



The Future Life Master



Volume I, Issue 2

Austin, Texas ACBL Unit 207

June - July 2009

Calling All Social Bridge Groups

In an effort to acquaint social bridge groups with the mechanics and pleasure of duplicate bridge, Unit 207 will provide a director to hold a duplicate-style game at that group's location, or at one of the local ACBL clubs.

There is no charge for this service and the director will provide all the necessary supplies. If you know of a social group that might be interested in this gentle and fun initiation to duplicate, please contact Laura Delfeld at 512.258.2117 or delhan@swbell.net



New Life Master Requirements

Beginning January 1, 2010 the requirements for attaining Life Master status will change. The new requirements will **not** apply to players who are already current ACBL members. As of January 1, 2010, the number of masterpoints needed to become a Life Master will increase from 300 to 500, of which, 50 must be gold or platinum, 50 red, gold or platinum, 75 silver and 75 black.

If you are not a Life Master and your ACBL membership is not active as of December 31, 2009, you will be required to fulfill the new Life Master requirements.

If you are not currently an ACBL member – now is an excellent time to join! Your club director is happy to provide you with an “instant membership” or you may join online through the ACBL website:

<https://web.acbl.org/JoinRenew/Join/index.do>

Balancing : Measuring Risk Versus Reward

To say the very least...bridge is a complex game. There are variables upon variables...all testing a player's sense of application...when to use, when not to use, how to use, etc. One major aspect of bridge frequents the game time after time during each session of play. This aspect concerns protecting the combined values in your hand when added to your partner's and is commonly called “balancing”.

Balancing in bridge terminology refers to action in the pass-out seat...specifically, whether to reopen the bidding or to let it die. Central to this thought is understanding WHEN NOT TO BALANCE. By far the overwhelming process for decision-making in the balancing seat should focus on the premise of whether the opponents found a fit. If no fit has been established, it is more risky to balance. A fit has only been determined when one opponent raises the suit (bid) by their partner. Here is a common auction that results in a balancing decision.

	<u>RHO</u>	<u>YOU</u>	<u>LHO</u>
<u>PARTNER</u>			
	1H	P	2H
P	P	???	

You find yourself in a balancing position (pass-out seat). Opponents have found a fit in the heart suit, but not enough points to move forward at this point; meaning, your partnership likely has (around) half the points in the deck. Should you balance??? **Unless there is a clear reason not to balance (you hold the remaining hearts in your hand and have little support in the other suits for partner)...yes**, you should balance. Why??? Statistically, your partnership will average less than 20% of the match points if opponents are allowed to play two hearts. If you are willing to accept this fact then there is little to lose by balancing...and, much to gain.

(Continued on page two)

Balancing (con't)

How to balance? In this particular example, because your opponents have a heart fit, your balancing decision is primarily based on the number of spades in your hand. Here are four different holdings you should balance on and four different ways to balance...(in-depth analysis of these hands will be provided in the June 16th Bridge Plus 11:30 lecture at the BCA).

♠Jxxx ♥10xx ♦Kxxx ♣Kx...with 4 or 5 spades...balance with 2S.

♠Jxx ♥Jxx Kxxx ♣ Kxx...with three spades balance with a Double.

♠Jx ♥Jxx ♦Kxxx ♣Kxxx...with two (or less) spades balance with 2 No Trump (asking partner to bid a minor).

♠ Jx ♥ Jxx ♦Qxx ♣KQ10xx...with a reasonably good 5-card minor, balance in that suit. In this example your call is 2C.

It is very important to understand that partner of the balancing hand ALMOST NEVER raises a balancing action. Why not??? Because the balancing hand's bid has already included partner's points when making a balancing decision. If you start raising partner's balancing action...after a few disasters...partner will cease to balance and your partnership will suffer.

Another common balancing possibility...

	<u>RHO</u>	<u>YOU</u>	<u>LHO</u>
<u>PARTNER</u>			
	1S	P	1NT
P			
	P	???	

You hold... ♠ xx ♥ Q9xx ♦ Axx ♣ Axxx. Should you balance on this hand??? It appears partner has spade length and your LHO with length in your suits. This is a classic misfit auction oftentimes headed for trouble if you balance. A pass seems in order.

Balancing is a broad topic and a single article in a forum such as this newsletter does not allow for an in-depth analysis on possible balancing scenarios. Be sure to take advantage of your classroom teachers and bridge (plus) mentors skills to steer you properly in the mechanics of balancing.

Article by Tom Clark, BCA Club Manager

Tourney Calendar

There are several local events to pique your interest this summer:

June 18-21 BCA Summer Sectional--**199er sessions Thursday through Saturday, 1:00 and 7:00 p.m.**

Novice partnership chair is Jan Clark,
tcjmc@austin.rr.com 512.428.6390

July 18-19 Non-Life-Master Sectional at the BCA— Sessions on **Saturday, 1:30 and 5:30 p.m. and Sunday at 1:30 p.m.** Partnership chair is Mark McAllister,
Markmc9@austin.rr.com 512.587.8524

Also, the San Antonio Regional will be held **June 29-July 5**. A complete schedule of Novice events for the Regional may be found at:

http://www.d16acbl.org/U172/San_Antonio_July_Regional.pdf

City Championship

For the first time in its history, Unit 207 is including a special Novice Section in the City Championship to be held **Saturday, June 13**. The novice section is limited to players with under 200 masterpoints and will be a one-session event starting at 1:30 p.m. Overall winners will have their names engraved on a plaque displayed at the BCA.



Bridge Puzzles

- 1) You have mis-bid to seven spades and your hand has A K 8 6 of spades; dummy has 10 3 2. Do you have a chance? If so, what is that chance, and how do you play the spade suit? Assume plenty of entries to hand and dummy, and correct play by defenders.
- 2) Assuming you have adequate entries to either hand, and no clues from the bidding and early play, what is the best play of each of these card combinations for five tricks at notrump:
 - a) A K 10 3 2 opposite Q 4
 - b) A K 4 3 2 opposite Q 10

Answers on page three.

Web Corner: Bridgeclues.com



Bridgeclues.com is a **free** website that provides bidding and play instruction hands for three levels: new player, level 1, and level 2. Both level 1 and 2 hands change daily. The hands provide interesting and challenging situations, asking the reader what action to take, and then providing answers. Each bidding and play hand is analyzed in a highly accessible step-by-step format. Additionally, a “flashcard” is posted on the website each day. The flashcards feature a quick review of rules covering most bidding topics of interest: Opening Bids, Responses to Opening Bids, Rebids by Opener and Conventional Bids. Here is an example of a recent Bridgeclues.com flashcard, reprinted with permission:

Preempts: Bidding, Responses, and Defense

W	N	E	S
3D	DBL	P	?

No one vulnerable

- 1) **84, J874, 983, K873** – Bid 3H. Partner asked you to bid so you bid. You hope partner does not bid again because you have less than the Seven points he is counting on you to have.
- 2) **54, AJ98, 654, AQ74**—Bid 4H. With close to an opening bid you have to make a bid that shows some points. You cannot bid 3H with this hand and the previous hand, too.
- 3) **QJ42, KJ43, 54, K84**—Bid 4D. You have enough points for game and want to be sure to find the best fit. Partner will bid four of a major.

Make Bridgeclues.com a daily part of your continuing bridge education. <http://www.bridgeclues.com/>

Puzzle Answers from page two

1) Your one small chance is that your left-hand opponent holds a singleton 9. Lead the 10 from dummy; covered (best defense), win it. When 9 falls, get back to dummy twice to lead the small cards, and simply cover what your right-hand opponent plays. Four spade tricks are yours!

2) A) Cash the top honors; B) Lead the two and finesse the 10. The reason for the difference is that with (A) you can benefit from a doubleton jack, wherewith (B) the 10 falls on the same trick.



1st overall winners in the May 199er Sectional were: **Ken and Sharon MacMoran** (Thursday afternoon), **Ed and Judy Parken** (Friday afternoon), **Lee Simon and Charles Kastner** (Saturday afternoon), **Mark Weimer and Nancy Paton**.

BRIDGE SLANG

Rags—Unimportant cards, spot cards

A rock crusher—A very good hand

Yarborough-- A hand containing no high cards or honors, named after the second Earl of Yarborough who would bet anyone 1000-1 that they would not be dealt a hand in which all the cards were lower than a ten. (The true odds are 1827-1)

Summer Lessons

Two over One Game Forcing System, taught by Scott Humphrey at the BCA. Tuesday evenings, 7:00-9:00 starting July 7 for six sessions, ending August 11. \$65 includes all materials. Call 300-2743 to register.

Novice Game Schedule

Novice or limited games refer to those games in which players holding more than a certain number of master points may not play. Novices are invited to play in **all** games throughout the Unit, however those games that cater specifically to the newer player are:

Monday, 7:00 p.m. BCA 0-200 points

Tuesday, 11:30 a.m. BCA 0-50 points

Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. BCA 0-300 points

Wednesday, 6:45 p.m. BCA 0-50 points

Thursday, 11:30 a.m. BCA 0-750 points

Additionally, Practice Bridge is held at the BCA on **Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

A complete schedule of games in Unit 207 may be found at: <http://www.d16acbl.org/U207/>

“The Future Life Master” is a bi-monthly publication of ACBL Unit 207. Laura Delfeld, editor. Please forward information regarding Novice games or lessons to: delhan@swbell.net