



SEPTEMBER 2019

NEWSLETTER



MORE HELP FOR US

For the last few months our Newsletter has featured articles by Greg R and Jay J on helping us become better bridge players. Well, this month Greg is taxed and Jay was last seen fleeing Greenland before the POTUS purchased it or him. But, fear not, as Raj has stepped up with Part 1 of his Bridge Tips, this one on bidding. Actually, I think 'tips' is a major underbid. It is really an excellent summary of the fundamentals of accurate bidding.

Miles Hall has contributed a commentary about the ways we inadvertently generate unauthorized information, the bane of our great game, during the bidding. He has included tips on how to avoid doing so.

So, in the spirit of things I will offer a tongue twisting tip of my own:

If you want to do well, you will do well to do what those who do well do.

There is also a report on the last Board Meeting and some other stuff.

GAMES IN SEPTEMBER

Are You Ready for Some Football?

The college football season has already started as you read this. So, who are my four picks for the National Championship Playoffs? Glad you asked! First, the defending champion Clemson Tigers, because they play absolutely no one all year. Second, the Alabama Crimson Tide, because, well, they are Alabama. Third, the Georgia Bulldogs, because their Head Coach is Smart and they don't play Bama until the SEC Championship Game. And fourth, the Big Red of Cornell University, because, well just because.

What about the Gamecocks. Well, they have a very long season ahead of them. They are the only team in the country scheduled to play Bama, Clemson and Georgia. Thankfully, they were spared having to play Cornell.

The National Football League, featuring the Belichick/Brady Patriots and the 31 dwarves, regular season begins on September 5th.

September golf features the Ryder Cup Lite, aka the Presidents Cup. And, of course, baseball goes on and on and on

So, what's up at our club? All games this month are International Fund Games. Yep, your once a year opportunity to contribute funds to defray the costs of our billionaire sponsors and their millionaire employees as they travel to exotic locals in search of world championships. I guess this is the ACBL's version of the Reverse Robin Hood Syndrome. You know, take from the poor and give to the rich. Oh, no, sorry, that's Trumpism.

Game Schedule - September 2019

Monday 1:30pm	Wednesday 1:30pm	Friday 1:30pm
2-Sep Open Pairs	4-Sep Open Pairs	6-Sep Open Pairs
9-Sep Open Pairs	11-Sep Open Pairs	13-Sep Dirty Dozen Teams Handicapped
16-Sep Open Pairs	18-Sep Open Pairs	20-Sep Open Pairs
23-Sep Open Pairs	25-Sep Open Pairs	27-Sep Open Pairs
30-Sep Open Pairs		

All Games International Fund Games

UPDATE ON THE AIKEN FALL SECTIONAL

A Message from Greg, our Tournament Chair

Would you believe that the sectional tournament that we host every year is just around the corner? The dates of this year's tournament are October 4th thru 6th; Friday through Sunday, at the Odell Weeks Center. I first attended this tournament in 1963 when it was held at the old Commercial Hotel (now the about-to-be-renovated Hotel Aiken).

As usual the success of our tournament will hinge on the help that we get from you, our club members. There are three areas in which we are asking for your help and participation. The first service opportunity is helping with the set up of our playing room at the Weeks Center on Thursday. Jesse Roach has once again assumed the leadership role in transporting our tables and chairs to the tournament site and then arranging them in the gym. After the tournament's conclusion on Sunday afternoon, we need help to fold up the chairs and tables and carrying them to Jesse's truck so that he can return these items to storage. Jesse will be asking for volunteers toward the middle of September via a sign-up sheet.

One of the constants with sectional tournaments is that players love to nosh (think eat) before, during and after the sessions. This year, in order to hold down our expenses, we have decided to depend less on purchased foods and more on homemade items. So if you have a favorite recipe, please prepare it. Here are some favorites: deviled eggs, dips with "dippables," finger sandwiches, cookies, vegetable trays, and other buffet items. We will also need soft drinks in abundance. So, if you would prefer to not prepare a food item, you can still help by contributing two or more large bottles of Coke products: Diet, Regular, Sprite, or Coke Zero.

Phoebe Walters, another energetic club member has graciously volunteered to serve as our food chairperson, and she will also be sending out a signup sheet in a few weeks.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we are asking you to play in the tournament, whether you have one or one thousand master points. This year we will have more strata: 0-99, 100-299, and 300-499, so you and your partner will not be compared with higher ranking players. If you can play in multiple sessions-great, but please play in at least one session.

Our club is growing due to Ron's leadership, and one reason for the increased attendance in our Croft House games is that we enjoy playing in a pleasant and hospitable environment. Your participation in our tournament this year will communicate to our out-of-town players that our club is special and our sectional tournament is special too.

If you can't commit to playing, but would be willing to play a session with a "partnerless" player, please communicate with Barb Dellamora, our Partnership Chair.

Thanks in advance for making this year's tournament a success.

Fall **AIKEN** **South**
Sectional **Carolina**

October 4 – 6, 2019

Location: Odell Weeks Activity Center
1700 Whiskey Road (Hwy 19)
Aiken, SC



UNAUTHORIZED INFORMATION

BY MILES HALL

Let me first acknowledge that I am neither an expert bridge player nor an expert on the rules of bridge. But I do consider myself to be a competent observer and reporter of what takes place at the bridge table at our club. It's what I sometimes see and hear that I want to comment on. This article is not intended to be accusatory but instead is meant to improve our compliance with the rules of bridge. Its focus is on how the bid card is played.

I want to cite a portion of Law 16 governing authorized and unauthorized information (UI). Quoting from paragraph B of that law: "Any extraneous information from partner that might suggest a call or play is unauthorized. This includes remarks, questions, replies to questions, unexpected alerts or failures to alert, unmistakable hesitation, unwonted speed, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism."

I sometimes observe the following actions which I believe unintentionally transmit UI to a partner (and to the opponents).

1. Quickly tossing out a pass card before the hand is completely sorted. Doing this implies "I'm not even close to an opening bid", or "I have no unusual distribution that might allow me to bid" or "my hand is so poor I have no intention of ever bidding with this mess." Surely this implied information falls under the category of being unauthorized.

2. The pass card is tossed out when a hand is not biddable but is carefully placed on the table when it is biddable, even though a bid may not be made at that immediate turn. I contend that the difference in how the card is put out transmits UI.

3. Comments such as "oh well" or "nothing to lose" or "we're not vulnerable" being made near the end of an auction while a bid card is being played. These comments can influence the subsequent bidding and play of a partner or opponents and I believe fall under the category of UI.

It seems to me that it should be a simple matter to always try to put the bid card down in the same way and to keep any extraneous comments to a minimum. After all, bridge has rules and we should try our best to play by them.

BOARD MEETING REPORT

The latest meeting of your Board was held on August 21st, 2019. Following is a very brief summary.

Treasurer's Report – Mike reported that for the seven months ending in July, the Club ran a surplus of nearly \$5000 and net assets were about \$40,000. **(Ron Note -- this is better than expected because of our increased table count, but, don't worry, the Holiday Party and mandatory local charity contribution will take care of most of the surplus.)**

By-Laws Re-write – after review of the current status of our by-laws, it was decided that they need to be updated. A committee of Phyllis Pellarin, Jay Jacobs, Jesse Roach and Ron Jaeger were assigned this project. Ron will appoint one more person to the committee.

Field Balancing – our current seating policy of first come, first served seems to have caused our North/South and East/West fields to be unbalanced. The consensus is that the N/S field tends to be stronger than the E/W field. After considerable discussion, we decided that Ron will call a meeting of all game directors to address this issue. **(Ron Note – as I am not particularly fond of creating solutions in search of a problem, I'm seeking your input on this matter. If you think balancing the field is more important than first come, first served, or vice versa, please give your thoughts to any Board member or game director.)**

Bottled Water – at the request of a member, we discussed supplying bottled water at our games. Since tap water (yep, the same water frozen is the ice you use) is available and we have very little storage space we felt this was not appropriate.

BRIDGE TIPS -- PART 1

BIDDING

BY RAJ

1. When partner bids two suits and you have an equal number of cards in each suit, take partner back to the first suit even if it means increasing the level.
2. A direct raise of a second suit promises four card support.
3. With two five-card suits: open with the higher ranking suit, respond in the higher ranking suit, and overcall in the higher ranking suit. Do not worry about which is the stronger suit.
4. When the bid to your right is strong, a jump by you is weak; when the bid to your right is weak, a jump by you is strong.
5. After you open 1♥ or 1♠ and partner responds 1NT denying support for your major, don't rebid your major unless you have a six-card suit.
6. When holding three four card suits and a singleton, open the bidding 1♦ unless your singleton is in diamonds! If it is, open 1♣. You should have at least 12 HCP to open the bidding with this distribution.
7. A takeout double by a passed hand shows 9-11 HCP with shortness in the opener's suit. If the opponents have bid two suits, the double promises at least four-card support for both unbid suits.
8. A good idea when playing Blackwood is to count the king of the agreed suit as an ace! This is called 'Key Card Blackwood' or 'Five Ace Blackwood'. When using this convention do not contract for slam unless you have at least four of the five 'aces'.
9. When responding to a takeout double, jump the bidding in your long suit with 9-11 'revalued' points. An unbid five-card suit is worth 1 extra point and an unbid six-card suit is worth three extra points. Do not count points for jacks and queens in suits the opponents have bid.
10. When responding to a takeout double with 12+ HCP, cue bid the opponent's suit to show a strong hand and then bid your suit(s) later. After you cue bid, any new suit bid by you is forcing.
11. A 2NT response to a takeout double shows 10-12 HCP and is not forcing. A 1NT response to a takeout double shows 6-9 HCP similar to a 1NT response to an opening bid. No Trump responses to a takeout double guarantee at least one stopper (hopefully two), in the opponents' suit.
12. If you play 'five-card majors', a short diamond should only be opened with 4-4 in the majors, three diamonds and two clubs. The incidence of a 1♦ opening bid with this exact distribution is less than 3%. Translation: When partner opens 1♦, assume partner has four or more diamonds.
13. After partner opens the bidding and second hand overcalls 1NT to show the strength of an opening 1NT bid, double for penalty if you have 9 or more HCP. Bidding a suit denies the strength to double.
14. It is dangerous to count extra points for short suits or long suits before the bidding starts. If partner bids your short suit, that reduces, not increases, the value of your hand. If one of your opponents bids your long suit, that decreases, not increases, the value of your hand. If you let the bidding develop, you will see whether your long or short suits are working for or against you.

15. It is dangerous to use Blackwood holding a void. If you are missing two aces and partner shows one ace, you won't know which it is. It is usually better to cue bid when interested in a slam. Also, when responding to Blackwood, do not count a void as an ace. With one ace (or three) and a void, jump to the six level of the void suit if it is lower ranking than the trump suit. If the void suit is higher ranking than the trump suit, jump to the six level of the trump suit. With two aces and a void, respond 5NT.

16. When responding to an opening bid with two four-card majors, respond 1♥ and give partner a chance to rebid 1♠. If partner doesn't rebid 1♠, assume partner does not have four spades and bid accordingly.

17. When the opponents bid and support each other and you have the jack or queen of their suit, do not count points for those honors. They are not worth the cardboard they are printed on. Secondary honors may take tricks on defense, but seldom do when you are the declarer.

18. When all your honor cards are in your two long suits, add 1 extra 'purity' point. Hands that have eight-card fits or longer can add extra distributional points. Until the fit is found, distributional points should not be added. Hands that are misfitted should not add extra points, they should subtract points!

19. When RHO uses Stayman and you, fourth hand, have five clubs or six clubs headed by three of the top five honors, double to alert your partner you want a club lead against any eventual contract. A double of an artificial bid is a lead directing double.

20. Also use the lead-directing double when the opponents go through Blackwood. If the response to 4NT is a suit you want led, double! Important!



AIKEN SECTIONAL EVENT SCHEDULE

Friday – October 4, 2019

Stratified Open & 499er.....10 am
Regional rating charity game

Stratified Open & 499er.....2:30 pm

Saturday – October 5, 2019

Stratified Open & 499er.....10 am
Regional rating charity game

Stratified Open & 499er.....2:30 pm

Sunday – October 6, 2019

Stratified Open Swiss Teams10 am
Stratified 499er Swiss Teams10 am
Catered lunch provided on Sunday

ONLY IN AMERICA

That's the title of a hit song and album by Jay and the Americans from 1963. It's an uplifting song about our land of opportunity, where you can become whatever you want and where everything is possible. Here are a couple of verses from the song.

*Only in America
Can a guy from anywhere
Go to sleep a pauper and wake up a millionaire*

*Only in America
Can a kid without a cent
Get a break and maybe grow up to be President*

However, the song has an interesting back story. The song was written before integration, and the lyrics were originally about racism. It had the following chorus: "Only in America, land of opportunity, can they save a seat in the back of the bus just for me. Only in America, Where they preach the Golden Rule, will they start to march when my kids go to school." Atlantic Records had a problem with the lyrics, so the songwriters changed them to a message of patriotism. The Drifters recorded the song with the new patriotic lyrics, but refused to release it because they had a problem and did not believe the message.

The song was then offered to problemless Jay Black and the Americans who recorded the revised version because, well, they were the (white) Americans. The message of the revised version is that anything is possible in America.

The last thirty some months have certainly proven that!

I fear I have digressed. All I Really Want To Do (OMG, now I have a Bob Dylan song in here) is take a look at things that only happen here.

Only In America:

Do we leave cars worth forty thousand dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.

Do we order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a diet Coke.

Do the drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy candy and cigarettes in the front.

Do the banks leave vault doors open and then chain the pens to the counters.

Do we have drive-up ATM machines with Braille lettering.

Just Wondering

If con is the opposite of pro, is Congress the opposite of progress?