

## Everything Is Relative!

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

And Welcome to this, our 48th Session of Shark's Pointer's Online!

I hope you all enjoyed a very happy St. Patrick's Day and, if you didn't get to enjoy any green beer, at least you had some corned beef and cabbage! This past week was rather special for my family, as Sue and I celebrated our son's 36th birthday on 3/13.

I suppose that to many, the most significant day was the day after Mark Jr's birthday - 3/14 which almost everyone today knows as "Pi Day".

But, I wonder how many of you knew that in 1879, Albert Einstein was born on March 14th? That's correct, and today's Shark's Pointer's topic is relatively (pun intended) pertinent to this!

Many of Einstein's memorable quotes have very special pertinence to our bridge game. . - and I'm not talking about  $E=MC^2$  squared!

The great inventor, Thomas Alva Edison, is attributed to have said that genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. Einstein once said something very similar to this...

**GENIUS IS 1% TALENT AND 99% HARD WORK**

The same may be said for success at bridge! You don't have to be a rocket scientist to become a great bridge player - but you do have to work at it.

We actually touched upon another one of Einstein's more famous quotes while we were talking about Achilles Heels

**INSANITY IS DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER AGAIN  
AND EXPECTING DIFFERENT RESULTS**

How many times do we continue to overbid - or underbid, forget to count trumps, or just lose concentration? How many times do we forget to give partner the proper count or suit preference signal? We keep making the same kinds of mistakes - and keep getting bad results as a result of this. But Einstein also gave us reason to hope, as he once said....

**IN THE MIDDLE OF DIFFICULTY LIES OPPORTUNITY**

## Everything Is Relative!

Here's another one that "relates" to our game....

### IMAGINATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWLEDGE

There are so many situations in which there is no system to describe a bid, and many times we have to rely upon our imagination to find the winning play or the best defense.

Some of the things Einstein said are inspirational - like

### THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO NOT STOP QUESTIONING

and others are rather nasty, such as

### THERE ARE 2 THINGS THAT ARE INFINITE - THE UNIVERSE AND HUMAN STUPIDITY - AND I'M NOT SURE ABOUT THE UNIVERSE

but my favorite as it applies to these talks is..

### IF YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN IT SIMPLY, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IT WELL ENOUGH

It's been with this concept in mind, that I have reduced complex probability discussions to simple but practical generalizations such as missing an even number the suit is less likely to split evenly, and using simple to remember terms like "S-H-A-R-K" to identify the major components of a simple squeeze.

So, with this preamble, let's venture into a discussion of some *relatively* difficult bridge hands-remembering, after all, that "everything is relative"!

Last night I played in the 2nd Qualifying session of the National IMP Pairs with Jonathan Green, with whom I finished 2nd Overall in the 2004 National Life Masters Pairs Championship in Orlando, Florida. We were just above average after the first session and things were not going great for us in the evening. Our opponents bid and made two excellent slams, and with just 7 boards to go we were about 20 IMPs below average. But the opps misdefended and let me make a game that could have been set, and then they completely misplayed a hand and went down in a cold game after Jon completely bamboozled them! Because of these two gifts, we were able to barely qualify. We were plus 8 IMPs after the first session and despite, or because of these two great results, were only plus 2 IMPs for the second session. Plus 3 IMPs over the 2 sessions DID NOT QUALIFY!

Here was the hand I held on the auction that Jon fooled our opponents with his methods...

Everything Is Relative!

NAOBC IMP Pairs

West Deals

N-S Vul



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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♣
2 ♦	Pass	?	

After 3 passes, South opened 1 strong club which was completely artificial saying nothing about clubs and showed 17 or more HCP. Jon now preempted with 2 ♦ - another completely artificial bid that showed nothing about diamonds, but showed either a one suited hand in hearts - or a two suiter in the next two higher suits - in this case spades and clubs. If Jon had bid 1 ♦ instead of 2 ♦ - he's still be showing either a single suiter in hearts or a two suiter in the blacks, but his hand would either be stronger or less distributional. North passed and I bid 2 ♥ which I self-alerted as saying partner should either pass or correct to 2 ♠. South bid 2 NT, and now North had to decide what to bid. Here was the North hand...

Everything Is Relative!

NAOBC IMP Pairs

West Deals

N-S Vul

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

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W   S   E</td></tr> </table>	N	W   S   E	♠ J 8 4 2 ♥ J 10 2 ♦ A 6 3 ♣ 9 7 2
N			
W   S   E			

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♣
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	2 NT
Pass	?		

One of the problems with artificial systems is that there frequently is a lot of confusion when opponents interfere. While it may seem obvious to transfer to 3 ♥, North wasn't sure that his partner would treat this as a transfer, perhaps. I'm not sure, but for whatever reason, he chose to bid 3 NT.

As it turns out, NS missed a 5-4 heart fit, but this might have been a huge swing for them - had the cards been as follows...

## Everything Is Relative!

NAOBC IMP Pairs  
West Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ 7		♠ J 8 4 2			
♥ A 7 5 4 3		♥ Q J 10			
♦ Q 10 8 2		♦ K 6 4 3			
♣ J 10 8		♣ 7 2			
♠ Q 9 6 5 3	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W    E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> </div>	N	W    E	S	♠ A K 10
N					
W    E					
S					
♥ 2		♥ K 9 8 6			
♦ A 7		♦ J 9 5			
♣ 9 6 5 4 3		♣ A K Q			

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♣
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	2 NT
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			

4 ♥ by South

Suction is an artificial system in which the bid made at any level - including a double- shows a one suited hand in the next higher suit or a two suited hand in the next two higher suits.

So, Jon's 2D bid was preemptive and showed either a long heart suit or a 2 suiter in spades and clubs. Had he held the actual hand and led the A of diamonds, the defense would score 2 diamonds a ruff, and would have to score a setting trump trick as well.

As it turns out, here was the actual hand...

Everything Is Relative!

NAOBC IMP Pairs  
West Deals  
N-S Vul

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

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

Opening lead 5 of ♠

3 NT by South

As you can see, 3 NT actually is cold. NS have 2 Spades, 3 Clubs, and 4 Hearts. But, he has to set up his hearts right away. What happened was that South was so shocked to see his side had a 9 card heart fit, that he made a terrible play at trick 2 after capturing my J of ♠ with his K- he continued with a low diamond. Jon ducked and I won the Ace, and continued spades. Now, there was no way declarer could make the hand!

I want to show one last hand. I think I should call it the "grand finale". Here was the hand....

Everything Is Relative!

IMPs

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♦
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	?		

You hold the North hand, after partner opens the bidding 1 ♦ and rebids 3 ♣. You obviously love your minor suit holdings, but can you make game, slam or a grand slam? How can you know?

Before we try to answer this question, what's the first thing we should know about partner's 3 ♣ bid? Can it be something like the following?....

## Everything Is Relative!

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

Well, I know many of you think this is a silly question, but there are some that think it is imperative to jump with any 5-5 hand. This simply is not true. To get to the right level, it is so important to have bids that show a minimum strength - based on the assumption that it normally takes 26 combined points in two hands to make game.

So this hand has great shape, but it only contains 14 HCP. Partner's response only promises 6. So combined, we may have as little as 20 HCP. On top of this, we don't have a known fit. So, clearly the correct bid with this hand is 2C not 3C. How would this auction proceed?

The North hand should raise to 4C and now South has a tough decision. Chances are that many will end up in 5C going down. Bridge is not an exact science!

What does partner's rebid of 3C actually show - if it clearly doesn't show a 5-5 minimum?

If you said 18-19 HCP, you are right! A jump shift by opener is GAME FORCING. In order to be game forcing, the total combined high card points must come close to 26. Your 6 and partner's presumed 18-19 would qualify. Always remember the rules of 26, 32, and 37 and you should end up plus - most of the time.



## Everything Is Relative!

IMPs

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♦
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	?		

Alright, let's go back to the hand we had. As you know, I play a lot with Andrew Chesterton. What you may not know about Andrew is that he is an avid bidding theorist. He and I disagree from time to time, but I am always willing to try out his ideas. One of his ideas that I like a lot and we have adopted successfully is that anytime 4 of our minor suit is forcing, partner is expected to respond as if the 4 of a minor was the start of a keycard Blackwood sequence. Now isn't that a great bid for the North hand? It keeps the bidding low and gets you some badly needed information. You bid 4C and partner bids 4D - showing 1 or 4 keycards!

Well, he certainly can't have only 1 keycard for his jumpshift, so you know he has the AK of clubs, the A of diamonds and the A of hearts - and his auction suggests at least 9 cards in the minors. So, how do we find out about the Q of clubs?

Once again, Andrew has been great at these bidding sequences and he has suggested that if the response doesn't show the Q of trumps or the absence (2 with or 2 without), then the next step is the queen ask. So, North would bid 4H, which says "Partner, do you have the Queen of clubs?"

Now, here's where you and your partner have to discuss whether or not 4NT or 6C have different meanings. Andrew and I would bid 6C, which says, we have the Q but no other kings. But that is all the info the North hand needs, and happily bids 7C! He knows his partner has at most 4 major suit cards, of which one is the Ace of hearts. His other 3 losers can go on his AKQ of spades, and if he needs to ruff diamonds, he has plenty of top clubs to handle this.

There is one more point I wish to touch upon. We talked about the ask for the Queen of trumps, I would implore you to review with your favorite partners how to ask for Kings if you know about the Queen of trumps. Some skip a step if there is ambiguity, some use the next step if possession of the Q of trumps has already been shown.

Everything Is Relative!

IMPs  
 East Deals  
 None Vul

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



♠ 3  
 ♥ A 10 8  
 ♦ A Q 10 6 3  
 ♣ A K Q 6

Opening Lead K of ♥

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♦
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	6 ♣
Pass	7 ♣	All pass	

7 ♣ by South

Here was declarer's hand.

On the lead of the K of hearts, you can count 3S, 1H, and 1D and 5 C off the top. If spades split no worse than 5-3, you can cash 3 spades pitching your two hearts, and ruff two hearts in hand. If trumps are 2-2, you are cold. If clubs are 3-1, you have lots of plays. 4-0 trumps may make things tricky, so you may need to cash 3 spades. There's no hurry to cash dummy's spades, if trumps split 3-1 however, and if they do split 6-2, you are going down. So best play is to win the Ace of hearts, play Ace of diamonds and ruff a diamond high, now cross to hand with a trump, and if both follow, play another diamond ruffing high again. If both follow, you are cold. Club to hand, ruff out the last diamond high, and use dummy's last trump to get to hand. Draw the last trump pitching a heart from dummy, cash your established diamond Q to pitch another of dummy's losers, and your last trump takes care of dummy's little spade. Now AKQ of spades comes to 13.

Here was the complete deal...

Everything Is Relative!

IMPs  
East Deals  
None Vul

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

Opening Lead K of ♥

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 ♦
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	7 ♣	All pass	6 ♣

7 ♣ by South

This is a great hand for both bidding and play.

To be able to bid good grand slams - and this is a very high percentage contract - is an important capability for any partnership. Andrew and I have had a lot of success with minorwood. You may have other tools that work for you, but whatever you do, please review this hand with your favorite partner and see how you can get to the excellent 7C contract. At my table, our opponents bid to 5C only! Our opponents' auction was 1D-1S-3C-4C-5C. At the other table, the auction was 1D-1S-2C-3C-3H\* (stopper ask) - 5C. Both tables of experts got to 5C!

This hand was a push!

Bidding these hands to achieve the optimal result is not at all easy. Partnerships need good tools, and they have to thoroughly understand all the nuances and follow up sequences.

All of this requires some hard work. Remember what Albert Einstein told us 100 years ago -

**GENIUS IS 1% TALENT AND 99% HARD WORK**

After last night, I should add my own Aquinoism. **YOU CAN NEVER WIN A BRIDGE TOURNAMENT - YOU CAN ONLY LOSE THEM!** Work hard at avoiding unforced errors!

**NO SHARK'S POINTERS ONLINE NEXT FRIDAY 3/26 - SEE YOU IN 2 WEEKS**