

Play problem solutions

1. You should have an easy 9 tricks (6 clubs, 1 heart, 2 spades). Watch out for one thing though. You must play off your A♠ before playing on hearts. Otherwise, unkind opponents might duck your first heart play, capture one of your heart honours on the second round of hearts, and then play a spade to strand you in dummy. When you are forced to play diamonds yourself you can lose 4 diamond tricks.

2. You appear to have 9 tricks (5 clubs, 1 heart, 2 spades, and 1 diamond after driving out the A♦). But did you spot the blockage in clubs which prevents your cashing the fifth club? Your only sure entry has been knocked out by the opening lead. I think the best line is to win the A♥ and play another heart discarding a blocking club from your hand. It's impossible for the opponents to develop 4 heart tricks to go along with their A♦. Any better suggestions?

Items for the Newsletter

I'd like some more gossip from the club's early years, please. Send it to mike@cs.otago.ac.nz

News Letter 2003

Taieri Bridge Club

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Tournament bridge

I'm producing the newsletter a week early this month in order to have time for a general exhortation to enter the Taieri Open B tournament on 3 May. If your reaction is that you have never played in a bridge tournament and now is no time to start I'd urge you to think again. Of course, there are financial and publicity advantages to our club in having a large entry but that's not the main reason for entering. Much more important from your point of view is that you will meet some new players and, by playing against them, improve your own game. In general, the quickest way to improve your bridge is to play as often as you can with and against good players. At the Taieri tournament you can do that in the friendly environment that prevails at our club with a large number of familiar faces to encourage you. So, come along with your partner and enjoy yourselves. I look forward to seeing you there (and also at our A point tournament in June!)

The multi-coloured 2♦

Many partnerships use an opening bid of 2♦ to describe a multitude of hand types. It's useful to be aware of this convention. You may want to try it, or want to counter it. Although there are several variations the commonest local treatment is to allocate three possible meanings to it. Most commonly it will be a weak hand (6-10 HCP) with a 6 card major suit. It can also be a strong balanced hand (21-22 points often) or it can be a strong hand with 8 playing tricks in a minor suit. The responder must assume initially that her partner has a weak hand. Their weakest bid is 2♥ (pass if that's your suit, partner, or bid 2♠). She can also bid 2♠ which shows 10-14 HCP and enough in hearts to play at the three level. Responder's strongest bid is 2NT (we may have game here, partner, even if you have a weak hand). The opener then reveals her hand type by a natural bid (or by passing 2♥ or 2♠). What's the point? Mainly, it frees up the opening bids of 2♥ and 2♠ (weak twos) and the 2NT strong bid for other purposes. How should you defend against the multi? Assume the opener has a weak hand and act accordingly. Take-out doubles are very useful, as well as natural overcalls. Occasionally you will get bitten but in the long run it's best to be bold.

Psychology

A professor of Psychology was greeting his new class. To introduce the idea of personal tension he said "Would everyone who thinks he or she is stupid, please stand up". To begin with there was no movement in the class until after a minute a young man stood up. "Well, hello, sir" said the professor "so you think you are a moron?". The student replied "No, sir, I just didn't want to see you standing up there all by yourself".

Murphy's Laws of Bridge

If **you** double their contract - they make.
If **they** double your contract - you don't make.
If you go for the 'drop' - you should have finessed.
If you go for the 'finesse' - you should have played for the drop.
If **you** sacrifice - they wouldn't have made.
If **they** sacrifice - you would have made.
If **you** underlead the Ace - the king will be in dummy (singleton, of course).
If **they** underlead an Ace - the king will be in the other opponents hand.
If you score over 65% on the first two nights of a competition - your partner will be unavailable for the last night.
If you arrive last at the table you'll be Dealer.

Signals

Do you watch what your partner discards when they cannot follow suit? A good partner will always try to tell you something with their discard. "Natural" discards are those where a high card indicates some strength in that suit (it is not a royal command to lead that suit if you get the chance but, if you *do* lead the suit, partner had better not complain!). When you sit down with a new partner make sure you agree on your discard signals:- "natural" is not the only method.

A very popular discard method is "Reverse attitude". Here a high card in the suit discarded denies interest in the suit. This method has the advantage that you don't waste high cards in suits where you are strong.

Yet another attitude signalling method is "Lavinthal discards". Here you discard in a suit you don't want played and the size of the discard says which of the two remaining suits you like (a high card means the higher ranking suit).

Finally, there are Roman discards. An odd numbered discard means you like that suit; but even numbered discards are interpreted as for Lavinthal discards.

What's best? It's certainly marginal but I'd recommend reverse attitude. At any rate, be on the same wavelength as your partner!

Two play problems

Answers on page 8. First an easy one. You are West in 3NT after the lead of 5♣

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

And, slightly harder. Again you are West in 3NT and the lead is K♥

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

Bidding, Defence, Declaring

Judging by most bridge columns, magazines and newsletters you could be forgiven for thinking that the most important area to work at in improving your bridge is being the declarer. False! Bridge writers emphasise declarer play because it's the easiest to analyse. Much the most important area is bidding. You don't need a large set of conventions if you and your partner are on the same wave-length (and that needs frequent discussions). After bidding, the next most important area is defence. Declarer play is last!

The aftermath of dinner

Frieda Mayer and Gordon Rhode were sitting together on Frieda's comfortable sofa. They had just enjoyed the results of Frieda's excellent cooking, Gordon had insisted on washing up, and they were sharing a rather good brandy. Frieda was wondering hopefully if Gordon would possibly edge a little closer when he uttered, in rather dramatic tone "Frieda, I want to ask you something". Frieda's immediate thought was quickly rejected; she and Gordon had only known each other for a few weeks and, well, they were of mature age and certainly not hasty. "Please ask, then, Gordon" she answered, hoping that her voice was steady. "Frieda, would you,....., would you be my ...". He paused in confusion while Frieda waited expectantly. "Frieda, would you be my partner in the Taieri B tournament?". He finally got the words out. Frieda felt a small sense of anticlimax and asked artlessly "But why do you want to play with little old me, Gordon?". Gordon went a rather fetching shade of pink. "I particularly admired your defence in last Wednesday's game" he said. This is the hand that Gordon was referring to (with Frieda in South's seat, East-West vulnerable, and West the dealer). West opened 1NT and Gordon sitting North doubled.

♠ K Q 9
♥ A Q J T 9 7 4
♦ 8
♣ A 6

♠ J 6 5
♥ K 8
♦ A J T 4
♣ K T 9 5

♠ 4 3 2
♥ 6 5 3
♦ Q 9 3
♣ 8 7 3 2

♠ A T 8 7
♥ 2
♦ K 7 6 5
♣ Q J 4

East passed (no doubt with trepidation) and Frieda passed too (after all she knew Gordon's double was for penalty). West, with a stoic sigh, also passed and Gordon led ♠K. Frieda signalled with the ♠T, Gordon continued with Q♠ and the defence took the first four tricks in spades. Frieda was now on lead and hesitantly advanced the ♣Q. Declarer covered with the ♣K, Gordon won the ♣A and returned a club to Frieda's ♣J. The excitement was proving too much for Frieda who, having a senior moment, thought they were defending a diamond contract. Hoping for a heart ruff, she led her singleton ♥2. To her surprise, Gordon now took the remainder of the tricks with his long hearts. They had scored 2000 for a top board.