

FOR THE NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK.....

Get out and Vote!! AND Play some bridge....

The Election Sectional is coming up this weekend. Play will begin Friday afternoon and continue Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday. There will be lots of beginning players in the IN area so come out and join the fun. Win silver points too!! The location is the Westchase Marriott just inside the Beltway 8 and a block south of Westheimer.

Even though it is not possible, in the course of a competitive auction, to determine how many tricks the opponents will make, can it be possible to predict, on average, the number of total tricks? If so this average figure cannot help but be of lively interest in making competitive decisions.

In fact, this average exists, and can be expressed in an extremely simple law:

Follow the Law!!!!

The Law of Total Tricks by Jean-Rene Vernes

The number of total tricks in a hand is approximately equal to the total number of trumps held by both sides, each in its respective suit.

A Practical Rule

As we examine one after another of the competitive problems at various levels, we find that the practical rule appropriate to each case can be expressed as a quite simple general rule:

You are protected by “security of distribution” in bidding for as many tricks as your side holds trumps.

Thus, with eight trumps, you can bid practically without danger to the two level, with nine trumps to the three level, with ten to the four level, etc., because you will have either a good chance to make your contract or a good save against the enemy contract.

The law at work!

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? High card points will not give you the answer! Your decision will be based on the number of trump you and your partner have rather than on the number of high card points. Use the LOTT (law of total tricks) to 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 trumps be willing to bid to the three level taking nine tricks. With ten trumps between partner and yourself, be willing to go to the four level.

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

Even if the opponents have not bid yet, you can use the LOTT with a weak hand to raise the level of the auction (weak freak bid raise) to keep the opponents from competing in the auction by taking up so much bidding room that it is difficult for them to find the right suit and the right level.

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

Back to the Basics—it's not just for school children:

Declarer Play:

Pay attention to the Bidding, Lead, and Signal to the opening lead and use them as a guide during play.

Count your losers in the suit contract and sure tricks at no trump contracts and apply these counts to your play.

Keep an entry between the hands.

Wait to draw trump when you need the tricks by trumping in the dummy. Trumps in your hand are for drawing trump and trumps in the dummy are for trumping.

Draw trump as soon as possible if you do not need them for trumping in dummy.

Set up the needed long suit as soon as possible.

Anticipate the dangers in a hand and “be prepared”.

Keep the danger hand off the lead.

Do not play too fast.

Do not let emotions like anger and frustration rule you at the bridge table.

Defense--you do it half the time

The Art of Discarding:

A “discard” refers to the play of a card that is neither the suit led nor the trump suit. When you are defending, you need to communicate with your partners by discards. There are many ways to do this.

Attitude signals: are the simplest system of signaling. If you use standard signals, a high card in the suit discarded encourages partner to lead that suit and a low card discourages. Some players prefer upside down attitude. If you use upside down attitude a low card in the suit discarded encourages that suit while a high card discourages it. The advantage of upside-down signals is that you do not need to play a potentially useful card to encourage.

Count signals: With standard count playing a high card then a low one in a suit shows an even number of cards while playing low-high shows an odd number.

When your partner leads an honor it is usually best for you to show attitude to that lead. When you next discard in that suit show the count of your remaining cards. This is referred to as giving present count.

Other types of discards include Lavinthal discards (low discard requests NOT that suit but the suit below it and high discard requests the suit above the card thrown).

Odd-even discards (also called Roman discards) allow you to combine attitude and suit preference. An odd card encourages that suit you discard in. An even card is suit

preference—a high even card asks for the higher suit and low even card asks for the lower suit.

Revolving discards are simple but effective. A high discard shows interest in the next higher suit and a low discard shows interest in the next lowest suit. For example, a high heart asks for a spade and a low diamond asks for a club.

There is no right answer on choosing a discard system, but upside down does appear to have a very slight edge. Whichever system you are playing, make sure that you and your partner are on the same wave length. Discard thoughtfully and give your partner clues. And don't forget to watch your partner's discards.

Director, Please

Alert! When do you inform the opponents that there has been a failure to alert or that an alert has not been properly explained? There seems to be constant confusion about this. Consider the whether you are playing the hand or defending. **If you are playing the hand notify the defenders BEFORE the opening lead is made.** If you are on defense, **DO NOT** notify the declarer because you will also be giving your partner a “reminder” until **AFTER the hand has been played**

Please send comments regarding this newsletter to jryan9620@sbcglobal.net. If you would like to be added to the mailing list just give ACBL your e-mail address and you will get it automatically.

See you at the tables

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