

SUMMARY OF HELPFUL ADVICE FOR NEWER PLAYERS FROM PREVIOUS MONTHS

OPENING LEAD ADVICE:

1) Listen to the bidding. 2) Against a no trump contract a lead from an unbid 5 card suit is generally best. 3) A 4th best lead from a suit with an unsupported ace or king is not recommended. A suit such as A1064. Find another 3 card or longer suit to lead if possible. 4.) Against a trump contract – again don't lead away from an unsupported ace or king and generally don't lead an ace or a king unless you hold both the ace and king. 5.) Against a trump contract don't lead a singleton unless you want a ruff. (such as you hold the AK of trumps doubleton. You don't need a ruff they are going to take tricks anyway.) When leading from three cards to an honor such as Q92 lead low a lead of a low card tells partner you have an honor a lead of a high spot card says you do not.

BIDDING DECISIONS:

1) In competitive auctions use the law of total tricks to decide how high to compete. That is subtract six from the number of cards you and partner are known to hold in a suit and you can bid to that level. Ex. 1S (partner) 2H 2S 3H P (partner) P ? If you raised to 2 spades with three spades you know partner has five to open $5+3+8-8-6=2$ don't bid 3 spades with 7 high card points. But if you held four spades you would compete to the three level and bid 3 spades. Also if partner held six spades he should have raised your 2 spade bid to three spades instead of passing.

2) Use negative doubles at the one and two level. 1C (partner) 1S Double (you). This double is not for penalty it says you hold something in the two unbid suits and 6-10 points.

3.) When partner makes a takeout double 1S D (partner) P ? with 0-8 points bid at the cheapest level. With 9-11+ points make a jump bid (such as 3 clubs/diamonds/hearts). With an opening hand cue bid the opponents suit (bid 2S in example)

4.) Don't preempt a preempt. If opponent opens 2/3 hearts and you have a long suit but not an opening hand do not bid it. Ex. 2H ? you hold S: KJ10987 H: 54 D: K98 C: Q10 don't bid 2 spades. If it goes 2H P P ? you now might bid with a little less than an opening hand.

GUIDELINES

1) Rule of three and five: In a competitive auction when opponents bid at the three and five level it is usually best to let them play it.

2) Rule of 7: When you have only one stopper in a suit at no trump and opponents lead that suit subtract the number of cards you and dummy have in that suit from seven and hold up taking you ace that many times. Ex. you are in 3nt and opponent leads the three of hearts. Dummy holds 54 and you hold A65. Subtract your five cards from seven and you get two. Don't play your ace on the first or second lead of hearts.

3) Rule of 15: When bidding goes P P P ?(4th position) Pass unless your number of high card points and the number of spades you hold equals 15 or more. Ex. S: Q10943 H: A53 D: K8 C: J65 your high card points and spades total 15 open one spade.

4.) Rule of 20+2: In 1st, 2nd, or 3rd position Open the bidding if your high card points and length in your two longest suits equals 20 and you have two high honors. Ex. S:109 H: AQxxx D: A10987 C: x Open 1 heart you have 10 honor points, two five card suits and two high honors.

OPENING BIDS AND RESPONSES

1) When you have an opening hand but no five card major and no long minor open diamonds only with four of them otherwise open clubs with one exception when you hold three diamonds and two clubs open 1 diamond.

2.) With a balanced hand (no singletons) and 15-17 high card points open 1nt even with a five card major suit

3.) With a balanced hand and 18-19 high card points open in a suit and then jump in no trump.

4.) When partner opens 1 of a minor and you hold 11-12 high card points and no four card major jump to 2 no trump (do not bid just 1 no trump)

5.) When partner opens 1 no trump and you hold seven high card points or less pass. Also do not make a transfer bid unless you hold a hand with a singleton or doubletons. Ex. 1NT (partner) P ? you hold S: K109 H: Q9432 D: 98 C: Q87 you should pass.

OVERCALLING CONSIDERATIONS

1.) Strain to bid when your bidding takes up bidding space such as 1 spade over 1 club or 2 clubs over 1 diamond.

2.) When deciding if you have a good enough suit to overcall a good general rule is to count the number of honor cards you hold in a suit, including the ten, and the number of cards you hold in that suit subtract from 6 and that is the level you can overcall at. Ex. 1C ? You hold S: Q10874 H: 8 D: K76 C: K1042 You hold five spades and two honor cards in spades. $5+2=7$ $7-6=1$ overcall 1 spade

3.) When opponents open a suit and their partner bids 1 no trump bidding a suit below openers suit is dangerous. Ex. 1D P 1NT ? bidding 2 clubs is very dangerous. When opponents open a suit and their partner raises to two (they have found a fit) It is almost always right to bid. ex. 1H P 2H ? or 1H P 2H P P ? Try to find a reason to bid.

DEFENSIVE SIGNALING

1) When partner leads a suit if you play a high spot card it means you like the suit a low spot card means you don't. Also if you play an honor card from a sequence always play the lowest card in the sequence. Ex. Partner leads the 2 of hearts against a four spade contract and you hold the queen and jack of hearts play the jack not the queen. If you held queen, jack, ten you would play the ten.

2.) When your attitude in a suit is obvious (You have nothing) play a high spot card in a suit to tell partner you have two (or 4) cards in the suit and play your lowest spot card in a suit if you hold three or five cards in that suit.

3.) When you don't follow to a suit try to play a high card in another suit to say you have something in that suit or a low card in a suit to say you do not have anything in that suit

4.) When declarer is running a suit and you must discard. Try to keep equal length with dummies long suit if possible.

SLAM BIDDING

- 1) Use blackwood for trump contracts (A bid of 4nt is not to play it is asking partner to tell you how many aces he holds). Use gerber for no trump contracts (A bid of 4 clubs is not to play it is asking for partner to tell you how many aces he holds) ex. 1nt p 4 Clubs (you) asks partner to show his aces. 4D = 0 or 4 4H = 1 4S = 2 4nt = 3
- 2.) Use Splinter bids (A double jump shows a singleton in that suit, plus four cards in partners suit, plus a hand good enough to bid game.) Ex. 1S P 4 Clubs means you have a singleton club, 13 points, and four spades. Ex. 1D P 1H P 4 clubs means you have a singleton club, four hearts, and 19 points.
- 3.) I recommend you use control bidding when your partner has such a good hand he/she opens 2 clubs. 2 diamonds shows one or zero controls, 2 hearts shows 2 controls, 2 spades shows three controls (an ace and a king), 2nt shows three controls (3 kings), and 3 clubs shows four or more controls. (A king counts as one control and an ace counts as two controls) say you bid 2 diamonds then partner bids his suit or no trump. If you have no controls make the cheapest bid possible.