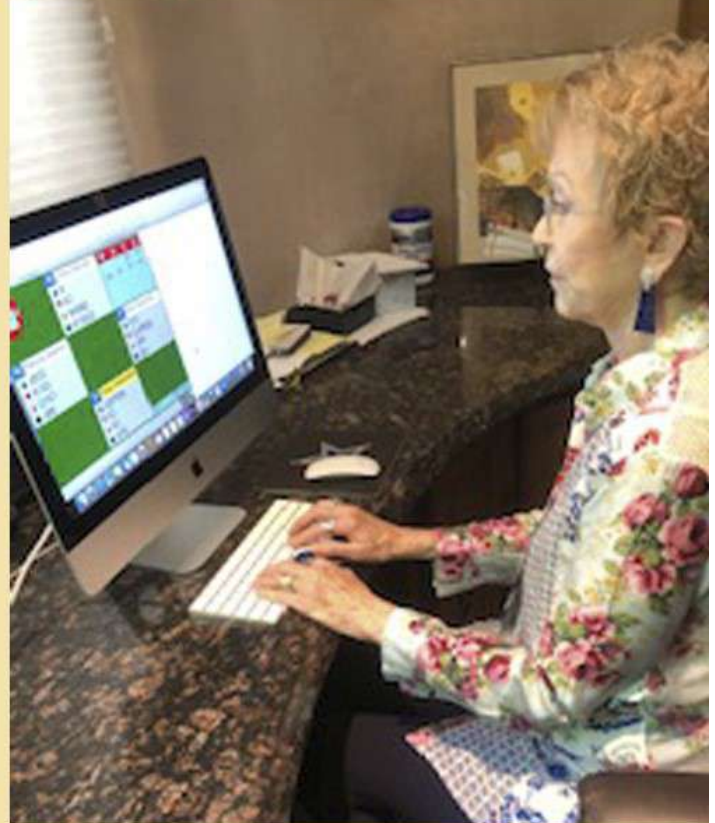




ScoreCard

Volume III Issue 5
October 2020



NEWS

WINNERS

LEARN

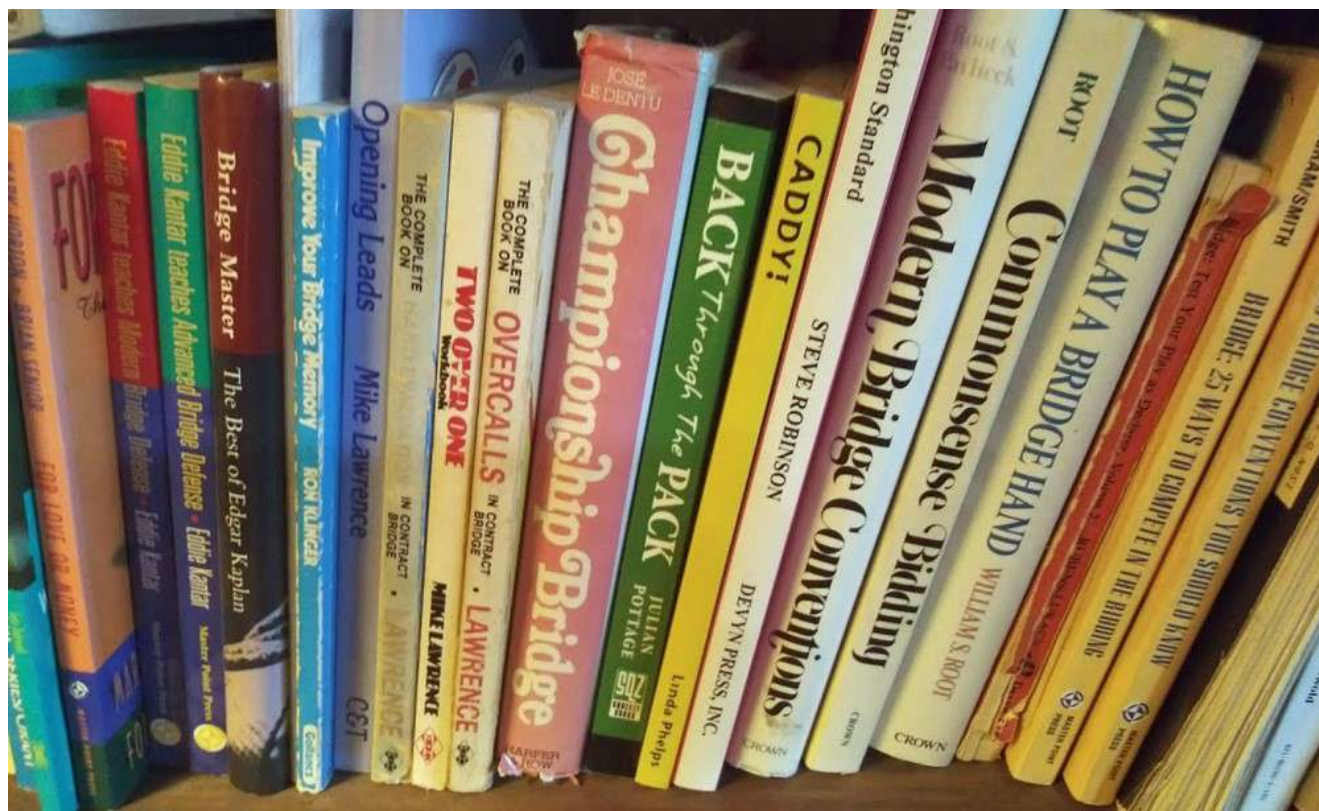


John's Journal

By John Grossmann, District 17 President



The pandemic is continuing to scramble the world of duplicate bridge. We are often asked to make decisions with murky information. Plans get made, scrapped, remade, and scrapped again. ACBL will not support any tournaments in January or February of next year.



What is my perspective on when face to face bridge might return? I get asked that a lot, and this answer is that I don't know. But let's not allow uncertainty to create despair. There is much we can do. We have virtual bridge, but bridge is more than just sessions, we are a community. Sometimes even small steps can support that community and lead to progress.

to make our virtual bridge world more friendly:

1. Be a Substitute: A couple of times each week, I am a virtual director in Colorado. We are always interested in potential substitutes. Sometimes we know of a player who needs a partner, but often we are trying to find substitutes to fill a half table. Substitutes get to play for free! Email your availability to your local director, or click on the VACB##### box for each BBO game to send a text message to the virtual director. Try it.

2. Donate a Book: Lots of us have books we have collected at tournaments. Consider donating a book to a new player. Add a note of encouragement.

3. Teach a Grandchild to Play Cards: In August I spent a week at a cabin just outside of Yellowstone with four grandchildren. No TV, no WiFi. The hardest part was getting small hands (youngest was age six) to hold 13 cards. What fun it was to teach them how to play a notrump hand. No bidding, just enthusiastic play. It's a start. [Ed note: Yes the method for teaching children is to start with just play, [click here for Kitty's advice, tools, and the link to the ACBL teacher's manual for kids](#) that she wrote]



Children learning to play Bridge at Hoover School in Albuquerque

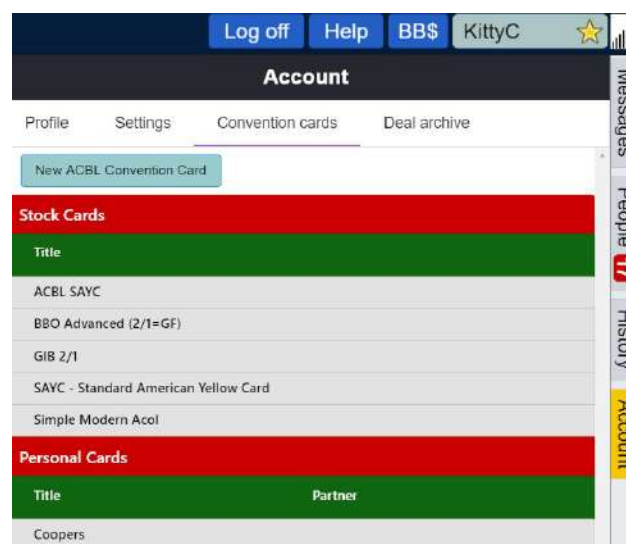
4. Play With Someone New: Most of us have a cluster of established partners. Try

admire? Better yet, find a player who rarely plays online and encourage them to partner up.

5. Peruse Bridge Statistics: Bridge is a game of numbers, and I don't mean just counting to 13. The odds of a 3-2 split when opponents hold five cards are 68%. You have an 84% chance of a fit with partner when you have a 5-5 two suited hand, something I just learned while writing this column! The odds of a void in any dealt hand are 1 in 19. Do a Google search on "duplicate bridge statistics." Feast on the statistical banquet. Did you know that 59% of all bridge statistics are made up?

6. Mentor a Rising Star: Mentoring a beginner can be rewarding. Talk to a teacher or club owner about players who might be looking for a "pro" (or just a Life Master!). Promise to play three times. Reserve an hour after the game to review some boards. It is interesting how much you can learn about your own game in the process. Players especially appreciate tips about defense and signals.

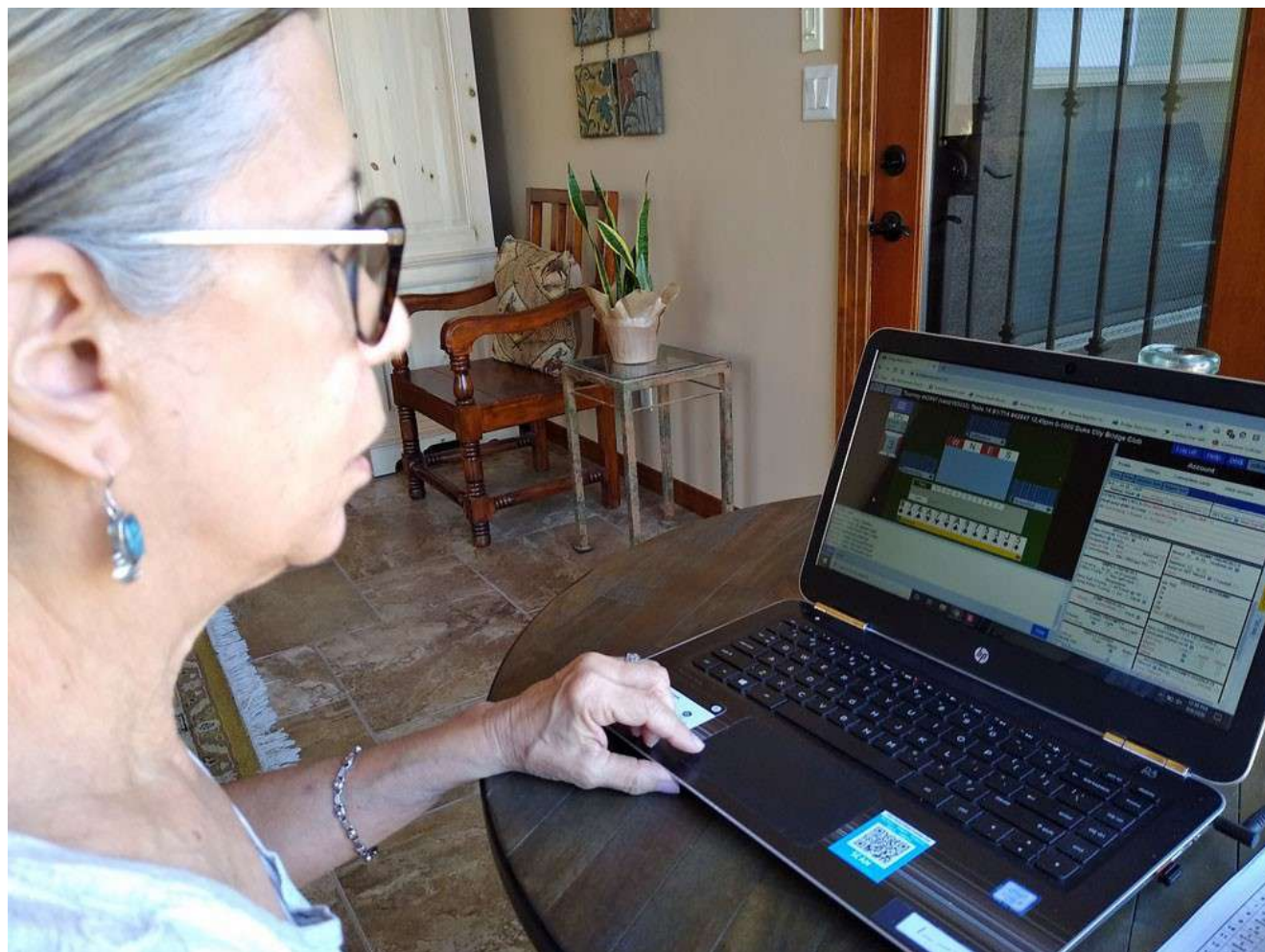
7. Convention Card: Be fair to your opponents, post a convention card for each of your partners on BBO. The ten minutes before game time is a great time to check if you have a card posted. After you register, go to the account menu (a tab on the right) and click on "Convention cards" in the white menu bar below the word "Account" in the black bar at the top. BBO now allows you to post a card in the middle of the game. [See page 20 of the September Bulletin](#) on how to post a convention card, or [click here to watch Silvana Morici's three minute video](#).



8. Robot Time: How would you like to have a partner who always remembers the cards that are played, never makes a mistake responding to keycard, writes what each of their bids means, and is fearless about bidding slams? Let me introduce “Jeeves”, my name for my BBO robot buddy. If you have not tried playing with R2D2 or C3PO, well, it can be challenging. BBO uses “GIB” robot logic. [Click here for the brief on robo-think.](#)

9. Authoring: Start a bridge blog. Post on Facebook. Post on [BridgeWinners.com](https://www.bridgewinners.com). Consider writing an article about your bridge experiences for your local club or unit newsletter. Write up a hand. Talk about your personal quest to become a Life Master. Share your love of the game.

Time to wrap it up. What? Where is number 10? Well, I leave that one for you to write. Think about what you can contribute to our game, to our bridge community. I would love to hear your ideas. Contact me at Blackstone.co@comcast.net



Donna Romm of Albuquerque, New Mexico playing online



District 17 News

District 17 Elections are Complete

Starting in November, Sharon Smith will join the District 17 Board as the new Colorado at large and Wyoming (Units 359, 360, 363, 364, 367, 421, and 422) representative, replacing Rod Southworth who is retiring from the board. We thank him deeply for his many years of service. [Click here for the September Buzz newsletter](#) which has the full election report.



Dr. Joyce Honorof

Further Report for the Longest Day in Tucson

In previous years, Small Slams Bridge Club organized the team “Bridge for Better Brains” to raise money in our community. This year “Bridge for Better Brains” was again chaired by Joyce Honorof, MD, with committee members from both the Small Slams and N.W. Tucson Bridge Clubs. The Board of Directors of both clubs voted to send all the money earned from the games on

June 20 and 21 to The Alzheimer’s Association. Bridge for Better Brains raised

donation to the Alzheimer's Association as well.

Successful Events for the Esperanca Charity

In Phoenix, *Bridge on Shea* and the *In Tempo Bridge Center* (as part of the Alliance group on BBO) raised over \$2400 for the local Esperanca charity. Most of the money raised by the two clubs came from auctioning District 17 pros who volunteered their time. This was the first time Phoenix clubs participated in the fund raiser, but players in the San Diego area have been supporting this charity for many years. Over \$20,000 was raised, including about \$300 raised by clubs in Colorado. [Click here to can find out more information about Esperanca.](#)



Totem the cat helps Leon Lowe play for charity

Photos of our Members Playing Online

I would love more photos of our readers playing online for the next and final

Mexico players Frank Fine, Albuquerque, and Patsy Waltermath. Bernalillo, playing bridge on BBO.

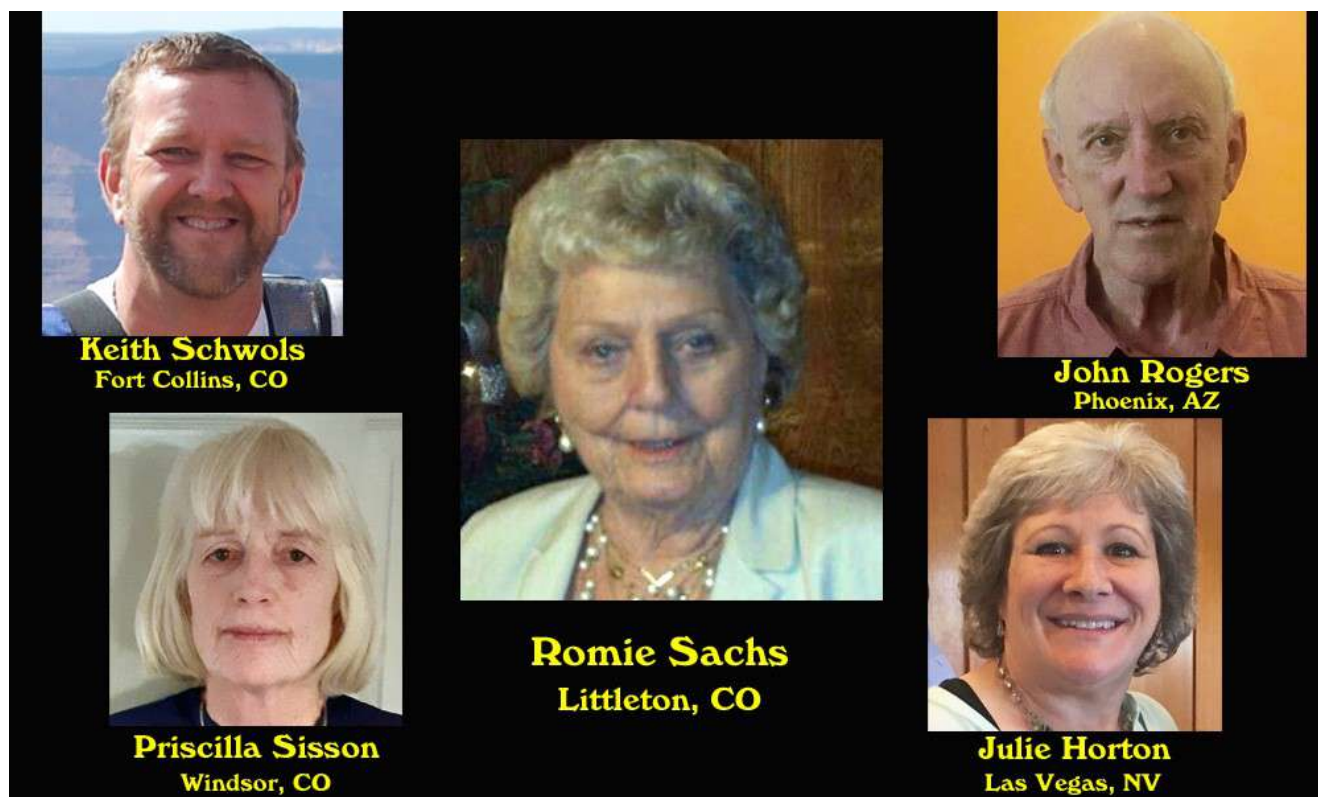


Ben Franz, Albuquerque



District 17 Member Achievements

NEW LIFE MASTERS



Some Stories from our New Life Masters

By Romie Sachs, Littleton, Colorado

I'm thrilled to get my Life Master at 90. I've been playing bridge for 66 years but only started playing competitive duplicate after my husband died in 2006. A dear friend conducted bridge lessons, including many of the new conventions, so I took three classes a week from her and played four days a week. She advised me to play with players better than myself.

I was living in Florida but moved to Colorado after seven years. It was hard to find a regular partner. Luckily I did, and we even attended out of town tournaments.

The last few silver points were difficult to earn but thanks to a nice gentleman who

By John Rogers, Phoenix, Arizona

By Keith Schwols, Fort Collins, Colorado

I began 2020 about 10 Silver points short of making Life Master, hoping road trips to nearby sectionals would put me over the top. The pandemic changed those plans. I should have made Life Master in the first Silver Week, playing late Saturday night in Hawaii with my mentor. But a couple of the virtual clubs where I was a sub marked down out of towner scores and I ended up 0.12 silver points short. Instead, I became a Life Master on the first day of the next Silver Week at my local virtual club.

I played online bridge for the first time this year. I meet many new people, and learned to focus on basic bidding concepts (not much time to discuss a complicated convention card when you are a sub). I also jumped into virtual bridge directing, running games for three clubs. My goal is to play virtually in all 50 states, all Canadian provinces, and as many countries as I can. So far 40 states, nine provinces and 11 countries.

element is delightful. I feel can always make new friends at the bridge table.

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

♠ TOURNAMENTS

Tournament Results

District 17 did very well at the recent [Virtual Vacation Regional-Rated Tournament](#). We were dominant in the 499er games, winning three of them as well as an Open and a Gold Rush Pairs.

We did not do particularly well in the online National Championships. The one bright spot was Steve Zolotow of Las Vegas, Nevada who was fourth in the [NAOBC Premier Pairs](#).

Here are our winners:



Kyle Rockoff



Phil Motuzko

Kyle Rockoff, of Gilbert, Arizona, won the [two session Boardwalk Top-Flight Pairs \(104 pairs\)](#) on the final day of the regional. See the article [Winning at Online Bridge](#) on the next page of this issue for more about his win. Phil Motuzko of Carbondale, Colorado won the Friday [Gold Rush Pair](#) with 734 tables!



Our 499er champions came from almost every one of our states. New Mexico winners were [William Camp, Cedar Crest and Sue Kelly, Albuquerque](#), 110 tables on Thursday afternoon. Colorado players [John and Glenda Heideman of Grand Junction](#) won the 31 table game on Thursday night. Arizona featured [Michael Barry and Bettina Brill of Tucson, Arizona](#), first among 72 tables Friday evening.

♠ TOURNAMENTS

Winning at Online Bridge

Kyle's favorite hands from his Regional win

By Kyle Rockoff and Kitty Cooper



Fast rising junior bridge star Kyle Rockoff, now of Gilbert, Arizona, won the two session Boardwalk Top-Flight Pairs (104 pairs) on the final day of the recent ACBL regional playing with Tom Fogarty, an old (71!) friend and partner from Chicago. Kyle has a youtube channel called [Ace in the Desert](#) which includes a bridge basics primer that could be a good fit for your friend who wants to learn the game. He also has videos of himself playing

in the regional. Click [session 1](#) or [session 2](#) for the videos of his big win.

The following are a few of the more interesting hands. But before reading any further, what would YOU do with this hand after partner's 15-17 1NT and your opponents vulnerable 4♥ bid?

		W	N	E	S
				1NT	4♥
		?			

	W	Elyk25
♠	KQ10632	
♥	954	
♦	KQ6	
♣	A	

Here is what Kyle said:

“This was probably my favorite hand. I was West. Over the 4♥ bid, I had a tough decision as to how to evaluate my hand. From the auction I had the inference that partner had to have at least two of the missing three aces, as the 4♥ overcall at unfavorable vulnerability seemed to suggest partner had little wastage in the heart suit.

“Looking at the KQ KQ A in the outside suits, I decided to go for slam. Concerned about a heart lead, I wanted to right side spades in case partner’s stopper was Kx. RHO may have bid on some hand with six hearts and a five card minor. So I came up with a creative 6♥ bid, which both looked like I had a first round heart control (void or the Ace) as an extra deterrent for the opening leader. That basically forced partner to bid 6♠.” [Ed note: When I bid that way South has eight hearts and gives his partner a ruff on the go]

Here is the full hand:

18

D

N

Ayla710

♠

974

♥

K

♦

943

♣

QJ8742

W

N

E

S

6♥

P

1NT

4♥

P

P

6♠

P

W

Elyk25

♠

KQ10632

♥

954

♦

KQ6

♣

A

♥

2

E

tfogarty

♠

AJ8

♥

AJ

♦

A5

♣

K109653

S

ekolesnik

♠

5

♥

Q1087632

♦

J10872

♣

Play this hand out at

tinyurl.com/y6bnobkh

6♠ E

NS: 0 EW: 0

Tom played it beautifully to make seven. After the heart lead and pulling out four

discarding his last heart so he could ruff a heart and then cash the ♣K discarding my last heart. Finally he ruffed a club to my hand and pulled the last trump. Tom was one of the only people to make seven for a 86% board. Notice that South can get a ruff in clubs if West is the declarer.

Matchpoint events are often won or lost by your results on the partscore hands; they may seem less exciting than slams but they are equally important. What would you bid with this hand from the first session?

D
9

W Kyle Rockoff

- ♠ Q104
- ♥ QJ74
- ♦ KJ85
- ♣ 82

Bidding: W P, N P, E 1♦, S 3♣

A negative double is tempting but you do not have the values to make partner take a bid at the three level. Pass might be the safest action but Kyle chose a brave 3♦. The frequency of partner's 1♦ being only a three card suit is low, so this seems the right action on values. Defending 3♣ is not attractive with this hand. If partner can make 3♦ or get out for down one undoubled it will be a good score. Sometimes the opponents will bid 4♣ and go down (in this case it makes but they did not bid it).

As it turned out, this was an 83% board when South led away from her ♣K into partner's AQ and Tom timed the play perfectly even though there was a 4-1 trump break. You can try to duplicate his result by playing the hand out at this URL:

<https://tinyurl.com/y6b3u6ow>

Here is another hand from Kyle, he says "I also liked this hand. Since Tom rebid 1NT over double (redouble would have showed three card support) and East did not bid 2♥ directly over 1NT. I was able to judge that it was wrong to compete to 2♠ with my mediocre suit.

D

9

N

tfogarty

♠ 84

♥ KQ76

♦ Q4

♣ AK762

W

g

♠ AQ2

♥ 10432

♦ AJ763

♣ 5

S

Elyk25

♠ K9765

♥ J

♦ K95

♣ QJ83

W

N

E

S

1♣

P

1♠

X

1NT

P

P

2♦

P

2♥

P

P

P

E

s

♠ J103

♥ A985

♦ 1082

♣ 1094

Play this hand out at

tinyurl.com/y5aao54m

2♥ E

NS: 0 EW: 0

BBO

We set 2♥ three tricks vulnerable! After my ♥J lead and a few rounds of spades had been played, declarer went after setting up his long diamonds instead of ruffing clubs, partner was able to draw trump. Since I managed to preserve the ♦K9 over his ♦10, we were eventually able to tap declarer out of trump and run the clubs in the ending.

Here are Kyle's words again:

“This also was a good one. Partner overcalled 1NT, got doubled, and I had a terrible hand. We didn’t have great agreements here except Lebensohl and systems on, so with both majors I tried 2♣ Stayman (garbage) which got doubled and passed back to me. Next I tried 2♦ to scramble. Tom was able to reasonably figure out that if I had a good hand I would redouble or advance in a major so he bid his three card Heart suit. We ended up in 2♥ doubled, which Tom played well. The 4-3 heart fit played better than the 5-2 spade fit would have, when Tom was able to make it with a partial dummy reversal (at least he tried that, but East kept

14

D

N

tfogarty

♠ 43

♥ A98

♦ AK103

♣ A653

W

tom

♠ Q7

♥ 104

♦ 642

♣ QJ9872

S

Elyk25

♠ 109862

♥ J532

♦ J98

♣ 10

E

re

♠ AKJ5

♥ KQ76

♦ Q75

♣ K4

2♥x N

NS: 0 EW: 0


♠ A

W	N	E	S
		1♦	P
P	1NT	P	2♣
X	P	P	2♦
P	2♥	X	P
P	P		


Click on any of the hand record images in this article to get to the playable BBO hand of the hand. In order to create a record of the cards played, Kyle exported the deal from his history column before leaving the session. Click the Next button to follow along with the play at his table or click on a card in the hand whose turn it is to make your own selections. The [ACBL Live](#) results list has a button that says PLAY which lets you see and play out the hand, but does not include a record of what happened. [Click here for Kyle's winning results list](#) with play buttons from the second session. You can change it to the first session with the drop-down up top.

Well done Kyle and thank you for making the videos and contributing to this article!


LEARN




Dan McGuire




Curt Soloff




Larry Matheny




Chris Hasney



Dennis Dawson



Kitty & Steve Cooper



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



Bridge in the Real World

By Dennis Dawson, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Einstein Fails Basic Math

At national and international events there is sometimes an auditorium where you can watch real-time bridge (usually team games) with the hands projected on a big screen while a panel of experts discuss the action. On one such occasion, the captain of one of the teams that had already been eliminated was helping with the commentary.

During a lull in the action, one of the other commentators asked what the captain thought about his team's execution. After a brief pause, he replied "I would be in favor."

Here's a deal that highlights execution of a different kind. The declarer was Albert Einstein, widely regarded in popular culture as one of the smartest people who ever lived. Maybe so, but he failed basic math on this deal.

<div>11</div> <div>D</div>		<div>N</div> <div>♠ 542</div> <div>♥ AK42</div> <div>♦ 43</div> <div>♣ K1032</div>	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>P</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S				1NT	P	2♣	P	2♦	P	3NT	P	P	P			
W	N	E	S																				
			1NT																				
P	2♣	P	2♦																				
P	3NT	P	P																				
P																							
<div>♠ K</div>		<div>S</div> <div>♠ A87</div> <div>♥ Q53</div> <div>♦ AQ5</div> <div>♣ QJ94</div>	<div>3NT S</div> <div>NS: 0 EW: 0</div>																				

Opening Lead: ♠K

Einstein was declarer in 3NT, so he counted winners starting with sure tricks.

These are tricks you can take immediately without losing the lead. You have five (one spade, three hearts, and one diamond). The target is four more, which must come from promotion, length winners, or finessing.

Three more tricks in clubs can be promoted by driving out the ace. One more trick in hearts is possible if the hearts break 3-3. Another trick in diamonds is possible by leading a diamond to the queen, finessing East for the king. Einstein correctly concluded he needed to establish clubs and then get one more trick in either hearts or diamonds.

Since he will have to lose the lead to the ♣A for sure, Einstein held up the ♠A until the third round of the suit. If East has the ♣A, this may exhaust East of spades so that East won't have a spade to lead to West.

East showed out on the third round of spades, discarding a low diamond. Thus,

gain the lead.

Einstein led a club. If West has the ♣A, he was going down, but there was nothing he could do about it. Fortune smiled, and East won the ♣A. East returned a diamond. Should Einstein finesse in diamonds or play for the hearts to be 3-3?

Being a student of the game, Einstein knew a finesse is 50%, but a 3-3 split is less than that, since an even number of cards is not likely to break evenly. He finessed and lost to West's ♦K.

West cashed two more spades and Einstein lost four spades, a club, and a diamond. Much to his chagrin, the hearts turn out to be 3-3. Einstein forgot his basic math.

Two chances are better than one. Einstein should have tested hearts before playing clubs. If he had played the ♥Q then the ♥A and finally the ♥K when everyone kept following suit, he would have discovered that the hearts were 3-3. Therefore since the last heart was high, he didn't need the diamond finesse.

The whole hand:

11

D

N

♠ 542

♥ AK42

♦ 43

♣ K1032

W	N	E	S
			1NT
P	2♣	P	2♦
P	3NT	P	P
P			

W

♠ KQJ93

♥ 1096

♦ KJ98

♣ 5

♣

E

♠ 106

♥ J87

♦ 10762

♣ A876

S

♠ A87

♥ Q53

♦ AQ5

♣ QJ94

Play this hand out at

tinyurl.com/y4pzvdot

3NT S
NS: 0 EW: 0

Practical Advice: Combine your chances.



Dennis Dawson is a National Champion, a Bronze Medalist in the Senior World Championship, and an ACBL Grand Life Master. He has won more than 250 regionals. He has taught people throughout the country to play better and enjoy the game more. He currently resides in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Currently he offers lessons online for individuals or groups. You can contact him at dennis@bridgevacations.com



CONSULT THE COOPERS

By Kitty and Steve Cooper, editors *D17 ScoreCard*

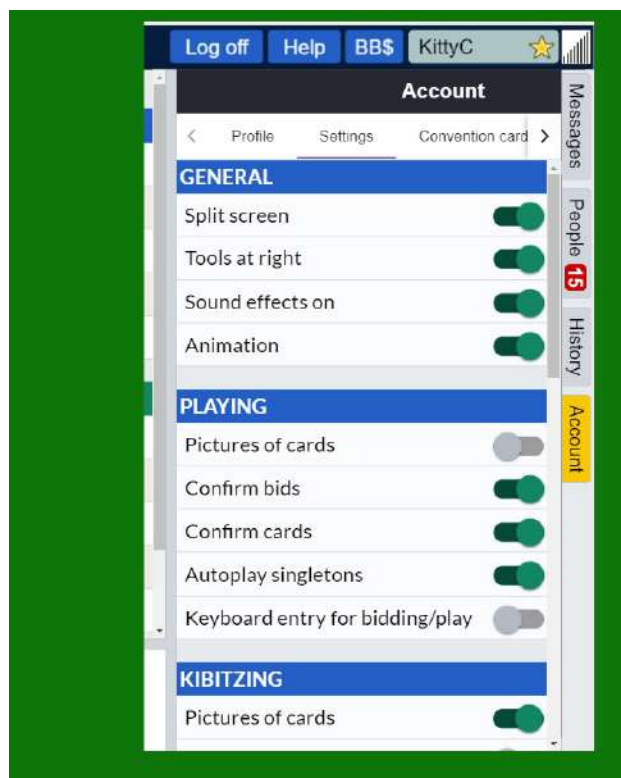
Why We Lose at Online Bridge

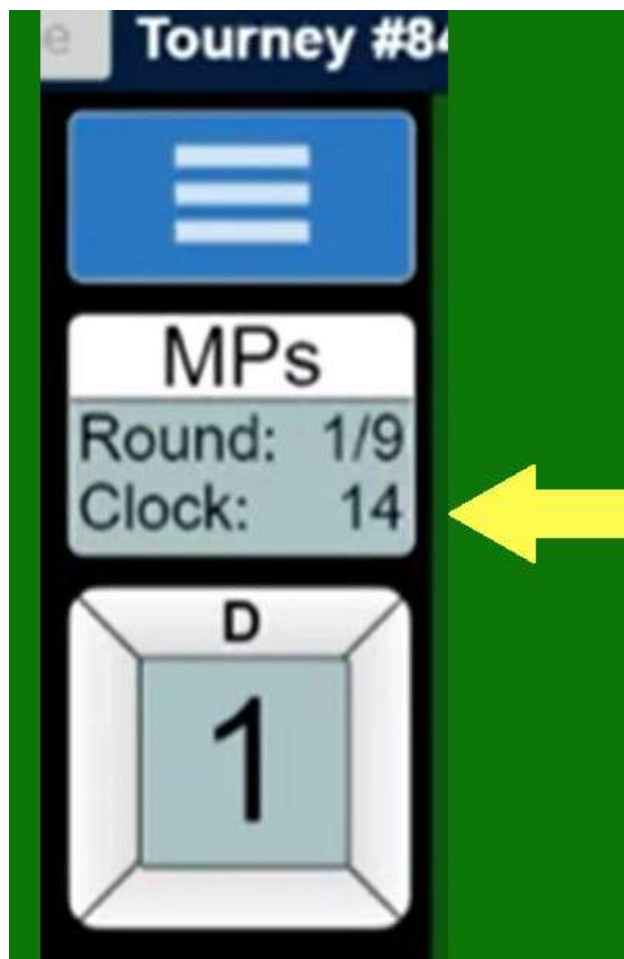
Not playing live Bridge has been hard on me. Steve does not mind. We bid 20 hands most mornings and do a few of the Bridge Master hands. We got a little discouraged by one of the world class problems which involved a double trump squeeze! Single trump squeezes are hard enough.

We finally gave in and started playing online at BBO in our Sunday unit game. We have yet to break 52%. Here are a few of the things I have learned the hard way

There are no “undos” in tournament online Bridge. I had set my account to confirm bids and cards to prevent my frequent mismouses. However that was on my tablet. When I played on my computer it was not enabled and I did not notice right away. Needless to say, when I double clicked to win the trick as declarer, it won and played that suit back. Not what I wanted! Another bad board.

To set up your account so that you have to OK your bids and click twice to play a card go to *Settings* in your *Account*. The tabs on the right hand side of the screen include *Account*. Once that is clicked, there are options across the top including *Settings*. Click that to get to a screen





Virtual Bridge is truly a timed event.

You have 14 minutes per two board round online. If you take too long on the second board it will vanish and your new opponents will arrive. If the previous pair was taking a long time to grossly misdefend, the director will adjust it to what you would have made at that point. Of course you might have benefitted from more mistakes if given enough time.

There is a little timer on the top left above the board number. Keep an eye on it. If your partner does not seem to know it is his turn, wake him up! Either type in ALL CAPS or in my case, shout, since he is only two rooms away.

There is no recourse for misperceiving. Nothing is more fun than thinking your partner opened the bidding when it was really an opponent, or not seeing partner's bid at all when he makes one. I think it takes a fair amount of online play to accurately see what is happening.

Online bridge is very enjoyable but not the same as live bridge. We are having our difficulties getting used to it. As soon as we are doing better we will go visit some of the clubs in D17 that we used to play at. DCBC here we come!



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

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.



IMPROVE YOUR PLAY

By Larry Matheny, Fort Collins, Colorado

Listen and Learn

The opening lead is very important and often made with little assurance of success. In addition to memorizing the tables that show the proper card to lead from different honor combinations, the auction can be of great help. In a matchpoint pairs event, this West player listened and learned.

D

1

N North

♠ AKJ932

♥ 532

♦ K2

♣ Q7

W N E S

P 1♠ P 2♥

P 2♠ P 3♥

P 4♥ P P

P

W West

♠ 74

♥ 97

♦ AQ43

♣ AJ865

S South

♠ Q86

♥ AKQ1084

♦ 9

♣ K42

E East

♠ 105

♥ J6

♦ J108765

♣ 1093

Play this hand out at

tinyurl.com/y6xk8lew

4♥ S

NS: 0 EW: 0

BBO

♠

Opening lead: ♣A

Bidding: After South's game-forcing two heart response, North-South had a routine auction to game.

Play: Expecting a strong spade suit in dummy, West led the ace of clubs. After seeing dummy, West quickly cashed his other ace. At other tables, several West defenders made a passive heart or spade lead, and those declarers drew trumps and soon had twelve tricks (pitching the diamond loser on the spades).

In team games and at rubber bridge, your goal as a defender is to defeat the contract, and you shouldn't worry too much about giving up an overtrick or two in your quest to do so. But in a game scored by matchpoints, your goal is to take all of your tricks rather than engage in a quixotic attempt to beat the hand.



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.



Advice for the New Player

By Chris Hasney, Hereford, Arizona

Maximal Doubles

The **Maximal Double** is used when the enemy has overcalled (and raised) in a suit just below the rank of our suit, leaving no room at the three level to make a game try. In this scenario, opener's double of the enemy suit at the three level becomes his game try.

Responder will almost never pass; instead, he either accepts the try by bidding game in our suit, or demurs by returning to our suit at the three level.

It looks like this:

SPECIAL DOUBLES	
After Overcall: Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/>
Negative	thru 4♥
Responsive	: thru 4♥ Maximal
Support: Dbl.	thru 2♥ Redbl
Card-showing	Min. Offshape T/O

W	N	E	S
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
X			

Opener has no room to make a help suit or similar game try, so can only make a

Try a slightly different auction:

W	N	E	S
1♠	2♦	2♠	3♦
X			

Here the heart suit is available for a general game try, **so this double is defined as penalty**. [*Ed note:* Some experts prefer to define all doubles as maximal or card showing when the opponents have a fit. This would keep 3♥ available as a natural game try in the above auction since a 4-4 heart fit could be better than the 5-3 spade fit.]

The Maximal Double is a standard treatment in modern contract bridge bidding. Once you leave the beginner game (and maybe there too) you should have this marked on your card in the doubles box and play it if it ever comes up. Now you'll recognize an auction that goes; 1♥-(2♦)-2♥-(3♦)-Double, as a game try, not a hammer. It is not alertable.

Is it any different if the auction is 1♥-(Pass)-2♥-(3♦)? Now the opponents have no guarantee of a fit and opener can easily have a trump stack so most players prefer to double for penalty in that auction. Best to discuss this with your partner.

For additional information on this convention in the context of game tries, please [click here for Robert Todd's column in the August 2019 issue of ScoreCard](#)



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CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

By Curt Soloff, Denver, Colorado

Major Suit Raises, Part VII: Major Suit Raises by Passed Hands

You might think that when you are a passed hand your bidding is the same as if you had not previously passed. For many auctions that is true, but what you must keep in mind is that you have already limited your hand by failing to open. You cannot have more than 11 points, since you would surely have opened with 12 or more points. As a result, you have largely ceded your ability to force—to make partner bid again no matter what.

Sometimes, your passed hand improves with partner's third or fourth seat opening, especially when partner opens with a major suit. If you have uncovered a fit, it can be easy to get excited and perhaps do more bidding than you should. We must bear in mind, however, that opening light in third or fourth seat (especially third) is common practice and sound duplicate bridge strategy.

Whether we are battling for a partscore or simply trying to get partner off to a good opening lead, it pays to open light. The expectation that comes with opening light is that your partner—who already failed to open the bidding—will not punish you for doing so with a big raise of your suit. It is with this goal in mind that I recommend a highly useful convention: Drury. More accurately, what a majority of experienced players use today is Reverse Drury.

How does Reverse Drury work? How does it differ from original Drury? It is the person who initially passed who employs this convention by bidding 2♣ to show a good raise of partner's major. Our thinking here is that we will not pick up all that many hands that would want to bid a natural 2♠ at this stage of the auction; you

up a natural $2\clubsuit$ bid and assigning a new meaning to it—a question, if you will. That question is, “Partner, did you open light or do you have a full opener?” Imagine that partner opens $1\spadesuit$ in third seat and we hold the following hand:

MAJOR OPENING			
Expected	Min.	Length	4 5
1st/2nd			<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3rd/4th			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES			
Double Raise:	Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv.	<input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
After Overcall:	Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv.	<input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conv. Raise:	2NT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3NT	<input type="checkbox"/> Splinter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other:	$3\clubsuit$ =Limit4+, $3\diamondsuit$ =Mixed Raise		
1NT:	Forcing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Semi-forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>
2NT:	Forcing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inv.	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____
3NT:	_____ to _____		
Drury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reverse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2-Way <input type="checkbox"/> Fit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____ splinters		



With a decent 10 points and four card support for partner’s spades, surely this hand is worth a limit raise, right? And under normal circumstances, we would have no reservations about jumping to $3\spadesuit$ to invite partner to bid a game, thinking that even if partner rejects the game try, we are probably safe at the three level. But what if partner opened light? What if partner in third seat has a decent spade holding but only 10 or 11 points? Would we be safe at the three level, or would we be better served to stop at $2\spadesuit$ this time? Consider this typical example of a light third seat opening:



This may strike you as a pretty chintzy opening, but in third seat (especially not vulnerable) it is fairly routine. Your spade suit is good enough that you want partner to lead it, and there is at least some value in making the opponents start their bidding at the two level and not giving them a free ride. Of course, the key to being able to open hands like these is the assurance that partner will be able to take the joke and not overbid.

Looking at these two hands together, it is pretty easy to see yourself losing the ace of trump, two hearts, one diamond, and one club. Sure, the opponents could misdefend and let the contract through, but we do not want to rely on that. If it turns out that 3♠ is too high, we will regret not having a way to have stopped at the two level!

Using Drury, responder bids an artificial 2♣ to discover the nature of opener's hand instead of jumping to 3♠. In the original conception of Drury, opener would bid an artificial 2♦ to identify a light opening. Most experts, however, prefer Reverse Drury, which means that we simply retreat to two of our major when we have opened light, since that will often be the final contract. Therefore, any other bid—e.g., 2♦, 2♥, 2NT, or a jump of any kind—are simply natural bids that further describe our hand while conveying to partner that we have a full opener.



One important point that you and your partner will want to address is what bids in a Drury auction are not forcing. Sometimes you will hold a full opener—that is to say, a hand that would open the bidding in any of the four seats—but still not be inclined to accept an invitation to game. A good rule for these auctions may be to say that if either opener or the Drury bidder retreats to three of our major, partner is allowed to pass. [Eds: We agree. We used to play that a jump to three of the major by opener directly over 2♣ was slammish, demanding a cue bid, but too often it got passed! So now, instead, we use 2NT as Jacoby by opener asking responder for a description. This takes care of the big hands.]

Next time, we will examine ways that you can further modify and refine your Reverse Drury auctions.



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



More Tips: How to Learn to Love Lebensohl

By Dan McGuire

The Lebensohl convention is designed to handle those annoying opponents who overcall your partner's opening 1NT bid. It can be intimidating even to intermediate players, who often quickly dismiss the convention as far too complicated and not worth the trouble.

So here's a mental trick for quickly learning Lebensohl's most useful features: The ONLY things you really need to remember are these:

NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS			
1NT	15 to 17	3♣	
	to	3♦	
5-card Major common		3♥	
System on over X, 2♣		3♠	
2♣ Stayman	Puppet		
2♦ Transfer to ♥		4♦, 4♥ Transfer	
Forcing Stayman		Smolen	
2♥ Transfer to ♠		Lebensohl (Fast denies)	
2♠		Neg. Double	
2NT		Other:	

- Bidding a major suit at the two level is to play.** When the opponents overcall your partner's opening 1NT by bidding 2♦ or higher and you have a weak 5+ card suit, just overcall in your suit at the two level (if possible) as a Drop Dead Bid—e.g., 1NT-(2♦)-2♥ is to play. [Eds. "Drop Dead Bid" was how bridge players back in the day referred to a non-invitational bid by partner; we will refer hereafter to "signoff bid[s]".]
- Whenever you'd have to go to the three level in order to bid that weak suit, bid 2NT instead.** A 2NT response tells partner to bid 3♣ (called a puppet), over which you will either pass (if clubs is your 5+ card suit) or sign off in your 5+ card suit at the three level—e.g., 1NT-(2♠)-2NT-3♣-3♥ is to play. because the opponents bid 2♠ you cannot bid 2♥ to show a weak hand).

You don't need memorize to bid 2NT must have 4+ card level signoff bid

along with its main advantage of being able to find your best fit without any ambiguity about game potential. For example, responder could have six clubs and four points; a 2NT Lebensohl bid after interference, followed by a pass of partner's forced bid of 3♣ will be very cool. In general, Lebensohl opens up a new world of reaching optimum three level contracts where most other players will fear to tread.

So consider the 2NT puppet to 3♣ as the “anchor” for learning the Lebensohl convention. It's actually all you need to remember because all of the other Lebensohl bids then fall out logically: Since you'd use that 2NT/3♣ anchor or a simple two level bid for showing weak hands, a direct three level suit bid over opponents' interference is logically used to show game going hands (10+ points)—e.g., 1NT-(2♦)-3♥ (forcing).

Those are the essentials of Lebensohl fun. You'll soon be hoping that those nasty opponents **do** interfere with your 1NT bids.

A few final additions once you're comfortable are:

- **A double of the opponent's two level interference is for penalties;** easy enough to remember.
- **An immediate 3NT bid** over an opponent's interference is as if the opponent had not bid. It shows a game-going notrump hand with no suit in which you want to look for a fit. A clever refinement to provide even more information to partner is to directly bid 3NT only when you do not have a stopper, and to bid 3NT after first going through the 2NT/3♣ puppet when you do have a stopper (“direct denies”) unless your partner prefers the opposite (“direct shows”).
- Finally, **a three level cuebid of an opponent's suit overcall is Stayman.** If an opponent overcalled in a major, it shows four cards in the other major. You can even use the same “direct denies” or “direct shows” approach to showing stoppers based on whether you make the cuebid immediately or first go through the 2NT puppet before making the cuebid.

Lebensohl anchor—the weak 2NT to 3♣ puppet bid—which is used to make a signoff bid at the three level whenever you can't make a signoff bid at the two level. Once you remember how the anchor is used, the rest of the Lebensohl convention falls out logically.



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