

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

October and November Tournaments for Silver Points!!

The October sectional is coming up at the end of the month. The Owlshly Halloween Sectional will be held at the Humble Civic Center October 29th, 30th, and 31st. A 299er sectional will be held on November 5th, 6th, and 7th at the Houston Bridge Studio. You can get more information about these tournaments and the big January Regional tournament at www.ACBLunit174.org.

Defense You play it half the time!:

The defense against the finesse is based on the principle of promotion. Therefore, cover only when there is a possibility to promote a lesser honor in your partner's hand.

Cover touching honors the second time.

Do not cover if you hold length in the suit

When you have four trumps, do not lead trump. Lead your long suit instead. Try to make the declarer ruff and ultimately lose control of the hand.

Keeping parity with the dummy: Unless there is strong evidence to the contrary, a defender should keep at least as many cards as dummy has in the suit they can protect. This is called "keeping parity". Sometimes the auction gives the defenders useful information about **declarer's** hand. A Stayman sequence or just bidding four card suits up the line will often show that declarer has a side four card suit. As a defender, try to keep enough cards to protect that suit.

After a Weak Two Bid:

When your partner opens a weak two in a major suit use this tool to help you decide whether or not to go to game. It is called the **Rule of 17**. Count the **number of high card points plus the number of trump** (minimum of 2) in your hand. If this comes to 17 go directly to game in your partner's major suit. This does not mean 15 or 16! Partner has a weak hand or he would not have opened a weak two bid. You need values to go to game.

The Rule of 20:

Use the Rule of 20 when opening in first or second seat only. You can open one of a suit **IF the number of high card points AND the number of cards** in your two longest suits add up to at least 20. (The high card points should be concentrated in your long suits)

Director Please: The Stop Card

- **When** do you use the stop card? The stop card is used before a jump in the bidding. The rules state that if you use it at all, you must use it all of the time (for every jump bid, regardless of whether it is weak or strong). It asks the next person to wait about 10 seconds before making a bid.
- **How** do you use the stop card? Before making your jump bid (weak or strong) pull out the stop card while saying "I'm about to make a skip bid, please wait 10 seconds." The stop card should remain face up on the table while saying this. Make your jump bid. The opponents are supposed to be studying their hands for the full 10 seconds regardless of whether the skip bidder has picked up the stop card or not.
- **Why** do you use the stop card? A jump bid can sometimes give the next bidder a problem since he would have to make a call at a higher level than he was expecting. The stop card allows him to take a bit of extra time to make up his mind about whether to bid or not without giving his partner any unauthorized information. What if the next bidder has no problem and just wants to pass? A quick pass would give his partner a clear picture of weakness (again, unauthorized information since it is being relayed by the quickness of the pass). The stop card makes the next bidder slow down so that his partner will not gain any information from the tempo of the bid.
- **There are some partnerships that do not use the stop card** and you are still supposed to wait 10 seconds before bidding. You are always supposed to pause after someone jumps.
- **Warning** The skip-bid warning is not used to inform your own partner that you are about to jump! Your partner is supposed to ignore the stop card completely. We use the stop card to warn our opponents, not our partner!

Lord of the Manners:

- **Always** maintain a courteous attitude to everyone, partner, opponents, Director, kibitzers, team-mates.
- **Do not** express displeasure or satisfaction at a lead, play, bid, double or any other call partner makes.

- **Always** make sure that any conventional bids used by you and your partner are alerted, and clearly explained to the opponents in answer to a question. Make sure that your convention card is correctly filled in, legible and available to your opponents.
- **Do not** look to see the place in his hand from which another player pulls a card in playing, nor draw inferences there from.
- **Always** make bids and plays in a uniform manner without special emphasis or inflection of the voice or method of playing the bidding cards which would give partner information on the nature of your hand.
- **Do not** draw any inference from the fact that partner has hesitated, or has bid with any special emphasis or inflection of the voice.
- **Always** call the Director at the first sign of an irregularity. Never make your own rulings.
- **Never** fail to exercise active ethics and full disclosure. Keep your (filled out) convention cards available for your opponents.

(Reprinted from ACBL District 16 website)

Some Good Bridge Habits:

Avoid leading out your high cards. Play toward honors and honor sequences.

Draw trumps at once when you are afraid that the opponents will ruff your winners.

Do not draw trumps at once when you need to ruff losers in the dummy. Trumps in your hand are for trumping and trumps in the dummy are for trumping losers. That is why the dummy reevaluates his hand using “dummy points”.

When you have agreed on a suit and you will be the dummy you will count “dummy points”. (5 for a void, 3 for a singleton, and 1 for a doubleton)

Your hand rarely maintains the same values as the bidding progresses. Remember to recount your hand after you’ve established trump. This is very important for bidding your games and slams.

Bridge Trivia:

Martina Navratilova uses bridge games as opportunities for relaxation. When she travels, she likes to find nearby bridge clubs and join in. She once said, “No matter where I go, I can always make new friends at the bridge table.”

George Burns was an avid bridge player. For several decades, he played daily at the Hillcrest Country Club. He said, "Bridge is a game that separates the men from the boys. It also separates husbands and wives". At the age of 100, he still showed up for his daily bridge game.

Katherine Graham, the longtime president of the Washington Post, died in 2001. She was on her way to a bridge game when she had an untimely fall that led to her death. She was on her way to play bridge with Warren Buffet and Bill Gates.

Please send your comments, questions, and suggestions regarding this newsletter to jryan9620@sbcglobal.net.

See you at the tables!

Joyce Ryan

St. Martin's Bridge School