



Team Games Strategy for the New Players

When you first started learning to play bridge, you were introduced to matchpoint bridge even though you did not really think about what the term “matchpoint” means. Matchpoint bridge involves playing hands that everyone else in the room plays and your goal is to outscore everyone else who played the same hand. It does not matter how much you outscore them, just as long as you DO outscore them. If you bid and make 3NT for +430 on Board 1 while everyone else bid and made 4 Spades for +420, you are going to get a top board because you made the highest score on the board. Never mind it was a measly 10 points. The important thing is that you outscores everyone else.

Then sooner or later someone suggests you play in team game. While the two games are essentially the same, team game play and scoring are a bit different. To begin with, in team game



A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT:

NOVEMBER...really. Y'all!!!

Conjures up thoughts about Veterans Day—we have members who have served in the military—thank you for your service!

Gobble, gobble—Thanksgiving is bearing down on us. I am thankful for each and every one of you for supporting CBC through your membership! Thanks to all who serve through leadership roles and/or as committee members; those who volunteer to help, when help is needed. Special thanks to all y'all who attend face-to-face games here at CBC...YOU ARE THE “LIFEBLOOD” of our Club! I can't tell you how thankful I am that you choose to come to CBC to play this game that we all love!

This year has flown by—hard to believe that the end of the year holidays are upon us.

play you are only competing against one other pair in each round and your goal is to not only outscore the opponents but to outscore them by as much as possible. The more you outscore them the higher your final score is going to be.

As an example, on the first board you bid 3 No Trump and make 4 for a score of +430 while the opponents bid 4 Hearts and also make 4 scoring +420. You outscored them by 10 points While that is a huge difference in matchpoint play, those 10 points is not enough to make any difference in your team score because it is so little

But then on the second board, you bid and make 6 Spades for a score of +1430 while the opponents at the other table only bid 4 Spades and also make 6 for a score of +680. This time you outscored them by 750 points with is a huge difference in score and very possibly win the match for you.

So the emphasis in a team game is to outscore the opponents by as much as possible. One of the ways is by making sure you bid your games and hope the opponents stop in a part scores. If they bid game and YOU stop at part score, they are going to outscore you big time. So if they are in game, you better be in game also.

To that end, you must be aggressive about bidding games. If you open 1 Heart and your partner makes a limit raise of 3 Hearts, you should go on and bid game is you can find any excuse to do so. Of course you will not be reckless about it. If you opened a 12 point hand and your partner makes a limit raise, you are certainly not going to accept the invitation (neither will the opponents, most likely). But say you opened a 14 point hand and your partner makes a limit raise. Do not even stop to think about it. Reach into the bidding box and pull out the 4 Heart card. You do not want to stop at 3 Hearts and make 4 while the opponents are bidding game and making 4. What if you have 13 HCP and your partner makes a limit



SAVE THE DATE: Please mark your calendars; the Winter Holiday Party is scheduled for Saturday, December 16. Lunch will be served at 11:30; the game will start at 12:30. CBC members play for free; we will be selling lunch tickets for the meal (\$10). Keep an eye out for details...you will see them on the website, the sandwich board near the director's desk and by email. If you are planning to attend, please purchase your tickets ahead, so we can plan for the meal.

This is a busy time of year for everyone. My very best wishes to you all for a safe and happy holiday season. Please squeeze in some "bridge time"...I hope to see many of you soon and often at the Columbia Bridge Club!

Happy Holidays,

Judy

Mark your calandars, line up a partner and win silver, black and red at our FLM at CBC!

raise. You should still consider bidding game. The decision might be clear one way or the other but you might be sitting on the fence about it. Think it over and see if there is any redeeming feature about your hand that makes you think you should bid 4 Hearts (for example, a singleton somewhere, or strong intermediates such as 10's and 9's, or a side suit that is sure to produce some extra tricks). If there are redeeming features about it, then go ahead and bid the game. If not, pull out the Pass card. (By the way, this is a good time to consider learning Losing Trick Count).

If you have a partner who is going to fuss at you for bidding a close game and going down, then there is an easy fix for that – find another partner!!

Here are a couple of more tips for successful team play.

1) Do not double a part score contract unless you have a huge stack of trumps. If you double their 3 Clubs and they make it, they are going to score +470 (not vulnerable) instead of the +110 they were going to make had you not doubled. Even if you beat it one trick, you are only going to score +100 instead of +50 – Not much of a payoff to gamble on by doubling.

2) Be aggressive about bidding slams (for the same reason you are aggressive about bidding games).

3) Do not take any sacrifices against the opponents' games. Nothing will make you feel worse than bidding a 5 Diamond sacrifice against the opponents 4 Heart contract and going down 3 for –800 only to find out that they were going to go down in 4 Hearts.

4) Play safe to make your contract. Do not take a risky play to make an overtrick. If you are in 4 spades and you know you have 10 top tricks, do not take a finesse that will cause you to go down if it loses even if it gives you an overtrick if it wins.

5) If you and your partner have a

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GNT Club Qualifier Game^A

Thursday, January 25, 2024
Open GNT Qualifier (single session) 12:30 pm
^A All players welcome - Strats per GNT CAC

Future Life Master Winter Sectional^B

Friday, January 26, 2024
0 - 50 Pairs 10:00 am & 2:30 pm
NLM 500 / 300 / 100 Pairs 10:00 am & 2:30 pm

Saturday, January 27, 2024
0 - 50 Pairs 10:00 am & 2:30 pm
NLM 500 / 300 / 100 Pairs ** 10:00 am & 2:30 pm

^B No players over 500 MP (Non-Life Master) - Strats based on pair/team average, subject to change
^{**} Denotes regional - rated games to benefit the ACBL Grass Roots

Tournament Chairs: Phone: (803) 413-3421 shelbypk46@gmail.com
Shelby King Phone: (803) 331-6894 leeweb1@scn.com
Lee Webb

Partnerships: Sally McCardle Phone: (803) 315-5587 sallymcc@gmail.com
Online Partnership Desk: www.bridgewebs.com/columbiabridgclub/ (Go to Sectional Tab)

Host Hotel:
Courtyard by Marriott Columbia NE Phone: (803) 476-0183
2320 Legrand Road, Columbia, SC 29223 Group Code: CBC

Rates: Good thru January 18, 2024
Standard Two Queen Beds \$119.00
Standard Single King w/Twin Size Pullout Sofa \$119.00



New lifer Masters:

**Jim Bull, Cathy Chiles and
Melissa Kaufman...A huge
accomplishment.**

Ruby Life Master:

**Shelby King
!**



This month of Thanksgiving, we give applause to all our members who are so vital to our success! Each and every one of you contributes to our longevity and our future. Thank you for being supporters of CBC! A special thanks to the top ten attendess this fiscal year beginning June 1, 2023. Listed in order of the most games

bidding misunderstanding and wind up in the wrong contract, do not moan and groan about it and start complaining to your partner. Just go about your business and try to make whatever contract you are in. Once, my partner and I had a bidding misunderstanding that landed us in a 4 Spade contract (it had to do with a splinter bid) when we should have been in 6 Clubs. Four Spades never had a chance. We were down two for a score of -200. We went back to our partners with sad faces only to find out our opponents bid 6NT and went down 3 for a score of +300 for our team. Sometimes the bridge gods smile on you.

There are a lot of other tips we can talk about for team play but let's save those for another day.

played: 1 Brent Holcomb 2
Randy Cannon, 3
Charmelle Staples 4 Patti
Suggs 5. Caroline
Grimball 6 Donna Hunter 7
Judy Rockwel 8 Shelby
King 9 Sylvia White, 10
Mary Townhill.

DIRECTOR'S CALL

This is my first submission on a new Director's rulings series. This series will focus on recent rulings made at the Columbia Bridge Club that I find interesting. The main goal of this article series isn't to call out any players and/or Directors but rather to learn from the situation that occurred and to provide further dialog if there are still any points that are unclear. So let's get to it!

This situation occurred in a team game. I don't recall being told what the vulnerability was, however I also don't believe it matters for this issue. North is the Dealer and opens 1S. East overcalls 1S which is pointed out as being insufficient. (editor note: I want to point out that the players immediately bringing attention to an irregularity such as the one in this article is not an admission of acceptance or denial of the call.) The Director was called to the table and was briefed on the issue. The Director then took East away from the table and asked if 1S was what they meant to bid or if they just pulled the wrong card from the bidding box. Basically, as Directors we first need to determine if the root cause was mental or mechanical. The ACBL allows for the correction of mechanical errors when it's deemed obvious (e.g. pulling 1S when they meant to pull 1NT). That type of correction would be permitted without penalty and play would continue. In this case East responded that they had not seen North's 1S call and intended to call 1S as an opener, so this falls under the mental side and Law 27 – Insufficient Bid is applied.

The Director brought East back to the table and explained that East will need to make the bid sufficient or Pass (editor note: Double is not permitted as a replacement to an insufficient bid), and that West is going to be barred from the remainder of auction. Now normally East would be permitted to make the call sufficient at the lowest denomination, in this case 2S, without penalty, however since East/West have the basic agreement that 2S would be a Michael's Cue Bid (H + minor) and thus the 2S call would be artificial, 2S would not be permitted as a legal replacement call. No matter what, West is going to be barred and unless East mentions spades naturally at some point in the auction, and assuming that North/South win the auction, West will have an optional lead restriction applied the first time they are on lead. That aside, back to the auction where East replaces their insufficient 1S call with a Pass. North/South now continue the auction unabated and eventually arrive at a contract where they are doubled and go off 1100. Here's where the fun begins.

The Director is called back to the table where North/South contend that the -1100 result would never have occurred had South been presented with the option of accepting East's 1S call. The Director realized at that point they had made what we refer to as an incomplete ruling by not presenting all the options to South. The Director is in a bind here. Should they allow the result to stand on the basis that North/South dug their own 1100 hole, or should the score be adjusted in some manner citing an incomplete ruling contributed at least in part to the final result? Since the board in question had not been played yet at the other table in this team match, the Director opted to have the result nullified and the board reshuffled. The board was replayed without incident and the game proceeded.

So was the Director's decision to reshuffle the board a fair, or even legal one? Let's get legal out of the way first. I reviewed Law 12 – "Director's Discretionary Powers", along with Law 7 – "Control of Boards and Cards" and Law 86C – "In Team Play or Similar / Substitute Board" and none of them are clear as how to handle this situation. It can be inferred that at best the Director is only permitted to award an adjusted score, however that's not going to help with it's a team match. Personally I felt that the decision to reshuffle, albeit typically an unorthodox one, was the most fair given that all parties involved, including the Director, were complicit in the matter.

There is, however, one scenario where I would allow the -1100 result to stand and that's if as a Director I felt that either member of the North/South pair should have known that an incomplete ruling was being made, and neither attempted to inform the Director that they should allow South the option of accepting the insufficient 1S call. This scenario is what's referred to as taking "two bites of the apple". The North/South pair could take a wild swing at a contract, and if it fails then fall back on blaming the Director for an incomplete ruling. In the incident that occurred in that team game, that was not the case but it was worth mentioning that players who know better can be held to higher levels of standard.

If anyone has any questions with the incident I detailed or would like to talk about it more in depth to convince me of another angle I may be missing, please feel free to reach out to me. Until next time!

Michael Bitonti
Head Director - CBC

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