

Dummy's rights and wrongs

One of our members has kindly supplied me with the following summary of the rights of dummy that appeared recently in the Otago Tabletalk newsletter.

Dummy has the following rights and obligations:

1. May ask declarer if they have revoked
2. May answer the Director's questions
3. Plays the cards for declarer as instructed
4. May keep track of tricks won and lost

But dummy is not allowed to

1. Initiate a call for the director during the play (unless *another* player has pointed out an irregularity)
2. Make comments on the hand during the play
3. Touch or indicate any card before the declarer has called for it
4. Ask the defenders if they have revoked
5. Look at declarer's or a defender's hand

Humour

The Managing Director was showing an Important Visitor around his company's offices. "And how many people work here?" inquired the IV. "Oh" said the MD wearily "about half of them".

Answer to quiz on Betting (page 3)

Clubs will break 3-3 less than half the time so it is not best to bang down the A, K, Q of clubs. Instead, play a club to the ten; 50% of the time it will win and then you will survive a 4-1 break.

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Taieri Open B tournament

Our Open B pairs tournament takes place on Saturday 1 May. If you haven't taken part in a tournament before this would be an excellent opportunity to wet your toes. Playing in a pairs tournament is like an ordinary Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday game but it takes place in two sessions (morning and afternoon) and there are usually visitors from other clubs (and, at Taieri, excellent refreshments).

Tournament directors like you to have a convention card made out. If you are an inexperienced player this should hold no fear since it will be very sparse indeed and will only take you a minute to complete (ask a club committee member if you want help). The purpose of having a convention card is to inform your opponents of what system you are playing; however it also gives you a chance to confirm with your partner what your agreements are (note: you shouldn't consult it yourself during play!).

Pairs kings, cabbage heads, and mice

I recently played in a pairs competition where this hand came up:

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

Looking only at the North-South hands which contract would you like to be in? My partner and I bid quite timidly to 4♠ (we were mice). We were lucky to find that we made exactly 10 tricks when spades behaved so appallingly. Better bidders than us bid their cards to slam. The best (king) players bid 6♠ whereas cabbage heads bid to the lower scoring 6♦ contract. The 6♠ contract has no chance but 6♦ is cold. Do you see how 6♦ should be made after a heart lead?

See page 7 for the solution

Pairs kings, cabbage heads, and mice solution

This is another standard type of elimination. Two rounds of trumps (felling the queen of diamonds), then A, K of clubs and another club ruffed in the north hand, back to dummy to draw the last trump, and cash the established clubs, after which the position is (something like)

♠ A Q T	
♥ void	
♦ 7	
♣ void	
♠ void	♠ K J 9
♥ Q T 9 7	♥ K
♦ void	♦ void
♣ void	♣ void
♠ 8 6 3	
♥ void	
♦ 8	
♣	

Now a spade to the ten leaves East on lead. East either returns a spade into North's A Q or a heart which allows a spade to be discarded from the South hand as North ruffs (after which North's queen of spades can be ruffed).

Another bridge statistic

95% of all bridge players think they are better than their partner.

Lebensohl: Part 3

In this final article on Lebensohl I'll discuss how you show or deny stoppers in the opponents' suit, and how to probe for a 4-4 major suit fit. You will recall that, when the opponents overcall your 1NT with a bid at the 2 level then responder's 2NT is a demand for opener to bid 3C. That means that responder has 2 ways to raise to 3NT. It can either go (assuming opponents overcall in hearts)

1. 1NT - 2H - 2NT - P
3C - P - 3NT

or

2. 1NT - 2H - 3NT

Both sequences show the values to raise to game but the first one guarantees a stopper in hearts while the second one denies it. Remember this by the mnemonic "**S**low **S**hows" or "**D**irect **D**enies".

There is a similar method for inquiring, via a cue bid of the opponents' suit, whether partner has a 4 card major. Again, suppose the opponents overcall in hearts. Then we have two possible sequences

1. 1NT - 2H - 2NT - P
3C - P - 3H

and

2. 1NT - 2H - 3H

each of which show 4 cards in the other major (spades). Again the first promises a stopper in hearts and the second denies one.

Lebensohl is undeniably complex. Try it!

Betting at the bridge table

One of the fascinations of bridge is that it is not an exact science. Because of a capricious lie of the cards a pair of novices may bid to a contract that experts wouldn't go near; and they may bring it home using an inferior line that ought to fail but gloriously doesn't. Yet, in the long run, because experts play the odds they will outscore less able players. One of their tricks of the trade is knowing something about the relative likelihoods of suits breaking. Whole books have been written on this topic! However, you can get a long way with just knowing that, if there are an even number of cards out against you (e.g. 6), they will break 4-2 more often than 3-3; while an odd number of cards usually breaks evenly (e.g. 3-2 is more likely than 4-1). Armed with that fact how do you make 3NT after the jack of spades lead?

♠ 7 5
♥ A T 4
♦ A 9
♣ A Q 7 4 2

♠ A K 2
♥ J 7 5 2
♦ T 8 4 3 2
♣ K T

You have 7 top tricks and need to make 5 tricks in clubs. What's your best strategy for the club suit?

See page 8 for solution.

Randy seeks advice

Randy Hardwick was feeling very down in the dumps. His girlfriend Voluptua had become so keen on bridge that she hardly ever nowadays seemed to have time for those non-intellectual pursuits so dear to 19 year old male youth's heart (for want of a better euphemism). In desperation he had sought the counsel of Gordon Rhode, Voluptua's aunt Frieda's man friend.

"I don't know, Mr Rhode" he said mournfully.

"Voluptua seems to have lost interest in ...". His voice tailed off but Gordon guessed what he meant. Gordon was fully conscious that, in the giving of advice on romantic pursuits, he himself was hardly qualified. Yet, as someone who had suffered in love himself, he wanted to offer the best advice he could. With furrowed brow he mused. "I think you should woo your young lady through bridge" he said. "Shine at the bridge table and you will light a star in her heart". Gordon couldn't help it; he had become hopelessly romantic over the last few weeks and it had addled his normally clear thinking. "The trouble is" he continued "you are a hopeless player" (tact not being his strong point).

"Remember that hand you butchered last week? You went down in a cold 3NT." Gordon swiftly sketched the hands (see opposite). Randy recalled his defeat. "Yes" he said "they led the Ace of

diamonds and continued diamonds. I took a losing spade finesse; South held 6 spades and unkindly returned one so that when she regained the lead in hearts she cashed a bundle of those spades.

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

"You were unlucky" commiserated Gordon "but you should first have ducked a heart. You would have found that hearts were 3-3 and your ninth trick would have come in hearts". Randy was indignant. "But, Mr Rhode" he expostulated "surely finding 3-3 hearts was a worse chance than the spade finesse working". Gordon was indulgent. "That's true" he said "but you could have fallen back on the spade finesse afterwards if necessary. The way you played gave you no chance to try hearts after spades had failed".

Randy was desperate enough to try anything and so a slow candle was lit in his resolve. Yes, he would master this game of bridge as a knight masters a fiery dragon; and Voluptua, in sooth, would swoon at his feet. "Mr Rhode" he asked "teach me how to execute finesses with finesse, holdups without delay, and trump management with triumph.