



The Future Life Master



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Austin, Texas ACBL Unit 207, Laura Delfeld, editor

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Bringing out the Best

*“Be with those who bring out the Best in you,
not the Stress in you.” - unknown*



by Tracy Bruce

I am honored to be asked to contribute to the newsletter. My first introduction to bridge started late in 2011 on Thursday evenings. At the time, I was overwhelmed but thrilled with my daughter's plans for her upcoming wedding and disappointed that my husband of 30 years had filed for divorce. My days were booked with wedding and divorce appointments. My mother, desperate to be supportive and helpful, said, "TAKE bridge lessons!" I sent an email inquiry through the Bridge Center website and enrolled in a class where a bunch of guarded strangers (at least I was), who have never played bridge, evolved into several tables of trusted bridge playing partners. By the end of Book One, I was hooked on bridge classes but still too busy with my daytime schedule. One trusted "bridge" partner suggested we play practice hands on BBO (bridge base online). We could play from our homes; and, aided by Skype, discuss the bidding, practice finesses and hire a robot if we needed a fourth. Brilliant idea!

By the end of Book Two, we were also regulars at the Bridge Center in the Monday "corner group." These "bridge" partners have become a supportive, dedicated and close group of cherished personal friends. In fact, several of us had so much fun learning bridge in

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Declare or Defend?

by Mark McAllister

After a session of duplicate bridge, it is often helpful to look (on paper or on the Internet) at the hands we have played, and to analyze the results. What lines of play or defense, if any, would have given us better results (if we got a low board), or what lines, if any, would have given our opponents better results (if we got a high board)?

See how well you can analyze the deal below. It is highly unlikely that you have played it, but similar situations have probably arisen in hands you have played. Dealer is South.

♠ A 9 3
♥ A 5 3
♦ K 8 7 5 2
♣ 9 6

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

♠ J 6 4
♥ K Q J 10 9 2
♦ A
♣ J 7 3

We can imagine the following bidding scenario: South opens 1H, North bids 2D (playing 2/1 or not), South bids 2H (limiting his hand), North bids 4H.

Here are two questions for you. Study the above deal and answer the first question before you look at the second.

1. Assuming optimum play by both declarer and defenders (including the opening lead,) is the contract makeable?

(con't on page 2)

Bringing out the Best (con't)

the Thursday evening classes that we re-enrolled when Laura started the five- book series again.

Recently my 78-year-old mother came to visit. She played party bridge in college and returned to party bridge after retirement. She has graciously volunteered her time to partner (not teach) in our online group practice games. She has patiently endured our learning curve progress although from time to time she does re-direct our faulty bidding or play. I thought she would be thrilled at the opportunity to partner with me in a game at the Bridge Center during her visit. But, she said she couldn't possibly play because the bidding box and scoring were too foreign. She said her brain would shut down if she couldn't touch the dummy cards and collect the tricks. Although, she did join the ACBL prior to her arrival so I knew my request was still a possibility. She did finally agree to play, one time, during her visit and we did well. The next morning at breakfast, she asked, "What time do we need to be ready to go to the bridge center again today?" To date, my mother has played two sanctioned games and earned MP's each time...

Now that my personal schedule is less booked, I am playing bridge more frequently. I find the community to be a smart, dynamic, fun group of intensely competitive, kind and caring folks. It is humbling that so many know my name, encourage my progress and validate my questions. I have one favorite partner who deserves special mention for his calm and supportive encouragement. Recently, we played in a NAP qualifier against several opponents who have surpassed master point levels I will never attain in my lifetime. One particular opponent knew me by name, without my name tag! She and her partner were genuinely kind as we ambled over to their prepared table. There was some small talk that I was known as Laura's "little" helper and as the Jaws theme started pounding in my ears, I blurted out that my partner was Laura's helper, too! The scene reminded me of a line from my partner's latest "slasher" movie release, "It's nothing personal; we just want to eat you." We survived! I was thrilled we set one board, although they clearly feasted in our round. It was a genuine honor to play against these accomplished opponents. Much to my surprise we qualified, in the C group, to the next round. On to the District NAP finals in San Antonio!

*Strong people don't put others down, they lift them up.
- unknown*

Declare or Defend (con't)

Put another way, would you rather declare or defend on this deal?

2. What is the ONLY card in the West hand which, as an opening lead, would defeat the contract? How does declarer make the contract with other opening leads? See last page for answer.



First overall in the November NLM Sectional:

Betty Ling- Jeff Skillin (Sat. am)

Rob Caldwell - Bill Kalmbach (Sat. pm)

Merry Balis - Marlene Golden (Sun. pm)

The Lone Arranger

What: A game to match newer players with more experienced players, typically Life Masters. Think Pro-Am game.

Why: To give players a chance to meet new people and to provide the less experienced players with an opportunity to partner with more experienced players. Partnerships are randomly arranged at the start of the game.

Where: Bridge Center of Austin

When: **Saturday, January 11, 1:30 pm**
Come early to be assigned a partner!

Tourney Calendar

**199er Sectional, BCA--Saturday,
December 7 and Sunday, December 8**

**Winter Sectional, Doubletree Hotel –Thursday,
January 2 –Sunday, January 5, 2014.**

**NLM Sectional, BCA--Saturday,
February 15 and Sunday, February 16**

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

It's the Law!

Calling Cards from Dummy

- When declarer, you should always name the suit and denomination of the card you want to play from dummy. If you don't, you may find that the defense are allowed to make assumptions and you may not be able rectify it even if it was "obvious" that you meant something else.
- If you say "play anything", or words to that effect, then either defender may choose a card for you to play.
- If you only specify the suit, or say something like "low", you are deemed to have called for the lowest card of the suit.
- If, when leading, you only name the denomination then you are deemed to be continuing the suit in which you won the preceding trick (assuming you have a card of the named denomination in that suit).
- When not leading, if you only name the denomination then you must play a card of that denomination if you can legally do so. If you have two or more then you can choose which
- If you say something like "win the trick", dummy should play the lowest winning card.
- If you call "high" then you are normally deemed to have played the highest card in the suit. However, if it's the last card in the trick then it's the same as saying "win the trick" - ie. the lowest winning card should be played.

Answer to the Play or Defend question: The only opening lead to defeat the contract is the four of hearts. Declarer should play ace of diamonds and then should lead clubs (trying for a ruff), and West must win and continue hearts at every chance. West can prevent the club ruff, but if West had led the six or seven of hearts on opening lead, declarer can use the five of hearts as an extra entry to set up his fifth diamond. (Do you see how this can be done?) Incidentally, spades is a classic "frozen" suit. If declarer leads spades, he loses two spade tricks. If the defense leads spades, declarer loses only one spade.

This deal and the possible lines of play shed light on virtually all declarer tactics – ruffing losers in dummy, finessing, setting up a long suit, unblocking, creating entries, gaining or losing a tempo, avoiding frozen suits. The deal is found in a wonderful book on declarer play—"Bridge Play from A to Z" by George Coffin (Dover, 1979.) I bought it in California 22 or so years ago – I had not played bridge in years but knew I would get back to it someday. That happened.



Unit 207 sponsors an annual **Mentoring Program** where players with under 50 masterpoints are matched with more experienced players to partner up to twice per month. The program runs from January to May. Application forms are due **December 21** and are available at Austin area clubs or on the Unit 207 website: www.austinbridge.org. For more information, contact Sandy Potts—sandy.potts5@yahoo.com

Bridge Quotes

"Many games provide fun, but bridge grips you. It exercises your mind. Your mind can rust, you know, but bridge prevents the rust from forming."—Omar Sharif

"Bridge is such a sensational game that I wouldn't mind being in jail if I had three cellmates who were decent players and who were willing to keep the game going 24 hours a day.—Warren Buffet