

Olney Bridge Club News

Official newsletter of the Olney Maryland Bridge Club

The Bridge Guy Speaks

For those of you who expressed interest in the first mini-lesson, we will try again on November 16 at 2:00. We will meet in the Children's Room. For those attending, I have put the bridge hand we'll discuss plus some text information on my website (<https://bridge.careytutor.com>). Click on "Class Materials" on the left menu bar and then scroll down to the "Declarer Play Mini-Lesson" items below.

If you are not attending the mini-lesson, please set up tables for the 2:30 practice session as always. We'll finish before 2:30 and join the practice session. Note: when the Children's Room is unavailable, we will use the main meeting for the mini-lessons. Please quietly set up tables while we finish the lesson.

Last month I noted the duplicate bridge sessions run by Allen Shaw at the Holiday Park Senior Center. I regret to report that Allen has since died (he was in his 90's and he will be missed). However, Arlyn Childs (301-275-6773) will temporarily fill Allen's role as contact person for the sessions. If anyone is interested, I'd be glad to brief you on the basics of duplicate play. Just let me know.

Also, Sabine and I will hold a small holiday party on Saturday, December 21, from 2:30 – 4:30 at our house. As we did last year, we'll provide a number of cookies and drinks. Feel free to bring other items as you wish, but nothing is required. Please join us if you can.

As our club continues to grow, please be supportive of all our club members. Our club is very new and many of the current players have only a few months of experience. Help them when you can; be patient otherwise. We'll all get better together.

As always, practice, practice, practice! Our message to the community: bridge is fun and intellectually stimulating – come join us! All ages are welcome!

Next Mini-Lessons:

- *Declarer play – 11/16*
- *Preemptive bids – 12/14*

2:00 – 2:30 – Olney library (Children's Room) or main Meeting Room.

Ongoing Practice Sessions:

Every Saturday from 2:30 – 4:30 at the Olney library (main Meeting Room).

Bridge Club Holiday Party:

Saturday, 12/21, from 2:30 – 4:30 at our home (17501 Shenandoah Ct, Ashton, MD 20861). The last two Saturdays of the year (12/21 and 12/28) are canceled.

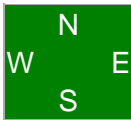
5 – 5 Bidding

In this article I will briefly discuss a fairly common distribution: holding two 5-card suits. This configuration is often very valuable: one suit may end up as trumps, and the other will provide winning tricks.

First, we'll explore the opening bidder's path. Then, we'll show a different method when bidding with two 5-card suits after the opponents have already bid.

As an opening bidder with two 5-card suits, the rules are pretty straightforward: Bid your higher-ranking suit first to allow an easier rebid of your second suit. Why is the rebid better in this case? Because your partner, with a weak hand, may correct back to your first suit without getting too high in the bidding.

Here is a simple example:

	♠ Q		
North Deals	♥ A Q 4 3 2	♠ J 10 2	
None Vul	♦ Q 2	♥ K J 9	
	♣ K 9 4 3 2	♦ J 10 6 3	
♠ A 9 7 5 4		♣ A Q 5	
♥ 10 8 7		♠ K 8 6 3	
♦ A 8 5 4		♥ 6 5	
♣ 10		♦ K 9 7	
		♣ J 8 7 6	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♣	All pass	

North has 13 high card points and 2 length points (for the 5th club and heart). However, I would downgrade the singleton spade queen (we'll discuss upgrading and downgrading high card points in a future newsletter). So, there is a choice between opening 1H or 1C.

Let's start with the recommended 1H bid. East has 12 high card points but also a "flat" hand (4 – 3 – 3 – 3). With no 5-card or longer suit, East has no good bid, so they pass. South bids their 4-card major suit (1S), West passes, and now North has an easy rebid: 2C. That shows at least 4 clubs along with the promised 5 hearts. South has an equally easy response: pass. They prefer clubs over hearts and now know that

they have 4 + 4 = 8 clubs or more. A good fit, a good contract.

Now, try the other approach: Open 1C. Same for East (pass), but now South has a choice: they could bid 1S or 2C. 2C is nonoptimal: North may have opened 1C with only 3 club cards. So, 1S is the bid. Oops. Now, North is stuck on their rebid. They can rebid their clubs (2C), but then they have hidden their 5-card heart suit. Not good if South actually had 3 hearts to produce an 8-card fit. Or North could bid 2H. But this would require that South take a preference to clubs by bidding at the three level: 3C. This a bad contract and will be set one trick. The 2H bid is an example of a **reverse**: where the responder is forced to the three level to show a preference between two previously-bid suits. For this reason, a reverse requires a stronger hand: 16+ points.

Now let's switch gears and assume that the opponents have already opened the bidding, and you hold two 5-card suits, one of which is a major (hearts/spades). Is there a way that you can show that lovely combination? Why, yes, there is: using the **Michael's convention**. You'll have to discuss this with your partner before using it, but it can be quite effective.

Here's a summary of how it works:

- They open 1C, and you bid 2C.
- They open 1D, and you bid 2D.
- They open 1H, and you bid 2H.
- They open 1S, and you bid 2S.

As you can see, you are bidding their suit! This is almost never wise if you really have a good suit that happens to be in their originally-bid suit. In those cases, pass and let them falter on their own.

So, what do these bids mean? They are examples of **artificial bids**. They do not

indicate strength in the bid suit. Instead, they tell partner “I have 5 – 5 in two suits (at least one of which is a major) and about 6 – 11 points.” Note: this is a basic approach. Some partners will allow other point ranges.

So, which suits are you promising? It’s pretty simple:

- The 2C and 2D bids indicate a holding of 5 – 5 in hearts and spades.
- The 2H bid indicates a 5-card spade suit (the other major) and a 5-card minor suit (clubs or diamonds).
- The 2S bid indicates a 5-card heart suit (the other major) plus a 5-card minor suit.

Subsequent bidding is mostly natural. Namely, if you have support for an indicated major, raise that bid appropriately.

There are times when Michaels can’t be used. For example, if you have 5 hearts and 5 diamonds and the opponents bid 1C – you can’t respond 2C. The 2C bid promises 5 – 5 in hearts/spades. So, what do you do in this case? Just overcall in your higher-ranking suit (in this case, 1H). Maybe you’ll get a chance to show your diamond suit later.

There are some additional conventions for when you don’t like their major suit but want to know their minor suit. I’ll discuss in a future newsletter.

Trump Control

This article will begin the discussion of how to keep control of your trump suit as declarer. This example is from a recent tournament, where I badly handled trump control and went down by one trick:

		♠ K 7 6 4	
East Deals		♥ Q 10 7 5	
Both Vul		♦ 10 8 2	
		♣ J 5	
♠ 10 8 5	W	N	E
♥ J 6 4 2	S		♠ Q J
♦ K Q J			♥ A K 9 3
♣ A 10 4			♦ A 9 4 3
			♣ K 3 2
			♠ A 9 3 2
			♥ 8
			♦ 7 6 5
			♣ Q 9 8 7 6
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 NT	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	All pass		
Lead: ♦ 7			

West has 11 high card points and has two choices: bid 3NT directly or look for an 8-card heart fit. Because of the flat distribution (4 – 3 – 3 – 3), the 3NT is safer, but in this case, we tried 2C (the Stayman convention, asking East to show a 4-card heart or spade suit). We’ll discuss the Stayman convention in a future mini-lesson and newsletter article.

In this case, East shows the 4-card heart suit and West bids the 4H game.

East wins the opening lead in the dummy hand and now must think. Counting losers first (suit contract), we see that there are 2 losers in spades and one potential loser in both hearts and clubs. One too many. However, with good luck, a small club may be discarded on the 4th diamond winner. All I needed was a 3 – 2 trump split (68% chance)! So, I immediately played the A and K of hearts – and the contract was hopeless. The trump split was 4 – 1 and North held the Q – T over my J – 6.

What should I have done instead? I should have considered the possibility of a 4 – 1 trump split. How? By playing the A of hearts and then returning to West to lead a small heart. If North played a low heart, I would finesse the 9 of hearts. If South could win, the hearts split 3 – 2 and all is well as described above. If, on the other hand, South is out of hearts, my 9 of hearts wins. I now switch to spades. N/S can win their two spade tricks (and eventually one heart trick), but I will discard a club on the good ten of spades. Once I play the A and K of clubs, I'll lead West's last club and overtrump North if needed. Count them up – that gives me ten tricks: I lose only the A and K of spades and the Q of hearts.

This is a very tough hand. I recommend dealing out the cards to match the diagram and see if you can follow the logic. The next article shows a simpler trump control hand.

Try to Bid (and Play) It

This is from the 8/16/24 Frank Stewart column. Try to bid and play it. Think about how to maintain **trump control**.

	♠ 9 6 3 2		
South Deals	♥ 3		
None Vul	♦ A J 7 4 2		
	♣ J 6 4		
♠ A K J	N	♠ —	
♥ J 10 9 6 2	W S E	♥ K 8 5 4	
♦ Q 9		♦ K 10 8 5 3	
♣ 10 8 2		♣ Q 9 7 5	
	♠ Q 10 8 7 5 4		
	♥ A Q 7		
	♦ 6		
	♣ A K 3		
West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			
Lead: ♥ J			

The bidding is straightforward. After South's opening 1S (with 15 high card points plus 2 length points), North has an easy 2S response with only 6 high card points but also 3 distribution points for the short heart suit. Remember that distribution points are added only after a trump suit is agreed (in this case, spades). The usual extra points are 1 for a doubleton (2 cards in a suit), 2 for a singleton, and 3 for a void. In this case, having a 4th trump is worth an extra point.

Once South hears the 2S bid, they reevaluate their hand (as we discussed in October). Add 1 point for the fifth trump and 2 points for the 6th trump (in addition to your original 2 extra length points). That gives 20 total points. Because North has at least 6 points, the magic number 26 says "go for it!" and bid the 4S game.

Review the hand before playing. In a suit contract, count losers first, and let's use the stronger hand (South) as the master hand. You have 2 or 3 spade losers (A, K, and maybe J) and 1 club loser, plus potentially 2 heart losers. With the lucky jack of hearts lead, your queen of hearts will win one of those losing tricks. So, that leaves 4 or 5 potential losers, and you can only afford to lose 3 tricks.

What can you do about that? You have two main choices: try to set your long diamond suit or try to ruff a heart. As you increase your experience, you'll see that your 6 cards in diamonds are hard to set up. The opponents have 7 cards: they outnumber you. So, your best chance is to ruff a heart and a club in dummy.

What if you try to draw trumps before proceeding? Oops. West wins the first three trump tricks immediately. That leaves North with only one remaining trump. They can ruff one heart, but they still have the club loser. Down one.

Therefore, don't plan to draw trumps immediately! Yes, we told all beginners to draw trumps early in most cases. Well, here's an exception: don't draw trumps early if you think you have to ruff losers to make your contract. In this case you can see that if you can ruff all losing tricks, you can afford to lose three trump tricks (assuming West has AKJ).

In this case, win the first heart trick and play the other high heart to discard a club from North. Then lead the third heart to ruff in dummy. Lead a club back to South's ace, play the king of clubs, and lead the remaining club to be ruffed in dummy. Now you can afford to lead a trump and see how they split. You lose only the 3 trump tricks. All is well.

Famous Bridgies

Benito Garozzo was a member of the Italian Blue Team in the 1960's and '70's. Together, they won 13 world championships. His two main partners were Pietro Forquet and the inimitable Giorgio Belladonna. He was at one time considered the world's foremost bridge player.

Forquet and Garozzo developed the Blue Club bidding system, which plagued the more staid American and European players during that early period. Garozzo later developed the "Super Precision Club" system with Belladonna. They won several world championships together. He also took part in the Omar Sharif Bridge Circus tours during 1967 – 1971.

Garozzo was born and lived in Naples and Rome, Italy, where he owned a jewelry business. He has been a U.S. citizen since 1987. Garozzo is still playing on BBO today, at age 97.

Bridge Quotes

You should never stop studying, no matter how many times you win. **Benito Garozzo**, quoted in Bobby Wolfe's 1999 *World Class: Conversations with the Bridge Masters*.

Olney Bridge Club

The primary purpose of the Olney MD Bridge Club is to teach and encourage social bridge in the areas including and surrounding Olney, Maryland.

We meet regularly (Saturdays from 2:30 – 4:30) at the Olney library for practice playing sessions.

Please feel free to send email to bridgeinfo@bridge.careytutor.com with any questions, comments, recommendations, or other correspondence for the editor. In particular, if you have a bridge article to include in a future newsletter or a suggestion of a possible topic, any such submission would be much appreciated.

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