



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

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ALERT – August 29, 2022

Top Master Point Earners at our Club

Contributed by Allen Pengelly

This table lists the individuals who have earned the most master points at our club in each of three master point bands since the beginning of July.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	35.14	1	Jake Liu	8.99	1	Molly Worden	5.15
2	Colin Harrington	23.77	2	Suzanne Edwards	8.79	2	Steven Allen	5.15
3	Ted Boyd	22.87	3	Cheryl Kip	8.22	3	Joe Blake	4.83
4	Margot Stockie	22.39	4	Jim Dalgliesh	7.62	4	Sue McDonald	4.73
5	Cindy Mahn	21.86	5	John Kip	7.57	5	Nancy Cattanach	4.40
6	Edith Ferber	18.46	6	Muzaffar Husain	6.79	6	Carol Gerber	3.92
7	Moira Hollingsworth	17.70	7	Judy Widdecombe	6.32	6	Judy Johnston	3.92
8	Dianne Aves	15.45	8	Lori Cole	5.70	8	Reinhold Kauk	3.66
9	Stephen Young	13.26	8	Ted Kennedy	5.70	9	Susan Durance	3.58
10	Mike Peng	12.63	10	Vivian McLellan	5.68	10	Belinda Burt	3.47
11	Neil Jeffrey	11.75	11	Barbara Arthur	5.60	11	Elinor Girouard	3.19
12	David Longstaff	10.32	11	Andy Wilson	5.60	11	Barb Neibert	3.19
13	Susan Lawton	10.15	13	Bev Hitchman	5.57	11	Anita Hanson	3.19
14	Pat McMillan	9.76	14	Roy Dandyk	5.31	14	Noah Pace	3.16
15	William Christian	9.62	15	Sue Peterson	5.09	15	Tong Chen	3.00
16	Liz McDowell	8.51	16	Lynda Burnett	4.90	16	Virginia Alviano	2.86
17	Kathy Russell	8.50	17	Grace Messner	4.60	17	Donna McKay	2.76
18	Diane Bourdeau	8.18	18	Donna Coombe	4.59	18	Rick Arthur	2.30
19	Neil Coburn	7.79	19	Shelley Metcalfe	4.58	19	J J Girard	2.18
20	Sharon Boyd	7.54	20	Nanci Phelan	4.57	20	Shirley Clarke	2.16
21	Adrian Record	6.93	21	David Dennis	4.55	21	Lori Bailey	2.12
22	Robert Griffiths	6.76	22	Adriaan Kempe	4.48	22	Jeannie Leforge	2.03
23	Frank Fischer	6.22	23	Joan Slover	4.47	23	Ginny Scott	1.96
24	Tom Ramsay	6.10	24	Sue Moses	4.38	24	Pat McDonald	1.78
25	Malkin Howes	5.88	25	Robert Walker	4.33	25	Linda Deluca	1.77

NEWS FLASH

On Wed., Aug. 24, **Moira Hollingsworth and Bruce Roberts** came first in the Common Game with 69.4% among [all clubs using the Common Game deals](#).

ALL GAMES ARE ONLINE UNLESS DESIGNATED **FACE-TO-FACE.**

North American Pairs

The North American Pairs (NAP) are an ACBL-wide grassroots competition to encourage all members (there are three flights) to compete for significant masterpoints and the possibility of a North-American bridge title. In order to compete, players must first qualify in a club game – and our club will be offering more chances to qualify in August (see the green-highlighted games below). The play-offs will be held **at our club** (not in Tillsonburg as we said last week) sometime in late October or early November. Click [here](#) for more information about the NAPs. There are extra masterpoints available, some of them red, and there is a \$2 surcharge for NAP games.

Coming Events

- Friday, August 26, 1:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) (\$9 members/ \$11 non-members) **FACE TO FACE** NAP GAMES**
- Friday, August 26, 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) (\$9 members/\$11 non-members) **FACE TO FACE** NAP GAMES**
- Saturday, August 27, 1:00 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Sunday, August 28, 10:00 am, **499er game (18 boards) BBO\$5**
- Monday, August 29, 9:00 am, **Bridge Lab (\$7 members/ \$9 non-members) **FACE TO FACE****
- Monday, August 29, 12:30 pm, **99er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Monday, August 29, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Monday, August 29, 7:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Tuesday, August 30, 12:30 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Tuesday, August 30, 1:00 pm, **open game (24-28 boards) (\$7 members/ \$9 non-members) **FACE TO FACE****
- Wednesday, August 31, 1:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Wednesday, August 31, 6:45 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Wednesday, August 31, 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Thursday, September 1, 9:30 am, **99er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Thursday, September 1, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Thursday, September 1, 6:30 pm, **199er game (18 boards) BBO\$5 ON HIATUS**
- Thursday, September 1, 7:00 pm, **999er game (24 boards) BBO\$5**





The Answer Lady

Contributed by Susan Lawton

As the “The Answer Lady”, I have been responding to questions from “newer” players over the past several weeks. A request has been made to share those players’ questions and my responses in the Alert, essentially a column for the beginner player!

If you have a question, please write to me at suzan2420@yahoo.ca. You don’t need to send me the actual deal – just tell me the game date and board number and I can take care of the rest.

Question

My partner and I feel we need to begin using weak jump overcalls. When we took a beginning bridge course, we were taught that weak jump overcalls should have fewer than 10 points at either the two- or three-level with a good, long suit. What might those “good, long” suits look like and how can we bid comfortably up to the two or three level?

Answer

*One way to look at weak jump overcalls is to think of them as **identical** to opening pre-emptive bids. The only difference is that opponents have entered the bidding before you have had an opportunity to bid yourself. Weak jump overcalls promise the same strength and shape as if you had opened the bidding with them. In other words, a two-level weak jump overcall promises five to ten points with six cards in that suit, while a bid at the three level promises seven cards in that suit and similar strength/values (maybe towards the top of the range when vulnerable). If Opener bids 1♣ and you bid 2♠, that’s a weak jump overcall. You are jumping over the typical 1♠ overcall bid and are promising six spades and a less-than-opening hand. In the same vein, if you jump to 3♥ after Opener bids 1♣, you have a weak-three pre-emptive bid with seven hearts. As with all pre-empts, you’re promising a hand that is powerful for offence (declaring) but weak for defence. The goal as always is to interfere and disrupt the opponents’ ability to find their game/slam contract, robbing them of bidding space.*

A big factor in any pre-emptive bidding, weak jump overcalls included, is vulnerability. If you aren’t vulnerable and the opponents are vulnerable, a more risky or aggressive approach can be taken. Even if you go down doubled, it may work to your advantage - especially if the opponents can make game or slam. Given that the opponents have already opened and you have a weak-but-long suit, the likelihood of a game or slam in their direction has increased (because at least one of them is probably short in your suit and all of their points are working).

Here are two examples of weak jump overcalls.

- 1♣-2♠ with this holding: ♠AK10982 ♥5 ♦1092 ♣J32, showing eight points and a six-card spade suit
- 1♦-3♥ with this holding: ♠65 ♥KJ109732 ♦2 ♣AJ2, showing nine points and a seven-card heart suit

Here is a hand played in a Thursday afternoon GRBC open game as an example of the power of weak jump overcalls. On this hand, **all** seven players sitting in South bid 3♠, vulnerable with seven spades but only seven points after East opened 1♣. Four of the E/W pairs allowed N/S to play that 3♠ contract. Surprisingly, 3♠ went down only one trick, for a second-top score for those pairs. One West opponent bid 4♦ over the 3♠ bid and made 5♦, missing a game contract. Two other West opponents doubled the 3♠ bid, forcing East to make a difficult choice: either leave in the 3♠ doubled for penalty or bid on. In both scenarios, East chose to bid 4♥ as shown below. One pair made 4♥+1, while the other pair went down one in 4♥, resulting in a top N/S score for that pair. (In this last scenario, the East declarer had to make some tough choices and decided to allow South to ruff diamonds twice in an effort to dispose of the losing spade tricks in her hand.) That 3♠ bid, a weak jump overcall, did its job!

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> D 13 </div>	N North ♠ K7 ♥ KQ93 ♦ 9864 ♣ J104	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">W</th> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">N</th> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">E</th> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>P</td> <td>1♣</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;">3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>X</td> <td>P</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S		P	1♣	3♠	X	P	4♥	P	P	P		
	W	N	E	S														
	P	1♣	3♠															
X	P	4♥	P															
P	P																	
W West ♠ 6 ♥ J72 ♦ AKJ1072 ♣ Q63		E East ♠ 1085 ♥ A1086 ♦ Q ♣ AK985																
	S South ♠ AQJ9432 ♥ 54 ♦ 53 ♣ 72	4♥ E NS: 0 EW: 0																

Rewind
Previous
Next
Options
GIB
Play
B
Bridge

One never knows how those weak jump overcalls will impact the opponents' ability to bid to the right contract and play the hand successfully. So, the advice from this week's column is: develop your courage and enter the auction with weak jump overcalls. Sometimes it won't work out in your favour but in other situations, like the example above, you will be winners.



Don't Take Him for Granted!

Contributed by Jim Dalgliesh, Club Manager

Grant Roberts joined the Management Team as the club's first Technology Lead in January, 2016. Before Grant's arrival, the club relied on another member, Mircea Giurgeu, to resolve all technology issues. Once Grant came on board, usually the first call to resolve an issue was to Grant and then if needed one of us would call Mircea (who had set-up and installed the computer system for the bridge club). Over time as Grant became more familiar with the computer software and hardware, the calls to Mircea decreased and then ceased.

Over the past seven years, there have been multiple upgrades to the club's technology as equipment needed replacing, new software was installed, improvements to back-up protocols, were made as well as WIFI changes, a new Uninterruptible Power Supply was installed, along with Pianola software (the club's database for membership, messaging, etc.), and updates to many of the club's other software programs were made.

Grant was heavily involved in each of the bridge club's moves; first from Gage Avenue, thence to our first temporary location in a Dare Foods warehouse, thence to the basement of the current building, and thence to our current location. Each time we moved, all of the club's technology had to be re-located and re-configured as needed.

Grant also found the time to provide technical support to many of the clubs' members, among them the club's teachers. In fact, there can't be too many people left whom he didn't help! In addition, Grant provided analysis and reports on game/player/member data to support management decisions on game schedules, etc. in order to best meet our members' needs. He also designed and conducted player/member surveys designed to inform board and management team decisions.

Over the years, Grant's calm, thoughtful approach to management team agenda items was very much appreciated. It is especially appreciated that Grant recruited and oriented his replacement, Paul Latimer, who will attend his first management team next month.



Team Leagues

Just a reminder that the deadline (September 2) is fast approaching for team leagues registration. Team games are the most popular bridge format because they're so much fun!

So far, we have four teams registered, plus one pair and one single. Ideally, we're targeting for at least 10-12 teams to register so we can get two-three brackets/pools.

For more information, contact [Mike Peng](#). To indicate your interest, click [here](#). You can register as a team or as a pair looking to join a team.



GRBC Tenth Birthday Picnic and Games

Contributed by Lori Cole

We are planning an outdoor birthday party bash with Club Championship (extra masterpoints) bridge sessions for 99er, 199er, 499er, and open on Friday September 9th (rain date Friday, September 16th). Please mark your calendars!

The picnic will be from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm outside of our club on the grass beside the parking lot. Bring your lawn chair!

- ♠ Hot food, including gluten free, will arrive at 5:15 pm.
- ♥ Birthday cake (not gluten free ☺) will be cut at 6:00 pm.
- ♦ And if you would like, you may bring another dessert to share – we can never have too many desserts!
- ♣ Also at 6:00 pm, we will have door prize draws!

The Friday afternoon 499er game will also have a 99er section. After the game, one of our more experienced players will do a hand analysis on some of the interesting hands.

In the evening, there will be two sections: Open and 199er. After the evening game, there is pubbing for all!

Make it a double-header bridge day if your schedule allows or just come out for the picnic! And if you attend the afternoon game, your evening game will be free!

Let's take this opportunity to see each other in person and toast our club! If you intend to come to any of these events, either click [here](#) to sign up, or register in person at the club on the sign-up sheet.

We hope to see you at our Grand River Bridge Club celebratory picnic and game events on Friday, September 9!

For the Friends of Shirley Stoesser

Shirley Stoesser's family is inviting her bridge friends to a Celebration of Life on Saturday, September 10 from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm at the Mannheim Community Centre. This is a cordial invitation to come and share a story and spend time with Shirley's family and friends.

Conventional Wisdom

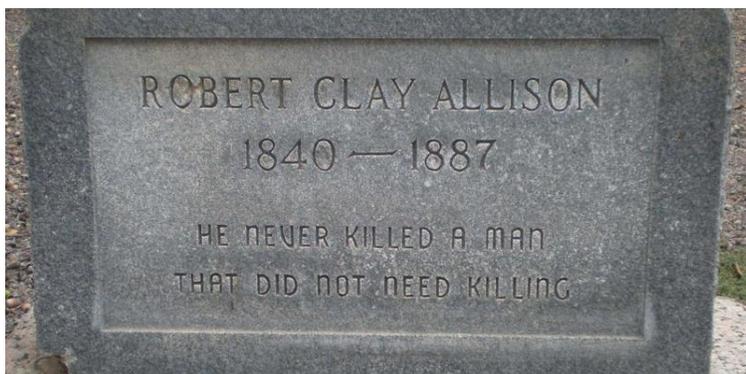
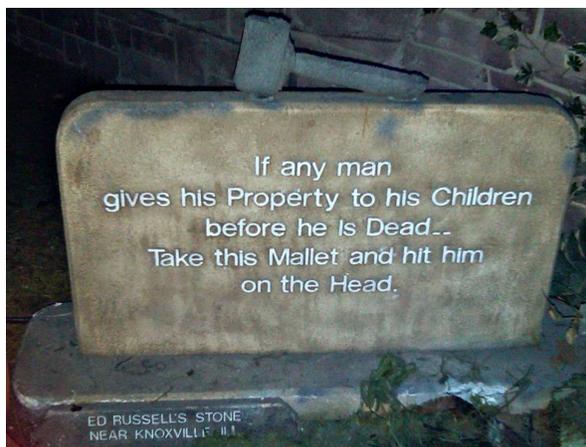
This column discusses conventions, starting with the most useful ones [according to Larry Cohen](#). Today, we will talk about the last one on Larry's list – **Support Doubles and Redoubles**.

Support doubles are used by opener after he bids one banana, his partner responds one or two apples, and the next player interferes. The support double is not penalty-oriented, but rather shows exactly three cards in partner's suit. If the interference is a double, then a redouble shows exactly three cards in partner's suit. Support doubles and redoubles can be made only by opener.

Support doubles and redoubles are found on the back of the convention card in the rectangle titled SPECIAL DOUBLES. Although they are in red on the old convention cards, support doubles and redoubles are no longer alertable.

If you would like to take an online or in-person lesson on support doubles and redoubles, write to [Malkin Howes](#) specifying your lesson mode preference and possible time lines.

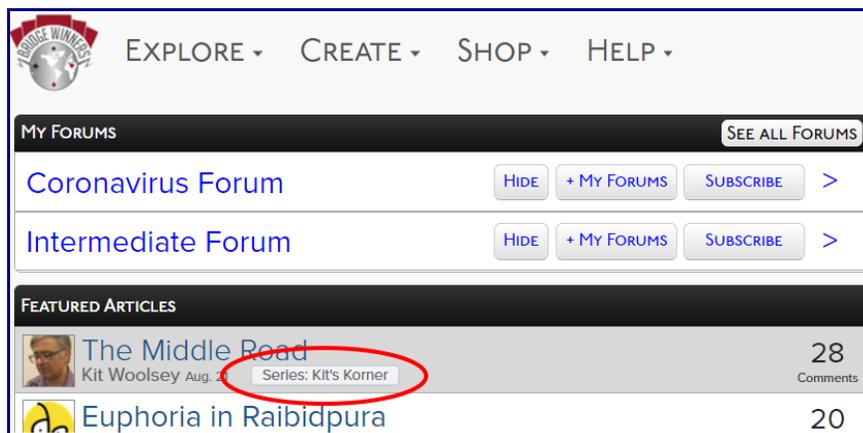
SOME TOMBSTONES ARE TO DIE FOR



BridgeWinner Polls. ○ Yes ● No ○ Maybe Next Week

Contributed by Jack Cole

Last time I promised BridgeWinner (BW) polls this week. So, let's fire up the old web browser and head over to BridgeWinners.com, where the first thing we see is this.



Oh look – a new article by Kit Woolsey! I like his articles. “The Middle Road”. Intriguing. Let's just click on it and have a quick lookand ... welcome to life in the Rabbit Hole. An hour later, I realize that I have learned more about “articles” and have nothing written about “polls”. Well, I may as well tell you about articles then!

Kit actually writes a *weekly* article for BW, and the little circled button above will take you to a list of all of them. **Kit's Korner** is described as “World Champion Kit Woolsey provides insight into the mind of an expert bridge player through in-depth analysis of hands he played at recent Major Tournaments”. Kit provides you with the opportunity to play along with him and decide what you would do at each critical juncture.” Cool.

Clicking on “The Middle Road” brings up this screen (re-formatted to fit here).

The screenshot shows the article page for "The Middle Road" by Kit Woolsey, dated Aug. 21. At the top right, there are icons for email and print. Below the title and author information, there is a red circle around a "NEXT PAGE" button and the text "(Page 1 of 8)". The main text of the article begins with "In the finals of the Senior Trials, you must decide what to do in competition with a big fit for partner." Below this, it says "E-W vul, West deals. As East, you hold:" followed by a table of cards for East and South. To the right of the table, there are three paragraphs of text discussing bidding options for 3♥, 4♥, and 4♣. The article ends with "Your call?".

East	South
♠ J7	
♥ 86532	
♦ 3	
♣ AQJ65	
W N E S	
1♥ 2♦ ?	

Your bids would mean as follows:

3♥ would just be to play. Not necessarily weak, but no game interest unless opener has unexpected playing strength.

4♥ could be any hand. Possibly very weak and distributional, possibly a flattish hand with game values but no slam interest. Possibly a big heart fit, possibly only 3-card heart support. Partner is expected to pass if South passes, and if South bids, partner will pass unless he has a very clear action since your hand might be anything.

4♣ would be a fit-showing jump. Since it commits to game, it would put your side in a force over further enemy competition.

Your call?

What follows is an eight-page trip through Kit's mind, as he bids and plays the hand. What's *your* bid? Well, mine was 4♥. On the next page Kit gives his reasoning for (wait for it) 4♥. YAY!

PREV. PAGE
NEXT PAGE
(Page 2 of 8)

<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px;"> <p>East</p> <p>♠ J7</p> <p>♥ 86532</p> <p>♦ 3</p> <p>♣ AQJ65</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 5px;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 2px;">E</td> <td style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 2px;">S</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">1♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">2♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">?</td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> </table> </div>	W	N	E	S	1♥	2♦	?		<p>3♥ isn't enough. You could easily have a game if partner has the right cards. In addition, bidding only 3♥ leaves East room to show his hand with a 3♠ or 4♦ call.</p> <p>A fit-showing jump of 4♣ is possible, since clubs is where you live. However, your hand really isn't strong enough to put the partnership in a force, since you have no idea whether or not 4♥ will make, you probably don't want to go higher, and you don't have enough to be confident about defeating their contract. In addition, bidding 4♣ leaves South room to show diamond support at the 4-level, without having to commit to 5♦.</p> <p>A straightforward 4♥ call looks best. You might make. This puts maximum pressure on the opponents. If they do compete you might have a problem, but that hasn't happened yet.</p> <p>You bid 4♥. The bidding continues:</p>				
W	N	E	S										
1♥	2♦	?											
	<table style="border: 1px solid black; border-collapse: collapse; margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 2px;">E</td> <td style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 2px;">S</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">1♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">2♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">4♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">4♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">P</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">P</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">?</td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	1♥	2♦	4♥	4♣	P	P	?	
W	N	E	S										
1♥	2♦	4♥	4♣										
P	P	?											
	<p>Your call?</p>												

The article continues with your/his next bid (a pass of 4♣), and the first few rounds of the defence, examining the strategy and signals that Kit and partner employ to defeat 4♣. He ends by showing the whole hand, discussing other bidding options, and the results at the other table.

But that's not the end of it! One downside of writing articles (take note readers!) is that it opens you up to critiques from all sides, and at BridgeWinners that means public comments from everyone who's a member. Sure enough, Kit's article has 36 comments so far, many of which are criticizing his judgements and/or suggesting alternatives. The 4♣ response in particular seems a critical favourite. But that's okay – there's plenty of learning to be found there.

Other recent articles at BW cover a wide range, such as:

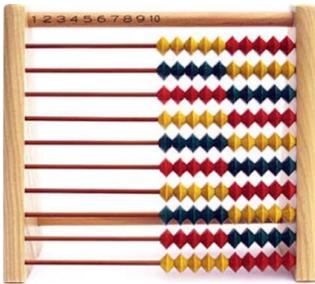
- **Euphoria in Raibidpura** tells the touching story of how co-ed bridge came to a village in India, and how 10 years later 2 young women won the 2022 World Youth Transnational;
- **Minor Suggestions: Odds and Ends** is the latest in a series of suggestions for improving the next edition of the "Laws of Duplicate Bridge";
- **Open Wroclaw Discussion Thread** is all about the 2022 World Bridge Games in Poland. So far, it's mostly about how to pronounce Wroclaw;
- **Liability insurance/LLC and other issues** contains questions about starting a bridge club;
- **Follow-ups 1NT-2♣ as Puppet Stayman** explores this particular treatment, with links;
- **Reflections on Teaching College Bridge** are just that - interesting insights; and
- **1NT Announcements WARNING: Do not read this one; you will likely forget to eat supper.**

You get the idea. Articles are all over the bridge table. There aren't a ton of them each day, but enough to provide a distraction on a rainy afternoon, when GRBC doesn't have a game running!

Some of the articles are actually polls, where people solicit advice on hands and strategies. I should try to write about polls one of these days. Next week! Yes No Maybe !

TIME YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSONS!

Our fall lesson schedule has now been posted to our website. Click [here](#) to view the Learn Bridge in a Day session and the beginners' lessons and [here](#) to view the ongoing learning lessons. Registration has been enabled. Here is the first in the line-up.



Counting at Bridge

Counting is the single most important skill you can learn in order to improve both your declarer play and your defence. Counting at Bridge is a five-week series of lessons based on the skill of counting. The lessons are intended for intermediate players who wish to improve both declarer play and defence.

Everyone knows about counting high-card points and the trump suit, but for many players counting ends there. If this is all the counting that you do, you have sampled just the tip of the iceberg.

- Learning how to count distribution is a necessary skill if you hope to become a good bridge player.
- Counting declarer's tricks is another type of counting.
- Do you know how to count tricks for the defence? Do you know how and when to show count?

Counting is a huge topic to learn and to master, but you need to start somewhere, and it might as well be now.

PS The author of your textbook (*Counting at Bridge*) is your instructor.

Instructor: Dianne Aves

Level: **INTERMEDIATE**

Dates: Wednesday evenings, 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm, Sept. 7, 14, 21, 28, & Oct. 5

Mode: In person at our club

Cost: \$75 for members/ \$85 for non-members. In addition, students are expected to order the text from Amazon before classes begin.

This course will be held at our club in our wonderful teaching room. Our lessons are a terrific way to make new friends and recruit new partners (as well as improve your game). Click [here](#) to register.

We have tried to offer something for everyone at every level. However, if you don't see what you need, please email [Malkin](#), our teaching lead, and she will see what she can do for you.

Also, it would be greatly appreciated if our readers would try to stir up interest among their friends and acquaintances who don't yet play bridge. We have a fun Learn Bridge in a Day session scheduled for October 1 as well as beginner lessons starting the next week. Please get the word out!

FOR OPEN PLAYERS



Dear David

Contributed by David Baker

Ain't Bridge Grand?

Dave, how do we bid to 6♠, or even 7♠ on this hand? What should my bid be over 3♠? I thought this was a cue bid kind of sequence and didn't want to bid 4♣.

D		N North		W N E S			
17		♠ 5		P 2NT P			
		♥ KJ753		3♣ P 3♠ P			
		♦ KQ943		4♦ P 4NT P			
		♣ 32		5♣ P 5♦ P			
				6♦ P 6NT P			
W West		S South					
♠ Q943		♠ J72					
♥ A86		♥ Q104					
♦ 10		♦ 8762					
♣ Q10965		♣ J84					
				6NT E NS: 0 EW: 0			

I don't believe that cue bidding a singleton or void as your FIRST cuebid in a cue bidding sequence is a good strategy. Strength first, shortness second. The heart ace is the key that leads to slam. If we substitute 4♥ for 4♦, what should we bid over 5♦? My trick (partnership agreement needed) is--6H shows Q, no kings, nothing extra & 5NT shows Q, no kings, I like my hand. "Like" means an undisclosed shortness, or an undisclosed strong suit (like AQJx of hearts), or extra trump length, etc. On this hand, West has a fourth trump, diamond shortness and a long side suit (Q10xxx of clubs), checking many boxes. If, over the Q ask, partner bids 5NT (Q, no side kings, but I like my hand) or 5H, 6C or 6D (Q and king of the suit bid), the cheapest bid asks for something else. The asker is saying that he can count 12 tricks. If you have another king, or the queen with the king you just showed, that would be the 13th trick.

The question remains--can East legitimately bid 7♠? He needs a perfect dummy (THIS dummy) to make 7♠. Paraphrasing a Larry Woods pearl of wisdom, "If you need me to have the perfect cards for slam, assume I don't have them". Besides which, bidding a successful small slam at a club game usually gets you a very good score. Going down in a grand slam will give you a bottom. Bidding a game or a small slam on a finesse is acceptable. Bidding a grand slam on a finesse leads to heartache. My correspondent was the only pair to move beyond 4♠.

We now come to the walk of shame.

W	N	E	S
	P	1♠	P
3♦	P	3♥	P
3♠	P	4♠	P
P	P		

3♦ was shortness, 3♥ asked, 3♠ showed 8/9 HCP. Even though I had grossly underbid my hand to begin with and had much more info to work with, I made no move. Sorry, Partner.



For Intermediate *Jake's*
Play a Bad Hand Well

#87

<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10843
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		S								
♥ 108										
♦ KJ9754										
♣ J										
♠ AQJ92										
♥ K42										
♦										
♣ A10865										

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♠
2♥	2♠	Pass	3♣
3♦	3♠	4♦	4♠
5♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl
All pass			

My partner led his 5♠ to my ♠A, West following with the 6♠. If you were in my shoes, what would you do now?

SOLUTION

To defeat this contract, you need three tricks. You see two tricks in your own hand, so you should start thinking about where a third trick might come from.

Diamonds? If your partner has something in diamonds that would be great. Or Declarer may guess the suit wrong based on your double. But if wishes were horses, we'd all be kings, and anyway there's nothing you can do about diamonds. Instead, choosing which card to lead at Trick 2 may be critically important. There are three possible scenarios.

1. **You continue spades.** You see four spades in the dummy, meaning that Declarer most likely started with a singleton. Thus, a spade continuation hands the lead over to Declarer and risks losing the chance to collect the tricks that rightfully belong to you.
2. **You lead the ♠A.** If you do this, Declarer's ♠K (if he has it) would become good, allowing him to discard one of dummy's hearts on it in due course and potentially eliminate any heart losers. This seems like a losing play but...
3. **You lead a heart.** If Declarer holds something like ♥Axxxx, then you may be able to develop a heart trick and defeat the contract (♠A, ♣A and ♥K). If this is the case, you need to attack the heart suit now. But what if Declarer holds ♥AQxxx? In that case, he will almost certainly finesse your ♥K, with the result that you end up helping him to develop his hearts so that he can pitch dummy's singleton club. If this happens, your chances to defeat the contract are completely gone. And remember, Declarer did bid hearts. So, it might be wise not to underestimate Declarer's hearts. In other words, it would be better if you put the ♥AQ in Declarer's hand and plan the defence on that basis.

OK, to recap: if you lead a spade or a heart at Trick 2, Declarer will be able to dominate the hand. He will almost certainly be able to develop his long heart suit and eventually get rid of the dummy's singleton club. This means you would have zero chance to defeat the doubled contract unless Declarer loses two trump tricks (very unlikely).

When a declarer has a powerful second suit, it is usually a good idea to take your aces before the mice get at them. Cash your ♣A at Trick 2 and hope for something good to happen on your partner's side.

Here is the full hand.

	♠ K75							
	♥ J6							
	♦ Q86							
	♣ 97432							
♠ 6	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> </div>	W	N	E		S		♠ 10843
W	N	E						
	S							
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♣ KQ		♣ J						
	♠ AQJ92							
	♥ K42							
	♦							
	♣ A10865							

As you can see, if you don't take the ♣A at Trick 2, the heart mice will gobble it up. After that, all you can hope for is that Declarer will play you for the queen of diamonds and thus lose a trick to your partner.



This is what a heart mouse looks like.

If you would like to play in a particular game but lack a partner that day, you can either:

- ♠ Log in to [Pianola](#), click on Partner Finder, and create a Partner Finder Advert. This needs to be done at least a few hours in advance of the game. OR
- ♠ Log in to the game in question and register yourself on the Partnership Desk tab.

If you are looking for a regular partner, contact [Joan Slover](#), our membership lead.

We have fun in **spades**.
 We play with all our **hearts**.
 We treat our members like **diamonds**.
 We have no mice at our **club**.