

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

August Tournament News

Wow! I saw so many of you at the August tournament and the overwhelming response from the new players was “It was fun”! Join the fun. We have a 299er sectional coming up in September 11-13th. The location is Bridge Club of Houston at I-45 at 2920. www.bridgeclubofhouston.org . Need a partner? Call Lorraine at 281 583-5503 or Becky at 281 635-2848.

It's a Partnership game

One of the most difficult hurdles for new players is finding partners. You need to have several partners with whom you play with regularly so that when one leaves town or becomes ill, you won't have to stay home and clean house. Try other players in your bridge classes, people in supervised play, asking your teacher for help, the partnership director at your local club or try the Houston unit website www.unit174partnership.com.

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

Leslie Shafer wrote about slaying bridge myths in her newsletter: These are dos rather than don'ts...

- When leading your partner's suit, lead top of touching honors, low from an honor or but DO NOT underlead an ace against a suit contract.
- It is OK to underlead a king against anything and it is better to underlead a king than a queen and better to underlead a queen than a jack.
- After your right hand opponent opens, you make an overcall with as few as 7 up to 17 points. This shows a good five card suit. Overcalling one no trump shows a no trump opener and a stopper in the opponent's suit
- Responder does not need to jump to show strength. Any new suit by responder is forcing. A jump on your first bid should show 19+ and slam interest (unless you and your partner have agreed to make weak jump bids).
- Fourth down from your longest and strongest against no trump is not a rule—it is a SUGGESTION. Did your partner bid? Did the opponents bid? And remember that top of a three card honor sequence always takes precedence **KQJxx**

Defense--you do it half the time

Counting Points on Defense

Whenever you are defending a contract where the declarer had opened the bidding with 1NT or 2NT, you know within 1 HCP how many are in the declarer's hand. Add that number to the points in your hand and to those in dummy, and then subtract that sum from 40. You now know within 1 point how many HCP partner started with. Use this information to help you figure out which high cards partner may or may not have.

(Courtesy of Ed Groner, Platinum Life Master)

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

When someone at the table makes an insufficient bid, it is important that the director is called immediately. Calling the director is not “unfriendly” or “mean”. The bidder does not have to make the bid sufficient! As the next bidder, you might want to accept the insufficient bid and slip in a cheap bid yourself. If you don’t accept the bid they may make it sufficient or not (with some ramifications). Let the director decide what should happen next.

Lord of the Manners

It is often difficult for new players to keep up with the pace of the game. It is **not** good etiquette to write down the bid in your individual hand record when it is your turn to lead or bid. Instead, make your lead so the dummy can come down on the table and the declarer can study the dummy. You should never slow the pace of the game to take care of your personal record. You might defer keeping individual records until your bidding and playing get a little faster.

Conventions- -We all need a FEW good ones

The first convention you should add to your repertoire is Stayman. Partner opens one No Trump and you have a 4 card major and 8+ points. Your first goal is to find a fit in hearts or spades. This is called a “golden fit”. You bid 2 clubs asking, “I have a four card major, do you?” Your partner will reply by bidding his four card major suit up the line (hearts first regardless of the suit quality). With a fit and 10+ bid game in the major; with no fit and 10+ bid 3 No Trump. With a fit and 8-9 bid 3 of the major and with no fit and 8-9 invite by bidding 2 No Trump. There are other fancy things you can do with Stayman, but when just starting out remember that the opener has described his hand clearly and as responder you are the CAPTAIN and you will know whether to invite with 8-9 or bid game with 10+. Don’t miss a game just because you are shy about bidding!

Volunteer opportunities within the unit

Most bridge games and tournaments in Houston are run by volunteers. Help is always appreciated at the local games. Get involved—it’s fun!

Upcoming events

The next Unit sponsored tournament is just around the corner. The Houston Halloween Sectional will be held on October 30th-November 1st at the Humble Civic Center . Play will begin Friday at 1:30 and 7:00 and continue Saturday at 10:30 and 3:15. Sunday team games begin at 10:30 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, Don and Joyce Trimble will assist with partnerships and their number is 281 44-8188. The drive is an easy one, right up Highway 59. You should be able to arrive in 30 minutes from central Houston . 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 e-mail me.

See you at the tables

Joyce Ryan