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# District 17 Tournament Calendar

Please check the [ACBL tournaments web site](#), [the D17 site](#), or the local unit web site before going to any of these events, since not all will take place.

## Regionals

Apr 24-26 ... CANCELED Scottsdale (Phoenix) AZ NLM

May 19-25 ... [Rocky Mountain \(Denver CO\)](#)

Jun 26-28 ... [Windsor \(Northern CO\) NLM](#)

Aug 10-16 ... [Scottsdale \(Phoenix AZ\)](#)



## Special Events

May 4-10 .... [WC Spring Fling STaC](#)

May 23-25 .... [D17 Flights A, B & C GNT Finals](#)



## Sectionals

### April

2-5 ..... CANCELED Colorado Springs CO

16-19 ..... CANCELED Tucson AZ

18-19 ..... CANCELED Denver CO 299er  
24-26 ..... CANCELED Glenwood Springs CO  
24-26 ..... CANCELED Scottsdale (Phoenix AZ)  
24-26 ..... CANCELED Las Cruces NM

**May**

1-3 ..... CANCELED Longmont (Boulder) CO  
1-3 ..... CANCELED Santa Fe NM

**June**

5-7 ..... [Albuquerque NM](#)  
12-14 ..... [Durango CO](#)



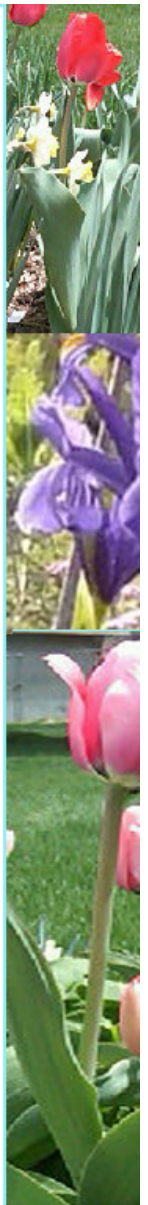
# **Spring Fling STaC May 4-10**

**Districts 17, 18, 21,  
22, and 23**

[tournaments.acbl.org/  
schedule.php?sanction=2005504](https://tournaments.acbl.org/schedule.php?sanction=2005504)

**The 2nd largest  
sectional in the country  
played at your local  
club**

[d17acbl.org/index.php?  
page=district-stac-games](https://d17acbl.org/index.php?page=district-stac-games)



# The Denver Rocky Mountain Regional

## May 19 - 25

By Wayne Eckerling, Tournament Chairman

**We plan to hold this year's Denver Rocky Mountain Regional on May 19-25 (Memorial Day)** at the Renaissance Hotel by Marriott. Before coming, please check the home page of our unit web site - <https://denverbridge.com/> -to make sure this tournament is not canceled in these trying times.

The Renaissance is conveniently located between Denver International Airport and downtown Denver in the redeveloped Stapleton area. About 1800 tables were in play in 2019. The bridge rate, \$120, is good through April 27. For reservations, call 303-399-3050 and ask for the bridge rate or go online to [RegionalRoomsBridgeRate](#) If you are interested in playing in the Rocky Mountain Regional and need a partner, send an email to [Partners@DenverBridge.org](mailto:Partners@DenverBridge.org)

The tournament begins with a Pro/Am Pairs event on Tuesday at 1:00 p.m.. If you have between five and 299 points and want to play with a more advanced player, send an email to [ProAm@DenverBridge.org](mailto:ProAm@DenverBridge.org) by May 8 by sign up. Experienced players (1500+ masterpoints) should email [ProChair@DenverBridge.org](mailto:ProChair@DenverBridge.org) if interested in participating as a pro. In addition to masterpoints, overall winners will receive prizes. There is also a single-session charity pairs game at the same time, limited to players with fewer than 1000 points). Evening charity games and a traditional, four round knockout begin at 7:00 p.m. Free coffee and homemade desserts are available in the ballroom.



The tournament includes knockout teams, Swiss teams, bracketed teams, Board-A-Match teams, open pairs, fast pairs, and side pairs. On Monday, we've scheduled A/X/Y Swiss teams and also Bracketed Gold teams for players with fewer than 3000 masterpoints. The top three finishers in each bracket will earn gold points. Last year, more than 55 teams competed in this event.

One of the tournament's most popular events is Gold Rush Pairs, which are scheduled at 10:00 and 3:00 Wednesday through Sunday except Friday, when a Gold Rush Swiss Teams event will be held. Gold Rush pairs average more than 60 tables daily, and you will never play against anyone with more than 750 points. Earn gold for tops in each section and overalls.

For I/N players, 299er single-session pairs events will be held Wednesday through Sunday at 10:00 and 3:00. To brush up on your bridge, come listen to one or all of our expert speakers, who will be scheduled at 2:15 Wednesday through Sunday.





We have made some changes for 2020 in response to player comments:

- Events that were previously scheduled at 9:30 and 2:30 have been moved back to 10:00 and 3:00 (Monday team events still start at 9:30); for those who want to play in both the afternoon and evening, the hotel will offer some dinner options that allow players to finish in time for the 7:30 evening game
- Four knockouts are on the schedule: one traditional, two Soloway, and one compact;
- Team events are offered every session Wednesday through Monday; and
- A Barometer Pairs event (know your standing after each round!) will be held on Friday night

For more details on the schedule, see the

<https://web2.acbl.org/Tournaments/Ads/2020/05/2005103.pdf> or see our Regional [page](#) at our [unit web site](#).



## Denver Vacation Travel Guide | Expedia



If you are looking to combine bridge with other activities, May is a great time to visit Denver. Consider an excursion to the [Denver Museum of Nature and Science](#) or the [Denver Botanic Gardens](#).

The hotel is located close to [light rail](#) (about a 15 minute walk or use the hotel's free shuttle service from the CentralPark Station), so it's easy to get to many of these events, as well as attractions such as [Union Station](#), [LoDo](#), and [Larimer Square](#), without a car.

[Click here](#) for a map of the area that may help with orientation and directions.

*Credits: Photos used in this article and for the cover are courtesy of [Visit Denver](#)*

# John's Journal

## COVID-19, the Preview

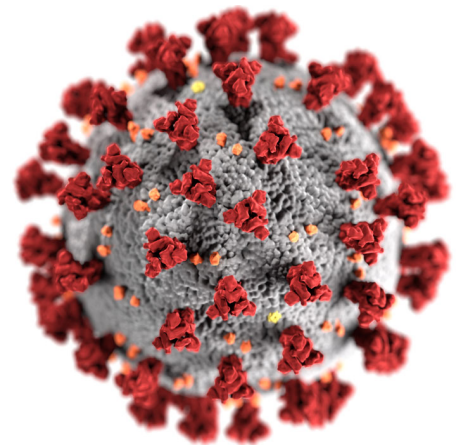
By John Grossmann, District 17 President



The novel Coronavirus is a very real public health threat, and it will impact bridge (among many other things) for at least a couple of months. National policy seems to have focused on border containment and health care practices to reduce the spread of the disease. An effective vaccine may be more than a year away, and one strategy has been to delay the virus's spread, in part to keep from exceeding the capacity of our healthcare system.

In February, I was a bridge instructor on a cruise ship traveling from Australia to New Zealand, and I got a preview of a virus response program. Early on, the ship had over a dozen passengers with serious GI tract distress, which triggered CDC and WHO protocols. Each day a formal announcement of the number of people who were sick was broadcast to every room. This message was repeated by a second officer along with instructions about hand washing.

Passengers were directed to hand sanitizers before and after every meal or event. Buffet dining was converted to distribution of portions by wait staff. Ketchup bottles were removed along with salt and pepper shakers. Tables were cleaned after any passenger used them, and a table tent showed the time when the table could again be used. All hand rails, elevators, stairs, and counters were sanitized multiple times each day. It took eight days, but eventually there were no ill passengers and in small steps the ship began to resume normal operations.



passengers, and in small steps the ship began to resume normal operations.



All of this was happening while the passengers were reading about the cruise ship in Japan that was quarantined for weeks. The crew on my ship had a week of extra shift duties. I guess my wife and I were lucky that the CDC had established cleaning protocols for this kind of virus. We were relieved that after a challenging cruise, disembarkment day went smoothly. We are now back in Colorado thinking about this experience.

## **District 17 Response**

ACBL sent out an email on COVID-19 on March 10, asking bridge players to make common sense decisions about their participation in bridge tournaments. As I am writing this column, a few sectionals have been canceled, as have many sports events, including March Madness. Ohio public health officials limited the size of gatherings, AND AS A RESULT THE SPRING NABC WAS CANCELED. See that announcement repeated on the [District News 17 page](#).

This emerging health threats from COVID-19 will have an impact on the regional tournaments run by our host cities and District 17. I have communicated my concerns to the D17 board about planning for COVID-19, and I am creating a task force to determine what health practices we should adopt at each tourney site. Every tournament chairperson is reviewing cleaning procedures. We also need to think about contingency plans and how we can effectively communicate with players.

What can you do?

**Fight Germs. Wash Your Hands!**



I am no public health expert, but some things being mentioned are: [1] wash your hands, [2] catch any sneeze or cough in a tissue that you immediately dispose of, and [3] stay home if you are sick. A recent medical journal determined that only five percent of the population knows the proper way to effectively wash hands! Click on the video link above for the CDC recommended procedure. Clean your cell phones too; they touch your face! Be smart.

Please do your part.



# District 17 News

## From the ACBL

From the ACBL website:

**“Due to the recent global coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, some event organizers are canceling upcoming tournaments. Additionally, some clubs are choosing to temporarily suspend games. These decisions have been made based on local conditions and recommendations from state/provincial and municipal health authorities.**

Before planning any travel to a tournament, please check the [tournament schedule](#) to verify that it has not been canceled. To check on club closings, contact your club or visit its website directly. If you are unsure of your club’s contact information or website link, you can use the ACBL’s [Find a Club](#) tool.



COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (KDVR) -- The Colorado Springs Bridge Center remains closed after health officials announced Thursday [the second COVID-19 death in El Paso County](#). Both victims

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Image from a KDVR local news video

## COVID-19 at the Colorado Springs Bridge Center

There was an outbreak of the virus in Colorado Springs, resulting in three bridge player deaths. Here is the public health service announcement:

<https://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/news/news-release/2020/public-health-alert-for-people-who-visited-colorado-springs-bridge-center>

According to the unit president, Karen Campbell, over 20 players got sick and of those, only three were in the hospital as we went to press.

## Upcoming D17 Board Elections

**By Bill Phillips, Election Secretary**

Elections of District 17 Board Representatives will be held this summer for representatives from Mesa; South New Mexico at large / El Paso; and Colorado at large / Wyoming. The term of office is three years beginning January 1, 2021, and ending December 31, 2023. The following District 17 Board positions are being elected:

- Mesa, Arizona: Unit 351
- Southern New Mexico at large / El Paso: Units 159, 376, 380, 388
- Colorado at large / Wyoming: Units 359, 360, 363, 364, 421, 422

Candidates must be members of District 17 in good standing and not under probation by or suspension from ACBL. Additionally they cannot be employed by ACBL nor receive more than \$5000 per calendar year for any contract or assignment from ACBL.

To get nominated, send a notice of candidacy via email or US mail to both the District Election Secretary, Bill Phillips, and the candidate's Unit President. The Unit President will notify the Unit's Board of Directors of nominations. The deadline

for nominations is Friday, May 31, 2019.

Voting will take place in June and July 2020. The voters are the members of the Unit Boards of Directors.

To notify the District Election Secretary send an email to [spheres0000@gmail.com](mailto:spheres0000@gmail.com) or mail your notice to:

Bill Phillips  
2928 N Boldt Drive  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Remember to inform your Unit President of your candidacy. If you have any questions, please email or call Bill at (928) 266-0865.

## **Many Tournaments are Canceling**

As stated above, please check the tournament calendar at the ACBL before going to a tournament, as it may be canceled. Most April tournaments are cancelled as we go to press.

## **Many Clubs in the District are closing**

From Kandi Osborne, director at the In Tempo Bridge Club in Scottsdale, as seen on Facebook:

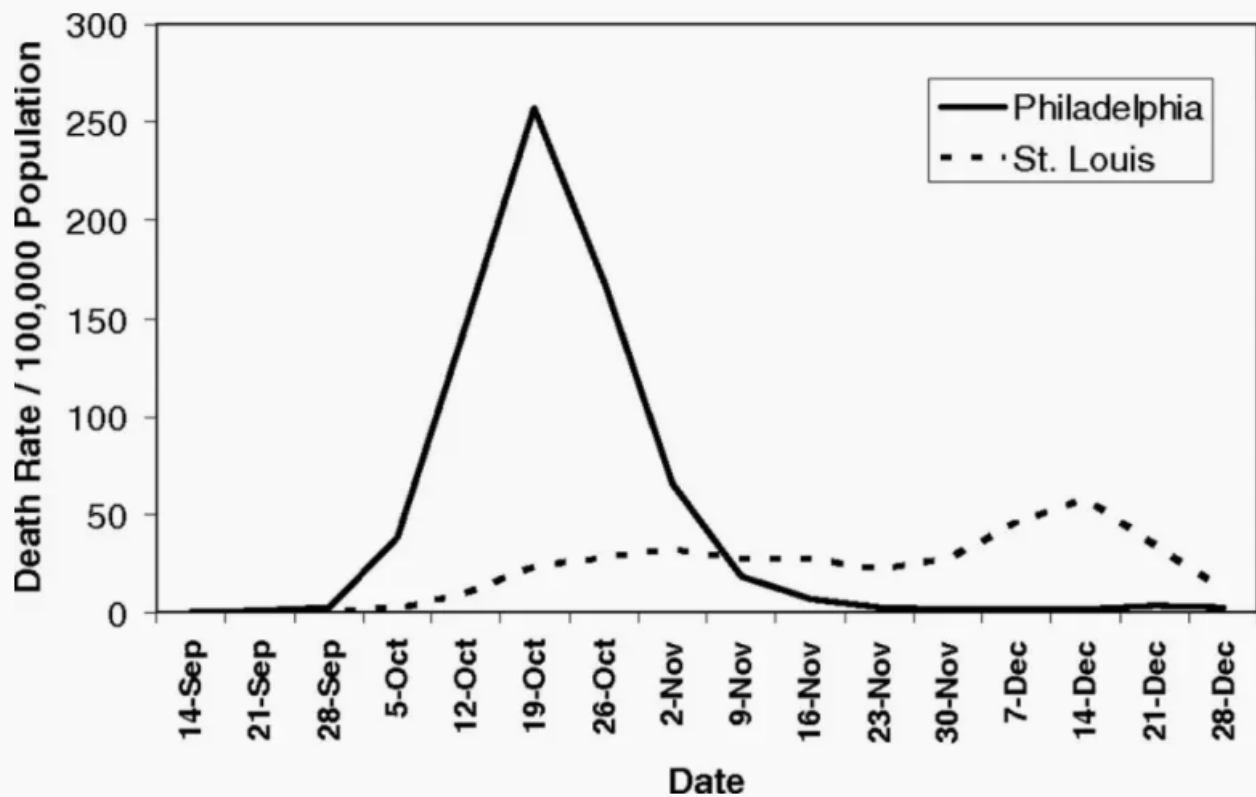
**“Looking on the bright side. By closing the club, I have toilet paper. Lots and lots of toilet paper. Oh and snacks. “**

## **From Your Editors**

The servers at [Bridge Base Online \(BBO\)](#) where we played this past Sunday were a bit overwhelmed. Still it was fun, hope to see you there! Many D17 clubs now have an online presence on BBO.

Social distancing is important to slow down the spread so that our medical personnel are not overwhelmed. Also it may give researchers time to come up with better treatments.

During the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic St. Louis practiced social distancing while Philadelphia had a parade. See what is meant by flattening the curve in the resulting image below or [click here for a National Geographic article](#) showing how many cities accomplished this in 1918.



Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences



# News from your National Board Representative

By Cindy Shoemaker



We are experiencing a new normal as we cope with the impact of COVID-19 and work to flatten the curve. We remain concerned for our families, our friends, our communities and for our country as a whole. And we are deeply saddened by the loss of life and hope for the recovery of those who have contracted this virus.

Our bridge players, club owners, instructors, volunteers, bridge organizations and staff are also experiencing a new normal. Clubs have closed and many sectionals and regionals have been canceled, including the NABC in Columbus.

In District 17, all sectionals have been canceled through early May along with the Phoenix NLM Gold Rush Regional. To my knowledge, all clubs have closed.

## **The financial impact is very real**

From an ACBL perspective, the NABC Columbus was to operate at a slight loss. Further loss will be minimal due in part to an order announced by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and signed by Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton prohibiting mass gatherings in Ohio.

Regardless, the ACBL's three main income sources – membership dues, tournament income and club sanction fees – have been significantly reduced. All are working hard to preserve assets and to plan for the future.

The vast majority of clubs have rent obligations which will compound the longer they stay closed. The clubs are our backbone and it is my hope that we do all we can to support them.



## Here's what we can do today

As we maintain social distancing guidelines, we can support our clubs and the ACBL by participating in the [Support Your Club ACBL Black Point Game via Bridge Base Online](#). Games are held daily at 10 am, 5 pm and 7:30 pm EST. Out of every \$5 entry that is purchased, \$4 will be distributed to the clubs.

Daylong Tournaments have now been added which are solo events played with robots. Here you have up to 24 hours to complete your game, and it doesn't have to be played all at once. You can even pause in the middle of a hand. Daylongs are \$6 per player.

The ACBL is also working to give ACBL members the option to play in games limited to their local clubs. A few clubs are already online and helping BBO and the ACBL with the rollout. More clubs will be added as more directors are available and club managers are trained. Significant progress is being made.

## Board motions

The ACBL Board of Directors was unable to hold its board meetings in Columbus the week of March 16. Instead, we conducted business via webinars during the same time frame. The BoD and various committees will continue to conduct business via webinars between now and the NABC Montreal scheduled for July.

# Tournament Results

## Regional Results

The Tucson regional had fabulous hospitality with free coffee, teas, lox and plenty of enthusiasm. All who came were treated to the best of lectures, competition and fun. [Click here for the full results at the ACBL.](#)

Unfortunately, one of the players became ill after the tournament and discovered that he was positive for COVID-19; click here for [his post on Bridge Winners.](#)

No winning players turned up for the photographer.

## Special Events

The Championship Flight of the Grand National Teams was played at the Tucson Regional. Here are the winners, the defending champions from last year's National Finals:



L to R: Roger Lee - Haig Tchamitch, Paradise Valley AZ - Daniel Korbel - Sheri Winestock - Fred Gitelman  
- Geoff Hampson, all from Las Vegas NV except Haig

## Sectional Results

### *February*

8-9 ..... [Tucson AZ IN](#)  
14-17 ..... [Scottsdale \(Phoenix\) AZ](#)  
14-17 ..... [El Paso TX](#)  
23 ..... [Scottsdale \(Mesa\) AZ Prog](#)  
24-28 ..... [Las Vegas NV](#)  
29-Mar 1 .... [Colorado Springs CO IN](#)  
29-Mar 1 .... [Santa Fe NM IN](#)

### *March*

12-14 ..... [Sedona \(Verde Valley\) AZ](#)  
13-15 ..... CANCELED Golden (Denver) CO







## MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

# District 17 Member Achievements

## Grand Life Masters



Las Vegas, Nevada has two new Grand Life Masters: Joshua Donn and Roger Lee.

Josh is a many time national champion and a world junior champion. He is the all-time leader of Richard Pavlicek's monthly polls that ran from 2000-2006 which had thousands of participants from over 90 countries. He also teaches and writes about bridge.

Josh and his daughter Mireille

## NEW LIFE MASTERS





## How Donna Achieved LM Status

Donna Romm, Albuquerque Unit 374's newest Life Master, is an example of how hard work and determination can help you achieve your goals. Donna believes there are naturals and mortals in the bridge world. She classifies herself as a mortal stating, "It took hours and hours of reading, studying, and exposure to become adequate."

Bitten by the bridge bug, Donna has embraced the challenges of the game. And yes, she still spends several hours per week reading and studying, as there is always something to learn.

When not at the bridge club, Donna is a dental hygienist who loves to paint in oils. She serves on the Unit 374 Board as the Charity and I/N Sectional Chair.

## Stories from Others on their Way



New ACBL Regional Master,  
Carmen Tucker

I started playing duplicate bridge 3½ years ago, hoping to start laying down new neural pathways for my aging brain. I took my first class through the Santa Fe Community College, which was given at the Santa Fe Bridge Center. I took to it like a duck to water, and really liked the people I was meeting. I got lots of encouragement from my teachers and took every course I could take.

I found others who were playing at my level and started going to every game and New Mexico tournament I could. I've been close to Regional Master for some time, but couldn't go to any tournaments last year for those badly needed Silver Points, so I had my hopes set high for our recent

Sectional here in Santa Fe and I, and my partner Katherine Kozick, did it! Now on to my next level!



New ACBL NABC Master, Karen  
Muench

The first time I played duplicate bridge was in the early 1980's in Madison, Wisconsin. I was pursuing my Ph.D. and noticed a small article about duplicate in one of the daily newspapers. I had never heard of duplicate bridge, but I went to check it out; I've been hooked ever since. After I graduated in 1985, I didn't play duplicate for many years, due mostly to professional obligations. I retired in 2004 and moved to Silver City, New Mexico.

For about 12 years, I played in the one weekly ACBL sanctioned bridge game there. I knew few bridge conventions. It wasn't until I moved to

Tucson in late 2015 that I was able to play again, first at the Catalina Club, then at the Small Slams Club in SaddleBrooke, and now at the new Northwest Tucson Bridge Center in Oro Valley.

I am most impressed at how player centered the Oro Valley club is. Most of the



board members and directors are not paid for their hard work and dedication.

Many of them are very willing to share their expertise with us “newbies”. Gaining masterpoints is certainly a goal of mine. Someday I hope to become a Life Master. But as equally important to me is the mental stimulation of the game and the camaraderie fostered by the members. I am delighted duplicate bridge has become even a larger part of my life. I hope to continue to become a better player with even more coaching and practice.

If you become a Life Master please send your photo to the editors – [coopers@d17acbl.org](mailto:coopers@d17acbl.org) - as well as any thoughts you wish to share about your experience.

# Denver Rocky Mountain Regional

## May 19-25, 2020

Sponsored by ACBL [District 17](#) and [Denver Unit 361](#)

[Renaissance Hotel](#) by Marriott, [303-399-7500](#)

- \$120 single/double through April 27
- Conveniently located near the Central Park [Light rail](#) Station
- Use the [Map](#) for driving assistance

### FULL [SCHEDULE](#) OF TEAM AND PAIR EVENTS

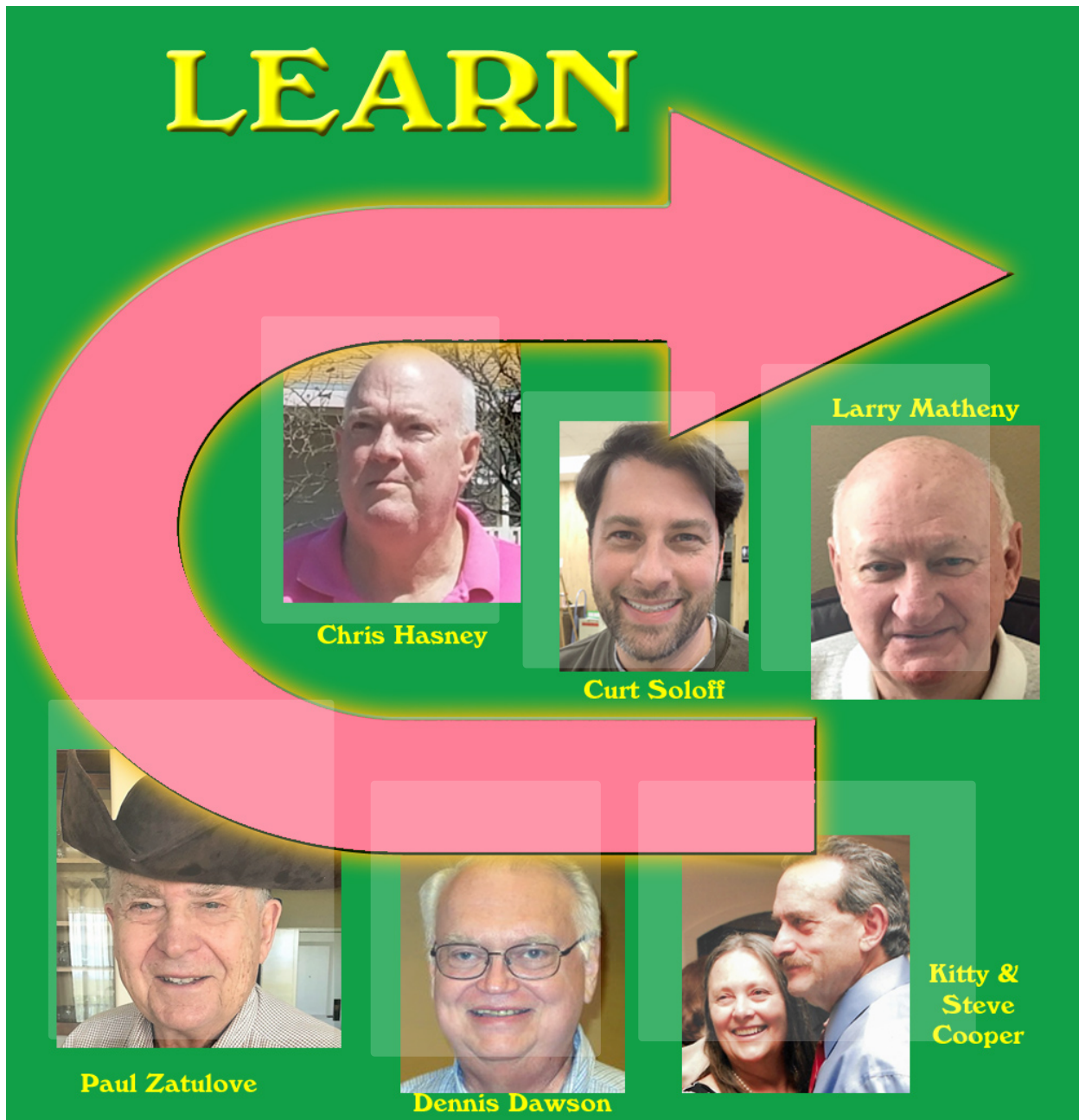
- Expanded team schedule: every session Wednesday through Sunday
- New: Barometer pairs and Soloway knockouts

### NEW PLAYER FRIENDLY

- LARGEST [Pro/Am Game](#) in the country !!
- 299er and Gold Rush Pairs; Gold Rush Swiss Teams
- Guest speakers Wednesday through Sunday

Email for [Partnerships](#) or for [Tournament](#) questions.





On the following pages we have articles from our regular columnists. Please feel free to send us - [coopers@d17acbl.org](mailto:coopers@d17acbl.org) - bridge questions, humorous anecdotes, or an article of your own for this section.



# Advice for the New Player

By Chris Hasney, Hereford, Arizona

## Doubles – What and When?

Before we get into the specifics of non-penalty doubles, let's see if we can establish a thought process to help sort them all out. First think "penalty or other?" Then, if other, consider what "other" means. As we [mentioned last issue](#), these days most direct seat doubles of suit bids below 2NT are NOT penalty.

The substitute for a penalty double is PASS, with the hopeful expectancy that partner will close the trap by making a takeout double, which you can pass for penalties. As I said last time, when it comes to doubles you must learn to think backwards.

So, is there a time when it is appropriate to refrain from reopening for partner at the one or two level? Sometimes. But remember conditions of contest. Is this a matchpoint duplicate or an IMP game or rubber match? Be less aggressive about reopening in rubber games. Let them have their part score or accept 50 or 100 instead of doubling them into a game bonus at the two level. Generally, the signs that maybe you SHOULD NOT balance for partner at the one or two level are:

- **The auction has gone (1♣)-P-(P) to you.** We are talking specifically about 1♣ here. Why didn't anyone bid? If you are looking at a hand light in points and short in clubs, where are they? It is possible that partner has "trap



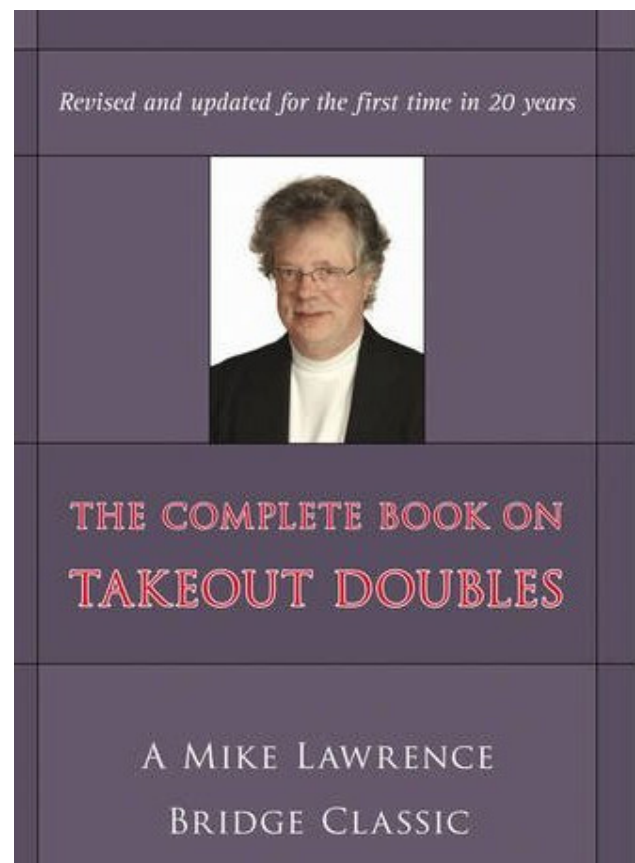
passed” over 1♣ with a stack and a decent hand, but is it really worth the risk of reopening and now hearing opener reverse, bid 2NT (18-19) or, worse, doubling or redoubling for penalties? Hopefully, if you pass and partner WAS trapping he’ll have a sense of humor about it (unlike the legendary Lew Mathe who, the story goes, fired Bob Hamman as a partner because he passed in this situation). For this reason it is best to AVOID trap passing over 1♣ with decent clubs and a decent hand. Find a bid that best describes your hand, even a 14 HCP 1NT overcall at times or an overcall on a scattered 10 count and a moth eaten five card suit. If you do choose to pass, don’t yell at pard when he lets it go.

- **YOU have the stack in the enemy suit and an opening hand too.** In this case most likely neither side has a game and whoever bids last loses. Just let them play the part score contract. Who knows, maybe you’ll even beat it.
- **They have a misfit and quit at the one or two level,** perhaps in someone’s second suit. Don’t reopen, partner isn’t likely to be trapping. If they have a misfit, so do we. Whoever bids last loses. (Remember about thinking backwards? What you’ve probably heard is “If they have a fit, so do we.” That means it’s much safer to balance when the enemy has a fit than when they don’t. But that’s getting a bit beyond our scope here.)

Now we can start talking about non-penalty doubles. (The penalty category includes protective doubles as described above). Like Caesar's Gaul, non-penalty doubles are divided into three parts.

These are:

- Fit or Size Seeking – takeout and negative
- Fit or Size Showing – support, maximal, responsive, and informative
- Specialized – lead directing, stopper showing, stolen bid, and announcement







# I/N Tips: The Three Cornered Hat continued

By Paul Zatulove

Bridge hand evaluation involves multiple dimensions, high card points, distribution (Losing Trick Count) and controls (Aces and Kings). All THREE are equally important in evaluating a bridge hand and we refer to this concept as the Colonial Three Cornered Hat.



Hat image courtesy of the [National Museum of American History, Behring Center](#)

In the [hand shown from the Common Game](#), North's Losing Trick Count (LTC) of only four alerts him to slam potential. One LTC for the missing Spade King, two LTC for the missing Heart Ace-King, and one LTC for the missing Club King. LTC is limited to the number of cards in the suit, so in a two card suit no missing Queen is counted.



From the common game <https://thecommongame.com/Results/20200221Rank.html>

## Board 13 (02/21/20)

N Deals Both Vul	♠ A7 ♥ J7 ♦ AKQ8743 ♣ A7	<b>13</b>
♠ J54 ♥ T9 ♦ 965 ♣ T8532	<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>N</span> <span>E</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>W</span> <span>S</span> </div> </div>	♠ 92 ♥ K86432 ♦ T ♣ QJ94
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">1</span> <div style="background-color: green; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span style="color: white; font-weight: bold;">18</span> </div> <span style="margin-left: 10px;">6</span> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">15</div>	♠ KQT863 ♥ AQ5 ♦ J2 ♣ K6	

NS 7N; NS 7♠; NS 7♦; NS 3♥; NS 2♣; Optimal Contract +2220

The next corner of the hat is Control Points. Seven Control Points is the expected amount for a High Card Point hand of 20-21 so North's cards are stronger than the 18 HCPs indicate.

North can count seven possible Diamond tricks plus two Aces. In addition, a Losing Trick Count of only four is slam territory. If partner has as many as eight LTC that would indicate the partnership could take twelve possible tricks,  $24 - (8+4) = 12$ .

The opening bid that forces partner to continue the bidding is 2♣, the most promising path to game and slam. The late great George Rosenkranz stated that Aces and Kings are more important than High Card Points when bidding slams. Therefore the most informative response to 2♣, opener's most promising invitation to slam, would be a response of Aces and Kings or Rosenkranz Control Points, two points for an Ace and one point for a King, a total of 12 Control Points. Dr Rosenkranz's research showed a 2♣ opener had 8 Control Points 65-70% of the time. The responses:

- 2♦ shows zero or one control point, no Kings or one.
- 2♥ shows two control points, one Ace or two Kings.
- 2♠ shows three control points, one Ace and one King or three Kings.
- 3♣ shows four or more control points.

In the above hand, North's 8½ plus tricks suggest opening 2♣. The Control Point response would be 3♣. North will know, from their own cards, that South must have at least one Ace and two Kings.

North would next make a natural bid of 3♦. South would also make a natural bid, 3♠. North can then bid 5NT to show South that they have all four Aces and ask South to bid 7♠ if they have two of the top three honors in Spades, which would have to be King-Queen. When South answers 7♠, North can count 13 tricks in NT if the diamonds run (that is highly probable as long as partner has one), knowing from South's first response there are two Kings and the Ace of Hearts in South's cards.

North can bid seven No Trump! Top board. Using control responses to a 2♣ opener is a simple, informative convention that compliments the Colonial Three Cornered Hat.

Of the more than 2300 pairs that played this hand, 50% did not bid slam! Only 7% bid a Grand Slam and 43% bid a Small Slam. Over 1150 pairs missed the most exciting bid in bridge. Use the Colonial Three Cornered Hat to evaluate your hand and experience more enjoyment in your bridge game.



Paul Zatulove is a recent LM who believes everyone should be exposed to bridge and improve the quality of their life. He organized a group of men to improve their bridge and play duplicate. 14 joined the ACBL, one became a director, two won the Ace of Clubs award and one is touring regional tournaments with three lovely ladies.

# Bridge in the Real World

By Dennis Dawson, Santa Fe, New Mexico

## Amazing Grace Returns


Many books have been written about how bridge *should* be played, but few about how it is *actually* played in the real world. Most hands are played not by the experts, but by amateurs who are just trying to muddle through and are having a hell of a good time doing it!

The local bridge club offers an amazing spectrum of characters, each with their own unique blend of characteristics. Bridge is a game not only of mistakes, but also of personalities.

Amazing Grace is so named because her teacher once asked her what her plan was as declarer and she answered, "To go down gracefully." Amazing Grace is always stylishly dressed and is a quite proper elderly lady. She rarely makes a contract but looks good not doing it. She loves the game passionately, and earnestly wants to improve. She has taken every lesson but understood few of them. She forever takes things out of context and applies them in bizarre ways.

Linus has his Security Blanket with him at all times and is, of course, a timid bidder. He lacks the self confidence so crucial for success at bridge.

Caveman plays an old fashioned game, to put it politely.

<div> <div>D</div> <div>1</div> </div>		<div>N North</div> <div> <span>♠</span> A32  <span>♥</span> KQJ2  <span>♦</span> Q1065  <span>♣</span> 64         </div>	<table> <tr> <th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>1♦</td><td>X</td><td>1♥</td></tr> <tr> <td>P</td><td>2NT</td><td>P</td><td>3NT</td></tr> <tr> <td>P</td><td>4♥</td><td>P</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr> <td>P</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S		1♦	X	1♥	P	2NT	P	3NT	P	4♥	P	P	P			
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	<div>S South</div> <div> <span>♠</span> Q4  <span>♥</span> A1098  <span>♦</span> J943  <span>♣</span> K52         </div>	<div>Play this hand out at</div> <div><a href="https://tinyurl.com/yx3nmkw9">tinyurl.com/yx3nmkw9</a></div>																					
		<div>4♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0</div>																					

This auction would probably never be duplicated, no matter how many times the hand was bid. But that's the way it happened.

**Caveman, sitting East, should not make a takeout double of 1♦ with only two hearts.** Takeout doubles for the last 50 years show at least three card support for all unbid suits, particularly the majors, unless the hand is just too strong to simply overcall. East should just pass—perhaps he will be able to bid later. Many bids in bridge show both strength *and* distribution.

Over East's double, West, Linus, has a clear cut 1♠ bid, and in fact should compete to 2♠ if the opponents bid 2♥. West should pick spades over clubs, even with more clubs, as the double emphasizes interest in the majors. The 1♠ bid shows about 5-8 points. With more West would jump to 2♠ immediately. (Maybe West had seen East's takeout doubles before?)

**Amazing Grace forgot that she had opened the bidding, and thought she was making a Jacoby 2NT response to partner's opening bid,** showing a heart raise and forcing to game. South was just an innocent bystander until fate made him declarer in a seemingly impossible contract.

When the smoke cleared, declarer was in 4♥ and West led the ♠6. Declarer's prospects were bleak, to say the least. There was a spade loser unless West had



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# IMPROVE YOUR PLAY

By Larry Matheny, Fort Collins, Colorado

## Cue Bidding

One of the first conventions new players discover is Blackwood. This useful tool asks partner for the number of aces he holds. The Roman Keycard Blackwood convention is an improvement, as it includes the king of the agreed suit as an ace, or keycard. However, this convention is not always the best method to use when hunting for slam. The convention will tell you how many keycards your partnership has, but not which ones. Showing controls, or cue bidding, is a better method to ensure a suit is protected against two quick losers.

	<b>N North</b> ♠ J753 ♥ 1086 ♦ A2 ♣ KQJ10	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td>2♦</td> <td>P</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td>3♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>4♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td>4♦</td> <td>P</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		W	N	E	S					2♣	P		2♦	P	2♠	P		3♠	P	4♣	P		4♦	P	4♠	P		P	P	
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<b>W West</b> ♠ 4 ♥ AK543 ♦ 765 ♣ 8732	<b>S South</b> ♠ AKQ1098 ♥ QJ ♦ KQJ10 ♣ A	<b>E East</b> ♠ 62 ♥ 972 ♦ 9843 ♣ 9654																														

**Play this hand out at**  
[tinyurl.com/wrn8qyy](https://tinyurl.com/wrn8qyy)

**BBO**

4♠ S      NS: 0 EW: 0

## Opening lead: ♥K

**Bidding:** After South's rebid of two spades, North was sure that a slam was possible. This N/S pair uses a cuebid method that shows either first or second round control. South began cue bidding with four clubs, and North cooperated with a diamond cuebid. But when South denied a heart control, the disappointed North knew to stop in game.

**Play:** West led the king of hearts asking his partner for count. East played the deuce showing an odd number, after which West cashed the ace. Declarer soon claimed the remaining tricks for a score of +450. At the other table in this team game, after South's two spade rebid North leapt to 4NT. South admitted to holding three keycards, and with only one keycard missing, North bid six spades. This contract was quickly defeated and the scores of +450 and +50 meant a swing of eleven IMPs.

When the values for slam are present, here is a logical progression:

- Agree on a suit or notrump.
- Make sure you have first or second round control of each suit.
- If necessary, use Blackwood to ensure you are not missing two aces or keycards.



Born and raised in Illinois, Larry worked at a major insurance company for 33 years, retiring as a director in the systems department. In 2003, he moved to Loveland, Colorado, the home state of his wife, Linda, and soon got involved in the local Bridge scene. Larry served as Unit president for ten years. He has written a weekly column for his unit webpage since 2004 and is a frequent lecturer at the monthly unit games.



# CONSULT THE COOPERS

By Kitty and Steve Cooper, editors *D17 ScoreCard*

## Slam Bidding in Suit Auctions: Cuebidding and Blackwood

Point count is not very accurate with unbalanced hands that have a fit. Tricks and controls, or controls with distribution and lots of trump are the hand types that make slam easily with less than 33 points. Look at this pair of hands.

W West	E East
♠ AJ3	♠ KQ10987
♥ KQJ1086	♥ A97
♦ A3	♦ 654
♣ 42	♣ 3

Notice that there are 13 tricks available (six spades, six hearts, and one diamond) with either major as trump, while the opponents have only one trick, the ♣A. So a small slam makes even though the partnership has nothing like the required points for slam. This is a typical example of the controls plus tricks slam that you can have with unbalanced hands; there are plenty of tricks in hearts and spades and both minor suits are controlled, one on the first round (ace of diamonds) and the other on the second (singleton club).



The auction should start 1♥-1♠-3♥ and then *East* should say to himself, “My partner has a good six card heart suit and I have the ace - six tricks, if she has the ♠A I have six spade tricks, if she has the ♦A as well, or the ♣A and the ♦K then the opponents cannot cash two tricks before we take our twelve.”

So how does *East* make a slam try? He makes a cuebid of 4♣. In this type of auction, 4♥ is a playable game as is, perhaps, 3NT or 4♠. Partner has said hearts should be trump so you would not go looking for a new suit to play in. Therefore bidding a new suit shows a control and agrees hearts. The bid of a control rather than a real suit is called a cuebid; it usually shows the ace, but sometimes can be the king or shortness with interest in slam.

Next *West* can cuebid the ♦A and *East* will sign off in 4♥ having made a slam try. *West* can continue with a cuebid of 4♠, which will excite *East* who will now bid slam. Note that the cuebid in partner’s suit, spades here, should always be a high card, not shortness, so that partner knows there are tricks in that suit.

*New suits once we have established a fit are usually cuebids.* They are always cuebids when you have a major suit and the auction cannot stop below game. If your fit is in a minor, new suits below 3NT are usually tries for NT (I can stop this unbid suit, can you stop the other one?), but new suits above 3NT are cuebids.

To summarize, once the partnership has a suit fit you can make a cuebid to tell partner that you have a hand that might be suitable for slam. Often you need to know that partner has specific controls before bidding a slam, and you can find this out by using cuebids rather than Blackwood. It is also possible to bid 4NT, Blackwood, after you hear partner cuebid the suit that you were looking for a control in.

## When to Use Blackwood

A commonly asked question is when should you use Blackwood as opposed to using cuebidding. The answer is that you shouldn’t use Blackwood without knowing that the partnership has a first or second round control in every suit. Also,

you shouldn't use it if partner's answer would not help you decide whether or not to bid a slam. If you have a doubleton or a tripleton with no ace or king in it, then you have no way of knowing that the opponents can't cash the ace and king of that suit.

The time to use cuebidding rather than Blackwood is when at least one suit is not controlled. Another way to say this is that Blackwood is not a slam *try* while a cuebid is. You use Blackwood when you know there are enough tricks for slam as long as the opponents cannot first take two tricks.

This column was first published as the tenth article of the Basic Bidding series in 2016 and is available with the others in that series on the District web site at <http://www.d17acbl.org/index.php?page=bidding-basics>



Kitty and Steve were both born and raised in New York City, where they knew each other from the local bridge scene. Unfortunately, they foolishly married other people. In 2000, both were again single when they re-met at the Las Vegas Regional. Soon after, they married, and Kitty moved to Albuquerque, where Steve was living. They moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, in 2008 and left there for 'the warmer clime' of San Diego County in 2012.

They are both Grand Life Masters and have won two National Championships together. Kitty has five others and a World Woman's title. They have been your D17 ScoreCard editors since 2010.

# CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

By Curt Soloff, Denver, Colorado

## Major Suit Raises, Part V: More Splinters

Before we delve into a couple of supplementary splinter gadgets that you may wish to add to your convention card, we must first deal with a very important question recently raised by *D17 ScoreCard* columnist Chris Hasney: Should you splinter with a singleton ace or king?

Let's say you pick up the following hand:



Partner opens either 1♥ or 1♠. Do you want to force to game? The hand seems a shade too good for a limit raise and should have play for game. As mentioned previously, starting with a 2/1 to set up a game force when you have four card major suit support is not advised, which leaves us to choose either Jacoby 2NT or a diamond splinter as the best option. For Jacoby 2NT, partner might expect a bit

more in high cards, so the splinter may be the lesser of evils. Is it perfect? No. The

optimal splinter suggests little waste in the short suit—a lower honor or a spot card rather than a stiff ace or king. Alas, bridge routinely confronts us with less than ideal scenarios. I would choose the 4♦ splinter bid this time, but be sure to discuss this style in your partnerships because some experts advise against the practice. My feeling is that the value of showing shortness while guaranteeing four card trump support outweighs the drawbacks. *[Ed note: The problem with splintering with a stiff Ace is that partner will downgrade a holding like KQ to length or the AQ when you have a stiff K. Thus we prefer to show a balanced forcing raise via Jacoby. However sometimes the splinter would have worked out better.]*

In the last installment, we discussed the importance of splinters being limited to a concise range, usually in the vicinity of 9-11 HCP. But what if we were able to make two types of splinters—i.e., splinters in different point ranges? Could we implement a structure that shows both a minimal splinter (no slam interest) as well as a splinter in a higher point range with slam interest, perhaps 12-15 HCP, or even without an upper limit? Yes, we are about to serve you cake AND allow you to eat it!

Allow me to introduce you to the anonymous splinter *[Eds. We, and many others, call it an unknown miniSplinter]*, a bid informing partner that you (a) want to be in game in partner's major and (b) have shortness somewhere, but you are not going to reveal where it is unless opener has a really great hand and wants to find out. If partner doesn't have a moose, she will sign off in 4M without knowing the short suit until the dummy is on the table, and neither do the opponents. Shortness information is delivered on a need to know basis, so let the defense figure out the best opening lead with minimal information.

How do you employ the anonymous splinter? You jump to 3M + 1. In other words, when partner opens 1♥ then 3♠ becomes the anonymous splinter, and following a 1♠ opening you jump to 3NT. Both of these bids are artificial and alertable. I also contend that both of these are ineffective as natural bids. Holding opening values and a balanced hand, why chew up valuable bidding space by jumping to 3NT when you could have a nice, smooth, 2/1 auction to 3NT instead? And if partner



opens 1♥ and you have a spade suit, you should always start with a natural and forcing call of 1♠, right? Most of the time, opener will sign off at four of our major after an anonymous splinter, but if he really wants to know where your shortness is, he asks by bidding the next step, at which point you will either bid your short suit or bid four of the major to show shortness in the suit that cannot be bid below game in our suit.

For example, after 1♥-3♠ [anonymous splinter]-3N [where are you short?], responder bids:

- 4♣, short in clubs.
- 4♦, short in diamonds.
- 4♥, short in spades.

What if you have a stronger hand with shortness and at least a little slam interest? Now, you will make a **direct splinter** in which you do, in fact, reveal the short suit. Because you are confident in your game bid and have slam interest, you are not concerned that you are sharing information with the defense because partner really does need to know. The auction for a direct splinter looks much like the classic double jump shift that we discussed last time, but with one necessary twist: the bid for showing spade shortness when partner opens 1♥ is a jump to 3NT! Remember that the jump to 3♠ has become your anonymous splinter, so you need another way to specifically show a stiff spade. For example, if you hold:



With such nice controls and a potentially useful side suit in clubs, you can likely envision some fairly minimal opening hands that partner could hold that would produce 12 tricks in hearts. Your first bid is a conventional jump to 3NT, which shows spade shortness, four card support for hearts, and slam interest. Even if partner does not love the sound of your spade shortness and attempts to sign off at 4♥, you are probably worth one more slam effort before you give up.

W	N	E	S
	1♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥



Curt Soloff is a sapphire life master with 15 years of bridge directing and teaching experience. He has served as the manager and director of the Castle Rock Bridge Club since its inception in 2009 and can be contacted at [castlerockbridge@gmail.com](mailto:castlerockbridge@gmail.com).



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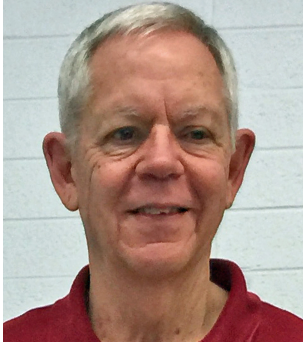
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