

BITE-SIZED BRIDGE

***for Mom & Pop
for retired couples on cruises,
on vacation, playing together
for young couples wanting to share a feast of fun***

**a hands-on step-by-step guide and cookbook
for the Absolute Beginner
and Your Partner**

by Robert Locke

for

mr.&mrs.north, nick&nora, sherlock&watson, booth&bones
dick&jane, mickey&minnie, punch&judy, ma&paKettle
lucy&desi, george&gracie, brangelina&jennifer, bert&ernie, mutt&jeff
romeo&juliet&pyramus&thisbe&tony&maria
antony&cleopatra, caesar&cleopatra, whoever&cleopatra
arthur&guinevere, lancelot&guinevere, arthur&lancelot
butch&sundance, thelma&louise, robin&marian
porgy&bess, pierrot&pirouette, ixchel&itzamna
samson&delilah, aeneas&dido, ulysses&penelope
paris&helen, hector&andromache, troilus&cressida, achilles&patroclus
david&jonathan, damon&pythias, abelard&heloise, dagwood&blondie
leonard&penny, howard&raj, sheldon&amyfarrahfowler
narcissus&narcissus
for you two, or just for you, enjoy

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“One of these days we’re gonna sit down and learn that game.”
How about now?

Dedicated to the memory of Olive and Lanny
Bill and Jean
Mom and Pop
and to teachers of Bridge everywhere.

**google “bob locke bridge” for an Internet tutelage of
the greatest card game ever**

One of the truly fabulous advantages of the Internet is the ability to update quickly and easily with a brand new copyright date on every page.

I began writing ***Bite-Sized Bridge*** after taking a teaching course from Audrey Grant, Empress of Bridge, in Reno NV. She so inspired me that I came right home and plunged into a book for beginners that I hoped to get published, earliest drafts April, 2010. Tried a couple of publishers with an actual book, May, 2011, first copyright, but nope.

In 2013 I got out of bed in prep for a cruise to Hawaii where I was to teach bridge for nine sea days. I woke up with the idea of putting ***Bite-Sized Bridge*** on the Internet. People were always asking to see what I’ve got so far. So there it was, not complete, the first nine chapters pretty tidy, GLOSSARY growing, the last pages a jumble of edited-out stuff that I didn’t yet want to delete.

Now in prep for a real class, I’m publishing it in bookform.

First Things First

I played my first hand of Bridge when I was in 3rd grade and was instantly hooked. My biggest trouble in the game was holding the thirteen cards in my little fingers, but I figured out a scheme for that.

How *hard* then, well might you ask, can this game be to learn?

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge (1st Edition 1964, 7th Edition 2011) has grown from 691 pages including a mere 8-page bibliography to 1033 pages (including the two CDs that come with it).

How *easy* then, well might you ask, can this game be to learn?

The new edition of the *Encyclopedia* no longer attempts a comprehensive bibliography (after the whopping 58-page bibliography of the 6th edition) presumably because published books about Bridge have become innumerable.

What then, well might you ask, makes this book in your hand so special?

This is a book for partners, unique in the Bridge world. Other books attempt to tell you—the individual—how to play, but this book is aimed at you the partnership, all the moms&pops, dicks&janes, sherlocks&watsons who are looking for clues and answers, a lot of baby-boomers who have told themselves for decades, “Maybe next year.” Well, maybe now. You two together. And me.

A word about me. And it might be more egoistical than egotistical, that word, but the reason I use the word “I” so much in this book is because I am talking directly to you. To you both, I hope. I want to share my experiences with this great game. With **YOU**.

I’m still learning after more than fifty years of playing the game. We will not jump right into a Table-of-Four or—so much better!—a Two-Table competition with rotating teams (See SWISS PAIRS) but will start with easy games for two, Honeymoon Bridge, fun and hands-on, right from the start.

Bridge is a feast, with so many delights to choose among that it is too easy to gorge too quickly and just spew. This book attempts to select the right morsels for you to chew upon first so that you can enjoy the feast to the fullest for the fun of your lifetime.

You are going to have to do homework on your own to learn and relearn because—you have no idea yet!—it is incredibly complex if you want to get good. But do bear in mind, I played my first hands of Bridge when I was in 3rd Grade, and played well in short order. So can you.

It is as daunting to teach the game as to learn it. There is so much to know that where and how to begin is a problem. But begin we *must* (you and your partner and I) if we are to move forward. As in a cookbook, I give the directions, but you are the ones to follow them, cracking each egg as I offer it to you.

I believe in hands-on learning. Doing it yourself and following step-by-step instructions is the best way to learn.

Left-page v. Right-page: ingredients on the left, further instructions on the right; steps to play on the left, cautions, jokes interesting and important notes on the right. Simple? Simple is best.

As you move forward at your own pace, remember the GLOSSARY. I have put definitions for terms and ideas there, out of the way of the step-by-step approach to your new world of Bridge so that you do not get sidetracked too soon with all the ins-and-outs that, yes, you do need to learn about, but not right at this moment.

I suggest, too, that early on, perhaps as a stretch-and-yawn, you read Appendix A & B: “A Brief History of Bridge” and “Why Bridge?”—about my own passion for the game which, yes, a 3rd Grader can learn. So get over the “I can’t do this” syndrome.

Bridge developed very much as you learn the game in the early chapters of this book, a step-by-step growth in the complexities of trick-taking, first played by two opponents, then three, then four with a partnership—through the centuries adding the Dummy and Auction. How better to learn the game than by double-quick following its development over 400+ years?

I did not start playing Duplicate Bridge until after my mom’s death in 2007. I was so bereft—having taken care of my failing brother, then my dad, then my mom, and

now being alone and loose—that I was ripe for throwing myself into Bridge and improving my game. You can’t teach an old dog new tricks? At age 63-going on 90, I started Duplicate with zero master points; by my 65th birthday I had earned my Life Master from ACBL, American Contract Bridge League (www.acbl.org). If you want, you can start now, too.

Have Fun (capital F) and, as in Life and a Feast, it’s best with a good partner. Make it your main goal from the start to develop good partnership habits: always *respect* your partner, and *trust* your partner or—if you find you must—move on. Now, first things first, turn the page.

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CHAPTER ONE

Bridge for Two Players

Shuffle a standard deck of 52 cards and deal four hands of thirteen cards each. Call them North, East, South and West. One of you play North and the other play East. For now, ignore South and West.

WAR (on your way to DUPLICATE BRIDGE)

HIGH-CARD War

Put your thirteen cards in a single pack face down before you. At the same moment both players turn over top card on each pack; these two cards constitute TRICK #1.

High-Card wins the TRICK: in Bridge Ace is always high, then King, Queen, Jack, ten all the way down to two. In case of a tie, let SUIT RANK determine high card.

Turn tricks as you would in DUPLICATE BRIDGE; e.g., if you win the trick turn it face down on the table vertically to yourself; if you lose the trick, turn it horizontally, each new trick overlapping the last. Continue in this manner through Trick #13 laying out the won-or-lost tricks from left to right.

Count your vertical tricks (won tricks) and score from one to seven for each trick above six. The first six tricks, called "BOOK", do not count. The 7th trick is called "one", the eighth trick "two", up the line to "seven".

The player winning fewer than six tricks has a score of zero for this deal. This is a simple form of Whist Scoring. Leave tricks in place until you finish the next page.

N.B. DETAILS DETAILS DETAILS

N.B. stands for *nota bene* which is Latin for "note well" and these *N.B.s* will appear throughout this book opposite the instructions to which they pertain.

GLOSSARY terms are in CAPS at their first few appearances in order to attract the skimming eye.

WAR

What does the children's game WAR have to do with Bridge? WAR is the simplest trick-taking game and a good place to start learning Bridge terminology.

SUIT RANK

In Bridge suits are ranked from low to high in alphabetical order: clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades (the boss suit). This fact is critical when you reach the bidding stage; but for now in WAR use suit rank to determine winner only in case of a denominational tie.

TURNING TRICKS and GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

You need to learn and practice clean techniques of play. Messy housekeeping leads to messy play. Keep your won-or-lost tricks in careful, neat order.

SCORING

Scoring in Bridge is more complicated than in practically any game, and was not even invented until 1925 on a cruise through the Panama Canal. In these early chapters we will learn the far simpler scoring for WHIST. The first six tricks won by a player are called BOOK and are not counted because they do not yet amount to half of thirteen.

TRUMP WAR

Carefully slide together your tricks from the High-Card War hand, preserving their order from last to first. You will play them again, in the exact same order, only reversed, but this time with one suit named TRUMP.

TRUMP SUIT is a suit that is designated (by various means) as the most powerful of the four suits. For this next exercise, let's simply agree that clubs are Trump.

Again, turn over the cards one at a time, Tricks 1-13, and determine the winner of each trick, remembering that even the lowly two of clubs will beat (trump) any other card in the deck except a higher club. Overlap the tricks as before, vertical if won or horizontal if lost.

Count the tricks. Any change of score? Probably there is. Any first thoughts about preference between playing with Trump as opposed to Notrump? It all depends, doesn't it, on which suit is named Trump.

Think of Trumps as wildcards; the more you have in your hand, the stronger your hand and the more tricks you should take.

If you wish, play these same thirteen cards three more times, keeping their original order, but designating each of the other three suits as Trump. Compare the score each time. Adding the variable of Trump to the game of WAR makes this simple trick-taking game more fun.

Or if you seem to understand trump, just skip forward.

N.B. HANDLING CARDS

The tedious discipline in these pages is deliberate. There are technical difficulties of all sorts in playing cards, but the Bridge community is welcoming and generous, and accommodations are made for people with movement challenges. Arthritic fingers may need aids, and those are available for purchase.

Remember that the cards must not be exposed until the proper time or there are penalties, so a dropped card can cause you problems. If you require practice to gain dexterity, start practicing now so that you will look smooth at the tournaments.

Always count your cards before you look at their faces. In DUPLICATE BRIDGE if you come up with too many or too few cards at the end of play, you must call the DIRECTOR to sort out the confusion, and penalties may be assessed. Beware that careless counting can easily expose the faces of your cards to others at the table. The best, fastest, safest way for most people is to count them out of sight, above your lap, just under the table, sliding them one at a time from one hand to the other.

COUNTING TRICKS

Leave all tricks in place until there is agreement on the correct score. If there is disagreement, start with Trick #1 at each player's left and examine each trick—carefully maintaining its horizontal or vertical orientation to determine winner or loser—until the disagreement is resolved. Never touch anyone's tricks but your own.

FOLLOW-SUIT WAR

Now, pick up the same thirteen cards, and hold them facing you for the first time. Arrange the cards in your hand after your own fashion, but see the *N.B.* opposite for worthwhile tips.

In the previous exercises with these same cards, you turned over your cards blindly and without strategy; High-Card won the trick in the first exercise; in the subsequent hands Trump and/or High-Card won the trick.

Now, instead of both players turning over their cards at the same time, one player (let's say North) LEADS a card, then the other player (East) plays to the trick. You must FOLLOW SUIT when possible, which is to say that if you have one or more cards in the suit led, you must play that suit. Having none, and unable therefore to follow suit, you have two choices:

- 1) to DISCARD (sluff) an unwanted card of a different suit, thereby losing the trick or
- 2) to TRUMP (ruff) and win the trick.

Let's agree again to make clubs Trump. Winner of the trick leads to the next trick. Play until all 13 tricks are played, counted and scored. Now that you are choosing which cards to play, plus following suit, you should find a different score from earlier.

Play once more with these same 13 cards, this time without a trump suit—or Notrump, as it is called. Do you find you are beginning to use strategy?

N.B. ARRANGING YOUR CARDS

It may seem insulting—this advice—but I've seen some messes in my time. Duplicate Bridge is a timed game and speed in sorting your hand can be important so as not to fall behind the other tables. Again, beginners are easy to spot as they fumble with their cards; so practice sorting the cards quickly, black-red-black-red to help prevent misplays; it is easy, for example, to play a heart instead of a diamond if your red suits are adjacent. The penalty for a misplay like this can be disastrous. You may also find it helpful to arrange the cards within a suit in rank from high to low so as to better assess the strength of your hand.

STRATEGY

Before FOLLOW-SUIT WAR, you did not use strategy at all; it was merely luck. But now you find yourself making choices:

To trump or to discard (ruff or sluff)?

To lead a high, middle or low card?

How to capture the lead in Notrump, and stay in the lead?

In the next exercise when you are introduced to the concept of DUMMY, strategies develop fast. As you continue to play, try to play quickly and smoothly. It is easy to over-think a problem—wheels turning without gears meshing—which grows tedious for everyone else.

“Oh, I just don't know what to do!” My teeth clinch every time I hear this whine from a beginner. Of course you don't know what to do—yet. The very best way to learn what to do is to **just do it**; do it fast and do it with humor. This is, after all, just a game. Let's play, play, play.

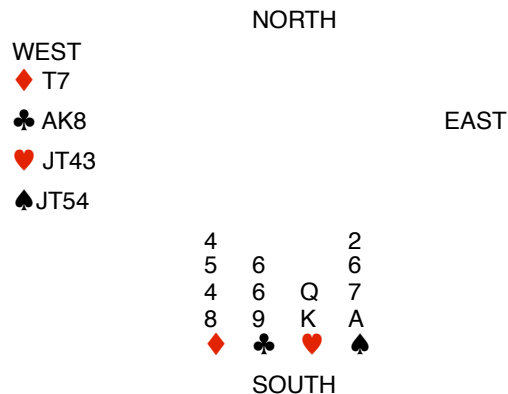
TWO-HANDED (Honeymoon) SPADES

“Are we playing Bridge yet?”

“No, but you are getting closer, step-by-step.”

It is time to learn about one of the most important developments in the history of Bridge: the DUMMY.

Deal four hands of thirteen cards each. North and East play against each other, as before, but now—while North and East keep their hands concealed—lay out South’s cards face-up on the table opposite North, also West’s cards face-up opposite East (as in example below). Lay the Trump (Spades in this game) left-most facing Partner.



Let’s give the first lead to East. Play-of-the-Hand in Bridge is always clockwise: so South plays 2nd, North choosing the card. West plays 3rd, East choosing the card. North plays last to the first trick. Winner of each trick leads to the next trick. With two Dummies it is perhaps easier for each player to simply whisk all four cards into a single pile, instead of turning tricks as in Duplicate.

N.B. SPADES and WHIST

You may be surprised that you have practically learned the old standard trick-taking games of WHIST and SPADES (which is a form of Whist in which spades is always Trump).

You have learned these basic premises:

- 13 cards to a hand
- Trick-Taking
- Following Suit (or Discarding or Trumping)
- Trump
- Notrump

If you are invited into a game of Spades or Whist, accept and play play play. It’s good practice for Bridge.

THE DUMMY

In Bridge, there are two periods to each hand, first the AUCTION, then Play-of-the-Hand when DUMMY is laid face up on the table. So far we are concentrating only on the second period, using two Dummies two-handedly, instead of only one as in Four-Handed and Three-Handed Bridge. Now, instead of having only two hands to play, we have all four, all 52 cards in play.

And this is pretty much how the vastly superior game of Bridge developed out of earlier trick-taking games, probably among some bored Russian soldiers about 1880, playing Birtch and wondering:

“Hey! Where’s Sergei? We need our fourth!”

“Got blown up by a cannon, I think.”

“Oh, too bad. Well, let’s play three-handed then. We’ll make Sergei Dummy.”

Now that each player can see all hands but one, you can figure out which cards your Opponent holds, but don't worry; there is still much strategy to learn—when and how to PULL TRUMP or CROSS-TRUMP (see Chapter Three); how to FINESSE (see Appendix C); how to manage TRANSPORTATION, etc.

You should now play several deals of Two-Handed Bridge to start understanding and developing strategies. If you do find, however, that you don't like seeing the complete Dummies at this point, you can choose an alternative Two-Handed Bridge style. (see HONEYMOON WITH A TWIST in GLOSSARY)

In the next chapter comes a wrinkle that will make Two-Handed Bridge far more interesting: the AUCTION. In Three-Handed Bridge you will learn how to lay out a single Dummy face-down in suit columns with each player bidding in an AUCTION to become partner with the Dummy and name Trump. Big jump in skill.

After you read Chapter Two, come back and re-read these paragraphs to adapt those Three-Handed instructions to your Two-Handed game. Instead of seeing four cards as instructed in Three-Handed Bridge, you will see six cards each in both Dummies. Then you use the same AUCTION techniques as in Three-Handed to become DECLARER. Highest bidder wins the choice of Dummy, also the right to name your own Trump (or Notrump). Loser of the auction becomes partner with the other Dummy and DEFENDS against Declarer.

So read the next two chapters, then come back here.

N.B. THE GAMES OF BRIDGE

DUPLICATE BRIDGE differs from PARTY BRIDGE (often called SOCIAL or RUBBER BRIDGE) in a number of ways. In Duplicate Bridge each deal is played over and over again by multiple partnerships in a club or tournament. After each deal is played, each hand is put into a BOARD with four slots: North, South, East, West. These boards are moved from table to table around the room after they are played while the E/W players move around the room in the opposite direction.

This is the reason you learned from the beginning to arrange your won and lost tricks in front of you (instead of whisked together by the winner into a little pack of four, as in many trick-taking card games). Keeping tricks separate allows hands to be replayed. This book prepares you to play Duplicate Bridge, more so than Party Bridge.

CONTRACT BRIDGE (the term that encompasses both Duplicate and Party Bridge) was developed out of the simpler game of Auction Bridge during a 1925 cruise through the Panama Canal by Harold S. Vanderbilt and his entourage. The biggest single advance was in SCORING, much more on that later.

Ponder the thousands of books about Bridge that have hit the market since 1925—including *The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge*, growing from an already whopping 691 pages in its 1964 first edition to over 1000 pages in its 2002 6th edition, and now a 2011 edition—with countless new SYSTEMS and CONVENTIONS. You are opening the door to an exciting new world.

CHAPTER TWO Three-Handed Bridge

Deal four hands of thirteen cards each to North, East, South and West. To make directions simple, let's put Dummy in South position, with the three players at North, East and West. Partnerships might change after each auction, which might mandate changing positions.

LAYOUT OF DUMMY

Each player privately examines four cards from South's hand, and then lays them face-down on the table at South's position, calling out "Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs" as the cards are positioned in columns from left to right according to North. If one of the suits is void, leave a gap. The thirteenth card is placed face-up in its appropriate suit column.

Each player, therefore, knows four cards privately and a fifth card in common with the other players. Additionally all can see the DISTRIBUTION of suits in Dummy's hand: how many Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs.

Beginning with Dealer, players bid in AUCTION (see opposite) to see who wins partnership with Dummy. Assess the strength of your own hand with what you know of the cards in Dummy as to whether you believe you can take seven or more tricks (guesswork perhaps now) and bid upward accordingly. If you are last to bid, you win the AUCTION and become DECLARER. The other two players become DEFENDERS.

N.B. THREE HANDED BRIDGE

Because it has been so many decades since the invention of Dummy—a player who sits out the Play-of-the-Hand in Bridge—it's curious that so little attention has been paid to the very entertaining game of Three-Handed Bridge. As far as I can tell, it was my mom and pop and I who invented it ourselves because nobody else in our family ever would bother to learn to play Bridge with us. It is by far the best card game for three players that I know, with Cutthroat Pinochle and Hearts a distant second and third choice.

THE AUCTION

As in all Bridge rotations, THE AUCTION proceeds clockwise, Dealer first to bid. As in all auctions the bids must continue upwards, with the lowest possible bid 1C and the highest 7NT: i.e., 1C, 1D, 1H, 1S, 1NT, 2C, 2D, 2H, 2S, 2NT, 3C, etc. all the way up to 7NT. Notice again the rank is alphabetic, C-D-H-S, with NT (Notrump) above spades.

Players may pass at any bid and come back into the auction later, also may skip over a number of steps, but the bidding must always go upward until two passes in a row end the Auction (or in Four-Handed Bridge, three passes in a row).

DECLARER's highest bid is the CONTRACT, e.g., 4S where Declarer has committed to take Book plus four tricks with spades as Trump. If Declarer fulfills the contract, Declarer gets a plus score. If Declarer fails (going DOWN or SET) Declarer gets a minus score.

After the auction in Three-Handed Bridge—unlike Four-Handed and Two-Handed Bridge—it is often necessary for players to swap seats. DECLARER moves to North to sit opposite Dummy (whom for simplicity we are making South always). East and West (or perhaps new East or new West) sit opposite each other as DEFENDERS.

Declarer's LHO (left hand opponent) always makes the OPENING LEAD, after which Dummy is exposed in South, keeping all thirteen cards in their suit columns. Put Trump (if any) on the left facing Declarer and the other suits in black-red alternation. In Notrump it is helpful to Declarer as a mnemonic to put the led suit at the left.

Declarer, take as long as you need at this moment to look over all Dummy's cards to see how they fit with your own cards and determine your plan for Play-of-the-Hand. This is perhaps the most challenging aspect of the game of Bridge, also the most rewarding. Learn not to rush it.

SIMPLE SCORING

I suggest for now a simple scoring system used by many who play Bid Whist. Only Declarer registers a score—either plus if you make your contract, one point for each trick you take—or minus the number that you bid if you fail to make your contract. For example, if you bid 4S and make 5, you score 5; but if you GO DOWN, you get a score of minus 4, no matter how many tricks you go down. The player first to reach 11 wins the match.

After you learn Bridge Scoring (Ch. 5) you will no doubt want to use that far more challenging and fun scoring system for your Three- or Two-Handed Bridge games.

N.B. BEGINNING PLAY-OF-THE-HAND

DEFENDERS, sitting East and West, have as their goal to SET the contract, giving Declarer a negative score. Mom and Pop and I called Three-Handed Bridge “Cutthroat” because partnerships change deal-by-deal, with a new East-West abandoning old partnerships and ganging up together on the new North, you and your new best friend cutting your old partner's throat.

OPENING LEAD

It is often said about Bridge that the first card led is the single most important card of the entire deal. So it is well to list here some strategies for OPENING LEAD. This list—like all “strategies” and “guidelines” and “rules” recommended by Bridge players—is rife with exceptions which you will learn about through practice and further reading.

- Fourth from high in your longest and strongest suit
- Top of touching cards, especially HONORS
- SINGLETON (v. Trump contract)
- HIGH-LOW from a DOUBLETON (v. Trump contract)

DOUBLETON=two of a suit, SINGLETON=one of a suit are advantageous or disadvantageous depending upon which suit is Trump, or whether you are in Notrump.

Watch your partner's Opening Lead like a hawk and remember it. Chances are good your partner wants you to lead that suit back when you win a trick and take the lead. Play, play, play, play, now that you know how.

DISTRIBUTION

One reason I prefer teaching Play-of-the-Hand with Three- or Two-Handed Bridge is that DISTRIBUTION of suits is much easier to understand than in Four-Handed Bridge where all four hands are concealed until after the Auction, when Dummy is revealed. (Also, it is much easier gathering a threesome than a foursome.)

Distribution can often be far more important than High Card Points (hcp) in how many tricks you are able to take. An easy-to-understand example—if one that you will never run across in your lifetime, hope for it though you may—is if your distribution were 13-0-0-0: i.e., 13 of one suit and three VOIDS. Naming that suit Trump, you cannot escape making a Grand Slam, taking all 13 tricks yet having only 10 hcp, the HONORS in your suit, AKQJ.

Skip, if you wish, these statistics, but I must admit that I am shocked, after all these years, to learn that the ten most common distributions of Bridge hands—

4-4-3-2	—	21.6%
5-3-3-2	—	15.5%
5-4-3-1	—	12.9%
5-4-2-2	—	10.6%
4-3-3-3	—	10.5%
6-3-2-2	—	5.6%
6-4-2-1	—	4.7%
6-3-3-1	—	3.5%
5-5-2-1	—	3.2%
4-4-4-1	—	3.0%

—amount to more than 90% of all Bridge hands, the other 29 possible distributions amounting to less than 10%. (!)

Put that into the perspective that the total number of possible deals in Bridge is a number so long—starting with 53 and followed by 9 commas and 27 digits—that I doubt there even exists an *illion*-word to say it aloud; so I simply say 53 googolplex-illion.

And look how seldom voids are dealt!

Twice in my life I was dealt a hand of 7-6-0-0 (statistics are 1 in 10,000). Somewhat more frequently I have been dealt a hand with 6-5-1-1 or 6-5-2-0 (respectively 71 and 65 in 10,000). These hands are great fun to bid and play; or they can also be monsters.

A commonplace is that when your own hand has a wild distribution such as those three in the paragraph above, at least one of the other four hands will often have similarly wild distribution. This can be thrilling yet dangerous; so keep it in mind.

PLAY-OF-THE-HAND DO'S-AND-DON'T'S

In any 4-handed trick-taking card game with partners, guidelines stretch back over centuries as to how and when to play each card. Because I do not wish you to get distracted by too much information too soon—of which perhaps I am already guilty by inserting these statistics on distribution—I shall tuck away these very good bits of advice into Appendix D—Play-of-the-Hand Do's-and-Don't's. Consult Appendix D often as you continue to play. The suggestions may not make a lot of sense to you right now, but they will begin making very good, practical sense as you gain experience in Play-of-the-Hand.

CHAPTER THREE Basics

BIDDING BASICS

To know how high you dare bid with hope of making your contract, you must EVALUATE your hand's strength.

First judge strength counting only High-Card Points (hcp), the HONORS in all the suits:

A=4 K=3 Q=2 J=1
Total hcp in a suit = 10 Total hcp of all suits = 40

This first, simple hcp evaluation is probably as far as you wish to go now, but soon you want to learn to re-evaluate.

These hand evaluations and re-evaluations will be the basis for communicating with your partner when you get to that point in the bidding process. But for purposes of Three-Handed bidding your intent is not yet partnership-communication but is far simpler—merely to win the auction in order to become Declarer opposite the Dummy.

So, adding your hand's points to Dummy's, here are some simplistic, easy-to-memorize guidelines to keep in mind:

18-23 hcp	=	7-8 tricks
24-26+ hcp	=	9-10 tricks
27-29+ hcp	=	11 tricks
33+ hcp	=	12 tricks
37+ hcp	=	13 tricks

N.B. EVALUATING DUMMY

In Three-Handed Bridge you see not only the distribution of suits in Dummy but also the denominations of five cards (seven when you play two-handedly). So your trick-taking calculations cannot be exact, but they can get you near enough to make the game exciting.

In Four-Handed Bridge communication with your partner is far more complex, and the challenges of bidding will expand infinitely—all the more fun! However, for purposes of BASICS, Three- and Two-Handed Bridge provide you with excellent practice in that most critical element of Bridge bidding: FINDING A FIT.

FIT

Look at the distribution of all suits in your hand and Dummy to find a FIT: 8+ between your hand and Dummy in a single suit. That is the suit you want to make Trump; the more trump, the better. If you don't find a Fit, you might well be better off in Notrump.

You might find two suits with an 8+ Fit; good, that makes your hand stronger. When you learn about Major v. minor suit advantages (Ch. 5) you will find new strategies for deciding between two equal suits, but for now you will probably use rank—C-D-H-S—to choose your Trump.

A 5-3 Fit between Declarer and Dummy is good, but 4-4 is called by many experts "THE GOLDEN FIT" because this distribution usually provides an extra trump in both hands for CROSS-TRUMPING after you PULL TRUMP.

PLAY-OF-THE-HAND BASICS

PULLING TRUMP early is one strategy in Play-of-the-Hand. It is particularly advisable if you have a long, strong side suit in your hand or Dummy which you can RUN after disposing of your opponents' trump so they cannot trump and steal the lead away from you.

If you have 8 trump between you and Dummy then your opponents have only 5, and the odds are in your favor that their trump are SPLIT 3-2 and you will be able to pull all their trump in three leads.

CROSS-TRUMPING is an alternative strategy. If you are short in one side suit and your Dummy is short in another, it will usually be far wiser to trump your losers back and forth between Dummy and yourself. This way each of your trump takes a trick, whereas when you pull trump, you use two of your trump to take two of theirs.

Only with practice will you learn when it is best to use either strategy—pulling trump or cross-trumping—or a wise combination of both.

PLAN YOUR PLAY-OF-THE-HAND

After Dummy has been displayed, plan your strategy. Count your losers and count your winners. How can you turn losers into winners? By cross-trumping? By pulling trump, then running a strong side suit while sluffing losers? By trying some finesses or end-plays? See Appendix C—Finesses; also Appendix D—Play-of-the-Hand Do's-and-Don't's.

N.B. 5, 6, 7, 8!

Audrey Grant, a delightful teacher of Bridge and author of numerous books, offers students various mnemonics, or memory aids. One of Audrey's most useful suggestions is her chant of 5,6,7,8! meaning that the odds of your opponents' 5 trump being split 3-2 is 67.8 %. Playing the odds is best.

N.B. "LAWS" v. "RULES"

"THE LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS" suggests that the number of tricks Declarer is able to win—when hcp are fairly equally divided—equals the number of trumps between Declarer and Dummy: e.g., 8 trumps=8 tricks; 9=9, 10=10. This is highly simplistic but good to remember.

"Laws" and "Rules" are terms you will learn to take both seriously and with a grain of salt. But you should know that ACBL (American Contract Bridge League) continues to put out new editions of a book called *LAWS OF DUPLICATE BRIDGE* by which Duplicate players are bound. Currently there are 93 laws, each so full of complicated clauses that it requires a DIRECTOR at Duplicate games to sort them out when misplays occur: e.g., REVOKE, BID OUT OF ROTATION, PLAY OUT OF ROTATION, etc. A call of "Director, Please," brings a Director quickly and quietly to your table to ask questions and render a fair decision according to ACBL LAWS. If you disagree, you may appeal after the game is over, but you must comply for the moment.

Do not confuse "The Law of Total Tricks" or "The Rule of Eleven", "The Rule of 20", "The Rule of 15", etc.—mere mnemonic strategies—with ACBL LAWS.

CHAPTER FOUR

Stretch, Yawn and Scratch In Preparation for Partnership Play

If you think that reading the previous pages was tedious because of the tightly packed instructions, you should try writing them. I am positively hemorrhoidal. As I limn these lines of sagacious prose, I long for a little poetry and art to leaven the doughy and doughy potpie with some dumplings of humor; and so I invite you to take a break, as I do, and loosen up. Our partnership as writer-reader will be the better for it.

If you are gung-ho, however, to go on with the next step-by-step instructions, you may feel free to skip this chapter. I know here and now that it will be casual and jokey, full one hopes, of laughs, sighs and tears, also lessons on how *to* and *not to* treat your partner.

PARTNERSHIPS

First I'll mention the partnership between me and you, the characters who began this book together. Until now we have been rushing headlong into Bridge, and yet we are still nowhere near Bridge. Many bridges to cross, ha ha, before we get into Bridge, the real game of Bridge.

I have already introduced you to my pop—Clayton, or Clay as everyone called him—and my mom Bess. They are the ones who taught me this game in 3rd Grade, or, well, the fundamentals. They were my first Bridge partners, and my longest partnerships, and I learned well their good and bad points as partners.

Good idea: know your partners well. Are they timid, aggressive, wild? You should find yourself adapting your own qualities to these qualities in your partners.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS—TRUST

Where Bridge gets most fun and most complicated is with the introduction of partnerships, the communication and *mis*communication(s) that abound at that moment when a fourth player takes a seat at the Bridge table.

There is a guide called the CONVENTION CARD which you and your partner can study in order to agree upon which conventions you will use in your partnership. ACBL has a series of webpages to help, “Conventional Wisdom”. You need to *trust* your partner to remember your agreements and abide by them. Yes, we all make mistakes, and so will you and your partner. Forgive and move on; don't make a big deal of it and remember that trust is a two-way street.

So back to my mom and pop. My mom was a notorious overbidder but had such luck that she could get away with it. Also, she was as skillful a player as I have ever seen.

My pop was a good player, too, an intuitive player with a lot of card sense. He had no education at all—well, a couple of years of elementary school. He would get confused when he would try to tell me what grade he reached because he was held back so many times. He would joke, for example, “They threw me out of 4th grade because I refused to shave.”

Pop probably had a form of dyslexia, I think. Now we have a word for it, but back then they would merely have deemed him “hopeless”.

I remember once when Mom and Pop were planning a trip back to Oklahoma, in their 60s, that they wanted to hand-write their wills in case they should die on the trip. Mom, who had two years of college and had even taught school for one year before she married Pop, was very quick at writing, but Pop asked me if I would write out what he wanted to put in his will so that he could copy it.

I had the good sense to print it, rather than write it in cursive, because I suspected he would have trouble otherwise. He had trouble anyway since he copied each word letter for letter. That was an eye-opener for me because I had always admired him so much for his great brain. Clay Locke could do practically anything; he could build houses—laying the foundations, pouring and smoothing the concrete, plumbing, wiring, framing, roofing, everything except painting, which he loathed—and he could fix anything broken on a car, the brakes, the clutch, the whatchamacallit, anything, all self-taught. But he couldn't write.

I remember one time I was typing furiously away on my Selectric typewriter—my treasure in those early days—writing my book *TRACKS* that was based on Pop's adventures as a young man hopping freights from Oklahoma to California in 1934 Dust Bowl Depression days. Pop was watching me from the sofa where he woke up from a snooze. He said, “I just marvel, Bob, at your way with words.”

The alert reader—you?—might already have suspected that I do love words and do relish stringing them together in long sentences with many parentheticals (often so many and long that I have to set off some of them with dashes instead of parentheses) with every period a rare punctuation mark: colons abound; and semi-colons make their appearance regularly, each punctuation mark serving its own purpose, period.

But enough of these frivolous digressions. The point is that my first Bridge partners were great folks, dear to me, smart, but certainly not without their faults. When you finish this book, you finish this partnership with me, and you owe it to yourself to find a good partner if that partner is not already by your side reading these words. And you owe it to your partner to always treat him or her as though he or she is your dearest friend.

I think I'll take an even longer break here to tell you a really long story—heart wrenching for me—that should illuminate benefits and pitfalls of partnerships.

Again I urge you to skip ahead if you feel you are not prepared for this kind of intimacy with “Yours Truly” and I remind you that there is an entire cookbook still ahead of you. Also, I offer you this caveat, in the oft-shouted, ever-frustrated words of my sister Janet, “Bob, you go on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on!”

That said, I shall go on.

PARTNERSHIP *DISAGREEMENTS*—*MISTRUST*

A good partnership is a terrible thing to lose. I had a wonderful partner at the beginning of my Duplicate career, and we learned a lot together. He had much more experience than I in Duplicate, having begun as a young man with an experienced partner, playing a system called Precision.

Honestly! (if I may interject) the number of “systems” in the game of Bridge is mind-boggling. What a partnership really needs is a simple SCHEME, which is what this book offers your partnership. You might want to take a moment and look up that simple word in the Glossary.

With this first partner of mine—and I’ll call him Bob, though that’s not his name, so as *not* to make him seem in any way villainous, but a sweet, gentle person—I had from the beginning told him, with amusement, when we would witness bad behavior between our opponents, quite often married couples at each other’s throat, perhaps some snapping or even throwing down of cards, some harsh words, angry criticism, carping, conjugal daggers sharpened and at the ready, “If you ever treat me like that, Bob, it will be the end of our partnership.”

I did give Bob a warning, just one month before I did finally call an end to the partnership. We were on the way home from a Duplicate game in San Francisco; he was driving, and I was in the passenger seat; I can tell you the exact stretch of Berkeley freeway, so much impact did my own words have on me: “Don’t talk to me like I’m a moron.”

I did not yell it but said it quietly because I had been re-running through our card-playing all evening the disagreement that Bob and I had had over dinner. During that conversation, as we discussed some complicated techniques that we might want to begin using, Bob did in fact talk to me as though I were a moron.

Now, I love long and very detailed discussions about Bridge strategies, and I’m very good about relinquishing my position when I have been shown that “there is a better way” or “that was a bad play because...” of this, that, or the other. It is easy for me to admit to making mistakes, and in fact I make a lot of them. And so will you.

So it’s really good advice I now give you to admit your mistakes with grace and learn from them and move on. Don’t beat yourself up. And for goodness sake, don’t beat your partner up.

So you can see that when I said quietly to Bob on our weary drive home, “Don’t talk to me like a moron,” I really meant it. He took it with grace (enough not to make a reply) and I hoped that THAT would be that.

But no, a month later Bob made a truly terrible play in the last hand of a Swiss Team event at a Regional tournament in Monterey. It had caused a huge SWING, which gave the entire match to our opponents. That really doesn’t matter to me; I never mind losing; I really do play the game for the fun of it; and I lose frequently and with good humor. In this case, Bob and I were playing on a team with two of my other very dear partners—and I will name them because I love them so,

Wayne and Laurie—and Bob and I owed it to Wayne and Laurie to play our best.

I didn't accuse Bob of it that night, but I have always suspected that he made this misplay on purpose because he wanted to show me "who is boss in this partnership," which is a very bad thing to do. Read that again please, right now, because it is perhaps the most important thought in this book. Your relationship with your partner is only as good as **YOU BOTH** make it, nota bene.

In this instance with Bob, he overtook my spade Queen with his King when he had several other spades he could have played instead. It wasn't out of inattention; he clearly thought it over and decided to do it. Overtaking one's partner's trick is not necessarily a bad strategy—though it does seem wasteful—because sometimes it is a good strategy to wrest the lead into your hand, allowing you to take even more tricks.

But that was not the case this time. This time the lead was much better placed in my hand than in Bob's. I knew it. He should have known it.

I said to him quietly as we left the table, "You should have left me in the lead."

Now, there are many people who will say, "You should *never* say 'should'." Oh, I hear that, and I take it with both the grain of salt and grain of wisdom that it so ironically offers. But Bob and I had often had long postmortems about our games of Duplicate, and we both benefited

immensely from them, and so to that "should never" I respond, "Balderdash!"

And so, yes, I did say the dreaded "should" word to Bob: "You should have left me in the lead. I saw your signal that you wanted a club lead, and I was going to come back with a club on the next trick."

But I think, no, I will **not** continue with this story right now after all because it will take us too far afield too soon. I shall put this entire deal, all four hands—still emblazoned in my memory all these years later—into an appendix. Appendix E. You can go look at it now if you care to, but at this point in your understanding of Bridge, I think some concepts will not make much sense to you.

And my point in bringing it into the narrative here is that you must be kind and generous and understanding with your partner, not bullying and, I really think in this case, abusive.

But you also need to know here that indeed advanced Bridge players do have SIGNALS in their partnership agreements, and certain signals are not deceitful or unethical but are wise and allowed. Later chapter.

And if you doubt that I really do remember that entire deal after all this while, all four hands, yep, and you will get to that point yourself if you keep playing. You will lie awake at night reliving—and in this case reviling—certain deals.

That is when you know for sure what "hooked on Bridge" means. Play, play, play, play, play, play, play, play!

CHAPTER FIVE Bridge Scoring

Scoring is so boring you might want to skip this chapter altogether. Many players play happily their entire lives without ever picking up a pencil. But I consider it so important for the beginning player that I devote a short chapter to it right now in your progress. Knowing it is here, you can always skip it for now, play, play, and come back to this chapter when you need it.

Working to get the wording tight, I realize even more so that this is the most boring stuff in the world, and I am tempted to put it all into an appendix. But already so many appendices. I'll just put this single premise in bold:

You earn bonuses for bidding what you make. A GAME bonus is either 300 or 500 depending upon VULNERABILITY. Failing to reach Game in your bidding, you get a PARTSCORE bonus of 50. Bidding and making SLAM (taking 12 tricks) or GRAND SLAM (taking 13 tricks) earns you whopping bonuses.

Since you can often make GAME in a single hand—not perhaps 50% of the time, but pretty often—I suggest you open each hand with that goal in the forefront of your brain, settling for PARTSCORE the other times.

Now skip ahead if this chapter bores you, and play, play, play, understanding, notwithstanding, that Yours Truly does consider it extremely important in developing your Bridge strategies.

N.B. DIFFERENT KINDS OF BRIDGE SCORING

First, there is more than one kind of Bridge Scoring: RUBBER SCORING and DUPLICATE SCORING pre-eminent (and this chapter does not even begin on Match Points, IMPS, etc.) Though this book prepares you for Duplicate Bridge, Rubber Scoring came first; so this chapter takes you through those ins-and-outs first.

Talking with Absolute Beginners, I usually ask them right off, “Do you want to learn to play Party Bridge or Duplicate Bridge?” Often they reply, “Party Bridge!” perhaps because it sounds more fun. But I'll caution you: some Bridge Directors say to a class of Duplicate Bridge learners, “How many of you already play Party Bridge? Okay, all of you are going to have to start *un*learning.”

A lot of this *un*learning has to do with discrepancies in scoring and the different strategies that the Bridge player brings to the Party Bridge table as opposed to the Duplicate Bridge table.

Party Bridge (Social Bridge, Rubber Bridge) is far less competitive for one simple reason: players don't get to see what *could have been* if the hands had been bid or played differently.

Party Bridge is rather like skinny-dipping in a huge lake at midnight with no moon: fun, no boundaries, no comparisons. But in Duplicate Bridge the moon comes up and you see not only the shoreline but also your own imperfections in reaching ideal harbor.

Duplicate players get to see the TRAVELER that is attached to each board to see what all other pairs did with this same deal: “Oh, look they bid Slam! Oh, warts and barnacles! Why did we stop at Game?”

Also, in Party Bridge players seem to take little delight in being Defender. “I only played three hands all night!” when in fact they played, of course, every hand. They simply didn’t count the hands they played as Defender because those hands weren’t as “fun” and—when Dummy—those dummies no doubt left the table for another plate of goodies instead of watching their partner’s Play-of-the-Hand: a mistake! Learn as you watch!

By contrast, Duplicate players enjoy Defending as much as Declaring, especially when they have DOUBLED the contract, which tremendously excites the scoring.

Duplicate players are also more prone to making SAC BIDS, sacrifices which are strategic for Duplicate but can be a bore in Party Bridge. So Duplicate players, beware! Other guests at the party get their kicks out of Declaring and have no appreciation for your SAC. Don’t take their fun away from them (too often).

VULNERABILITY

I’ll offer an amusing anecdote from a friend of mine who is a Bridge Director aboard cruise lines. Once he was called to a gig that was half-way through a world cruise because the previous Director had died of a heart attack on board ship. No wonder, my friend thought, when he met the

passengers who had been taking the Bridge classes; many of them were British and playing the British system of bidding called ACOL. (I told you about the plethora of bidding systems; ACOL is but another, no better or worse than any other, but a system nonetheless with which the Director aboard this cruise needed to be familiar.) Among the Brits were some noble folk, lords and ladies, or at least with pretensions. Yes, hypertension would be rife.

One particular woman—dubbed La Principesa by my friend—responded in her plummiest of tones when he asked, “First, are there any questions before we begin?”

“Ahem, ahem, yes. What is all this we have been told about quote-unquote ‘vulnerability’?”

That would be akin to asking half way through a road trip, “What is all this about gasoline?”

Vulnerability is one of the 1925 inventions that the Vanderbilt entourage dreamed up in the Panama Canal. In Rubber Bridge, you must win two games to win the Rubber and earn the Rubber Bonus: 700 if you win two-of-two Games but only 500 if you win two-of-three games. When you have won your first Game you are called “Vulnerable.” When vulnerable, penalties for failing to make your contract are increased so as to give the advantage to the non-vulnerable underdog in the Rubber.

Knowing only that much, it appears that you may well have a leg up on British royalty if you should find yourself in the Bridge parlor aboard ship. Ha!

RUBBER BRIDGE SCORING

Draw a line horizontally on your score sheet to differentiate between ABOVE THE LINE and BELOW THE LINE scores. Also draw a line vertically for each side, or in the case of Three-Handed Bridge, two vertical lines to separate the three players.

DECLARER

If you make your contract, put that score below the line. When a score below the line amounts to 100 points (often possible in a single hand) a GAME has been won. That pair is now said to be VULNERABLE (V) with the non-winning pair still NON-VULNERABLE (NV). If the non-winning pair already has a PARTSCORE—often called a LEG-ON—the leg is “cut off”, meaning it no longer counts toward GAME but is still counted in total score.

Next Game begins with same partners. When two games are won by one partnership, the RUBBER ends and a RUBBER BONUS for that pair is scored above the line. In Party Bridge, this is a good time to change partners and start anew, keeping a cumulative score for each player.

Also above the line, score any OVERTRICKS also BONUS POINTS for bidding and making SLAM or GRAND SLAM.

DEFENDERS

If you SET Declarer's Contract, score penalty points above the line in your column.

N.B. 1925 - THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

Contract Bridge Scoring advanced the game in a myriad of ways, but for now, let's just learn the point system, which is most certainly complicated enough!

BELOW THE LINE —Only these count toward GAME

minor suits (C or D) each trick = 20

Major Suits (H or S) each trick = 30

NT first trick = 40; each trick thereafter = 30

DOUBLE* = X2 (below) + 50 (“for the insult” above)

REDOUBLE** = X4 (below) + 100 (“for the insult” above)

ABOVE THE LINE—Bonus Points

OVERTRICKS (tricks made by Declarer above contract) are awarded to Declarer as per above.

Doubled (NV) = 100 per trick (V) = 200 per trick

Redoubled (NV) = 200 per trick (V) = 400 per trick

RUBBER BONUS (2 of 3 games=500, 2 of 2 games=700)

GAME BONUS (if rubber is not completed) = 300

PARTIAL GAME BONUS “ = 100

BONUS POINTS are also awarded to Declarer for bidding and making SLAM (NV=500, V=750) or GRAND SLAM (NV=1000, V=1500).

UNDERTRICK PENALTIES (awarded to Defenders)

Per trick NV = 50 Per trick V = 100

Per trick NV & DOUBLED* = 100 first trick +200 next two tricks, i.e., 300, 500, +300 all additional, 800, 1100, etc.

Per trick V & DOUBLED* = 200 first trick + 300 each additional, i.e., 500, 800, 1100, 1500, 1800, 2200 etc.

GAME IN A SINGLE HAND

It is quite possible and advisable to make GAME (100) in a single hand, **if you bid it**: 4 of a Major, 5 of a minor or 3NT. However, if you bid only 2S, for example, and make 4, below the line you get only a PARTSCORE of 60 points, with the other 60 going above the line. Game is not won, and the Rubber continues, sometimes stretching until eternity (why, perhaps, they are called “rubbers”).

DUPLICATE SCORING (also called “Chicago”)

That eternity, along with habitual if strategic underbidding, is why many Party Bridge players prefer to use Duplicate Scoring. In Rubber Scoring, it is tempting to underbid really marvelous hands simply because you already have a leg-on and need only a partscore to make Game, terrible practice for Duplicate where every hand should be bid for its full value or your Duplicate scores will suffer.

Playing Chicago you play only four deals before the end of the round: 1st deal both sides NV; 2nd=Dealer’s side V; 3rd=Dealer’s side V; 4th=both sides V. Instead of waiting until the end of the rubber for the RUBBER BONUS, you score either a GAME BONUS or PARTSCORE BONUS for every hand, thus eliminating the underbidding problem of Rubber Bridge.

For example, if you are NV and you bid 4S and make it exactly, you receive a score of 420: 120 for the 4X30 tricks of a Major, plus a NV-Game Bonus of 300. If you are V, your score with the V-Game Bonus of 500 is 620.

GAME BONUS = 300 (NV) or 500 (V)

PARTSCORE BONUS = 50 (NV or V)

N.B. HOUSE RULES

What I have given you in this chapter is pretty standard but, as you can see for yourself, the complications are so many that in Party Bridge I usually go along with the host or hostess, whether to use Rubber Scoring or Chicago Scoring. In Duplicate Bridge, ACBL rules!

N.B. KEEP YOUR OWN SCORE

Too many new players allow other people to keep the score, thereby swimming around naked far too long in that big lake without a moon, vulnerable indeed.

Every strategy of Bridge depends upon your knowing how to score properly.

Make it a habit to practice scoring with each hand; try to figure it out for yourself, and ask a more advanced player to help. There are all sorts of guides to help you. If you are in club or tournament play, look at the backs of the cards in the BIDDING BOXES. Here you will find every possible score for every possible bid if you make your contract: usually NV in black and V in red, with overtricks 1, 2, 3 etc., also with DOUBLE * and REDOUBLE ** bonuses included.

The bidding boxes also include red cards marked X and blue cards marked XX. These are for calls of Double and Redouble, and on the backs are the penalties per trick, both V and NV.

CHAPTER SIX

Bidding with a Partner—Prelude

You now face the AUCTION, more challenging and way more fun, a new language with only 15 words: “1-7, clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, notrump, pass, double, redouble.”

The next chapters are slow-going because there is so much to cover, and there is no quick way. Central to understanding are the terms: GAME-GOING VALUES (ggv) as opposed to INVITATIONAL VALUES (inv) and WEAK. Consult the glossary.

Find yourself a simpatico partner as soon as you can to make it easier. By simpatico, I mean three things:

- 1) a partner of equivalent skill and experience to yours
- 2) a partner of equivalent ambition to learn better bridge
- 3) a partner who is generous, thoughtful, patient and forgiving

In Chapter Four I told you about the breakup with the partner of my first two years of Duplicate. We learned lots together, and until the end I was comfortable with him, whether it was I or he who was making the hundreds of mistakes. One learns best from one’s own mistakes.

We both read different books, excited to bring each other new ideas. We had a favorite nearby club that we called Bridge Lab because the folks were all friendly beginners and we could experiment freely in practice for the tournament play in which we pretty much excelled.

N.B. TOURNAMENTS

In ACBL Tournaments there are widely different strata of players. You can PLAY UP if you wish, so that you can match yourself against players with thousands of ACBL master points. There is a benefit in watching them bid and play, once you are advanced enough to understand some of what they are doing.

The downside is that they are so much more advanced than you that you might feel defeated. But there are the 49er games, and 99ers, 199ers, and 299ers, where the competition is limited by ACBL master points. I always felt more comfortable in these games (still do, although now that I am a “Life Master”—having earned 300 master points—I must play up with the sharks).

Just a word about the sharks. All of us beginners rather cling together and complain about how “mean” the more advanced players can be. I think what we mean is that advanced players can be very impatient with beginners. Why that should be true—and I admit it often is—is beyond me since everyone must start as a beginner. They seem to have lost all sense of humor.

We beginners say to each other, “We’re not going to become like that, are we?”

Learn to shrug, the art of rising above the effluvium.

At all costs, have fun. I can’t repeat this good advice enough because I suspect that you will keep forgetting it.

OPENING BIDS

Bridge becomes more complex 1000-fold in these next chapters for the simple reason that every player now has a partner with whom you must communicate. I will start with the most basic elements of bidding, but you should remember throughout that it is like learning a new language; better to do it a word and small phrase at a time, step-by-step deepening the communication.

OPENING THE BIDDING

Dealer is first to make a call, let's say North for now. North evaluates his hand according to the criteria set forth in Chapter Three and makes a call of PASS, or a bid.

Commonly used as opening strength is 12-13+ hcp, but this varies widely with different SYSTEMS, different players, different seats at the table and different vulnerability. In this chapter, I am introducing you to the Standard American (S.A.) system of bidding.

MAJOR SUIT OPENINGS—Let's say you open with a Major suit, 1S or 1H. You are saying, "Partner, I have 12+ hcp and 5+ of my Major." You would love to be able to reach a GAME contract of 4H or 4S in order earn the Game Bonus, remembering that 100+ is Game, and 4X30 =120). Eagerly you await partner's response.

minor suit openings—1C or 1D are often bid as a placeholder with 3 cards in the suit (for some players, even fewer), saying, "Partner, I have 12+ hcp but no 5-card Major. I am hoping to find a Major suit FIT. Do you have a 4+ card Major? If so, please name it."

N.B. STRAIN for a FIT, FIT for a STRAIN

Not all systems of bidding require 5+ for a Major suit opening, e.g., the British system ACOL where 4-card Major openings are common. With S.A., however, most partners promise 5-card Majors. Whether with Major suit or minor suit or NT openings—**our first goal is to find if we have a Major suit FIT** to make our Trump. If we must settle for a minor suit as Trump, oh sigh.

Promising 5+ to open a Major suit is a concrete start. Check again the distribution statistics (Ch. 2) and you see these occurrences in 90% of deals:

3 in a suit=10 4=9 2=8 5=5 1=5 6=3

Being dealt 5+ in a suit is not uncommon; half of those deals will be a Major; odds are good that Partner will have either 3 or 4 of your Major. Lacking 5+ in a Major, we open a minor or, with enough hcp, Notrump.

After we determine the best STRAIN (Major, minor, or NT) we work next to establish our LEVEL (whether we will go to GAME or SLAM or settle for PARTSCORE).

Your bids should attempt to tell partner both your hcp and longest suit(s). It often happens that you can't find the perfect bid that describes your hand honestly and completely. You may need to stretch the truth in one direction or another. Try, however, never to tell an outright whopper. One of my teachers advised, "If you need to lie, lie about a minor suit rather than a Major."

NT OPENINGS—1NT and 2NT describe your hand most narrowly in both hcp and suit length. Opening 1NT you are saying, “Partner, I have 15-17 hcp and BALANCED or SEMI-BALANCED distribution, no suits longer than 5, no voids, no singletons, at least 2 in every suit. Do you have a 4 or 5 card Major for a possible Fit?” 2NT=20-21 hcp, same distribution, same goal.

First Goal Always: to find a Major Suit Fit.

ALL PASS? It sometimes happens. After all, an Opening Bid requires 12+ hcp and every player’s “fair share” is only 10 hcp. Ironically, perhaps the interior dialogue in a PASS-OUT is most revealing.

NORTH as dealer evaluates his hand. “Hmm. 11 hcp, I can stretch it to meet RULE OF 20 but not RULE OF 22. Too many Queens and Jacks —QUACKS— making me ever weaker. Maybe partner can open. Pass.”

EAST, “Hmm, 11 hcp, I’d like to open a Weak 2 with my 6 hearts, but with only Jack-high, it’s not good enough. Besides I might be pre-empting my partner as well as South. Also, we’re vulnerable. Pass.”

SOUTH, “Hmm, as third hand I can ‘open light’ but not as light as only 8 hcp; even my 5-card spade suit and my void in hearts is not good enough. Pass.”

WEST, “Hmm, 10 hcp, but I don’t meet RULE OF 15. Also, we’re vulnerable. Pass.”

Game or at least Partscore might be possible with either side declaring, yet the hand has been passed out upon sound reasoning. In Party Bridge, we would simply re-deal, but in Duplicate, Law 22 forbids re-deal because players at other tables might be bolder and make scores.

N.B. OPENING MNEMONICS

RULE OF 20 is used by many beginners to determine whether or not to chance an opening bid on a borderline hand. It says if your hcp plus your two longest suits = 20 you should open. For example with 12 hcp and two 4-card Majors, you have an excellent hand to invite partner forward. Bid 1C or 1D.

RULE OF 22 is what my partners and I generally use, which is “The Rule of 20” plus two QUICK TRICKS:

AK=2 quick tricks A-Q=1.5 A=1 KQ=1 Kx=.5

RULE OF 15 is based upon “Pearson Points” put forward by Don Pearson. It suggests that in fourth seat you would do well *not* to open the bidding with borderline hcp but *short on* spades. Add the number of spades in your hand to hcp; if they equal 15, make an opening bid. Consider that if there are three passes before you, the hcp must be fairly evenly distributed around the table. It is doubtful the bidding will go beyond the 2 level with any success. The partnership with the boss suit—spades—is going to have the advantage at every level of bidding.

In third seat many players “open light” for a number of reasons:

- 1) partner might have passed with a borderline opening hand, hoping you will bid, so stretch if you can.
- 2) to give partner a lead if it becomes opponents’ contract
- 3) to get in the way of opponents’ auction, especially if you have the boss suit.

PRE-EMPTIVE OPENINGS

Whole books are written on this subject, but let me try to condense the logic for you. Opening a weakish hcp at the 2, 3, or even 4 Level is called pre-emptive because you often prevent your opponents from even beginning to bid even though they have stronger hcp.

Convention Cards are available at tournaments, and ACBL has a link called “Conventional Wisdom” offering advice on filling out the card. The bottom third of the first half of the Convention Card is devoted to 2-Level Opening Bids.

My suggested guidelines in opening a Weak-Two are:

- * 6-10 hcp (varies with partnerships);
- * 6-card suit with no outside 4-card Major;
- * 2 of the top 3, or 3 of the top 5 honors;
- * As many hcp inside your suit as outside; if most hcp is outside your suit, perhaps you should defend.

There is a lot to learn about the risks and benefits of pre-emptive bidding, especially regarding vulnerability (yours and theirs) but until you have more practice, try this:

6-card suit: open 2

7-card suit: open 3

8-card suit: open 4

Pre-empts are especially effective with spades (big boss) or hearts (also rather boss). A 2D opening is not very pre-emptive because opponents may still bid 2H or 2S without much fear. 2D, then, often is used differently.

Opening 2C shows a very strong hand, usually 22+ hcp.

NB. SCORING AND PRE-EMPTS

In Duplicate, where more aggressive players abound, pre-emptive bidding is often strategic because of different scoring concerns. As I emphasized earlier, sacrifices in Duplicate are more common than in Party Bridge.

Pre-emptive bids invite penalty doubles, but if you are *not* vulnerable and opponents *are* vulnerable, you still might get the better score in Duplicate. For example, if you scare away opponents from bidding and making Game—earning a score of 600 or 620—your doubled penalty of 500 at Down-3 is a dandy sacrifice. You often receive a TOP board, even with your weak hcp; this is the premise of RULE OF 500.

And again, this is why you need to familiarize yourself, starting now in your practice sessions, with Bridge Scoring. You need to be able to quickly assess whether or not you want to risk a pre-emptive bid.

N.B. PRE-EMPTING IN DIFFERENT SEATS

Perhaps the best seat for pre-empting is 3rd Seat if your partner has already passed. Since your hand is also weak, it appears that your opponents have the Majority of hcp. Shut them up; bid high with your 6+ or 7+ or 8+ suit.

In 1st or 2nd Seat, remember that you are also pre-empting your partner. Still, a pre-empt describes your hand rather exactly in terms of hcp and suit length.

In 4th Seat, a pre-empt is usually not advised, but still it might prove strategic in certain circumstances.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Responding to Major Openings

Opening 1-of-a-Major, partner says, “I have 5+ in my suit.” Again, different systems offer different advice to Responders, but in this chapter I’ll use Standard American (S.A.) except where noted otherwise. Assume Responder’s RHO passes in the examples below.

With less than 6 hcp, usually Responder should pass. Your partner may not be happy to hear it, but you have at least told the truth.

Most experts agree that with more than 6+ hcp, your first priority is to tell partner, “We have a FIT!”

3-CARD MAJOR SUIT SUPPORT

Let’s use an opening bid of 1S as our example. With 3 spades, you as Responder are deemed to have “support”. With 6-10 hcp and 3 trump, a SINGLE RAISE is an apt description of your hand: 1S — **2S**.

6-10 hcp and fewer than 3-card support, 1S — **1NT** is an apt description of your hand. Is it forcing your partner to bid again? Depends on partnership agreement.

10+ hcp you need to make a TEMPORIZING BID to let partner know that you have more than a minimum. If you do have 3-card support, you can then return to partner’s suit at your next bid.

N.B. DIFFERENCES IN POINT RANGES

I had a beginning Bridge teacher who said to the class, “Let us promise each other that we will open every 12+ hcp hand and respond every 5+ hcp hand.” That’s good advice for beginners because the emphasis is on TRUST.

I use 10 as a breaking point and you might ask, “Well, is it 6-10 (weak) or is it 10-11 (inv)?”

I suggest, “If it is a weak 10, full of Quacks, make it the weaker choice; if it is a strong 10, with Aces and Kings and perhaps some tens (not even counted in hcp, but valuable) then make it the stronger choice.”

My effort is to keep it simple and mnemonic, but you and Partner must make your own Partnership Agreements.

STANDARD AMERICAN STANDARDS

SINGLE RAISE—Knowing you have only 6-10 hcp and probably only 3 trump, Opener will pass with a MINIMUM OPENING (12-15 hcp). With more hcp or longer trump, Opener might make a jump bid (later lesson).

1NT—Opener might pass, unless your agreement is that 1NT opposite a Major opening is forcing. Opener might rebid the Major, showing 6+, or might bid a second suit.

TEMPORIZING BID = 1S — **2C** (or 2D or 2H) 10+ hcp, does not deny trump support. Remember: NEW SUIT BY RESPONDER IS FORCING; Opener should *not* pass you in this TempORIZING Bid.

DOUBLE RAISE—Treated in three different ways today, as you will see from the standard Convention Card:

Force Inv Weak

- 1) 12+ hcp, trump support—Force=Game-Going (ggv)
- 2) 10-12 hcp, trump support, LIMIT RAISE, Inv.
- 3) 0-6 hcp but 4+ trump support, weak & pre-emptive.

Of these choices my partners and I prefer #3 and have incorporated it nicely into our larger SCHEME (below). The red box means this choice must be alerted.

4+ MAJOR SUIT SUPPORT

So strongly do we believe that to show 4+ trump support is a first priority, my partners and I have agreed upon our own SCHEME, at variance with but not at odds with S.A. Symmetrical, our scheme also works nicely with the TWO OVER ONE system. It is at once logical and economical as well as mnemonic ("Up-the-Line" bidding) that incorporates REVERSE BERGEN RAISES. These are conventions and Opponents must be alerted.

OUR SCHEME

The scheme, showing 4+ support, works equally well with opening either Major, but let's use 1S again:

- 1S-**2NT** - Jacoby 2NT — 12+ hcp (much more later)
- 1S-**3C** - Reverse Bergen — 10-12 hcp
- 1S-**3D** - Reverse Bergen — 7-9 hcp
- 1S-**3S** - Weak and pre-emptive — 0-6 hcp

All are jump bids, but the smallest jump is strongest and the largest jump is weakest: SLOW SHOWS.

N.B. RESPONSE MNEMONICS

SLOW SHOWS: "The stronger your hand the slower you want to bid "Up-the-Line", allowing more exploration."

FAST ARRIVAL: "The weaker your hand the farther and faster you jump to your final contract. Partner, take heed."

N.B. LIMIT RAISE — A Brief History

When I learned Bridge, the **double** raise (1H-3H or 1S-3S) showed opening strength and trump support. By the time I began Duplicate in 2007, the double raise was commonly used as a "Limit Raise", a term I find inexact for this bid—which is inv—since a **single** raise is also quote-unquote "limited" but is **not** inv.

When I heard of BERGEN RAISES (or better, REVERSE BERGEN RAISES as you see opposite) I was gladdened for at least three reasons:

1S-**3C** with same hcp as 1S-3S "Limit Raise" is more economical and more exact, showing 4+ support.

1S-**3D** with nearly the same hcp as "Single Raise" also shows 4+ support not just 3.

1S-**3S** as a Limit Raise wastes the entire 2-Level, but as a weak bid now has the advantage of being pre-emptive.

Why teach anything else? Notice, too, that Bergen Raises do not get in the way of other bidding systems, i.e., probably the 1S-**3C** and 1S-**3D** jumps would not be otherwise advisable, showing preference to a minor.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Our Scheme—My Rationale

DOUBLE RAISE AGREEMENT

This Double Raise conundrum about which I have just offered you advice—Game Going v. Invitational v. Weak; check the box that applies—is probably at the very heart of why I even began to write this book.

Let me be frank. The reason I am writing this book and, I hope, the reason that you have come this far in reading it, is that we agree there are better and worse ways for Bridge to be taught to beginners. Some of my choices will be criticized; you need to know why I made them.

It's understandable that Charles Goren—way back in the beginning days of creating schemes and systems for how to better play this fabulous newly expanded game—might have chosen the idea of the Double Raise as a natural progression: “If 1S-**2S** shows a weak Responder with 6-10 hcp, then 1S-**3S** must show a much stronger Responder, in fact an opening hand.”

Knowing as they did even then that 25-26 hcp often makes Game (because your partnership owns almost two-thirds of the 40 hcp) then it is simple math to divide by two and end up with 13 hcp opposite 13 hcp.

Oh, but things grew more complex rather quickly in the game's evolution and the term “Limit Raise” came into popularity, and the effort became to distinguish between “Invitational” (inv) and “Game-Going” (ggv).

Meanwhile, Oswald Jacoby came along with his more economical bid of 1S-**2NT** to show an even stronger ggV Responder, and then along came Marty Bergen with his more economical alternatives to show the inv. Responder.

And now who are all these people playing 1S-**3S** as weak and pre-emptive? Well, that's us: my partners and I—and you if you care to join our scheme of “better Bridge”.

“Better bridge” is the title of Audrey Grant's corporation, and yes, Audrey Grant does teach better Bridge. To see her in action is to watch an enchantress captivate a roomful of students and swirl them into a cyclone of concepts.

However, I was stunned to find—as I've been writing this book and referencing others on my Bridge bookshelf—that in her fine introductory book *Bridge Basics 1*, Audrey writes in a tiny footnote on p.43 deep in her second chapter about responding to Notrump openings: “The 2C response is reserved for the *Stayman Convention*, which is beyond the scope of this book.”

“Beyond the scope”? Why? Stayman is commonly used around the world, which is why it is in black on the Convention Card, not even requiring an ALERT.

I was told by a Director, when I began working on this book, “Start with Notrump.” What? Why? 15-17 hcp required by most players to open 1NT occurs once in about 20 deals. Why begin with an anomaly? A 12-21 hcp hand occurs far more frequently, with its choice of *either* a *Major* or a *minor* opening bid. Logic says to start there.

The modern Convention Card appears to go along with the “Notrump first” principle with which I disagree. The very first choices you need to make on the card ask for your partnership’s point-range for 1NT and 2NT openings, and whether you play “systems on” over intervening bids. What a complex of brain cells you need to even **begin** to fill out the card!

Am I offensive? Defensive? Certainly I *am* defending my SCHEME which I find superior for a number of reasons. I also believe it is easier for a beginning student to **first** learn one workable and economic scheme rather than to learn old-fashioned styles, adding alternatives later.

Critics have already told me, “Bob, you go too fast.”

“Bob, you play too many conventions.”

I disagree. It’s merely that my scheme is different from the one(s) they were taught, and although they may know a little about alternatives that I choose for this book, these players adhere to their old-fashioned schemes for comfort. Okay. But that’s not what I want to teach you.

Writing this book, I made my first decisions about how to organize the Feast, not by putting the desserts first on the table—too rarified—not by putting the salads first—too many choices without enough substance—but by putting the meat and potatoes first: the Major suit FIT.

The FIT is the essence of the Feast; it is where you will return again and again. Simply put, you will almost always make more tricks with trump than Notrump—yes there

are exceptions—and also you get a better score per trick with a *Major* than with a *minor* trump.

So isn’t it both logical and beneficial to start with *Major* suit openings to reach a *Major* suit Fit? First things first, you name the Major with 5+ cards in it. Lacking that, you name a minor suit, still hoping to find the Major suit Fit.

Needing only 12+ hcp to make either of those choices, and knowing that 12-21 hcp hands come up far more often than 15-17 or 20-21 hands, again isn’t it logical to start with suit openings instead of Notrump?

Take a look some time at a well used bidding box. The card for 1C shows far more wear than any other card—so dog-eared and dirty you can barely make it out. That is because people open 1C more than any other bid. Hmmm. What is the lesson there?

The lesson is that having a 5+ Major in an opening hand is not as common as having a 3+ club suit, which you open **seeking a Major Fit**.

5 plus 3 is easier for a beginner to understand. 5 plus 4, as in Our Scheme, is not that different.

And in the next chapter when you get introduced to the myriad miasmas of responding to the minor suit opening, you will be glad I saved that for second. Now, turn the page.

CHAPTER NINE

Responding to Minor Openings

Opening 1C or 1D, Opener usually denies a 5-card Major, though not always. (See REVERSE in GLOSSARY.)

Opener either has a legitimate 4+ minor, opening a CONVENIENT MINOR, or is opening a SHORT CLUB. Either way, Opener is inviting Responder with a 4+ Major along with 6+ hcp to bid that Major at the 1-Level.

Responder with 4-4 in the Majors is expected to bid “Up-the-Line” starting with hearts. This allows Opener with four spades to bid 1S. Responder would then gladly support the spades, advantageously allowing Opener to become Declarer. (See CONCEALING STRONG HAND in GLOSSARY).

Responder with 5-5 in the Majors, however, is expected to bid 1S first and later show the hearts, if Opener does not support spades. Opener is not sure at this first bid if Responder has only four, but there are ways to help uncover this situation. (See TWO-WAY CHECKBACK also NEW MINOR FORCING also XYZ in GLOSSARY).

Responder with 5-4 (5 spades and 4 hearts) also bids spades first, but with 4 spades and 5 hearts, bids 1H.

Responder with 4+ diamonds and 4 of a Major needs a partnership agreement. Some partners prefer you to bypass the diamonds and show your 4-card Major, but I prefer “Up-the-Line” bidding here, too. (For rationale, see FREQUENTLY BYPASS 4+♦ in GLOSSARY.)

N.B. MINOR OPENINGS—A MATTER OF MUST

Be prepared when Partner opens a minor for a usually more difficult Auction than if the Opening Bid were 1-of-a-Major where Responder is certain from the beginning that Opener has 5+, and it is easier to find the Fit.

N.B. BIDDING WITH TWO 5-CARD SUITS

Whether Opener or Responder, you should bid the higher-ranking suit first. This way you can bid your other suit upon your next bid, allowing partner to choose between them without going up another level.

Let's say you are 5-5 hearts and spades in these sequences:

1D-1S-2C-2H-? (partner, preferring S may bid 2S)

v.

1D-1H-2C-2S-? (partner, preferring H must bid 3H)

This same “Bid the Higher Ranking Suit First” logic also applies to opening bids. Compare these sequences:

1S-1NT-2H-? (Responder, preferring S may bid *only* 2S)

v.

1H-1NT-2S-? (Responder, preferring H must bid 3H)

Get the logic? It's important; so ponder it until you do.

LENGTH v. STRENGTH

It's easy to favor a strong suit over a long suit, but it's usually a mistake. A,K,Q in a non-trump suit will usually take as many tricks as in Trump, but 6,5,4,3,2 will never take any tricks unless they **are** trump.

RESPONDING WITH NT TO A MINOR OPENING

Responder lacking a 4-card Major will probably respond 1NT to a *minor* opening. Unlike some agreements with a *Major* opening; Opener may pass a 1NT response to a minor opening.

6-10 hcp=1NT; 10-12 hcp=2NT; 13+=3NT

Most of my partners agree on these ranges with the idea that 1NT is close-out for a minimum Opener; 2NT is invitational probably with Distribution something like 3-3-3-4; and 3NT secures Game but also invites Opener with a powerhouse of hcp to seriously consider Slam.

RAISING PARTNER'S MINOR SUIT

Finding a minor suit Fit is not nearly so welcome as finding a Major suit Fit. Who wants to learn that your best chance on a hand is to earn 20 per trick instead of 30? This is especially true in Duplicate where the difference of 10 points often makes the difference between TOP and BOTTOM score on a board, with a single board knocking you out of first place (see opposite).

Beware, then, of raising Partner's minor opening. Since Opener promises only 3 clubs or 4 diamonds, a Fit requires 5 and 5 respectively. Your agreement might be, as in S.A., to raise the minor suit as you would a Major suit: 6-10 hcp = 1D-2D or 1C-2C

Or you might agree on INVERTED MINORS: where a single raise is inv to Notrump, with 10+ hcp and 4+ support, and a DOUBLE RAISE is weak and pre-emptive, which Opener will probably pass.

N.B. CONVENIENT MINOR v. SHORT CLUB

On the ACBL Convention Card under "MINOR OPENING" you must make a checkmark for "Expected Min. Length", 4 or 3 , or 0-2 .

My partners and I agree to promise 4 diamonds with a 1D Opening Bid, while a 1C Opening shows 3+ clubs. There is the occasional problem (one hand in 300 is my estimate based on odds) where your distribution is 4=4=3=2, S,H,D,C. Any opening bid you would make, therefore, would be a lie: you do not have a 5-card Major, nor do you have 4 diamonds, nor do you have 3 clubs.

Some people solve the problem with the 0-2 option, for clubs usually. That option is in blue ink on the Convention Card which requires an announcement by Responder at each 1C Opener: "Could be as short as two."

My partners and I simply agree that with that one in 300 distribution our 1D opener might be only 3. That way we *never* have to open a 2-card suit or make that announcement which grows obnoxious.

DUPLICATE SCORING—TOP BOARD v. BOTTOM

In Duplicate, because your real opponents are not at your table but are playing the same N-S or E-W seats at the other tables, you are vying for higher scores than those players. Common examples: 1NT beats either 1-of-a-Major or 1-of-a-minor; 4H at a score of 420 beats 5D at a score of 400; 3NT making 4 at a score of 430 beats 4S making 4 at a score of 420.

Continuation Responses to Minor Openings

Okay, so you have made a first response to Partner's minor suit opening. What happens next? It gets complicated. I'll give just a few examples to show how each bid attempts to give hcp and suit preference.

With "Our Scheme" following a Major Opening back in Chapters 7 and 8, it was perhaps easier to follow the sequences because so much information was contained in Responder's first bid: Opener had not only a good idea of STRAIN but also a good idea of LEVEL; that is a fairly narrow approximation of Responder's hcp and trump support, so both know where to stop.

Compare the rather straightforward bidding logic and dialogues below in these Major suit openings to the logic of minor suit openings opposite. Lots more ? over there.

1S-2S-P — Opener=12+ hcp with 5+ spades; Responder=6-10 hcp with 3 spades; Responder="Okay, we'll take part-score."

1S-1NT-2S-P — Opener=12+ hcp with 5+ spades; Responder=6-10 hcp with fewer than 3 spades; Opener=6 spades but a limited hand, 12-14 hcp; Responder="Okay, we're content with part-score."

1S-3C-4S — Opener=12+ hcp with 5+ spades; Responder=10-12 hcp with 4 spades (Reverse Bergen); Opener="I've got a little extra; we should make GAME."

1S-3S-P — Opener=12+ hcp with 5+ spades; Responder=0-6 hcp and 4+ spades (weak); Opener="Without any extra, we miss Game; 9 trumps=9 tricks, LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS."

With a minor suit opener, there is more room for doubt because of so many unknowns: Opener's first bid could show only 3 or 4 instead of 5+; Responder's first bid promises only 4 with unknown hcp limits. Also see Chapter 11 LIMITING ONE'S HAND.

Compare these ??? sequences and internal dialogues:

1) 1C-1H-? — Opener=12+ hcp with 3+ clubs; Responder=6+ hcp (unlimited but unknown) with 4+ hearts

2) 1C-1D-1H-? — Opener=12+ hcp with 3+ clubs; Responder=6+ but unknown hcp with 4+ diamonds; Opener=4 hearts unknown hcp.

3) 1C-1H-2H-? — Opener=12+ hcp with 3+ clubs; Responder=6+ but unknown hcp, 4+ hearts; Opener=4 hearts also, but now limited to 12-14 hcp.

4) 1C-1H-2H-3H-? — Same as above, but Responder is inviting to GAME: "I've got a little extra here; are you at the top of your limited hand? If so, go to GAME."

5) 1C-1H-2H-4H — Same as above, but Responder has now said, "I have ggvs opposite your 12-14, also perhaps an extra trump or two. Fast Arrival; go no further."

6) 1C-1H-3H-? — Compare to 3) above. Opener has jumped, showing 15+ hcp, not limited. As Responder, you now have many options, but if you pass, you might be hitchhiking home.

One option certainly is to bid GAME, Fast Arrival: "I have about 10 hcp, not enough to go further." Another option is to invite to SLAM. (See Chapter Twelve.)

CHAPTER TEN Notrump Opening Bids

About one hand in 20 is able to open 1NT, which in S.A. requires 15-17 hcp and balanced or semi-balanced distribution (no singletons or voids). It used to be common to open 1NT with 16-18 hcp. Now we frequently see the “Weak 1NT” with 12-14 or even 10-12 hcp. One advantage of the Weak 1NT is it’s rather pre-emptive; also it occurs more frequently. But we will use 15-17 hcp.

Any 1NT range must be announced because it is in blue on the Convention Card. The ranges for opening 2NT or 3NT are in black on the Convention Card because, I suppose, those ranges are fairly standard: my partners and I use 20-21 for 2NT, but with 22+ hcp we open 2C, believing that allows us better communication.

With 15-17 hcp NT openings, Responder becomes CAPTAIN, not Opener. Responder more easily does the math, looking first for ggv (10+ hcp) or inv values (8-9 hcp), or looking to pass with 7 or fewer hcp.

Responder looks next for a 5+-card Major; lacking that, a 4-card Major. Lacking that, Responder with ggv and a balanced or semibalanced hand jumps to 3NT.

Old-style Responders simply name their longest suit, knowing that Opener has at least two in every suit. This can work well enough in Party Bridge; you are not embarrassed by comparing scores against others. But when you play Duplicate, you rarely find anyone not using JACOBY TRANSFERS and STAYMAN.

N.B. OLD STYLE RESPONSES TO NT

Unlike with Major and minor openings where a pass is often your most advisable response with a weak hand of fewer than 6 hcp, when your partner opens 1NT and you are weak, you should think very hard before passing because your hand is probably worthless in Notrump. But with a trump suit, yes, you certainly will be able to take tricks in your long suit, allowing possibilities for TRANSPORTATION and, consequently, FINESSES.

Trying one evening to help a friend teach JACOBY TRANSFERS to a sweet and savvy old-style bidder—set in her ways and fiercely proud of it—I brought out the boards I had made up to give her practice with what to her was a new (and therefore formidable) concept.

“Nope, nope, I don’t want ‘em.”

So with six hearts and a singleton but with zero hcp she passed her partner’s 1NT opening, which did not surprise me. When I explained to her that she doomed her partner to go set whereas he could easily make 2H if she told him about her hearts, she shook her head violently. “Zero points? I pass with less than 6 points!”

“But with just two or three heart leads, these little hearts all become Aces, giving your partner transporta—”

“Less than 6 points, I pass.”

“But they would be Aces, equal to 12 or 16 points if—”

“I pass!””but...” “PASS!”

JACOBY TRANSFERS AND CONTINUATIONS

The great idea with Jacoby Transfers, as with Stayman (next page), is to make Opener the Declarer. (See **N.B. ADVANTAGES** opposite.) You can often nab an extra trick or two because of this significant change.

Responder opposite a NT opener, looks first for a 5+ card Major and, if found, transfers Opener into that trump suit by bidding the suit just below it in rank. Opener is pretty much obligated to complete the transfer, as below:

1NT-2D-2H or 1NT-2H-2S

All it takes is 5+ in the Major, no matter how many or few hcp. Indeed, even with zero hcp all the more reason to transfer the hapless 1NT Opener who cannot possibly make a 1NT contract when Responder has no takers, no entries, no way to help with TRANSPORTATION, always forcing Declarer to lead from Declarer's own hand.

Opener has only 15-17 hcp, and if Responder has zero, then Opponents have 23-25 hcp to crush Opener. But if Responder has 5+ trumps, Responder can win at least two tricks, perhaps more. After Opener completes the transfer, Responder with less than 8 hcp passes; but Opener's chances are good with Responder's 5+ trump.

Let's save the continuations for Jacoby Transfer until after we look at the Stayman Convention which is on the next page. It is instructive to see how these two dynamic conventions and their respective continuations are similar and how they are different.

N.B. CAPTAINCY

Unlike with the 12+ hcp openings of 1M or 1m where Opener's hand might remain a mystery through several bids and where Responder's hand might be "limited"—for more on this concept, see Chapter Eleven—the NT Opener immediately yields captaincy to Partner, saying: "I have described my hand so narrowly that I await your communication, Cap'n, as to where we are to go."

N.B. ADVANTAGES TO TRANSFERS AND STAYMAN

The basic idea put forward by Samuel Stayman right after WW II, and a decade later by Oswald Jacoby is that for two solid reasons it is usually more advantageous for the NT Opener to end up as Declarer rather than Dummy.

- 1) The strong hand is hidden from Defenders.
- 2) Opening lead comes **into** strength, not **through** strength, often eliminating the need for a FINESSE. (See LEADS and FINESSE in GLOSSARY.)

N.B. 25 or 26

As in economics, inflation and deflation come and go with the times. It used to be common to use 26 hcp as a guideline for GAME; now it is rather common to hear 25. There are so many ifs and exceptions to this simple math that you will develop your own guidelines and stretch or condense your hcp to reflect other assets: adding for long suits or short suits, subtracting for QUACKS (Queens and Jacks, slow takers) adding for Aces and even tens and 10-9-8 combinations. With 25 hcp, you can make 3NT 60% of the time, depending upon ONSIDE or OFFSIDE honors; with 26 hcp, the odds jump to 70%. That 40% or 30% failure rate looms large.

STANDARD STAYMAN AND ITS CONTINUATIONS

As always hoping to find a Major Suit Fit with Partner, if Responder to a NT Opening does **not** have a 5+ Major, Responder looks next for a 4-Card Major or—even better—4-4 in both Majors. If so, and with 8+ hcp, Responder bids **2C**. 2C is the prompt for the Stayman Convention which says nothing about clubs but instead asks Opener with a 4-card Major to bid it. If Opener has 4-4 in both Majors, Opener bids “Up-the-Line”, 2H first.

Because the Stayman 2C club response is not NATURAL but a CONVENTION, it is absolutely forcing; Opener, knowing Responder is **not** suggesting clubs, **must** rebid. Opener with a 4-card Major, rebids 2 of that suit.

In continuation, Responder now has four choices:

- 1) 8-9 hcp (inv) and a Fit; rebid 3 of that Major
- 2) 10+ hcp (ggv) and a Fit; jump to 4 of that Major
- 3) 8-9 hcp (inv) but **no** Fit; rebid 2NT
- 4) 10+ hcp (ggv) but **no** Fit; rebid 3NT

With the two inv responses (1 and 3) Opener does the math: with 15 hcp Opener passes; with 17 Opener goes to GAME. With 16, Opener re-evaluates, looking for other assets to make the Game-v-NoGame decision.

If after Responder’s 2C Stayman-Ask, Opener does not have a 4-card Major, Opener responds **2D**, also conventional and saying nothing about diamonds. Responder follows through using the hcp logic in #3) and #4) above.

N.B. Responder to a 2NT Opening Bid does not require the 8 hcp to bid Stayman at the 3-Level, 3C. since as few as 4-5 hcp opposite the 20-21 hcp indicated by the 2NT Opener could give the partnership the 25 hcp necessary for GAME.

N.B. AUTHORSHIP AND NOMENCLATURE

The Stayman Convention—in such common practice these days that it is in black on the Convention Card requiring neither alert nor announcement—might well have been called “Rapee”, after George Rapee, since he was the one to suggest it first to his partner, Samuel Stayman. Stayman, however, was the first to publish it in 1945. It might have been even fairer to call it “Marx” since Englishman Jack Marx put the basic idea forward in 1939. But World War II intervened, distracting everyone from Bridge during the interim, and so Mr. Stayman’s name is the one on a myriad of conventions today: “Puppet Stayman”, “Garbage Stayman”, “Checkback Stayman”, “Forcing Stayman”, and the list goes on.

Oswald Jacoby published his first article on TRANSFERS in 1956. Also not *new*, Transfers are nevertheless in blue on the Convention Card, requiring an announcement.

N.B. PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUES

Communication between partners is not a new concept, and we know that it is often not as simple as we imagine and that **mis**communication can easily happen. Try to think of it as an everyday dialogue.

OPENER: “**1NT**: I’ve got 15-17 hcp and a balanced hand. Got any length in a Major?”

RESPONDER: "Sure do. I've got 5 hearts: **2D**."

OPENER: (aloud to Opponents) "Transfer. **2H**." (privately) "Okay, you're the boss. Where to now, Cap'n?"

In continuation with this Jacoby Transfer sequence, Responder's job, as CAPTAIN, is to more fully describe Responder's hand in regard to hcp and trump length. Opener can figure out the STRAIN, knowing Responder has 5+ of the Major, but Opener as yet has no clue about the LEVEL. Responder's choices now are:

- 1) 7 or fewer hcp, **Pass**.
- 2) 8-9 hcp (inv) and only the 5 promised trump, rebid **2NT**
- 3) 10+ hcp (ggv) and only 5 trump, rebid **3NT**, GAME.
- 4) 8-9 hcp (inv) and 6+ trump, rebid **3** of your Major
- 5) 10+ hcp (ggv) and 6+ trump, rebid **4** of your Major, GAME

OPENER'S CONTINUATION TO JACOBY TRANSFER

With Responders #2) choice above, Opener also has choices:

- A) With 15 hcp and only 2 trump, **Pass** at 2NT
- B) With 17 hcp and only 2 trump, Bid **3NT**
- C) With 16 hcp and only 2 trump, Game is iffy

With Responder's #3) choice above, Opener again has choices:

- A) With only 2 trump, **Pass** at 3NT
- B) With 3+ trump, bid **4** of the Major

With #4) choice opposite, Opener again has choices:

- A) With only 15 hcp, **Pass** at Responder's 3 of the Major
- B) With 17 hcp and this 8+ card Fit, bid **4** of the Major
- C) With 16 hcp, Game is iffy but certainly possible, especially if Opener has 3+ of the Major.

With #5) choice, Opener probably passes, trusting Responder has described the assets fully and Slam is not in the offing. (But see BROBDINGNAGIAN 3C.)

TRANSFER WITH DISTRIBUTIONAL VARIANTS?

1) What if Responder has 6+ of the Major instead of only the five promised trump? Certainly that makes GAME more likely, and Responder might choose to use the TEXAS TRANSFER instead of the JACOBY TRANSFER. Instead of bidding 2D or 2H, Responder would jump to 4D to transfer to hearts or 4H to transfer to spades. This has the value of pre-empting ambitious 4th Seat Opponents who now fear to enter the auction.

2) What if Responder has a singleton or void along with only the five promised trump? That could make the #2 choice opposite dangerous? (How to ask for Opener's trump holding? See BOBLOCKEAN 3C in GLOSSARY.)

3) What if Responder has a combination of a superlong Major and extra hcp and is therefore interested in SLAM instead of GAME. (See BROBDINGNAGIAN 3C in GLOSSARY.)

TRANSFERRING TO A MINOR SUIT?

Though Jacoby Transfer is intended primarily to get the partnership into a Major Fit, it is also sometimes advantageous to transfer to a minor suit, particularly when Responder's hand has weakish hcp but length in a minor.

Let's say, for example, that Responder has a weak hand but 6+ clubs or diamonds. Responder's hand may very well be useless to Opener in NT, but possibly very valuable in a trump contract. But since Responder now forces Opener to the 3-Level, 6+ trump is a must.

There are different ways to transfer to a 6+ minor suit. Many partnerships use 2S as a Transfer to 3C. If clubs is Responder's long suit, Responder passes. If diamonds is Responder's long suit, Responder corrects the bid to **3D** with the unfortunate consequence that Responder's weak hand will become Declarer. But see the next option.

RULE OF 16 AND 4-WAY TRANSFER

A better option to set diamonds as trump is for Responder to use 2NT. Warning: many Responders bid 2NT with inv values of 8-9 hcp but no length in the Majors, this in order to invite Opener with 17 hcp to rebid 3NT, GAME.

But Opener with only 15 hcp are supposed to pass Responder's 2NT invitation. And 16 hcp is iffy. And 2NT is the most dreadful contract, harder to make than 1NT yet yielding nothing more than the same part-score bonus as 1NT. No gain and lots of pain.

My partners and I use RULE OF 16 (see GLOSSARY) to avoid this problem. This also frees up Responder to use the now-vacant 2NT bid to transfer Opener to diamonds, accomplishing a FOUR-WAY TRANSFER: diamonds to hearts; hearts to spades; spades to clubs; NT to diamonds.

N.B. MY FIRST TIME

When I was a callow college student, I did play in one huge regional tournament—came in first, too, somehow—and my partner—a decadent young man aptly named D.K.—said to me, “Do you know Stayman?”

I didn't, but when he explained it to me I said, “Okay.”

Of course I forgot when D.K. opened 1NT, and I responded in the old-style way, bidding my longest suit, not clubs. My RHO jumped a bit and at her turn asked D.K., “You play Stayman?” D.K. nodded.

I said to myself, “Huh oh,” but kept a game face.

We reached a contract and I was Dummy. My RHO hesitated lonnnnng before making her lead, repeating to me rather furiously, I thought, “And you **DO** play *Stayman!?!?*” I nodded lamely, but still gamely. She led. I laid down my hand. She screamed “Director!” so loud that the entire hall first fell silent then burst into a huge laugh.

Oh, yes, we all make mistakes. Ha. (now I can laugh) Ha.

CHAPTER ELEVEN LIMITING ONE'S HAND

Let's return now to Major and minor suit openings which, as I have pointed out, are far more common if perhaps less exciting than NT openings. So far we have discussed only the first two bids, partner's Opening and your response. But the dialogue very often continues beyond that, though certainly not always.

You will undoubtedly have noticed by now, too, we have not even considered interference.

(Oh, dread! No, not at all! But later.)

It often happens that the happy dialogues proffered in this book get intruded upon by pushy opponents who do, after all, have their own ambitions to play better bridge.

Sure, they want to get their own contract or, failing that, set you in yours, perhaps doubled. They will use all manner of bidding strategies and schemes of their own. But for now, let's forget about them.

This book has as its first concern getting you comfortably to a bridge table, both at Party Bridge and at Duplicate games, and it is already crammed with so much information that your head is no doubt swirling. You can learn how to play defensively and offensively later, but for now, just try to understand how to get to your own contract with your partner and be able to play it with the most success possible.

CARRYING ON THE DIALOGUE

Without intervening bids, when your partner opens and you respond, between you both you probably have at least half and perhaps the Majority of the hcp around the table. As you have learned, if you have 25 or 26 you have a good chance at Game.

After your first two bids, both you and your partner should ask rather formally and distinctly inside your head, "Have either of us limited our hand yet?"

LIMITED OPENING BIDS

Opening bids of NT are limited: they narrowly indicate hcp range plus Distribution. As you have seen, just because you have "limited your hand" does not mean that from that point forward you must pass.

Opening bids of 1-of-a-Major or 1-of-a-minor are not limited because partner knows only that you have 12-21 hcp. Your hand is still a mystery until you reach a bid in your partnership dialogue that does limit your hand.

Pre-emptive Openings are limited by partnership agreement. My partners and I generally agree 5-11 hcp with 6, 7, 8+ in the suit. As almost always, there are exceptions but those are beyond the scope of this book.

The strong 2C opener is not limited, showing 22+ hcp or 8 1/2 RUNNING TRICKS. 2C is forcing, usually to Game, but that, too, depends upon partnership agreement how to move forward after a 2C Opening. Big Time.

N.B. STANDARD AMERICAN v. TWO-OVER-ONE

When I started playing Duplicate, I was among beginners most of whom played S.A. because—I supposed then—there was an understanding that S.A. is easier to learn than 2/1. I don't find that necessarily true.

I was, consequently, under the impression that it is a natural progression to move from S.A. into 2/1 as you gain expertise. Not so, I found out later, although indeed whole books are devoted to S.A. as well as 2/1.

One expert I know surprised me with the information that she likes to play 2/1 in Team Games but S.A. in Pairs Games. Her reason is that in SWISS TEAMS—where getting to Game is far more critical in IMP scoring—she prefers 2/1 because partners agree from the second bid that you will not stop before you reach Game.

In S.A., she explained, she gets to play 1NT more often because a 1NT response to a Major opening is not forcing, but in 2/1 a 1NT Response *is* forcing. Knowing her own skills at playing 1NT contracts, therefore, she prefers switching in her bidding systems depending upon whether she is playing in a Team or Pairs Game: good reasoning for one so expert, but well beyond the scope of this book to detail further.

Early on I hope that you get to play some Team Games. I like them for a variety of reasons, and the strategies are somewhat different, again making Bridge the very best, most diverse and challenging card game in the world.

LIMITED RESPONDING BIDS

Limited bids among Responses are according to the scheme you and your partner have agreed to play. In OUR SCHEME with Major suit Openings, in both S.A. and 2/1 limited responses include: SINGLE RAISE, DOUBLE RAISE and BERGEN RAISES. Responder's bid exactly describes hcp and number of trump support.

And with minor suit Openings? Go back to Chapter Nine and look at your choices with INVERTED MINORS.

Responder's bid at the 2-Level of a second suit is not limited in either S.A. or 2/1 and is therefore forcing in both. It does not necessarily imply "no Fit" but instead is an indication of strength, 10+ in S.A. where it is forcing for one round, or 12+ in 2/1 and therefore forcing to Game since simple math shows a combined hcp of 25-26+.

A 1NT response is limited: 6-10 hcp in S.A. and non-forcing; 5-12 hcp in 2/1, forcing for one round.

Also in S.A. a Double Raise of a Major shows a limited hand, 10-11 hcp.

In OUR SCHEME, however, we use the Double Raise as a pre-empt 0-6 hcp, In fact one of the advantages of OUR SCHEME —all bids showing 4+ support for the Major— is that all but one of the responses to the Major opener is immediately limited in hcp: Bergen Raises showing 3D=7-9 hcp or 3C=10-11 hcp. (See Chapter Seven.) In OUR SCHEME the only unlimited response is JACOBY 2NT, 12+.

JACOBY 2NT

Put forward by the same Oswald Jacoby who gave us the extremely bright and useful Jacoby Transfer responses to NT openings, the Jacoby 2NT response to a Major suit Opening bid is at once versatile and explicit:

“Partner, we are going at least to game in your suit, and let’s start exploring Slam! I have 12+ hcp, as yet unlimited, plus at least four of your trump. Tell me immediately about your distributional assets and/or hcp. Don’t forget to put out your Alert card.”

Opener’s continuation rebid after Jacoby 2NT must also be alerted as conventional. Using spades as our Major:

- 4S - “Partner, my Opener is minimum, 12-14 hcp, stop?”
- 3C/D/H - “I have a singleton or void in this suit.”
- 4C/D/H - “This is a strong 5-card suit, source of tricks.”
- 3NT - “I am stronger than minimum, 15-17, no shortness.”
- 3S - “I am very strong, 18+ hcp. Slam?”

After Opener’s reply to your Jacoby 2NT response, you should have a very good idea of how far to go and how to proceed to get there. Not only do you know how good your Fit is, but you also have a good idea of partner’s distributional assets.

You add your points and your distribution to Opener’s and proceed either to Game (FAST ARRIVAL) or to an Ace-ASKING convention or to CONTROL BIDDING (next chapter).

N.B. THE GREAT NAMES

There are numerous great names in Bridge that have taken the Bridge world by storm with their innovations since 1925: Eli Culbertson, Charles Goren, Edgar Kaplan and Alfred Sheinwold who gave us entire systems of Bridge early on. More recently Eddie Kantor has given us great books on Defense, Marty Bergen has conventions named after him and has several excellent books on bidding, Audrey Grant has given us excellent books on teaching Bridge as well as playing the game. Oswald Jacoby, who has given us the two enormously important and popular conventions bearing his name, was one of the first international stars of Bridge, playing in the first big World Bridge show-downs in the early 1930s.

CONVENTIONS IN GENERAL

You have been introduced to the conventions that I have found most useful with my partners. They are not difficult to learn if they are incorporated into a Scheme that is logical and mnemonic, based upon the concrete foundations: SLOW SHOWS and “UP-THE-LINE” BIDDING.

When I first learned Jacoby 2NT and Bergen Raises, for example, I learned them piece-meal, not a part of a Scheme, and I therefore often forgot them, leaving my partners high and dry. That is why I offer OUR SCHEME.

Remember that most conventions are in red on your Convention Card, therefore requiring an ALERT. This means that when your partner makes a conventional instead of a natural bid, you are the one to say “Alert” and flash the blue ALERT card, explaining further if asked to.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Slam Bidding Techniques

ACE-ASKING CONVENTIONS

There are four common Ace-Asking Conventions today, listed on the second half of the Convention Card as Gerber, Blackwood, RKC and 1430. Because they are in black print, you do not alert them, but you are obliged to answer questions from your opponents, also to announce after the auction has ended: “We had a 1430 auction,” or something of the sort. Bridge bidding is an open book, not partnership secrets.

To ask for Aces using Gerber, usually when your STRAIN has been determined as NT, you use the prompt **4C**. Partner responds “Up-the-Line”: 4D=all or none; 4H=1; 4S=2; 4NT=3.

To ask for Aces using Blackwood, you use the prompt **4NT**. Partner responds “Up-the-Line”: 5C=all or none; 5D=1; 5H=2; 5S=3.

Roman Key Card (RKC) has two versions, the original 3014 and the later developed 1430. In addition to Aces RKC shows the K of Trump. Both versions are “Up-the-Line” mnemonic, as easy to learn as Gerber and Blackwood.

3014: 5C=3 or zero keycards; 5D =1 or 4; 5H=2 or 5 (lacking the Q of Trump); 5S=2 or 5 (plus the Q).

1430, as its name implies, simply reverses 5C and 5D.

Marty Bergen in 2008 reported on a poll that 25% of experts prefer Blackwood, 25% 3014, and 50% 1430.

My partners and I have also developed a Slam route after 1NT-and-Transfer incorporating the BOBLOCKEAN 3C (I hope to amuse by calling it by my name and I have dubbed the Slam usage the BROBDINGNAGIAN 3C after the land of giants in Jonathan Swift’s 1726 novel *Gulliver’s Travels*. This route uses the 4C Gerber prompt but—since trump is established—a variant called RKC-Gerber based on 1430 logic.

CONTROL BIDDING

Another technique aiming toward Slam is not Ace-asking but Ace-telling. This is sometimes called “Control Cue Bidding”, a name I find confusing since there are other bids called “Cue Bids”. So I just call it “Control Bidding”.

Perhaps I’ll get into Cue Bids —which use your opponents’ bids to further your own purposes— in my next book, if any, which I would probably title *Bidding Your Fool Head Off*.

Many players prefer to first bid Primary Controls (Ace or void) and, after those are exhausted, Secondary Controls (King or singleton). It exhausts me, however, trying to figure out when the Primary Controls end and the Secondary Control begin.

That is why I prefer the logic of “Italian Controls” and, nota bene, Italian teams are always among the top players in the world, so take heed. Italian Controls show *either* Primary *or* Secondary Controls with the same bid. I

have found that by examining my own hand and thinking about the bidding up to this point, I usually can figure out if partner has Ace or void or King or singleton.

With all Control Bidding, you begin it only after your partnership has determined the STRAIN (either with a suit Fit or a decision to play NT). You start by bidding the next suit “Up-the-Line” in which you have a control, skipping a suit in which you do not.

Let’s take the example of your opening 1S and your partner jumping to 3C, the stronger Reverse Bergen Raise showing 10-12 points in addition to 4+ trump. As Declarer with 19 hcp and 6 spades (happy aspects both as yet unknown to your partner) you are immediately thinking: “Slam?!?”

The way you convey this to your partner is to start Control Bidding “Up-the-Line”. If you now bid 3D, for example, there is no possible way partner can misconstrue your intent. Since you both know you have at least 9 spades between you, why else would you bid diamonds now?

Going along with your slam exploration, Responder names his/her first control, let’s say 4C, skipping over 3H. This conveys two crucial facts in one bid: “I have a control in clubs, yes, but no control in hearts.”

1S - P - 3C - P - 3D - P - 4C

If Opener’s hand has xx in hearts —therefore also no control— you know at once that Slam is improbable because your opponents are likely to lead out their A and

K of hearts immediately, and Slam is Down-1 out of the gate.

However, you can be content to close the auction by returning to your home suit at 4S, GAME. Your partner will not bid further, understanding that you are captain and you must have at least two heart losers.

Notice that partner also skipped over the home suit, 3S. In Control Bidding you commonly skip over the home suit; if you bid it, you suggest that the auction be called off.

You can also use Blackwood or 3014 or 1430 in combination with Control Bidding, especially if you are unsure if the Control that your partner has told you about is indeed an Ace rather than a K or singleton.

MY SCOPE vis-a-vis YOUR SCAPE

I have said a number of times already that I deem particular conventions or lore outside the scope of this “beginner’s book” and have suggested other places for you to get more information, among them acbl.org where there is a wealth of material including links to Bridge practice programs.

Yet here I have just chosen to tell you about Slam Bidding techniques that many would consider outside the scope of *any* beginner’s book. The reason I disagree, I suppose, is that I learned to play Blackwood and Gerber in 3rd Grade. How difficult can they be to grasp? They are a mnemonic “Up-the-Line” scheme and easy to understand.

Easley Blackwood put forward his 4NT Ace-asking scheme in 1934 and John Gerber his 4C Ace-asking scheme in 1938; so these are hardly brave new ideas.

Roman Key Card was developed by (who else?) the Italian Team far more recently than Blackwood, and both 3014 and 1430 (my preference) have continuations and more complications that I will not go into here. You can find them easily in other books and on WWW.

I have even included the furshlugginer BOBLOCKEAN 3C which, I think, must really boggle your beginner minds. "How dare he? He calls himself an egoist, but I think he is an *egotist!*"

And you're right. I'm not even sure that according to ACBL Laws it is legal to make up your own conventions like that, but what if Stayman and Oswald and Blackwood and Gerber and all the other big names in the game had not put forward their ideas. Think of Marty's BERGEN RAISES and Larry Cohen's LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS and give me a break.

And so long as one alerts such bids, then they are not a secret system. Gee, I'm even putting mine onto the internet. How open can an inventor get?

I have made so bold as to put in this beginner's book not only the BASICS but also these conventions that I find so useful because I expect you to keep coming back to this book for reference. On your very first day of Duplicate Bridge you will probably see many of them used (and perhaps abused). You should therefore know about them,

whether or not you feel ready yet to practice them yourself.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN OUR SCHEME

I had a Scheme in mind when I set out to write *BITE-SIZED BRIDGE*, and I hope that I have accomplished it. However, you are my partners in my Scheme—whenever and wherever you are—and only you can decide.

Here, I'll give you an overview and summary of my Scheme, and hope that it comports with the Scheme you yourself will develop, going forward from here.

LOCKE SCHEME

- 1) To find a Major suit FIT:
 - A. Through a Major suit opening;
 - B. Through a minor suit opening;
 - C. Through a NT opening.
- 2) To find a NT contract when a Major FIT is not found.
- 3) To settle for a minor suit contract, *if* NT is not feasible.

This Scheme in this simple outline might appear simple, but it is fraught with difficulties, only some of which have been discussed in *BITE-SIZED BRIDGE*. However, if you keep the Scheme in mind, perhaps you will stay on track for playing better Bridge as you move forward.

I have only rarely touched on bidding in competition. That is, intervening bids have not been discussed except for my partnership fiasco detailed in Chapter 4 and Appendix E.

INTERVENING BIDS

Intervening bids make the game of Bridge even more fascinating with many more facets to be explored. Bidding Opponents can be maddening when they get into the way of your Scheme, but they can also provide unexpected opportunities as well, i.e., TAKEOUT DOUBLE, NEGATIVE DOUBLE, SUPPORT DOUBLE, CUE BID, and other great bidding opportunities about which I do not talk in these step-by-steps. But do explore the Glossary.

Also watch for my next book, if I ever write it: *Bidding in Competition*, or perhaps I'll title it *Bridge for the Dang Fool*, or perhaps *Enough, Please! I'm Gorged!*

The purpose of *BITE-SIZED BRIDGE* was to get you into a seat at a Bridge table—especially a Duplicate table—with some idea of where you and your partner should be headed, with a map of where and how to take your first steps.

I hope we have succeeded, you and I together, but only you will be able to judge as you move forward from here. It is up to you now to play as often and as well as you can, take notes, learn new ideas from different partners, evaluate those ideas, try some when they seem good to you, drop them if they don't seem to work, and keep broadening your own Scheme, and play, play, play.

Keep an open mind; you are anything but expert at this point. Your best chance to learn more is to, yes, play, play, play and analyze the bids and the plays as you come across them. Your second best chance is to read as much as you can bear to read of the tedious schemes

and details of other Bridge writers. The internet abounds with such Bridge writings, much not worth the effort of even trying to understand, let alone incorporate; yet much, precious.

I suggest that you keep coming back to *BITE-SIZED BRIDGE*. It is tightly packed, logical in its progression, and mnemonic where the game allows. Find your own mnemonic devices; you will need them.

Notice that in the book itself I have provided you with no sample hands. I find them tedious to pore over, and even more brain-numbing to create. But see the mention of PATTERN HANDS below.

I suggest examining the hand in Appendix E, that morbid hand in which my partnership with Bob was destroyed back in January, 2009. The hand is rife with exemplary and non-exemplary bidding and play. Plus, I think it is a great story of a failed partnership, one that we can all learn from.

Also remember the main webpage from which you probably first arrived at *BITE-SIZED BRIDGE* where there are lots of other links that I have posted for my Bridge students on cruises and elsewhere. Google “bob locke bridge” and you will reach:

<http://webpages.csus.edu/~boblocke/bridge/general.htm>

I have also put links on that main webpage to what I call PATTERN HANDS, explaining not only Play-of-the-Hand

strategies, but also some of the ins-and-outs of partnership bidding dialogues:

Major Suit Openings

<http://webpages.csus.edu/~boblocke/bridge/Pattern%20Hands%20-%20Major%20Openings.pdf>

minor suit Openings

<http://webpages.csus.edu/~boblocke/bridge/Pattern%20Hands%20-%20minor%20openings.pdf>

NT Openings

<http://webpages.csus.edu/~boblocke/bridge/Pattern%20Hands%20-%20NT%20Openings.pdf>

and Pre-Emptive Openings.

<http://webpages.csus.edu/~boblocke/bridge/Pattern%20Hands%20-%20Pre-emptive%20Openings.pdf>

Remind yourself as you go forward to stretch-yawn-scratch every now and again, and if you find yourself getting up-tight or emotional in the Bridge Feast ahead of you, push yourself back from the table, close your eyes a moment, and take a few deep breaths to clear your head. It works, trust me.

THE END

(or is it the beginning?)

[[do you hate that kind of ending as much as I do?]]

{{{but isn't it, sometimes, true?}}}

FORWARD!

play, play, play, play, play, play, play

Appendix A
A Brief History of Bridge
The World's Greatest Card Game

The game of Bridge was not invented overnight. Well, actually it was. Let me explain.

Its name derives from the Russian card game biritch, but the game as we know it today actually developed over many centuries from much simpler trick-taking games such as loo, euchre, ruff, trump, triomphe, quadrille, ombre, ecarte and many others all coming into and going out of fashion in various capitals of the world. If you're familiar with the characters of Jane Austen, for example, you've seen them at dubitable and redoubtable play at these games in their parlors.

The 18th Century saw the advent of whist, whose name perhaps came from the provocative sound—in the silence of the concentration at the table—of whisking up the four cards into the trick. Whist became the direct predecessor of bridge-whist with its cumulative inventions over decades of dummy, declarer, and bidding and finally developed by 1904 into a game called Auction Bridge. (And it seems to me that when a game has grown in complexity enough to require an adjective, even multiple adjectives, it deserves capitalization.)

Auction Bridge, with its innovations in variant scorings for major and minor suits and no-trump contracts, required a more profound collaboration between partnerships during the bidding section of the game which in turn created fervent new partnerings in parlors worldwide. But it was not until 1925,

literally overnight during a cruise through the Panama Canal, that Harold Vanderbilt and his gamy entourage invented the scoring scheme which soon became known far and wide as Contract Bridge. With new emphasis on the concept of vulnerability as well as above-and-below the line scoring for games and bonuses, Contract Bridge took the game a giant leap forward.

Duplicate Bridge, where the four hands are replicated and put into boards to be rotated and played by different partnerships around the room—around the city, county, continent and even around the planet—advanced the ever-growing trend toward skill as opposed to mere luck of the deal. Many Bridge players became increasingly discontent with Rubber Bridge, the simpler version of Contract Bridge played at parties everywhere, and began attending tournaments of Duplicate Bridge. These pairs events with matchpoint scoring broke up into Swiss Team events with IMPs (International Match Points) and Victory Point scales.

In only a few years after Contract Bridge hit the public like a global tidal wave, the first big names in Bridge hit the heights of popularity with Ely Culbertson and his wife Jo challenging international bridge stars to matches of hundreds of rubbers that were broadcast live on the radio. Oswald Jacoby, Charles Goren, Alfred Scheinwold—only a few of the great names that popularized their systems of playing the new game most advantageously—authored multiple books on the game. The first *Official Encyclopedia of Bridge* by the American Contract Bridge League was published in 1964 in a staggeringly thick volume of 691 pages with a bibliography of

seven pages. Through the “new revised edition” of 1971, the 3rd edition of 1976, the 4th edition of 1984, the 5th edition of 1994 and the 6th edition of 2002, *The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge* has steadily grown until it is now more than 1000 pages weighing more than four pounds, its bibliography more than forty pages.

The World Team Championships began as an annual event with the Bermuda Bowl and became a biennial event in 1963, continuing to the present day. The World Bridge Federation has mounted its World Bridge Olympiad every four years since 1960, now superseding it with World Mind Sports Games to include international competitions of Chess, Go, Draughts and Xiangqi.

The development of Bridge is, of course, not stopping here and now. Talk to any Bridge player worth his or her salt, and you’ll quickly hear, “I’ll never get this game right!” With the advent of computers, Bridge is now easily played by millions of strangers online day or night. Also possible now are calculations as to the total number of deals possible of the fifty-two cards of four suits and thirteen denominations, but the figure is so astronomical, with the number 53 followed by nine commas and 27 digits, that there aren’t enough *illions* to say it in words.

Though played as avidly by little kids as centenarians (I’ve known more than one!) bridge extends in an endless span over a bottomless chasm with dizzying heights above and below and beyond. More than thrilling, bridge is temptation

itself, every new deal. Sit down. Pick up a hand. Open up your mind. What an adventure lies ahead of you!

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APPENDIX B

Why Bridge?

*The Hullabaloo, Hush, Passion
And Fun!!!
of the World's Greatest Card Game*

You probably came to *BITE-SIZED BRIDGE* through a webpage at <http://webpages.csus.edu/~boblocke/bridge/general.htm>.

On that webpage you will find a link to this color tri-fold brochure titled *Why Bridge?*

It is my effort to introduce you to the fun of bridge tournaments world wide. It is why I worked hard and fast to achieve my Life Master from ACBL—to become a Bridge Teacher and Director aboard cruise lines.

I hope it is a fun read, and a nice stretch and yawn.

APPENDIX C Finesses

The first bridge stratagem many beginners learn—often feeling as grown up and smug as the name itself implies—is the *finesse*: dictionary definition, an adroit or evasive maneuver.

Since, however, the odds of a finesse working are only 50-50, it might as aptly be called the *gauche*. Personally I don't like a device that works only half the time; so I try to find other, safer ways to achieve extra tricks, e.g., setting up long suits and paying them off by discarding loser(s). Still, sometimes the best device possible to nab an extra trick is the *finesse*.

Whole books have been written about the *finesse*—or more properly *finesses* since there are so many different kinds that Wikipedia accords a plethora of names: *Direct, Indirect, Deep, Double, Triple, Marked, Two-Way, Ruffing Finesse*, etc. Some of those names make sense, and you can figure them out; some not. I, however, have developed my own nomenclature, which I share here with you.

The Sneak Finesse

When as Declarer you see AQ together in either hand—called in bridge a *tenace*—consider the gap a blinking road sign: “Finesse possible, plan ahead!” If you carelessly play the A first, you will lose the Q to opponents' K practically 100% of the time. If, however, you *lead low* from the hand without the tenace *toward* the tenace, you can win the Q 50% of the time—any time the K is *onside*, held by the opponent who plays second to the trick, allowing you to sneak the Q *past* (literally *past-behind-after*) the K. If LHO *ducks*—playing *Second-Hand-Low*—you play your Q and win the trick: a successful finesse! If opponent goes up with the K, you capture the K with the A, making the Q high for a later trick.

Warning: the missing K could just as easily be *offside*—held by opponent who plays fourth—and will capture your Q the other 50% of the time. Learn to pay attention to opponents' bidding to help determine where missing honors are likely to lie.

Wikipedia uses the term *Direct Finesse* to describe this type of tenace finesse—AQ, KJ, Q10, J9, etc.—but I prefer to use my own more apt monicker: *The Sneak Finesse*.

AQJ? Here you have a dandy opportunity for what I call *The Repeat Sneak*: if a finesse works once, the same finesse will work again.

TRANSPORTATION

The major key to successful finessing is to keep *entries* in both hands, takers that allow you to transport the lead back and forth to make second and third finesses. Take a look at the Deal-out-of-a-Dream below and imagine making a Grand Slam with only 27 hcp if all four Ks are *onside*. You merely oil your merry way back and forth between hands much to the chagrin of your hapless opponents.

Dummy: ♠AQJ ♥xxxx ♦AQJ ♣xxx
You: ♠xxx ♥AQJx ♦xxx ♣AQJ

The Trap Finesse

Another kind of finesse—also called *Direct Finesse* by Wikipedia although the mechanism is actually different—is what I call *The Trap Finesse* for the obvious reason that opponents' missing honor is literally trapped between honors you hold in *both* hands instead of in only one hand as in *The Sneak Finesse*.

Take a look at another Deal-out-of-a-Dream and figure out for yourself how to maneuver your transportation. An added advantage of *The Trap Finesse* is that the lead remains in your original hand until the trapped honor does fall.

Dummy: ♠Axx ♥J10xx ♦AQx ♣Jxx
You: ♠QJ10 ♥AQxx ♦J10x ♣AKx

Look first at the spades. You lead the Q. If LHO covers with the K, you take the A and your J and 10 are now high. If LHO has the K but does not cover, you let your Q ride and take the trick; then you lead your J with the same scenario. This dream hand has Trap Finesses in all four suits, for you to oil your merry way back and forth.

As always, if the missing honor is *offside*, the finesse will fail, but since the trick would have been won by that honor anyway, you lose nothing by trying the finesse.

As with *The Sneak Finesse* (and indeed all finesses) you must plan ahead to reserve your high honor(s) instead of leading them outright. Lead low-to-high. If LHO *ducks*, you also duck in Third Hand; if LHO *covers*, you also cover.

Most players by the time they are intermediates have learned the bridge dictum, “Cover an Honor With an Honor,” understanding it’s often best (not always!) to make opponents pay two honors to capture one of yours. This defensive play often means they are able to make a 10 good in either their own or partner’s hand.

Therefore do not even attempt *The Trap Finesse* unless you have enough honors to cover the added expense of paying two-for-one. Take a closer look at the difference between the club and diamond suits above. Leading the diamond J is fine because you have the 10. But if you lead the club J and LHO covers with the Q forcing you to cover, you get only two club tricks, your third club trick falling to opponents’ 10.

The Elizabethan Finesse

Another kind of finesse is one I guess I invented since I can’t find it in my research. I feel free, therefore, to call it (only half-jokingly) *The Elizabethan Finesse* since it involves a Queen without a King or Jack to defend her.

Well... yes... (ahem) Wikipedia does include a similar kind of finesse situation which they call *Indirect Finesse* (I don’t know why). Wikipedia’s *Indirect Finesse*, however, is simpler than my *Elizabethan Finesse*, their example being the Kx in one hand and xx in the other; naturally you lead low toward the K in hopes the A is *onside*. If so and if LHO goes up with it, your K will be good for a later trick. Or if LHO does *not* go up with the A, you go up with the K and win the current trick.

In the case of *The Elizabethan Finesse*, you hold Qx(x) in one hand—a *Virgin Queen*, if you will, no K or J for protection—and Ax(x) in the other hand, three of the suit opposite two. I have so often seen beginners—with the lesson of *The Trap Finesse* newly in their portfolios—lead the Q toward the A, evidently planning to finesse. But without the J also in either hand, this is a 100% losing stratagem. If RHO covers, you must go up with your A, using two honors to capture one and leaving yourself with two losers in the suit. If RHO does not cover, clearly the K is held by LHO who captures your Q, leaving you still two losers in the suit. 100% failure.

However, if again—as with all other finesse techniques—you lead low toward the Q, and the K is indeed *onside*, both A and Q will be takers at a later trick, and you will lose only one trick in the suit. Again, it is a 50% chance, but that is way better than a 0% chance otherwise. **N.B.** Do the Elizabethan finesse before cashing the A; LHO is likelier to not play the K, thinking Partner might have the A.

The Ruffing Finesse

As its name implies, this finesse comes into play when you are void in one hand and therefore are able to trump. If, for example, you have KQJ in Dummy and are void in your hand, you can lead any of them with the plan either to trump if RHO *covers* with the A or to discard a loser if RHO *ducks*.

If the A is *offside*—held by LHO—you lose the current trick, but you have now made your other two honors good in Dummy for later tricks.

Bridge Maxims Related to Finesses

More on these Bridge Maxims can be found in Appendix D: Do’s-and-Don’t’s of Play-of-the-Hand, but let us look at them here as they relate to Finesse strategies.

“5,6,7,8!” — said when opponents hold 5 in a suit: odds of a 3/2 split are 67.8%.

“Eight Ever, Nine Never” — said when you hold 8 or 9 in a suit and the Q is among the 5 or 4 you lack.

If you have 8 of the suit between the partnership, **always** try the finesse. The odds of a 3/2 split are 67.8, but the Q is likelier to be with the 3 than with the 2; factor these odds with 50-50 LHO v. RHO finesse odds.

If you have 9, **never** finesse, but hope the Q falls in your first two leads, A and K. The odds of a 2/2 split are only 40.7%, but factor in the 50-50 LHO v. RHO finesse odds.

Card Split Percentages

2 —	1/1=52%	2/0=48%			
3 —	2/1=78%	3/0=22%			
4 —	3/1=49.7%	2/2=40.7%	4/0=9.6%		
5 —	3/2=67.8%	4/1=28.3%	5/0=3.9%		
6 —	4/2=48.5%	3/3=35.5%	5/1=14.5%	6/0=1.5%	
7 —	4/3=62.2%	5/2=30.5%	6/1=6.8%	7/0=.5%	

“Cover an Honor With an Honor” — said of defending against *The Trap Finesse*.

You lose your honor, but you take two of theirs with your one. If you or partner have the 10, it will become high. (Not all finessers are wise enough to try the *Trap Finesse* only holding all three, QJ10.)

Do not cover, however, if you have several low cards to protect your honor, especially the K. Keep ducking, and eventually Declarer will run out of leads in that suit, and your honor will still be in your hand, and might still be a taker.

“Second Hand Low” — said almost always in any kind of defense.

Yes, if there is an obvious finesse being maneuvered and you as LHO hold the sought honor, you will lose. But not always is the finesser absolutely sure he/she will indeed go forward with the finesse. If you smoothly play low, the finesser in doubt might

decide **not** to try the finesse. If you go up with your honor, you remove all doubt, and your honor is doomed.

“Save that loser for an End Play” — said of *The Two-Way Finesse*

A *Two-Way Finesse* is when you can finesse in either direction from your hand to Dummy or from Dummy to your hand, e.g., when you hold A10x and Dummy holds KJx.

You don't know whether to finesse LHO or RHO for the Q, and there has been no clue in the bidding or Play-of-the-Hand. Which way is best to finesse? It's 50-50 win-or-lose.

So, play it smart. Play your cards down to the end, down to these last three cards and an outside loser (often, that last trump that you did not bother to pull). Meanwhile, you have stripped your Opponents down to their last four cards, also, three in this suit and one outside winner.

You deliberately lose this crucial fourth-from-last trick to their outside winner, so they are now in the lead when they must, perforce, lead this questionable suit. And they must, perforce, lead right into a finesse. If your RHO gets the Lead, he must lead to the KJx on the board, or if your LHO is the one to get the Lead, she must lead to the A10x in your hand. Either way, their Q is a goner.

APPENDIX D Play-of-the-Hand Do's-and-Don't's

Do Lead Partner's Bid Suit. Partner may have gone out on a limb to make a bid just so that you will know which suit to lead.

Do return Partner's Lead... if there is good reason to do so, **but do not slavishly return Partner's lead** simply because you have heard that Partner expects it. The Opening Lead is complicated, as you have seen, and it is often true that Partner must "lead from hunger". That is to say, perhaps Partner does not want to lead a particular because it would mean leading away from a K, and Partner does not want to lead another particular suit because it would mean leading away from an Ace, and Partner does not want to lead trump for perhaps a very good reason; yet Partner must indeed lead. When I find myself in this situation, I try to lead a discouraging middle card such as a 7 or 8. (See the next three Do's.)

Do lead 4th from High especially against a NT contract. You want Partner to know which suit you would like returned.

Do lead B.O.S.T.O.N.: B.O.S.T.O.N. is an acronym standing for "Bottom of Something" and "Top of Nothing." If you have Q72, lead the 2, promising a high honor. If you have 8,6,5,2 which would appear on the Convention Card as xxxx, lead the 8: "Top of Nothing", so as not to confuse Partner into thinking it might be 4th-from-High.

Do lead "Top of Nothing" which is also called "leading from hunger" when all other leads are risky; see the next several Don't's.

Don't lead an Ace unless you have the King or are pretty sure Partner has that King: Aces are meant to capture Kings or Queens, so hold them back. If you lead an Ace, you usually capture only small cards, a waste.

Don't lead away from an Ace except in Notrump: underleading an Ace often means that your opponent cashes in on a singleton ("dry" or "stiff") King that otherwise would have been captured by your Ace. Worse yet, Opponent now is able to trump your Ace.

Don't lead a King unless it is top of a sequence, KQ or, better, KQJ: another exception is if the King is a doubleton in Partner's bid suit. In this case, you hope Partner has the Ace, making your King good and allowing you next to lead into Partner's hand so that partner can return the suit for you to trump, a nifty triple-play.

Don't lead away from a King: if you are sitting behind Declarer—who usually has most of the hcp around the table—you are probably leading into Declarer's A-Q, finessing yourself. (See Appendix C: Finesses.)

Don't lead into a finesse: If you know that 4th hand has AQ or even AJx(x) or A10x(x) in a specific suit, do not lead that suit or you will finesse Partner and probably set up later tricks in Opponent's hand. **Just the opposite, make it a practice to lead THROUGH strength and TO weakness;** if you know that 4th hand has two or three

little cards and no high cards in a suit, that is usually a super-good lead.

Do play 2nd Hand Low—: Opponent sitting in 3rd position is almost always going to play as high as possible, so why waste a potential taker unless you are very sure your card can beat or push 3rd hand?

—and 3rd Hand High: when Partner leads low to you, Partner is trusting you to play as high as you can to draw out an even higher card from 4th hand.

—but do cover an honor with an honor (most times but by no means always). Let's say RHO (right hand opponent) leads an honor to a higher honor in 3rd Hand (Declarer to Dummy, or vice versa) in what I call a "Trap Finesse" —see Appendix C: Finesses. You are usually wise to cover that honor with a higher honor so as not to be finessed. If you don't, chances are good that Opponent will drop a little card from 3rd Hand and then make that same darn finesse again. Instead, cover that Q with your K and force out 3rd Hand's Ace, taking two of their honors with only one of yours. Also, you often make yours or Partner's 10 or 9 high for a later trick. Also, it often gets the Lead into the undesirable hand from P.O.V. of Declarer.

Do "take 2 for 1" whenever possible. See cover an honor with an honor above. Taking 2 for 1 is also a good bargain in playing trump: e.g., if your one trump pulls two of theirs. There ain't hardly nothin' better that single trump can do, as my pop would tell you.

Do, as Declarer, take the trick in 4th Hand when you can take it just as easily in either hand. This is another way of saying to play 2nd Hand Low. An impoverished 3rd Hand might allow you, in 4th position, to snap the trick up with a much lower card than you might imagine.

Do False-Card Opponents but not Partner: If Partner leads low, trusting you to play 3rd Hand High, and you have a sequence of touching cards—e.g., KQJ—play the lowest of the sequence, not the high nor a middle card in the sequence. Partner will be watching to see how high a card this draws from 4th Hand and figure you for the as-yet-unseen cards in the sequence. It is quite common, however, and ethical to try to mislead Opponent by False-Carding, e.g., playing the Q first when you have the QJ together so as to make Declarer fear that your partner has the J. Declarer might, for example, abandon pulling trump or be fooled into making an unwise finesse. On the other hand...

...Do lead Top-of-a-Sequence: this way Partner won't be fooled into wasting a high card. For example, if you have KQJ and you lead J, deeming them all equal, Partner will be fooled into putting the A on the trick, figuring Opponent must have the unseen K and Q.

Don't give Opponent a "Sluff and Ruff": usually said to Defenders, but it works both ways and is, IMHO, the very worst mistake you can make in Play-of-the-Hand. If both Dummy and Declarer still have trump and you see that Dummy is void in a suit and suspect Declarer is also void in that suit, do not lead that suit; lead ANYthing else. Otherwise Declarer gets to choose which hand will trump,

and which hand has this dandy, unhoped-for opportunity to discard what has been until now a worrisome loser. A kind Declarer will murmur afterwards when his partner exclaims over having made an impossible contract, “Well, I had a little help.” Declarer will probably not look directly AT you, but Declarer will mean you. You are probably wise not to say, “You’re welcome,” unless you have your own transportation home.

Do figure transportation problems from the start: and this time by transportation I do not mean whether it is you or Partner who has driven to the game. Usually as Declarer one of your two hands has more ENTRIES (trick-takers) than the other, either in trump or High Cards. In your first examination of your hand vis a vis the Dummy, take all the time you need to make special note of the entries in both hands and where you foresee problems. If you have a choice between taking a trick in either hand, usually it’s wise to take the trick in the hand with most entries, saving as many entries as possible into the weaker hand.

Do as DEFENDERS spend your own time wisely looking over the DUMMY: So often you see DEFENDERS gazing about while DECLARER examines the DUMMY to figure out the Play-of-the-Hand. As DEFENDERS you should be making the exact same considerations and figuring out DECLARER’s most likely line of play. I am always inwardly furious with my partner when DECLARER gets to the point of making a finesse which was apparent right from the beginning, and my partner has to hesitate before knowing what card to play, giving the TELL to DECLARER.

Say, for example, the AQ of a suit are in DUMMY and I am sitting in front of the AQ with the K of that suit. I can be absolutely sure that one of the plays DECLARER is considering is a finesse. (See Appendix C.) And so I work out in my mind ahead of time what are the odds that I will be able to make my K good on a third or fourth round this suit is played. How many cards do I have protecting my K? How many cards in that suit is DECLARER likely to be holding? How many times can DECLARER finesse? Is DECLARER more likely to lead a J or a little card. I know exactly what card I will play so that I can play it smoothly, without hesitation.

Don’t make false hesitations: I see players do it, and I deplore it. It is unethical to pretend to hesitate over a choice when such a choice is not in the cards. For example in the case above —where the AQ and possibly other cards are DUMMY and DECLARER leads toward DUMMY, perhaps or perhaps not being fully sure that a finesse will be attempted— I have seen some LHOs to DECLARER hesitate, even going so far as to half-pull a card from the hand and then push it back in to ultimately play low, as though deciding NOT to play the K. And then DECLARER does go through with the finesse, and it loses to the K which was always in the hand of RHO. Oh, how sly, and what a cheat is that LHO. I would be tempted to call the Director. I’m not sure. I think it is not only unethical but illegal.

Do play the odds: You already know about Audrey Grant’s mnemonic for the split when there are five cards out against you: “5,6,7,8!” With 5, there is a 67.8 % chance they will split 3-2.

And when there are only two cards out against you, they will split 1-1 52% of the time. They will split 2-1 48% of the time.

But when there are four cards out against you, the chances of their splitting 2-2 evenly is only about 40%, compared to nearly 50% splitting 3-1, and nearly 10% splitting 4-0.

Do play the odds using "Eight Ever Nine Never": this applies to the question of whether or not to finesse for the missing Q. (See Appendix C - Finesses.) Say you hold AKJxx of Trump and Dummy has xxx, eight trump between you. Do you lead from Dummy and play the J, hoping the Q lies in the hand of RHO? Or do you play your AK and hope for the Q to drop? The "Eight Ever" half says yes, you try the finesse.

Let's say, however, that you hold the same trump but Dummy has xxxx, nine trump between you. "Nine Never" says no, do not finesse but instead to "Play for the Drop".

Here is the most tedious analysis you will ever hope to run across, and it is all my own logic since nobody else has bothered to figure all this out (and publish it) except moi:

With nine between you and Dummy, you have a 40.7 % chance that the Q will drop. Factor into this the 50% chance that the Q will be on the negative side of the finesse, and you have good reason NOT to try a finesse when you have nine.

On the other hand, with only eight between you and Dummy, you have a 67.8 % chance that the trump will split 3-2 and a 3 out of 5 chance that the Q will lie with the three. Factor into that the 28.3 % chance that the split will be 4-1 with a 4 out of 5 chance that the Q will lie with the four, and factoring in the 50% chance that the Q will lie on the negative side of the finesse anyway, and so it's just better to stop thinking about it and just go along with larger brains than mine and say, "Eight Ever Nine Never, please."

Even More About This Tedium: Recently I made a coup, and my partner sat up and took notice. I had nine trump and was missing the Q. I might have just cashed my A and K and seen if the odds might be wrong, but since I had plenty of transportation between hands, I decided to lead the A and see what fell from Defenders in case there was a clue. There was not. So I transported the lead over to Dummy and led low to my KJxx. RHO played another uninformative trump and so my question became, "Should I finesse this J or play my K."

I decided to finesse the Jack, remembering that the odds were greater that the outstanding 4 trump would divide 3-1 more often than 2-2, also that the odds were greater that the Q would be among 3, rather than with the singleton. Once my RHO had shown 2 trumps, the odds were that the last remaining trump was also held in that hand. The odds were right, and the Jack did win the trick, with the Q falling on the K, next lead.

So do give yourself an exploratory first lead if you have plenty of transportation. Play the A first to see if you get a hint about the split, and then transport yourself

to the right hand to try a finesse if the Q doesn't drop from your RHO on your second lead.

Do continue to play the odds with "Ten Ever Eleven Never": In contrast to the "Eight Ever Nine Never" dictum which is repeated ad nauseam and even with reckless abandon as though it were the surest thing ever taught about Bridge, you never hear anyone say "Ten Ever Eleven Never". In fact, I am the sole person I have ever heard say it; yet it makes just as much sense. Of course "Ten Ever Eleven Never" would apply to a missing K, not a missing Q, and it follows similar reasoning.

Do learn the various signaling systems that are available and ethical in good Bridge Play-of-the-Hand: There are three main kinds of signals Attitude, Count and Suit Preference. Standard signaling usually has a higher card showing encouragement about a particular suit to Partner and a low card showing discouragement about a particular suit. Upside-Down signals are pretty much the reverse. See GLOSSARY for lots more information on all these terms.

But I shall tell you now that with lots of experimentation with all the signaling systems, I prefer Upside-Down-Count-and-Attitude and Lavinthal Discards.

That said, you must try them all for yourselves and make your own discoveries about advantages and disadvantages of each. One disadvantage is that DECLARER might well be as familiar with your signaling choices as your Partner.

To whom, you must ask yourself, and with what result are you giving this signal?

APPENDIX E That Morbid Last Hand

Appendix E continues the story of the partnership gone sour that I began in Chapter Four. I will be criticized for even including this story, a self-indulgence, perhaps. So firmly, however, do I believe that partnership is what this book is all about, first-last-and-always most important in the game of Bridge, that I go ahead.

Also this morbid last hand has many different lessons for Defenders that fit perhaps nowhere else in this book, that I pursue the point. Take of it what you will. If that is only idle gossip, then so be it. Gossip, too, is a part of partnerships.

That last morbid hand of that last morbid night in my partnership with Bob, I was Opener and I held five diamonds with the top three honors, three spades to the Q, two little hearts and three clubs to the Q.

I opened 1D, my LHO (left hand opponent) bid 1H, Bob bid 1S and my RHO pre-empted 4H.

N.B. PRE-EMPT

To pre-empt in Bridge is the same as pre-empting in other situations; that is, by your quick action you hope to stop somebody from going forward. In this case, to jump to GAME was RHO's effort to pre-empt me and Bob from finding our best FIT together.

Since my diamonds were so strong and I did have three of Bob's spades, I was very tempted to compete with a bid of 4S over RHO's 4H pre-empt. Now that I am more experienced, I would not hesitate even a moment to make this bid since RHO's jump to 4H showed a weak hand while Bob's 2S bid showed me 5+ spades and 10+ hcp. But alas, my mistake: I chickened out and passed, and the contract was theirs.

Bob led a diamond, following the advice of one of our teachers: "There are only two circumstances when you do not lead your partner's suit: when you are void or when you are dead."

The diamond that Bob led was small, a good indication in our signaling system of that period that he probably had more, at least three. Otherwise he would probably have led a higher diamond, either high-low from a doubleton or a possible singleton.

Dummy came down with the five hearts that I expected from her pre-empt.

S: xx H: Qxxxx D: Jx C: Axxx

Here is my hand:

S: Qxx H: xx D: AKQxx C: Qxx

I took the first trick with the diamond-Q, knowing that Bob would figure out that I also had the A and K. I switched to a low spade, following the principle of leading through strength to the weakness in Dummy; also Bob had bid

spades, so I figured him to have a couple of high honors, opposite my Qxx.

Declarer hesitated a moment before she chose her Ace. From her hesitation I learned two things: she had at least one more spade, and she did not have the K to back up her Ace. (This hesitation is called a TELL; try to overcome hesitations, since you do not want to tell your opponents the cards in your hand.)

So now I knew from a process akin to that of Sherlock Holmes that Bob had the spade K, possibly KJ or K10.

Declarer began immediately to pull trump. With ten hearts between herself and Dummy, it took only two leads. Bob showed out on the second lead, dropping the diamond 4. This was a critical moment for us Defenders. Bob and I were playing Odd-Even Discards, a popular system whereby if you prefer your partner to lead a particular suit upon capturing the lead, you discard an odd card of that suit, 3,5,7,9; if you don't like a particular suit, you discard an even card. Further, if you discard a low even card, you are requesting the lower-ranking of the two remaining suits to be led back to you and, by the same token, if you discard a high even card, you are requesting the higher-ranking of the two suits.

Understand? If you continue to play, you will get to the point where you and your partner, too, will be choosing among CARDING and DISCARDING systems. It will take many hands of play before you get there, but get there you will.

In this case, Bob's first discard being the diamond 4, a low card, I understood immediately that he did not want a diamond but a club return. That made me very happy because it probably meant that he had the club K since I could see the club Ace in Dummy. His K would take out the Ace, making my club Q high, and very likely the setting trick in the 4H contract: we would take my top two diamonds, a top spade, and the club Q, four tricks to set the contract Down-1.

After Declarer's two rounds of trump, she led a diamond to my K. That voided Dummy of diamonds, and likely her own hand as well. She was no doubt hoping that next I would lead my diamond Ace, giving her a SLUFF AND RUFF, the very worst play you can make in Bridge.

I had no intention to lead back a diamond, not only for the SLUFF AND RUFF reason but because Bob had signaled he wanted a club return. I could now count out Bob's hand pretty well, given the bidding and the first several cards played. His original hand held a singleton heart, probably five spades, probably three clubs and probably four diamonds.

This is pretty advanced, counting out the hands around the table even though you cannot see them. It is something that you, too, will be able to do, soon.

Here, then, is the hand that I deduced for Bob:

S: KJxxx H: x D: xxxx C: KJx

And having a good idea now of Bob's hand, I could figure out Declarer's hand as well:

S: ATxx H: AKJxx D: xx C: xx

Now I was in the lead, Declarer's third lead having been her remaining little diamond to Dummy's J.

I had seen Bob signal a club return, yes, but instead I decided first to lead my spade-Q. Why? With the spade-A now gone, and with Declarer's hesitation showing that she did not have the K backing up her A, also showing at least one more spade, I led my Q with confidence that Bob had the K and would let my Q ride.

And, still having the lead, I would then return the club as Bob had signaled.

N.B. SHOW THE HONOR YOUR PARTNER SEEKS

I don't know that this is a stratagem that is put forward by Bridge experts or a stratagem of my own, but I think it's a good one. If you have ever had your high honor fall to a higher honor led by partner, you will understand.

In this case with my Qx of spades remaining I knew my Q was safe from that fate, but it also occurred to me that Bob would benefit from knowing that I was the one with the Q, not Declarer. That way he would not fear leading his K if he got into the lead.

What I never imagined was that Bob would overtake my Q with his K. Why did he? It makes absolutely no sense

for him to do this. It gave him absolutely no advantage, but alas, he did.

He wasn't forced to do it. He hesitated a long moment before he did do it. And he hesitated an extremely long moment *after* he did it because he now found himself in a serious bind, to wit:

"If I lead away from my club KJ, I am giving Declarer a free FINESSE if Declarer holds the club Q. If I lead a diamond I am giving Declarer a possible SLUFF AND RUFF. If I lead my spade J, I might be setting up Declarer's spade 10. All choices are bad."

So Bob ended up giving Declarer—yes, indeed, what I do deem to be the worst play in Bridge—SLUFF AND RUFF: he led a diamond. Declarer trumped the diamond in Dummy and discarded her losing club.

Another of the lessons here is to TRUST YOUR PARTNER.

I did see Bob's discard indicating he wanted a club return, but I did not immediately and slavishly follow through. He should have trusted that I knew what I was doing. Taking the lead away from me cost us the entire match. We owed it to our teammates to do better.

For what happened next, and for an entire night of sleeplessness, and all the regret since that night, I remind you that my very first thought when Bob overtook my spade-Q with his K was that Bob did so *not* because he

deemed it strategic but because he wanted to show me “who is boss of this partnership.”

BROUHAHA

I may be mistaken about Bob’s motivation—or paranoid—but here is what happened next. We went back to Wayne and Laurie’s room in the hotel, just to un-stress from the depressing bouts. On the way from the car, Bob said to me snidely, “And so what was so important about your Queen of Spades that you had to show it to me? Why was your Queen of Spades so important in your mind that you felt you had to show it to me? What was the thing about your Queen of Spades?”

I was startled by the question, repeated three times, so sarcastically. I can only suppose this was in response to my having murmured to him as we left the table, “You should have left me in the lead. I was going to lead you a club, but first I wanted to show you my Queen of Spades.”

If you are prone to sarcasm, I suggest you do not use it with your partner, or you will one day find yourself in the situation Bob did. Bob continued on with his sarcasm while I kept replying in quiet earnestness until I realized that there was no going further. My point was always the same: Bob should not have overtaken my Queen of Spades, taking the lead away from me, when he did not have a plan. He should have trusted me that I had seen his signal and that I would be returning a club next.

He seemed as though he had been drinking, but he not yet had the opportunity. His boisterous arguments,

however, were so illogical and beside the simple point that I wondered if he had slipped a drug in his mouth when he had gone to the men’s room. Finally he said with finality, “You can’t see anyone’s point of view but your own!”

That may be so, dear reader, but I don’t think so. I could see every aspect of this argument. I could see that I was completely right that if he had left me in the lead we would have defeated the contract. I could see that in taking the lead away from me, he had taken upon himself a problem that had no positive resolution. He was the one who could not see that he had made a mistake.

Not that I cared for him to admit, “Okay, Mr. Know-it-All, I made a mistake!”

It was not a matter, for me, one person was right and the other wrong. It was a matter of understanding what went wrong so as to make sure it did not happen again.

The evening was drawing to a close. Wayne and Laurie would surely like to get to bed; I wanted to get to bed; I suggested to Bob that we leave and walk back to our hotel room a long way away through this sprawling hotel; Bob was not ready to go back to the room.

I suppose that “we were furious at one another.” For the first time I wondered how his wife put up with him.

I pretended to be asleep when he did return to our room some time later. But I didn’t sleep all night, lying awake thinking about what I considered to be partner abuse.

Trust—lost.

In the morning, Bob was bright and energetic, but I said, “We need to have a serious conversation. Do you want to get a shower and go and get a coffee, first?”

So he had quite a long time to think about what might be coming, a shower, a trip for a cup of coffee, and then back to sit across the room with the “Okay, let’s hear it...” expression on his face.

“I don’t want to be your partner any more.”

“Starting when?”

A fair question. After all, we had come to this Regional Tournament for a several day stint.

“Starting now.”

“Okay.”

“Do you want me to go into the tedious details?”

“No.”

And that was that.

There was a kind of civility in the next few moments that I actually treasure. Bob came across the room and shook my hand and said, “Thanks. I’ve enjoyed it. I learned a lot,” and I said the same.

I also said something about what a pleasure it was to have been his partner so long. He had gotten his Life Master with me, the night that we earned more than 17 whopping master points in a STaC game in San Francisco. He told me that he had come to this Regional simply with the goal of getting me the rest of my gold points for my Life Master. That was nice. I had not known that.

But here it was, the end of this partnership. We no longer trusted each other. I couldn’t trust him, knowing that he would take the lead away from me and then accuse me of not being able to understand anything but my own point of view. He could not trust me because...

Well, I never knew. But clearly he did not trust me.

Here’s the thing, partners: If there is going to be this kind of struggle for supremacy, along with this kind of verbal abuse and this lack of trust, then perhaps you had better seek a different partner. It will only grow worse.

I’ve always thought that in abusive relationships, it is up to the abused person to be the one to call it quits. But I tell you this: a good partner is important to find and important to keep if you want to really enjoy this game.

GLOSSARY

A Definition of Bridge Terms

See also my main webpage

webpages.csus.edu/~boblocke/bridge/general.htm

ACE-ASKing v. KEY-CARD ASKing—When Slam or Grand Slam is in the offing, you need to discover the partnership's ability to wrest away the lead quickly, usually with Aces or Voids (Primary Controls) and partnerships often use BLACKWOOD or GERBER to ask for Aces. Blackwood uses the 4NT prompt, usually after a Major or Minor suit Fit has been determined; Gerber uses the 4C prompt, usually after NT has been determined as the STRAIN. See also the terms in CAPS. Chapter Twelve gives much more information especially regarding RKC-BLACKWOOD (1430 or 3014) and RKC-GERBER.

ADVANCER—Partner of the Overcaller, sometimes adopting the bidding ranges of Responder, as with a single raise, but often offering other options since there have been three bids or calls at a minimum before Advancer gets a chance to join the action. Compare to Responder and Opener.

ATTITUDE—said of Partner's led suit, this is a signal agreement you want to decide upon with Partner. Standard Signal is that a high card shows encouragement in the led suit while a low card shows discouragement, e.g., High-Low to show a doubleton. "Partner, if you come back in this suit, I can trump upon the third lead." My partners and I prefer UPSIDE-DOWN-COUNT-AND-ATTITUDE (q.v.).

AUCTION—Beginning with the dealer, players make calls in clockwise rotation to win the right to determine the Trump Suit or Notrump. A bid is a number and suit, e.g., One Spade or Three Hearts. A call is a pass, a DOUBLE, or REDOUBLE. In Four-Handed Bridge three sequential passes end the auction; in Three-Handed and Two-Handed Bridge, two sequential passes end the auction.

BID—a call in the Auction in which a number and suit (or Notrump) are named, e.g., 1N=One Notrump, 2S=Two Spades, 3D=Three Diamonds, 3H=Three Hearts, 4C=Four Clubs. Compare to "Call."

BID OR CALL OUT OF ROTATION—There are various adjustments or penalties depending upon player whose bid or call is interrupted, LHO, RHO or Partner.

BIDDING BOXES—Available for sale from Baron Barclay Bridge Supplies, bidding boxes greatly enhance the auction experience. There is a single card for every possible bid from 1C through 7NT, and the visual aid really helps in keeping the game running quietly and smoothly with only rare requests for "a review of the bidding".

BLACKWOOD—Also RKC1430 and RKC3014. Also RKC Gerber. See Chapter Twelve.

BOARD—a device with four slots to hold the hands of North, South, East and West, with designations of Dealer and Vulnerability (V or NV).

BOBLOCKEAN 3C—I invented the boblockean 3C also the BROBDINGNAGIAN 3C to work with the Jacoby Transfer Response to the 1NT opening bid. The boblockean 3C shows 8-9 hcp (inv) but with the additional asset or danger of a singleton or void. If the final contract is a NT contract, such distribution is a danger; if the final contract is a trump contract, such distribution is an asset. So with the boblockean 3C with GAME as a goal, Responder asks Opener after the Transfer has been completed, “What is your holding in the trump I have suggested? If only two, rebid 2D; more than two, rebid 3 of the suggested trump.” e.g., either of these two sequences:

1NT - P - 2D (“Transfer”) - 2H - P - 3C - 3D ?

“I have only two hearts. Where to now, Cap’n?”

or

1NT - P - 2D (“Transfer”) - 2H - P - 3C - 3H ?

“I have three hearts.” (or four with fewer than 17 hcp, see also SUPER ACCEPT) Responder usually then bids GAME in the trump suit. However, see BROBDINGNAGIAN 3C.

BROBDINGNAGIAN 3C—(meaning huge) It is exactly the same 3-Level sequence as the BOBLOCKEAN 3C (q.v.) except now the very strong Responder has SLAM (not GAME) as the ultimate goal. Opener rebids according to the boblockean 3C plan without yet knowing if Responder has GAME or SLAM intentions. With the brobnagian 3C, Responder plans to continue with the 4C response for regular Gerber or Gerber-RKC to differentiate at this point whether the 3C rebid was indeed brobdingnagian as opposed to boblockean.

BOOK—the first six tricks won by Declarer, after which the actual counting 1-7 begins.

CALL—a generic term for all bids used during the Auction, plus PASS, DOUBLE and REDOUBLE.

CALL OUT OF ROTATION—There are various adjustments and perhaps penalties depending upon player whose call is interrupted, LHO, RHO or Partner.

CAPTAIN—the partner whose hand has not been limited in the bidding and therefore has the better understanding of the partnership’s joint assets and consequently a better idea what the final contract should be.

CARDING—partnership agreements as to signals to show ATTITUDE about the led suit or COUNT in this suit or SUIT PREFERENCE, which suit you would like Partner to lead next.

CHICAGO SCORING—Based upon Rubber Scoring and identical to Duplicate Scoring, Chicago varies by awarding the bonuses for Partscore (50) or Game (300-NV and 500-V) after each deal instead of waiting until the end of the rubber. Slam and Grand Slam bonuses are also awarded, as in Rubber Scoring. Chicago Scoring is often used in Party Bridge to keep the game moving more quickly, with partners usually changing after the play of four or five deals. First Deal=nobody vulnerable; Second and Third Deals=Dealer’s side V, Opponents NV; Fourth Deal=All V; Fifth Deal=recommence the rotation.

CONCEALING STRONG HAND—Said of Declarer v. Dummy, and the basic premise of Jacoby Transfer and Stayman conventions, it is almost always better for the stronger hand to be concealed for two significant reasons: 1) Defenders are more unsure about where Honors lie and 2) the Opening Lead is disadvantaged when it is INTO STRENGTH as opposed to THROUGH STRENGTH.

CONTROL BID—also called by some Control Cue bid which I disfavor because a Cuebid in my book has a specific meaning. A Control Bid is used to explore Slam possibilities, wherein the partnership, after agreeing upon the Fit begin an “Up-The-Line” bidding to indicate a Control card in the bid suit. Some people choose to first bid Primary Controls, or a first-round stopper in the suit, and when primary controls are exhausted begin upon Secondary Controls. I was easily convinced by Marty Bergen in one of his many books to instead choose “Italian Controls” wherein the “Up-the-Line” bidding starts with a suit in which there exists either a primary (Ace or Void) or a secondary control (K or Singleton). See also Up-the-Line bidding, also Chapter Twelve.

CONVENIENT MINOR—an Opening bid of 1C or 1D, indicating Opener has neither a 5-card Major nor the 15-17 hcp and balanced/semi-balanced distribution for a 1NT Opening bid. Responder usually wants to steer Opener to a Major suit fit. See also SHORT CLUB.

CONVENTION—rather a misnomer for a device which is pretty *un*conventional. In brief, a convention is a bid

wherein the DENOMINATION is not what it might seem. For an easy example, see STAYMAN.

CONVENTION CARD—a sheet of paper on one side of which partnerships can explain their partnership agreements, their preferred systems of bidding and playing, their signals, etc. It is quite complicated for beginners but so worth the effort. I encourage you and your partners, all of them, to sit down together and pore over the options. www.acbl.org has a link titled “Conventions & Cards” to help you work out your agreements together. **N.B.** Although your convention card is supposed to be on the table or nearby at all tournament games, you are not allowed to consult it during play. You are expected to know and remember your partnership agreements.

COUNT—one of the three signals Defenders might choose to make in their CARDING agreements, this one to show whether you hold two, three, or more cards in the led suit.

CROSS TRUMPING—a strategy in which Declarer (usually, but the strategy can also be applied by wily Opponents, to Declarer’s horror) uses trump to transport from a void in one hand to the void in the other hand, taking full advantage of trump in both hands. Compare this strategy with PULL TRUMP.

CUEBID—simply put, a bid by any player which is the same suit as the Opponent. In *Bite-Sized Bridge* I use the simpler and more specific term Control Bid instead of a term in common usage Control Cue Bid. **N.B.** Cuebid by

Responder has a different meaning than Cuebid by Advancer. Michael's Cuebid has its own meaning, as does its kissing-cousin, Unusual 2NT, all of which, see.

DEALER—In Duplicate Bridge the Dealer is designated on each board. Dealer is always first to make a call or bid.

DENOMINATION—the name of the suit or Notrump in any given bid.

DIRECTOR—In Duplicate Bridge the director runs the game, decides upon the rotation, and may be called for equitable decision-making in cases of irregularity or dispute. A Director's decision stands for the moment but may be appealed to a higher authority if a player disagrees with the decision.

DISCARD—Often called a sluff or slough. When unable to follow suit, a player may discard at will. Advanced partnerships have agreements about signals that can be strategically achieved with discards, e.g., ODD-EVEN and LAVINTHAL (q.v.). My partners and I prefer LAVINTHAL because it gives us the opportunity to play a middle-rank card such as a 5, 6, or 7 to indicate we are not making a signal.

DISTRIBUTION—how many cards in which suits held in a specific hand. See p. 11 for the ten most common of the 39 possible distributions.

DOUBLE—a call made during the Auction which may have several different meanings depending upon when and where they occur during the Auction. Because a

Double does not raise the level of the Auction, it is a popular way for players to convey a wide variety of information. See also Penalty Double, Takeout Double, Negative Double, Support Double, Responsive Double, Maximal Double.

DOUBLE RAISE or Jump Raise—the skip of an entire level by Responder in Opener's bid suit, e.g., 1S-3S or 1D-3D. It is critical that you establish your agreements about the Double Raise when you first sit down to play with a new partner: is it forcing? is it a Limit Raise? is it weak? On the Convention Card there are three boxes to check under both MAJOR OPENING and MINOR OPENING because your partnership agreements might vary with both and vary, too, depending upon interference or lack of interference.

DOUBLETON—two cards in a suit, often advantageous for early trumping.

DUMMY—The partner of Declarer. After Declarer has won the auction, Declarer's LHO (Left Hand Opponent) leads the first card face down, determines that all are in agreement as to who is Dummy and who is Declarer, may ask Partner if there are any questions, then turns over the lead. Only then is Dummy exposed, with Trump Suit (if any) laid out to Declarer's left. In Two-Handed Bridge as presented in this book, there are two Dummies, one for each Opponent.

DUPLICATE BRIDGE—a form of Contract Bridge in which hands are retained as originally dealt by putting them into slots in boards which are therefore able to be

replayed by other pairs at other tables. Scoring is by match-points based upon Duplicate Scoring.

DUPLICATE SCORING—See CHICAGO SCORING.

FAST ARRIVAL—applies to a weaker rather than a stronger hand. When you jump to GAME, you are using Fast Arrival and usually saying, “Partner, I know that we have Game, but I doubt very seriously we have prospects for Slam.” The One Who Knows Goes and should not merely invite. Compare to SLOW SHOWS.

FINESSE—a 50-50 chance that a missing honor is “onside” as opposed to “offside”. See APPENDIX C.

FIT—refers to having at least eight in a suit between the partners, with the understanding that such a Fit is usually necessary to make a Game, q.v.. See also Moysian Fit and Golden Fit.

FOLLOWING SUIT—In playing to the trick, each player must play a card from the suit led, unless void of that suit, in which case the player may trump or sluff at will.

FOUR-WAY TRANSFER—allowing for Jacoby Transfer to both minor suits. See RULE OF SIXTEEN, also Chapter Ten.

FREQUENTLY BYPASS 4+♦—On the Convention Card, there is a box to check under the heading MINOR OPENING if it is your partnership agreement for Responder—after Opener’s 1C Opening Bid—to skip over a 4+ diamond suit in order to name a 4-Card Major.

My partners and I have agreed NOT to check this box with the rationale that bidding the diamonds allows Opener to be first to bid a Major in which both partners might have a 4-4 Fit, thereby insuring that Opener becomes Declarer, almost always advantageous. Another benefit of Responder’s naming the minor is that the bidding might proceed 1C-P-1D-P-1H-P-1S. It does happen that Responder is 4-4-4-1 in S-H-D-C. If your partnership tries this policy, you will come across other advantages, also.

ggv—See GAME-GOING VALUES.

GAME—100 scoring points, which is equal to bidding and making 4 of a Major Suit, 5 of a Minor Suit, or 3NT.

GAME BONUS—If you bid Game and make it, you are awarded a Game Bonus of 300 (NV) or 500 (V)

GAME-GOING VALUES (ggv)—A bidding concept meaning you have enough hcp in the partnership to add to 25, usually enough to make GAME. For example, if you as Responder have 12+ hcp and your partner opens 1-of-a-suit, you have ggV If your partner opens 1NT, you need only 10+ hcp to have ggV Compare to INVITATIONAL VALUES and WEAK.

GERBER—an ACE-ASKING convention usually used with NT as goal. See Chapter Twelve.

GERBER-RKC—a version of Gerber that works with a trump fit, using either 1430 or 3014 RKC-BLACKWOOD. See Chapter Twelve.

GOLDEN FIT—4-4 Trump distribution in both Declarer and Dummy. It is called Golden because unlike the 5-3 Fit, after Pulling Trump with a 3-2 split in Opponents' hands, you still have one trump in either hand. With a 4-1 split in Opponents' hands, a good strategy is to stop pulling trump once that is discovered, and let Opponent trump once before resuming pulling trump.

GRAND SLAM—Bidding and making Seven, contracting to take every single trick of the hand, earns a bonus of 1000 (NV) or 1500 (V). See also Slam.

hcp—See HIGH CARD POINTS

HIGH BOARD v. LOW BOARD—In Duplicate Scoring, you compare your score not with the Direct Opponents at each table, but with all the other players sitting in your same direction. For example, if you as E/W get a better score than most of the other E/W players, you are said to earn a High Board. If your score does *not* compare well to the other E/W players, you are said to have a Low Board.

HIGH CARD POINTS— hcp are not scoring points but evaluation points to initially assess a hand's strength. A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1. 25-26 hcp usually yields Game in a Major Suit, 28 hcp yields Game in a minor suit, 33 hcp yields a Slam and 37 hcp a Grand Slam.

HONEYMOON BRIDGE—See Chapter One.

HONEYMOON WITH A TWIST— Instead of having all 13 cards exposed in both Dummies, you may choose to

expose only 7 of the 13 cards in each Dummy, putting each exposed card on top of a face-down card, with one extra. When the exposed card is removed during Play-of-the-Hand, turn over the face-down card beneath it. There's a fun element of surprise to this style.

HONORS—the top ranking five cards, A K Q J T. In Party Bridge, players might be rewarded 100 points for having four of the five, or 150 scoring points for all five. But this is never done in Duplicate.

Inv —See INVITATIONAL VALUES

INVERTED MINOR—so-called because Responder's Single Raise of a minor is reversed from what is common in a Single Raise of a Major: a stronger rather than a weaker bid, showing 10+ hcp and forcing, showing at least 4-card support in Opener's minor but suggesting a goal of a 3NT contract.

INVITATIONAL VALUES (inv.)—Compare with GAME-GOING VALUES. You are said to be inv. when your partner opens 1-of-a-suit and you as Responder have only 10-12 hcp, not quite enough to reach the 25 hcp for GAME.

JACOBY 2NT—See Chapter Seven.

JACOBY TRANSFER—See Chapter Ten.

KEY-CARD ASKING—See Chapter Twelve.

LAVINTHAL—a method for Defenders to show with their first **DISCARD** a suit preference for a return-lead. You discard a suit in which you have no interest, with a high card indicating a preference for the higher ranking of the other two suits and a low card indicating a preference for the lower ranking of the other two suits. Of the two **DISCARD** methods, Lavinthal and Odd-Even (q.v.) I vastly prefer Lavinthal because it allows me to sluff a middle rank card—5, 6 or 7—which is neither high nor low to indicate that I decline to make a signal. It may be that I have nothing of importance in the other suits, or it more probably means that I understand that my signals can be read just as easily by a savvy Declarer and I do not wish to give away where I have strength. You can often tell that if you keep your strength a secret, you have a better chance of capturing future tricks. On the other hand, when I am desperately eager for Partner to lead a particular suit because I want to capture the lead, I will use Lavinthal to make the signal.

LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS—Introduced to Americans by Larry Cohen and Marty Bergen, **LOTT** suggests that with hcp roughly divided equally, Declarer can usually take the number of tricks as Declarer has trumps.

LAWS OF DUPLICATE BRIDGE—Newly published by the American Contract Bridge League every few years, the 2008 edition contains 93 Laws and runs to 137 pages.

LEADS—See **APPENDIX D**.

LEADS INTO STRENGTH—usually a bad lead that gives opponents an advantage. Compare to **LEAD THROUGH STRENGTH**. See also **Jacoby Transfer** and **Stayman** conventions.

LEADS THROUGH STRENGTH—usually a good lead that gives you or your partner an advantage. The stronger hand with its tenaces is often forced to make an unwise finesse. Compare to **LEAD INTO STRENGTH**. This fact underlies **Jacoby Transfer** and **Stayman** conventions.

LEG-ON—In Rubber Bridge scoring when a partnership has a partial score below the line, but has not bid Game.

LHO—Left-Hand Opponent of Declarer.

LIMIT RAISE—Often a jump raise, e.g., 1S-3S, to indicate trump support plus 10-12 hcp. Compare to **REVERSE BERGEN 3C** in Chapter Seven.

LIMITING ONE’S HAND—Important. Once you have limited your hand to “at most a certain number of hcp or trump”, then your partner becomes **CAPTAIN**.

MAJOR—The two Major Suits are hearts and spades, being the two top-rank suits in the Auction and garnering 30 points per trick above Book.

MATCH POINTS—scoring for Duplicate Bridge based upon Duplicate Scoring, but going beyond to determine High Board or Low Board for each pair, comparing all scores achieved by East-West and North-South partnerships. Direct Opponents sit in the opposite direction at each table but the Real Opponents or Indirect Opponents, in Match Pointing, are the other people sitting in the same direction around the room, playing the exact same hands.

MAXIMAL DOUBLE—a competitive double as opposed to a penalty double, used as a Game Try when the Auction has left no room for a Game Try bid of another kind, e.g., 1H-2D-2H-3D-Dbl ? or 1S-2H-2S-3H-Dbl ? “Partner, I am interested in Game, but willing to stop at the 3-Level if you are toward the bottom of your single raise.” The danger here is that Partner may not understand it is Maximal instead of Penalty (q.v.). I think I have never used the Maximal Double, and I may think I don’t want to.

MINIMUM OPENING BID—opinions vary; my range is 12-15.

MINOR—The two minor suits are clubs and diamonds, being the two low-rank suits in the Auction and garnering only 20 points per trick above Book.

MINOR SUIT JACOBY TRANSFER—Yes, possible and useful. 2S transfers to 3C. See Chapter Twelve for advice, also **FOUR-WAY TRANSFER**.

MNEMONIC DEVICE—named after the Greek Goddess of memory, Mnemone, a mnemonic device is your own private way of remembering something, e.g., a string tied around one’s finger.

MOYSIAN FIT—refers to a 4-3 Fit in Trump, named after Alphonse Moyse, Jr., an advocate of opening 4-card Majors. A Moysian Fit can often make Game and even Slam, but a Golden Fit of 4-4, or a Fit of 5-3, or even far better a Fit of 5-4 are much more secure.

NEGATIVE DOUBLE—used by Responder to show a preference for the two unbid suits, most notably, as in this Auction sequence, 1C-1H-**Dbl** to indicate “four of the other Major, spades. Four not five.” With five+, and using Negative Doubles, Responder should bid that Major outright, in this example, 1S.

NEW MINOR FORCING—a fairly complex scheme that allows Responder in an XYZ situation to show that the 1M response is based upon a 5-card Major, not merely a 4-card Major. See also **TWO-WAY CHECKBACK**, which I prefer.

NEW SUIT BY RESPONDER IS FORCING—a common dictum among partners to remind each other that the current bid might merely be a Temporizing Bid (q.v.) and that Responder might well suggest a different Fit if Opener abides by the dictum.

NOTRUMP—a designation that there be no trump. A Notrump contract garners 40 for the first trick above Book and 30 for each trick after that.

NV—an abbreviation for Non-Vulnerable, also said Non-Vul. See Vulnerability.

ODD-EVEN—a method for **DISCARD** wherein an odd card in a sluffed suit indicates a preference for that suit to be led back; an even card indicates a dislike of the led suit, with a low card showing a preference for the lower ranking of the two remaining suits, and a high card the higher ranking.

ON-SIDE or OFF-SIDE—said of a missing honor when a player is trying a FINESSE. If the missing honor is ON-SIDE, the finesse works; if it is OFF-SIDE, the finesse fails. See APPENDIX C.

OPENER—the first player to bid. See Opening Bid, also compare with Responder, Overcaller and Advancer.

OPENING BID—Used to be 13 hcp minimum for a 1-Level Opening Bid of a Major or minor suit, but often today people open with 12 using the Rule of Twenty or Twenty-Two, or in 3rd Seat, or in 4th seat with the Rule of Fifteen (all of which, see also.)

OPENING LEAD—the first lead by LHO of Declarer. For simple suggestions, see p. 10. For further suggestions see Appendix D: Play-of-the-Hand Do's-and-Don't's.

OVERCALLER—the Opponent who first makes an overcalling bid to Opener (q.v.). It once was conventional wisdom that Overcaller required an Opening Hand to overcall, but as players have grown more aggressive, Overcalls are often made now with a 5-card suit and 8 hcp (NV at the 1-Level) or 10 hcp (V or at the 2-Level) or 12 hcp (V and at the 2-Level). Overcaller might also opt for a Takeout Double (q.v.) See also Advancer, Opener and Responder.

PARTSCORE BONUS—More than half the time, Game (with a Game Bonus V or NV) is not in the cards and you must settle for a Partscore, less than a hundred. There is, then, a Partscore Bonus of 50 added to your score for the hand.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS—Surely one of the most crucial aspects of your strategies is to develop sound partnership agreements on bidding and playing. Bridge Ethics forbid you to have secret agreements, but the Convention Card (q.v.) available at www.acbl.org allows you to notate all your partnership agreements and have them open on the bridge table for your opponents to see.

PARTY BRIDGE—also called Rubber Bridge (q.v.), Social Bridge, Kitchen Bridge.

PLAY-OF-THE-HAND—said of Declarer's strategy and implementation after Dummy is exposed, first trick to last.

PLAY OUT OF ROTATION—There are various adjustments and perhaps penalties depending upon the player whose turn it is to play, LHO, RHO, or Partner.

PLAY UP—said of going to tournaments and challenging yourself to play with the more experienced players in the Open Pairs events instead of playing down with the 99ers and 299ers.

PENALTY DOUBLE—the original meaning of the call of Double, which is to penalize Opponents for bidding too high. Double Score NV=per-trick 100, 300, 500 and after three tricks, 200 each trick; for V=200 for the first trick and 300 for each trick after that, e.g., 200, 500, 800, 1100 and upward. In Duplicate Bridge, the Penalty Double is usually not used until Opponents have reached Game, as there is always the fear of doubling their score to the Game Level if you double too early.

PRE-EMPT—a jump bid, most often in a weakish hand with a long suit, in order to make it riskier for the Opponents to bid at a higher level.

PULL TRUMP—a strategy in Play-of-the-Hand where Declarer gets rid of Opponents' trump early on, usually with the plan to use a long side suit to sluff losers.

QUACKS—referring to Queens and Jacks, too many of which weaken a hand because these are hcp which may never take a trick.

QUICK TRICK—An Ace is one QT; KQ together are one QT; AK together are two QTs; A-Q tenace is one and 1/2 QT; Kx is 1/2 QT.

RENEGE—see Revoke.

RESPONDER—the partner of the Opener (q.v.) and see also Overcaller and Advancer and New Bid By Responder is Forcing.

RESPONSIVE DOUBLE—used by Advancer when Overcaller has either overcalled or made a Takeout Double. The Responsive Double is usually made when Responder has raised Opener's suit, e.g., 1C-Dbl-2C-**Dbl** or 1C-1D-2C-**Dbl**. In both examples you would be showing 4-4 in the Majors, and you are asking Partner to choose between them. This is especially valuable when your partnership agreement is NOT to "frequently pass 4+ diamonds" after an Opening Bid of 1C. I also see a use here for 1C-1H-2C-**Dbl** to indicate, "Partner I cannot

support your hearts, but I do have four spades (not five) and more than 6 hcp." I am not sure that is a usual interpretation, but I've used it and been understood by Partner.

REVERSE—Showing a strong hand, 17+ hcp, a Reverse is when Opener has two biddable suits and starts—not in the usual way by bidding the higher ranking suit first and then bidding the lower ranking suit at Opener's second bid—with the lower-ranking suit first. Responder knows, then, if Responder is alert, that Opener has not only a powerhouse but a longer first-bid suit than second-bid suit, very often 6-5. Responder, often with a long suit of his own, usually makes a choice between Opener's two suits at this point, but Responder might also choose NT if the fourth suit is firmly stopped.

REVERSE BERGEN RAISES—See Chapter Seven.

REVOKE—Also called renege, a revoke is when a player fails to follow suit when indeed the player does have cards in that suit. Since Play-of-the-Hand can be radically effected when such an error is made, there might be penalties, usually a one-trick penalty if the erring side wins the trick and a two-trick or more penalty depending upon how many tricks after the error are taken by the erring side. A Revoke can be corrected without penalty if it is discovered before the revoke is deemed "established". A revoke is "established" as soon as either revoker or partner plays to the next trick.

RHO—Right-Hand Opponent of Declarer.

RKC—Roman Keycard 1430 or 3014. Also RKC-GERBER. See Chapter Twelve.

RUBBER—two out of three games won by a partnership.

RUBBER BRIDGE—a form of Contract Bridge also called Social Bridge and Party Bridge. As opposed to Duplicate Bridge, deals are usually played only once, with partners either changing after each rubber through the event, or not.

RUBBER SCORING—First fully developed on a cruise through the Panama Canal in 1925, Rubber Scoring is the basis for all scoring in modern Bridge. Explained in detail in Chapter Five, the basics are the per-trick score—20 each for minor suit, 30 for major suit, 40 for the first trick and 30 for each additional trick in NT—plus bonuses for slam and grand slam awarded to Declarer for making the contract. Per-trick penalties are awarded to Defenders for setting the contract. Doubles, Redoubles and Vulnerability play an important part in the scores. Additionally, there is a bonus for the partnership who wins the Rubber. Compare to Chicago Scoring.

RULE OF ELEVEN—Always accurate, the Rule of Eleven states that when a lead is “Fourth from High” (often the Opening Lead against a NT contract), if you subtract the number of the card from eleven, and add together the cards above that number in your own hand and Dummy, you can tell how many cards above that number are held by the fourth hand.

RULE OF FIFTEEN—Pearson Points, named for Don Pearson, suggest that 4th Seat, after three opening passes, should add number of spades in the hand to hcp. If this number equals 15, open the bidding; if it does not, pass. The idea is sound, it seems to me, because the three passes indicate that hcp are fairly equally divided around the table. The partnership with the most spades, therefore, the boss suit, has the advantage at every level of the Auction.

RULE OF SEVENTEEN—a guideline by which partner of a Weak-2 opener in a Major Suit can determine if a jump to Game is in the cards. If Responder’s hcp plus number of suggested trump add to 17 or more, bid Game.

RULE OF SIXTEEN—perhaps my favorite “Rule of” (besides the Rule of 178 which says that if the ages of your opponents add up to 178, don’t underestimate them). Rule of 16 suggests that Responder to the 1NT Opener with hcp amounting to 8-9—which is invitational to Game— add to that hcp one point for each card 8 or above, including recounting one for each honor already included in the 8-9 hcp. This is a great way to give value to the otherwise uncounted but often precious spot cards, 10, 9, and 8. If the total 16, then Responder should jump right to 3NT rather than inviting with 2NT—which is a dreadful place to land up if Opener passes the invitation. If, on the other hand, there are only a few of these 10-9-8 cards and Responder’s total is less than 16, just pass Opener’s 1NT. This is a happy happy guideline. Also it frees up the dreadful 2NT bid in this situation for a FOUR-WAY TRANSFER to diamonds, when Responder is weak

but has a 6+ diamond suit. See Chapter Ten, also Pattern Hand #17.

RULE OF TWENTY—Used by some to determine if a borderline hand is worth opening, the Rule of 20 says that if would-be Opener's hcp and two longest suits equal 20, do open at the 1-Level. But this seems to me facile, and I use Rule of Twenty-Two instead.

RULE OF TWENTY-TWO—My preferred rule for opening a borderline hand. I use the Rule of Twenty, but add the requirement of two Quick Tricks. Therefore 12 hcp with two 4-card suits along with two Aces or AK together will suffice. Or a 5-4 with 11 hcp, or a 5-5 with 10 hcp, as long as the two Quick Tricks are there.

RUNNING TRICKS—similar to **QUICK TRICKS**, these are tricks that you can win in rapid succession without losing the lead. You might open 2C, for example, with 8 1/2 Running Tricks once you capture the lead.

SCHEME—Less complex than a **SYSTEM** (q.v.) a Scheme gives shape to your partnership by allowing the two of you a “plan of action, an orderly combination of parts or elements,” as defined by *American Heritage Dictionary*. I have worked in *Bite-Sized Bridge* to give you such a Scheme, simple step by simple step until, gee, here we are at p. whatever it is now. If you go back to Chapter Seven, you will find the Scheme that my partners and I agree works best for us with Major Suit Openings and Responses. Taken as a whole chapter, well, yes, it is quite a mouthful of morsels. But when you compare it to an entire **SYSTEM** such as Standard American or ACOL

or Two-Over-One or Precision, it really is pretty simple. And it works well pretty much all the time.

SHORT CLUB—Not much in favor these days, replaced by the perhaps wiser **CONVENIENT MINOR** (q.v.) the so-called “Short Club” is a way for Opener lacking a 5-Card Major or the hcp and correct distribution for 1NT—also lacking the 4+ diamonds that most partnerships promise, in a 4-4-3-2 distribution, 1 out of perhaps 300 deals—to open the bidding. In Duplicate play, Responder must announce something like, “Could be as short as two,” when the agreement on their Convention Card so states. See also **Frequently Bypass 4+ Diamonds**.

SIGNALS—I remember when I first understood that in Bridge partners can make signals to each other, and it is entirely ethical. It was when the wife of the club Director said to him, “Well, you told me you wanted me to lead you a club!” Wow! What a revelation. And so I started doing some research on signals. For now, just see **LAVINTHAL** also **UPSIDE-DOWN-COUNT-AND-ATTITUDE**.

SINGLE RAISE—supporting Partner's suit without skipping a Level. A Single Raise of a Major in S.A. shows 6-10 hcp and 3-card support. A Single Raise of a Minor might show the same or might be an **INVERTED MINOR**.

SINGLETON—one card in a suit, also called a “stiff”, often advantageous for early trumping and therefore a frequent Opening Lead.

SLAM—Bidding and making Six, contracting to take all but one trick, earns a bonus of 500 (NV) or 750 (V). See also Grand Slam.

SLOW SHOWS—said of a strong hand, meaning “I have strength I cannot show except through incremental bids. Let’s proceed slowly; we might have Slam.” Compare to FAST ARRIVAL.

SLUFF AND RUFF—pretty much the very worst defensive play you can make, leading a suit in which Declarer is void in both hands. It allows Declarer to sluff a loser in one hand while trumping in the other hand.

SOCIAL BRIDGE—see Rubber Bridge.

SPADES—a popular trick-taking game like WHIST where spades is always trump.

STANDARD AMERICAN—a system for playing Bridge. See Chapter Eleven.

STAYMAN—an early example of a conventional bid where, following a 1NT Opening Bid, Responder bids 2C to indicate a 4-card Major. See Chapter Ten.

STRAIN—the denomination of a given bid, e.g. clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades or Notrump.

SUPER ACCEPT—In the Jacoby Transfer sequence, if Opener has four of the suggested Major plus 17 hcp (top of range) Opener jumps to 3 of the Major.

SUPPORT DOUBLE—used by Opener to show 3-card support for Responder’s Major Suit response which promises only 4 in the suit.

SWING—said of scores in Team Games where one side makes a big plus score while the other side makes a little score or even a minus score. In Duplicate, this would not be serious, amounting only to a single High Board or Low Board. In a team game, however, a bid Swing might lose the entire match.

SWISS PAIRS—a great way to play a Two-Table Bridge party. Based upon the Swiss Team events at tournaments, I have devised a SWISS PAIRS Score Sheet for my own Swiss Pairs events, and it is available at the bottom of my main bridge webpage: <http://webpages.csus.edu/~boblocke/bridge/general.htm>

SWISS TEAMS—a competition in tournaments wherein teams play true Duplicate, where teams go head-to-head in a Two-Table match or in a Round-Robin match when there is an odd number of team in the event. The N/S of one team plays against the E/W of another team while their teammates play opposite seats at the second table. The boards are caddied about half-way through the match so that all boards are played twice, once by either side, After the match, each team meets back at the home table and compares the scores, converting them to IMPS (International Match Points) and then converting the IMPS to Victory Points by which all the teams in the event are compared to determine the winning teams.

SYSTEM—There are several Systems of Bridge available to choose among, or to select bits and pieces of in developing your own Scheme (q.v.). *Bite-Sized Bridge* relies upon the Standard American System for most of its suggestions.

WEAK—a bidding term that usually means 6-10 hcp, enough to respond but not nearly enough to encourage Game opposite a **MINIMUM OPENER**.

TAKEOUT DOUBLE—originated in the early days of Contract Bridge, the Takeout Double by Overcaller is useful in two distinct ways: 1) to tell partner, “I have an Opening Hand, few of the suit bid before this double, and I can support any of the other three suits. This commands you to bid if there is a pass after my double.” 2) to show a very large hand, 17+ hcp, with the next bid by Doubler showing a good, long suit that Doubler suggests as the Trump suit. The Takeout Double is a demand bid; partner **MUST** bid something or be prepared to hitchhike home, if any is left unburnt.

TELL—something to rid yourself of, a habit of doing something that tells Opponents something that should be secret in your hand, e.g., a hesitation that indicates you have a choice, usually before a finesse; figure that out ahead of time and play smoothly. Another terrible Tell is to pull a card out of your hand before it is your turn to play to which indicates that no matter what Opponent plays, you have already made up your mind to play this card, usually an unimportant little card that has no chance of taking the trick. Many finesses are made or unmade because of such Tells.

TEMPORIZING BID—said of a bid usually by Responder that in the Standard American System indicates 10+ hcp and a reliable suit. It is called “temporizing” because **NEW BID BY RESPONDER IS FORCING** and Responder knows, therefore, that Responder will not be passed in this suit at this level.

TENACE—a gap, usually between honors: AQ, KJ, QT.

TEXAS TRANSFER—an option for Responder with 6+ of a Major but without **SLAM** ambitions after a NT Opening bid. Responder jumps to the 4-Level, 4D transfer to 4H; 4H transfer to 4S. With 6+ and also **SLAM**-ambitious hcp, Responder should think of **JACOBY TRANSFER** instead, with the addition of the **BROBDINGNAGIAN 3C**.

THIRD SEAT OPENING BID—Third Seat might want to open with less than the usual Opening Hand. Fourth Seat might be loaded, and this might be the only opportunity to give Partner a good Opening Lead.

TRANSFER—also called Jacoby Transfer after its inventor, Oswald Jacoby. See Chapter Ten.

TRANSPORTATION—said of moving the lead back and forth between hands. Declarer needs to plan carefully as soon as Dummy is exposed so that entries to both hands are husbanded to facilitate good transportation throughout Play-of-the-Hand.

TRICK—four cards, one contributed from each player; high-card or trump wins the trick.

TRUMP—the suit determined by auction to be the most powerful suit of the deal. A trump may be played whenever a player is unable to follow suit, winning the trick unless a higher trump is played by another player. **TWO-OVER-ONE** or **2/1**—a system for playing Bridge. See Chapter Eleven.

TWO-WAY CHECKBACK—a fairly complex scheme for Responder to become **CAPTAIN** when the first three bids of the partnership are **1m-1M-!NT**. I prefer it to **NEW MINOR FORCING** (q.v.) because it allows a weaker Responder to become **CAPTAIN**. See also **XYZ**.

UP-THE-LINE BIDDING—said of choosing to bid the lower ranking of two or more suits first, e.g., in the sequence **1C-P-1H-P-1S-P-2S**—Opener with a 4-card spade suit—which he does not open in favor of the Convenient Minor **1C**—has the opportunity to hear that Responder has 4-4 in the Majors and therefore the partnership has found their Fit as early as the 2-Level. Up-the-Line bidding also applies to Control Bidding (q.v.).

UPSIDE-DOWN-COUNT-AND-ATTITUDE—My own preferred signaling for reasons that are complicated to explain, even after many hours of working with partners to get them to agree with the premise. When ultimately they do agree, they find they make the switch from Standard Signals to UDCA fairly quickly and come to prefer it themselves. The premise is that a low card encourages, rather than a high card. This is most easily seen in playing **HIGH-LOW** to show a doubleton. Playing **LOW-HIGH** is just as easy to understand, provided both

partners are alert. I imagine that in the history of **SIGNALS** a savvy player said, “You know, if we didn’t just stuff our lowest card, if instead we played a high card to show encouragement, then we would have a leg up on our opponents who are paying no attention; and thus **HIGH-LOW** to show encouragement came into play. But again, reverse that, and the savvy player can read it just the same way, but now you need not ever toss a high card that might soon have come in handy. I have thrown away many a Jack to signal **HIGH-LOW**, only to find it would have taken a trick or forced out a higher honor if I had reserved it and thrown a low card instead. With my partners, therefore, we have agreed to play **LOW-HIGH** to show a doubleton, and **MIDDLE-DOWN-UP** to show three or more. We have quickly grown accustomed to it, and we can read it more securely, looking around the table on the first lead of a suit, and seeing all the low cards dropping, and fitting our partner’s card into the mix. A deuce is a very telling card for us now, a welcome sight of encouragement, showing either a doubleton or indicating a high honor. A trey? Well, if the deuce is visible, then— A four? Well, if the deuce and trey are visible, then— A seven? Well, if I can see on that first trick the deuce and trey, and in the Dummy the four and five, and if in my hand I have the six, then—

V—also Vul. See Vulnerability.

VOID—zero cards in a suit.

Vulnerability—Originally given this name by a woman who traveled with Harold S. Vanderbilt on a cruise through the Panama Canal in 1925 when the Rubber Scoring for

Contract Bridge was invented and afterwards very soon adopted by the entire world, Vulnerability is attached to the first side to win one Game in a Rubber, making them vulnerable to doubled penalties if they fail to make their future contracts. Rewards of a Game Bonus are also increased. See also Rubber and Rubber Scoring, Chicago Scoring, Game Bonus, Slam, Grand Slam, V and NV.

WAR—one of the earliest trick-taking games, easy to understand and play.

WHIST—a trick-taking predecessor of Bridge with four players in partnerships of two, 13 cards per hand, and trump determined by turn-of-a-card or by winner of a simple form of auction. There is no Dummy in Whist.

XYZ—said of the bidding sequence that happens rather frequently in a partnership, 1m-1M-1N. Also includes 1m-1M-1OM (other Major). There are several schemes to handle the situation, too complex to put into this book, but see TWO-WAY CHECKBACK and NEW MINOR FORCING.