

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

Tips for Being a Better Partner

“We all know that the rapport one has with a favorite partner is worth all the conventions in the books.”

Victor Mollo

August is be a Better Partner month in Unit 174. Think about what you can do to be a better partner. Good partners always have a smile and never make a face. Good partners watch their partners' discards and return their partners' leads. Good partners are quick to praise and even quicker to admit their own mistakes. Good partners study and continually learn.

Back to the Basics---It's not only for school children

The Take out Double. This double promises partner support for all of the unbid suits. What do you need to make a take out double? You need 13 points and you can count dummy points for shortness in the opponent's suit. Dummy points are 5 for a void, 3 for a singleton and 1 for a doubleton. You can count dummy points because **your hand will be the dummy** and shortness in the opponent's suit will give your hand extra ruffing power. Do your high card points and your dummy points add up to 13? If so you can make a take out double. When you have a big hand of 18 or more high card points you also make a take out double and then bid again. This should a very strong hand. Unless there is an intervening bid, your partner **MUST bid even with 0 points!** With 0-8 your partner will make a minimum bid, with 9-11 bids jumping a level and with 12 or more the advancer bids game. Since partner will be playing the hand, partner will count an extra point for every card beyond 4. These are called length points.

Defense--you do it half the time

Defense is the toughest part of the game to learn, but we play defense half the time. If you are playing defense more than half the time, you aren't getting the bid when you should. In notrump, the defenders lead their combined longest suit. If the long suit is headed by three or more cards in sequence, lead the top card. Otherwise, lead fourth best. The defenders must be patient; each time they gain the lead, they continue to work to make their original suit good. Remember, it is ok to underlead an ace against a notrump contract but do not underlead an ace against a suit contract.

Director Please---When and how to call the director

When calling the director, raise your hand and say “Director, Please” There is no reason to shout “DIRECTOR” in a loud or intimidating manner. The director is not a policeman or the Gestapo! He is there to restore equity when a mishap has occurred. Always call the director when an irregularity occurs. It is **not** an unfriendly thing to do.

Lord of the Manners

Players come to a duplicate game to test their skills and have a pleasant day. Make sure you greet your opponents, praise their good play or defense, and never gloat over your

good fortune on a hand. When you meet up with a sour puss, make it your goal to get him to smile.

Conventions- -We all need a FEW good ones

Larry Cohen suggests that you cut back on the number of conventions you are playing and concentrate on using logic and not making mistakes at the table. What conventions should you add to your card? Stayman, transfers, weak twos, negative doubles, and Blackwood are good conventions to begin with. Add one convention at a time after you have studied it and understand the entire convention thoroughly. 25 Conventions You Should Know by Barbara Seagram is a great book for your library.

Volunteer opportunities within the unit

Most bridge games and tournaments in Houston are run by volunteers. The next big opportunity to volunteer will be the August Sectional tournament. Help is always appreciated at the local games. Get involved—it's fun!

Upcoming events

The next tournament is just around the corner. The Awesome August Sectional will be held on August 21st, 22nd, and 23rd at the Westchase Marriott. Play will begin Friday at 1:30 and 7:00 and continue Saturday at 9:00, 1:30, and 7:00. Sunday team games begin at 10:00 and 3:00. Sessions will be held for 299ers, 49ers (attendance permitting) and 0-5 on Saturday afternoon. Finding a partner is sometimes the most difficult part of the game. An online partnership desk is located at www.unit174partnership.com. At the tournament, Ralda St Pierre will assist with partnerships and her number is 281 556-0433 or raldastp@sbcglobal.net. Come join the fun!

Please send your comments, questions and suggestions regarding this newsletter to jryan9620@sbcglobal.net. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please send your email address to ACBL which can be done on the unit website.

See you at the tables

Joyce Ryan