

District 16 Newsletter for Future Life Masters

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From the Editor

A Bit of Bridge Trivia:

General Dwight D Eisenhower was playing bridge when he received a call about a certain appointment. When he returned to the card table, his partner asked about the call:

"Who was that?"

"It was the president." (Truman)

"What did he want? "

"He wants me to go to Paris as head of NATO. "

"Will you go?"

With a shrug, "If the president says go, you go."

"Who will you take as your number two?"

"Well, I ought to take Bedell Smith. But I think I'll take Gruenther* because he's a better bridge player."

The New York Times Bridgebook, Truscott, Saint Martin's Press, NY, (2002) pp.109-110.

*Eisenhower was referencing General Alfred Maximilian Gruenther who had served as part of his command in the European Theater of World War II. In fact, Eisenhower had relaxed by playing bridge with General Gruenther on November 7, 1942 as they were waiting for news of the landing at Casablanca in North Africa. Id at p. 106.

Carol Jewett, Editor

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Upcoming Tournaments

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For Information on Other Tournaments in General for District 16, [click here](#).



Bridge Math

Card Splits and Card Combinations

Last month's newsletter looked at playing card combinations when the declarer and the dummy hold eight cards in a suit divided 4/4. This month, we will look at a couple of card combinations and how to play them when the declarer and the dummy hold eight cards in a suit divided 5/3 again using materials from Vinh Tran's *A Quick Guide To Card Combinations*. To reiterate; when the declarer and the dummy together hold eight cards in a suit*, the defenders are holding five cards in that suit and the probabilities in terms of how those five cards will be split as between the two players are:

3-2: 68%
4-1: 28%
5-0: 4%

Assuming a perfect playing situation (i.e. you have all the transportation you need between the two hands and no pressing reason to play the cards differently), here are some typical 5/3 card combinations and how you would want to play them:

AKJxx
Xxx

First, play the ace and then lead from the South and finesse the jack. You will make five tricks if West begin with QXX or QX. This guards against east holding a single queen, slightly improving your chances of making four tricks.

AQJxx
Xxx

For five tricks, finesse the queen, and if the finesse holds, repeat the process. For four tricks, cash the ace, and then finesse the queen and repeat the process.

A10xxx
Qxx

Cash the ace and then lead towards the queen.

So, we have taken brief looks at playing card combinations of an eight card suit split 4/4 and an eight card suit split 5/3. Do you remember in one of your very beginning bridge classes having a practice hand in which your partner opened 1♥ and you held something like:

♠ Qxxx
♥ Jxx
♦ xxx
♣ Qx

If you were like most beginning bridge players, your first instinct was to bid 2♥ to show a minimum hand with at least three card support for your partner's five card heart suit and you were surprised when your teacher told you that the better bid for you to make was 1♠. Your teacher probably then explained that the reason you would do this is that your partner could have four spades and you found yourself wondering why you were wasting time checking to see if you had an eight card fit in spades split 4/4 when it was clear that you had an eight card fit in hearts split 5/3. The answer is that you do this because the odds are that a hand plays more favorably in an eight card trump fit when the trump are split 4/4 as compared to when they are split 5/3. To see a simple demonstration of this principle, look at this YouTube video:

[Video](#)

There are some circumstances when 5/3 trump split would play better than a 4/4 trump split such as when the two hands have lots of winners in the other two suits or when the 5/3 fit is very strong and the 4/4 fit is weak such that trumps losers are the main or only concern, but as a general rule the 4/4 trump split will play better than the 5/3 split. See, *Morehead on Bidding*, Morehead, Albert H., Simon & Schuster (1974).

* Old bridge joke: What do you call eight cards in a suit? Answer: Trumps .

Those Pesky Rebids

Did you ever find yourself hesitating between two alternative bids when making your opening bid in an auction? Or, alternatively, with a very marginal hand, did you find yourself debating whether you should or should not go on and open? Sometimes, you will find a little guidance on such issues if you consider what your rebid alternatives are going should you bid and then find yourself needing or wanting to bid again. Recently, Joyce Ryan gave a presentation on the fundamentals of an opener's rebid in the District 16 Zoom lecture series. Here is an abridged and edited version of the presentation she gave (you can view the District 16 Zoom lectures by clicking [here](#).)

Those Pesky Rebids
Joyce Ryan
March 23, 2024

Introduction

Many of our intermediate/newcomer players (helped by their teachers) are trying to learn more and more conventions. Our mentors in the novice/mentor games say they half way know a convention but may not recognize when they could use it and may or may not recognize it when partner bids it. Today we will dial it back a bit from conventions and focus this lecture on rebids by the opening bidder.

Opener's Rebid After 1-level Responses In General

Opener does two important things with his rebid (his second bid of the auction):

- 1) Shows his shape (balanced with a notrump rebid).
- 2) Narrows the range of strength from approximately 12-20 to something more definite.

Shape: With a balanced hand (5-3-3-2, 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, opener rebids 1NT or 2NT. With a 6+ card suit, he repeats it. With a 4+ card second suit (or support), he bids it.

Strength (Suit Rebids): Minimum rebids (12-14/15 pts) Opener does not jump or reverse. Medium rebids(15/16 to 17/18 pts) Opener jump rebids, jump raises or reverses. Maximum rebids (19-20 pts) jump shifts or other game forcing) bid.

Strength (Notrump Rebids): A 1NT rebid is 12-14 balanced (does not promise all suits stopped). A 2NT rebid is 18-19 balanced (does not promise all suits stopped) A 3NT rebid is a trick-taking hand (long running suit, strong stoppers)

Notrump Rebids

After 1♣(you) - 1♥(your partner):

♠ Q32	♠ K82
♥ AJ3	♥ A2
♦ K72	♦ 1087
♣ A542	♣ AJ432

With either of these hands, your rebid would be 1NT because: each hand shape is balanced (no singleton or void and balanced distribution), you cannot support your partner's heart bid and you have minimum strength.

After 1♥(you) - 1♠(your partner):

♠ 976
♥ AQ542
♦ AQ6
♣ AQ

After 1♦(you) - 1♠(your partner):

♠ A2
♥ KQ2
♦ AKJ62
♣ J96

With either of these hands, your rebid is 2NT. In each case, your hand is balanced and you cannot support the suit your partner bid, but now the strength of your hand is above minimum (12-14 HCP) but below maximum.

Choice between Notrump or 4 card major

After 1♣(you) - 1♦(your partner):

♠ QJ8 2	♠ KJ82
♥ AJ3	♥ AJ72
♦ K72	♦ 107
♣ Q52	♣ K32

If your convention agreement with your partner is that your partner is obligated to show a four card major when you open a minor, you would assume that your partner has no 4 card major and you would rebid 1NT with either of these balanced hands even when holding a 4 card major.

After 1♣(you) - 1♥(your partner) or 1♦(you) - 1♥(your partner):

♠ J986	♠ QJ54
♥ 87	♥ KJ2

♦ AQJ6 ♦ AKJ7

On the first-hand, you should bid spades at the 1 level because your partner has not denied having a four card spade suit by bidding the hearts and your hand is minimum so finding a fit in spades quickly if there is one makes sense. With the second hand, you should rebid 2N to show your partner a strong balanced 18-19 point hand.

Raising Responder's suit

The rule in terms of supporting a suit that your partner bids in response to your opening bid is simple: if you have enough cards to support that suit, you do so, and the more points you have the higher you bid.

After 1♣(you) - 1♠(your partner):

♠ KJ82	♠ KJ82
♥ AK3	♥ AJ72
♦ 872	♦ 7
♣ Q52	♣ K732

Assume that your partner's one spade bid promises a spade suit that is at least four cards as is usual. If so, each of these hands is minimum in terms of point value (12-14) and includes at least four cards support for your partner's spades suit, so with each you would bid to spades.

After 1♦(you) - 1♠(your partner):

♠ J986	♠ KQJ8	♠ AK65
♥ AQ87	♥ A2	♥ KJ52
♦ AQ6.	♦ A8	♦ AKJ2
♣ AJ	♣ KQ876.	♣ 8

Each of these three hands has you holding support for your partners spades suit. The first hand holds 18 points and therefore is medium strength. With it, you should jump in terms of supporting your partner spade suit with a three spade bid. The other two hands show maximum strength so you should be straight to a force spade game.

Strong rebids(including jump-shifts and reverses)

As was shown above, when you have opened the bidding and can then support a suit bid fly your partner, it is easy to show the strength of your hand: a one level support bid shows a minimum strength hand, a jump bid that does not jump to game shows a medium strength hand and a jump to game shows a maximum strength hand that was short of the 22 points that you would have needed to open a strong to club that. But, as opener, how do you show a stronger than minimum opening hand on your rebid when you cannot support the suit your partner has bid?

When an Opener opens one suit and then on rebid makes a single level jump bid if another suit it is a game forcing bid that shows a hand holding 19 -21 points. When an Opener rebids a higher level suit than the first suit he or she bid in a non-jump bid (thus forcing partner to go to yet a higher level to bid a return to his or her first bid suit), it is an Opener's reverse bid which shows an unbalanced hand with 17-21 points. An Opener's reverse bid is a 1-round force (which means his or her partner must not pass the bid in the absence of interference).

After 1♥(you) - 1NT(your partner):

♠ Q7
♥ AKQ107
♦ AKJ87
♣ 3

You have a powerful hand: 19 points and 5/5 even distribution in hearts and diamonds. After your partner's 1NT bid, you should jump bid 3D showing both your strength and shape.

After 1♣(you) - 1♥(your partner):

♠ K2
♥ 2
♦ AQJ2
♣ AQJ653

Again, you have a powerful hand: 17 points and 6/5 uneven distribution in clubs and diamonds. In response to your partner's 1H bid, you have enough strength to bid 2D to show your second suit. If your partner needs to go back to your club suit at the 3 level you have enough points between the two of you to be playing there.

Minimum or Medium Two-Suited Hands

The most difficult rebid for opener is anew suit, without jumping or reversing.

The range is extremely wide (about 12-18). Bidding a second suit shows at least a 5-4 shape.

What about 6-card suits? With 6 or more, rebid the suit, but if you also have a 4+card suit,

you have a decision to make. The general rule is that with good hands (a Oretty good medium hand), bid the 4 card suit and then rebid the 6 card suit, otherwise rebid the 6 card suit.

Also relevant is suit quality; there is no 100% correct approach.

After 1♠(you) - 1NT(your partner):

♠ QJ9832
♥ 3 ♥
♦ AKQ2
♣ K3

This is a nice hand but it does not look like NT would be a good place to play. The diamond suit is a strong four card suit and it is below the spade suit so bidding it does not reverse showing more strength than the hand has. So bid 2D.

After 1♠(you) - 1NT(your partner):

♠ KQJ1097	♠ 8
♥ A7	♥ AKQJ87
♦ Q1087.	♦ K876
♣ 3.	♣ K5

The rebid on this one is not so clear - it is two suited but is minimum and the diamond suit is weak. You might want to bid it anyway just to give your partner a choice of suits but a simply rebid of the spade suit is also reasonable.

After 1♥(you) - 1NT(your partner):

♠ 8
♥ AKQJ87
♦ K876
♣ K5

Here the hand is fairly strong so a bid of diamond suit as the Opener's rebid is reasonable even though it is a somewhat weak suit.

Summary

This presentation focused on Opener's rebid after a one level response. The opener has given very little information after a one level opener; somewhere between 12-21 points; possibly balanced or very unbalanced. This second bid by opener helps to refine the *shape* as well as the *strength* of the opener's hand. I especially would like to thank Larry Cohen for his generous sharing of all the materials.

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Eddie Kantar's Tip

Really Simple

North

♠ K6532
♥ 743
♦ AQJ103
♣ -

South

♠ A4
♥ AK852
♦ K2
♣ 9754

While other pairs were struggling to get to 4♥, you and partner bid to 6♥! West leads a low club. Plan the play.

Solution

Don't make this harder than it is. All you have to do is ruff the opening lead and duck a heart. If hearts are 3-2, you have 12 tricks regardless of what suit they return: Four hearts tricks in your hand, five diamonds, two spades and a club ruff in dummy counts to 12 tricks. It always helps to count your tricks before embarking on a line of play. Also, one way of keeping control of a hand that has an automatic trump losers is to concede a trump early.

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ACBL Puzzle Hand

Here is a Puzzle Hand from the Staff of the ACBL Bridge Bulletin

Riding Your Luck

North

♠ A 9 2
♥ A
♦ J 10 8 5
♣ A Q J 10 3

South
♠ K Q 7 5 3
♥ J 7 2
♦ A 9
♣ K 6 5

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH

3♥. 1♣. 1♥. 1♠.
PASS. 4♥. PASS. 5NT
PASS. 5♣. PASS. 6♠.
ALL PASS

West's 3♥ was a weak, preemptive raise. West leads the ♥10 to dummy's ace. What is your plan to make 12 tricks?

Solution

The first move is to count your tricks. If trumps are 3-2, you can make all of the tricks – five trumps, a heart, a heart ruff, the ♦A and five clubs. However, there is a good chance that West's pre-emptive raise to three hearts is based on a trump shortage. Suppose the full deal is:

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

Now you have a loser in trumps, but all that does is reduce your 13 tricks to 12 – provided you are careful. Your plan should be to lose a trump trick at a convenient moment. In fact, the only way to make the slam on this layout is to duck a round of trumps at trick two. Suppose East wins and switches to his singleton club. You win with the king, ruff a heart with the ♠9 and cash the ♠A. You can then return to your hand with the ♦A to draw the remaining trumps. You have made six tricks already (three trumps, a heart, a heart ruff and a club) and there are six more waiting to be cashed (a trump, a diamond and four clubs).

Why were you “riding your luck”? Well, because on the above layout any non-heart lead from West sees the slam fail!

It's The Law

Law 45 talks about when a card is played. This is a very frequent cause for Director calls.

The following is from Duplicate Decisions which is published by ACBL:

“Declarer’s card is played when it is held face up, touching or nearly touching the table, or maintained in such a position as to indicate that it has been played. It is irrelevant whether either or both of the defenders see the card. If the card is held in a manner to indicate declarer has determined to play it, the card is played.

A defender’s card is played when it is held in a position where it could be possible for his partner to see its face.

Declarer may correct the call of a card from dummy if it is inadvertent (i.e., a slip of the tongue) and if there was no pause for thought in indicating a desire to change the card called. An opponent, however, may change a legal play made in turn prior to the correction.”

Duplicate Decisions gives the Directors guidelines for determining the correct ruling in the event the play of a card is contested. The guidelines basically boil down to NOT allowing the change unless there is overwhelming evidence that it should be changed.

Here is one example of the guidelines:

“Example: It frequently occurs that declarer leads and his play from dummy is intended to be conditional on the play of LHO. He then prematurely calls a card from dummy and,

observing that LHO's card makes his choice unpalatable, endeavors to change it. The change must not be allowed regardless of the tempo, for his first designation was not inadvertent. Declarer leads a club, intending to ruff in dummy. As he says "ruff," he notices that LHO has ruffed with a trump higher than any in dummy. Regardless of how quickly he says "pitch a diamond," such a change may not be allowed, because "ruff " was not inadvertent."

