on only 30 HCP!!!

**If you are going to bid
(and make) a pushy slam,
you need a source of tricks!**





Defense — When Should You Play Your Aces and Kings?

Aces and kings were sent to you by the bridge gods to capture queens and jacks. In the sea, a big fish wants to swallow the biggest fish he can find. Same thing should be true at the bridge table. Against 3NT, partner leads the ♠J. Here's what you see:

	Dummy	
	♠ K 6 3	
Pard		You
♠ J		♠ A 7 2

- Questions:**
1. Where's the ♠Q?
 2. Who are you supposed to be guarding?
 3. Should you play "third hand high"?

Answers:

1. Partner has denied the ♠Q when he led the ♠J. So the declarer **MUST** have it!
2. You are supposed to be guarding the player on your right, the one who plays **BEFORE** you do. That means here you are guarding the dummy. *Partner is supposed to be guarding the declarer.* Seeing the ♠K in the dummy you should be saying to yourself, "I'm **NOT** going to play my ace until that king is played!" You are guarding that king. You are the only one who **CAN**!
3. If dummy plays low, you'll play the ♠7. You should not play *third hand high* if there is something in dummy you should be guarding instead. With nothing in the dummy (three babies) you would rise with the ace and return the suit, because partner might have led from K-J-10-9-(4).

Now, it is true that if you play low, the declarer will score his ♠Q. But if you jump up with your ace, you will make **BOTH** his king and the queen good.

It is **NOT** your job to set up tricks for the opponents!

Try not to jump up with your aces and kings, capturing nothing in return. The more honors you capture, the bigger your partner's 10's and 9's will become. More tricks for your side! Let's try it from another angle:

	Dummy	
	♠ K 6 3	
You		Pard
♠ A 7 5		♠ ??
	Declarer	
	leads the ♠2	

- Questions:**
1. Where's the ♠Q?
 2. Who are you supposed to be guarding?
 3. What card should you play?

Answers:

1. You can't be sure where the missing ♠Q is. Either declarer or your partner might have it.
2. You should be guarding the player on your right; on this hand, that's the declarer!
3. If you jump up with your ace, all you will get is the 2, 3 and 4. Not a very good result for a big and powerful ace! So play low and wait for something better to come along that you can capture!

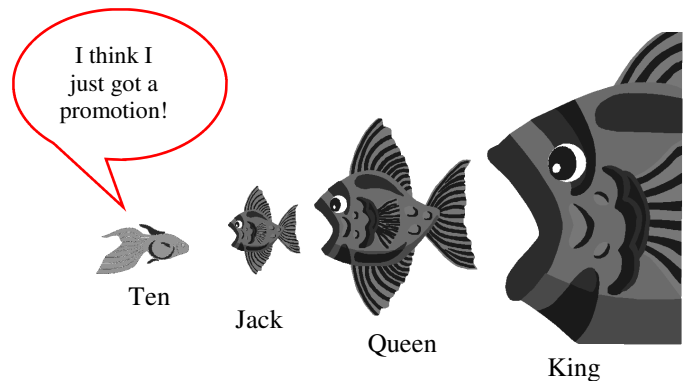
The full layout was:

	Dummy	
	♠ K 6 3	
You		Pard
♠ A 7 5		♠ J 10 9 4
	Declarer	
	♠ Q 8 2	

If You Jump Up With Your Ace:

Now the declarer's king **AND** queen are good and he'll get two tricks from the suit.

Yes, by playing low there will be some slight pain when the declarer wins his ♠K, but he was always going to get a trick with it anyway. However, when your partner later gets the lead, he can switch to the ♠J, trapping the declarer's ♠Q. So declarer gets only his **ONE** spade trick.



BIG TIP!!!!

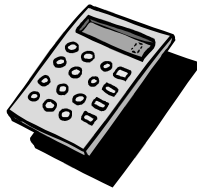
Many of you are still leading *unsupported* aces. Unless you have the king to go with that ace, **do not lead the ace**. Save it until some big flashy king or queen pops up that you can capture. Make your aces do some of that hard work!

Bidding — Law of Total Tricks at Work

Dealer: West	North		East
E-W Vul	♠ 8 5 3 2		♠ J 10
Lead: ♥ Q	♥ 9 5		♥ A K 7 4 3
	♦ 7 6 5 2		♦ K 9
	♣ A Q 10		♣ 9 8 7 4
West		South	
♠ 9 6		♠ A K Q 7 4	
♥ Q J 8 2		♥ 10 6	
♦ A Q J 10 8		♦ 4 3	
♣ K 2		♣ J 6 5 3	

Bidding:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	2♠ (1)	3♥ (2)	Pass
Pass	3♠ (3)	All Pass	



- (1) North had a very bad hand and tried to buy the contract for two spades. Having an extra trump, he was planning on going to the three level if the opponents pushed him there.
- (2) East was not willing to let his opponents play *in a fit* at the two level. He knew that North-South were comfortable where they were and he felt his job was to make his opponents *uncomfortable*.
- (3) North took the push to the three level.

Result: Making three, +140 for North-South.

South was amazed. “How did you know to bid again with only six points, partner?”

“Well, the Law told me to!” replied North.



The opponents would have made their 3♥ bid if North had let them play it there. Trust in the Law. It's actually quite remarkable when you start using it. No more anxiety, wondering whether or not you should bid, pass or double. If you trust the Law, it will tell you what to do.

$$5 + 4 = 9$$

In a competitive auction where everyone is bidding, the points are usually spread out around the table. So how will you know whether to take another bid or not? *You might as well just throw your high card points out with the trash.* Your decision will be based on the number of trump you and your partner have. It will not be based on HCP.



The Law of Total Tricks (LOTT) will guide you in competitive auctions. You might still try to buy the bid at a low level, but you will take the push to a higher level if you have extra trump.

For example, with nine trump you should be willing to bid to the three level, contracting to take nine tricks. With ten trump between you and partner, you should be willing to contract to take ten tricks, bidding to the four level.

Use the Law in competitive auctions and when you expect the auction to become competitive.

Even if the opponents haven't bid yet, you can use the Law with a weak hand to jack up the auction (e.g., a *weak freak* raise). This will keep the opponents from competing comfortably.

In non-competitive auctions, you must use the strength of your hand to determine if you should bid higher.

Everyone has heard of the super agent 007 (James Bond). He goes around killing anyone he wants to with absolute immunity. He has a license to kill. With an extra trump, you have a *license to bid*.



Bridge Students 'R Us—Index of Articles by Volume and Issue

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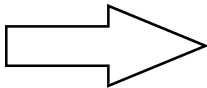
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