

Contributed humour

Jim phones his boss. "Boss, I'm feeling very sick with headache and stomach ache. I'm not coming in to work today". The boss says "Jim, I really need you today. When I feel like this I go to my wife and tell her to give me rapturous sex. That makes everything better and I can go to work. You should try that." Two hours later Jim calls again. "You were right boss. I did what you said and I feel great. I'll be in to work soon. You've got a nice house"

Contributed definitions

1. The definition of a will. It's a dead giveaway.
2. In democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism it's your count that votes.
3. A plateau is a high form of flattery.
4. Bakers trade recipes on a knead to know basis.
5. A lot of money is tainted. Taint yours, taint mine.
6. Every calendar's days are numbered.
7. Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
8. Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.
9. Acupuncture is a jab well done.
10. Marathon runners with bad footwear suffer the agony of defeat.

News Letter

Taieri Bridge Club

Issue Number 83 November 2003



Annual General Meeting

The club's AGM will take place on 4th November. This is an important event in the club's year. Please come and make your contribution.

Labour Day fun night

The club held another of its increasingly popular fun nights on 27 October. The evening began with the bar opening at 5.30pm. Shortly after that we had an excellent selection of Chinese food delivered, followed by delicious home-baking. This was followed by 24 boards of duplicate bridge in a ten table Mitchell movement. Very many thanks to all those who contributed their time, cooking energies, and skill. Food and bridge cost each of us \$7 only which must be the bargain of the year. If you haven't yet been to a fun night look out for the next one.

The law of total tricks (part 2)

Last month I wrote about the LAW of Total Tricks. The LAW is a guide to tell you how far to compete in an auction where both sides are bidding. In its simplest form it says "Contract for as many tricks as you have trumps in your combined hands". The LAW doesn't say that you will make your contract; it merely says that you will score better than by letting the opponents play theirs. This month I want to give a couple of typical examples that show the accuracy of the LAW.

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

Suppose you are East and South has opened the bidding with 1♣. Then it goes

1♣ - P - 1♥ - 1♠

2♥ - 2♠ - 3♥ - ??

Do you compete to 3♠?

Ace of hearts.

That's already 11 points. Since he opened 1NT he cannot have both the King of spades and the King of hearts. If he has the King of spades we must continue hearts. If he has the King of hearts we must switch to a low spade. How can we know which is correct? In short, how can we know whether our partner likes hearts or not? She hasn't had a chance to tell us. Or has she?

If you play Smith signals your partner will tell you whether she likes hearts or not by her play to the second trick. A high diamond means she wants you to continue hearts; a low diamond is a suggestion to try something else.

The basic idea is that *either* defender signals their like or dislike of the opening lead by the card they play when declarer first gains the lead. Some players like to reverse these two signals but whichever version you play you will have to guess less often in situations like the one above.

By the way, I don't know who the Smith was who invented this form of signal. Can anyone enlighten me?

Smith signals

We all know how useful it is to signal to our partner when she leads. If we have the King when she leads the Ace we tell her by whatever signalling method we are using. These attitude signals are essential to good defence. But now look at this defensive problem. You are West and the contract is 3NT by South after the simple bidding sequence 1NT - 3NT.

♠ J 8 3
♥ Q 5 4
♦ Q J T 8
♣ A Q 9

♠ A Q 9 4
♥ T 8 7 6 2
♦ K 2
♣ T 9

You lead the six of hearts, dummy plays low, partner plays the Jack, and declarer wins with the Ace. Next declarer plays a club to the Ace. At trick 3 he runs the Queen of diamonds to your King. This is the critical moment of the hand.

Declarer is playing as though he has the Ace of diamonds (else why enter dummy for the diamond play?). He also seems to have the King of clubs (or why not finesse?). And we have already seen the

If you believe in the LAW you will pass. You have 8 trumps so you should contract for 8 tricks. Note that, on this hand, you can defeat 3♥ by at least one trick and 3♠ will go down two tricks if the opponents lead spades at every opportunity. Does that mean your partner shouldn't have bid 2♠? Not at all. The opponents had bid to their proper 8 trick = 8 trump level and were making 2♥. Your partner's bid has forced them off their proper level. Don't squander his good work!

But wait a minute. That analysis depends on the king of hearts being in your partner's hand. If you had held that card it could have been finessed. Then the opponents can make 3♥. So should you have bid 3♠ in that situation? No! Because now 3♠ goes down by an additional trick and that could well be worse than conceding 140 to the opponents.

The LAW is not always so accurate. In these examples we made our decisions based on what we held without regard for our opponents' trumps. Do they matter? Yes, they do. Next month we shall look at the LAW in its full form. It's more complicated to understand, and more complicated to apply. But, if you can master it, it will pay you many rewards.

Frieda's unblocking play

Gordon Rhode and Frieda Mayer were defending a tricky slam contract. The bidding had been swift:

1♠ - 3♠ - 6♠

and Frieda, sitting West, led the 2♣. Looking at her feeble collection

♠ 6 5; ♥ K 2; ♦ J 4 3 2; ♣ 7 5 4 3 2

she did not have much hope of defeating the contract. Her only significant card was K♥.

"Better use that to good effect" she thought. So intent on that thought was she that, when declarer casually played the A♥ to the second trick, Frieda accidentally played her King! Realising immediately, she flushed but otherwise remained impassive. The full hand was

♠ Q T 9 8 4
♥ J 9 4
♦ A 6
♣ K T 9

♠ 6 5
♥ K 2
♦ J 4 3 2
♣ 7 5 4 3 2

♠ 3 2
♥ Q T 7 5 3
♦ Q 8 5
♣ Q J 6

♠ A K J 7
♥ A 8 6
♦ K T 9 7
♣ A 8

In due course, the contract failed by one trick much to Frieda's relief. "Brilliant, Frieda" said Gordon. "Um, thank you, Gordon, I". Gordon continued. "If you hadn't thrown your King under the Ace of hearts, declarer would have drawn trumps, cashed the top cards in diamonds and clubs, ruffed a diamond, ruffed a club, ruffed a diamond to get to this position:

	♠ Q	
	♥ J 9	
	♦	
	♣	
♠		♠
♥ K		♥ Q T 7
♦		♦
♣ 7 5		♣
	♠ J	
	♥ 8 6	
	♦	
	♣	

Then he would have played a heart for you to take with your King and you would have had to concede a ruff and discard. But, since you had discarded your King already, I took the heart and cashed another heart winner". Frieda had to confess that her brilliancy was inadvertent hoping that Gordon wouldn't think less of her. But her honesty and her heart play had quite won his own heart.