



MAY 2019 NEWSLETTER



CONTRIBUTORS

Many thanks to Greg Roberts for the “Bidding and Play Quiz” beginning on Page 3, and to Jay Jacobs for the “Alerts and Notifications” article beginning on Page 5.

You too can contribute – don’t be shy.

GAMES IN MAY

Pro Basketball and Hockey have finally started their playoffs. I’ll let you know how that works out in what will seem like four or five long boring months. Ah, boring. That brings us right back to baseball. I spotted an interesting (by baseball standards) anomaly in the American League East Division. That division includes the teams with the highest payroll, the third highest and the lowest in the major leagues. As of the day I am writing this, the first place team in the division is the one with the lowest payroll, the last place team is the one with the highest and the other is somewhere between the two. Extrapolating their current results to a full season means the Boston Red Sox will spend \$ 4.4 million per win, the New York Yankees \$ 2.7 million per win, and the Tampa Bay Rays \$ 0.4 million per win. So, what does this mean? Not really sure, but maybe that all overpaid underachievers should head to the Northeast.

Anyway, May is Grass Roots Fund Month in ACBL Nation. So, all games will award additional masterpoints, just like April. We will donate four dollars per table to the fund which will be returned to our District and used for Grand National Teams and North American Pairs stipends. This money really does find its way back to the club level players. Other games of interest:

Dirty Dozen Team Game – Friday, May 10th – Dirty Dozen handicapped format.

Individual Game – Wednesday, May 29th – You will get a new partner on each hand or so (and spend a lot of time walking around in circles). No time for system discussion, so play SAYC or the ever more popular wing - it system. This game, in my opinion, is a hoot, so, if you haven’t tried it, give it a shot.

Pro – Am Swiss Teams – Friday, May 31st – Random draw Pro – Am Swiss Teams using our usual handicap scheme. Sign up as a pair. Top half in total masterpoints will be the Pros. On the day of the game, Am pairs will draw their Pro partners from a hat (hope I can find a hat that big).

The Individual and Pro – Am Team Games are both special games with a \$1.00 card fee (such a deal you get at the Aiken Bridge Club). There will be sign – up sheets for these games

Remember, sign up and show up.

Game Schedule - MAY 2019

Monday 1:30pm	Wednesday 1:30pm	Friday 1:30pm
	1-May Open Pairs	3-May Open Pairs
6-May Open Pairs	8-May Open Pairs	10-May Dirty Dozen Teams Handicapped
13-May Open Pairs	15-May Open Pairs	17-May Open Pairs
20-May Open Pairs	22-May Open Pairs	24-May Open Pairs
27-May Open Pairs	29-May Individual Game	31-May Pro - Am Teams Handicapped
All Games Grass Roots Fund Games		

SLOW PLAY

Yes, yes, we've been down this road before. Well, here we go again. Slow play, in addition to being a violation of bridge law, is unfair and disrespectful to the other players, needlessly and perhaps erroneously affecting the outcome of the game, and is flat out annoying.

Following is the first part of an article concerning slow play which has been published almost every day in the Daily Bulletins from the three ACBL Nationals for at least five years. Hey, seems like they think it's kinda important, and so should we. The shaded phrases are my emphasis.

Slow play, especially habitual slow play, is a **violation of law and subject to penalty**. When a pair has fallen behind, it is incumbent on them to make up the time lost as quickly as possible **whether at fault or not**. All players are expected to make a concerted effort to catch up when they have fallen behind, **regardless of the reason for their lateness**. In the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, the director should presume that a pair finishing a round late by more than two or three minutes on more than one occasion during a session is responsible for the lateness. There is a **strong expectation that the director will penalize** such a pair. The size of a penalty will tend to increase for subsequent instances of slow play and for chronic or egregious slow play. While warnings typically will be given before a penalty is assessed, failure to do so in no way limits the director's authority to issue a penalty. Players are expected to be **aware**, in a general sense, **of time used and remaining in a segment** in which they are playing regardless of whether a clock is in use or a time announcement has been made. An excuse of "no announcement" or "no clock immediately visible" will not be considered persuasive.

The remainder of that article discusses the powers and responsibilities of the Tournament Directors. The remainder of this article pertains to the rules in effect at our club.

Two Minute Warning – our clock makes a noise when there are two minutes remaining in the round. **You may not start a hand after that noise. Period. End of story.** This rule is routinely ignored by way too many of our players. Those who do this are taking advantage of their opponents by stealing their valuable time from them for their own selfish benefit. Players at the nicest bridge club on the planet do not engage in this sort of behavior. There is an automatic procedural penalty (size of penalty at the sole discretion of the Director) for starting a board after the two minute warning.

Note: since we have playing Directors, enforcement of the two minute warning is quite difficult. Interestingly, it only takes one of four players at a table to prevent violations of the rule against starting a hand after the warning. I don't even want to think about what this says about our collective disdain for rules. This problem is very easy to solve. Don't be one of the four.

Last Round – the slow play rules do not end following the penultimate round. The two minute warning is still in effect. Some of us think they can take as much time as they wish in the last round. Not so. This is completely unfair. **Why should you have unlimited time to play the same boards that everyone else had to play in the proscribed time?**

Sominex Coup – this is the art of playing so slow that your opponents fall asleep or get so bored they don't remember what's going on. Hey, don't laugh; it has happened to me numerous times. This tactic is totally unacceptable.

Who Cares – well, I do and you should too. Consistent slow play is a **violation of the rules of bridge, it is being disrespectful to and taking advantage of your opponents, and is, in some cases, ethically suspect**. It is also disruptive to all the other players in the game since it inhibits the normal flow and process of the game.

Bridge is a timed game, and simply because you are willing to break the rules when your fellow competitors are not, does not mean you should have an advantage over them.

BIDDING AND PLAY QUIZ

1. No one vul. You open 1♥, partner bids 2NT (Jacoby), RHO bids 3♠, what do you bid with:

- | | | |
|--------|----------|----------|
| a. ♠54 | b. ♠2 | c. ♠---- |
| ♥AQ765 | ♥KQ10342 | ♥QJ9876 |
| ♦KJ3 | ♦AQ98 | ♦AKQ2 |
| ♣A32 | ♣K3 | ♣AK3 |

2. No one vul. Partner opens 1♥, RHO bids 1NT, what do you bid with:

- | | | | |
|------------|---------|--------|----------|
| a. ♠KQ1065 | b. ♠765 | c. ♠8 | d. ♠43 |
| ♥54 | ♥A65 | ♥J8765 | ♥53 |
| ♦A54 | ♦76 | ♦Q8752 | ♦KQ10976 |
| ♣543 | ♣AQ789 | ♣75 | ♣J102 |

3. Partner bids 1♠, RHO doubles. What do you bid with:

- | | | | |
|---------|----------|--------|---------|
| a. ♠K54 | b. ♠QJ65 | c. ♠76 | d. ♠65 |
| ♥65 | ♥3 | ♥Q1054 | ♥AQ92 |
| ♦A765 | ♦543 | ♦K98 | ♦K7 |
| ♣8765 | ♣J10932 | ♣K987 | ♣Q10876 |

4. ♠754
♥Q54
♦K65
♣K432

You are declarer in 3NT. Opening lead is the 3 of ♠ and RHO plays the Jack. What card should you win the trick with?

♠KQ
♥A74
♦AJ1072
♣A76

5. ♠Q75
♥A963
♦76
♣AJ105

You are declarer in 3NT. Opening Lead is the J of ♦. What card should you win the trick with?

♠KJ2
♥1082
♦AKQ
♣Q976

Editor note: Hey – let's make this a contest! Before looking at the answers on the next page write down your answers, then see how you did. All members who ace the quiz (honor system here – only works at the nicest bridge club on the planet) will win a really nice travel oriented prize. The prize will be revealed on the next page following the quiz answers.

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1a pass (nothing new to add and partner may want to double 3♠)
- 1b 4NT (Blackwood, whatever your flavor)
- 1c 5NT (Grand slam force-> bid 7 with both A and K of trump and 6 with one)

- 2a Double
- 2b Double
- 2c 3♥
- 2d 2♦

- 3a 2♠
- 3b 3♠
- 3c 1NT
- 3d redouble

- 4. Queen, if the diamond finesse loses to west, you want him to KNOW that you have the King
- 5. Not the A, preferably the Q, so when east wins a club, he will play his partner for AJ1092 of ♦.

OK, so how did you do? Get them all right? Well, if you did, you have won an

all inclusive, all expenses paid, round trip excursion

from your bed to your potty in the middle of the night.

CONGRATULATIONS

Even More from the guy in Wallingford



ALERTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

Before discussing bidding and strategy, consider the 'alert' procedure. Since there are a variety of bids that can be made and some may have significant variations, unusual bids are alerted. Certain bids appear on the convention card in **red** – these must be alerted. The partner of the bidder says "alert" immediately after the bid. Each person may ask the meaning of the opponent's bid, or for that matter any other bid, when it is his/her turn to bid. (You may not ask when it is partner's turn to bid, nor may you ask in a way that brings something to the attention of partner.)

If the next bidder makes a bid, or passes, before the alert has been made, the alert should then still be made. Then, that person has the right to take back the bid or pass and make another one. This can cause problems if it gives unauthorized information to that person's partner – for example, the person changes the bid or bids after previously passing. At a minimum, it tells that person's partner there was a decision and something was marginal. In such cases, call the director, who will watch over the rest of the bidding. The director will then tell you to play the hand and call him/her back after the hand if either side feels injured. The director may award an adjusted score. In rare instances, each side may receive a different adjusted score, depending on culpability.

The partner of the person who made the alerted or questioned bid makes the explanation. Generally, the proper way to ask is to say: "How do you interpret that bid?" or "Please explain". If the person answers that it is a certain convention that you are not familiar with, say "I don't know (/understand) that convention, please tell me what the bid means." You may also ask what alternative bids may be available or what someone would do with other point counts or distributions, although generally such questions are saved until after the auction, especially if your side is not participating. Asking such questions can only help the opponents get on track if one was misinterpreting the other's bids.

If the person you ask for an explanation flounders or seems to have no idea, cut them off right away ("Never mind") so that his/her partner cannot get any more unauthorized information. (Partner already has the unauthorized information that the person doesn't know what the bid means.)

You may ask for a review of the bidding or the meaning of any bid by the opponents at any time it is your turn to bid or after the bidding is over, including during the play of the hand. You may also ask questions about the opponents' convention card similarly. You may point out things on the opponents' convention card to partner before the bidding starts but not afterward. Once the bidding starts that constitutes illegal information.

It is generally poor strategy to ask opponents to explain alerts in an uncontested auction, since it may provide unauthorized information by calling something to your partner's or either of the opponents' attention, or imply you have an action to take. Instead, wait until the bidding is over and then ask for a summary of the bidding and/or what any particular bid meant. If you are the partner of the opening leader and have questions, partner should make his lead face down before you ask your questions (to avoid giving any clues to partner about the opening lead). Partner should always make the lead face down and, before turning up the opening lead, ask "Any questions, partner". This prevents unauthorized information and a considerable number of leads out of turn (since it is face down, there is no problem and it can be corrected).

If an explanation is incorrect, either partner should correct it after the bidding is over but before the opening lead ("There was a failure to alert ..." or "The explanation for xyz bid should have been ... ") IF your side is declarer. If your side is defending, you may not call attention to the incorrect bid until after play is complete to avoid giving unauthorized information. It is a violation of ethics for a partner to take advantage of an alert when he has made a bid and partner alerts the bid, thereby reminding him he made a bidding error. He should continue to bid based on his original premise.

Continued on next page

ALERTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

(continued)

Call the director when/if you think the opponents are taking advantage of the alert process, receiving or using unauthorized information, or have a private understanding that does not agree with their convention card or goes beyond their convention card. Note that it is ok to psych (make a bid you don't have), but, to do so often or in a particular way, creates a partnership understanding. For example, if partner regularly preempts on fewer cards than normal, I know that a weak 2 may only have 5 cards or a 3 level preempt may be on 6 cards, that represents a private understanding – I have more knowledge than the opponents. Then, if I alert all weak bids as possibly being short suited, because partner may have a smaller number of cards in the suit than normal, that would be an abuse of the alert process. It casts doubts on something that partner bids when he only does it a small percent of the time and it informs partner I may know what he is up to. When in doubt, call the director.

There are also certain bids that do not require an alert but must be notified when made. When playing weak no-trump (10-12, 11-14, etc), when partner opens or overcalls with a weak no trump, you must say “weak” or provide the point range. If you play that 1 C can be opened on less than 3 clubs in hand, when partner opens 1 C say “could be short”. People who play an opening bid of 1 C is 18+ points must say “strong and does not necessarily mean clubs”. (This system has the advantage of telling partner, and everyone else, when you have a strong hand but several systemic disadvantages – I always ask if such bids deny a 5 card major, since I want to know their bidding priority).

There are certain other situations where you make a “special alert”. This occurs when you use a variation of a ‘normal’ alert. Otherwise, when you alert, people would think it was the normal alert. For example, if playing weak no trump but you may open with 7-2-2-2 distribution (normal no trump openers should not have more than a 5 or, rarely, a 6 card suit), you must make a special alert, since just saying “weak” would not give the full story.

Doubles and cue-bids are not normally alertable because they are on the convention card. However, if there is an unusual treatment, make a special alert.

In an uncontested auction, alerts are not given above the 3 level. Instead, when the auction is over, you indicate to the opponents what otherwise would have been alerted. This speeds up the auction and prevents one partner from ‘alerting’ the other to an unusual bid. After the auction, you are also obligated to inform the opponents what version of Blackwood you use (straight, 1430, or 3014).

Final notes: (1) generally items in **RED** on the convention card must be alerted and those in blue must be announced and (2) if there is any doubt or question, call the director.

BOARD MEETING NOTIFICATION

The next meeting of your Board of Directors will be on May 6th at Noon in the Croft House Conference Room. Topics to be discussed include Longest Day plans, Worldwide Bridge Game participation, alternative venue for the Sectional Tournament, a few other loose ends and the ever popular and dreaded ‘Other’. So, should be quite boring unless something exciting happens in the ‘Other’ category.

Nevertheless, all members are welcome to attend the Board Meetings.