



# The Future Life Master



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Austin, Texas ACBL Unit 207, Laura Delfeld, editor

June-July 2013

## I Could Have Been a Contender



by Nola Ray

I was born into a bridge-addicted family. Some of my early memories included being taken to other homes where my folks would enjoy rubber bridge and pitchers of martinis. I would really want to go home and they would say “ just wait until we finish this rubber.....” Which could take *hours*.

In the Greater Metropolitan area of New York City where I grew up, there were many long cold winter days when we played marathon Michigan and Gin Rummy games or put together jigsaw puzzles. When I turned 12, I received a “Learn to Play Bridge” book. I was already an accomplished Gin Rummy player. In fact, my dad and I kept a running tab; at one point, he owed me over \$60.00, which was big money when your weekly allowance was 25 cents. (He still owes me.) My older brother already was playing bridge. I would have been the fourth. My life as I knew it would have ended. I never opened the book.

My mom and dad retired to Austin and played at the Bridge Center on Arroyo Seco in the 1970's. I picked them up there one time and was appalled to see that there was more smoke in that room than in many night-clubs in which I had been. Another reason never to play bridge.

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## Less Common Finesses

by Mark McAllister

One of the first tactical plays we learn as newcomers to bridge is the finesse, which the Encyclopedia of Bridge defines as “The attempt to gain power for lower-ranking cards by taking advantage of the favorable position of higher-ranking cards held by the opposition.” The simple finesses are easy to learn and employ, but it also pays to be familiar with some of the less common varieties, such as those listed below.

**Obligatory Finesse.** Assume your trump suit consists of the following cards:

♠ Q 7 2 in dummy

opposite

♠ K 8 6 4 3 in hand

You lead the 3 from hand and play the queen. It wins. You lead the 2 from dummy and right-hand-opponent (RHO) plays the jack. Do you “cover an honor?” No. Why play your king when LHO is marked with the ace? You must play a low card, hoping the ace is now alone. “Obligatory” simply means that you have nothing to lose and plenty to gain by playing low when the jack or ten appears from RHO.

**Backward Finesse.** Assume you are South in a notrump contract and need three tricks from this holding:

♥ A 7 3 2 in dummy

opposite

♥ K J 9 4 in hand

Furthermore, assume that West has a side suit ready to run if he ever wins a trick, and East has no more cards in the side suit. The normal way of finessing, ace and then low to the jack, risks the contract. Instead, lead the jack from hand. If West covers, win the ace and finesse the 9 on the way back if East plays low. Only if West started with both the queen and 10 will this play lose.

In this case the backward finesse is an avoidance play to keep West off lead.

(con't on page 2)

## *I could have been a contender (con't)*

People often ask "When did you start to play bridge?" I answer "When the Senior Center of Austin accepted me." For some reason Pat Meheriuk and I decided to take lessons there with Leona Reiger on Tuesday mornings. As I was getting ready to leave the house for that first lesson, I had qualms. Since I always associated bridge with alcohol, I tried to imagine pitchers of martinis on the table on a Tuesday morning; it just didn't compute.

We met Darlene McConnell and Joyce Lemons. We learned to count to 13. I would have told you I was good at math until I realized that it was challenging to count to 13. Well, it turned out to be a lovely way to start. No one there thought Pat and I were old enough to qualify as seniors. (That never gets old!) We made it through the lessons once or twice and then took Leona's Duplicate class. I had to take that one more than once as well.

Finally, with much trepidation, I arrived at the Bridge Center behind Half Price Books, for a BridgePlus game. There I met many new teachers: Scott, Sally, Jack, Laura, Rosemary, Pam, Kevin, Paul, and Tom Clark.

I was able to play one game of duplicate with my mom at her retirement home in Hilton Head. We were East-West. I kept taking tricks she could have taken....bad idea. She always accused dad of being less than adorable at the bridge table, but she must have learned a lot from him. The next day when the results were posted, we had won. About \$12.00. She was thrilled.

I think of lost opportunities. Mildred Breed started her career playing with her dad. I could have done that. Then I read "The Cardturner" by Louis Sachar about dead bridge players playing through their living younger relatives. I tried that technique at a tournament. Didn't work for me.

I attended an exhibit at the Bob Bullock Museum about Texas Women. The exhibit showed the choices women had for employment around the 1900's. As a school teacher, there were four rules one needed to follow. They were, in descending order, (4) don't dance, (3) don't date on weeknights, (2) don't stay out after 10, and (1) don't PLAY BRIDGE!

That is how much fun it is. And how addictive.

See you soon.

## *Less common finesses (con't)*

You could also employ such a finesse if the bidding indicated West was a strong favorite to hold the queen.

**Chinese Finesse.** One of the first things we learn as beginners is – don't lead an honor for a finesse unless you have the card or cards directly below it, in one hand or the other. But, as you learned in the previous newsletter, there are exceptions to just about every rule. Say you are South in a notrump contract and need exactly two tricks from this holding:

♦ A 7 in dummy

opposite

♦ Q 6 4 in hand

Assume that the bidding and play to that point indicates that West is highly likely to hold the spade king. The normal way of playing this holding – leading toward the queen in hand – has a low chance of succeeding. Instead, lead the queen. Why might this work against a competent defender? Here is a holding West might have:

♦ K 8 5 2

Note that West has neither the jack nor the 10. From your lead of the queen, West might place you with those cards. If West covers, he envisions setting up three tricks for you. If he ducks, only two tricks. So he ducks, and your ruse succeeds.

**Intrafinesse.** Consider the following holding, in which you as South need three tricks:

♣ A 8 5 in dummy

opposite

♣ K 9 4 2 in hand

A 3-3 split of the outstanding cards will happen only 36% of the time; a 4-2 split is the most likely. And, of the three outstanding honors (the ten is an honor!) the most likely distribution is two honors in the hand with four cards and one honor in the hand with two cards. So, lead a low card from your hand and play the 8 from dummy. It loses to an honor. When back in the lead, play the ace. With luck, an honor drops from the West hand. Now finesse the 9 and then play the king. Three tricks, if West started with honor doubleton.

Intrafinesse opportunities don't appear often, but if you ever pull off an intrafinesse your partner and opponents will have an enhanced regard for your bridge prowess!



# BCA THE LONGEST DAY

alzheimer's association®

## Friday, June 21—Bridge from Sunrise to Sunset

Thanks to the fantastic generosity of our players, Unit 207, and Dick and Sara Rathgeber who provided the Bridge Center of Austin with a \$10,000 matching grant, we are in the position to be one of the top **Longest Day** fundraising organizations in the country! Click on: <https://thelongestday.alz.org/home/team/88019> to follow our progress. All donations are welcome, regardless of the size. Hope to see you on June 21 for lots of great bridge.

- ♥ Games at 5:30 am, 9:00 am, noon, 3:30 pm, and 6:30 pm.
- ♥ Guaranteed partners for all games
- ♥ \$8 entry fee donation—100% donated to the Alzheimer Association
- ♥ Delicious, free meals throughout the day
- ♥ Silent auction and raffle for games with expert players
- ♥ Free bridge lessons to the public. Please be sure to let your party-bridge friends know about this, also friends who are totally new to bridge.
- ♥ See the BCA website for additional details:  
[www.bridgecenteraustin.com](http://www.bridgecenteraustin.com)



There are two kinds of losers in bridge—those who always pull trump and those who never pull trump.

## Congratulations!

### First overall in the April 199er Sectional:

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

*Patricia Webb - Michele Abriol (Sat. Pm)*

### First overall in the Unit 207 Spring Sectional, 299er games:

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

*Frank Anderson - Nancy Ring (Thurs. pm)*

*George Miller - Jean Marsh (Fri. am)*

*Nancy Ring - Barbara Werth (Fri. pm)*

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

*Jeff Skillin - Sandy Reynolds (Sat. pm)*

## It's N.A.P. Time

For the months of June, July and August, clubs will be running North American Pairs (NAP) qualifying games. If you get a 50% or better game, you qualify to play at the next level (District). If you score in the top 3 or 4 at the District level, you earn a stipend to play in the finals at the Nationals next Spring in Dallas. Even if you don't plan to play in the District finals, when you play at the club level, you earn 100% sectionally rated **RED** and **BLACK** masterpoints!

## Tourney Calendar

### NLM Sectional, BCA

**Saturday, June 15 10:00 am and 1:30 pm, Sunday, June 16, 1:30 pm.** Partnership Chair: Mark McAllister, [Markmc888@gmail.com](mailto:Markmc888@gmail.com)

### 199er Sectional, BCA

**Saturday, August 25 and Sunday, August 26. Both games at 1:30 pm.** Partnership Chair: Mark McAllister, [Markmc888@gmail.com](mailto:Markmc888@gmail.com)