

## BARBARA & ALEX'S BRIDGE TIPS

1.

S Q  
H K9  
D QJ6432  
C K863

If your partner opens 2C, what will you bid?

Some will bid 2D (waiting) and some may bid 3D to show 8 or more HCP and a good quality 5 card or longer Diamond suit. The Diamond suit is not that great but there are six of them to make up for the not-great quality.

OK, let's say you bid 2D. Your partner now bids 2NT.

What is she telling you?

And what will you bid next?

We like the following NT ranges:

20-21 HCP: Open 2NT

22-23 HCP: Open 2C and then bid 2NT

24-25 HCP: Open 2C and then bid 3NT

26-27 HCP: Open 3NT

28+ HCP: Open 2C and then bid 4NT. This is not Blackwood

So, after the 2NT rebid by partner, you add your points to hers and come up with 33 HCP (11+ 22) so you bid 6NT, knowing that you cannot be missing two aces. Missing two aces, you would be missing 8 HCP and you can only be missing 7 HCP, using the Rule of 40. You do pray that you are not missing an Ace and King in the same suit but what are the odds.

Here is partner's hand:

S AK1083  
H AQJ  
D AK  
C Q54

There are 12 happy tricks there for the taking and maybe even 13 if one of your opponents is friendly and discards a Spade from Jxxx.

**2.** Partner opens 2NT and you pick up this hand:

S QJ6  
H Q97  
D KQ764  
C QJ

Let's say you bid 4C (Gerber) and opener bids 4D. What is your next bid?

How many Aces is partner saying that she has when she bids 4D?

Answer: ZERO or all FOUR.

Which is it? How can you tell? here's how. Look at your hand. If the 2NT opener has NO Aces, then in order to open 2NT, she could have had:

Remember you are thinking she has NO Aces.

So what is left, looking at your hand?

She could have

Spade King

Heart King and Jack

Diamond Jack

Club King

That totals 11 HCP. Could she have opened 2NT with only 11 HCP? NO, so now you know she has all four Aces. Bid 6NT!

If you play Puppet Stayman, the auction should go

2NT - 3C (Puppet, in case partner has a 5-card major)

She doesn't so you will rest in 6NT.

**3.** Here's another hand: (Hand by Rob Drummond of Toronto Bridge, who is a great teacher). Commentary by Barbara.

S 2  
H AK853  
D K865  
C K107

Partner opens 1C and you respond 1H. Opener now bids 1S. You have enough points for game. What do you now bid?

a) 3NT?

b) 4H ? Partner could have a void in Hearts!

c) 2C: Not forcing and shows 6-9 points and preference for Clubs

d) 3C: Still not forcing and shows 10-12 pts and preference for Clubs

New suits are forcing. Old suits are not forcing.  
What is the one thing you really need to know?

Answer: You need to know if opener has 3 card support for your Heart suit, in which case 4H is the safest and best contract. When you have an eight-card fit in a major, it is always better to be in a trump suit contract than in NT because you have better control in a trump suit contract.

SO, you MUST use the convention: Fourth Suit Forcing. You bid 2D which says NOTHING at all about Diamonds. You could even have a void in Diamonds. This asks partner to show three-card support for your major as # 1 priority. If she does not have that, then she shows a stopper in that fourth suit or bids that fourth suit if she owns four of them.

This is Opener's hand:

S QJ75  
H 942  
D Q  
C AQ986

You cannot make 3NT whereas 4H plays nicely.

If you would like a write-up on Fourth Suit Forcing, click here:

<https://barbaraseagram.com/pdf/FOURTH-SUIT-FORCING-Mini-handout.pdf>

**4.**One more hand for you!

You pick up this hand:

S Q1083  
H AJ732  
D 5  
C AK5

Partner opens 1C and you bid 1H. Partner now bids 4H. What will you now bid?

- a) Pass
- b) 4S
- c) 5C
- d) 4NT
- e) 6H

How many points has opener promised now by bidding 4H?

YOU only promised 6 or more points. If you only had 6 points, partner bid like a maniac and bid 4H anyway so she must have 20 or more points (or 19+)

When you revalue your hand, you have 16 points and you expect about 20 points from partner. That is the sound of slam!

Thus, either c) d) or e) are good bids. 5C would show first-round control of Clubs. 4NT would be Keycard Blackwood and 6H is just because you cannot possibly be missing two Aces with all those points.

Partner's hand is

S AKJ4  
H K965  
D AK  
C J97

### Here is a bridge tip from Jean Collins

If you make a takeout double and partner dutifully bids a suit and then you change that suit (maybe because you didn't like the one that partner chose), you are guaranteeing that you hold at least 18 points .

This is called "The Big Double". Notice how this fits in with Overcalls. A one level overcall shows 8-17 points. So what do you do with 18? You double first and then bid your suit!!! And partner will know that you have the BIG hand, i. e. too many points to overcall at your first turn. Cool, eh?

## FINDING THE MISSING QUEEN

by Andrew Robson

When you need to guess which opponent holds a critical missing honour, you should apply such maxims as “the high card lies with the opponent who opened the bidding” and “the high card lies with the length”. Cover up the East-West cards and see if you can avoid losing to ♣ Q and so make this contract.

West Deals	♠ A 6 4 2											
E-W Vul	♥ 10 3 2											
	♦ K Q 10											
	♣ 10 9 7											
	♠ K Q J 9 7	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;"> </td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 8
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♥ A K Q 7 5		♥ 8 4									
	♦ 8 3		♦ J 7 6 5 4 2									
	♣ 5		♣ Q 6 4									
	♠ 5 3											
	♥ J 9 6											
	♦ A 9											
	♣ A K J 8 3 2											

West North East South

1 ♠	Pass	Pass	2 ♣
2 ♥	3 ♣	Pass	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠	4 ♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West cashed ♥ AKQ, East discarding ♦ 2 on the third ♥, and West then switched to ♠ K. Declarer won dummy's ♠ A and crossed to ♣ K in case ♣ Q was singleton. He cashed ♦ A, led ♦ 9 to ♦ Q, then led dummy's ♣ 10. When East played ♣ 6, the moment of decision had arrived. Which opponent held ♣ Q – was it West, the opponent who opened the bidding; or East, likely to hold longer clubs as he held fewer major-suit cards?

West would have bid the way he did regardless of whether or not he held ♣ Q. In fact, counting the hand reveals that ♣ Q was certain to be with East – West had revealed five cards in each major during the bidding and followed to two rounds of ♦s and one round of ♣s: Therefore West cannot have two Clubs. East must have ♣ Q. Declarer correctly ran dummy's ♣ 10 (finessing East for ♣ Q), then remembered to cash ♦ K discarding ♠ 5, before leading ♣ 9 to ♣ Q and ♠ A.

**ANDREW'S TIP:** Generally play the missing high card to be with the opponent holding greater length in that suit.

## TELEPATHY AT BRIDGE

### TELEPATHY by MICHAEL BERKOWITZ

Telepathy is hard. I remember trying to pass messages to my friends in class telepathically, but never having success.

I told my sister about my efforts, and she was oddly encouraging. "Why don't I think of a number and you'll tell me what number I'm thinking of," she said. I thought a while and said, "Seventy-two". Her jaw dropped, "How did you do that?!"

After that, I used to get very mad at my friends for not thinking properly during school.

Whose fault is it when partner can't read your mind?

While there are some experts who love to be on lead, the vast majority hate it. Larry Cohen wishes the dummy would come down before the opening lead is made. Still, making leads is a part of life. There's no amount of lead theory that can match the importance of having a partner who knows that you can't hear them thinking "lead a spade, lead a spade, lead a spade".

There are two main ways you can help partner with opening leads: make lead directing doubles and overcalls to show what suit you want led. When can you make lead-directing doubles? Well, the higher the level, the less you need. For example on the auction:

1NT--Pass--2♣, you should have good clubs and club length to double—something like ♣AQJ109 (We wish it could always be that good); ♣KQ109x is probably more realistic.

You do have to consider what else could happen though. Imagine holding

♠ 32  
♥ 872  
♦ 53  
♣ KJ10872.

The auction goes 1NT by LHO and Pass by partner. 2♣ by RHO. You should absolutely double! Why? Your partner is going to be on lead against something and if they lead away from an honor in another suit, it will be a catastrophe, since you have nothing to offer anywhere else. The opponents aren't likely to play in 2♣ doubled (or redoubled).

As your opponents bid higher, you need less in that suit to make a lead-directing bid. On the auction:



WEST	NORTH	EAST (YOU)	SOUTH
			1♣
Pass	2NT*	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	?	*Jacoby 2NT

If you have the ♥KQ3, you should double! You don't care about what the rest of the deal is. Maybe partner has an ace or maybe not, but you still want partner leading that suit.

Overcalling is another area where you can help your partner out. My father once said, "If you make a bad lead when I didn't have a chance to overcall on the one-level, then that's unlucky. If you make a bad lead when I could've overcalled on the one-level, that's my fault."

Particularly when partner starts the auction by passing, you should look to help partner with a lead-directing call. Nobody vulnerable, give yourself

♠ 5  
♥ KQ1098  
♦ J63  
♣ 8632.

The auction is Pass by partner--1♣ by RHO to you. You should get a 1♥ call in here. Partner's likely to be on lead against spades and you want to stop partner from doing something silly like leading from ♦Q742.

One last, more advanced idea: when partner preempts and the opponents make a takeout double, you can bid a new suit as a lead-directing call. You should only do this with support for partner's suit (and with partnership agreement). For instance, you hold:

♠ J74  
♥ 63  
♦ AK843  
♣ 962

Partner opens 2♣ and East doubles. You are South and should bid 3♦ on the way to 3♣ since the opponents are likely to get to 4♥ anyways. This is your chance to show partner what you'd like led.



## THE COLOURING BOX OF BRIDGE MASTER POINTS

by Richard Ross  
Manager & Director of Stephen's  
Bridge Club

When I first started playing duplicate bridge, master points were issued in the form of little paper certificates, which gave the player a tangible record of his or her achievement.

I treasured those slips of paper and was so proud when I had collected a bunch of them and sent them in to the ACBL to have them recorded. My friends were very blasé about their slips and saved them in the glove compartment of their cars. It was a standing joke that when the glove compartment got too full of master point slips, it was time to trade in the car.

I almost yearn for those days when I would get that little slip of paper; as dear to me as a high school diploma; my announcement to the world that I won .06 of a match point for coming fourth in a pairs event.

Nowadays, master points are recorded electronically; no little certificates, no need to submit anything. It's all done instantaneously without any effort at all - save, of course, the effort of actually winning the points.

The points awarded at the club level are **Black** points. These are the easiest to get.

Sectional tournaments held within the ACBL's units (we are in Unit 166) offer **Silver** points. You can also win silver points at STaC events (STaC = Silver points tournament at Clubs). We will be hosting STaC events from time to time so watch out for announcements in the near future.

**Red** points are available at Regional events except for the overall winners and section-top winners who get **Gold**.

**Platinum** points - the true hen's-teeth of the bridge world - are awarded at National championships.

Gold points are also awarded at regional tournaments' novice events. Called **Gold Rush** competitions, these offer a much easier way of earning gold than having to win at an Open game at a Regional. There will be Gold Rush events at the Easter Regional in Toronto this April, and I encourage you to play; especially, those of you who need gold points.



But to what end do we compete for master points? Some people play bridge for the pure enjoyment of the game. It's a social activity which keeps the mind active. Some play for that competitive edge, the need to win. But many of us strive to become a Life Master.

If you have less than five master points, you are considered a **Rookie**. At five, you become a **Junior Master** and at 10 points, you may call yourself a **Club Master**.

At 50 master points, you are considered a **Sectional Master** but here's where it gets tricky. Of those 50 points, at least five of them have to be silver.

Confused yet? No? Read on. You will be.

The next stage is **Regional Master** for which you'll need 100 master points of which 15 must be black, 15 must be silver and no less than five have to be red.

Then comes **NABC Master** which is 200 master points: at least 20 must be black, 25 silver, at least 20 red/gold/platinum and at least five gold/platinum.

You're well on your way now to **Advanced NABC Master**. For this lofty height, you need 300 points: 50 black, 50 silver, 50 red/gold/platinum and 25 gold/platinum.

And now we're there. **Life Master**. For this you require 500 master points of which no less than 75 are black, 75 silver, 100 red/gold/platinum and 50 gold/platinum.

It's a long road and not an easy journey. Some never make it; some continue to play only for the social aspect and mental challenge without masterpoint goals. But there really is a thrill opening the envelope from the ACBL, reading the letter of congratulations from the President and receiving the heavy metal card that tells the world that you're now a Life Master (I know that sounds chauvinistic, but I cannot see anyone striving to become a Life Mistress).

For me, seeing my name in print in The Bulletin was a great moment of personal satisfaction and I still read each month the names of newly crowned Life Masters. (New Life Masters is actually the second thing I read in The Bulletin).

So play often, play well and let me know if you're getting close to a milestone so we can all watch out for you and cheer you on.

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