

# Olney Bridge Club News

*Official newsletter of the Olney Maryland Bridge Club*

## The Bridge Guy Speaks

Well, the days roll by, and we're almost ready for the autumn season of the year. This is a time for preparation for the long winter to come – figuratively and literally.

Sabine and I will be getting our flu and covid shots in late September/early October. That should give some protection during the flu season (November through March) as well as the next covid spike (probably near New Years Day). But whether you vaxx or not, please trust your health instincts. If you feel under the weather, please stay home and take care of yourself. The bridge games will still be there when you get back.

I'll also be starting the promised mini-lessons in early October (and continuing in November and December). After a couple of comments from the group, I think I'll start with a series of sessions on card play. We'll practice counting: losers and winners as well as the number of missing trumps. We'll consider how to win tricks and when to wait to win tricks. We'll learn a few new techniques.

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-Lesson:**

- *Playing techniques I – Oct (date TBD)*
- *2:00 – 2:30 at the Olney library (Children's Room).*

### **Ongoing Practice Sessions:**

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

## Knowing and Going

In the last newsletter, we talked about two magic numbers: 8 and 26. We are trying to find a “fit” in a suit with 8 cards between the two partners. As the bidding proceeds, each teammate is counting the combined team points – with 26 points the team can bid to the 4 level (suit) or to 3 No Trump.

**“The one who knows, goes.”** What does this old saying mean? It simply means that whichever partner first knows the combined point count – they will make the decision on the level of the contract.

**Example:** The opening bid is 1 spade (12+ points, 5+ spades). The responding partner bids 2 spades (6 – 9 points, 3+ spades). If the opening bidder reevaluates their hands and sees 19+, the partnership total is 25+. That is close enough to the magic 26 – go for it! The opening bidder should place the contract: 4 spades, a game contract (4 spade tricks at 30 points apiece gives 120 points, more than the minimum 100 points for game). Don't bid anything else...and expect your partner to help you out. They might pass! When you know you have a game contract, bid it.

**Example:** The same situation as above, but the opening bidder reevaluates their hand to only 15 points. The partnership total is 24 points (15 + a maximum of 9). That is usually insufficient for a game bid, and the opening bidder should pass. There is no need for any additional bids – the opener knows that 26 is impossible.


So, in both of the examples, we noted that the bidder reevaluates their hand after each bid (by partner or, in the future, by opponents). How do we perform that reevaluation?

I will elaborate upon “hand reevaluation” in a future newsletter article. But to summarize the options we’ll discuss:

- Extra trumps
- High card location
- Hand structure (unbalanced/flat)

## Long Side Suit

You will find that having a second suit of 4 or more cards is a major positive when playing for a contract. If partner has support for that suit, extra tricks are often available.

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

North initially evaluates their hand at 15 total points (14 high card points plus 1 length point in clubs). With a 5-card club suit, they open 1 club. South initial evaluates their hand as 9 high card points. If they chose to support clubs, they could count 1 extra point for the diamond doubleton (shortness). But, instead, they show their 4-card spade suit (higher scores are available in a spade contract). They can do so cheaply at the one-level.

In this case, North has 4-card spade support. They reevaluate their hand, assuming that they will be the dummy hand. In addition to their initial 15 points, they add 2 or 3 points for the heart singleton (shortness). They can then jump in spades to 3 spades (shows 16 – 18 total points).

Now, South also reevaluates their hand, adding 1 point for their doubleton in diamonds. They all give a little extra for their second fit – in partner’s club suit. Because their 10 points plus partner’s 16+ now adds to at least 26 points, they can confidently bid the 4 spade game.

Note that the partnership holds only 23 high card points. The hand structure and the fit between the two hands increases their combined value.

The play is straightforward. You see a loser in hearts, possibly two losers in diamonds, and possibly a loser in clubs (and in spades if one opponent holds more than 4 cards in the suit). So, you may need to eliminate at least one loser – either with a ruff or by using your long clubs for a discard.

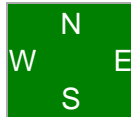
The obvious opening lead is the Queen of hearts, which gives declarer a free trick with the King. But assume that West is cagier and leads the Ten of spades instead.

First, test the trumps by playing two rounds (say, the Ace and King). When the split is

seen to be 3 – 2 (were you counting the trump suit as it was played?), I'd take one more trump and then take the King of clubs. When the next club is led, the Queen appears, taken by the Ace. Now the long club suit is used to discard a diamond. Declarer will have only two losers (one heart and one diamond).

## Try to Bid (and Play) It

This is from the 9/7/24 Frank Stewart column. Try to bid and play it. Think about the “danger hand” and how to plan your trick-taking.

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

For those not familiar with “preemptive bids”, the 2S bid shows 6 – 11 points and a 6-card spade suit. A preemptive bid stops the opponents from bidding at a lower level. We'll discuss preemptive bids in a future mini-lesson plus a future newsletter article.

With 15 high card points and length in clubs, North inserts a 3 club bid. South takes a chance and bids a risky 3NT.

After the Ace of spades opening lead and West's subsequent Ten of diamonds, the

planning begins. In a No Trump contract, count winners. Using South as the master hand, South sees 4 heart winners, 2 diamond winners, and 2 club winners. One trick short, but the long clubs look like a likely place to win an additional trick, if the opponents' suits split 3 – 2 (68% chance).

But are your red lights flashing? Where is the danger hand? You know West holds 6 spades, headed by the Ace (played) and the King (promised by the play of the Ace). West may also hold either the Jack or Ten, in which case South's Queen is trapped – if East ever leads spades. So, East is the danger hand. If they get in by winning a trick, back comes a spade and down you go.

How do you resolve this problem? By trying to get West to win an early club trick.

So, after winning the Ace of diamonds, lead the 9 of clubs. If West plays the Queen, **let them win!** They are not the danger hand. They have no card they can lead that will hurt you. If, on the other hand, West plays low, then win the Ace of clubs, lead a heart to South, and lead clubs again. Again, if West plays a high card (as in this case), **let them win!** Because clubs split 3 – 2, you will win any return and cash the remaining clubs for 10 tricks. The contract is safe.

## Famous Bridgies

As a follow-up to last month's article on Alfred Sheinwold, one must note his successor, Frank Stewart. Frank has won a number of North American national championships, but his road to fame is paved with his bridge column articles and 19 bridge books. Originally born in New York, Frank studied history and music at the University of Alabama and taught bridge there for a number of years. Stewart and his wife, Charlotte, later moved to Tennessee, where they currently reside.

Frank's Daily Bridge Club articles grace the pages of over 100 newspapers (including the Washington Post). His characters (Unlucky Louie, Cy the Cynic, Wendy, and Minnie Bottoms) each exemplify a particular type of player – and he uses them to illustrate his well-thought-out concept of the day. His articles target all levels of players, from his “Simple Saturday” entries to more difficult passages on advanced card play. But all of us can learn from any article...and laugh while doing so.

Note: Baron Barclay maintains a collection of Frank's columns:

<https://www.baronbarclay.com/frank-stewarts-daily-bridge-column/>.

## Bridge Rules

### **Defender's opening lead out of turn:**

This occurs when an opponent of the declarer makes the opening lead when not properly designated to do so. Example: North is the declarer, but West makes an opening lead (face up exposure of a card) instead of East.

**General statement:** If the opening lead were made face down (optional, but recommended), the incorrect opening leader may be informed of the error. If the card has not been exposed (turned face up), the card may be withdrawn and the correct opening lead made, all without penalty.

**Adjustment:** After an incorrect play of an opening lead (face up), declarer may orally accept the opening lead (without consultation with partner). In that case, the dummy is faced as always, but the next card played comes from the declarer's hand.

If declarer faces all or part of their hand (either if believing they were the dummy or by conscious decision), that faced hand becomes the dummy hand, and declarer's partner becomes the new declarer.

If the dummy player faces their hand or otherwise exposes any of their cards to the declarer, declarer must accept the opening lead, and the original dummy hand is exposed.

Finally, declarer may request that the defender retract their incorrect opening lead. In that case, the incorrectly exposed card becomes a **penalty card**. The disposition of penalty cards will be discussed in a future article.

## 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](mailto: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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