



# Quarterly Newsletter



UNIT 124

July 2013 XXXVIII Number 3

2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45241 (513) 563 2218

## From the President's Desk

by A J Stephani

I've had international travel and visiting foreign countries on my mind recently. I've heard that some of you have recently travelled abroad over the last few months, and I always enjoy hearing about your impressions and experiences. On a personal note, my family is looking forward to the arrival of an exchange student from Switzerland this August – Lorene will be joining our family and attending Walnut Hills for the coming school year.

Visits to museums, castles, and "touristy" sights in other countries are usually the focus of our foreign travel itineraries, but I actually love observing the differences in the smaller details of culture and society more. It's fascinating to see, for example, how other foreign cities manage the interaction between pedestrian and car traffic in urban areas, or how the typical restaurant experience differs from an "American" one, or why hostels are so frequently seen as attractive alternative lodging options. Sometimes, you realize how things are much better at home (what, Europe hasn't discovered ice yet?), but sometimes, you see how other people have figured out how to do something more efficiently or improve on what we assume is the standard way of doing things. It's SO much better, in my opinion, for restaurants to pay waiters and servers a decent wage and figure that into their menu prices (as most of the world does) rather than bicker and squabble over mandatory

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gratuities, tip-sharing, etc. Why America refuses to include sales taxes on the stated price of items you buy at a store (except gasoline, where it's

### Upcoming 2013 Tournaments

July 27 – 28	Lexington KY	S NLM
July 26 – 28	Kettering OH	S
<b>Aug 1 – 11</b>	<b>Atlanta, GA</b>	<b>NABC</b>
Aug 10 – 11	Louisville KY	S NLM
Aug 12 – 18	Indianapolis IN	S Unit 130
<b>Aug 27 Sep 2</b>	<b>Pittsburgh, PA</b>	<b>R</b>

### Unit 124 Club Games

Mon	Morn	BCB 10:00 - CBC*11:00 <b>Inv</b>
	Aft	MIDM 1:00
	Eve	CBC 7:00 (<2000) - OXF 7:00
Tue	Morn	NKY 10:00 - BCB 10:00 - CBC 11:00 MIDS 11:00 - AND 11:30
	Eve	CBC 7:00* Open & 99er
Wed	Morn	CBC* 11:00 - SCC* 10:00 - AND 11:30
	Aft	MIDL 12:00
	Eve	NKY 6:30
Thu	Morn	INT* 9:00 - BCB 10:00 - CBC 11:00
	Aft	WHC* 12:00 - EAB 12:30
	Eve	CBC 7:00
Fri	Morn	NKY 10:00 - CBC 11:00
	Eve	BCB 6:30
Sat	Morn	BCB 11:30
	Aft	CBC 1:00

included) is mind-boggling. Anywhere else in the world, you pay the price you see.

I played a club game up at the Miami Valley Bridge Center in Dayton recently, and it struck me how it was much like visiting a foreign country. Sure, the basic architecture of the game is the same, and it's not like there's a Dayton bridge "style" that is any different than Cincinnati's, but there are all sorts of subtle differences and minor variations in the total experience. I believe we can learn from these differences and engage in a conversation about how to make our own local bridge universe better. Did you know that Dayton uses plastic playing cards? They cost more up front than paper-based cards, but they last up to 50 times longer. Maybe we should consider making the conversion. Chairs, tables, lighting, internet – posting of game results, bulletin board usage – all different.

Some clubs, like the Northern Kentucky Bridge Club, collect table fees after the game has started – this allows the Director to spend more time greeting players and attending to other tasks. Some clubs even go so far as to allow players to choose their own table assignments, freeing the Director up to provide a pre-game lecture for an NLM lecture or the like. Most of us have used both Bridgemates and their primary competitor, Bridgepads. Personally, I'm glad we made the call on Bridgemates, but others may differ. Bidding boxes come in several different designs. Unit and club websites run the gamut from nonexistent to, well, ours, and, of course, physical locations of games range from living rooms to state-of-the-art dedicated bridge centers.

The next time you have a chance to play at a bridge club away from home, do yourself a favor and make a note of the little differences. Sometimes you may be able to bring back a helpful suggestion on improving your local game; sometimes it will just make you appreciate your home club all the more.

Many thanks go out to Patti English, Gerry Mirus, and the entire Flying Pig Regional cast for a successful tournament. The larger space made

the turnout feel smaller, but we were actually up 81 tables – a 7% increase over last year. Our first NLM sectional on May 18-19 came off swimmingly, and thanks go to Gerry Mirus and Sonya Wilson for their organizational efforts and Mike Lipp for his Directorship. Our Mentor-Mentee program (BOGO free games on selected Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons through September!) continues strong, and we will have just completed our summer STaC by the time you receive this. It all reminds me of what an active Unit we really have – if you're interested in getting involved as a volunteer, game director, member of the CBA Board, or even starting something new, please let one of us know.



See you at the Bridge table!  
A. J. Stephani, President  
CBA Board of Directors

## Letters to the Editor

*We encourage your input and feedback for all to share. E-mail your thoughts to the Alert Editor at [alert@cincybridge.com](mailto:alert@cincybridge.com)*

### Bill Meyers writes:

Thanks for the outstanding work and great effort you have been making to attract people to the beautiful game of bridge, and to make CBA a friendly place for newcomers. It is greatly appreciated.

I have liked the people at CBA who have been generous to me, for example partnering me on Tuesday nights when I had no partner, and I am grateful. The "99ers" columns are very good and reflect a lot of thought and knowledge. The bridge lessons offered have been excellent in my opinion. The "Learn Bridge In A Day" workshops CBA has presented strike me as another fine idea and a good way of involving new people and making learning bridge seem less daunting.

Please accept my thanks for the fine job you both are doing and for all the time and thought you have put into it. I think your efforts will bear

plenty of fruit. But I think they would bear more fruit if certain emphases were changed. I have brought several friends, good bridge players, to CBA and they have been disappointed and left. This has dismayed me and I have been thinking about why... and about their comments.

I hope you won't mind too much if I share some of these thoughts with you.

Basically I think we are working against ourselves without knowing it.

Bridge is a beautiful game, with elegance and logic and subtlety. That is one big attraction, and it attracts intelligent people of a logical turn of mind.

Bridge is also a social game, with bonds between partners, collegueship with other players, and a friendly social atmosphere.

But we almost vitiate these two wonderful aspects of bridge with a third element: stratification. It is made very clear to everyone that there is a strict and vitally important hierarchy and that newcomers are at the very bottom and the longer term members and the leadership are at the top. Great prestige is given to the high Masterpoint players, and newcomers can draw their own conclusions as to where they fit into the hierarchy, namely at the bottom. The "under 20's" and "the non-life masters" and "newbies" and "beginners" and "novices" and "99ers" are terms used incessantly and are a constant reminder of the stratification. I recognize that some stratification is necessary so that players have opponents of approximately equal ability, but I think we are way over-doing it. I leave you to speculate as to why we are over-doing it, if in fact we are.

A further negative element is the extreme and dogged pursuit of Masterpoints. One would not dream that bridge is a beautiful game and a social game, it is instead conveyed to be a pursuit of a strange currency. One is reminded of Hermann Hesse's novel, "The Bead Game." The people I have brought to CBA tell me that they have the impression that people come to CBA not to play

the beautiful game of bridge and to socialize with other bridge players, but instead they come to get Masterpoints.

I hope the above will be helpful in some way, assuming of course that it contains some element of truth, rather than being just a discordant opinion.

Best regards,  
Bill Meyers

*Dear Bill,*

*Thank you for your insight and your willingness to share your thoughts with our membership. We must reflect your appreciation to our many volunteers (too many to name here) who work tirelessly behind the scenes to recruit new players, provide learning experiences and build interest for a long term commitment to this game we love.*

*Indeed each of us are responsible to making the club a warm friendly place where people of varying experience, skill, and objectives can get together for 3-4 hours of social fun. If we are to grow our membership, it is indeed up to us.*

*We continue to look for ways to engage people who are likely to try (and continue) duplicate bridge. You might be aware of the new Supervised Play session 10 AM to Noon on Saturdays. We offer people looking for fun a place to play where they can learn at their own speed and see first hand that playing at the club is fun. They play 8-12 hands in 2 hours, discussing each one. Mike Purcell (Education Chair) leads this opportunity for newer players.*

*The CBA Board has asked our sanction holders and directors to gently but firmly weed out rude behavior. We've published guidelines for fun bridge at the CBC. Bill, our hope is that many more CBA members will step up and do their part to make the games at the CBC friendly and supportive for all players. We can't wait!*

*Regards,*  
*Steve Moese, Editor, THE ALERT*

**Check out the wealth of BRIDGE information on our [www.cincybridge.com](http://www.cincybridge.com) website!**

**Midsummer Dreams** by Steve Moese, Editor  
e-mail: [alert@cincybridge.com](mailto:alert@cincybridge.com)

**The Reds in the hunt for the World Series, July rainy and temperate, Lush gardens, No smog alerts, Family reunions, Graduations, Extended vacations and exotic locations, Weddings, SABBATICALS, Business trips, fishing trips, Stock Market UP, NEW CARS, Shopping Trips ... A friendly game at the club, a warm welcome and polite conversation at each table, new Life Masters, NEW FRIENDS, new players, new members, new Grand Life Master, Partnership Chairs, larger 99er games, thriving NLM games, a growing Regional in a new exciting week, a new format for the North American Pairs, happy faces, Youth Bridge Citywide Championship, the Longest Day...A Sunday CBA Mentor game full of laughter, support and people sharing what they know having fun. **WOW!****

This midsummer, all seems real. Too good to be true? **NO!** Are we living a dream? **YES!**

There's no doubt the CBA has an active and diverse membership. We want different things from our club game. We like to win, and we play for fun. We can all contribute to the culture of our club and create the atmosphere we want for each game. We support all levels of interest and experience – from newcomers wanting to learn, to advanced players experimenting with mid-chart systems and conventions.

July 1, 2013 saw the first of what we hope will be an annual event: The Pigasus Lecture. Adam Parrish gave 28 CBA members a thoroughly engrossing seminar on Opening Leads. Adam is a bridge professional, Cincinnati native, ex CBA member, and now lives in Cape Cod.

Chris Hastie and Joanne Earls have taken on helping CBA Members build partnerships. Polling the NLM members (more than half of the CBA) they found that the single biggest reason why people stopped playing bridge was that they no longer had a partner. Making bridge connections has seen happier players and a rise in table count for our 99er and NLM games.

Mike Purcell, Phyllis Bishop, Pat Hoffman, Bob Fisk, Lorna Davis, and Potter Orr have coached new SUPERVISED PLAY sessions. These games attract new duplicate players. For a nominal fee, people drop in, play a few hands and hear an informative discussion about each. There is no time pressure and questions are encouraged, even during bidding and play. This is about fun and learning, not about cutthroat competition and master points. **FUN!!!** So if you have a friend who wants to start playing – bring them Saturday!

Kay Mulford has added a new NLM section for the Friday AM game, with a free seminar in advance of the game. Chrissie and Joanne support partnerships for this game.

In this **ALERT**, AJ reports the Cincinnati Youth Bridge Championship, Al Fultz and Cindy Tretter update club news, Otto Walter reprises a Partnership Desk Ditty from the 90's (or is it a prayer...), and shows newcomers the possibility of promoting partner's little trumps. Miss Manners offers thoughts for the thoughtless, and Potter Orr talks us through team games, Flight/strata, and master points. Miss Archie & Edith of "All in the Family"? Be sure to read Rob Weidenfeld's take on "A Night at Match Points". Steve Felson and Robert Brown keep us entertained in their continuing series – we add 5-6 new words to our vocabulary with every article. Pat Dutson and Yauheni Siutsau offer challenging problems. Can you solve them? We continue with Andrew Gumperz's series on Preempts. Dean Congbalay reflects on decorum and Debbie Cummings explores the high tech side of Bridge Mates.



Thanks to all who contributed! When it comes to bridge and life, we hope your dreams come true.

**Steve**

Editor, The **ALERT**

"Which dreams indeed are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream". Guildenstern, Hamlet (II, 2) W.S.

## District 11 North American Pairs

Qualify for the premier grass roots National Pairs Championship here in Cincinnati!

Remaining CBA Qualifying Games		
JULY	July 23	Tue PM
	July 25	Thu AM
	July 25	Thu PM
	July 26	Fri AM
AUGUST	Aug 1	Thu PM
	Aug 6	Tue AM
	Aug 9	Fri AM
	Aug 13	Tue PM
	Aug 13	Tue AM
	Aug 15	Thu PM
	Aug 17	Sat PM
	Aug 22	Thu AM
	Aug 24	Sat PM
	Aug 27	Tue PM
Aug 30	Fri AM	

There are two major changes this year. First, the NAP District Finals had been held concurrently with Cincinnati's Halloween weekend sectional for several years. The NAP District Finals are standalone events on October 19-20, 2013. The Finals will be at the Cincinnati Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241.

Second, unlike in past years, all 3 Flights will not hold their District Finals on the same day. The Finals for Flight B will be Saturday, October 19, and the Finals for Flights A and C will be

Sunday, October 20. Times will be announced. You may play both days if you qualify (A & B or B & C). You must qualify in an NAP qualifying game in District 11, and you must meet flight eligibility master point requirements as of the May 6, 2013 cycle.

District 11 North American Pairs Finals	
Cincinnati Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241	
Sat Oct 19, 2013	Flight B
Sun Oct 20, 2013	Flights A & C

The NABC Finals are at the Spring NABC in Dallas Texas March 20-30, 2014. Top qualifiers receive compensation at the National Tournament. See the CBA and ACBL websites for details.

CBA: [http://www.cincybridge.com/District\\_11\\_NAP\\_FAQ.html](http://www.cincybridge.com/District_11_NAP_FAQ.html)

ACBL: [http://www.acbl.org/news\\_archive.php?id=848](http://www.acbl.org/news_archive.php?id=848)

**Breaking News - The Middletown Sectional originally scheduled for the weekend of August 23-25 has been cancelled.**

**21st century comes To Anderson** by Al Fultz  
Sonya Wilson and an anonymous donor have given Bridge Mates to Anderson as well as a hand held duplicating machine and a storage cabinet. The bridge center supplied Debbie Cumming to do the technical work. Members to numerous to mention also helped on this. We sincerely thank all involved.

Dickie Bird (Dick Day) has returned. Jack Boyd was at The July 9 game with a big smile on his face. Tom Hasset too. Welcome back. We missed you.

Anderson again won the unit championship for June courtesy of Judy Ruehl and Hobbie Brooks.

We are a club the welcomes beginners, and we strive to make you feel comfortable playing with us.

### New England Bridge Club by Al Fultz

Our extended family has returned. Lynne Shoemaeker (Red Molly) has recovered from hip replacement and returned. Dastardly Don, the cushion cutter has returned and so be warned if you leave your cushion unattended it may have a hole in it. Dangerous Dan, our fashion police is looking for a helper to write the dress memo. Tom Hasset, our Lord Byron expert, is well and out of care and back to bridge. We are making progress with our novice game and urge all members to treat them with TLC. Without them, we may not have future bridge games. Happy overtricks.

### NKy Bridge Club News by Cindy Tretter

The Longest Day, June 22nd, Northern Kentucky Bridge Club participated in the ACBL sponsored fundraiser for the Alzheimer's Assoc. We are very proud to announce we collected \$2046.14 for the association, which has effected many of our friends and family. Our club manager, Sheila Dippel did a fantastic job getting this event up and running in a very short period of time, which great success. Many members contributed to the silent auction which is expected to be even bigger next year. Don't miss out next year! Jeff Ruby gift

cards, books, chimes, linen table cloths, storage containers, wine basket, and the list went on with 70+ items donated. Our three directors, Sheila Dippel, Cordell Coy, and Don Duritsch, donated their time and expertise directing, which was another huge donation. As always, we had all the appetizers, snacks, and desserts you could eat throughout the day donated by our members and then enjoyed a pizza dinner provided by the NKyBC, and Donato's. The Elsmere Senior Center provided the venue, which was another plus for the success of our day. Members from NKyBC as well as many from nearby Cincinnati made this day a day of giving and fun. Working together is awesome, fabulous, exciting and proved to be successful again.

July 4th, Betty Hurst and members of the NKyBC, had a very special Fourth of July. The rain did not dampen our picnic indoors with hot dogs and all the fixings and BBQ. Again, members came through with veggies, snacks and desserts. We had fireworks the nearby neighbors shared to add a little more fun and bang to a great day.

## CBA Education News

By Mike Purcell



### Saturday Informal Supervised Play

New for this summer we have informal supervised bridge Saturdays from 10-noon for new players up to 99ers. Typically we play 8-10 hands with players of like experience playing together. If you are learning bridge through formal lessons or on your own this a great place to get in some practice and have fun. For more experienced players this format will allow you to play and pick up a tip or two. Single players are welcome and these sessions can be a great place to make contact with future partners. Groups of 4 or 8 can also come and play together in this flexible new format with a Play Friendly attitude. For more information, please contact me at [mikpur@cinci.rr.com](mailto:mikpur@cinci.rr.com) or 513 702 4007.

### More Games for New Players

With the new Non Life Master (NLM) section on Fridays we now have lots of opportunities for new players to play including the Wednesday Home Style Game during the day and the 99er game Tuesday

nights. Monday and Thursday night games are also great choice for new players.

### CBA NLM Games – Play Often!

**Mon NLM 7 PM** Wed Home Style 11:00 AM CBA

**Tues 99er 7 PM** Wed 199er 6:30 PM NKY BC

**Thurs NLM 7 PM** 1st Fri 99er 10:00 AM NKY BC

**Fri NLM 11 AM** (Lecture 10:30) CBA

**Sat Supervised Play 10 AM to 12 Noon** (0-99ers)

### Fall Lessons

Here are the classes for the Fall so far:

NKY Bridge Club (Elsmere Senior Center, lower level)

Betty Hurst and Cindy Tretter, 859-653-4400

Wed 3pm–5pm. Starts 8/7,

Cost: \$70/6 lessons

Topics: Play of the Hand, defense, weak 2s, transfers, negative and penalty doubles

Cincinnati Bridge Club

Nancy Sachs, 513 561-1766,

[nancy.sachs@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.sachs@gmail.com)

Supervised Play – Wed 4-6pm starts 9/18.

Cost: \$90/6 lessons.

Linda Wolber, 513 522-1771,

[ewolber@cinci.rr.com](mailto:ewolber@cinci.rr.com)

Fundamentals I - Mon 7-9pm starts 9/16.

Fundamentals II-Wed 12:30-2:30pm starts 9/18.

Intermediate Bridge – Wed TBD starts 9/18.

Cost: \$90/6 lessons plus \$10 for the materials.

Look to the CBA website for more classes as we get closer to September.

### CBA Mentoring Program Games

CBA Mentoring Program is underway.

For information, click here→

#### CBA Mentoring Games:

CBA - Wednesday July 31, 7:00pm

CBA - Sunday August 11, 1:00pm

CBA - Wednesday August 28, 7:00pm

CBA - Sunday September 8, 1:00pm

#### NKy Mentoring Games:

NKy - Wednesday July 24, 6:30pm

NKy - Thursday August 15, 11:30am

NKy - Wednesday August 21, 6:30pm



## Cincinnati Youth Bridge News

by A. J. Stephani

Thanks to everyone who came out for the **Second Annual Greater Cincinnati Youth Bridge Championship!** Friday night June 7, 2013, twelve students from 4 different schools battled it out for the title in a pairs game at the Cincinnati Flying Pig Regional. We were thrilled to have ACBL CEO Robert Hartman in attendance to speak to the kids before the event and to present the trophy to the winners -- Jared Hance from Lakota West and Isaac Stephani from Walnut Hills. Congrats!



Of course, having winners from separate schools means that the traveling trophy will spend 6 months at each school, but the optimist in me says that's just good advertising for Cincinnati Youth Bridge! Kudos go out to Glen Hird and James Pun (second place) and Brady Hesse and Austin Rieke (third place), all of St. Xavier High School. However, everyone had a tremendous time, and we'll use this event to continue building the Cincinnati Youth Bridge Program.



For more news on the Cincinnati Youth Bridge Program, check out the webpage:

<http://www.cincybridge.com/youth/index.html>

## Let's Play Bridge!

By Chris Hastie & Joanne Earls, CBA Partnership Chairs



Like most loyal members of the Cincinnati Bridge Center we want the center to thrive. When asked to spearhead a partnership program to stimulate growth we went to work. We discovered that several members had quit coming to the center not because they lacked interest, but because they had lost their partners. After a brief survey we began matching players without partners and presto, we started to see several of these players return to the Nonlife Master (NLM) games. We realize matching players to a reasonable partner is an ongoing need. Our goal is to find two or three potential partners for all interested players so they have multiple options and can play continually, even when their regular partner can't.

You can help us help you by following these guidelines:

- 1) Be flexible. Every partner we find for you won't be a perfect match with your skills and abilities, but EVERY game can be a wonderful learning experience.
- 2) Take the initiative to keep your new relationship alive by scheduling future dates with your new partner. If one of our recommendations is a bad fit, please email us and let us know.
- 3) Take lessons and/or read bridge books. We have chosen to play competitive bridge so it stands to reason that most players want a partner who cares about improving his game.
- 4) Use it or lose it! Bridge is a game that requires constant practice especially as you begin to use new conventions. If you know your partner will be gone for several weeks, call us so you can continue to play and develop new partnerships.
- 5) Be nice! Mistakes are inevitable so use them as learning opportunities. Do not berate your partner or yourself for mistakes. It won't improve your score or help you in future games.

6) Finally, give us as much advance notice and information about your level of play as you can. Please provide phone number and email address. This will help us find the best match for you.

PS: We are happy to help Life Masters find partners too. Our experience thus far is that the open game players take care of themselves.

*Congratulations to Joanne, one of our newest Life Masters!*

### Partnership Desk Ditty by Otto Walter

Matchmaker, matchmaker, make me a match  
Someone with whom I can earn a high scratch  
So that when the day is all done  
On the recap I'll be number one.

For Seniors Meckstroth will do fine  
For IMP's make it Paul Soloway  
For match points I know that I should be  
Sitting across from Zia all day.

Matchmaker, matchmaker, my request is so small  
I only ask to be first overall.  
Winning those gold points would be quite a coup  
And I want the bragging rights too.

### BRIDGE MANNERS AND THE ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

by Miss Manners

The ACBL suggests that all Bridge Clubs follow a Zero Tolerance Policy. But what does this mean? It means that no one can arrive early in order to bribe the director before the round. No, that's not what it means. It just means that we would like to keep the CBC the friendly and highly enjoyable place to play bridge that it has been for lo these many years. In order to help us understand this policy a little better we have asked Miss Bridge Manners to answer a few of your questions.

**Q: Is it ok to encourage your teammates to "take no prisoners" before a Thursday morning team game?**

A: Figuratively speaking, you are right on...bridge is a competitive sport! Literally, however, we would frown on that.

**Q: I love to really chomp on my gum during bridge...is that ok?**

A: Well, my dear, that might disturb some players, but others don't mind. Cliff actually told me it relaxes him. So, just ask!

**Q: My partner and I have choreographed a victory dance to use when we get a high board off Bill and Eugene...is this appropriate?**

A: If you get a high board from Bill and Eugene, dearie, you should add a battle cry to your victory dance! But, with everyone else just look smug.

Q: Sometimes my partner criticizes my play at the table. I have even seen him rolling his eyes and giving big sighs after I lead. What can I do?

A: This is a great question! Well, honey, you have several options here:

- 1) report him to the director – that should fix his wagon.
- 2) purposely trump his tricks for the next two hands.
- 3) delete him from your bridge calendar!

**Q: I really like to snap my cards as loud as I possibly can during the play of the hand. An opponent called me a "snapping turtle". Is this allowed in the zero tolerance policy?**

A: Dearie, your opponent showed admirable restraint. I would have sat you in the corner with your nose against the wall!

**Q: Last week one of our opponents kept giving me his input on my bidding and play of the hand. Should he be doing that?**

A: Oh, that's another great question, and again, you have several options.

- 1) call the director – they love to deal with situations like this!
- 2) Tell him that you really don't recall paying him for a lesson.
- 3) Tell him to save it for that bridge book you're sure he must be writing in his spare time.



Well, that's all for this month everyone. Thanks for your excellent questions. I will endeavor to give you my very best answers each month!

Ta ta....Miss Bridge Manners

### Team Games and Things That Make Master Point Awards Go Bump in the Night by Potter Orr



I'd like to help make sense of a few things that confuse both beginning players and people who've been playing duplicate for a very long time.

Let's start with how many master points you get for winning. ACBL has a formula (the details of which I have never seen) that determines how many points the winning pair gets in a duplicate game. I will describe the basic process but you need to keep in mind that this is for a standard game at a bridge club. The ACBL uses the basic formula and increases awards for special games and tournaments. Any time you pay a dollar extra for game at the club there will be larger master point awards than a standard game offers.

The most important factor in determining master point awards is the number of tables in the game. This does make sense. You should get more points for winning in 18 table game than you would get for winning a 4 table game. If there are upper Masterpoint limits for a game (a nonlife master game for instance) then standard award is reduced to 80% of normal. If a particular game has 2 sections, like our Tuesday night game with an open section and a novice section, the awards in the open game reflect the total number of tables in both sections. The awards in the novice section reflect only the number of tables in the novice section. This may seem to fall into the "rich get richer and the poor don't matter" category, there is at least an explanation for the policy. In the bad old days before separate novice sections, the beginners had to play in the open game. Many of them did not enjoy this and refused to come back. When ACBL decided that it would be okay to have a separate novice section, they did not want to antagonize those who

played in the open section by giving them smaller awards based only on their own section.

Duplicate bridge has 2 primary play formats. A pairs game is the game we play most of the time at the bridge center. Your pair is your partner and yourself, and the score is based on how you compare to the other pairs who played exactly the same hands that you did. Each hand you win a certain number of match points. The formula for awarding match points is very simple: you get 1 matchpoint for every pair that you beat sitting your direction and one half a matchpoint for every pair that you tie. If each hand is played 10 times and everyone is in 4♥ making 4♥ for 620 points then every pair will get 4.5 match points (you tied with 9 other pairs and got a half point for each one of those ties). If on that same hand you managed to make 5♥ when everybody else made only 4, you would get 9 match points (one matchpoint for every pair that you beat – and you beat 9 of them). If you see decimal match points in the score, that is because there was a half table (sit out) and the computer had to factor the results.

The other form of duplicate bridge is a team game. You and your partner have another pair as your team. Team games are played in matches where your team of 4 will play a match against a different team of 4. The mechanics of a match are fairly straightforward. Your team designates one pair of players to be east-west and the other pair plays north-south. The opposing team does the same thing. A set of boards, usually 6 - 12, is played at both tables. When play is complete, your team will have played each of these boards once as north-south and once as east-west. Now you get together with your teammates and compare scores. On each board you total the number of points you got or gave away and decide which team won that hand. For example, if your north-south team bid and made 4 hearts for 420 points while the other teams north-south pair stopped at 3 hearts making 4 for only 170 points. Our team's net score was 250 (+420 and -170). There's a chart on the team game scoring sheet that tells you how many international

matchpoints (IMPS) you win based on the net +/- on each hand. You total the IMPs plus or minus on each hand and the team with the most IMPs wins.

There are a variety team games – here are the more common ones:

**Swiss teams:** this is a team game as described above where over the course of the event your team will play number of matches. Each round you are matched with a team with a similar score. A single session Swiss team game (like we have at our STaC tournaments) is typically comprised of 4 matches. The team that does the best over the course of 4 matches is the winner but there is a small additional wrinkle to the scoring in Swiss teams. The scoring system recognizes that there is a difference between winning by 1 IMP and winning by 30 IMPs. The score card has a Victory Point chart that shows how the total points for each match are split based on how lopsided the victory was. If your team wins by only one IMP, the available points are split almost evenly with the other team. If your team wins by 30 IMPs or more, they will get all of the points available for the match. The winning team in the Swiss is the one with the most Victory Points.

**Knockouts:** this is also a team game but as the name suggested you may not play all of the matches available. I'm sure that most of you are familiar with a knockout, you just haven't heard used called by that name. March madness (the NCAA national tournament) is a classic knockout. It starts with 64 teams and after the 1<sup>st</sup> round of play, the 32 winners continue in the 32 losers go home. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> round the tournament is down to 16 and then to 8 and then do for and then do to. A bridge knockout works the same way. After each round in the knockout the winners continue and in the losers go home (or find a different game to play). This is an attractive form of team play too many people because the master point awards are usually pretty good and if your team is doing extraordinarily badly you don't have to suffer through playing the rest of the rounds when you have no chance to win. There is a variation of the knockout called a

compact knockout which is the same basic format with shorter rounds and faster elimination.

**Board-a-Match:** Score each hand as a win (1) Loss (0) or tie (0.5). The team with the highest total score wins. A difference 10 points is a win (say, 2♦ making 4 for 130 wins over 1 NT making 2 for 120, but loses to 3♥ making 3 for 140). Note, 10-point differences are ties in IMP scoring. 1000 point differences are still just 1 win or loss. The movement feels more like pairs, but EW jumps around the field (not just moving to the next table).

**Flighted and Stratified** events are common at tournaments. Let's start with **Stratified**. This is the system of dividing the players in a duplicate bridge game into lettered groups based on the number of masterpoints. Even though everyone will play together, there are separate masterpoint awards for those win or place in each strata. Most club games will have an A, B and C strata. The point limits for each strata will vary depending on the game. In the Tuesday evening open game the strata are usually no limit for A, up to 1500 points for B and up to 500 for C. In the novice game on Tuesday evening A is up to 100, B is up to 50 and C is up to 20 points. Since tournaments usually have larger numbers of players, some events are **Flighted**. This means that the event is separated into 2 or more separate "sub-events". For example, the Sunday Swiss at our Regional is separated into 2 flights. The top flight has teams with one or more player with more than 2000 points. The other flight has the rest of the teams. This levels out the competition since teams will be playing only other teams of similar experience levels. The "Gold Rush" events are also flighted with one flight for players with 750 points or less and another flight for more experienced players. Within each flight, there are also strata.

Looking to improve your game? If you have an Intel Computer we highly recommend the free software offered by the ACBL and developed by Mr. Fred Gitelman. Check it out at:

<https://web.acbl.org/LearnToPlayBridge/>

## A Night of Matchpoints With All In The Family

By Rob Weidenfeld

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Archie had not agreed easily. If he were to give up his tattered recliner with a cold one while enjoying a night of mindless television, he would have it his way. There was no way he would play duplicate with Edith the 'dingbat', his wife, and he could not stomach the radical views of his son-in-law, Meathead, when it came to bidding. By process of elimination, he was going to play with his daughter, Gloria. Early in the round he picked up a nice hand, which he opened.

West Edith

Deals ♠ Q7  
E-W ♥ AJ10  
Vul ♦ A103  
♣ J10872

Archie		Gloria
♠ KJ432	N	♠ A10965
♥ KQ94	W E	♥ 32
♦ Q	S	♦ 8764
♣ KQ9		♣ A6

Meathead

♠ 8  
♥ 8765  
♦ KJ952  
♣ 543

Edith was apparently in one of her moods and ventured a somewhat off-beat double. Gloria, feeling confident with five card support and two aces said, "You can do it, Daddy, 4♠." Meathead, who had a flair for the dramatic, looked at his two rounded suit

sequences and fell in love with his hand. The vulnerability was right. If Archie could make 4, he knew 5♥ would be a cheap sacrifice. How could he miss. An eight card fit in ♥s and at least 8 in ♦s. Archie shook his head and smirked as he grumbled 'Meathead' pathetically! He then led the ♦Q, thereby missing an important lesson. You should not lead your short suit against a trump contract when you have length in trumps. You don't want to ruff in your hand! It is far more damaging to play a forcing game and make declarer ruff, thereby shortening his trumps and causing him to lose control. Archie chuckled again when he saw that the 'dingbat' only had 3 hearts.

The auction:

West	North	East	South
Archie	Edith	Gloria	Meathead
1♠	Dbf	4♠	5♥
Dbf	All Pass		

Meathead looked upward and gave a soulful thank you to the heavens, though he knew not to whom he was thanking, because he had avoided the devastating ♠ lead. He won it in hand and immediately led a trump. Arch erred again by not splitting his honors. So Meathead won in dummy and led the ♦A, knowing full well it would be ruffed! He was shortening Archie's trump holding!

Sure enough Archie ruffed with the 9 and belatedly played ♠J and then ♠K. Meathead ruffed in hand and played a ♥ to the A, drawing East's last trump and leaving Archie with a high honor. He then played off his diamonds. Archie didn't want to but he ruffed the last one and was on lead in this position:

West Edith

Deals ♠ -  
E-W ♥ J  
Vul ♦ -  
♣ J108

Archie		Gloria
♠ 4	N	♠ A10
♥ -	W E	♥ -
♦ -	S	♦ -
♣ KQ9		♣ A7

Meathead

♠ -  
♥ 5  
♦ -  
♣ 543

Archie knew enough not to give Meathead a ruff and a slough, but not knowing with certainty where the ♣A was, and knowing Gloria might have bid 4♠ with 5 to the ace and out, he decided to play for a one-trick set. He led the ♣K and then a small ♣. Now Gloria was end-played and Meathead was only down 2, a great board. "A perfect dummy, Mom", said Meathead as he slyly glanced at Arch. Archie quietly seethed while he pondered how Godless Communists will have to wait to get their comeuppance.

## Defense Trump Promotion by Otto Walter

As a defender, we enjoy the opportunity to score tricks by ruffing. How else can we ever expect to make a winner out of our small trump(s)? It is a different situation entirely if our option is to over ruff declarer with our own natural trump winner. It is sometimes possible to create an additional trump winner by refusing to over ruff and, instead, simply discarding some plain suit card.

The simplest situation to see this in operation is as follows:

♠ Q10x		♠ AKJ9xxx
♥ 7654		♥ -
♦ xxx		♦ xxx
♣ xx		♣ xxx
♠ 2		
♥ AJ		
♦ xxxxx		
♣ xxxxx		
	♠ N	
	♥ W	♥ E
	♦ S	
	♣	
♠ xx		
♥ KQ109832		
♦ AKQ		
♣ A		

Partner preempts in Spades. Declarer is playing four Hearts. You lead the two Spades. Partner wins the first trick economically and plays two more high Spades. Declarer ruffs the third trick with the King of Hearts. If you over ruff

this trick following the notion that “Aces were made to take Kings”, that will be your only trump trick. But bridge is not Pinochle; you are not required to over ruff in an attempt to beat the trick. Discard one of your small side suit cards on this trick. You will now be able to score both the Ace and Jack of trumps.

This operation works just as well if you started with A10x and declarer’s trump suit is headed by the KQJ. When declarer ruffs with the King just discard something and you will score both the Ace and 10 in the fullness of time.

Again, this operation works just as well when you trump holding is K10x and declarer’s trump suit is headed by the AQJ9. If declarer should ruff ahead of you using the Queen of trumps, just take a discard. As before, you will score both of your high trumps. (Of course if declarer ruffs ahead of you with the 9, you will over ruff with the 10.)

This type of play can work successfully with some fairly anemic looking holdings. Partner opens the

♠ Jx		♠ xx
♥ AKJ10		♥ Q832
♦ AQx		♦ Jxx
♣ Axxx		♣ xxxxx
♠ AKQ10x		♠ xx
♥ 9		♥ Q832
♦ Jxx		♦ Jxx
♣ xxxxx		♣ xxxxx
	♠ N	
	♥ W	♥ E
	♦ S	
	♣	
♠ xxxx		
♥ 7654		
♦ Kxxx		
♣ K		

bidding at one Spade. North makes a Take Out Double. South eventually becomes declarer at four Hearts. Partner leads three rounds of Spades and declarer ruffs the third trick with the 10 of Hearts. Discard something on this trick and you will eventually

score both the Q and 8 of Hearts. Here are the requirements for this procedure to be successful.

1. You have several trumps including a sure trump winner.
2. Your second highest trump is fairly high and is bigger than any of the trumps in the hand behind you.
3. Declarer ruffs a trick ahead of you with a high trump such that, if you want to win this trick, you will need to over ruff with your own sure trump winner.

When these conditions exist, consider the option of discarding rather than over ruffing.

### Episode 8: MY MARRIAGE, MY DESTINY – THE BROWN YEARS by Steve Felson



*Anywhere’s our home. On the road. Out there on a cold star. Anywhere’s our home. We may never find happiness but we have the right to live.*

(Sylvia Sydney as Joan Graham in *You Only Live Once* (1937), with Henry Fonda as a scarcely believable ex-con)

*For I the ballad will repeat,  
Which men full true shall find;  
Your marriage comes by destiny,  
Your cuckoo sings by kind.*

W. Shakespeare, *All’s Well That Ends Well*, 1602, Act I, Scene 3

I’m not sure who’s the cuckoo in this partnership, or what it means to “sing by kind,” but I do know destiny has me by the neck; I know I’m on the road a lot; I know I spend lots of time on freezing cold stars pretending they are home; I’m pretty sure I’m still alive; and my general bridge misery is broken by occasional happiness, such as the result below.

Background: After over 90 years of approximating the same system I play, Bob suddenly decides we need a new convention. Since nothing can further unhinge our bidding I let him talk me into playing that a jump shift from 1♠ to 3♥ shows game-going-or-better spade support with an unknown singleton; ditto for 1♥

to 3♠. Partner can then ask for your singleton by bidding the next step up. Fine. Months go by with the convention unused and then this hand happens at a big-time galaxy-wide regional on Wellmeck. Both vulnerable, S deals:

**NORTH (Bob)** I open 1♠ and Bob jumps to 3♥. I alert, the “hume prox” (humanoid approximation) playing East inquires, and I announce: “Spade support with an unknown singleton.” Bob seems paler but otherwise in good health.

♠ --  
♥ AKQ10xxx  
♦ AKxx  
♣ xx

	N	
W		E
	S	

**SOUTH (Me)** I then bid 4♠, having a minimum and therefore no current interest in which singleton he has. Bob bids 5♥. East inquires and I announce: “I’m taking it as first round control in hearts.” What else can it be?

♠ AKQxx  
♥ 9xx  
♦ xx  
♣ QJx

It is now clear that my heart losers are protected by partner’s ♥ control, that we have at least nine trumps to the AKQ, and that the substantial HCP count Bob must have for his slam-interest bid are in the minors – perhaps even AK in each. I bid 6♠. “Great job, Felson: Trust your partner, bid boldly, good score.” Bob bids 7♥.

Convention? What convention? He must be saying he’s got hearts and they’re better than my spades.

Ah, wedlock – can’t live with him, can’t live without him, can’t outbid him. Beginning when he totaled his father’s Caddy at age 5, Bob Brown has never been overtaken – not in a car, not in a spaceship, not at the old-time bidding box, and not in the breath-thought-eye bidding system we use today. If his partner attempts a fast arrival Bob outbids him/her fast; if the bidding is more scientific Bob outbids him/her slow. We should have a place on our convention chip to indicate this understanding – something like “North will declare two-thirds of the time.”

I alert the 7♥ bid: “Cancel all previous alerts. Cancel this board. Cancel this partnership – PLEASE!!” This uncalled-for disparagement of our chances elicits a double from West, although his

Club ace might also have had something to do with it. Brown, insulted, redoubles, perhaps in eager anticipation of dealing with my wasted spade values.

The bidding again:

South	West	North	East	
1♠	Pass	3♥	Pass	Of course, not
4♠	Pass	5♥	Pass	having the ♣A and
6♠	Pass	7♥	Pass	unable to infer
Pass	Dbl	Redbl	All Pass	anything useful
				from West’s double,

East leads a ♦ and 7♥ makes easily: 2 diamonds, a diamond ruff, 3 spades and 7 hearts. We end up absolutely tops among more than 110,000 pairs (79,000 or so humanoid), since even a beginner cephalopod would stop short of slam once it was clear that no one had a club control. Moreover, our plus 2980, the second-highest declarer score possible, gets us a cash prize.<sup>1</sup>

Later I ask my brilliant helpmeet what happened to our new convention? He looks puzzled.

“Convention? What convention?”

“Well, at least tell me what 1♠-3♥ means in our system – you know, for next time.”

“System? What system?”

## RUMINATIONS

By Robert S. Brown

The Ruminator was extended an invitation – the “high privilege and distinct honor”<sup>2</sup> – to partner at our adynatonic Regional<sup>3</sup> with the ACBL CEO, Robert Hartman. Knowing that the



<sup>1</sup> We have actually gone for a couple of even higher negative scores, but that was long ago and in another nebula.

<sup>2</sup> Quoting the invitation of A.J. who has apparently watched too many State of the Union addresses.

<sup>3</sup> *Id est*: **The Flying Pig**.

Albatross would be devastated by my desertion, I readily accepted.<sup>4</sup> With a literal seat at the table, I could not resist the opportunity to reshape the Game by the following suggestions:

### Monetization of Masterpoints.

Jumping on the Bitcoin bandwagon and its Chaumian e-cash precursors, the ACBL should manage a Masterpoint Exchange to facilitate agoristic transactions ranging from the banal to Deep Web black markets. In addition, points purchased on the Exchange should be counted for Life Master and higher rankings.<sup>5</sup> As the Exchange Manager, the ACBL's transaction fee could supplement or reduce its dues income as its needs dictate.

### Total Tolerance.

Zero tolerance, the highest stage of intolerance, is an egregious affront to personal liberty, the First Amendment, and the red blooded American ideal. It brands the Game as a wimpy competition between pusillanimous intellectual effetes. Let's let in the "trash talk" that traditionally distinguishes our great sporting events<sup>6</sup> and restore vitality and crowd appeal to our matches.<sup>7</sup>

### Table Card Errata.

The ubiquitous Mitchell movement inscription "MOVE BOARDS TO NEXT LOWER TABLE" is a

<sup>4</sup> Altruistically motivated – the Albatross's game rises with his level of despondency.

<sup>5</sup> Purists may contend that points should be earned through actual play; but consider the points often earned by paying a pro(s) to partner/team.

<sup>6</sup> Trash talk should be limited to the pre-bidding and post play interludes of each hand to avoid signaling concerns; intimidation and gloating are the obvious themes.

<sup>7</sup> For those too timorous to participate in robust competition, the ACBL could establish a separate league for steatopygous ninnies.

mathematical impossibility at Table One.<sup>8</sup> The proper inscription for the Table One card should be "MOVE BOARDS TO HIGHEST TABLE".

### RESULTS

I am sorry to report that CEO Hartman was unmoved by the financial genius and marketing insight underlying my first two suggestions. Even though we won three points (mostly gold) in two sessions, he was more interested in offering advice on how to improve my game<sup>9</sup> rather than heeding my advice on how to improve the Game.<sup>10</sup> When pressed, he grudgingly allowed he might look into the Table One card inscription. We are watching.<sup>11</sup>



### **Nancy's Nasties** by Pat Dutson

North ♠AQ62  
Deals ♥ J5  
N-S Vul ♦ AQJ53  
♣ KQ

	N	♠ 854
W		♥ AKT863
	E	♦ 98
S		♣ AJ

You are East and partner leads the 4♥. In Nancy's

West	North	East	South
---	1♦	1♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	2♥	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣
All Pass			

led (generally a king or queen) or a singleton. How are you going to defend to set 4♣?

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<sup>8</sup> Mathematicians AF and PF spent their early days at the Bridge Club vainly looking for negatively numbered tables to comply with this directive.

<sup>9</sup> Others far more skilled than he have already failed in that endeavor.

<sup>10</sup> Confer "calcareous concretions interposed against even-toed ungulates".

<sup>11</sup> Vide T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, III. THE FIRE SERMON:

After the event He wept. He promised "a new start." I made no comment. What should I resent?

## Can Cincinnatians do Better?

By Yauheni Siutsau

All problems are from Polish Bridge Magazine

**NORTH**      **Problem 1** - IMPs, 6♠ (S). Opening lead : ♦7. Plan your play.

♠AQ109  
♥AKJ2  
♦Q863  
♣7

**SOUTH**

♠KJ87  
♥7  
♦AKJ5  
♣QJ62

**Problem 2** – IMPs. 6♠ (S).  
Opening lead : ♣K.  
West plays 2<sup>nd</sup> ♣ to East's ♣A.  
Plan your play

**NORTH**

♠KJ10  
♥KJ  
♦Qxxx  
♣xxxx

**SOUTH**

♠AQ98x  
♥AQ109x  
♦Ax  
♣x

**Problem 3** - IMPs, WE vul.

NORTH	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>You</u>
♠KQx	4♥	Dbf	Pass	4♠
♥Jxx	All Pass			
♦KQx				
♣AKxx				

4♠ (S). Opening lead : ♥A. **West** plays ♥K, you ruff and cash ♠A and ♠K. **West** has only 1 ♠ (he discards small ♥ on the 2<sup>nd</sup> round). **Plan your play.**

**SOUTH**  
♠A108x  
♥x  
♦Axxxx  
♣xxx

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## Better Preempts II

by Andrew Gumperz Sept. 26, 2012

[www.bridgewinners.com](http://www.bridgewinners.com)

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Preemption is a form of *gambling*. By preempting, you intentionally risk a negative score in your contract in exchange for a chance to earn a positive score when your opponents misjudge. Vulnerability, both yours and theirs, affects that gamble.

The traditional advice is embodied in the "Rule of 2 and 3." The rule states that when NV versus Vul, since you can afford to go down 3 doubled against an opposing game, preempts should be within 3 tricks of the level of the bid. At equal vulnerability, since you can only afford to go down 2, a preempt should be one trick more sound. Modern experts believe this advice is too conservative.

South	W	N	E	S
♠KQJxxxx ♥x ♦xx ♣xxx				?

By the rule of 2 and 3, this is an acceptable 3♠ preempt only at favorable. However, no expert would give serious thought to not preempting 3♠ at equal vulnerability.

South	W	N	E	S
♠x ♥xx ♦QJ10xxxx ♣xxx				P P ?

By the rule of 2 and 3, this 5-trick hand is not worth a preempt at any colors. But anyone who passes this hand NV in third seat is seriously under-preempting. The Rule of 2 and 3 may be good enough for beginners, but it is a blunt instrument for aspiring tournament players. The rule focuses on one factor--keeping numbers smaller than the value of an opposing game, while ignoring more important considerations. If you follow the rule carefully, you will be taking risks that are too large in some situations, while not taking enough risks in others. To develop an

expert understanding of preemption, you must look much deeper.

### Vulnerability

Vulnerability has two effects on raw score. It increases:

**The penalty** when our contract fails

**The bonus** when our game or slam makes

Both effects drive us to preempt more conservatively when vulnerable. The first notion is easy to understand--if our penalties are larger, IMP losses will be larger when we go for a number. But why should an increased game bonus also make us want to preempt less often?

When you preempt, you make constructive bidding more difficult for *both sides*. If the hand belongs to you, your partnership is much more likely to misbid after a preempt than after a pass. Don't believe me? Consider these hands. They are easy to bid to the best spot using an uninterrupted constructive auction.

<b>North</b>	<b>W N E S</b>
♠ x ♥ xx ♦ AQJxxxx ♣ xxx	P P 1♣ P
	1♦ P 1NT P
<b>South</b>	3♦ P 3NT
♠ J109x ♥ AQx ♦ Kx ♣ Axxx	

<b>North</b>	<b>W N E S</b>
♠ x ♥ xx ♦ Qxxxxxx ♣ Qxx	P P 1♣ P
	1♦ P 1NT P
<b>South</b>	2♦ P P P
♠ J109x ♥ AQx ♦ Kx ♣ Axxx	

But what happens if North opens both hands with a preemptive 3♦? Partner will have a terrible guess when to bid 3NT and he is certain to go wrong some of the time.

<b>South</b>	<b>W N E S</b>
♠ J109x ♥ AQx ♦ Kx ♣ Axxx	3♦ P ?

When we preempt, we accept *two* major risks--the risk of a large penalty in our contract and the risk of missing a game. Surprisingly, the risk of missing a game is a bigger consideration than going for a number! Numbers don't occur often. But if partner is an unpassed hand, preempts can

lead to missed games, especially when the preemptive style allows a wide range of values and shapes. Since missed games cost us 10 IMPs apiece when we are Vul and only 6 when we are NV, the increased game bonus is a strong incentive to preempt more cautiously when Vul than when NV.

How can we reduce the missed-game price tag? When we are Vul and partner is an unpassed hand, restrict preempts to hands with the correct length and good suits. Missing a good game will be expensive, so tailor your preempts so that partner can easily judge when to raise your preempt to game. Wild and undisciplined preempts are for NV situations when the cost of missing game is low or for when partner is a passed hand, so that a missed game is unlikely.

### Their Vulnerability

Their vulnerability also has a strong effect on the decision to preempt. It affects:

The penalty when *they* go down

The number of tricks we can go down and still outscore their game

When we preempt, sometimes we push the opponents into failing contracts, even disastrously failing contracts. We will win more IMPs on those hands if the opponents are vulnerable when it happens. When they guess wrongly to defend instead of declare, we will win more/lose fewer IMPs if their game/slam is vulnerable.

However, there is one important note that tempers our enthusiasm. If the opponents cannot make a game, then the increased bonuses are irrelevant. An NV or Vul partscore is worth exactly the same to them. So preemption is equally unattractive against Vul and NV opponents when they only make a partscore. How can we know if they can make game? We can't know for sure of course, but when we hold significant outside defense, enough to think they can't bid a game, their vulnerability is no longer as big an incentive to preempt.

Which is more important, our vulnerability or theirs? Our vulnerability slows us down every



time we are vulnerable. Their vulnerability helps us only when they are vulnerable *and* they have a game or slam. So their vulnerability helps less often than ours hurts.

### The Vulnerability Traffic Light

When considering a preempt, I rate preemptive opportunities by the traffic-light scale:

**Green Light: NV on Vul**  
**Green Light: NV on NV**  
**Yellow Light: Vul on Vul**  
**Red Light: Vul on NV**

The best time to preempt is NV on Vul, and the worst time is Vul on NV--that much is clear. Why should NV on NV be a better opportunity for preemption than Vul on Vul? In both cases, a down 2 sacrifice against a game will win 3-4 IMPs so they are seemingly equal. But NV on NV is superior because a bad sacrifice against a game is not the only way to lose. A preempt could cause us to miss a game or to go down (possibly doubled) when opponents can only make a part-score. In either case, the damage will be far worse when we are vulnerable.

If we miss a game, it costs 10 IMPs when we are Vul and only 6 IMPs when NV

If they can only make a partial, our penalty is much higher when Vul

When you consider all the ways a preempt could go wrong, it becomes clear why NV preempts are so much more attractive than Vul ones.

Notice how the traffic light differs from the rule of 2 and 3. Using the traffic light we treat NV on NV as an opportunity for aggressive preemption, even though it is an equal vulnerability.

### Digesting This Information

To summarize, there are two ways to fail by preempting--we could miss a game or give up a number. Both cost more when we are vulnerable. When partner is a passed hand, one of those scenarios (missing a game) is no longer likely. Using these observations, we can put our advice about preemption style into this grid.

**Looking for Bridge Lessons?** Go to [www.cincybridge.com](http://www.cincybridge.com) click **Learn/Improve** then **Bridge Class Schedule**

	<b>We Are Vulnerable</b>	<b>We Are Not Vulnerable</b>
<b>Partner is Unpassed</b>	Conservative	Aggressive
<b>Partner is Passed</b>	Aggressive	Super-Aggressive

When we are vul and partner is unpassed, we must be **conservative**. We can lose by missing a game or by giving up a number, and IMP losses will tend to be larger.

When we are NV and partner is unpassed hand, we can be **aggressive** because IMP losses for missing game or a number will be smaller than the first case.

When we are Vul and partner is a passed hand, we can be **aggressive**. We have only one way to lose (a number) instead of two.

When we are NV and partner is a passed hand, we can be **super-aggressive**. We have only one way to lose and the losses will be smaller.

But what do these vague terms conservative, aggressive and super-aggressive mean? To some degree, that is up to you. If we wanted to translate them into rule of 2 and 3 terms, we could say:

Conservative = within 2 tricks of your contract

Aggressive = within 3 tricks

Super-Aggressive = within 4 tricks

My own personal scale might be closer to the rule of 2, 4 and 5! The scale you use doesn't matter as much as correctly recognizing when to apply the brakes and when to accelerate. The rule of 2 and 3 suggests that Vul on Vul in second chair is just as good as NV on NV in 3rd chair, when, in fact, the former is 2 tricks of leeway and the latter is 4-5 tricks!

### Examples

<b>South</b>	<b>W N E S</b>
♠ KJ10xx ♥ x ♦ xxx ♣ Q10xx	P P ?

Open 2♠. You are NV and pard is a passed hand. Gentlemen, the green flag is waving. Go! Go!

**South** **W N E S**

♠ KQJ10xx ♥ x ♦ xxx ♣ xxx ?

Open 3♠. You are NV and your hand is pure. Yes, partner is unpassed but at least being NV will limit the damage from any game you miss. 3♠ will be far more damaging to the opponent's constructive auctions than 2♠.

**South** **W N E S**

♠ xx ♥ x ♦ Q10xxxx ♣ Kxx ?

Pass. Vul on vul facing an unpassed hand is not the time for stepping out. If you open 3♦ and partner bids 3NT, he will be disappointed. Your preempt ought to show something like: ♦AKxxxx, ♦AQTxxx, ♦KQT9xxx. Holding one filling honor, partner should be able to count on running the suit in 3NT.

**South** **W N E S**

♠ KJ109xxx ♥ x ♦ Qx ♣ xxx P P ?

Open 3♠. Vul on vul is normally a yellow flag for preemption, but because partner is a passed hand there is little danger of missing a game, so our aggression is restored.

### Conclusion

Vulnerability changes both the costs and the rewards of preempting. In general, our vulnerability is far more important than theirs. When we are vulnerable, it increases our potential costs all the time. When they are vulnerable, it only improves our rewards if they can also make a game. So aggressive preemption NV, and cautious preemption Vul is a good simple guideline. However, we can tune that further.

When you are vulnerable, you can relax the cautious approach when partner is a passed hand. Missing a vulnerable game is not a concern, so loosen up. When you are NV, you can preempt aggressively in general. If you are NV and partner is a passed hand, go wild.

Both the old rule of 2 and 3 and the more recent rule of 2, 3 and 4 for more modern players, are unreliable guides to preemption because they

focus on how high to preempt, rather than *when to preempt*. If you want to preempt like a pro, base your preemption style on seat position and your vulnerability instead.

### Parting Tips

Undisciplined preempts are vastly safer when partner is a passed hand.

Vulnerable preempts in a minor suit facing an unpassed hand should suggest that the suit will run facing one top honor. (AQxxxx, KQxxxx, AKxxxx, etc.)

When NV, err in favor of aggression; when Vul, err in favor of caution.

Fear the missed game, not the telephone number.

Preempt when there is a lot to gain and little to lose. Pass when there is a lot to lose or little to gain. NV facing a passed hand has a lot to gain and little to lose. Vul facing an unpassed hand has a lot to lose. If you are preempting at a similar frequency and on similar hands in both scenarios, something is wrong.

### Nancy's Nasties - Answers by Pat Dutson

Let's start by counting points. North has 19 HCP and you have 12 HCP. That leaves 9 HCP for West and South. Assume partner's lead is from the ♥Q. Since partner didn't raise your hearts, partner must have 0-2 maybe 3 HCP the other suits.

Now, let's count defensive tricks. You have 3 possible defensive tricks so you need a fourth trick to set the contract. Even if partner has the ♦K or ♠K, it is poorly placed and not a trick.

So, if there are any additional defensive tricks to be had, they probably have to come from the trump suit. What trump combination might result in a fourth trick for the defense?

Is there a way to promote your ♣J into the fourth defensive trick? If partner has as little as the 10x or the ♣9xx, you can promote your ♣J into the setting trick if you can force the opponents to ruff a fourth round of hearts in dummy with the ♣Q. You now have your plan.

North ♠ AQ62  
 Deals ♥ J5  
 N-S Vul ♦ AQJ53  
 ♣ KQ

♠ T973  
 ♥ Q74  
 ♦ T764  
 ♣ T3



♠ KJ  
 ♥ 92  
 ♦ K2  
 ♣ 9876542

♠ 854  
 ♥ AKT863  
 ♦ 98  
 ♣ AJ

After winning the first 2 ♥ tricks, lead a 3<sup>rd</sup> ♥.

Declarer will ruff in his hand and then lead a club to the ♣K. When you win the ♣A, lead a fourth

heart and your plan works. Declarer ruffs in his hand but your partner over-ruffs with the ♣10. Declarer is forced to over-ruff with the ♣Q in dummy. You've promoted your ♣J to the setting trick.

**Can Cincinnatians Do Better? - Answers**

By Yauheni Siutsau

**Problem 1 Solution:**

We can try to pitch one losing club on ♥K, give up a club and later make two ruffs in dummy. However, if diamonds are 4-1, opponents will be able to manage a diamond ruff (after taking club trick) since we cannot afford to draw trumps.

Let's look at the full deal :

♠ AQ109  
 ♥ AKJ2  
 ♦ Q863  
 ♣ 7

♠ xxx  
 ♥ xxx  
 ♦ 7  
 ♣ Kxxxx

♠ x  
 ♥ Q109xx  
 ♦ 109xx  
 ♣ Axx

♠ KJ87  
 ♥ 7  
 ♦ AKJ5  
 ♣ QJ62

We don't have to get rid of losers in our hand, we can try to ruff *dummy's* 2 hearts. **Win first trick and – before drawing trumps – play ♥A, ruff a small heart, spade to the ♠9, ruff ♥J, ♠K to the ♠A, draw trumps.** Defense will get only

one club trick from dummy. (We'll take 4 ♠ + 4 ♦ +2 top ♥ + two ♥ ruffs).

Notice that we can't afford to play even one round of spades because we need trumps to enter dummy.

**Problem 2 Solution:**

We have 11 top tricks : 5 ♠ + 5 ♥ + 1 ♦. It looks like we have no chances to make 6 unless the ♦K is singleton. However, if ♠ are 3-2 (68%), we can try a **dummy reversal**. Let's look at the full deal:

♠ KJ10  
 ♥ KJ  
 ♦ Qxxx  
 ♣ xxxx

♠ xxx  
 ♥ xxx  
 ♦ Kxx  
 ♣ KQ10x

♠ xx  
 ♥ xxx  
 ♦ J10xx  
 ♣ AJxx

♠ AQ98x  
 ♥ AQ109x  
 ♦ Ax  
 ♣ x

We should ruff **second club, play heart to the ♥J, ruff a club, spade to the ♠10 and ruff last club with ♠A.** Now we can overtake ♠Q, draw last trump (pitching a small diamond) and claim 12 tricks : 3 ♠ (KJ10) + 5 ♥ + 1 ♦ + 3 ♣ ruffs.

**Problem 3 Solution :**

Even after disappointing 5-1 trump break we still can make 10 tricks. All we need is to find **East** with at least 3 ♦s and at least 2 ♣s. In this case we can simply **cash ♠A, ♣K, then ♦K,♦Q,♦A.** If **East** follows, we can **ruff a diamond with ♠Q and play last heart from dummy.** The position would be→

Our ♠10 will score a trick (coup *en passant*).

♠ KQx  
 ♥ Jxx  
 ♦ KQx  
 ♣ AKxx

♠ x  
 ♥ AKQ109xx  
 ♦ xx  
 ♣ Q10x

♠ J9xxx  
 ♥ xx  
 ♦ J10x  
 ♣ Jxx

♠ A108x  
 ♥ x  
 ♦ Axxxx  
 ♣ xxx



## Ladies and Gentlemen By Dean Congbalay

[dcongbalay@comey.com](mailto:dcongbalay@comey.com)



(l to r Congbalay, Cozart, Heisey)

We are ladies and gentlemen playing a game we love with ladies and gentlemen, right?

On a recent session, my partner was one of the nicest guys I know. After we got a good board, he made a very slight and inadvertent smile. My LHO glared at him and exclaimed, "I don't like the score, and I don't like your face." My partner felt terrible and apologized. She did not.

A few days later, my pard du jour and I got a bad board. My LHO jabbed her fist in the air and smiled while she exclaimed, "YES!" I was appalled.

We are ladies and gentlemen playing a game we love with ladies and gentlemen, right?

## Bridgemate Tips by Debbie Cummings

Bridgemates II can display your rank and a board-by-board summary – at the end of the game.



Press the **RANK** key – at the end of the game, or log-on as your last table-for this screen

This is the Rank display. For end-of-game summary, press GAME SUMMARY.

RANKING AFTER ROUND 9		
PROVISIONAL RANKING:		
10 NS:	1.	70%
9 EW:	6.	47%
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>BACK</span> <span>GAME SUMMARY</span> </div>		

BRD	CONTRACT	SCORE	MP
1	6NT E 6	-990	0.0
2	2H E -1	50	3.0
3	3S S -1	-50	4.9
4	3S E -1	100	3.8
5	5H N 5	650	6.5
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>BACK</span> <span>▼</span> </div>			

Initial display is NS summary (as Match Points). Press E/W key to see the EW summary.

When EW summary is being displayed, press N/S key to see NS. This is as percentage.

BRD	CONTRACT	SCORE	PERC
6	1NT W-1	100	25
7	4S E-2	200	91
8	NO PLAY		
9	4C W 4	-130	68
10	4S S 5	650	100
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>BACK</span> <span>▲</span> <span>▼</span> </div>			

If your table unit has logged out, or returned to the opening screen, you may still see your rank and game summary. Use any Bridgemate II and log in as any table. It will immediately go to the END OF SESSION screen – and RANK will be displayed. Press the RANK key, enter your pair number and press OK. From the Rank display screen press GAME SUMMARY to see details on each board played.

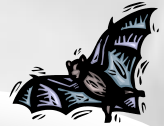


Note: Final results – prepared by ACBLscore – may be different. When the ranking and summaries are being displayed at the table, there may be scores still to be entered at other tables; also, ACBLscore may include score adjustments – as well as resolution of not-played boards.

Looking to improve your game? Check out [Learn/Improve](#) then [Improve Your Game on the CBA website](#). You'll find many resources for sharpening your skills.

# CINCINNATI SPOOKTACULAR SECTIONAL

October 25-27, 2013



**Crowne Plaza**  
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Exit 15 Interstate 75 (Sharon Rd)  
across from Sharonville Convention Center  
Open Playing Area / Free Parking  
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New Schedule!  
Friday and Sunday 2-Session Swiss

**Strats:**  
**Pairs:** 0-750/750-2000/2000+  
**Friday and Sunday Swiss:**  
Bracketed  
All Events Use Average MPs

## FRIDAY, OCT. 25

Open Pairs . . . . . 10:00AM, 2:30PM and 7:00PM  
NLM Pairs . . . . . 10:00AM and 7:00PM  
Zombie Apocalypse Swiss (2 sessions)  
. . . . . 10:00AM and 2:30PM

## SATURDAY, OCT. 26

Open Pairs . . . . . 10:00AM, 2:30PM and 7:00PM  
NLM Pairs . . . . . 2:30PM  
Haunted Pumpkin Compact KO. . . . 10:00AM and 2:30PM  
Spellbound Side Session Swiss . . . . . 7:00PM

## SUNDAY, OCT. 27

Spooktacular Swiss (2 session playthrough). . . 10:00AM

### **Tournament Chair:**

A.J. Stephani  
513-313-0488  
ajstephani@gmail.com

### **Partnership Chair:**

Bob Fisk  
513-379-5252  
bobsbbcards@gmail.com

### **LODGING:**

Crowne Plaza (on site) / 513-771-2080 / Bridge Rate: \$89  
LivInn Suites (across the street) / 513-772-7877 / Bridge Rate \$59

