

AVOIDING SLOW PLAY

by Martin Hunter ACBL Tournament Director

Fast(er) Players are not that much faster than Slow(er) Players. They just tend to do fewer things that slow down the game. Slow(er) players are more likely to be not ready to bid, play, or even start a hand. Why?

- 1) They are writing in their scorecards when they should be taking their cards from a board, making a call, playing a card, or entering information into the BridgeMate.
- 2) They are entering information in the BridgeMate, when they should be leading, displaying the dummy, or playing a card.
- 3) They are discussing results when they should be starting the next hand.
- 4) They are not ready to start a round promptly, for non-bridge reasons.

What can we do to waste less time?

If you are the Opening Leader: Your only task is to make the opening lead. Do not write in your scorecard. Do not enter any information in the BridgeMate. Place your opening lead face down. Allow your partner and / or declarer to ask any questions they may have. Then, face your opening lead. It takes 5-10 seconds for Dummy to display their hand properly. Most good declarers take at least 15 seconds to study the dummy, make a plan, ask about defenders' carding. That is plenty of time for you to do the other stuff.

If you are the Dummy: Your immediate task is to display your dummy properly. Do not write in your scorecard. Do not enter any information in the BridgeMate. You will have plenty of time during the play of the hand to do the other stuff.

At the end of the hand:

The BridgeMate Operator's only task is to complete the data entry and have opponent accept. Do not enter anything into your scorecard, or discuss the hand, until you have done this. Be ready to start the next round promptly.

If you are an EW pair waiting to go to a table that is still playing after a round has been called, be ready when they finish - do not wander off.

If you are a NS pair waiting for an EW pair that is still playing after a round has been called, be ready when they finish - do not wander off.

Some things to keep in mind:

Claiming (and conceding) speeds up the game. We understand that experienced players are more comfortable doing this, but playing out all 52 cards is often unnecessary.

We all like to discuss the results, but anything more than 10 seconds is excessive between hands and anything at all is unacceptable, if your table is behind.

While Players are required to shuffle their cards, before returning them to the pocket of the board, a little mixing is enough. Multiple shuffles just slows down the game.

Asking questions during the auction slows down the game and can create a problem for your partner. Unless an opponent's bid is alerted, and when you have no intention of bidding, it is best to ask questions before you make your opening lead (if on lead) & if it was partner on lead, then ask after opening lead is made face down.

It is understood that difficult hands will come up, both in bidding and in play, that will take longer than others to complete, but:

Actively ethical players make a concerted effort to catch up, once they have fallen behind, regardless of the reason for their lateness.

If a table is late finishing a round: (after round has been called)

Get the result into the BM, accepted, and move on. Absolutely no discussion and no other time wasting (# 1-4 above)

If a table is late starting a round: All 4 players are responsible for getting caught up, regardless of who was at fault for the delay. No time wasting (# 1-4 above)

Comments to Director, such as "It's not our fault" or "They were late" serve no purpose.

It is considered poor etiquette to ask for boards from another table, before a round is called.

It is a violation of procedure for a NS pair to not pass completed boards to the next table, after a round has been called.

COUNT CAREFULLY TO COME HOME **by Phillip Alder**

	98654	
	K53	
	K7	
	982	
AJ103		KQ7
742		86
96532		J108
K		QJ1074
	2	
	AQJ109	
	AQ4	
	A653	
S	N	
1H	2H	
4H		

Vinoba Bhave, an Indian advocate for human rights who died in 1982, said, "Innumerable actions are going on through us all the time. If we started counting them, we should never come to an end."

If every player counted his tricks correctly, there would be no average players remaining; everyone would be an expert. Luckily it is not that tough at the bridge table. But the more counting you do, the better you will play.

In today's deal, how should South plan the play in four hearts after West leads a trump? North was correct to raise his partner's five-card-major opening bid to two hearts, not respond one spade. With a weak hand, it is best to make a limited bid immediately.

After West had led a trump and the dummy was tabled, a careless declarer would charge into the play. He would draw trumps and continue with the ace and another club. He would be hoping for an even club break, but East would gratefully cash three club tricks, then lead the spade king to defeat the contract.

South should have counted his tricks more carefully. He had nine sure winners (five hearts, three diamonds and one club), and the tenth could come from either a 3-3 club division - which will happen about one-third of the time - or a club ruff in the dummy.

The correct play is to win the first trick in hand and immediately cash three diamond tricks, discarding a club from the dummy. Next, lead the ace and another club. East will win and return a trump, but South wins in hand and ruffs a club in the dummy with the heart king for his tenth trick.

Note that if South carelessly wins either of the trump leads with dummy's king, West will be able to ruff the third club with the heart seven. Any time you can arrange a ruff in the shorter trump hand, it is almost certain to be the right play.

*Note from Barbara: **R.I.D. Stands for Ruff In Dummy.** (OR ruff in the hand that has the fewer trump...called the short hand.) It is the commonest way of disposing off losers. Ruffing in dummy ALWAYS gains you extra tricks. Rarely does ruffing in declarer's hand gain you tricks.*

**IS IT FORCING?
ARE PARTNER AND I ON THE SAME PAGE?
by
Josée Hammill**

What is a forcing bid? Is a jump bid always forcing? We've all been there! You made a bid you thought was forcing and it was passed by partner. You passed a bid Partner thought was 100% forcing. As if this was not enough there is also a difference between Forcing bids (F) for one round and Game Forcing Bids (GF). The first two rounds of bidding are the critical ones, and ones where we are all most likely to commit serious blunders. If you and Partner get through the first two rounds of bidding with an understanding of which bids are forcing and which are not, the rest of the auction will occur naturally and without causing either one of you any anxiety!

One way to look at whether a bid is forcing is to ask yourself if the suit has been bid before by you or partner. So we like to say that Old Suits (Suits that have been bid before) are not Forcing. Also any rebid in NT by either Opener or Responder is considered Not Forcing as they all show an exact point count. You also know from your early days of playing bridge that a new suit by Responder is always forcing. Does the same apply when Opener bids a new suit? Let's find out!

Look at the following examples, and decide if the last bid is Forcing (F), Game Forcing (GF) or Not Forcing (NF)

Opener's Rebids

1.

West North East South

1H Pass 1S Pass

3S Pass

2.

West North East South

1H Pass 1S Pass

2H Pass

3.

West North East South

1H Pass 1S Pass

3H Pass

4.

West North East South

1H Pass 1S Pass

2NT Pass

5.

West North East South

1D Pass 1S Pass

2H Pass

6.

West North East South

1D Pass 1S Pass

2C Pass

7.

West North East South

1D Pass 1S Pass

3C Pass

8.

West North East South

1D Pass 1H Pass

1S Pass

9.

West North East South

1H Pass 2D Pass

3C Pass

10.

West North East South

1D Pass 1H Pass

2S Pass

Responder's rebids

11.

West North East South

1D Pass 1S Pass

2C Pass 2S pass

12.

West North East South

1D Pass 1S Pass

1NT Pass 2S Pass

13.

West North East South

1H Pass 1S Pass

2H Pass 2S Pass

14.

West North East South

1H Pass 1S Pass

2H Pass 3C Pass

15.

West North East South

1D Pass 1S Pass

1NT Pass 2H Pass

16.

West North East South

1H Pass 1NT Pass

2H Pass 3C Pass

17.

West North East South

1D Pass 1S Pass

2C Pass 2H Pass

18.

West North East South

1C Pass 1D Pass

1H Pass 1S Pass

19.

West North East South

1C Pass 1S Pass

1NT Pass 3C Pass

20.

West North East South

Pass Pass

1H Pass 1S Pass

SOLUTIONS (Points include distribution)

1. NF - West shows a medium hand of 16 to 18 pts. It is highly invitational but not forcing
2. NF- West repeated their suit at the 2 level showing a minimum hand with usually at least 6 hearts
3. NF- This time West shows 6+ hearts and 16-18 pts.
4. NF - Balanced hand 18-19 HCP
5. F - For one round. West has reversed and promises 17+ points with diamonds longer than hearts.
6. NF- The range is quite wide here with West could have up to 17 points for this bid and shows an unbalanced hand unsuitable for NT
7. GF - A jump in a new suit is forcing to Game.
8. NF- Again West could have any number of points up to 18. Responder with 6-9 can choose opener's second suit and pass.
9. GF-After a 2 level response from East promising 10 + pts, (13+ if playing 2/1) West with a hand of 16 or more points can bid at the 3 level.
10. GF- this is a Jump shift. West needs 18 or more points to make this bid.
11. NF - East has long Spades (6 or a good 5) and 6-9 pts
12. NF - Same as above with a hand that doesn't feel like NT will play well.
13. NF-This is a sequence that often gets players in trouble. East's rebid of spades is not forcing. In fact it is highly discouraging. A wise West will pass and enjoy being dummy. Always remember the saying No Fit Quit!
14. GF- East needs a game forcing hand to introduce a new suit at the 3 level.
15. NF- East has 6-9 pts and 5 spades + 4 or 5 hearts. This one is an exception to the rule...a new suit by responder is always forcing.
16. NF - East limited their hand by bidding 1NT (6-10 HCP). They have 4 spades and likely 5 or 6 clubs with no tolerance for Hearts.
17. GF- When the 4th suit (Hearts is bid), it is artificial. It promises a game going hand and requests some answers from Opener. Please read about the Fourth Suit Forcing convention for the follow up bids.
18. F - This is a new suit and shows at least 4 spades. Yes, it is the 4th suit but is not 4th suit forcing (the convention. In many partnerships, in this sequence 1C -1D-1H-2S is the Game Forcing bid whereas 1S forces partner to bid just one more time. It shows a hand with 10 or more points and at least 4 spades. PLEASE DISCUSS THIS SEQUENCE WITH YOUR PARTNER!
19. NF - East has an invitational hand (4 spades and 5 or more clubs and 10-12 points)
20. NF - East is a passed hand so any bid made by East can be passed!

FOURTH ROUND LOSERS

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K42
A65
9643
J92

875
Q4
J852
KQ106

93
J1092
Q107
A843

AQJ106
K873
AK
75

S	N
1S	2S
4S	

West leads Club K. South takes stock. He has

**0 Spade losers
2 Heart losers
0 Diamond losers
2 Club losers**

We are used to gazing at dummy and counting our losers and planning to ruff in dummy if a singleton, doubleton or void lurks there. But alas, dummy is 4-3-3-3. We hate dummies like that.

But we still have one too many losers. South could always hope for Hearts to divide 3-3 and that his fourth Heart would now be good but odds are against this.

South should ruff the third club lead and play Heart Ace and Heart King and now give away a Heart to charity. The opponents win the trick and now whatever they lead back, you win, next ruffing a Heart in dummy with Spade King. Now he can say: "The rest are mine!"

Note that declarer cannot draw trump first or, when opponents win a Heart, they will now lead back a trump, ultimately taking your H King off dummy. Don't even pull one round, as each time opponents are in with a Heart, they will keep leading trump.

Note also that this hand differs a bit from the Phillip Alder hand (above) because on that other hand, declarer was able to make a discard from the dummy first to help with creating a void in dummy.