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BRIDGE TODAY ♠♥♦♣

Editor: Matthew Granovetter

The Magazine for People Who Love to Play Bridge

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Switch in Time Forum

Are "implied suits" equal to "bid suits"?

For example, after you make a takeout double of 1♥, you and partner pass throughout, and you are on defense. Is the spade suit considered a "bid suit"?

Answer on pages 31-32.

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The Red Pencil

by Matthew Granovetter

This month I'm crossing out the invitational jump to 2NT over a minor-suit opening. To tell you the truth, I never played it to begin with, but recently I discovered that everyone at my local bridge club plays it. I don't know who the madman was that invented this method but he must have enjoyed scoring 120. Here's the method:

1 ♣/1 ♦ pass 2 NT

This response is played as not forcing by at least half the world. Let's put a red pencil through this and play it now as forcing. Before this, if you held 13 points and a square hand, you had to jump to 3NT. Now the good news is that you can bid only 2NT, and partner won't pass. In fact, partner will be able to describe his hand at the three level, which should be helpful.

Partner	You
1 ♣	2NT
?	

Partner can now bid 3♣ to show six of them. What did he do over a 3NT response? I guess he passed or risked 4♣.

Partner can now bid 3♦ to describe long minor-suit length. Did he really bid 4♦ over 3NT? I doubt it. He passed and you were at the mercy of lady luck.

Partner can even bid 3♥ or 3♠ to show long clubs and length in a major, inviting you to judge your hand. Did he really bid 4♥ or 4♠ over your 13-15 three-notrump responses? You know he didn't.

Here are some nice auctions, using the old-fashioned (now *noveau*) forcing 2NT response.

♠ A K x	♠ Q J x
♥ A K x x	♥ Q J x
♦ x	♦ A x x
♣ Q x x x x	♣ K x x x

1 ♣	2 NT
3 ♥	3 ♠
4 ♠	5 ♣
pass	

Last year, you bid 1♣-3NT-pass. True?

♠ x	♠ K Q x
♥ A x x	♥ Q J 10
♦ K Q x x x	♦ A x x
♣ A K x x	♣ J x x x

1 ♦	2 NT
3 ♣	3 NT
pass	

What did you do last year over a 3NT response? (By the way, some partnerships play that opener bids his singleton over a 2NT response. This is a good method.)

What will you do now with 11-12 points? You'll still respond 2NT. The downside is that you will sometimes reach 3NT down one. The upside is that you'll sometimes reach 3NT making when everyone else is in 2NT. The way many of your opponents defend, you will come out ahead in the long run. And the best news is that now opener will be able to describe his hand. As for a 3NT response, this can be used to show 16-17 points balanced. How did you describe that before?

Baker's' Dozen

by Karen McCallum

13 Tips for Winning

I've played regularly with Lynn Baker for many years, and I thought I'd share 13 of our favorite agreements with *Bridge Today* readers.

1. POINTS DON'T TAKE TRICKS. You can take tricks with high cards: aces, kings and queens, etc. You can take tricks by trumping. You can develop a long suit for tricks. The better your hand fits with partner's, the more tricks you will be able to take by ruffing in one hand, or both. You can even take tricks on power with 7's and 8's sometimes – when all the high cards are played on one or two early tricks in a suit.

But in all the years I have played bridge I have never seen a point take a trick!

Stop relying on the high-card point count as your only, or primary, guide to the value of your hand. Look at your hand's trick-taking potential. Look at the degree of fit with partner, at the spot cards, at the positional value of your cards (are your kings behind their aces, does it look like the finesses are onside for you, or offside?). Look at your stoppers in their suits.

Of course, high-card points can also be a useful guide to the value of your hand, particularly on balanced hands. It's hard to make 3NT with two balanced hands unless you have something pretty close to the old-fashioned Goren requirement of 26 points. But you can take a whole lot of tricks, with very few hcp's, when your hands are unbalanced.

You can count your high-card points if you want to (I don't unless my hand is balanced), but make that only one of many factors you consider in your bidding decisions.

Example: Here's a five-point grand slam, admittedly not so easy to reach.

North
♠ J x x x x
♥ x x x x x
♦ —
♣ x x x

West
♠ Q
♥ A K J 10
♦ Q J 10
♣ A Q x x x

East
♠ K
♥ Q x x x
♦ A K x
♣ K J x x x

South
♠ A x x x x x
♥ —
♦ x x x x x x x
♣ —

Six clubs is a great slam East-West, but goes down because of a diamond ruff or two. Meanwhile, 7♠ is cold the other way!

2. IF IT'S NOT IN THE NOTES, WE DON'T PLAY IT. Even if you've discussed a cute idea that you and your partner want to try, one of you may be unsure about whether you've agreed to actually play it. If you make this rule in your serious partnership(s), it will save you from many unnecessary accidents. Until it's written down in your partnership notes, assume you don't have an agreement. You may both

know that you *should* be playing it, and that you *want* to, but it's better to agree to stick to your notes and play what's written there, despite system discussions in between notes-updates.

3. CHOICE OF GAMES COMES BEFORE SLAM BIDDING. Bids below game are designed to get to the right game, or to 3NT from the right side of the table if that is an option. Example:

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	2 ♥	3 ♣	pass
3 ♦	pass	3 ♥ ?	

This 3♥ bid is not a cuebid in support of diamonds. It's fishing for 3NT, asking West to bid it with anything resembling a half-stopper. Yes, if East later comes back in diamonds, the 3♥ bid could be reinterpreted as an "advanced cuebid" but at the point it's bid, it's simply looking for the best game.

4. DON'T SELL AT THE 2-LEVEL WHEN THE OPPONENTS HAVE A FIT. In other words, don't defend at the two level if either side appears to have an 8-card fit. When is the last time you got a good board for defending 2♥ when they had 8+ trumps? I can't remember myself. (OK, this doesn't always apply — when they bid 1♠-2♠, you might be vulnerable without a decent fit. But it usually applies.)

5. A PARTNERSHIP IS ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS WEAKEST LINK. If you or your partner are not feeling strong, you won't play your best game. This applies to teams as well. If one of your teammates is weakened, for whatever reason (physically or psychologically), your team is handicapped. So get your teammates and partners playing their very best by being a good, supportive, loyal partner and teammate. Your partner is your best friend.

6. DON'T BE AN EASY OPPONENT. If you pass a lot, and rarely preempt, and always have your bids, your partner will find you an easy partner to play with. But your opponents will love you even more. They won't have any problems reaching their best contracts against you. And your partner won't make as many good leads against them as your more active counterparts do, because he won't know as much about your hand.

7. PAY ATTENTION TO THE LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS. If you don't know it, learn it. If you know it and don't believe in it, take a second look – you won't regret it. In the 25+ years I've used LOTT as a guideline to competitive bidding, I've rarely seen a hand where it was wrong.

However... there are a lot of misconceptions out there about LOTT. It is much abused. Contrary to what I frequently hear, LOTT does not mean that you can just count your trumps and blindly contract for that number of tricks (i.e., 9 trumps means that we're safe to bid to the 3-level). If it were that simple, we would all have given up bridge a long time ago.

The Law of Total Tricks is merely an observation of the phenomenon that the total number of tricks available, to both sides, is usually equal to the total number of trumps held by both sides. If we have 9 hearts, and they have 10 spades, there will usually be 19 total tricks. But they may have 12 of those 19, and we would have only 7. Or, we may have 11 tricks and they will be able to take only 8.

CAUTION: There are several factors that can affect the total number of tricks

available. For example, when there's a great deal of distribution, total tricks will usually be higher, by one or even two tricks. When the hands are flat, total tricks will often be lower. In other words, there will sometimes be one more, or one less, trick available than the total number of trumps. It's important to learn what to watch for so that you can make an educated guess about the number of tricks available. It takes practice, but you'll find that your "guesses" will be fairly accurate in time.

While it is true that, because of LOTT, you are usually safe to bid to the level equal to the number of trumps your side holds, that's a common over-simplification that will lead to bad results. You have to do some thinking, don't just blindly bid to the 4-level every time you have 10 trumps.

For example, if your non-vul opponents have most of the hcp's with an 8-card fit, and you are vul with your 10 trumps, it won't be a good idea for you to go -1100 at the 4-level, even if they can make a slam. If they have 12 tricks, you have only 6 (18 trumps, 18 tricks). You have to use LOTT with some common sense.

The best way to begin to apply LOTT is to add methods to your partnership that make it easy for you to know how many trumps you have (for example, use support doubles), and how many cards you have in their suit. Then think about the scoring table before you bid again in competition. Frequently, this will entail stopping at the 2-level with 8 trumps, bidding to the 3-level with 9 trumps, or to the 4-level with 10 trumps, etc.

A great way to learn LOTT is to take Larry Cohen's course at Bridgetoday.com.

8. MAKE THE OPPONENTS MAKE THE LAST GUESS. Bid as high as you can as fast as you can. Bid to a level where you aren't sure what it's right for them to do. In other words, see #6 and #7.

9. PARTNER NEVER HAS THE RIGHT HAND. If you have a tough bidding decision to make on your own, without enough input from partner, then assume that your partner does not have the cards you need. Sometimes he will have them and you'll miss a good contract. But the vast majority of the time he will have the wrong hand, and you'll find yourself going minus.

Last night I held:
♠ — ♥ A K x x ♦ x ♣ A K Q J 10 x x x.
The auction was 2♥ on my left, pass from partner, 2♠ on my right. It's very tempting to bid a slam, but following my own advice, I didn't play partner for the perfect hand. I knew that, if she had the ♦A, I could gamble that I would find something useful and make 6♣, otherwise I'd play in 5♣. And I had the tool to find out. We play Specific Ace Blackwood. If I bid 4NT, she'll bid 5♣ with no ace and I can pass. She'll bid 5♦ with the ♦A and I can bid a slam. But if she bids 5♠ with the ♠A, I will almost certainly be too high. Accordingly, I disciplined myself (not easy) and bid 3♠ (ostensibly asking for a stopper for 3NT), then followed with 5♣ to show a powerful hand. My caution was rewarded when dummy produced: ♠ 8 x x x x ♥ J x ♦ x x x x x ♣ x. I made 5♣ on the nose.

10. BE AGGRESSIVE ABOUT BIDDING GAMES AT IMPS. Particularly vulnerable games. But otherwise bid games conservatively. At matchpoints you can often get a good score by making overtricks – you don't need to bid thin games. And you'll get a bad score when your pushy games go down.

The scoring table doesn't really make non-vul games at IMPs an odds-on proposition, so it doesn't really pay to be too aggressive. But when you're vul, the scoring table is very much in your favor. So bid those thin games and win some imps.

11. BID SLAMS CONSERVATIVELY. A lot can go wrong, even with a "cold" slam. Be particularly conservative about slam bidding at matchpoint scoring, where going down in a bad slam will be close to a zero. Also, be cautious about bidding slams when the opponents are in the bidding at a high level – the suits are not going to be breaking well. The rocks of distribution have defeated many a good slam.

I once heard Bob Hamman say that if he never bid another slam, he'd probably be doing better than he does now. And Bob Hamman is usually right.

12. IF TWO PEOPLE AT THE TABLE THINK I'M GOING DOWN, AND I'M ONE OF THEM, I DON'T PLAY THERE. For example, partner opens 2♠ and you find your side doubled for penalties after:

West	North	East	South
2 ♠	pass	pass	double
pass	pass	?	

If your hand as East is something like ♠ — ♥ K J x x ♦ K x x x x ♣ Q 10 x x, you know you are in big trouble in 2♠, and your RHO thinks so too. So you should try to improve the contract. It isn't going to cost much if you're wrong. Consider it a "Free Chance." You could redouble, or bid 2NT, either one will be interpreted as "Help!!!!"

Similarly, If RHO opens 4♥, and you choose to overcall 4♠ holding:
♠ A Q 10 x x ♥ x ♦ A Q J x x ♣ K x,
you won't be surprised to go down when LHO doubles 4♠. You and LHO are in complete agreement – 4♠ isn't going to make. So get yourself out of it. You could bid 5♦ or, again, you could redouble, just in case partner has long clubs. If he doesn't he'll bid 4NT and you can try 5♦. (But be sure you're playing with a partner who agrees that this is an SOS redouble before you try it.)

13. BE A DISCIPLINED PARTNER. Have what your partner expects you to have. Whatever your agreements are, stick to them.

CAUTION: "Disciplined" does not mean "sound." It means just what it says – disciplined. It's just as bad to pass when partner expects you to make a light overcall, as it is to overcall on a light hand when partner expects you to be sound.

Despite the myriad of systems and styles employed by expert players around the world, from very sound to very aggressive, from highly artificial to totally natural, there is very little systemic edge for any one approach in the long run. Good players who are playing well will win with any methods. But no matter how well they are playing, the most important factor in winning is partnership. You can't win if your partner doesn't know what's going on.

Stay within your agreements, whatever they are. Stick to them like glue so that your partner knows exactly what to expect from you at all times. He'll make better decisions and your scores will improve.

Around the World with 52 Cards

by Migry Zur Campanile

The 1999 edition of the European Championships was held in Malta, a colorful archipelago at the center of the Mediterranean Sea with a wealth of heritage. Thanks to its key location at the crossroads of maritime routes between many ancient civilizations, Malta has had a rich history serving as host, often unwilling, to prehistoric temple builders, seafaring Phoenicians, the traveler Apostle Paul all the way to the Knights of St John, Napoleon and British royalty!

Its capital, La Valletta, is a magnificent fortified city, with streets that sweep up and down a huge hill towards the vast expanse of the harbor. During the fortnight we spent in neighboring St Julians, where the tournament was played, we didn't visit any of the churches or museums, but instead walked all around the city. Everywhere we went there were taxi-drivers offering us "half-price" tours of the city in carriages drawn by horses, but we preferred to travel on foot and stop and stare at the many wonderful sights which would surprise us at each turn of the narrow winding streets.

The most popular destination in Malta is its neighboring island of Gozo, where most of the British tourists reside. They are attracted by the rare mix of a sun-soaked island and many tangible signs of a rich British tradition. Due to the island having been under British rule for a century-and-a-half, one often comes across the characteristic English style red-letter boxes and phone booths, which stand bright against the sandy yellow of the local limestone. Another unusual tradition left in place by the British rule is that Maltese cars drive on the left. Or as one local put it, "we drive on the left...and on the right, and in the middle of the road!"

One of the positive side-effects of having the tournament in a relatively small town like Saint Julian was that most of the teams decided to stay in or very near the playing

venue and that meant that I got to spend time with many interesting new people. Among them was one of the great stars of Polish bridge in the 80's, Julian Klukowski.

Klukowski was a member of the Polish team that won the European Championships in 1981 and 1989, thanks also to players like Frenkiel, Przybora, Szymanowsky and the new rising stars of Martens, Balicki, and Zmudzinski. In Malta he was part of a strong Polish Senior team and showed everyone how much we can still learn. Let's see how well you can do in this 6♠ contract that Klukowski declared in the match against Norway.

There was no opposition bidding:

North
♠ A K J 7
♥ A 6 5
♦ 10 2
♣ A J 4 3

♠ 5

South (Klukowski)
♠ Q 10 6 4 2
♥ Q 9
♦ A K 4
♣ K 5 2

Opening lead: ♠5

I guess most of you will reject the pedestrian lines based on a club finesse or clubs 3-3. If they were to succeed, I would not have published the hand at all!

Now you may decide to try a heart to the queen and then, were that to fail, go back to the club finesse. Sorry, not good enough . . . you get a C- for that.

A better option would be to draw trumps (they break 2-2) and then play the ♦A-K (East surprisingly discards a heart on the second diamond), then ruff the third one, while East discards a club.

What do you make of the hand now?

Well, a top player like Klukowski had no problem placing at least five clubs with East, as no sane person would discard a club from a shorter holding, instead of another heart.* That meant East started with a 2-5-1-5 or, less likely, a 2-4-1-6 shape. Following this assumption the Polish champion found a great line to bring home his contract.

How did he continue?

Let's have a look at all 52 cards:

*Perhaps against a player like Klukowski, a brilliant East should pitch a club from four of them! — editor

In Depth

The club-suit combo in the hand above is classic. The normal line of play for three club tricks is to play the ♣A, ♣K and a third club toward the remaining ♣J-4. This produces three club tricks whenever the queen is with West, or when the queen is with East singleton, doubleton or tripleton. But Klukowski played the suit to be divided 5-1, with the queen offside.

North
♠ A K J 7
♥ A 6 5
♦ 10 2
♣ A J 4 3

West
♠ 5 3
♥ 4 3 2
♦ Q J 8 7 6 5 3
♣ 10

East
♠ 9 8
♥ K J 10 8 7
♦ 9
♣ Q 9 8 7 6

South (Klukowski)
♠ Q 10 6 4 2
♥ Q 9
♦ A K 4
♣ K 5 2

This is the position we have reached after declarer played two more rounds of spades:

Julian Klukowski

♠ —
♥ A 6
♦ —
♣ A J 4 3

♠ —
♥ 4 3 2
♦ Q J
♣ 10

W N E S

♠ —
♥ K J
♦ —
♣ Q 9 8 7

♠ Q
♥ Q 9
♦ —
♣ K 5 2

Klukowski played the last spade (discarding a heart from dummy) and East was well and truly fixed. East couldn't discard a club, else declarer simply gives up a club, setting up a club trick. So East pitched the ♥J. Declarer now cashed the ♥A and claimed when the ♥K dropped. Note, however, that if West started with the ♥K, declarer was still OK. He comes back to the ♣K and ducks a club to East, endplaying him in clubs. East was squeezed in this position even if he held two little hearts! A great effort by a Grand Old Man of Polish bridge!

Forcing Passes (part 4)

by Eddie Kantar

Forcing Passes after a One-over-One Response

This month let's look at some more forcing passes. Remember, forcing passes are very useful — they allow one partner to pass to show that his hand has no clear-cut action one way or the other (double or bid), and the other partner can now make an intelligent decision. In this article, we'll see when a forcing-pass sequence is in effect after one player opens and his partner makes a one-over-one response.

Suppose opener invites game and responder accepts. A forcing-pass sequence is in effect.

West	East
♠ 6 5	♠ 8 3
♥ 7 4	♥ K Q J 9 5 2
♦ A K Q J 8 7 6	♦ 4 3
♣ K Q	♣ A 7 6

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
3 ♦	pass	3 ♥	3 ♠
pass ?			

West's pass is forcing because East's 3♥ bid is a game force.

The same principle applies if responder invites a game and opener accepts.

West	East
♠ K 7 6	♠ Q 8 3
♥ K 3	♥ A Q 7 2
♦ A K J 10 5 4	♦ 6 3
♣ 6 5	♣ K 7 4 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♦	pass	2 NT	3 ♣
3 NT	pass	pass	4 ♣
pass ?			

West accepted East's invitation to game. Therefore, West's pass is forcing.

If opener invites a game and responder doesn't accept, a forcing-pass sequence is not in effect. Ditto if responder invites and opener doesn't accept.

West	East
♠ 6 5	♠ J 9 3 2
♥ 7 4	♥ K J 9 5 2
♦ A K Q J 8 7 6	♦ 4 3
♣ K Q	♣ J 8

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	pass	1 ♥	2 ♣
3 ♦	pass	pass	3 ♠
pass ?			

West's pass is not forcing because East declined the invitational jump.

West	East
♠ J 6	♠ 5 2
♥ 7 3	♥ A K Q J 4 2
♦ A K J 10 5 4	♦ 8 6
♣ Q J 10	♣ 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♦	pass	3 ♥	3 ♠
pass ?			

Assuming East's jump is invitational, West's pass is equivalent to a non-accept and is not forcing. (If the 3♥ bid is forcing — say East has the ♣K instead of the ♣5 — then West's pass is forcing and East will bid and make 4♥).

* * * * *

A cuebid by opener creates a forcing-pass auction.

West	East
♠ A 2	♠ 8
♥ A K 4 3	♥ Q J 9 8 6 2
♦ 7 6	♦ K J 8 4
♣ A K Q 6 5	♣ 3 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♠	4 ♠	pass ?	

West's cuebid is a game force, so all subsequent passes by either player are forcing. East-West must play this hand or North-South play it doubled.

Suppose they make a preemptive bid after a one-over-one response. Again, opener must cuebid to set up a forcing-pass-by-either-player situation. If opener fails to cuebid, but bids strongly, there is no forcing-pass situation except by *opener vul vs. not only.*

West	East
♠ 8 7	♠ A 9
♥ A Q 8 7	♥ K J 4 3 2
♦ K Q	♦ 10 6
♣ A Q 9 8 7	♣ 10 6 4 3

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	pass	1 ♥	2 ♠
4 ♥	4 ♠	pass ?	

East's pass is not forcing. Only the opener, vul vs. not, can make a forcing pass after a game raise.

If opener makes a single raise and responder bids game, then forcing passes are on by the responder vul. vs. not, or by either player if "the sound of the bidding" demands it.

West	East
♠ 4 3	♠ 8
♥ K J 3 2	♥ A Q 9 8 5 4
♦ A K J 8 4	♦ 3 2
♣ 3 2	♣ A 10 6 4

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	pass	1 ♥	2 ♠
3 ♥	4 ♣*	4 ♥	pass
pass	4 ♠	pass ?	

*raise to 4♠ and North wants a club lead

East's pass is forcing vulnerable vs. not. East also could have created a force by doubling 4♣, an artificial bid. With his actual hand, he should.

West	East
♠ 2	♠ Q J 8
♥ Q 10 7 6	♥ A K J 9 2
♦ A K J 10 2	♦ 7 6 3
♣ Q 4 3	♣ 8 7

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	pass	1 ♥	2 ♠
3 ♥	3 ♠	4 ♥	4 ♠
pass ?			

West's pass is forcing because of the "sound of the bidding" (both opponents limited).

* * * * *

What happens if opener's side voluntarily bids game with *no* established fit? All subsequent passes by either the opener or the responder are forcing.

West	East
♠ A 6	♠ K Q 10 3 2
♥ A K J 10 7 6 5	♥ Q 3 2
♦ K J 7	♦ 4 3 2
♣ 3	♣ 9 5

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	pass	1 ♠	2 ♣
4 ♥	5 ♣	pass ?	

East's pass is 100% forcing. If he doesn't want to hear 5♥ from his partner, he must double, as he would do with, say:

♠ Q J 9 4 2
♥ 4 3
♦ Q 10 6 5 4
♣ J

And now for the biggie. If both sides have an established fit, and both sides bid game, and there has been no weak jump overcall, takeout, responsive or negative double, forcing passes are in effect when:

1. You are vulnerable and they are not (by the *unlimited* hand only); 2. Opener has leaped from one to four in partner's suit showing a strong balanced hand; 3. The "sound of the bidding" demands it (they are sacrificing); 4. Your side clearly has the preponderance of high-card strength.

Note: A limited hand can make a forcing pass only after the unlimited hand has created a forcing-pass sequence.

West	East
♠ 6	♠ A 5 4
♥ J 9 3 2	♥ A K Q 10 6
♦ A K J 10 6	♦ 7 3 2
♣ K 8 7	♣ 6 4

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♥	2 ♠	4 ♥	4 ♠
pass ?			

West's pass is not forcing because West is limited and East did nothing to create a forcing auction.

West	East
♠ 8 4	♠ J 2
♥ K Q 7 3	♥ A J 6 4 2
♦ K 6	♦ 9 5 3
♣ A K 10 9 8	♣ 7 4 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
3 ♥	4 ♠	pass ?	

East's pass is not forcing because East-West did not bid a game.

When opener leaps from one to four in partner's major, a forcing pass-auction is in effect provided the leap shows a strong balanced hand. If it shows a distributional raise, then forcing passes are in effect only vulnerable vs. not. Here are two examples:

West #1: ♠ 5 4 ♥ A Q 7 6 ♦ A K 5 ♣ K Q J 8
West #2: ♠ 5 ♥ A Q 8 7 ♦ J 4 ♣ A Q 10 8 7 6

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
4 ♥	4 ♠	pass ?	

If you play that the jump shows Example #1, then East's pass is forcing regardless of vulnerability. However, if you would make a cuebid with #1 and jump to game with #2, then East's pass is forcing only vulnerable vs. not.

Some would jump to 4♣ to show the Example 2 hand, in which case the question is: Does this create a forcing-pass auction? If it can be as weak as this, I think not. But if the strength is greater, then yes.

Let's not forget the "sound of the bidding" situation:

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥
3 ♠	4 ♥	4 ♠	5 ♥
pass ?			

If South isn't saving, he's playing a very wily game. All he did the first time was bid 2♥ and now he's bidding 5♥. Come on. West's pass is forcing.

Dear *Abby*,

I heard you are an expert in forcing-pass auctions. Try this one on for size:

Matchpoints	♠ A 9 8 5 2	
East dealer	♥ A 10	
None vul	♦ 8 7 3	
	♣ A 10 5	
♠ —		♠ K 6 4
♥ K Q 8 6 5 4 2		♥ J 7
♦ K 9 5		♦ A Q J 2
♣ J 4 3		♣ K 9 8 6
	♠ Q J 10 7 3	
	♥ 9 3	
	♦ 10 6 4	
	♣ Q 7 2	

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♦	1 ♠ (!)
4 ♥	4 ♠	pass	pass
pass			

We were East-West and collected only +150 when the field was +420 or 450 our way. Had either of us doubled, we'd have had a top instead of a bottom and finished first (not second!). Where did we go wrong?
Sincerely yours, *Always the Bridesmaid*

Dear *Always*,

We just can't let South get away with that overcall. We just can't. The question is: If East passes 4♠, is this a forcing pass? My feeling is that it isn't. It would be if East-West were vulnerable against not, but West can have much less defense and much more offense for that 4♥ bid (think eight hearts headed by the K-Q-10). Assuming a pass is not forcing, East has to choose between passing and doubling; 5♥ doesn't look right. Being a coward and not knowing that the ♠K is going to take a trick, I would probably make a gutless non-forcing pass. Now what should West do? Looking at all four hands, quite tempting sitting here in front of my computer, and knowing if I pass with the West hand, I will lose my Dear Abby column after my very first bridge question, I would bid 5♥. I would assume partner had at least two hearts (didn't double), doesn't seem to have much in spades (didn't double) so maybe, just maybe the hand fits well enough so that we can make 5♥. The way I see it, it takes a club lead to beat 5♥ or a misguess later if North shifts to a low club.

— *Abby*

Bad Hair Day

by Pamela Granovetter

All women know what it's like to have a "bad hair day." This means your hair is sticking out at odd, unattractive angles, or it's all frizzed up, or it's limp, etc., and you hate your hair and feel extremely homely. This type of situation can also occur at the bridge table: Everything you do is wrong, your luck is terrible, you can't guess a card, your system lets you down, etc. etc. There's really nothing you can do about it but grind it out and, if it's a team game, hope they play worse than you do at the other table, or your teammates save you. Take these two hands, for example, from a recent match.

Hand #1
South dealer • All vul

Playing Trent Weak-Two bids, you open 2♥ in first seat with:

♠ K 9 5 2
♥ A K 8 7 6 5
♦ 6 2
♣ 8

Yes, yes, most people would open 1♥, but 2♥ is your system bid so you open it. The bidding continues:

South	West	North	East
2 ♥	2 ♠	2 NT*	pass
?			

*as if it went 2♥-(pass)-2NT (e.g., forcing and asking for more information)

Despite the wasted ♠K, I bid game because I liked my strong trumps and 6-4 shape, and I thought if I needed a card onside, it would be with the overcaller. For example, if partner had:
♠ x x ♥ Q J x ♦ A Q J x x ♣ K x x, I would like to be in game, but partner can hardly bid it himself if I sign off. In any event, the auction continued:

South	West	North	East
2 ♥	2 ♠	2NT	pass
4 ♥	pass	pass	double
(all pass)			

West leads the ♦A. What do you think of your contract?

North (dummy)
♠ 7 6 3
♥ J 4
♦ K Q 9 7
♣ A K J 2

♦ A

South
♠ K 9 5 2
♥ A K 8 7 6 5
♦ 6 2
♣ 8

East followed low, and West shifted to ♠A and ♠Q. East followed to the first spade with the jack, then, after some thought, ruffed the ♠Q with a low heart. He then returned the ♦J, West following. What would you do next? This is the position with dummy to play:

North (dummy)
♠ 7
♥ J 4
♦ K 9
♣ A K J 2

South
♠ K 9
♥ A K 8 7 6 5
♦ —
♣ 8

They had three tricks in. If East had the ♥Q-10-9 left, three or four times, there's nothing I could do, and anyway I doubted that this was the case, because East would have happily ruffed that ♠Q quickly. I think East was worried about ruffing the spade because that would leave him with a dubious heart trick, and, therefore, he considered letting partner set up a second spade trick. However, some simple arithmetic showed that he couldn't afford to let declarer win the ♠K, because declarer would then have pitches in dummy for any remaining spade losers.

After he ruffed, I had to decide how to play the hearts. What if West began with the singleton ten or nine? In that case, I could play the ♥J from dummy, to the queen and king, pinning the 10 (or 9), cross back to the ♣A, discard the ♠9 on the ♣K, and finesse East out of his remaining high heart. Wouldn't that be fun?

On the other hand, might East have made a "Lightner" type of double, trying to get partner to lead the ♠A, so he could ruff the second spade, play over to partner (who would signal where his entry is) and get himself a second spade ruff? In this case, I should play a heart to the ace at this point, making the hand any time West began with the ♥Q singleton or any doubleton. I briefly considered this scenario but decided nobody would double with the East hand without a fairly secure heart trick in the bag (since he had shown up with two jacks and possibly the ♣Q, making his double a bit bizarre if he held no high honor in hearts).

I, therefore, played the ♥J from dummy, but it went low, low, queen, and they got another heart ruff. I finished -500 while the other table played 3♣ doubled, by West, minus 500 (after 1♥-2♥ overcall). The whole hand was:

South dealer
All vul

North (dummy)
♠ 7 6 3
♥ J 4
♦ K Q 9 7
♣ A K J 2

West
♠ A Q 10 8 4
♥ Q
♦ A 3
♣ Q 10 7 6 5

North
♠ J
♥ 10 9 3 2
♦ J 10 8 5 4
♣ 9 4 3

South
♠ K 9 5 2
♥ A K 8 7 6 5
♦ 6 2
♣ 8

South	West	North	East
2 ♥	2 ♠	2NT	pass
4 ♥	pass	pass	double
(all pass)			

Without the penalty double by East, West would probably lead a club. Declarer, desperate for some spade pitches, tries the ♣J, and when that wins, the rest of the hand is fairly easy. East made a remarkable double, but did it have to be against *me*?

Hand #2
North dealer • North-South vul

You, South, hold:

♠ A K 7 6 2
♥ 10 9 8
♦ A K J
♣ 5 2

West	North	East	South
—	pass	pass	?

For the last 25 years or so, my bidding has been geared to this principle:

"If possible, declare the hand from the right side of the table."

This means that the strong hand should declare, or the hand with tenaces should declare, or the hand with a stopper in their suit should declare, etc.

I have had assorted disasters over the years with partners who don't follow this principle. For example, let's suppose that West bids spades but your side has 26 high-cards. Who should declare 3NT with this spade holding:

North
♠ Q x x

West East

South
♠ K x

Obviously, South should declare, but many people would bid the notrump with the North hand without hesitation (if given the chance). Notice that North-South have one stopper when North declares, but *two* stoppers when South declares (if West doesn't lead this suit, North-South may not have two stoppers, but they have gained a tempo).

On the same bad-hair day, I held this hand in third chair:
♠ A K 7 6 2 ♥ 10 9 8 ♦ A K J ♣ 5 2, and although it is a beautiful 15-point hand — rich in quick tricks and controls — I decided not to open 1NT because I had two suits unstopped. If partner holds (for example) ♠ x x ♥ K x ♦ Q 10 x x x ♣ K x x x, I would prefer to play 1NT from his side. If I open 1NT, on a bad day the opening leader will have something like:
♠ Q x ♥ Q x x x x ♦ x x x ♣ Q J x.

First the defense will take five heart tricks, and then the defense will take four club tricks, and we'll be -300 rather than +90 (at least).

Or, the bidding might go 1NT-3NT and, again, partner's round-suit stopper is exposed (say this time he has:
♠ Q x x ♥ A x x ♦ Q x x x x ♣ K x.
It feels gruesome to go -100 and your teammates come back with -650....

And, there are other occasions when a 1♠ opening bid will be the winner. For example, we might play 1NT if I open it, making two, with four spades a good bet when partner has:
♠ Q x x x ♥ x x ♦ x x ♣ A x x x x.

So, true to form, I opened 1♠ and the bidding went:

West	North	East	South
—	pass	pass	1 ♠
pass	1 NT	pass	?

A 2♦ rebid by me would show four diamonds, and I didn't want to play in a 3-3 fit, or even a 4-3 fit if partner passes 2♦ with,

say, ♠ x ♥ J x x x ♦ Q x x ♣ A x x x x, or ♠ x x ♡ x x x ♢ x x x x ♣ A Q x x. I, therefore, reluctantly passed 1NT.

My hand:
♠ A K 7 6 2
♥ 10 9 8
♦ A K J
♣ 5 2

Partner's hand was:

♠ 3
♥ K J 7 6 4 2
♦ Q 10 6 3
♣ 8 5

Naturally the ♥Q was onside *singleton* so there was no way to go down in 4♥, which the opponents reached easily after a weak-two opening bid (living dangerously at this vulnerability...).

I got a firing from my partner for failing to bid again over his 1NT response and gave him a firing right back for failing to take a bid with a six-card major with two honors and a 6/4 shape! We both felt miserable about our terrible +90 result, but the truth is that when you're having a "bad hair day" it doesn't really matter what you do, because you are destined to be unlucky that day....

As Victor Mitchell always said, "Bridge makes fools of us all." There's no use stewing over remarkable bids that work against you, or unlucky bidding results you perpetuate yourself. My tip is this: When you are having a bad set, don't double-dummy partner's bidding or play, and don't change your system after every less-than-perfect result. You will strain your partnership for no good reason, and drive yourself crazy trying to find a perfect system that works on every hand (there is none). Just hang in there and hope things turn around.

Trick One (and Beyond)

by Matthew Granovetter

Learning how to think

This new "hand-study" series for *Bridge Today* was suggested by long-time subscriber Dick Henry.

As declarer, what do you think about before you play a card from dummy at trick one? Do you always think before you play, or do you sometimes play fast when you see you have no problem?

The answer to the first question is that you think about how to make your contract. Usually you do this by counting your tricks and then deciding what to do when you don't have enough tricks, or what to do about protecting the tricks you do have. Sometimes you think in terms of losers instead (in a trump contract) and how to reduce them. You don't think about what many think about: Why does partner make such bad bids or — just as hopeless — How am I going to excuse my own bad bid? Stop thinking about the bidding — unless you need to review the actions taken by the opponents to help you decipher the hand.

The answer to the second question is that you should always think at trick one — you should never play fast, no matter what. This is not only a courtesy to your opponents, who are entitled to thinking time as well, but also protects you from your RHO giving away information (unintentionally) with a pause, or lack of a pause, at trick one, too. After you've thought at trick one for a reasonable time (at least five seconds), RHO should be ready to make his play in tempo, as a courtesy as well.

Now for this month's example, from an bridge game played recently on the Internet. I was South.

North
♠ 10 3 2
♥ A K Q 4 3
♦ K Q 3
♣ 5 2

♠ 6

South
♠ Q J
♥ 2
♦ A 10 9 7
♣ K Q 9 7 6 3

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♥	pass	2 ♣
pass	2 ♥	pass	2 NT
pass	3 NT	(all pass)	

This was the auction, and perhaps I should have bid 3♦ over 2♥ instead. My partner would probably bid fourth-suit 3♠ and then I'd bid 3NT, so we'd land there anyway. West led the ♠6.

Dummy came down. What should declarer be thinking about?

First count the tricks: one spade, three hearts, four diamonds (you hope), one club. Meanwhile, you hope spades are 4-4, so that you'll lose only three spade tricks and the ♣A. There's nothing interesting to do in the spade suit, so there's nothing more to think about and you play low from dummy.

North
♠ 10 3 2
♥ A K Q 4 3
♦ K Q 3
♣ 5 2

♠ 6

South
♠ Q J
♥ 2
♦ A 10 9 7
♣ K Q 9 7 6 3

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♥	pass	2 ♣
pass	2 ♥	pass	2 NT
pass	3 NT	(all pass)	

East wins the ♠A and returns the ♠9. West thinks for a while and then plays the 5. So the ♠Q wins the second trick and it is very clear that the spades are divided 5-3. What should you think about now?

One idea is to go to dummy and lead a club, hoping to slip a club trick through for your ninth trick, and another is to cash some tricks. This is a common theme, and, as is usually the case, the decision boils down to (a) sneaking through the ninth trick or (b) running your long suit and hoping somebody gets squeezed or makes an error. At this point, you might consider the quality of your opponents. If the player to your right is not a strong player, you may try the (a) sneak approach. In any case, you must consider (b) running the long suit. This tactic has a proven track record and must be considered seriously. What is the long suit?

There's only one suit to run tricks with and that's diamonds. Hearts can't help you, since you have only three top tricks, but think about what might happen to LHO if you run the diamonds and he is sitting with the length in hearts. Let's say West started with five spades and four hearts. If you run diamonds he cannot throw a spade, else you'll just drive out the ♣A (they won't be able to take four spade tricks if West pitches a spade). He can't throw a heart, else the hearts will all be high. So if you run four diamond tricks, West must throw all his clubs! Interesting. If West also has the ♣A he will be triple squeezed!

Needless to say, you can't be sure of four diamond tricks, but because you need LHO to hold four hearts with his five spades, you should plan on finessing East for the ♦J on the third round. Good assumption!

So you try it. You cash the ♦K-Q, but West plays the ♦J on the second round (great!). You cash two more diamonds and West throws the ♣8 followed by the ♣J. What do you throw from dummy on the last diamond?

North (dummy)
♠ 10
♥ A K Q 4 3
♦ —
♣ 5 2

South
♠ —
♥ 2
♦ —
♣ K Q 9 7 6 3

Well, you mustn't throw a club, since you need a second club if somehow you are going to score a club trick. The obvious pitch is a heart, a card you don't need. Is there anything to think about here?

West has started with five spades and, you hope, four hearts. He has no more clubs. If you go to dummy and cash hearts, then lead a club, the jig is up (East will go up with the ace). But what if you lead a

North
♠ 10
♥ A K Q 4 3
♦ —
♣ 5 2

South
♠ —
♥ 2
♦ —
♣ K Q 9 7 6 3

high club from your hand? It's time to think of West's problem. West, holding ♠K-x-x and ♥J-x-x-x, is in a position to make an error. He is clinging to those hearts and if you lead the ♣K he just might make the mistake of throwing a spade, not wanting you to score those five heart tricks in dummy. So it's better, psychologically, to discard that ♠10 and keep the big heart threat of ♥A-K-Q-4-3. When you lead the ♣K, West falls for it and throws a spade! (West might have thought you held the ♣A-K and you were playing for overtricks or that his partner held only two spades (but that would also be an "overtrick" defense).

East wins the ♣A and comes back a spade but West has only one more spade trick and must lead a heart to dummy, down to ♥A-K-Q and a club. You make the contract!

This was the full hand:

North
♠ 10 3 2
♥ A K Q 4 3
♦ K Q 3
♣ 5 2

West	East
♠ K 8 7 6 5	♠ A 9 4
♥ 9 7 6 5	♥ J 10 8
♦ J 8	♦ 6 5 4 2
♣ J 8	♣ A 10 4

South
♠ Q J
♥ 2
♦ A 10 9 7
♣ K Q 9 7 6 3

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♥	pass	2 ♣
pass	2 ♥	pass	2 NT
pass	3 NT	(all pass)	

West would have been right if you held the ♣A-K or if East held two spades, but only for preventing overtricks. At imps, West must discard a heart and hope partner has the ♣A with a third spade. At matchpoints, it's more difficult, but Switch-in-Time fans will note that East can signal many ways in diamonds to tell partner what's going on. One way is for East to high-low in diamonds as a Smith Echo (partner, I like spades; I have another one). Then East follows up the line on the remaining diamonds to say he owns the ♣A.

In any case, it's much harder to think correctly on defense than it is as declarer, because you're more in the dark. We saw what declarer should think about at trick one, and much more this month. Let's try it again next month. Until then, pause and think at trick one, even if there's nothing clear to think about. Thinking helps!

Welcome to the House of Horrors

by Pietro Campanile

(1) West dealer • E-W vul

South (you)
♠ K 6
♥ Q 4 2
♦ K 7 6 4 3 2
♣ J 7

West	North	East	South
1 ♣ (1)	pass	1 ♠ (2)	?

(1) artificial 17+
(2) artificial, three controls (an ace and a king, or three kings)

What is your call?

(2) West dealer • E-W vul

South (you)
♠ A 9
♥ 8 5 4
♦ A 2
♣ A K Q J 10 3

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	4 ♠	pass	4 NT
pass	6 ♦	pass	6 ♠
pass	7 ♠	double	?

What is your call?

---

(3) East dealer • N-S vul

South (you)
♠ —
♥ Q 10 8 7 5 4 2
♦ A 10 7 6
♣ 10 3

West	North	East	South
—	—	pass	3 ♥ (1)
double	4 ♣	double (2)	?

1) a natural preempt in hearts or clubs!
(2) card showing

What is your call?

It is a dark, moonless night. You are hurriedly walking along in a deserted parking lot while the heavy rain beats down on the street like the rhythm of a crazy tap dancer. You hear a noise behind you ... you turn and you see someone running towards you. Where are the car keys? Too late! He quickly gets by you and shouts: "I don't believe what you did ! I just don't believe it!" He leaves you there, alone with your nightmare crowding your mind again and again: The cards start a macabre dance in front of your eyes, it is that hand, yes, the one you knew you should have made and yet ... pain ... misery ... one off! Your partner getting up to move for the next round, the look of disappointment and incredulity on his face ... a

look which had turned into bitter resentment by the time he had spoken to you just now.

If only I hadn't ... if I had ... how much would you give to go back: to stamp those cards firmly on the table, to faultlessly execute the dazzling play you thought about only after you despondently wrote the -100 on the scoresheet, to bask in the light of the admiring kibitzers when you explain to them in a condescending way your brilliant line of play ... how much indeed?

"It all comes down to ability"— you say to yourself — "and concentration, of course, yes ... concentration. I bet Hamman would have made the hand in a minute flat!

"Hmmm ... these things only happen to people like me, Life Master indeed ... more likely Village Idiot after the way I butchered that hand!"

Yet such mishaps do not occur only to the average player. Many, many champions have had their nightmare come true in hands that you and I would have bid and made without a problem. Of course, these hands never make the newspaper columns. Oh, no! There we only see the inspired plays, the razor-sharp defenses, the amazing leads. I think it is time to bring some of these chaps back down to earth with the rest of us, don't you?

We move now to the delightful surroundings of the Italian Lake District in Como where the 1958 final of the Bermuda Bowl is taking place between Italy and the USA. It is an epic struggle between two great teams but also between two very different systemic worlds: the traditional American 5-card major, supported by a variety of gadgets but essentially still 99% natural, and the new strong club systems pioneered by the likes of Forquet and Belladonna.

Let us sit with John Crawford and B. J. Becker (two of the all-time great stars of American bridge) playing against Pietro Forquet and his partner, Guglielmo Siniscalco. Here are Crawford's cards in South, with West dealer, E-W Vul:

South
♠ K 6
♥ Q 4 2
♦ K 7 6 4 3 2
♣ J 7

Imagine you are in his seat. You hear Forquet open 1♣ (strong =17+HCP) to your left, partner passes, and Siniscalco replies 1♠ (showing three controls: an ace and a king, or three kings).

Now, you did not come here to let these pesky Italian systems walk all over you, so how about making it more difficult for them to find the right contract?

Anyone for a weak jump 3♦ bid?

Well, Crawford certainly was not known for his shyness at the bridge table, and he duly bid 3♦, which was doubled and passed out. Let us see what happens next, having a look at the whole hand:

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

West	North	East	South
Forquet	*Becker*	*Siniscalco*	*Crawford*
1 ♣	pass	1 ♠	3 ♦
double*	(all pass)		

*Is it Xmas already?

Forquet leads a small club to the ace and Siniscalco switches to a spade. After cashing two top spades and the ♣K, Forquet plays a third round of spades. Crawford ruffs and plays a small diamond, Siniscalco winning the jack to play the ♠10, which holds the trick, as both Crawford and Forquet discard. Siniscalco returns a trump and Crawford has to lose three more trumps and two top hearts.

Let's add it up: Declarer makes a spade ruff and the ♦K ... that's it, just two tricks. 3♦ doubled, down seven! 1300 points to Italy (with the old penalty schedule in place).

The best part was yet to come: Crawford had to go and explain to his teammates where that strange -1300 score came from on a hand where at the other table they must have put away the 3NT+1 result as another flat board!

The sobering tale of this destructive bid and its boomerang effect should make all of us realize that whenever we play in a team event and feel the urge to "take a flyer," we should think again. We owe it to our teammates to bid and play in a responsible way without over-indulging our "creative" side, however tempting it might be!

The Grass is not Always Greener

Our quest into the dark recesses of the bridge archives to uncover the forgotten disasters incurred by top class experts goes on.

In my first example, I showed how the Italian Blue Team came to enjoy a nice penalty from a dubious overcall of their strong club action; not to be accused of national bias it seems only fair to show the "Maestros" on the giving end as well.

Let us move to Stockholm, the venue for the 1956 European Championships. Italy and France are in hot contention for first place, which also entitles the winner to contend the next Bermuda Bowl.

On board 37 of their direct confrontation Forquet-Siniscalco and Jais-Trezel have to battle over the following explosive layout:

John Crawford

West dealer
E-W vul

	♠ K Q 10 7 6 4 3 ♥ — ♦ K 8 7 6 5 3 ♣ —	
♠ — ♥ K Q J 7 3 2 ♦ Q J 10 ♣ 8 6 5 4	N W E S	♠ J 8 5 2 ♥ A 10 9 6 ♦ 9 4 ♣ 9 7 2
	♠ A 9 ♥ 8 5 4 ♦ A 2 ♣ A K Q J 10 3	

In the Open Room the French got swiftly to 6♠ after Walter Avarelli (Giorgio Belladonna's partner in the West seat) passed and North opened 4♠. In the Closed Room the bidding was rather more exciting:

West	North	East	South
Jais	*Forquet*	*Trezel*	*Siniscalco*
1 ♥	4 ♠	pass	4 NT
pass	6 ♦	pass	6 ♠
pass	7 ♠	double*	?

*Trezel did not believe that there could be a hand where partner opens and the opponents can make a grand slam when he holds Jxxx in trumps and an outside ace!

You can see Siniscalco's problem: The spades could not be splitting since nobody would venture a double at this level without being absolutely sure that declarer cannot take advantage of the now revealed trump position to make his contract; yet he had this incredible club suit, which could be an excellent source of tricks also in notrump. Hmm, notrump, you might ask? Are we looking at the same deal?

Well, if Forquet himself raised 6♠ to 7♠, a bid which is such an obvious breach of discipline, he clearly is not doing so with an aceless hand! If he were void in hearts, surely the opponents would have made more noise with their 10-card fit.

You can guess what happened next ... The Italian champion, no doubt spurred by such a cogent piece of deductive logic, removed the now cold 7♠ doubled to the rather less attractive spot of 7NT, which was doubled with a relish by the very same Trezel. The grateful French pair proceeded to cash the first six tricks for a resounding +1100, which, added up with the 1010 at the other table, provided a nice little swing to the transalpine team.

Here, however, the mettle of the great player showed through: Forquet did not say a single word to his partner about the extraordinary mishap and proceeded to play the remaining 11 boards of the session as if nothing at all had happened. The final imp score of the match was 42-42, and the draw was enough to keep Italy in first place. This European Championship turned out to be the first of what would be a very long series of trophies for the Italian team, which soon achieved its legendary status. The happy outcome after such a huge disaster during a crucial match confirmed that confidence in one's partner and a supportive attitude can often be a critical factor in transforming a good team into a winning one. As Perroux, the Italian captain, put it when asked at the start of its tenure which players he would be looking to field in his team: "I am not looking for great players for my team, but for players to make my team great."

Bridge moral: "It is always better the evil you know than the one you don't!"

The original Blue Team

Crossed Wires in Perth

Let us continue looking at mishaps suffered by the high and mighty of bridge, champions whose names we associate with exotic criss-cross squeezes and ingenious bidding decisions and yet, as we will see, are not immune to nightmarish misunderstandings and end up paying huge penalties just like ... well ... just like us really.

For our third example, we'll fly together to sunny Perth, on the western coast of Australia.

No, we are not here to do some scuba-diving but to kibitz the deal that will be the turning point of the 1989 Ladies World Cup Semifinal between Germany and Holland. There are 15 boards to go and Germany is leading by 25 imps, and then comes board 114:

East dealer
N-S vul

North
♠ J 6 4 3
♥ A K 9 3
♦ Q 5 4 2
♣ J

West
♠ A Q 10 7
♥ J
♦ K J
♣ K Q 9 7 5 4

East
♠ K 9 8 5 2
♥ 6
♦ 9 8 3
♣ A 8 6 2

South
♠ —
♥ Q 10 8 7 5 4 2
♦ A 10 7 6
♣ 10 3

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Schroeder	*Arnold*	*Vogt*	*Vriend*
—	—	pass	pass
1 ♣	pass	1 ♠	2 ♥
4 ♠	(all pass)		

In the Closed Room the bidding proceeds rather unimaginatively: After two initial passes the German pair reaches almost unopposed the rather normal contract of 4♠, making 11 tricks.

It is true that North-South can make 5♥, or save in 6♥, but the adverse vulnerability clearly put the brakes on North-South's willingness to compete.

Will the same happen in the Open Room? Noooo, I hear you say, otherwise why on earth would we be reading about it?

OK, you got me there. Maybe I gave too much away. Still, let us go back and see what happens when the top German pair of Sabine Auken (then Zenkel) and Daniela von Arnim have to tackle this very distributional deal.

But first a little digression, Sabine and Daniela are well known in the bridge world for having one of the most complete and thorough system files, with a very aggressive bidding style full of hostile two-way preemptive bids (meaning that they promise the suit bid or another undisclosed one).

Of course, we all agree that conventions are very sexy things and every bridge player above bronze lifemaster will happily fill his card with a lot of these beauties just because ... he can!

However, we must truthfully admit that from time to time we have all been guilty of forgetting that we agreed to the odd late addition to the convention card and let partner unhappily stew in the wrong contract. Do you really think that such disasters are the sole domain of us non-experts?

Well, think again!

East dealer
N-S vul

	♠ J 6 4 3 ♥ A K 9 3 ♦ Q 5 4 2 ♣ J	
♠ A Q 10 7 ♥ J ♦ K J ♣ K Q 9 7 5 4	W N E S	♠ K 9 8 5 2 ♥ 6 ♦ 9 8 3 ♣ A 8 6 2
	♠ — ♥ Q 10 8 7 5 4 2 ♦ A 10 7 6 ♣ 10 3	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Van der Pas	*Sabine*	*Schippers*	*Daniela*
—	—	pass	3 ♥
double	4 ♣	double	(all pass)

In the Open Room, Daniela decides proudly to show off her special gadget and opens 3♥ with her hand, a bid promising either long hearts or ... long clubs!

Van der Pas cannot do much else apart from doubling.

Over to Sabine. According to their agreement, after 3♥-pass responder may bid 4♣ and opener would pass or correct; however, the German partnership had not discussed their action after a *double* of 3♥. Should she bid 4♣ now or pass? Would pass here imply long hearts (as, for instance, the pass over the double of a Multi 2♦, used by some players to show diamond length)? From her hand it does look as if partner holds clubs, so Sabine decides to take the "safe" action and bids 4♣. After all, what could possibly go wrong with that?

The other Dutch girl, Elly Schippers, is under pressure: She can bid 4♠ but that may overstate her values, so she opts for the "wait and see" approach and follows Sabine's 4♣ with a point-showing double.

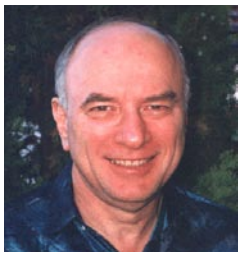
Back to Daniela. Well, we can all guess her thought process here: Partner bids 4♣ over the double of 3♥, when she could easily have said pass with no risk. This must be showing a very good club suit and that, opposite her spade void, is looking very yummy (how much is 4♣ doubled making vulnerable?). The fateful green card is slowly placed on the bidding tray, followed by two more to close the auction at the rather tricky spot of 4♣ doubled, to the surprise and delight of Marjike van der Pas, whose holding in the opponents' trump suit is only K-Q-9-x-x-x!

Now we must say this for declarer, she did not jump up and scream at the sight of dummy, and she did manage to collect four tricks after the friendly spade lead, thanks to two spade ruffs and the two red aces (a club lead would have curtailed the ruffs and the ♥A, leaving her with a -2600 score).

Her achievement of limiting the loss to -1700 was not exactly cheered on by her teammates, who ended up losing 15 imps on the hand. Germany did not get through to the final that year.

The moral of the story? Well, I am sure you can work it out: If two top-class players can fall victims to their own agreements, then maybe we should also give a second look to check if we really need to keep those memory-hungry sequences with a once-in-a-lifetime frequency.

Sabine



The Wizards of Aus

Hands from Australian Tournaments

by Ron Klinger

Here are two problems at imps, one bidding and one defense.

Problem One

West dealer • E-W vul

West (you)
♠ K 5 3
♥ K Q 3
♦ K Q 6
♣ A 10 9 6

West	North	East	South
1 NT	pass	2 ♥*	pass
2 ♠	pass	pass	3 ♥
?			

*transfer to spades

What is your call?

Problem Two

West dealer
Both vul

North
♠ 10 2
♥ 10
♦ A Q 10 8 5 2
♣ A K 3 2

♠ 7

East (you)
♠ A J 9 3
♥ 3
♦ K J 7 3
♣ Q 10 9 6

West	North	East	South
pass	1 ♦	pass	1 ♥
pass	2 ♣	pass	4 ♥
(all pass)			

Opening lead: ♠7 (fourth best leads or second high from a worthless holding)

Declarer thinks briefly and plays the ♠2 from dummy. As East, what is your defense?

The New South Wales Bridge Association is to be commended on its annual teams-of-three competition. Expert players are chosen by lot to be captains for groups of three less-than-expert players. There are six 8-board matches and the captain plays with each of the teammates in two matches. This gives the less-experienced players the chance to partner and learn from a top-class player.

Last year's Teams-of-Three was won by Alan Walsh (captain), Anne Coverley, Helen Maguire and Tamara Samuels. On this deal,

Helen Maguire, who has come to Sydney recently from Noosa and has scarcely played bridge for the past 20 years, showed that she was not to be taken lightly.

Problem One

West dealer
E-W vul

North
♠ J 10 2
♥ 10 4
♦ A 4 3
♣ 8 5 4 3 2

West
Helen Maguire
♠ K 5 3
♥ K Q 3
♦ K Q 6
♣ A 10 9 6

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

South
♠ A 9
♥ A 8 7 5 2
♦ 10 8 5 2
♣ K 7

West	North	East	South
1 NT	pass	2 ♥*	pass
2 ♠	pass	pass	3 ♥
double	(all pass)		

*transfer to spades

South's little excursion came with a price tag of −500 and −8 imps. At the other table, after the same start, 2♠ was passed out and declarer made +140.

Problem Two

Maguire made a thoughtful play on this deal and gave declarer a losing option:

West dealer
Both vul

North
♠ 10 2
♥ 10
♦ A Q 10 8 5 2
♣ A K 3 2

West (*Walsh*)
♠ 8 7 5 4
♥ A J 6 5
♦ 6 4
♣ 7 5 4

East (*Maguire*)
♠ A J 9 3
♥ 3
♦ K J 7 3
♣ Q 10 9 6

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

West	North	East	South
pass	1 ♦	pass	1 ♥
pass	2 ♣	pass	4 ♥
(all pass)			

Opening lead: ♠7

If East takes the ♠A, declarer has no problems. South's minor-suit losers are covered by North's winners and South just loses two trump tricks to make the contract.

Maguire considered the implications of the ♠7 opening lead. It could not be fourth-highest as that would give West K-Q-8-7 and from that West would have led the king. She judged that West was likely to have a worthless holding in spades and so she played the ♠9 when dummy played low. She had both minor suits covered and was prepared to risk that Walsh had not led from K-8-7. Just as important, she did this in tempo.

South won and, fearing that Walsh had made a devilish lead away from the ♠A, took the diamond finesse. Maguire won with the ♦K, cashed the ♠A and the seemingly easy contract was one down. Well done! It pays to give declarer a little rope....

Bridge Yesterday

by Paul F. Zweifel

I'm sure my devoted readership (both of them) has been wondering why I haven't written any columns recently. The fact is, I haven't played any bridge in about a year and a half; my last article entitled "George" appeared in *Bridge Today* about a year ago. It described how my childhood buddy Bill and his wife Susan (not their real names) took up bridge after retirement and how they fixed me up with a retired doctor named George, a life master with over 500 points, for a sectional open pairs.

Well, a couple of weeks ago my wife and I went to visit Bill and Susan again, and after much argument I got Susan to play with me in a local weekly duplicate. (Since my last article, Susan has become a life master.) It took a lot of persuading, but finally Susan agreed to be my partner; right there is one striking difference between bridge today and bridge yesterday. When I was starting out in bridge, I would have given my eye teeth to play with a player like me. Today's players don't want to, because it moves them up to a higher stratum, and makes it harder to win master points.

Well, Sally turned out to be a pretty decent player, a lot better than George. When it came to bidding, she knew every system ever invented, and even made some very thoughtful bids. For example, she held this hand, not vulnerable versus vul:

♠ A x x ♥ x x x ♦ J x x ♣ Q x x x

She heard me pass as dealer. Her vulnerable RHO opened a heart, she passed and LHO bid two hearts. I jumped to three spades and righty bid four hearts. She took the sacrifice in four spades, and justified her bid with the impeccable logic that I should be able to take seven spade tricks for −500. I was impressed with her reasoning, which I thought was sophisticated for a beginner (yes, today even life masters can be beginners). Here's another example of her good bidding. She held:

♠ K x x ♥ Q J 10 x ♦ A x x ♣ K 10 x

I opened one heart and Susan bid 2NT, in our system showing a limit raise or better in hearts. I bid three clubs, showing slam interest, and Susan raised to four clubs, showing better than a limit raise. I now bid four hearts, and Susan passed, reasoning that she had shown the full value of her hand with her four-club bid. It turned out that six hearts depended on the heart finesse, which actually failed, but I was pleased by Susan's expert-style reasoning in not moving over four hearts. Whether

or not she should move is perhaps a matter of debate, but at least she had a very solid reason for her action.

Would that Susan's play were on a par with her bidding. Here were a couple of card combinations that came up, and despite my undertaking lengthy explanations I got the impression that she never really understood. With plenty of entries in both hands, you need to play this suit:

J 6 5 3

K Q 8 7 4

I just could not convince Susan that low to the jack was the correct first play in the suit (in case East started with A-10-9-2); she just somehow couldn't quite grasp the difference between that trump holding and this:

J 6 5 3

K Q 9 8 4

Here one starts with the king (or queen) to pick up the A-10-7-2 in either hand. And as far as restricted choice was concerned, she had never heard of it, and didn't understand any of my explanations. She kept insisting that with a holding of

8 7 6 5

A K 10 3 2

when West drops the jack under the king the correct play on the next round is not to finesse the ten. She kept insisting that she would play the ace. Her reasoning? "West might hold the singleton queen now."

When I was trying to convince her that holding:

J 9 8 7 6

A Q 5 3 2

the correct first play was the jack from dummy (to pick up K-10-4 onside), she said she'd play the ace from her hand because "West might hold the singleton king."

Why does she know so much about bidding and so little about play? Bidding forms the core of the curricula in most bridge schools. Bridge magazines devote way too much space to bidding (especially the absurd "Master Solvers Clubs.") The rationale behind what the magazines stress is that most of their readers are already experts, and experts know all about the play of the cards, but may want to vary their bidding systems. (Just a guess.) But the bridge schools, catering to beginning players, should know better. Susan told me that the school where she had learned bridge was going to offer a course in "Two-over-one" next month, which she intended to take. Why?

On another note, at the duplicate, where Susan and I finished third, we were beaten out by an old, old friend of mine, Rev. Jim Jackson of Tryon, NC. I used to play against Jim often during my days at Duke University (1949-53) when both of us were frequent partners of the late Billy Woodson. Jim is still an exceptionally fine player, and I'd like to think that I can still take a finesse with the best, but when it came to the play of the cards Billy Woodson was in a class by himself. (He's the one who taught me about double squeezes, by the way.) Maybe if the spirit moves me I'll try to dig out some of Billy's old hands and write another column one of these days.

The Switch in Time Forum

by the Granovetters

Questions and answers based on the "obvious shift principle" and other defensive methods, discussed in the book "A Switch in Time"

We sometimes receive questions about implied suits, such as: When is an implied suit counted as a "bid" suit by the defenders, when determining the obvious shift suit? This hand from the 2005 Bermuda Bowl final between the USA and Italy highlighted this problem:

East dealer
E-W vul

North
♠ J 5 4
♥ A 6
♦ Q 9 3
♣ Q 8 5 4 2

West (Soloway)
♠ K
♥ Q J 8 7 3 2
♦ J 10 8 6
♣ J 6

East (Hamman)
♠ A 10 9 8 3
♥ 10 9 5 4
♦ A K 7
♣ 10

South
♠ Q 7 6 2
♥ K
♦ 5 4 2
♣ A K 9 7 3

West	North	East	South
Soloway	*Nunes*	*Hamman*	*Fantoni*
—	—	1 ♠	2 ♣
double	5 ♣	double	(all pass)

Opening lead: ♠K

Hamman followed at trick one with the ♠10. Soloway took this as a suit-preference card and switched to hearts. So a diamond went away on the ♥A and the defenders did not get their spade ruff. The result was down two, but could have been down four, if Soloway had switched to the ♦J.

In the forthcoming 2005 World Championship Book, Eric Kokish will discuss this hand and present our view, that defenders must have a "signaling method based strictly on attitude. . . . This type of approach, while more complex [than suit-preference], works well enough if the rules for determining the switch suit are clearly defined."

As Switch fans know by now, a discouraging spade at trick one calls for the obvious shift and an encouraging spade says that East does not like the obvious shift suit. An unusually high spade signal would be a loud call for the *un*-obvious shift.

The question remains, however, what is the "obvious shift suit" on this deal? Looking only at dummy, it appears to be diamonds, since if the ♠K is a singleton, East needs to tell West where to get him in for a spade ruff, and hearts is out. But that is not how we determine the OS in our methodology. We have rules, and in all cases the best approach is to stick to the rules, so that both partners will stay on the same wavelength.

Soloway made a negative double over

2♣. Does that make hearts a "bid suit" by implication? This is an important idea to discuss with your partner. We say, yes, the negative double indicates hearts and therefore hearts were in effect bid.

East dealer
E-W vul

North
♠ J 5 4
♥ A 6
♦ Q 9 3
♣ Q 8 5 4 2

West (Soloway)
♠ K
♥ Q J 8 7 3 2
♦ J 10 8 6
♣ J 6

East (Hamman)
♠ A 10 9 8 3
♥ 10 9 5 4
♦ A K 7
♣ 10

South
♠ Q 7 6 2
♥ K
♦ 5 4 2
♣ A K 9 7 3

West	North	East	South
Soloway	*Nunes*	*Hamman*	*Fantoni*
—	—	1 ♠	2 ♣
double	5 ♣	double	(all pass)

Opening lead: ♠K

Here's the bottom line. West showed hearts with his negative double so the obvious shift suit is *hearts* (because it is one of "our" suits). A low spade by East means, "you can switch to the obvious shift suit if you want" — in this case, with dummy holding the ♥A, East promises the king or queen of hearts if he plays a low spade.

Therefore, East must play a *high* spade, like he did, saying: "I cannot stand the obvious shift."

West now knows that East probably doesn't have the king of hearts and can therefore work out that East must have at least one high diamond honor and probably both.

Actually, East *could* hold the ♥K. If East had ♠ A 10 9 x x ♥ K 10 9 x ♦ A x x ♣ x, he might decide to show the ♦A rather than the ♥K because that's his immediate entry.

In fact the ♠10, which Hamman played, is the right play here, under our rules, as a loud call for the *un*-obvious shift, diamonds. Personally, however, we think Bob meant the ♠10 as "I like spades and *not* hearts!" which would be the standard attitude signal before SIT (Switch-in-Time) days.

The nice thing about SIT is we use the same signals all the time so you don't need a separate signal for: "If you've led a singleton, here's where my entry is." We once played that way, but it wasn't always clear that partner's lead was a singleton, so it led to confusion. SIT is easier, as long as the rules are clear and you stick to them.

Finally, let's answer the question asked on page one. After you make a takeout double of 1♥, you and partner pass throughout, and you are on defense. Is the spade suit considered a "bid suit"?

The answer is no. Because you did not promise four spades with the double. Only when your call promises four or more cards in a suit, does that suit become a "bid" suit. See you next month.