



# The Future Life Master



Volume 3, Issue 1

Austin, Texas ACBL Unit 207

February 2011 - March 2011

## Bridge Flashback



1969! What a year it was. Nixon was in and deGaulle was out. Woodstock was a cultural phenomenon and the Youth Movement (Hippies, students and other Peaceniks) was fomenting the Anti-Vietnam war movement with street marches and National Guard armory sit-ins. All this was happening even in the normally conservative bastions of the University of Texas fraternities and sororities.

I was a sophomore and a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity. Much more of our time than was good for our draft exempt status was spent playing cards: Poker, gin rummy, spades and of course Contract Bridge. Several of my brothers were very good card player and at least three or four already had what they cryptically called "master points". Bridge quickly became the thing to do. But I now know it was a pretty rudimentary style compared to today. In fact, even then we called it "Guerrilla bridge".

We opened four-card majors and 16-18 HCP Notrumps. The only conventional bids used were Stayman and Blackwood with some awareness of Gerber. Jacoby transfers, Jacoby 2NT response to a major suit opening, and cuebidding were unknown. But still we played. And played a lot, too. Eight or ten hours at a stretch were typical. Sessions of twenty hours and more were not unknown. I do not exaggerate.

I was considered a good spades player and thus familiar with the bridge-related concepts of trump suits, tricks, and finessing. However, I had never played Contract. So I watched hundreds of hands before I would even sit in to substitute for a hand. I have always thought this was a very

(con't on page 2)

## Avoiding the Memory Squeeze

In Volume 1, Issue 1 of the The Future Life Master, I wrote, "One of the most fundamental aspects of bridge and one of the most compelling for long-term development is counting. Unfortunately, too often a player thinks about counting only in terms of the number of high card points in her hand based on an ace is four, king is three and so forth. Counting is much more. It is a critical part of bridge."

This article expands upon the counting concept with a twist...giving defensive count. A partnership should give accurate suit-count in a hand in order to be successful against declarer. Suit-count is an indicator of suit length. For less experienced players, the best way to learn is to use the standard count method...

- Playing a low card in a suit suggests an odd # cards in the suit...1, 3, 5, etc.
- Playing a high card in the suit suggests an even # cards in the suit...2, 4, 6, etc.

Here is a typical defender-count problem...

♠ K 7 6 5

♥ 10 2

♦ Q 9 6 3

♣ K 5 4

♠ A 9

♥ 9

♦ A K 10 7 2

♣ A Q J 10 2

♠ J 10 8 4 3 2

♥ K

♦ 8 5 4

♣ 7 6 3

♠ Q

♥ A Q J 8 7 6 5 4 3

♦ J

♣ 9 8

(con't on page 2)

## Bridge Flashback (con't)

good way to learn the basics of the game.

I mentioned the two well-known bidding innovations of the late Oswald Jacoby for a reason. Sometime in the Fall of '69, it was discovered by one of my fraternity brothers that Mr. Jacoby was a Phi Kap out of Tulane. Our social director contacted him about participating in a fund raiser at our house and Mr. Jacoby graciously complied. Arrangements were made for him to give a short talk and then play a few hands with and critique the participants. Time has erased most of my memories of the talk and the three or four hands he sat in on at my table but I can assure you that his reputation as a card wizard is fully justified. Every time, after only two or three tricks he could describe the opposing hands in detail. It was quite remarkable to me. In the course of the evening, while observing some of us declare a hand, the accompanying photo was taken. All together it was a memorable night. **Article by Robert H Caldwell III**

*Editor's note: Rob is one of our Unit's excellent newcomers. In the photo he is the seated player looking attentively at the housemother wearing pearls.*



## Limited Game Schedule

Limited games are those games in which players holding more than a certain number of masterpoints may not play. Novices are welcome to play in **all** games throughout the Unit, however these games cater specifically to the newer player:

**Sunday, 1:30 pm** \* BCA (0-50 points) Supervised play.

*You may come without a partner*

**Monday, 11:30 am** \* BCA (One Life Master per pair max.)

*You may come without a partner.*

**7:00 pm** \* BCA (0-200 points)

**Tuesday, 10:30 am** \* BCA (0-200 points) *You may come without a partner.*

**Wednesday, 11:30 am** BCA (0-500 points)

**Thursday, 11:30 am** BCA (0-750 points)

**Saturday, 1:30** \* pm BCA (0-500 points)

\* Free 20 minute lesson held before these games. A complete schedule of games in Unit 207 may be found at: [www.austinbridge.org](http://www.austinbridge.org)

## Memory Squeeze (con't)

After competitive bidding with East/West reaching 4♠, the South hand buys the contract at 5♥ doubled. West leads the ♠A, then the ♦K. Fearing declarer might be void in ♣'s, West leads her trump. Declarer wins the Ace, crosses to the ♥10 in dummy, discards the ♣8 on the ♠K, trumps a ♠ back to her hand and runs all her trump. West discards all her cards, until she has only her two aces remaining. Declarer, seeing the ♣QJ10 discarded by East, throws the ♣K as a decoy... making the ♦Q the apparent threat card. When declarer cashes her last ♥, West is caught in a "memory squeeze." Or is she?

What is a "memory squeeze"? This is nothing more than not remembering which cards have been played, not counting the hand out in each suit, and not depending on the communication from your partner on suit-count. When declarer plays her last ♥, throwing the wrong ace by West at this point will cost the contract...a result of the three "nots" listed above.

Let's start over with standard suit-count. West leads the ♠A at trick one. East plays the ♠J which denies the Queen and shows an even number of spades in the East hand. Considering South follows with the ♠Q, this is reasonably understood. West, at trick two, cashes the ♦K. East plays the ♦4 and South plays the Jack. By partnership agreement, a low card shows an odd number suit-length. But, is it one or three diamonds in East's hand? West knows she cannot cash the ♦A for fear South will ruff it, creating a second discarding opportunity for South if she can get to the dummy. West also fears leading a low ♦ in hopes of East ruffing it will be equally as devastating if South has no diamonds and rises with the ♦Q, discarding a club on it and another club on the ♠K. The solution, as stated previously: switch to a trump at trick three.

This time, as South runs her trump, West need only to watch her partner's discarding...and COUNT THE DIAMONDS while doing so. East, being a good partner, needs to communicate the completion of the diamond suit-length by playing her remaining two diamonds up-the-line, low-to-high. Starting low and playing higher promises an odd number. In this case the count is readily easy for West as she can see 9 diamonds between her hand and the dummy. Add in the odd-number count of three from East plus one from South...the Memory Squeeze is non-existent as partnership communication has shown to West to save the ♠A for the final trick.

Practicing good defense is difficult and will not happen overnight. It takes practice and experience...and a healthy willingness to learn from making mistakes.

**Article by Tom Clark, BCA Club Manager**



Congratulations to these First Overall Winners in the January Unit 207 Sectional 199er events:

**Thursday Morning Pairs:** Tod Pontius and Nell Dale

**Friday Morning Pairs:** George Ricker and J. Martin

**Friday Afternoon Pairs:** Allan Kohm and Joe Bindo

**Friday Evening Pairs:** Pat Rutledge and Mindy Kerber

**Saturday Morning Pairs:** Sybil and Mike Lowey

**Saturday Afternoon Pairs:** Julie Valentine and Steve Hollahan

## Special Valentine's Day Game



Celebrate **Valentine's Day** by playing in the Unit Championship on Monday, February 14, 11:30 at the BCA. ( Max one Life Master per pair.) You may come without a partner. Refreshments compliments of Unit 207.

## Tourney Schedule

Be sure to mark your calendars for these upcoming tournaments, featuring sessions for the newer player:

**Saturday, March 5, 1:30 and 5:30, Sunday, March 6, 1:30** -- Unit 207 Non Life Master Sectional at the BCA. Partnership Chair: *Mark McAllister* 512.257.2320 [markmc888@gmail.com](mailto:markmc888@gmail.com)

**Thursday, March 24 - Sunday, March 27, BCA Spring Sectional.** 199er games at 10 am, 2 pm, and 7 pm. Partnership Chair: *Mike Harris* 512.219.9005 [mharris59@austin.rr.com](mailto:mharris59@austin.rr.com)

**Saturday, April 16, 1:30 and 5:30, Sunday, April 17, 1:30** Unit 207 199er Sectional at the BCA. Partnership Chair: *Laura Delfeld* 512.917.5036 [delhan@swbell.net](mailto:delhan@swbell.net)

## Tax Day Just Got Better!

Circle April 15, 16 and 17 on your calendar.

### Why?

Because renown bridge champion and author, **Mike Lawrence** will be returning to the BCA for three workshops and private group sessions.

Here is the workshop schedule:

**Friday, April 15, 7-9:30 pm:** "Balancing--Balancing--Balancing"

**Saturday, April 16, 10 am-12:30 pm:** "Competitive Bidding"

**Sunday, April 17, 10 am – 12:30 pm** "10 Things to Learn not to do before you have to Unlearn Them"

Cost: \$30 in advance; \$35 at the door.

For further information on a private group of 4-6 people, contact BJ Sanders [bjinaustin@gmail.com](mailto:bjinaustin@gmail.com)

*Register at the BCA by putting your check in the envelope provided and dropping it into "The Box." Or mail your registration to: Bridge Center of Austin, 6700 Middle Fiskville Road, Suite 408, Austin TX 78752-4327*

## Mike's Advice on Holdup Plays

*Reprinted from ACBL Bridge Bulletin, December 2009*

When you read an article about the holdup play, you can usually spot the key play. The key is to gain enough understanding so that you will know the right play in real life. You have seen the subject of this article, so you should know what to do in the situation that follows.

NORTH	♠ 5 3
	♥ 8 3
	♦ A 10 4 3 2
	♣ 7 6 5 2

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

You, South, open 2NT. North raises you to 3NT. West leads the ♣ K, East plays the ♣ 4. Should you take it? Here is what happens if you duck it. West will switch to the S 2, and East will play the king. Do you wish you had taken the first trick now? If you take this trick, East might be

## Holdup Plays (con't)

to get in with the ♦ K. A spade return would give you a sinking feeling. Take trick one over. Go back and win the first trick with the ♣ A. You intend to take the diamond finesse, and if East has the king, you are safe because the worst that can happen is that the defenders take three club tricks, which would mean West led the singleton ♣ K against your contract. You can expect that to happen virtually never.

When you take the first trick and lead the ♦ Q, West covers. Are you home? It looks like you now have a spade, three hearts, five diamonds, and a club. That is an overtrick.

Your refusing the holdup at trick one turned out not to matter, but you get credit for spotting the dangers of holding up at trick one. Holdups are important but they do require you to see a need. On many hands, grabbing an early trick may be best. Is that all there is to this contract? Think about it for a moment.

You were right to take the first club. It is dangerous to duck given the potential for a spade switch. But what you do next is important, too. When you lead the ♦ Q and find West with the king, you still are at the mercy of one factor: You need diamonds to divide 3-2. That is a 68% event, so even though West has played the ♦ K, you are not home yet. If you win the A and continue the suit, you will discover that diamonds divide 4-1. You can take three diamond tricks but not four and not five. The solution?

It is the holdup! But not the one you saw first. This time, you are not holding up on one of the opponents' leads, you are holding up on a suit that you are leading yourself. Let West win his ♦ K. Now you have nine tricks as long as diamonds divide no worse than 4-1. Do you know how often five cards will divide 3-2 or 4-1? The answer is that they will divide 3-2 or 4-1 about 96% of the time.

Coming back to the deal, if you can make 3NT almost a certainty by letting the defenders have that ♦ K, you will have done something extremely good. If you are playing matchpoints, you might hate the thought of giving up a trick you do not have to lose, but if you are playing IMPs, ducking this trick will be rewarded a third of the time. Nice play



## Test Your Knowledge of Bridge Origins

Bridge remains the most popular card game played at a competitive level with an estimated 20 million players worldwide. Do you know the history of the game?

1. Which American multi-millionaire transformed the game from Auction Bridge to Contract Bridge in 1925 - the game we play today?

- A) Jacob Astor
- B) John Paul Getty
- C) Harold S Vanderbilt
- D) Andrew Carnegie

2. In 1931, the best-selling book in the USA was a bridge book, written by the first entrepreneur of bridge. What was its name?

- A) A Bridge Too Far
- B) Bridge on the River Kwai
- C) Culbertson's Blue Book
- D) Goren's Complete Bridge

3. The trophy for the first world championship was named after the place where it was first played - what is the name of the trophy, still played for today?

- A) The Paris Cup
- B) The Bermuda Bowl
- C) The New York Cup
- D) The London Bowl

4. From 1957-69 one country remained undefeated at bridge at the world level - which one?

- A) Italy
- B) USA
- C) France
- D) China

5. Women have had their own Bridge World Championship since 1970, with the trophy again named after its first venue. Name the trophy.

- A) The Rome Vase
- B) The Venice Cup
- C) The Paris Shield
- D) The Moscow Cup

Answers: 1-C, 2-C, 3-B, 4-A, 5-B [Funtrivia.com](http://Funtrivia.com)

**"The Future Life Master"** is a bi-monthly publication of ACBL Unit 207. Laura Delfeld, editor. Please forward information regarding Novice/Newcomer games or lessons to: [delhan@swbell.net](mailto:delhan@swbell.net) or call 512.917.5036