



The Future Life Master



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Robots



by Nell Dale

I hate robots! I hate robots! I hate robots!

In the spring, I went to "child sit" with my 15 year-old grandson in the Washington DC area. I had nothing to do all day but read, sleep, eat, pet the cat, read, pet the dogs... You get the picture: utter boredom. I had heard about BridgeBase, so I thought I would try it. I can now understand how kids can get hooked on video games.

If you have not tried BridgeBase, let me tell you a little bit about it. You logon and have a wide range of options. There are three main areas (worlds): ACBL, BBO, and Robot. The one I like is the ACBL world where you have the opportunity to earn ACBL master points. You can play in a "sanctioned game" (1\$) either with your own partner or in a rotation where your partner changes each round. The sanctioned games allow you to win ACBL master points. There are non-sanctioned free games, played with or without your own partner. You can enter non-sanctioned games at anytime; sanctioned games start about every fifteen minutes. When playing in either game, you can click on players' names and see where they are from, their level, and a brief summary of their conventions. I have played with people from Canada, Mexico, Yemen, Sweden, England, Ireland, Italy, Serbia, France, Netherlands, Chili, Turkey, Argentina, Israel, China, South Africa, Poland, Spain, Egypt, Peru, Columbia, Pakistan, Denmark, Kenya, New Zealand, Portugal, and Norway. You can converse with players via text messages on the screen.

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Duplicate Bridge—A Lifetime Partner

by Tom Clark

Several years ago, Mike Lawrence...bridge author, world champion and lecturer at the Bridge Center of Austin...wrote; "Of all competitive activities, bridge is unique because it offers you the opportunity to improve by competing against better players. The amateur golfer can't play a foursome with Nicklaus; the average tennis player could never hope for a match against Navratilova. But even novice bridge players can sit down at a tournament and play against experts and world champions." Echoing his thoughts...it is a right of passage in playing the game of bridge when lesser experienced players have the opportunity to play against players with better defined skills and ability at the time.

Ask the question of yourself...do I want to improve? All players...in their lifetime...should have the mentality that moving forward requires taking that first step. Yes, duplicate clubs are social groups...fun and exciting...but, they are also ground zero for development and improvement in all facets of the game. There is nothing like winning that first master point. From that point on, for a great number of players, duplicate bridge will be a lifetime partner! And, most everyone wants their partner in life to be enjoyable and ever progressive.

Why am I writing these thoughts for this issue of *The Future Life Master*? At times, hesitancy is a roadblock in life. It is natural to have doubting tendencies...the downside on the teeter-totter of life where it's polar opposite, confidence, rides high above the fulcrum. Getting past that inner voice that whispers, "I do not want to get beat up or embarrassed", certainly is not easy. But, take measure in this truth...every skilled player was once a novice...a novice with the willingness to take the step necessary to improve. Getting poor results goes with the territory in developing bridge skills...another rite of passage in bridge.

(con't on page 2)

Robots (con't)

So what does this have to do with robots? There are sanctioned tournaments where you can play with three robots. There may be as many as sixty people playing the same boards with other robots. You can earn master points based on how well you do against the other human players. These games with robots are both fun and frustrating. You think your human opponents and/or partners are strange? Try robots. Although you can click on the robot's bid to see what it means, the robot may or may not have what it claims. Robots do not recognize penalty doubles. The robot convention card says they play takeout doubles through four spades; thus the robot responds to *every double* below four spades. There is a facility that allows you to send a message to the system. (I assume this means the programmers.) The last one I sent had to do with the robot taking me to three no trump with six points. Like a human player, right? Yes, but believe me, it happens more often when you are playing with a robot—and you can't talk back to it. Give me a human any time.

When I first came to the Bridge Center in August two years ago, my life was simple: I played party duplicate once a week, worked, and played tennis three times a week. When Sandy Potts asked me to play with her, I explained that I really didn't have time to play at the center more than maybe once every other week. How my life has changed! I have revised my last textbook, given up my Wednesday tennis game, and manage to get to the club in time to play after my Monday game, so I play four weekdays. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday? Sure, why not? And of course I battle the robots at least once a day.

Tourney Calendar

Non-Life Master Sectional, BCA--Saturday, November 3 and Sunday, November 4.

199er Sectional, BCA--Saturday, December 1 and Sunday, December 2.

Winter Sectional and District 16 NAP Finals, Doubletree Hotel--Thursday, January 3--Sunday, January 6, 2013.

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

Duplicate Bridge-Lifetime Partner (con't)

Mixing play in both the limited game and open game is a step in the right direction. Continue to play in limited games, but work in some open competition as well (remember, at some point you will outgrow the limited game because you have earned too many masterpoints.) Results in the limited game will almost always be better. But, learning and growth will definitely be superior in the open games. It is my observation that better players are more than willing to share thoughts when approached. Do not hesitate to ask a question...but, do so after a round is over (time permitting) or before/after a session of play.

Like any game, bridge is more fun if you play it well. Yes, the bridge environment is social and friendly. But, it is also very much a competition. Because it is, most duplicate players view party bridge as pale in comparison. Thus, my tip for you in this writing is...if you love duplicate bridge avoid falling into the vanilla trap. Give your game some flavor and variety. Spice it up. Play some games amongst better competition. Politely ask advice. Let the good times grow!

Editors note: Many thanks to Tom Clark who has contributed articles to the past 22 editions of this newsletter. We wish the best to the Clarks upon their move to Florida.



First overall in the August 199er Sectional:

Rachell Jackson - Ann Bower (Saturday)

Larry Johnson - Patricia Moore (Sunday)

First overall in the Fall Sectional, 199er games:

George Ricker - J. Martin (Thursday am)

Louis Fogleman - Arthur Herritt (Thursday pm)

Lisa Holzgrafe - Brett Bidwell (Friday am)

Marlene Golden - Merry Balis (Friday pm)

Thomas Hughes - Mindy Kerber (Saturday am)

Pat Rutledge - Sybil Lowey (Saturday pm)

Capitulation

I'm giving up bridge- Tonight's my last night
It's amen to Stayman, I give up the fight.
The insults and muddles are giving me troubles
And I can't sleep at night for thinking of doubles.

My cards are all rotten and I have forgotten
Who's played and what's trumps and what's gone
on my right!
So for now it's all over- I'm off to the back wood
I'm bidding good-bye to Gerber and Blackwood

I can't stand the hassle, I can't stand the pain
I'm getting those bad cards again and again.
So I'm giving up bridge- Tonight's a bad night.
Declarer is horrid and nothing's going right.

My partner's a dope and I'm losing all hope.
And when s/he says "double" I know we're in
trouble.

My points are not high and I'm wondering
why
S/he kept on bidding right up to the sky.

We're in seven spades and all my hope fades
When surprise,surprise, the high bidding pays!
We're winning all tricks, the defenders feel sick,
And I have to admit my partner's a brick

But I'm giving up bridge- Tonight's my last night!
Farewell to conventions- I give up the fight?
So I leave with few words but some that are true,
Bridge is a game- not for me but for you.

So be kind to your partners and don't mind their
cheek.
For it's only a game- Oh! Yes. I'll see you next week



"The Future Life Master" is a bi-monthly publication of ACBL Unit 207. Laura Delfeld, editor. Please forward information regarding local novice news to delhan@swbell.net.