

The inventor of Smith signals

Last month I asked if anyone knew who was the Smith who gave his name to Smith signals. I should have known that I could rely on Bert Oskam to tell me. Bert produced a reference from the Official Encyclopaedia of Bridge. It seems that Smith signals saw light of day in December 1963 in an article in British Bridge World. Their originator was a player called I.G. Smith. Thanks, Bert.



Taieri Bridge Club

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Annual General Meeting

The club's AGM took place on 4th November. Our new president is Jean Young, with vice president Tamsin Meaney. Subscriptions will remain the same for next year.

New Zealand Bridge

The New Zealand Contract Bridge Association publishes a magazine "New Zealand Bridge" 6 times a year. At \$35 for an annual subscription this magazine is an absolute bargain weighing in at 72 pages per issue. Not only does it inform you of bridge around the country but it has regular columns to offer tips on play, defence, and bidding. It also has many accounts of hands bid and played by experts - you can pick up many tips by seeing how top players approach the auction and play. So, if you have an aspiring bridge playing friend and are looking for a Christmas gift, look no further! By the way, I don't get paid for these endorsements.

The law of total tricks (part 3)

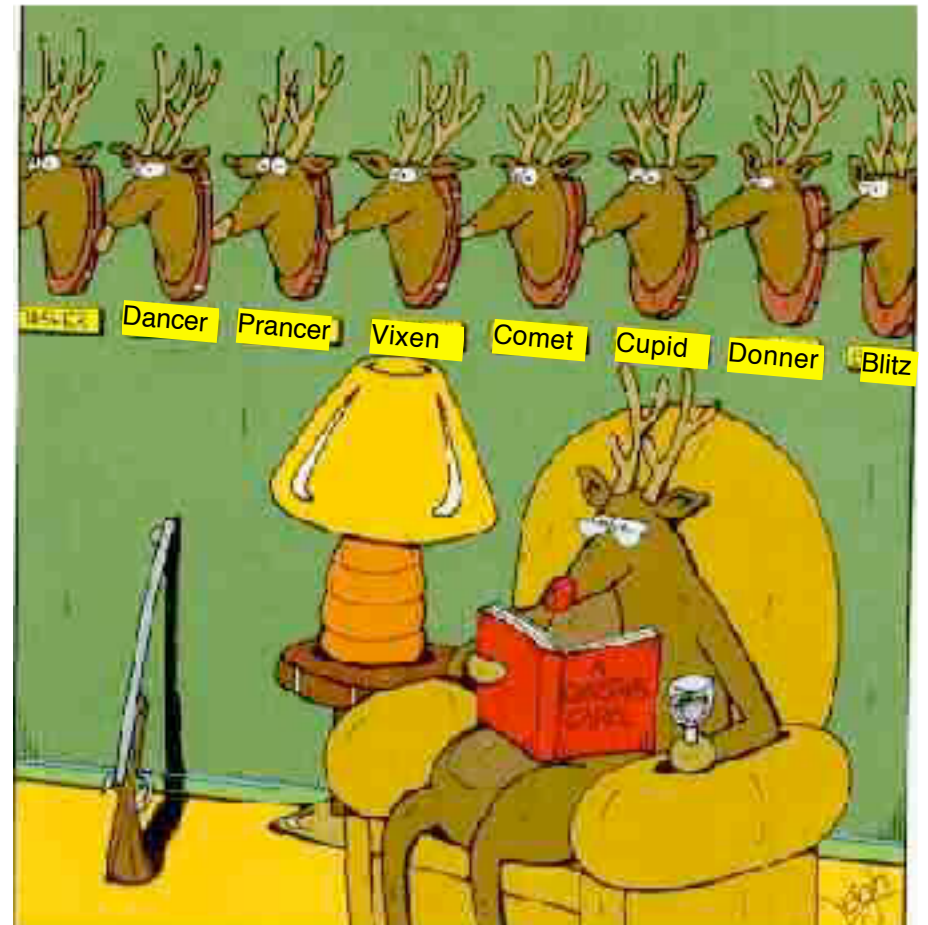
In this last of three articles about the LAW I shall tell you what it says in its full form. So far we've only had the simple version where it says "Contract for as many tricks as your combined trump holding". But sometimes we can deduce how many cards the *opponents'* long suit has and then we may use a more accurate form of the LAW which takes into account how many tricks *they* might take if *they* declared the hand in *their* trump suit. The LAW tells us that

the number of tricks available to us if we declared the hand plus the number of tricks available to them if they declared is equal to the length of our trump suit plus the length of their trump suit.

I must confess that this is a bit complicated. Furthermore, situations where you can estimate the total length of *their* suit let alone your own are somewhat rare. But it is amazing how often the LAW holds. Look at some hand records and try to work it out yourself. Here's a typical hand from Larry Cohen's book *To bid or not to bid* (facing page).

North-South have 9 hearts between them while East-West have 9 clubs. Therefore, by the LAW, the total number of tricks available is 18 (for example, if North-South can make 8 tricks in

I shall write about that next month and give some examples of its use.



All of the other reindeer *used* to laugh and call him names

Defence to 1NT

The Acol opening 1NT bid is a cornerstone of the system. It occurs frequently, paints an accurate picture of the hand, and prevents the opponents overcalling at the one level. We all love opening 1NT for those reasons --- and just as much we hate to hear the opponents open 1NT. How should we defend against those irritating opponents who open 1NT?

One of our options is to make a penalty double but we shall not often be blessed with the requisite 15+ HCP necessary for that. If we have a good long suit we may well bid it at the 2 level. But what if we have two suits? If we have two 4 card suits we won't want to bid either, and with two 5 card suits we might not be sure which one to bid. Many partnerships have conventions about how they bid two-suited hands against 1NT. The simplest such convention is called "Landy": if you hold at least 4 cards in both majors you bid 2♣ and let your partner choose which major suit she prefers. The downside is that you cannot show a club suit.

A slightly more elaborate convention is to use 2♣ to show the minors (partner passes or corrects) and 2♦ to show the majors. There are many other conventions. In the Otago area the most popular is called "Pottage" or "Capelletti".

hearts, East-West can make 10 tricks in clubs; if North-South can make 9 tricks in hearts, East-West can make 9 tricks in clubs).

♠ Q T 5 4
♥ Q 9 8 7 5
♦ J 3 2
♣ 7

♠ 8 7 6 2
♥ T 4
♦ A T 8 7
♣ A 9 3

♠ A 9
♥ 6 3
♦ K 6 5
♣ K Q T 6 4 2

♠ K J 3
♥ A K J 2
♦ Q 9 4
♣ J 8 5

Suppose South has opened the bidding with 1♥, West passes, North raises to 2♥, and East comes in with 3♣. South should now pass (thinking "It looks as though we have 8 hearts between us; East rates to have 6 clubs and my own partner could easily have 2 or 3 clubs. That's 8 trumps for us, 7 or 8 for them, a total of 15 or 16; I'll defend since if 3♥ is making then 3♣ is going down"). But when it comes round to North she knows she holds 5 hearts and a singleton club so she knows the total heart length is 9, the opposition club length is likely to be at least 9 so bidding 3♥ is clear cut (because if 3♣ is making so, by the LAW, is 3♥).

The reward of the anti-hog

Gordon Rhode was feeling a little embarrassed. He had just declared five hands in a row and he sensed that Frieda Mayer was itching to be other than a dummy. So, on the last hand of the night, when he picked up

♠ Q J T 4; ♥ K Q J T 6 5; ♦ J 8; ♣ 3

and imagined himself playing in a heart contract his own heart fell somewhat. He perked up a little when he heard Frieda open the bidding with 1♦.

Nevertheless, it required a conscious effort to pass Frieda's final bid after the auction

1♦ - 1♥

2♣ - 3♥

3NT - Pass

Frieda was sitting South and received the 3♠ lead.

Here was her predicament

♠ Q J T 4

♥ K Q J T 6 5

♦ J 8

♣ 3

♠ A 8 6

♥ 3

♦ A 9 4 3 2

♣ K Q T 2

Hoping to tempt East into playing the King of spades, Frieda played the Queen of spades from

dummy. East however did not oblige and played 2♠.

But Frieda had carefully analysed the entries to dummy's heart suit; she resisted the temptation to win the trick cheaply and put up the Ace of spades. Now she could establish the heart suit and even though the defence held up the Ace of hearts she could force an entry into dummy via spades. The whole hand was

♠ Q J T 4

♥ K Q J T 6 5

♦ J 8

♣ 3

♠ K 5 3

♥ A 9 2

♦ K Q 7

♣ A J 9 8

♠ 9 7 2

♥ 8 7 4

♦ T 6 5

♣ 7 6 5 4

♠ A 8 6

♥ 3

♦ A 9 4 3 2

♣ K Q T 2

and 4♥ would have failed. Gordon was in seventh heaven. Not only had they ended with a top board but he felt sure that his unselfish bidding would earn him some personal reward. And so it proved. "I do hope you'll come to dinner on Christmas Day, Gordon; we'll play Sardines". With an arch smile she added "Just the two of us".