

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to this, the 28th session of Shark's Pointers Online!

Today we are going to talk about a few conventions that you probably have not been playing - and possibly haven't even heard of before.

I'm a firm believer in the KISS approach to conventions. Keep It Simple Stupid!

I've had 75% games playing virtually no systems.

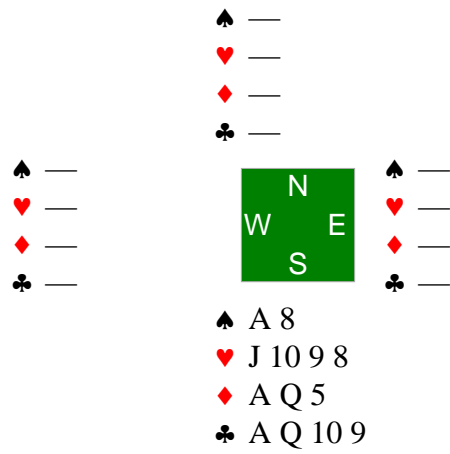
The constant tradeoff is not making things so complicated that you can't remember your conventions.

Having said all this, some conventions are very useful. You need to have conventions that meet a specific need. You must understand those needs in order to understand how to best use the conventions.

Today, we are going to look at a few conventions that most of you are probably not using today. I'm not advocating you and your favorite partner adopt any convention. That's totally up to you. But I do want to make you aware of these and let you decide whether or not they are right for you.

Specifically, we are going to talk about some rather esoteric conventions for the first time today such as Exclusion Blackwood, and Marcus Accept, and revisit others such as Chesterton, McCabe, and if time allows, one I came up with that has never been adopted and on rare occasions could prove very helpful. Some experts use some of these methods. Some experts don't use any of them. Let's take a look at them one at a time. You don't have to rush off to figure out how to adopt these. Today's objective is to highlight the solutions these conventions may provide to frequent problems that arise on defense and bidding.

Marcus Accept



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 N
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	

You've got an awfully nice hand, but you don't know if partner has the following hand...

Marcus Accept

♠ Q J 10 7 6

♥ K 6

♦ 7

♣ K J 6 5 3



♠ A 8

♥ J 10 9 8

♦ A Q 5

♣ A Q 10 9

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 N
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	3 N
All pass			

3 N by South

Only interested in game...

Marcus Accept

♠ —	♠ K Q J 7 6	♠ —
♥ —	♥ A	♥ —
♦ —	♦ 8 7	♦ —
♣ —	♣ K J 8 5 4	♣ —
♠ —	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ —
♥ —	♠ A 8	♥ —
♦ —	♥ J 10 9 8	♦ —
♣ —	♦ A Q 5	♣ —
	♣ A Q 10 9	

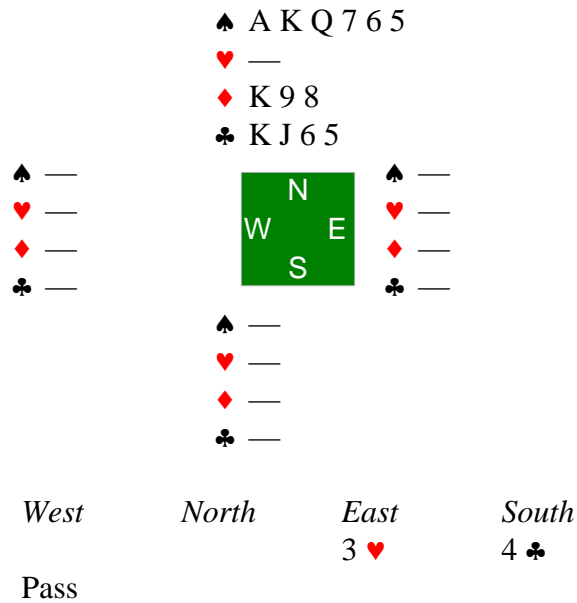
Or this hand with serious slam interest.

One of New England's finest bridge teachers was a gentleman named Mel Marcus. Just prior to his passing in late 2015, Mel - who had already amassed far more masterpoints than needed to become a Grand Life Master - won his first and only NABC+ event and thereby achieved his lifelong goal of attaining the highest ranking in bridge in the last few weeks of his life. Mel partnered with Rena Lieberman, and teamed up with Bill Irvine and Haven Sharaf - Bob Lurie, and John Hrones, Jr. to win the Truscott Senior Swiss Teams.

Mel Marcus, one of the best bridge teachers in New England, came up with an interesting treatment. When partner transfers to a major and then bids a minor, the opening NT bidder bids 3 of the first major to show slam interest in the minor, and bids a new suit to show slam interest in partner's first bid major.

So, on this hand, South would bid 3S after the 2nd suit to show slam interest in clubs. Change his hand slightly (Adding the Q of spades, for example, and taking away the Q of clubs) and South would bid 3D to show slam interest in dummy's first bid suit.

Exclusion Blackwood



Let's talk about another convention that is called Exclusion...

You're sitting North with this huge hand and you hear your partner bidding freely at the 4 level.

Should you just close your eyes and bid 7C? Is there a way to find out if partner has the Ace of diamonds and the Ace of clubs?

Fortunately, there is. A jump bid to 5H commonly would be showing a heart void, as it asks for aces (or keycards, depending upon your agreements) EXCLUDING HEARTS.


The responses are very simple - 0, 1, 2, 3, 4

Partner's response is 6C. What does that mean? 5S=0, 5N=1, 6C=2.

North happily bid 7C. This was the complete deal...

Exclusion Blackwood

East Deals
N-S Vul

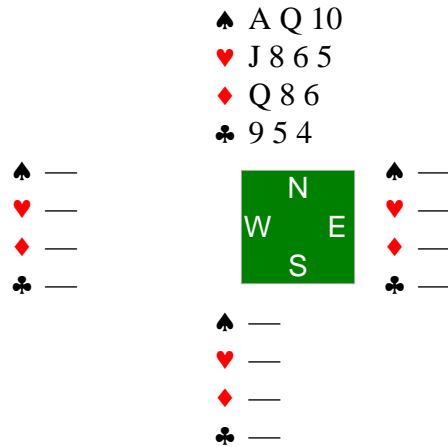
♠ J 10 3 2		♠ 4
♥ Q 8 2		♥ A K J 6 5 4 3
♦ 7 4 3 2		♦ J 10 6 5
♣ 9 7		♣ 4
		♠ 9 8
	♥ 10 9 7	
	♦ A Q	
	♣ A Q 10 8 3 2	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		3 ♥	4 ♣
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	6 ♣
Pass	7 ♣	All pass	

7 ♣ by South

Great auction! Exclusion is a super tool. It doesn't come up very often, but when it does, it is huge!

McCabe



Now I want to introduce you to a very handy treatment that I seriously think you all should add to your bidding repertoire. It is called McCabe, and I am going to just highlight the simplest application of this very versatile tool. I'll be happy to send you more info directly if you would be interested.

Partner opens 2H. West doubles, what is going thru your mind?....

If you are me, you want to raise partner's hearts. If the opps should buy the contract, which seems likely as they must hold most of the points, I'd like partner to lead a spade - not a heart.

For example, if you raise to 3H, and East bids 3 NT. You might very well fall into the trap as shown in the following depicted deal..

McCabe

South Deals
None Vul

♠ K J 9 6	♠ A Q 10	♠ 5 4 3
♥ 9	♥ J 8 6 5	♥ A Q
♦ A 9 8	♦ J 6 2	♦ K 4 3
♣ A Q 10 3 2	♣ 9 5 4	♣ K J 8 7 6
	♠ 8 7 2	
	♥ K 10 7 4 3 2	
	♦ Q 10 7 5	
	♣ —	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Dbl	3 ♥	3 NT	2 ♥ All pass

3 NT by East

Your partner will be certain to lead a heart into East's AQ - presenting him with his ninth trick.

McCabe

South Deals
None Vul

♠ K J 9 6	♠ A Q 10	♠ 5 4 3
♥ 9	♥ J 8 6 5	♥ A Q
♦ A 9 8	♦ J 6 2	♦ K 4 3
♣ A Q 10 3 2	♣ 9 5 4	♣ K J 8 7 6
	♠ 8 7 2	
	♥ K 10 7 4 3 2	
	♦ Q 10 7 5	
	♣ —	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			2 ♥
Dbl	2 ♠	3 NT	All pass

3 NT by East

Playing McCabe, North will bid 2S over the X, which says "Partner, I have a raise to 3H, but I don't have the A or K of hearts, and I want you to lead a spade."

Look what a spade lead does to 3N! - No play, Jose!

Chesterton

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 6		♠ A J 9 3
♥ A K Q 10 9 8 7 6		♥ J 3 2
♦ A J 9		♦ K 7 3
♣ 6		♣ A J 2
♠ K Q 2	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	
♥ 4		
♦ Q 10 8 2		
♣ K Q 10 9 7		
♠ 10 8 7 5 4		
♥ 5		
♦ 6 5 4		
♣ 8 5 4 3		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	3 ♥	All pass	

3 ♥ by North

One of my favorite, regular partners is a guy named Andrew Chesterton. Andrew came up with a great method to describe hands that possess 9 tricks in hearts or spades. I've asked around and haven't found a name for this treatment, so I have dubbed it "Chesterton".

After he opens the bidding 2C, and his partner temporizes with 2D, a jump to 3 H or 3 S says " I have 9 tricks, if you have a complete bust you may pass, with anything that might generate just one more trick, bid 4 H or 4 S."

After 2C-2D, 2H or 2S by the strong opener is now 100% game forcing.

Convention To Be Named Later

NS Vul

South Deals

♠ J	♠ Q 8	♠ 7 4 3
♥ 5 4	♥ Q 3 2	♥ A 9 8 7 6
♦ K 8 7 6 4	♦ Q 10 9	♦ A 5
♣ A K 8 3 2	♣ Q J 10 5 4	♣ 9 7 6

♠ A K 10 9 6 5 2
♥ K J 10
♦ J 3 2
♣ —

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
2 NT	Dbl	Rdbl	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

4 ♠ by South

Here's a common situation. The person on your right opens one of a major, you're at favorable vulnerability sitting with 5-5 in the minors and bid 2N, and the person behind you doubles.

This usually doesn't end well for me. I usually end up going for 1100!

A long time ago, I came up with an idea on how to make use of a redouble on this auction. It clearly cannot be SOS, nor can it logically be to play.

What I came up with was the XX forces partner to bid 3C. Now a pass shows longer clubs with Ax or Kx in diamonds, and a bid of 3D shows longer diamonds with Ax of Kx in clubs.

Look at how beautifully this treatment would work in the above hypothetical, but plausible scenario. Knowing that partner has Ax of diamonds makes the killing lead of a low diamond lead easy instead of the otherwise normal lead of a high club!

This is still something I am experimenting with. A couple of my regular partners have adopted it, but the situations where it can be applied are quite rare.

For now, focus on learning the intricacies of the most common treatment - and that would be McCabe. Weak 2's occur all the time. Add that treatment to your bidding toolchest and your results will improve dramatically! See you next Friday!