



THE KIBITZER

A NEWSLETTER OF THE CONNECTICUT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION



Volume 20 • Number 9 • February 2020

CAN'T COST

Chapter 53 — a feint of hand play.

by John Steifel



In this deal from a recent Regional Pairs event, South made a “can’t cost” play to make an extra trick for a fine matchpoint score. The North-South hands were:

NORTH
 ♠ 10 8 4 2
 ♥ Q J 5
 ♦ 8 5 3
 ♣ 9 4 3

SOUTH
 ♠ Q J 7 3
 ♥ A K 8
 ♦ J 10 9
 ♣ K J 6

Dealer: South

Vulnerability: Neither

Auction: 1NT (15-17) – Pass – Pass – Pass

Opening Lead: ♣2

East won the opening lead with the ♣A and returned the ♣7 to South’s jack and West’s queen. A third round of clubs (East following) cleared the suit and set up West’s fourth-round winner.

South could now see that he had only four obvious tricks – three hearts and one club. So the normal North-South score on the hand would be -150.

Getting another trick would earn a fine score of -100, but how could he achieve that? Is there any way?

South’s initial plan was to set up a fifth trick in spades. He realized, however, that that plan was doomed to failure. When the opponents won their first spade trick, they could then cash at least four diamond winners for a total of nine tricks – four diamonds, three clubs and two spades. Even if the opponent who won the first defensive spade trick tried leading a heart, his partner would discourage further heart leads and the opponents would then revert to diamonds when they won their second spade trick.

But what if South led diamonds himself?! It “couldn’t cost” to try. So he led a heart to dummy’s queen at trick four and then led a low diamond from dummy at trick five. East ducked this trick and West won the king.

West then cashed his good club at trick six. Dummy and East discarded hearts and declarer threw a spade – *suggesting no interest in that suit.*

West now led the ♠A to trick seven and East discouraged with the ♠4. West reverted to diamonds at trick eight and East took the next two tricks in that suit with the ace and queen.

East, with no more diamonds, led a heart to trick ten, but South drove out East’s ♠K and took the last two tricks with his remaining ♥A and ♠J.

What’s Inside

Power of “8”	2
<i>Larry Lau</i>	
Support Double..	3
<i>Paul Burnham</i>	
The Director’s Corner	4
<i>Tom Hunter</i>	
Ask the Expert	5
<i>Mike Hess</i>	
Larry’s Little Tips	6
<i>Larry Lau</i>	
Club News	8

What’s New

Spotlight.	7
Calendar	10
In Memoriam:	
<i>Harold Feldheim</i>	11
Achievements/Milestones . . .	12
UWL Results	3
299er Flyer.	10

Upcoming Events

- NE Regional Strubridge
Feb. 11-16
- CT Winter Sectional Orange
March 6-8
- CT 299er Sectional Stamford
April 4

PLAYING SUIT COMBINATIONS

The Power of the “8”.

by Larry Lau



There are several factors to consider when determining the technically correct way to play a suit combination. Often overlooked are the spot cards – especially the eight.

Here is an example of the power of the “8”.

I recently held this combination:
A 10 6 / Q 9 5 4 2

The technically correct line of play for four tricks is as follows:

- 1.) Play low towards the ace and if second hand plays low, play the ace.
- 2.) If fourth hand also follows low at trick one, at trick two lead the ten or six and if fourth hand plays low, finesse for the jack.

It is not possible to take five tricks from this holding, but this line-of-play has a total success rate to generate four tricks 67% of the time.

Now substitute the eight spot card for the five: A 10 6 / Q 9 8 4 2

The technically correct line of play is as follows:

Lead low towards the ace:

- 1.) If second hand plays the king, win the ace and next finesse fourth hand for the jack for five tricks.
- 2.) If second hand plays low, play the ten. If the ten wins, return to your hand and lead the queen or nine or eight to force an honor from second hand. If he instead plays low again, play the six.
- 3.) If second hand plays low, then play the ten. If the ten loses to the king, return to hand and lead the eight or nine to finesse for the jack. If the ten loses to the jack, return to hand and lead the queen or nine or eight and

finesse for the king. Possession of the eight improves the chances to generate at least four tricks to 71%.

Here is another example where possession of the eight alters the correct line-of- play.

Assume you are playing Swiss teams (IMPs) and need only four tricks from this combination A 5 2 / Q J 9 6 4. Play the ace at trick one. If the king doesn’t drop, at trick two, lead toward the queen. Repeat if necessary. This has an 88% success rate of generating at least four tricks.

It is an error to lead the queen in this holding, because if 4th hand has stiff king (3%) or K 10 X X (9%), only three tricks can be made **against perfect defense**. The success rate of generating at least four tricks now declines to 76%.

However, substitute the eight for the five: A 8 2 / Q J 9 6 4

The technically correct line of play is as follows:

Lead the queen:

- 1.) If second hand covers the queen, win the ace. At trick two, lead the eight and if RHO plays low, play low. If the eight wins, lead the two and finesse the ten if necessary.
- 2.) If second hand plays low on the queen, play low. If the queen wins, at trick two lead low towards the ace/ eight, and if second plays low again, then play the eight—protecting against the K 10 X X!
- 3.) If second hand plays low on the queen, play low. If the queen loses to king, cash the ace at trick two, and if LHO shows out at trick two, finesse

RHO for the ten at trick three. This line of play has a 93% success rate of generating at least four tricks vs. 88% without the eight.

However, if you need five tricks from either of these holdings, the line-of- play for both of these holdings is identical. Lead the queen at trick one, and if second hand covers with the king, win the ace and at trick two finesse RHO for the ten. If the queen wins, play the ten and hope fourth hand began with ten X.



Can’t Cost

by John Stiefel

Continued from page 1

The original hand was:

NORTH			
♠	10 8 4 2		
♥	Q 7 5		
♦	8 5 3		
♣	9 4 3		
WEST		EAST	
♠	A	♠	K 9 6 4
♥	10 6 4 3	♥	J 9 2
♦	K 7 6 4	♦	A Q 2
♣	Q 10 8 2	♣	A 7 5
	SOUTH		
	♠	Q J 7 3	
	♥	A K 8	
	♦	J 10 9	
	♣	K J 6	

Note that West must lead a diamond immediately after he cashes his long clubs to hold declarer to four tricks. Not so easy when declarer has shown “strength” in that suit! That hesitation allowed declarer to employ a “can’t cost” technique that ultimately delivered a fifth trick, bettering the field by a trick for minus 100.



SUPPORT DOUBLES CONTINUED

More toil and troubles?

by Paul Burnham



This is the second in a series of articles concerning support doubles. This convention applies when one partner opens the bidding (opener) with a suit bid at the one level, opener's partner (responder) bids a new suit, and opener's right-hand opponent (overcaller) bids a third suit. When opener doubles (x), opener promises three-card support for responder's suit. In my last article I noted that if responder's suit is diamonds and overcaller's suit is spades, some partnerships might prefer that double by opener shows four hearts rather than three diamonds.

Recently Sam and I came across another situation where support doubles might not be best. I opened the bidding 1♣ (having a 3-3-1-6 16 count). Sam bid 1♠, and my right-hand opponent bid 2♦. Although I had 16 high-card points, I did have three spades and figured there should be no harm in making a support double. Sam, on the other hand, was looking at her own 17 high-card points including A Q J 10 of diamonds, and left my double in, as almost all of us would. Overcaller had bid 2♦ with seven diamonds to the king empty. His partner contributed one trick and we set his contract three tricks doubled. They were vulnerable; we were not. Our plus 800 should have been a below average score because we had a likely slam. (This was matchpoints.)

A partnership might choose to agree that a direct cue bid (3♦) by opener would show a fit with responder's suit with extra strength, but not necessarily any more than three of responder's suit (in this case spades). It could agree

that opener's jump rebid of opener's own suit should not deny three pieces in partner's suit. It could agree that one should reverse or make a jump shift with an appropriate hand, rather than make a support double. Any of these agreements would have gotten us to where we belonged. Without them, I made the same bid I would have made with four high-card points less than I held and Sam, understandably, chose, being non-vulnerable, not to explore for slam when there certainly appeared to be at least a two-trick vulnerable set ready for the taking.

What would you and your partner have done after the 2♦ overcall?

Dealer: East

Vulnerability: N-S

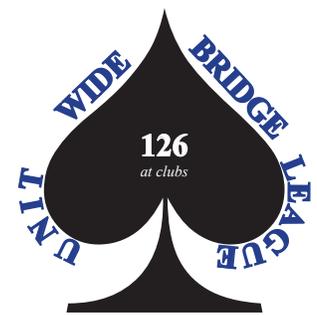
North	East	South	West
	1♣	Pass	1♠
2♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Pass			

NORTH
 ♠ 4 3
 ♥ 7 6 5
 ♦ K 8 7 5 4 3 2
 ♣ 2

WEST
 ♠ Q J 9 8 5
 ♥ Q J
 ♦ A Q J 10
 ♣ K J

EAST
 ♠ A K 6
 ♥ K 8 2
 ♦ 9
 ♣ A Q 10 8 4 3

SOUTH
 ♠ 10 7 2
 ♥ A 10 9 4 3
 ♦ 6
 ♣ 9 7 6 5



AND THE WINNERS ARE ...



Twenty teams from across the state participated in the inaugural season of the Unit Wide League (UWL). **Four Guys** ended with an overall team average of 60.31% and claimed first place. A total of 38 prizes (a free session entry to a 2020 CT Sectional Tournament) were awarded.

Team Winners

1st Place – Four Guys:
 Scott Hutchason, Ken Shafarman,
 Ron Kahan, Doug Thompson

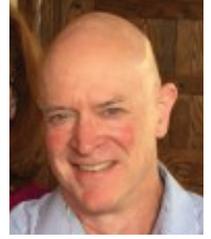
2nd Place – The Kippsters: Susan Mayo, Susan Kipp, Carol Taylor, Avery Flowers

3rd Place – Team BEEM: Betty Hodgman, Meredith Dunne, Liz Dwyer, Eileen Montellese



THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Tom Hunter



I'm constantly asked: How does stratification work? Why did they get masterpoints, but we didn't?

Most duplicate games are open, which means that anyone, including world champions, may play in the game. Most open duplicate games have some strong players and some not-so-strong players. If masterpoints were awarded only to the top finishers, the not-so-strong players would get discouraged. So the ACBL introduced the idea of *games within the game* by separating players into groups, or strata.

First, some background.

As the players arrive, the director should balance the field by assigning positions based on strength. In other words, the best six or so pairs should not all be N-S, but split equally N-S and E-W. The number of masterpoints that players have earned is the proxy for strength. Further, the director should try to balance the not-so-strong players as well.

Every director has a database of the players who have played in that director's games. Every month a director should update his database to add any masterpoints won in the last month.

And the game starts ...

The director enters the names of all the players, either electronically (Bridgemates, for example) or by hand. The director now has a small chore: choosing the strats. Early in the game, the director looks at the pairs ranked by the higher number of masterpoints held by each pair. In a ten-table game, the director will probably choose to have three strats:

A, B, and C. In a perfect world, about a third of the field (i.e., three or four pairs) will be in each strat. Furthermore, there should be a gap between the strats. If one pair has 505 masterpoints and another pair in that direction has 495, then 500 would not be a fair breakpoint between the strats.

Sometimes the director has a tough time drawing the breakpoints because ranking the pairs by the higher number does not produce reasonable strats. The director then ranks the pairs based on the average number of masterpoints in each pair.

Some clubs use the same strats all the time. Open, 1,000, and 500 are common strats. Most clubs choose strats on a game-by-game basis. The strats chosen vary because the players vary.

And the game ends.

In our ten-table game, everyone competes in the A strat. Anyone can win the game. Masterpoints are awarded to the top 40% of pairs, rounding up or down. The top four pairs will win points in the A strat.

Now the scoring program looks at the game as if it consisted of just the B and C pairs. Let's assume roughly seven tables, and again 40% of pairs earn points. So 2.8 pairs, rounded to 3 pairs, win points in the B strat. Finally, the scoring program looks at just the C players. In order to award points in any strat, there must be at least three pairs in each strat. Let's assume three tables: 1.2 pairs rounds down to 1 pair winning points in the C strat.

What if a C strat pair finishes second in the game in their direction? The scoring program calculates the masterpoints to be awarded for second in A and first in C and shows the higher amount. Note that since only one C pair will win points and the C pair will be getting the points for placing second in A, no award will show for the C strat.

Put another way, let's assume four As, three Bs, and three Cs. If the N-S A pairs finish first through fourth, and the N-S B pairs finish fifth through seventh, then all four A pairs will get the A strat points. All three B pairs will get the B strat points, and one C pair will get the C strat points. Eight pairs out of ten winning masterpoints.

In short, what strat you are in and whether you win masterpoints depends on who shows up that day. And on how well you play. Aren't you glad you asked that question?



UWL WINNERS

Continued from page 3

Pair Winners

A-B – Doug Thompson and Ron Kahan, and Millie Fromm and Joan Hoben

A-C – Tom Hyde and Bob Glasspiegel

A-D – Susan Mayo and Avery Flowers

B-C – Martha Hathaway and Deb Suckow

B-D – Martha Hathaway and Carolyn Eddie

C-D – Magank Mehta and Mike Shore

All UWL results can be found at ctbridge.org. Stay turned for details regarding the 2020 league.



ASK THE EXPERT

by Mike Hess



Mike, what's a topic that your Advanced Beginner and Intermediate students find particularly confusing?

I'd like to address what I refer to as a "meat and potatoes" issue. The Takeout Double.

The takeout double seems to cause students the most confusion. When I bring up the subject, I find many of my students lack even a basic knowledge of the subject.

There is a serious lack of clarity on *when to make* such a double, and even worse, *how to respond* to it. The most serious problem is that after the auction, for example: 1♦ - Dbl - Pass, the responder to the double almost always makes the cheapest bid possible, regardless of holding:

For instance, they will correctly bid 1♠ with:

♠ Q 9 8 6 ♥ J 5 3 ♦ 10 8 ♣ Q 7 6 5

However, they will also respond 1♠ with:

♠ K Q 9 8 5 ♥ A 4 3 ♦ 10 8 ♣ J 7 2

The correct response to the second example is "2♠" because "1♠" shows about 0-8 points while 2♠ shows 9 to about 12 total points. This might seem obvious to some readers, but I asked those who have bid just 1♠ to each why they did so. Their response was: "My partner made a takeout double and I took it out."

Upon further probing, they volunteered: "My teacher or mentor never really taught me that there were any levels of responses to the double other than to take it out. In fact, we

spent almost no time on takeout doubles and overcalls."

So, for the record, an agreed upon method of responding to a takeout double, assuming that your RHO passes, can be summarized this way:

- 1) As responder, with 0-8 points, bid your longest suit at the cheapest level, but prefer a 4+ card major to a longer minor.
- 2) With 6-10 points, bid 1NT if balanced with a stopper in the opposing suit bid; bid 2NT with 11-12 points.
- 3) With 9-12 points, jump bid in your longest suit. (As in the above example, 2♠ was a jump to 1♦ doubled; if the opening bid had been 1♥, your partner doubled and you held 9-12 points with clubs as a your best suit, jump to 3♣ to show that holding.)
- 4) With the somewhat rare holding of 13+ points, either cue bid the opener's suit or simply jump to game with a 6-card suit of your own, especially if it's a major. For example, 1♦ - Dbl - Pass. 4♥ would show 13+ points and a six-card heart suit.

A cue bid auction would start like this: 1♦ - Dbl - Pass - 2♦ (cue bid). This sequence alerts the doubler that the bidding will generally continue to game if a 4-4 fit is found in a major after the cue bid has been made.

Note the reason I wrote "somewhat rare" above is that when you hold 13+ points in response to a takeout double, it implies there are three opening hands at the table: that of the actual opener, that of the doubler, as well as your own hand. However, in today's

world of "increasingly light opening bids" by some, you might find yourself with 13+ points after your partner doubles more often than in decades past.

In sum, as responder (advancer) to partner's takeout double:

Make a minimum bid in your best suit (preferably a major) with 0-8, a jump bid in your best suit with 9-12, and cue bid with 13+. If you happen to hold a balanced hand with a stopper in the opener's suit with 6-10 points, bid 1NT; and holding 11-12 points, bid 2NT.

Entire books have been written on takeout doubles. So, in a short column like this one, I can't cover as much as I might like to say on the topic. For example, what does advancer's bid promise after RHO has taken a bid (example: 1♥ - Dbl - 2♥ - 2♠)?

I'll cover that and similarly nuanced auctions in a later column.

Editor's Note: Although Mike Hess has been mentoring bridge since he became a Life Master in the 1980s, he started teaching the game in earnest in 2015 after he semi-retired from a career in marketing and advertising research. Currently Mike teaches Beginner and Advanced Beginner/Intermediate Bridge at Stables High School in Westport's Adult Continuing Education program, as well as Advanced Beginner and Intermediate/Duplicate classes at Founders Hall in Ridgefield. He estimates he is reaching over 160 students this semester. His efforts contribute greatly to the growth and vibrancy



LARRY'S LITTLE TIPS

That make a BIG difference.

by Larry Lau



Eddie Kantar, with two world championships and scores of popular bridge books to his credit, had given me permission to reprint tips that he used for his students. In each issue, I will share tips for bidding, defense and declarer play.

Bidding as a Passed Hand:

A takeout double by a passed hand shows 9-11 HCP with shortness in the opener's suit. If the opponents have bid two suits, the double promises at least four-card support in the other two suits.

For example, as a passed hand you hold:

♠ A J 5 2
♥ 7 5
♦ K J 10 7 3
♣ 5 4

YOU	OP	PARD	OP
P	1♣	P	1♥
DBL			

Your takeout double shows diamonds and spades. If you bid 2♦, you might lose the ♠ fit.

Would you like a bid to show at least one 5-card and 4-card holding?

Try a "Sandwich 1NT"

YOU	OP	PARD	OP
P	1♣	P	1♥

1NT (shows 4-card and 5-card suit, **not Alertable** because you are a passed hand)

In the above Eddie Kantar example, a bid of 1NT instead of the double by a passed hand is known as "sandwich notrump" and, also shows the two

unbid suits. One treatment is that double shows specifically two four-card suits, and 1NT shows at least one 5-card suit. You should discuss with your regular partner as to the difference in meanings between the two bids. There are other equally useful treatments so it's worth taking the time to discuss.

Bidding when NOT a Passed Hand:

Here's the rub. Takeout doubles and Sandwich NTs can change when you are an unpassed hand.

OP	PARD	OP	YOU
1♣	P	1♥	1NT (4-card and 5-card)

is **Alertable!** because you are an unpassed hand.

A bid of 1NT in the sandwich position by an unpassed hand can also be played as a "sandwich NT" showing at least one 5-card and 4-card suit. In this case, partner ALERTs the call. *To further complicate the issue, many expert players currently play that a sandwich NT by an unpassed hand is "natural" and shows an opening NT.* Again, this treatment is worth your consideration and these bids are all about partnership agreements.

Defense:

Leads from AK(x) holdings against suit contracts:

1. The lead of the ace is a TRICK ONE convention only. It promises the king. If later in the hand, you break a new suit holding A K (x), the king is led.

2. In a supported suit, or in any suit PARTNER has bid, the king is led from A K. Leading the ace in

either of these situations, **denies** the king.

3. From A K doubleton, everything is reversed. Playing the king, then the ace, shows a doubleton.

Declarer Play:

If you have a number of equal honors in the closed hand and you want second hand to cover, then lead the highest. If you want second hand to duck, lead the second or third highest.

Say you have the Q J 10 9 of trumps and dummy has the K x x x. If there is danger of a ruff if the opponent wins the trump ace on the first lead of the trump suit, then lead the jack. If second hand, (LHO) has the ace, he often ducks thinking partner has the queen, and you might avoid the ruff if second hand has A x x. On the other hand, if there is no chance of a ruff and you want LHO to cover, lead the queen, the highest honor.

Say dummy has A K x x with no side entry and you have J and the 10. If you lead the jack, second hand is apt to cover blocking the suit, limiting you to two tricks. Try the ten. If second hand has the queen, he is likely to play low giving you three tricks.

Another reason to lead the second or third highest is that it could disclose a singleton honor. Let's say dummy has A 8 5 4 and declarer has Q J 10 2. If declarer leads the 10, and second hand (LHO) plays the king, then it's almost assuredly a singleton. Declarer now "knows" that RHO started with four cards in the suit.



MEET OUR INTREPID TOURNAMENT COORDINATOR, CORNELIA GUEST



But wait, she's so much more – Scrabble King-Maker, Published Poet, Accomplished Horsewoman, Dog-Handler, and oh, yes, mother of triplets.

There are many unsung heroes who toil behind the scenes to make our Unit better and its events run smoothly. One of them is Cornelia Guest. Most of you haven't met her yet. She has little time to play bridge, but she plays a very important role in our bridge community. As tournament coordinator, she assumes responsibility for researching and negotiating tournament venues, ordering and managing delivery and pick-up of bridge supplies, making sure marketing announcements are circulated on schedule, and preparing profit-and-loss reports. You might ask what prompted her to take on this onerous task? Her belief that tournament play fuels passion for the game.

Although Cornelia is new to bridge, she is a nationally ranked Scrabble player. What may be just as impressive is that as a teacher and coach of young players, she has shepherded at least 11 youngsters to win a national championship or come very close. She understands the vital importance of tournament play in developing the competitive spirit and passion for a game. In 2018, seven young Scrabble players from the Ridgefield program she founded finished in the top 10 in their age division nationally. Amazingly, she coached the national champs in all three divisions.

This Scrabble success story began when the young mother of triplets

read a book recommended by a friend: *Word Freak* by Stefan Fatsis, a chronicle of the tournament Scrabble world. Slightly familiar and slightly bored by the at-home game she played as a child, the book inspired Cornelia to give tournament Scrabble a try. She competed. She lost, but she was hooked, and quickly rose in the ranks. In 2003 she started thinking about finding a youth Scrabble program for her young triplets. Although Hasbro had launched a School Scrabble program, played by a half-million children in the U.S. and Canada, Cornelia could not find a local school program. Undeterred, she founded her own in conjunction with the Ridgefield Library. As the program grew, she also organized local youth tournaments so that her pupils would be able to hone their skills and become tournament-tough. In the last 15 years, she has organized and directed more than 500 Scrabble tournaments, both large and small. By the way, Cornelia's daughter went on to win top School Scrabble Player of the Year in 2007 as testament to her mother's excellence. Cornelia continues to run youth Scrabble clubs in southwestern Connecticut and New York, in addition to running an adult club in Brookfield.

Since January is ACBL's Junior Fund Month and February is American Bridge Teachers' Association Educational Foundation month, we thought it timely to ask Cornelia to share her thoughts on developing youth bridge programs. Although youth bridge initiatives will be covered more thoroughly in our next issue, here are some highlights from our conversation that we hope will prompt your thoughts on the

subject. Cornelia emphasizes that a teacher needn't be an expert, merely competent and kid-loving with some spare time and a passion for bridge.

1. Offer classes just for kids, and keep them social.
2. Run shorter lessons (an hour a week).
3. Give recognition by age group so that a top 5th grader is not overshadowed by a top 9th grader.
4. Bring in experts for a topic and arrange ongoing mentor relationships.
5. Hold newcomer events to introduce students to the game. Provide "cheat sheets" so they can actually play and enjoy the process. Make the events short and provide prizes and pizza.
6. Perhaps the "Learn Bridge in a Day" curriculum can be adapted and shortened for kids.
7. Hasbro has disbanded its Scrabble School Program, but dedicated teachers and individual players are keeping programs going. Today the North American Scrabble Players Association is supporting youth growth by awarding year-end "Achievement Awards" to top elementary, middle school, and high school students. Plus, they are developing a webpage for kids.

What's next for Cornelia? "Well, as a teacher of Scrabble and English, most of my goals are for my students to improve and find joy in their games and writing. My personal goals are to improve my bridge game, finish a novel, and learn Chinese." Cornelia, thank you for making room for us in your very busy life. We'll be looking for that novel. *Zhù nǐ hǎo-yùn!*



BRANFORD BRIDGE CLUB

Happy New Year! The Branford Bridge Club has moved back to its original home – the Branford Community House. For more than two years the Branford Community House has been closed for construction, adding space for the Canoe Brook Senior Center and expanded space for community events. The club now plays in the new addition on the lower level of the building, which is an ideal playing site. The Community House is located at 46 Church Street in Branford. Our regular weekly game starts at 12:00 pm on Mondays (except for Monday holidays).

BRIDGE FORUM HAMDEN AND WOODBIDGE

2019 statistics are in. Conversion rates: Small slams 65.56%, grand slams 59.42%, doubles 77.50%, redoubles 33.33%. Fourth seat scored 44.93% on passouts. Louise Wood averaged 9.90 HCP per hand. 49 of 69 flat boards were game contracts making.

Bob Silverstein had eight penalties of +1,000 or higher; Jeff Horowitz had five without any -1,000s or worse. Louise Wood had the most passouts. Kendall Clark played 41 times without any late boards.

For pairs, Jeff Horowitz–Kevin Hart had the most tied rounds, most wins, most unsuccessful doubles, most 70% games, most tops, tied for fewest zeroes, tied for best declaring, most successful doubles, and best defending. Breta Adams–Karlene Wood had scores closest to average, most grand slams (11), least overbidding opponents, most optimistic bidding, most frequently doubled, and most combined tops and bottoms. Cindy Michael–Gail Carroll were the most consistent pair and best at maintaining a good start. Harold Miller–Rita Brieger tied for both best

second-half rallies and best declaring. Hill Auerbach–Tracy Selmon had the best single round. Alan Milstone–Gernot Reiners made the most doubled contracts. Doug Tendler–Jane Mathias had the most late boards. Celeste Hocs–Ruth Sachs had the most games without tops or bottoms. Eric and Wendy Frieden tied for best second-half rallies. Hank Voegeli–Steve Grodzinsky tied for fewest zeroes. George Levinson–Hank Banach had the highest percentage score in a single game.

COME PLAY BRIDGE OF WESTPORT AND DARIEN

2019 was a great year, our best since starting our fledging Monday-night game in 2015. We hosted more than 3,000 tables. Our teaching program reached 100 players, another top for us. We are thrilled to see so many new faces in our games, especially playing in our new 0-5 MP Chat Bridge on Mondays at 4:30 pm. We are grateful to all of you who continue to grace our tables. We think you are all winners, but we'd like to recognize last year's top-ten performers in each of our three venues. **In Westport:**

(1) Linda Green, (2) Robin Sanders, (3) Janice Dean, (4) Rob Rising, (5) Lenny Messman, (6) Susan Rodricks, (7) Millie Fromm, (8) Tom Hey, (9) Nancy Robertson, (10) Bill Seldon. **Wednesdays in Darien:** (1) Millie Fromm, (2) Janet Soskin, (3) Bill Seldon, (4) Garson Heller Jr., (5) Meredith Stravato, (6) Betty Hodgman, (7) Sue Kipp, (8) Stacey Weiss, (9) Tom Hunter, (10) Arjun Chaudhuri. **Mondays at DCA (Darien Community Association):** (1) Sue Kipp, (2) Janet Soskin, (3) Mary Richardson, (4) Betty Hodgman, (5) Meredith Dunne, (6) Lynn Reilly, (7) Kathleen Rowland, (8) Joan Bergen, (9) Barbara Johnson, (10) Mary Ellen McGuire. Here's wishing all of you a wonderful new year, and may all your finesses work in 2020!

COUNTRY CLUB OF DARIEN

Congratulations to the winners of the Country Club of Darien's fall series:

- A. Sue Kipp and Mary Ellen McGuire
- B. Liz Dwyer and Dorothy Baker
- C. Emily D'Andrea and Avery Flowers

HARTFORD BRIDGE CLUB

Happy New Year! On January 1, Hartford Bridge Club hosted 30 tables at a **New Year's Day brunch and Swiss Team game**. Members rang in 2020 with a full afternoon of delicious food, engrossing bridge, and friends old and new. Winning teams for the day were Sonja Smith, Paul Burnham, Frank Blachowski, and Tom Joyce (flight A); Mike Wavada, Buzz Kohn, Connie Dube, and Paul Sampson (flight B); and Mike Shore, Lori Shore, John Pelegano, and John Willoughby (flight C).



NYD Winning Team: Team members Sonja Smith and Tom Joyce (standing) and Frank Blachowski and Paul Burnham (seated) were the day's overall winners.

Thanksgiving Slam Scores a Big Win for Foodshare!

As a result of its Thanksgiving Slam charitable efforts for the month of November, the Hartford Bridge Club donated more than 16 boxes of healthy food and \$1,100 in cash to **Foodshare**, the largest anti-hunger organization in



the Greater Hartford area. That means club members and friends provided enough food and funds to feed more than 30 families for an entire week. The effort was coordinated by HBC member Bill Wininger.



HBC member Bill Wininger (left) delivered more than 16 boxes of food and more than \$1,100 in cash to Foodshare.

Tuesday Evening Pro-Am

Recently HBC held its first-ever Pro-Am Swiss Team game. In this special event, each member of one pair was required to have 199 MPs or fewer, and each member of the other pair was required to have 200 MPs or more. During the matches, each 0-199 pair played against the opposing team's 0-199 pair and the 200+ pairs also played against one another. This format presented an excellent opportunity for newer players to learn Swiss Team protocol and scoring from their own teammates without feeling outmatched by playing directly against more experienced players. A good time was had by all!

HBC Members Qualify for National Finals

Several HBC members recently participated in the New England qualifying event for the 2019-2020 North American Pairs championship. Club member Victor King and his partner Sheila Gabay placed third in flight A, for expert players, and club members Trevor Reeves and Felix Springer placed second in flight B, for players with fewer than 2,500 masterpoints. These players will now

represent New England in the National Finals, to be held in Columbus, Ohio in late March.

NEWTOWN BRIDGE CLUB

On Tuesday, December 10, Newtown Bridge Club celebrated the holidays with potluck meals before both our afternoon and evening games. Our players enjoyed sharing and eating favorite family recipes! A congenial social time with yummy food set the stage for the fun bridge that followed.

Please save these dates:

Our club will also host two Wednesday-afternoon Swiss Team events on **April 29** and **September 16**. After our regular 10:00 am Open & 299er games, there will be a short lunch break. The team game will start at 2:00 pm and end by 6:30 pm, including a complimentary light supper. Please join us on these Wednesdays and play a morning pair game and/or the afternoon team game!

We invite you to join us at Edmond Town Hall on **Wednesday, June 17**, for our fourth annual Longest Day fundraiser for the Alzheimer's Association. We will have Open, Limited, and Social games at 10:00 am, 2:00 pm, and 6:00 pm. After last year's success, we will also host sanctioned Scrabble tournaments, so please invite your Scrabble-playing relatives and friends to participate. Before the games, there will be complimentary breakfast, lunch, and dinner provided by local restaurants. Game fees are \$15 per duplicate game (with extra points!) and \$10 for the Social games and Scrabble sessions. Anyone donating at least \$100 to the Alzheimer's Association plays free all day. The Open games will be held in the top floor of the hall, and the Limited and Social games and the Scrabble tournaments will be in the lowest level of the building. We have plenty of room to accommodate multiple tables. So please come and support this worthwhile cause.

SEVEN NO-TRUMP BRIDGE CLUB

I am proud to report that we raised a total of \$5,255 for the Alzheimer's Association on the Longest Day! Thank you to everyone who played and everyone who contributed. Special thanks to Woody Bliss, Sheila Katz, Gordon Kiernan, Dorothy Kolinsky, Doug Pratt, and Tania Reyes Hiller. These bridge warriors played in all six sessions! What endurance! What commitment! A very special thanks to Ken Shafarman, who worked all day directing and filling in half-tables for me. That was a huge help!

We celebrated our three-year anniversary on Thursday, October 24 with a free catered lunch.

Website: www.7ntgames.com
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Mobile: 979-218-7428.

STAMFORD BRIDGE CLUB

The Stamford Bridge Club was started in 2003 by directors Elaine and Jim Misner. Elaine and Jim recently decided to retire. Needless to say, the members of the club were saddened. Through their teaching and guidance, they have introduced many to the world of bridge. We thank them for their many years of service and wish them good health and enjoyment in their retirement, but we'll hold them to their promise that they are not giving up bridge.

Jim and Elaine are a unique couple. They directed together, played together and even went home together with nary a word of criticism at the bridge table. We would all do well to model our behavior at the bridge table to that of Elaine and Jim.

Recently, our members competed in the STAC game in a field of 75 tables. Joan Ginnetty and Lucille Flynn placed 1st overall in flight A and took home 18 silver points. We are very proud of Joan and Lucille, congratulate them and wish them

Continued on page 10

much success in the future.

On a sad note, two of our players recently passed away after lengthy illnesses: Adele Soldano, wife of Pat Soldano, and Larry Schmidt, husband of Ruth Schmidt. Both played for many years at the club and will be dearly missed by all.

The Stamford Bridge Club is located in the Government building on Tresser Blvd. and is one of the many programs offered by the city of Stamford to the community. We feel very fortunate to have our club there. Our game is every Tuesday at 12:15 pm. We usually finish at 4:15 pm. It is an Open stratified game. If you are in the area, we would love for you to come by. All are welcome!

WEE BURN COUNTRY CLUB

We congratulate recent winners.

Fall Series:

1. Meredith Dunn–Joan Bergen
2. Janet Soskin–Sue Kipp
3. Brenda Greene–Donna Doyle
4. Liz Dwyer–Shelley Emery
5. Mary Richardson–Betty Hodgman

Continued on page 11



CT Spring 299er Sectional Tournament

Saturday, April 4, 2020 at The Seven No-Trump Bridge Club
 Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 1230 Newfield Ave, Stamford, CT
 TWO SESSIONS - Play One Session or Both: 10:00am & 2:00pm

SILVER POINTS | LUNCH WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE
PLAYERS WITH FEWER THAN 5 MASTERPOINTS PLAY FREE!!

Stratifications may be modified at Director's discretion as warranted by attendance. Strata based on average for the pair. No player over 300 MPs.

Info & Pairing: Renee Clift, ct299er.info@gmail.com or (203) 543-6215
Stratified Games: A 100-300 | B 50-100 | C 0-50
Entry Fee: \$14 per person per session
Students: \$10 per student per session
\$4.00 additional for unpaid ACBL members

FROM THE MERRITT PARKWAY: Take Exit 35 which is High Ridge Road. Follow High Ridge Road south and turn left on Vine Road. Take Vine Road to Newfield Avenue and turn left. The church is on the left after about ¼ mile.

FROM I-95: Take Exit 8. Go North on Elm. Elm becomes Grove Street. Grove Street becomes Strawberry Hill. Strawberry Hill becomes Newfield Avenue. The church is on the left.



2020 UNIT 126 CALENDAR

Month	Date	Day	Time	Event	Location
February	11-16	Tue.-Sun.		New England Presidential Regional	Sturbridge
March	2	Mon.	Afternoon	ACBL Senior Game #1	Local Clubs
March	6-8	Fri.-Sun.		Connecticut Winter Sectional	Orange
March	9-15	Mon.-Sun.		STaC with North Jersey (U106)	Local Clubs
March	19-29	Thurs.-Sun.		ACBL Spring Nationals	Columbus, OH
March	18	Wed	Daytime	Unit-Wide Championship	Local Clubs
March	24	Tue.	Evening	Unit-Wide Championship	Local Clubs
March	27	Fri	Daytime	Unit-Wide Championship	Local Clubs
March	31	Tue.	Afternoon	ACBL Charity Game #1	Local Clubs
April				Charity Club Championship Games	
April	4	Sat.		Connecticut I/N sectional	Stamford
April	15-19	Wed.-Sun.		D25 I/N Regional	Sturbridge
April	18-19	Sat.-Sun.		D25 GNT NAP	Sturbridge
April	20-24	Mon.-Fri.		D24 Regional	Farmingdale
April	29	Wed.	Afternoon	ACBL-wide Charity Game	Local Clubs
April	29-3	Wed.-Sun.		New England Senior Regional	Hyannis, MA

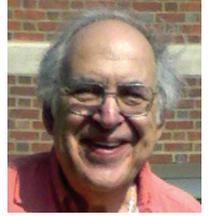
Key:	Sect/STaC	Regional	Nationals
Pigment:	Silver	Red, Gold	Red, Gold, Platinum

Note: GNT and NAOP qualifying rounds pay red points (not gold).

IN MEMORIAM: HAROLD FELDHEIM

TEACHER, PARTNER AND FRIEND

by Pat Hartman



Harold was one of my oldest and dearest friends. My husband and I first met him in the late 70s when he ran a bridge club in the Amity section of New Haven. We were new bridge players and Harold and his wife Sue were very welcoming. It turned out that my husband didn't care much for duplicate, but I became addicted. Harold was always helpful with finding me partners, offering advice and nurturing me along the way to becoming a Life Master. It was then that I decided I needed to actually learn how to play bridge and that's when Harold and I became partners.

We played twice and the third time he came to the club with one typewritten sheet of paper and said, "Here, we're playing this." "This" was a very high-level summary of precision. He loved precision and the version we played was a combination of the best of a Strong Club and a 2/1 system; so, it is far more natural than most precision variants. I convinced a few of my "B" team members to play it with us and two of them also became students of Harold's.

Playing with Harold was magical. His focus was impressive. After the first few tricks, he knew what everyone held. Declarer Play was his strength. He never failed to find a squeeze if there was one. End Plays, not so much. His version of an end play was: throw them in and they'll claim. As a partnership, defense was our strength. At a regional, we were playing against an expert friend of Harold's who was declaring 2♠. Harold false-carded and I was sufficiently in tune with the auction to recognize Harold's false card. Declarer then took a finesse into Harold's hand, but when Harold didn't cash the 13th heart, he convinced the declarer that I had it the missing heart so it was safe to take a finesse for an overtrick into Harold's hand. Harold put on his best Cheshire Cat smile and the pro looked at him and said, "I'm going down, aren't I?"

There are certainly many professional bridge players who are hired to win for the client. That wasn't Harold. He always allowed his students to play the hands that were theirs to play and he never hand-hogged. Harold always played with clients who were students of the game and wanted to learn to play better. He was, above all else, a partner at the table. One hand, which was probably funnier at the table than it will be in the telling, was a prime example. We were playing in the finals of the World Mixed Pairs in Montreal. It was the first time I'd ever played behind a screen. So in my defense, I was a little nervous. We were having a Strong Club auction and I had opened 1♣ with a very strong, balanced hand. As the auction progressed, it turned out that Harold also had a balanced hand. We got into a cue bidding sequence and I made one bid too many. It was my fault. I got carried away with the auction. Harold, being the good partner that he was couldn't not bid 7 NT if he believed my bid. The auction ends, the flap on the screen comes up and I see the dummy which is a mirror image of my hand 3-3-3-4. We have all the aces, all the queens and jacks and even the ten of clubs, but we are missing THREE kings. I say "thank you partner" and proceed to take the first finesse which works. There is a small movement of the table. I take the second finesse which works. There is a larger movement of the table. I can feel Harold on the other side of the screen hanging on to the table and wondering if I have completely lost my mind. I take the third finesse which also works and Harold's coffee cup hits the floor. I claimed, stood up, apologized over the top of the screen and begged for forgiveness. He forgave me and we ended up doing quite well in this world-class field because he didn't stop believing in me.

After Harold and I stopped playing together, we remained friends. My husband would golf with Harold and Sue. We had picnics and potluck suppers as frequently our schedules allowed. Even my grandchildren called him Pucka. We will miss him very much. Not only was he a gifted player, partner and teacher, he was brilliant, well-read, a pleasure to be with and a genuinely kind person.

Continued from page 10

6. Marilyn Tjader–Martha Hathaway
7. Dolly Rech–Avery Flowers

December Charity Game:

1. Karen Barrett–Doug Thompson
2. Lynn Reilly–Mary Ellen McQuire

December Swiss Teams:

- Janet Soskin–Ron Kahan–Jean
Thoma–Karen Barrett

Player of the Year 2019:

Janet Soskin

This award is given to the Wee Burn member who wins the most masterpoints at Wee Burn during the calendar year.





Achievements

MILESTONES

LIFE MASTER¹

Cynthia Anderson
 Scott Hutchason
 Bernhard Kohn Jr.
 Barbara Mindel
 Randall Murphy
 Clifford Wald
 Maureen Walsh

**300 MPs for players who joined ACBL prior to 1/1/2010; 500 MPs for all others.*

SILVER LIFE MASTER

(1,000 MP)
 Joan Stroup

GOLD LIFE MASTER

(2,500 MP)
 Solomon Field
 Ann Hudson
 Alice Hummel
 Jean Schiaroli

IN MEMORIAM

Keith Butterfield
 William Everett
 Harold Feldheim
 Robert C. Lahey
 Herb Osber
 Dr. Irving Rosenthal
 Ann Towne
 Mary S. Trono
 Anthony Ustanowski

BRONZE LIFE MASTER²

(500 MP)
 Jonathan Jankus
 Ron Kahan
 Sally Solomon
 Clifford Wald

***500 MPs for players who joined ACBL prior to 1/1/2010; 750 MPs for all others.*

DIAMOND LIFE MASTER

(5,000 MP)
 Art Crystal
 Don Stiegler

THE KIBITZER

The Kibitzer is published quarterly by the Connecticut Bridge Association, Unit 126 of the American Contract Bridge League.

All comments, news, items related to the bridge world and of interest to our readers are welcome. Please send all items for the next *Kibitzer* by **MARCH 20, 2020**.

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