



The Future Life Master



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Austin, Texas ACBL Unit 207

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Duplicate Bridge, Take Two



by A Happy Bridge Player

Although I have been playing bridge in some form or another for more than twenty years, I am only a newcomer to the Bridge Center of Austin. I have thoroughly enjoyed this wonderful game, but I had been hesitant to participate in organized bridge games at the Center, because a past club experience had left unpleasant memories that were difficult to overcome. This made me very hesitant to visit the Bridge Center of Austin to play there.

That unpleasant experience of which I speak occurred twenty years ago when as a very novice player I had decided that I wanted to get "in the swing" of the bridge community to get some real experience. Consequently, my partner and I presented ourselves at the only bridge club that was present in Austin at that time. After spending some time searching for the address that evening, we finally located the building, and we gathered our courage to cross the threshold of the club. Upon entering the room, we had some difficulty seeing the details of the physical arrangements in the room, both due to the somewhat darkened ambiance and to the haze of cigarette smoke. Of course, we did not recognize any of the people who were milling around. The environment was not inviting, and at first we entertained the thought that perhaps we were in the wrong place, and we considered leaving. However, after a few minutes of eyeballing the surroundings, we agreed that this was the Mecca where we would gain our experience in the world of duplicate bridge.

After we registered and received our pair number, we moved to our first table. Of course, we first went to several wrong tables before we found the correct table. Our opponents were already seated, discussing their conventions, which really intimidated us since our "conventions" were Stayman, and Stayman, and Stayman. I extended my hand to one of the opponents, and gave my name as is customary in reasonable social circles.

(con't on page 2)

Tooth Be Or Not Tooth Be!

by Tom Clark, BCA Club Manager

Bridge is far more than a game. In simplest terms it is a stimulus. In complex terms it is a psychology. In any term...it is enjoyable. Bridge runs the gamut of know-all to know-nothing...ever beginning to never ending. As a contributing writer to this newsletter slanted toward newer players, there are a multitude of subjects from which to choose. For this issue...a brief look at elimination plays.

All experienced players understand the theory of elimination play: **removal of safe exit cards from an opponent's hand, either by extraction or by making them unsafe to play**, and hope the opponents can be forced to do something helpful in the end game. Why should you want to polish your elimination play technique? There are two very good reasons. The first is that it is a relatively easy play to perform. Often you will not even need to keep track of which cards have been played. The second reason is that the opportunities to use this technique, or to defend against it, will arise in nearly every bridge session you play. So the rewards to be gained are considerable.

Elimination plays come in many disguises...

- Elimination and exit in a key suit
- Elimination by ducking
- Elimination via a loser-on-loser play
- Partial elimination
- Elimination as a discovery play
- Elimination to get a free finesse
- The "Dentist's Coup"

Duplicate Bridge, Take Two (con't)

However, rather than introducing himself, the opponent merely mumbled, "What is your number?" I advised him that we were pair four, and the play started. There were no social amenities and no small talk. It was all business. That scenario was to be repeated at every table that night.

It was this experience that convinced me that I did not belong at this local club. I loved the game of bridge, but I also enjoyed social exchanges which were missing in this environment. I am convinced that none of this behavior was malicious or intentionally rude. Instead, it was just that the entire process was just too seriously aimed at the game of bridge. This experience made me hesitant to try the process again when I learned that Bridge Center of Austin had opened. However, I finally I garnered enough courage to tackle my old nemesis of playing at a bridge club, and one day I showed up without a partner at the Center, unaware of the surprise that awaited me. I was to learn that my experience with Bridge Center of Austin was nothing at all like my previous unpleasant experience some 20 years ago.

As I entered the playing room, I experienced that old feeling because again I did not recognize any of the players. However, that was the only similarity between my previous experience and this new experience. The room was clean and airy and free from smoke. The milling players were visiting in a friendly manner. When I was noticed by some of them, several of the players approached me and welcomed me. Names were exchanged, along with the "small talk" and social amenities. Questions were asked about my personal background, and about my level of play. The workings of the Center were explained and another player without a partner was chosen for me. Happily I learned that free lessons were also available prior to some of the games. A calendar of the happenings at the Center was handed me. I was made to feel a part of the group even though this was my first visit to the Center.

By the end of the rotations, I had experienced a most enjoyable evening of bridge. Regarding the quality of my play that night, I did not embarrass myself too badly (at least the director was not called to my table even once for my errors), and I made several new acquaintances. This was the beginning of many enjoyable sessions at the Center over the next several years, and I look forward to continued participation over many more years with this wonderfully friendly, supportive, and crazy group of players.

Editor's note: In addition to the Bridge Center of Austin, there are several other fine duplicate clubs in our area, all of which are welcoming to new players. A complete listing of clubs may be found at www.austinbridge.org

Tooth Be or Not Tooth Be (con't)

Yes, there is a technique in bridge known as the Dentist's Coup. Remember the times you agonized about going to the dentist? Perhaps it is time you learned to turn the tables and be on the delivering end...in bridge, anyhow...of "dental numbness," extracting an opponent's (teeth) exit cards.

Consider this hand from **Bridge – Tricks of the Trade** by Terence Reece and David Bird.

South is in a 5H contract; West leads the ♠ A

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

West switches to her singleton diamond at trick two and withholds the ♥ A when declarer plays two rounds of trumps. If a third trump is played by Declarer, West will win this and switch to a club, putting declarer back in dummy with no good continuation (declarer cannot return to her hand with a diamond as West would ruff it with the setting trick). Declarer can counter this action by West, however, using the Dentist's Coup. Before leading her third trump from dummy, she cashes her top two club winners and her King (discarding a club on this trick) and then leads the last trump from dummy.

Tooth Be or Not Tooth Be (con't)

West can win this, but no longer has the means to dummy-lock declarer to prevent her from getting to her hand to pull trump and fulfill her contract. West's (teeth) exit cards...are no longer a threat.

The big winners in bridge are not the players capable of executing an occasional sparkling coup, but those who know how to avoid defeat in everyday contracts when breaks and positions are bad. Unlucky breaks/positions can be guarded against by the using techniques such as a safety play or by avoiding declarer play that results in blocked suits. All improving players are familiar with the frustrating experience of finding themselves stranded in the wrong hand, unable through the lack of transportation to cash in on tricks that could have been theirs for the taking. Perhaps the next time you envision this possibility, look for an elimination play. It could be the key to success.



Tourney Schedule

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

Saturday, April 16, 1:30 pm and Sunday, April 17, 1:30 pm -- Unit 207 199er Sectional at the BCA. Partnership Chair: *Mark McAllister* 512.257.2320, markmc888@gmail.com

Thursday, May 12 - Sunday, May 15, Unit 207 Spring Sectional. 199er games at **10 am, 2:30 pm, and 7 pm**. Partnership Chair: *Clara Wood* 512.459.5834, clarawood2005@yahoo.com

More details on these tournaments may be found on the Unit 207 website: www.austinbridge.org

Mike Lawrence Workshops

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, contact BJ Sanders 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

See Mike's advice on Opening Leads attached to this newsletter.

Spring/Summer Bridge Lessons

Commonly Used Conventions (Spade Series) Mondays, 9:00- 11:00 am April 25 - June 27 (no class on Memorial Day). Jack Lacy, instructor. \$90 for eight lessons includes text and one play session.

Two over One System Thursdays, 7:00-9:00 pm **or** Saturdays, 10:00 am - noon. (Attend one or the other.) Starts Thursdays on June 23 and Saturdays on June 25. Laura Delfeld, instructor. \$60 for four lessons, includes text by Audrey Grant and Eric Rodwell.

These classes are held at the Bridge Center of Austin. Register on-line at: www.bridgecenteraustin.com or call 300.2743.

"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 or call 512.917.5036

Mike's Bridge Lesson: Opening Leads

By Mike Lawrence (reprinted from *The Bridge Bulletin*, January 2010)

OPENING LEADS

Someone comes up to you and gives you an opening lead problem. This is your hand:

♠ 9 7 5 ♥ A 7 6 ♦ 9 2 ♣ Q J 8 5 2.

What do you lead? You can make a case for just about anything, but it would be nice to know the bidding and the contract. To satisfy that need, I am giving you four different auctions. You are West. No one is vulnerable.

1.	West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass	1S
	Pass	2D	Pass	2S
	Pass	3S	All Pass	
	You Lead	_____		

2.	West	North	East	South
			1H	1S
	2H	3S (weak)	All Pass	
	You Lead	_____		

3.	West	North	East	South
			2H	2S
	3H	Pass	Pass	3S
	All Pass			
	You Lead	_____		

4.	West	North	East	South
				1C
	Pass	1D	Pass	1S
	Pass	1NT	Pass	2S
	Pass	3S	All Pass	
	You Lead	_____		

Answers on next page

1. This is pretty easy. There is little reason to lead spades or diamonds, so your choice must be a heart or a club. A rule I tout with passion is that you do not lead or underlead aces against suit contracts. If you have A-K-x, you can lead the ace, but not otherwise. Even if partner has bid the suit, leading an ace is way down on the list of desirable leads. Lead the C Q. No second choice here.
2. On this one, the issue is whether to lead partner's suit (hearts) or something else. I offer this hand as an example of how far I will go to avoid leading a suit headed by the ace. Even with partner's heart bid, leading this suit can be a disaster. Your partner bid 1H, but he can have all kinds of holdings that do not include the king, ranging from H 10 9 5 4 3 to H Q J 10 3 2. If you lead this suit, declarer will have the king much of the time and he will get a free trick. You have a much better choice in the C Q.
3. Partner bid hearts strongly. I can accept the H A but I maintain that you should not be surprised if it does not work. Some of this depends on your requirements for a weak-two bid. I am happy to open 2H with Q-10-9-8-5-4, so for me, leading the H A won't be a lock. If your requirements are higher, then lead a heart.
4. This is an acceptable moment for a trump lead. Their side has stopped in partscore and you can see that their main side suit, clubs, is breaking poorly. With a trump lead, you should be able to get a couple rounds of trump in, thus stopping club ruffs in dummy.

Are these choices always going to work? Mostly they will, but when they don't, you should accept it. Of the points made in these four hands, the one about not leading aces is the big one.

Just remember this helpful acronym, **YLAAYWOLWYSHL**: "If you lead an ace, you will often learn what you should have led." Write it on your convention card under opening leads. You will get a lot of odd looks, if nothing else.