



# The Future Life Master



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Austin, Texas ACBL Unit 207, Laura Delfeld, editor

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## Playing in the Big Pond



**by Art Widen**

I moved to Round Rock about four years ago but didn't find the Bridge Center of Austin for another year.

I started playing in Laura's 299er Group and began to build a good foundation in Bridge play and conventions and unlearn some of the bad habits I had developed over the years. During this time I met Steve Andersen who has become my most frequent Bridge partner and good friend. As many of you know, we are both very competitive and have always aspired to become Life Masters and play in the Open Game - the right side of the Bridge Center where the Big Fish play in what we refer to as "The Big Pond".

As we rotated through the 0-500 and 0-750 games we gained in confidence and tried to prepare ourselves for our first venture into the murky, shark-infested waters. Our first venture (I like sports analogies) reminded me of the first time I went to the top of a Black Diamond Run at Squaw Valley Ski Resort and wondered how I was going to fare. It had a 12 foot drop off to start, a very steep slope and huge moguls - I was glad to make to the bottom in one piece. The Open Game wasn't quite as scary; we did take our lumps, we now knew we had a long way to go... but we were hooked.

Playing in the Open Game is a humbling experience. Your ego will get bruised and you quickly learn that a

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## Play and Counterplay

**by Mark McAllister**

When we first learn the game of bridge we are taught some simple rules of play to get us going. As we gain more experience, we find that the simple rules still apply in most situations, but that there are exceptions. Learning the exceptions is a fun part of bridge growth. Now and then there comes a hand where best play and defense require applying not just one "exception" but several!

Consider the following simple rules:

1. Lead high from the short hand.
2. Cover an honor.
3. Second hand low.

Now look at the deal below, which was played at an Austin club three years ago. (I was dummy.) North and South hands are shown.

♠ K 10 3  
 ♥ 9 8 6  
 ♦ J 10 9 4 3  
 ♣ 7 6

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

The bidding was 2C by South, 2D by North, 2NT by South, 3NT by North. Opening lead was two of hearts.

As South, how would you plan to make 3NT? You have only six top tricks, so you need to get to dummy after unblocking the diamonds... doing so will give you three more tricks. The spade suit is the only hope for an entry to dummy. In this deal, West has four spades to the queen, and East has four

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## *Playing in the Big Pond (con't)*

a 50% game is a very respectable score.

We sat down to play with Rosemary and Paul Kelly and engaged in a competitive auction, winning the bid at 3 diamonds. I was feeling pretty good about our contract when dummy went down. Rosemary made her opening lead, Paul won the first trick and 4 minutes later it seemed like we had been hit by a school of Piranha - down 2.

At the next table Paul Tobias won the auction and was playing a 4 spade contract. I had a near opening hand with good defensive cards and think that I just might have a chance to set him. Two tricks into the hand Paul stops and takes a minute to think. All of a sudden you realize that he has analyzed the distribution and can probably tell you every card remaining in your hand - 4 spades making 5.

Moving on we sit down with Marilou Powell who always greets you with a pleasant "Hello" and her Mona Lisa smile. But don't get too complacent - she is a very accomplished and successful player and has the bridge skills to hunt you down like a Great White Shark. As you reach for your bid box the haunting theme from Jaws begins to play in your mind and you know you might be on today's menu.

There are some good moments; takeaways that bring you back like the shot you chipped in for a birdie on # 15 during a lack luster round of golf. You triumphantly remember the time you set Jack Lacy one trick, forgetting that he squeezed you to make a tenuous slam on the previous hand and end played you on the third board to make a seemingly impossible 3 NT contract.

However, if you pay attention and ask for advice, there are pearls of wisdom to be found in the Big Pond. Our convention card has taken shape with the help of many generous players. We play a modified version of Bergen that we refer to as (Dean) Truair Bergen. We learned about strong 2 opening bids in fourth seat from George Watkins and "Bidding the Slot" courtesy of Pam La Shelle. There isn't enough room in the article to recognize everyone who has shared their wisdom and knowledge of the game, but I am truly thankful to all of you who have contributed.

Playing in the Big Pond at our Club is a thrill and a privilege. The competition is tough; you will get no "gifts" and probably a zero board if you make a mistake. But to all of my Life Master Wanna Be Peers - if you want to test your mettle and improve your knowledge and skills, playing in the Big Pond is a great experience.

## *Play and Counterplay (con't)*

spades to the ace.

Let's say you follow Rule #1. You lead the jack of spades from your hand. Let's say West follows Rule #2 and covers your jack with the queen. You cover with the king and you are guaranteed an entry to dummy...if East takes the ace, dummy's ten will provide the entry.

So, back up one step. Say West makes an "exception" and does not cover your jack. You play low from dummy and East also makes an "exception" and ducks. You are now shut out of dummy! East's ace will eventually make sure of that.

The counterplay: Back up one step further. Instead of leading the jack from your hand, lead the five, an "exception" to Rule #1. If West applies Rule #3, second hand low, you play the 10 from dummy. Now you are guaranteed an entry, whether East ducks or wins the ace!

Leading the five is certainly the right play, but there is more. What if West makes an "exception" to Rule #3 and *rises with the queen* when you lead the five? Your only hope is to cover, but East wins the ace. You are shut out of dummy, and 3NT goes down.

Three rules, three exceptions, for best play and defense. You may wonder why West would ever rise with the queen when you led the five. A little analysis reveals that such a play cannot lose and might gain for just the reason given. But, I think there are very few defenders at any level of experience who would find that play.

## **Tourney Calendar**

### **199er Sectional, BCA**

**Saturday, April 13 and Sunday, April 14, 1:30 pm.** Play in one or both sessions. Regionally rated, 40% higher silver points. Partnership Chair: Mark McAllister, [Markmc888@gmail.com](mailto:Markmc888@gmail.com)

### **May Sectional, BCA**

**Thursday, May 2–Sunday, May 5.** Open and 199er Games at 10:00, 2:30 and 7:00. Team games and single session Swiss, Thurs-Sat. Sunday Strati-flighted Swiss at 10:00 and TBA. Partnership Chair: Pat Rutledge, [pjsr65@gmail.com](mailto:pjsr65@gmail.com), 512-246-0547

More information on these tournaments may be found on the Unit website: [www.austinbridge.org](http://www.austinbridge.org)



### First overall in the February NLM Sectional:

*John Connolly- Pritam Sooch (Sat. am)*

*Spencer Ledlow - Rob Caldwell (Sat. pm)*

*William McIndoo - Brenda McIndoo (Sun. pm)*

### First overall in the BCA Spring Sectional, 199er games:

*Barbara Rodriguez - Pat Disanza (Thurs. am)*

*Mabel Byrnes - Darlene Kinstley (Thurs. pm)*

*Sheila Milner - Anu Chhabra (Fri. am)*

*Beth Peterson - Judith Klenz (Fri. pm)*

*Alan Wakefield - Harold Tweeden (Sat. am)*

*Marilyn Vallario - Sarah Loffredo (Sat. Pm)*

## *The Double Finesse*

Here are some common card combinations that offer the opportunity for a **Double Finesse**:

**A432**

**J1098**

You can try a double finesse if you're missing two honors. Here, you hope to lose only one trick by playing LHO for one or both honors. Lead the jack. If LHO plays low, play low from dummy and let RHO win his queen or king. You can now finesse LHO for the remaining honor by running the 10. This play will win three tricks 75% of the time.

**AQ32**

**10987**

This is a double finesse for the jack and king. Lead the 10 and let it ride, then repeat by leading the 9. If LHO holds both king and jack, you'll win four tricks. If he has either one of these honors, you'll win three tricks.

## It's the Law!

### Opening Lead Out of Turn

**Scenario:** You are declarer and the opening lead is made by the wrong opponent. You summon the director and he mumbles the five options listed below. What to do? Familiarizing yourself with these options ahead of time will help you make the best choice.

1. You may elect to accept the lead, put your hand down as dummy and make your partner declarer.
2. You may elect to accept the lead, remain declarer, and see dummy before playing to the trick.
3. You may refuse to accept the lead and require that the correct defender lead the *same suit* as the illegally led card. The illegally led card is returned to its owner's hand and there is no further penalty.
4. You may refuse to accept the lead and require that the correct defender lead a *different* suit from that of the illegally led card for so long as that defender remains on lead. The defender may choose any other suit and the illegally led card is returned to its owner's hand. There is no further penalty.
5. You may refuse to accept the lead but allow the correct defender whichever card he wishes. In this case, the illegally faced card stays on the table as a major penalty card to be played at the first legal opportunity.

