



# ScoreCard

Volume III Issue 1  
February 2020

TUCSON WINTER REGIONAL  
MARCH 2-8

NEWS

WINNERS

LEARN

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## District 17 Tournament Calendar

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# Denver Rocky Mountain Regional

## May 19-25, 2020

Sponsored by ACBL [District 17](#) and [Denver Unit 361](#)

[Renaissance Hotel](#) by Marriott, [303-399-7500](#)

- \$120 single/double through April 27
- Conveniently located near the Central Park [Light rail](#) Station
- Use the [Map](#) for driving assistance

### FULL [SCHEDULE](#) OF TEAM AND PAIR EVENTS

- Expanded team schedule: every session Wednesday through Sunday
- New: Barometer pairs and Soloway knockouts

### NEW PLAYER FRIENDLY

- LARGEST [Pro/Am Game](#) in the country !!
- 299er and Gold Rush Pairs; Gold Rush Swiss Teams
- Guest speakers Wednesday through Sunday

Email for [Partnerships](#) or for [Tournament](#) questions.



# Tucson Winter Regional

## Tucson, Arizona, February 25 – March 3

By Cindy Shoemaker, D17 National Board Representative

Great weather, a dynamic playing schedule, and signature hospitality make this now annual regional the place to play!

Conveniently located just off I-10, and five miles from the Tucson International Airport, the Tucson Winter Regional will be held at the [Tucson Expo Center, 3750 East Irvington Road](#), Tucson, Arizona. Free ample parking provided.



Players at the Tucson Regional 2018

Players will receive discounted rates at several nearby hotels, many of which are within walking distance of the Tucson Expo Center.

Packed full of team games, the tournament schedule includes: Five days of Gold Rush Pairs, KOs, bracketed team games, Swiss Teams, Open Pairs and side games.

The Grand National Teams Championship Flight will be played during the Tucson Winter Regional on Friday, March 6, and Saturday, March 7, with play on Sunday if needed.



In keeping with tradition, free coffee will be provided daily along with free lox, bagels, cream cheese, and pastries each morning and free premium candy each afternoon. A free lunch will be provided on Sunday. A varied and affordable lunch option will be offered onsite daily.

Free lectures by top experts Sylvia Shi, Chris Compton, Dennis Dawson and Mike Levy will be held Tuesday through Friday at 1:00 p.m.

Stop by our information desk to receive your newly designed tournament patch, welcome gifts for I/Ns, and information on all that is Tucson.

Visit our website at [playsouthernazbridge.com](http://playsouthernazbridge.com) for more details on the Tucson Winter Regional.

Thanks to the [Visit Tucson web site](#) for several of the images in this article and to that site plus photographer Nicci Radhe for the photo used on the cover of this issue.

Tucson's Urban Core





# John's Journal

By John Grossmann, District 17 President



A new year brings changes and challenges. We have some new members of the D17 team and new projects underway for 2020.

Liz Hamilton will take over for Becky Rogers as the Las Vegas representative on the D17 Board. Cindy Shoemaker will replace Bonnie Bagley as our representative on the ACBL national Board of Directors. Larry Bertholf, from the Albuquerque unit, will assume the responsibility of D17 recorder. Doug Couchman, Tucson, was appointed at the recent D17 board meeting (filling the remaining term of Art McHaffie) to be the second alternate for Cindy on the BoD, and a member of the ACBL Board of Governors.



Liz Hamilton



Cindy Shoemaker



Larry Bertholf



Doug Couchman

I was recently elected to be the President of the Western Conference for 2020. On a sad note, I regret to report that Bill Michael has died. Bill was a sectional, regional, and STaC tournament director in District 17 for ACBL.

## Cleaning Up Pairs

Over the years we have gotten a lot of complaints about dirty cards, bandaged boards, poorly labeled table mats and missing timers at our regional tournaments.



Sometimes it seems like one step forward and one step back. That is going to change.

D17's dealing machine, new cards, new boards



For 2020, District 17 has spent about \$20,000 to upgrade the pairs games in regional tournaments. Board member Bill Phillips will be duplicating all of the hands (District 17 has purchased a dealing machine), plus all new cards and all new boards. We will also be adding three laptop based event timers at our regional tournaments. Bonnie Bagley donated brand new table mats. And, we have bought lots of new bid boxes and inserts.

### **Las Vegas Returns to Regional Schedule**

Las Vegas returns in 2020 after a long regional tournament hiatus. The Las Vegas Regional will be held at the Plaza, just off Fremont Street. Players can snag a great midweek room rate of \$58 that includes tax and resort fee. I walked the space with



Becky Rogers and it's outstanding. In years past,

Las Vegas Plaza Hotel by  
slworking2 on flickr

Vegas was second only to Gatlinburg for table count, often twice the size of our other D17 regionals. We aim to restore the Vegas regional as the crown jewel event in District 17. **Mark your calendar for November 9-15.**

### **StaC web pages**

Contrary to a recent rumor, the Western Conference is not going out of business. In my new job as President of the Western Conference, I will push to completely refresh the STaC program this year. Re-branding! The first change is that the three districts will post STaC info on their own websites. The WC Board decided to save \$1400 a year by not having a separate website for just the WC/STaC. We will post more about this topic in *Buzz* and *ScoreCard*. Keep an eye on our StaC page at [d17acbl.org/index.php?page=district-stac-games](http://d17acbl.org/index.php?page=district-stac-games)

**Our biggest challenge remains recruiting and training the next generation of bridge players.** I convinced the D17 board to increase the annual budget for the Grant program to \$5000, a 66% increase! In the past six years, grants have helped a dozen units to run membership building and bridge education programs. These programs have attracted hundreds of new players. D17 Units that have not run a regional in the past three years are eligible. Contact Steve Nordberg at [Texminn@SBCGlobal.net](mailto:Texminn@SBCGlobal.net) or me. A simple email explaining the who, what, when, where, and why of your proposed event or activity gets you started. The max grant award is \$1000 and does not require matching dollars. District 17 wants to make grant decisions at the next board meeting in May (Denver Regional) so that units will have the funds for Fall programs.

The extra funds will help, but we also need folks at the club and unit level to step up and run EasyBridge, Learn Bridge in a Day, open houses, and school programs. Recent analysis by the ACBL foundation suggests that there might be 20 million potential bridge players. These include lapsed bridge players and perhaps folks who know bridge players and would consider learning the game. Lets find them.



KAROL & GUY MONROE

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## BRIDGE PROGRAM INCLUDES

- ◆ BRIDGE LABS by Monroes feature interactive class format designed for Advancing Players.
- ◆ DAILY ACBL Silver Point Tournament Games
- ◆ HAND REVIEW—Q&A—

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MARION & JERRY FLEMING

### Jerry Fleming

ACBL Past President and Chairman of the Board ◆ ACBL Certified Director ◆ Sapphire Life Master ◆ 40+ Years Teaching Bridge

Jerry is joined by his wife Marion, a Bronze Life Master, retired educator and counselor.

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[web2.acbl.org/Tournaments/Ads/2020/04/2004362.pdf](http://web2.acbl.org/Tournaments/Ads/2020/04/2004362.pdf)



## District 17 News

### Grand National Teams (GNT)

By Rod Southworth, D17 GNT Coordinator

The qualifying period for the District 17 (D17) GNT District Finals is half over, with the qualifying period ending on May 1. There is still lots of time to qualify, so see your local club manager or Unit GNT coordinator for qualification games in your area. Your club may also hold GNT Fund Raisers, with extra masterpoints available.

**The D17 GNT district finals for all but the top flight will be held during the Rocky Mountain Regional in Denver, from May 22-24.** It is expected that all games will be completed during Friday and Saturday, with Sunday being a possible day for Flight A if we have more than eight teams competing. Flights B and C will be two days. The D17 board has waived entry fees for Flight C teams.

**The Open Flight district finals will held at the Tucson Regional from March 6-7, 2020.** If there are more than eight teams, then March 8th will be used to determine the winner.



The GNT Conditions of Contest are on our website at: <http://www.d17acbl.org/index.php?page=gnt-coc>

Preregistration is required for the Open Flight. Teams must mail a team roster to me, the GNT Coordinator, P.O. Box 21989, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003, no later than May 1st, along with a check made payable to District 17 GNT for the first session entry fee (currently \$13/player). In the event that only one team preregisters, it will be declared the winner and will not be required to attend the District Finals, but must have prepaid the initial session entry fee.

Winning teams that compete in the National GNT Finals in Montreal (in July) will receive \$2000 per team from D17. District 17 provides \$2000 per first place team in each of the four flights to assist with expenses. If a second team is chosen for either Flight B or C, that team may receive a \$1500 subsidy from the district. I hope to see you in Denver at the District GNT Finals!

## Losing to Youngsters at the Nationals

By John Tippett



At the San Francisco NABC I played in a bracketed KO event with one of my regular tournament partners, Loring Harkness. Our team reached the finals of the KO only to be knocked out by a family team made up of Sarah and Steve Chen and their two sons, Charlie and Andrew.

Bridge can be a humbling experience, but I was very excited for Andrew and Charlie. Here is how those youngsters performed in the San Francisco NABC:

Charlie Chen: 60.96 MPs, including first in two KOs and first in a Swiss Team event

Andrew Chen: 59.78 MPs, including first in two KOs and a tie for third in another KO

Considering they both had under 200 MPs going into the San Francisco NABC, their performance was remarkable.



My team: Randy Jones, John Tippet, Loring Harkness and Janice Nakao with Andrew and Charlie Chen in front

Here is a hand that Charlie and his dad Steve played against Loring and me:

<b>W</b> West					<b>E</b> East
♠ AQ74					♠ K632
♥ Q6					♥ AKJ94
♦ AQJ					♦ 5
♣ QJ43					♣ K65
		W	N	E	S
		1♣	P	1♥	P
		2NT	P	3♦	P
		3♠	P	6♠	P
		P	P		



Click to play  
the hand at

[tinyurl.com/ux3upd9](https://tinyurl.com/ux3upd9)

3♦ was checkback Stayman and over 3♠ Charlie bid six with no hesitation. Steve asked "Is that your bid?" with some surprise as he passed. As you can see there were 12 easy tricks once trumps were 3-2.

# TUCSON WINTER REGIONAL

## MARCH 2-8

TUCSON EXPO CENTER

3750 E Irvington Rd, Tucson, AZ 85714

[goo.gl/maps/Wnft8xudnNo](https://goo.gl/maps/Wnft8xudnNo)

**GAME TIMES 9:30 AND 2:00 (Except 9:00 Sunday)**

Tue-Sat **Gold Rush and Stratified Pairs Knockouts** starting Tuesday and Thursday  
**Bracketed Teams** Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, **A/X/Y Swiss** Sunday and **0-3000 Bracketed Teams** Sunday

**D17 GNT (championship flight finals) begin on Friday**

**PARTNERSHIP TEAM: DOUG CAIN, SHERRY CAIN & JACK SHOEMAKER 520-609-1232 [shoejack20@gmail.com](mailto:shoejack20@gmail.com)**

**flyer:**

[web2.acbl.org/Tournaments/Ads/2020/03/2003105.pdf](http://web2.acbl.org/Tournaments/Ads/2020/03/2003105.pdf)

[PlaySouthernArizonaBridge.com](http://PlaySouthernArizonaBridge.com)





## Tournament Results

### Regional Results

Attendance was up at the yearly Albuquerque Regional, a fun filled week of good bridge, great accommodations and service, excellent hospitality and partnership assistance, and, of course, the awarding of an abundance of gold points. [Click here for the full results at the ACBL](#)



### Special Events



D17 Flight A NAP Final

## Sectional Results

*December*

9-15 ..... WC Holiday STaC

*January*

9-12 ..... Tucson AZ

10-12 ..... Golden (Denver) CO

23-26 ..... Yuma AZ



Players at the Taos Regional



# MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

## District 17 Member Achievements

### Sylvia Shi is a Grand Life Master



Sylvia Shi of Las Vegas, Nevada, is our newest Grand Life Master. She is the youngest woman ever to have achieved this rank. The ACBL Bulletin featured her on the cover of their January Bulletin and wrote an article all about her. You need to be logged into the membership area of the ACBL to [click here and read it.](#)

### NEW LIFE MASTERS

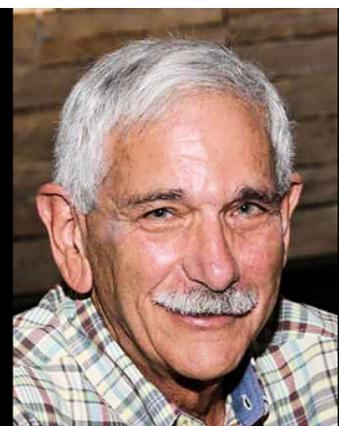


**Betty Santa,  
Casa Grande AZ**

### NEW LIFE MASTERS



**Jane Elson,  
Albuquerque NM**



**Gary Lowenthal,  
Santa Fe NM**

If you become a Life Master please send your photo to the editors – [coopers@d17acbl.org](mailto:coopers@d17acbl.org) - as well as any thoughts you wish to share about your experience.

# LEARN

**Robert Todd**



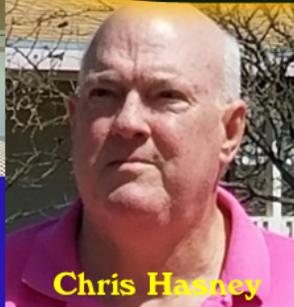
**Curt Soloff**



**Larry Matheny**



**Paul Zatulove**



**Chris Hasney**



**Dennis Dawson**



**Kitty & Steve  
Cooper**

On the following pages we have articles from our regular columnists. Please feel free to send us - [coopers@d17acbl.org](mailto:coopers@d17acbl.org) - bridge questions, humorous anecdotes, or an article of your own for this section.



## Losing Trick Count Points the Way for a Slam

By Paul Zatulove

How would like to be in the top 3% of 1500 pairs in [The Common Game, on Board 12, December 20, 2019](#)? Even if you are an Intermediate/Novice player, you can be! Use the “Colonial Three Cornered Hat” to evaluate the bridge hand in the following article to have more fun, compete with experts, and experience exciting aspects of bridge!



Hat image courtesy of the [National Museum of American History, Behring Center](#)

The world of bridge is not flat, not high card points alone. It is three dimensional. We simplify and reduce hand evaluation to three numbers based on 1) Quality of the Cards: [High Card Points \(HCP\)](#), 2) Distribution: [Losing Trick Count \(LTC\)](#), and 3) Control of Play: [Rosenkranz Control Points \(RCP\)](#). All three are of EQUAL importance when evaluating a hand. Click on the live blue phrase for a description of each term.

You may use this concept EVERY hand from just your side of the table.

We try to shy away from adding conventions but here is a convention that fits perfectly into the Colonial Three Cornered Hat concept: Losing Trick Count (LTC) Ogust. This convention is a variation on [standard Ogust](#), which is used after a weak two bid, where 2NT requests the opener to further describe their hand. In this version of Ogust, a good hand is defined by LTC, instead of high card points.

With one bid the weak two bidder can inform partner of two things: 1) Whether or not he has a good suit (2/3 top honors) and 2) whether or not he has a low loser count ( seven or fewer LTC) as follows:



In the above hand West passes and North opens two Spades. East has a problem with a flat hand 3-3-4-3 and 13 HCP's. In the actual play, East passed. South, by partnership agreement knows the following about North's hand. North holds six Spades, two of the top three honors when vulnerable, ten HCPs or fewer, no voids, and preferably not four cards in the other major. Note that North gave priority to describing a good Spade suit, less than ten points, and preempting East, in spite of holding four Hearts.

South has a LTC of four: one Spade, two Hearts, and one Club! South should bid a forcing 2NT, indicating 15 or more HCPs by partnership agreement, asking North to describe his hand, using the LTC Ogust variation.

North only has six LTC plus a good suit; North bids three Spades.

According to LTC, the partnership subtracts the combined LTC from 24 and the answer suggests the number of tricks the partnership can take if there is a fit, trump breaks normally, and not too many aces are missing. The one who knows, GOES!

South next explores for slam with Ace asking 4NT, finds that the Ace of Clubs is missing, and bids 6♣, Only 3% of over 1500 pairs across the country bid slam, but over 30% took 12 tricks. Double Dummy suggests 12 tricks in Clubs and Spades, but the best matchpoint score is +1430. Be a believer in the Colonial Three Cornered Hat. You will enjoy the great game of bridge to the fullest potential!

*[Ed note: great story but if the heart king was in the other hand this slam would not be making on a heart lead or switch so not our choice of contracts at matchpoints ... the actual hand will get the lead of a high diamond so plan the play ...]*



Paul Zatulove is a recent LM who believes everyone should be exposed to bridge and improve the quality of their life. He organized a group of men to improve their bridge and play duplicate. 14 joined the ACBL, one became a director, two won the Ace of Clubs award and one is touring regional tournaments with three lovely ladies.

***PRESIDENTS' DAY  
SECTIONAL***



**EI PASO, TEXAS**

**February 14-17**

**Decker Bridge Center**

[goo.gl/maps/W5YPoP9m6zn](https://goo.gl/maps/W5YPoP9m6zn)

**Game times 10:00 and 2:00**

**Lead off one session Swiss Friday**

**Single session pairs Saturday, Friday afternoon**

**Special Pairs/Teams event Sunday**

**Swiss Teams all day Monday**

[elpasobridge.com](http://elpasobridge.com)

photo courtesy of [visitelpaso.com](http://visitelpaso.com)

**Partnerships: Jenny Ayer**  
[jennyayer737@yahoo.com](mailto:jennyayer737@yahoo.com)

**Games stratified by  
average masterpoints**

**flyer: <http://web2.acbl.org/Tournaments/Ads/2020/02/2002328.pdf>**



## Advice for the New Player

By Chris Hasney, Hereford, Arizona

### Modern Non-Penalty Doubles



Card Players in 1900 by Charles Huard

**Back in the good old days of Whist and early Bridge “Double” meant (M.C.) “Hammer Time!”** When a defender doubled he said “No Way this contract can make,” and his partner was expected to respect that opinion, “Leaving In” that double. If right, defenders collected extra money from the declaring side. (Remember, back then most contests were played for money, not glory.) Of course, the doubled side could “Redouble” to further increase the reward for success (“Yes, Way”), with the corresponding risk of greater loss if wrong about things on the deal. To make matters even more fun, doubles and redoubles were unlimited—both sides could continue the game of “I double” and “I redouble” endlessly, with the stakes eventually becoming astronomical. This could lead to ruin of one’s own and one’s partner’s finances.

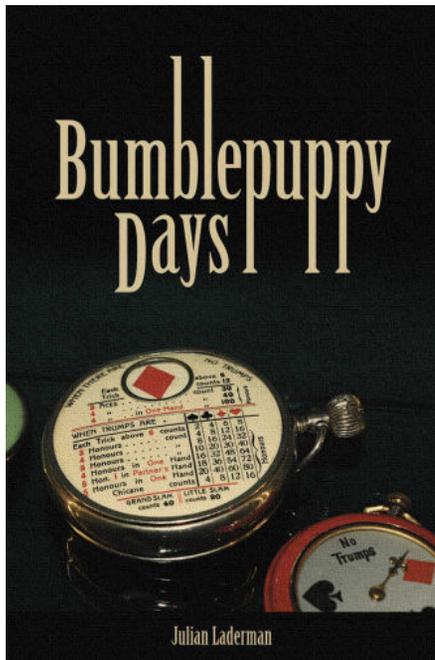
**Eventually things calmed down**, with a maximum of one penalty double and one penalty redouble “Left In” per bridge deal. There is no limit to the number of doubles and redoubles during an auction, but once the auction ends, no more than one double and one redouble may have been applied. Why can more doubles and redoubles happen during the auction? Because the meanings of these words can change, depending on how the auction has progressed. The trick is to properly interpret partner’s intent when using them.



Card Players in 1939, photo by Roger Schall

**Bridge bidding vocabulary consists of 15 words:** numbers one through seven,

the four suits, notrump, double, redouble, and the most important word in bidding



“Pass.” I was unable to determine when the meaning of double became complex, but my research led me to find that the confusion of penalty and takeout, for example, led to a 1927 addition of “Challenge” to distinguish a takeout double from the penalty version. This idea, proposed by expert Sidney Lenz, was actually adopted by the Knickerbocker Whist Club of New York in 1929, but eventually it passed into bridge obscurity. (For more information on this and the history of our game check out [Bumblepuppy Days](#) by Dr. Julian Laderman, but be warned, while fascinating it requires some effort to read.)

**All doubles are cooperative.** Many doubles, perhaps most, at the level of two spades or below are not for penalty (business). They are informative in special situations. For example, in the auction 1♠- (Double), the meaning in modern Standard American bridge is “Takeout”, and usually specifies an opening hand or better in support of hearts (primarily) and at least one other suit (usually both). Intervenor’s distribution should look pretty much like x xxxx xxxx xxxx. (1=4=4=4, where the equals sign specifies exact suit location and number of cards, in the usual order: spades, hearts, diamonds, clubs).

**But what if, as “intervenor” (the first person not on opener’s side to act after opener) you happen to have a ton of great spades yourself, and would like to double opener’s 1♠ bid for penalty?** You must pass (!!!) and hope your partner has learned how to **“think backwards”** and protect your pass with a reopening double. After an auction such as (1♠)-P-(P), your partner is said to be in “passout seat” (incidentally, in hand diagrams, putting a call in parenthesis means that it was made by the opponents). The point is, your partner does your doubling for you, even if he has NOTHING—no values at all!!! If partner dutifully doubles, you simply convert it to a penalty double by passing.

**This backwards thinking applies to negative double situations too!** Consider the auction (1♣)-1♠-(P)-P. The original 1♣ opener usually reopens for his partner

(responder), who may have wanted to double 1♠ but couldn't, because that double would be a negative double showing at least four hearts. So, when opener reopens with a double, IT DOES NOT SHOW EXTRAS, partner is just being courteous; responder leaves it in if he wishes to convert it to penalty ("Thanks, Partner!").

**How do you know to reopen with a double rather than bidding 1NT, rebidding your suit, bidding a new suit, or passing?** Your distribution tells you. If you are short in the enemy suit (no more than three cards, and hopefully either one or two), then where are all the others in the suit? Opener's partner doesn't have them or you'd have heard a raise. You don't have them; aha, partner does!

**Is this ALWAYS true?** No. Nothing is always or never true. But it's true so often you should look for it and cater to situations where this is what might be going on. This is especially true when the intervention is at the two level, where a juicy penalty double may be in the offing. Note that this same mindset will apply to support doubles and redoubles, too, when you start playing those!

**Your partner must be able to rely on you to protect him by making "his" penalty double for him when appropriate.** The last thing your partner wants to hear is you rebidding that rag of a suit of yours when he's practically on his knees begging for you to make the double he couldn't, because his would have been takeout. See how it works? Over the next several months look for situations where you can apply this concept, and then we'll dive deeper into the sea of doubles in these columns.

*Credit: the first two images in this article are courtesy of the Carnavalet Museum, Paris, France. Thanks to the web site <http://parismuseescollections.paris.fr/en> where thousands of images are now scanned, online and free to use.*



Chris Hasney is an accredited bridge teacher from Hereford, Arizona. He supports the college bridge and rubber bridge revival movement. He is the author of *Simplicity Bridge* published as an e-book through [Lybrary.com](http://Lybrary.com)

# 299er Intermediate/Novice PAIRS Sectional

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

Las Cruces, NM

<http://lascrucesbridge.com/>

GAME TIMES  
9:30 and 1:30

BELTON BRIDGE CENTER

<https://tinyurl.com/BeltonBridge>

for partners:

Molly O'Evetts 575-644-3722

[robertmollyevetts@gmail.com](mailto:robertmollyevetts@gmail.com)

FLYER: [web2.acbl.org/Tournaments/Ads/2020/03/2003394.pdf](http://web2.acbl.org/Tournaments/Ads/2020/03/2003394.pdf)



Declarer held up on the first diamond and West continued with the queen as Han followed suit. This meant West couldn't have more than four diamonds, so it was safe for declarer to win the second diamond and play back a diamond. Either the suit will break 3-3, setting up declarer's ninth trick, or Han will be forced to discard, which is the case here.

Should Han discard a spade, a heart, or a club?

Keeping equal length with dummy's four card or longer suits is an excellent guideline. If you and dummy each have four of a suit, it is unlikely that your partner will also have four, so only you can guard the suit. (And it is impossible for partner to have four of the suit if declarer has shown a balanced hand, so at least two cards, leaving your partner with at most three.) Of course, your highest card must be higher than dummy's lowest card, or you can't guard the suit.

This is known as keeping parity. It is one of the cornerstones of discarding on defense. Han could see that he needed to keep all his spades. But should he discard a club or a heart?

Han can see dummy's cards, but he must visualize declarer's cards based on the bidding. Declarer bid 1♥, showing at least a four card suit, so Han must also save all his hearts, keeping parity with that suit as well. He must therefore pitch a low club, coming down to the QJ doubleton. And if West cashes his last diamond winner, which is a virtual certainty, then Han must discard the ♣J! This leaves West to guard dummy's clubs and set the contract. It goes against the grain to discard an honor to keep a low card, but here it is absolutely necessary. Han rose to the occasion and saved the day.

Han may have stayed in character, but he certainly went against his last name by seeing bridge as a four handed game, not a one or two handed game. When first learning to play, people see bridge as a one handed game. It's all about the cards in front of you and all you're worried about is not embarrassing yourself.

Bridge becomes two handed when you realize the person across the table is actually on your side and you should listen to what he has to say. Learn to revalue

your hand based on how it fits with partner—now shortness is an asset if there is a fit.

Bridge becomes a four handed game when you take the opponents's bidding into consideration. QJ32 of their suit is good for defense but terrible for offense. Don't count Q2 in their suit for any points when you are making a takeout double. The value of a king depends on who bids the suit—that person has length in the suit, so they are likely to have strength, specifically the ace. From your point of view, partner is the best person to bid the suit, RHO is second best, and LHO is the worst.

## Practical Advice

Listen to the bidding to start forming a picture of what everyone has, and act accordingly.



Dennis Dawson is a National Champion, a Bronze Medalist in the Senior World Championship, and an ACBL Grand Life Master. He has won more than 250 regionals. He has taught people throughout the country to play better and enjoy the game more. He currently resides in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

# Phoenix President's Day Sectional

February 14 - 17, 2020

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## CONSTRUCTIVE BIDDING:

By Robert Todd, Tallahassee, Florida

### Responding to Partner's Overcall

When partner makes an overcall, the most important thing we can do is to raise: “support with support.” Knowing how to raise an overcall and what our options are is a very important part of our partnership understandings. We want to have lots of gadgets to raise partner in a variety of ways. We will discuss some of those here. Note that the partner of overcaller is called “advancer” in Bridge literature.

W	N	E	S
1♦	1♠	P	?

W	N	E	S
1♠	2♥	P	?

Before we talk about the different ways to raise partner, let’s take a moment to consider partner’s overcall. If partner makes an overcall at the two level (showing 12-18 points) we will raise it in a similar fashion as if he had overcalled at the one level (showing 7-18 points.) Our raise will get us a level higher, but the fact that partner has promised more values for his overcall compensates us for being at this level. So we raise partner in a similar way whether he overcalls at the one level or two level.

#### Advancer’s Hand

We are only discussing hands where Advancer has a fit for partner’s overcall (here 3+ card support). Advancer wants to show the strength of his hand and the size of the fit. We want to accomplish this in one call if possible.

#### Strength

We want to define Advancer’s strength. We do so in the usual way (with the

following buckets):

<b>POINTS</b>	<b>BUCKET</b>
0-5	Weak
6-9	Minimum
10-11	Limit Raise
12-13	More than a Limit Raise
14+	Game Forcing Raise

## **Fit**

We also want to show the size of our fit:

- 3-card support
- 4-card support
- 5-card support

### **Weak Raises (0-5 points)**

With a weak hand we use the Law of Total Tricks; we compete to the size of our fit.

With an 8-card fit we try to compete to the 2-level, with a 9-card fit we try to compete to the 3-level, and with a 10-card fit we try to compete to the 4-level.

- **Pass** with 3-card support and a weak hand.
- **Jump Raise** (usually to the 3-level) with 4-card support and a weak hand.
- **Jump to the 4-level** with 5-card support and a weak hand.

### **Minimum Raises (6-9 points)**

With a minimum hand we want to support partner and let him know we have some values.

- With 3-card support: Simple Raise = Raise partner's overcall one level.
- With 4-card support: Partner has overcalled at the 1-level so we can make a jump cuebid showing a *mixed raise*: 4-card support and 6-9 points.

### **Limit Raises or Better (10+ points)**

When we have 10+ points and 3+ card support for partner we start by cuebidding

the opponent's suit. The shorthand for this on your card is Q=LR+.

- If we have 10-11 points we start with a cuebid and pass if Overcaller responds by rebidding his suit.
- If we have 12-13 points we start with a cuebid and make one more try for game by raising again.
- If we have 14+ points we start with a cuebid and then force to game.
- If we have 14+ points, 4+ card support, and shortness, we want to force to game and try for slam. We can show our shortness by *splintering*—making a double jump shift. [Ed note: see this month's *Conventional Wisdom* column for more on splinters]

**SIMPLE OVERCALL**  
1 level 7 to 18 HCP (usually)  
often 4 cards  very light style   
**Responses**  
New Suit: Forcing  NFConst  NF   
Jump Raise: Forcing  Inv.  Weak   
cue = limit+, jump cue = mixed

A possible overcall box on your card

## Choice of Games

When we have a hand that might want to play 3NT instead of playing in the 4M game in partner's suit, we want to engineer an auction that gives partner a choice between these two contracts. First, we support partner by cuebidding the opponent's suit, and then we bid 3NT to offer this as a choice of games. Overcaller can then choose between 3NT and 4M.

## Conclusion

One of the most common things we will want to do in a competitive auction is raise partner's overcalled suit. Having a variety of ways to show a fit for partner is important to allow us to properly describe our hand in just one call. Make sure you and partner have lots of ways to raise overcaller's suit.



Robert is a professional bridge player and teacher whose hometown is Tallahassee, Florida. But you'll find him all over the country and the world playing and teaching bridge. Robert began playing bridge at a very young age in his parents' party bridge games, and came to duplicate while working on his graduate degree in Mathematics. He spent a year in Helsinki, Finland, where he met and played with many fine European players. When he returned to the States, Robert decided to become a bridge professional himself and has never looked back!

Robert has finished in the top 20 on the Barry Crane list (with over 1500 masterpoints) many times, has posted several top-10 finishes in National-level Pairs events, and won the 0-10,000 Knockout Teams at the Dallas NABC in 2014. This article was previously published as one of Robert's free email lessons in his series published at [advinbridge.com](http://advinbridge.com)

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## IMPROVE YOUR PLAY

By Larry Matheny, Fort Collins, Colorado

### DON'T FORGET THE AUCTION

After the opening lead is made, the auction is often forgotten. However, as declarer or defender, there are often clues from the bidding that will help.

	<b>N North</b> ♠ 8752 ♥ 92 ♦ K7 ♣ KQ754	W    N    E    S P    2♣   P    1NT P    2NT   P    2♦ P    P     P    3NT
	<b>W West</b> ♠ K106 ♥ KQJ5 ♦ 952 ♣ 1096	♥K
	<b>S South</b> ♠ AJ3 ♥ 107 ♦ AQJ10 ♣ AJ83	Click to play the hand at <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y6d6nqq1">tinyurl.com/y6d6nqq1</a>
		3NT S      NS: 0 EW: 0

Opening lead: ♥K

**Bidding:** North used Stayman to discover if there was a spade fit, but South denied a four card major. North next invited game with 2NT and South accepted.

**Play:** West led the king of hearts and his partner encouraged with the six. If East

had held three hearts to the ace, it would now be necessary for West to lead a low heart to ensure that his side could take their four tricks. However, the auction made it clear that South held at most three hearts, so West continued with the queen, jack, and the five. This meant down one for declarer.

At other tables, after receiving encouragement at trick one, some West players continued with the five of hearts and blocked the suit. This meant only four tricks to the defense and some lucky declarers.



Born and raised in Illinois, Larry worked at a major insurance company for 33 years, retiring as a director in the systems department. In 2003, he moved to Loveland, Colorado, the home state of his wife, Linda, and soon got involved in the local Bridge scene. Larry served as Unit president for ten years. He has written a weekly column for his unit webpage since 2004 and is a frequent lecturer at the monthly unit games.

# **Sedona Sectional** back in March

**March 12-14, Thur - Sat**

**Game times 10:00 and 2:30 except Sat 9:00**

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928 300-0820 [sparky4921@gmail.com](mailto:sparky4921@gmail.com)**

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## CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

By Curt Soloff, Denver, Colorado

### Major Suit Raises, Part IV: Splinter Bids

Good bridge players constantly upgrade and downgrade their hands as the auction develops. When it comes to distributional features such as singletons and voids, you must ask yourself one key question: Is my shortness an asset? If you have a known suit fit somewhere, shortness in a side suit is an upgrade; moreover, the bigger your trump fit, the more useful that shortness becomes.

Let's say you pick up the following hand:



If your partner deals and opens  $1\heartsuit$ , proceed with caution and downgrade your hand. You will still respond  $1\spadesuit$ , obviously, but do not retrieve the rose colored glasses from your purse. In contrast, how do you feel about your hand if partner

opens 1♠? Now you perk up! You have a guaranteed nine card spade fit. Partner can likely both (a) ruff his heart losers in the dummy and (b) get trumps drawn. We can construct a lot of minimum opening bids (12-14 HCP range) that partner could hold in which your side will take ten tricks with ease. You don't need opener to hold extras for 4♠ to be a fantastic contract.

Based on our initial evaluation, you have decided to force to game. But how? You need to make a forcing bid, but raises to 2♠ and 3♠ are not forcing, so opener could pass. Jumping all the way to 4♠ gets you to game, but conveys a weaker hand. How about starting with a 2♣ bid since you play 2/1 Game Forcing? Well, as we discussed in the last installment, 2/1 sequences should be avoided when responder holds four card trump support. But you do have a perfect bid available to you: the splinter.

MAJOR OPENING			
Expected Min. Length	4	5	
1st/2nd	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3rd/4th	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
RESPONSES			
Double Raise:	Force <input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/>	Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
After Overcall:	Force <input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/>	Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conv. Raise:	2NT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3NT <input type="checkbox"/>	Splinter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____		

When you play splinter bids, you get the luxury of doing three things at once, and it takes only one bid to describe your hand! You get to inform partner that (1) you want to be in game; (2) you have four card (or more) trump support; and (3) you have a singleton or void in one of the side suits. To show this hand, you will make a **double jump-shift** in your short suit. For the hand above, the bid would be a jump to 4♥. This is a very unusual

Where to mark splinter bids on your card

looking bid, and hopefully the strangeness of it will jog partner's memory that it is a conventional bid, not a natural one. After all, if you had a game forcing hand with a heart suit, wouldn't you just start with a simple 2♥ response to 1♠? There is certainly no reason to go flying off to the game level when you actually have hearts, and doing so would unnecessarily eat up precious bidding space.

Note that no matter which major partner opens, or which suit is your short suit, the splinter bid never carries your side past the game level. For example, if partner opens 1♥, your splinters are 3♠, 4♣, and 4♦, all bids that allow you to stop at 4♥.

There is an additional piece to the splinter puzzle that numerous players get wrong when they first start playing the convention, and that error is to think that a splinter bid is unlimited. A splinter bid is NOT, in fact, unlimited; rather, it falls within the range of hands that want to be game but do not have slam interest unless opener has significant extras and/or little to nothing wasted in your short suit. The typical splinter bid should probably be in the 9-11 HCP range. Your partnership should discuss the range, but be sure to keep it fairly narrow.

Also, be aware that when you make a splinter bid, opener becomes the captain of the auction. If a slam investigation takes place, only the opener is permitted to push beyond the game level. Responder has told the story of her hand with the splinter. The rest is up to partner. With that in mind, when should opener consider doing something other than signing off at game? If opener's hand improves significantly with the information delivered by the splinter, opener might forge on toward slam. Imagine that you hold the following hand, and after opening 1♠, you hear a 4♥ splinter from partner:



Prior to partner's splinter, you would (and should) be concerned about quick losers in the heart suit. Now that you know partner has no more than a singleton heart,

can you construct a hand that partner could hold that would allow you to take 12 tricks? If partner held just the right seven points – the ♦A and the trump K – you would likely lose just one heart trick and that’s all. These two hands produce what should be a frosty slam with only 25 combined points!



Curt Soloff is a sapphire life master with 15 years of bridge directing and teaching experience. He has served as the manager and director of the Castle Rock Bridge Club since its inception in 2009 and can be contacted at [castlerockbridge@gmail.com](mailto:castlerockbridge@gmail.com).

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## CONSULT THE COOPERS

By Kitty and Steve Cooper, editors *D17 ScoreCard*

### Play the Card You're Known to Hold.

Several columns this month showed defensive card plays; this inspired us to reprint our column (and lightly re-edit it) from the November 2010 ScoreCard called [Play the Card You're Known to Hold](#).

	<b>N</b> North	
	♠	
	♥ 854	
<b>W</b> West		<b>E</b> East
♠		♠
♥ AJ7		♥ K962
	<b>S</b> South	
	♠	
	♥ Q103	

Suppose as declarer you hold K9xx opposite AJx and finesse the jack, which wins; your only hope for four tricks now is to play the ace and king and hope that the suits splits 3-3. But what do you do when the queen drops under the ace? Against many players it's clear to lead a low card from dummy and insert the nine expecting the next hand to show out. Declarer "knows" that the queen will next fall under the king. But what if a sly defender plays the queen from Q10, a play which

cannot cost since the queen and the 10 are equivalent cards after the jack is played. Declarer must judge whether you have played the queen holding the 10, in which case declarer should play the king, or whether you have played the queen because you had no choice, in which case declarer should finesse the nine. Here's a hot tip: If you make declarer guess what to do, sometimes declarer will get it wrong.

The above example is an easy one, which we would expect any decent defender to do.

Once when we were playing behind screens Kitty was declaring a hand and took a finesse through Steve's screenmate (the person on the same side of the screen as him), playing Steve's queen then his ace and then ruffing one of his two remaining cards with the deuce of trump. What made this so difficult for Steve (other than his usual difficulties whenever he is dummy!) is that his screenmate was showing him her hand and he could see that she held KJ109. And yet she resolutely held on to her king until the bitter end, thus giving Kitty the certainty that she could play to ruff the third and fourth cards of the suit without fear of being overruffed. Steve said later that he felt like grabbing the king and throwing it on the table!

So the next time you're known to hold a card give some thought to whether you can safely play it the next time the suit is led.



Kitty and Steve were both born and raised in New York City, where they knew each other from the local bridge scene. Unfortunately, they foolishly married other people. In 2000, both were again single when they re-met at the Las Vegas Regional. Soon after, they married, and Kitty moved to Albuquerque, where Steve was living. They moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, in 2008 and left there for 'the warmer clime' of San Diego County in 2012.

They are both Grand Life Masters and have won two National Championships together. Kitty has five others and a World Woman's title. They have been your D17 ScoreCard editors since 2010.



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#### Sedona Sectional

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#### Roadrunner Sectional, Scottsdale

March 19-22

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### **Presidents' Day Sectional, El Paso**

February 14-17

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# ***D17 ScoreCard* volume III issue 1**



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