

# I/N News ... especially for you!

Volume 14, Issue 4  
Winter, 2014

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## Inside This Issue:

Mechanics of Bridge

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## The Mechanics of Bridge ... an adapted excerpt from Bridge for Beginners by Alvin Roth and Jeff Rubens (of Bridge World)

We are often asked, "Why is contract bridge so avidly enjoyed by so many people?" This question is usually raised by someone who has never learned the game, but whose interest has been piqued by friends who have been bitten by the "bridge bug."

It is not surprising that the game is highly appealing, because it combines so many fascinating features. Some of these are:

Upcoming Tournament List

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### **SKILL**

A player who has learned well will win more often than one whose technique is inadequate, for bridge is first and foremost a game of skill. It is sufficiently demanding to provide a challenge to all; it requires such abilities as reasoning, memory, and planning. Yet anyone who is willing to invest some time and effort can learn to play, and you need not be an expert to find enjoyment.

### **CHANCE**

The idea of "hitting the jackpot"--taking a chance and having it pay off, or receiving a lucky windfall--is present in bridge, for an element of luck is provided by the random distribution of cards to each player. On some occasions, you will be dealt powerful cards and will reap the benefits--if you can apply the necessary skill. On less fortunate occasions your opponents will be blessed by the goddess of chance and will hold considerable strength, and you will have to combine your skill with whatever good cards you do possess to try to turn defeat into victory. The interplay of skill and chance is one of the most appealing features of bridge.

### **THE PERSONAL ELEMENT**

It is possible to program an electronic computer to play a pretty fair game of chess, but the computer would probably have a nervous breakdown if it tried to learn bridge because it could never master the "personal element."

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Taking into consideration the behavior patterns of your opponents is yet another intriguing aspect of bridge. For example, some opponents consistently overvalue their cards, and you can let them climb out on a limb and cut it off behind them; others tend to undervalue their cards and should be left strictly alone. Also, the care and feeding of partners is particularly important. In bridge, you have a partner to assist you in the battle against your two opponents, and partner's habits must also be kept in mind. Thus, a close decision would be resolved differently opposite an aggressive partner (who often announces unpossessed strength) than with a conservative partner (who always turned up with something in reserve). A highly unusual action that might be justified with a clever partner could be extremely foolhardy with one less imaginative. Bridge involves "playing the people" as well as playing the cards.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Bridge presents a fascinating challenge in the area of communications. Each player holds thirteen cards, and there are clearly defined rules concerning the information you are permitted to give to your partner. Within these severe limitations, players must choose ways to exchange information in order to get the most out of the combined partnership assets.

## UNIQUENESS

In bridge, exact situations are virtually never duplicated. The reason for this is that there are no fewer than 53,644,737,765,488,792,839,237,440,000 possible situations (deals), so you are most unlikely ever to see the same one recur twice in your lifetime, even if you play every day. Thus, every situation will offer something unique. (Certain general principles, however, are useful in many different situations, and their mastery is rewarding to serious students of the game.)

For reasons such as these, bridge is enjoyed by millions of participants and is commonly regarded as one of the two best card games in existence. Unlike its competitor for the popularity title, poker, bridge need not be played for stakes to be interesting, an advantage that is particularly appealing in an era of rising prices and taxes. As the first step in learning about the world of bridge, let's turn to the rules and procedures that define how the game is played.

## Equipment

### THE DECK

Bridge is played with a standard 52-card deck, or pack. Two decks are customarily used for convenience, although you can get along with just one. The deck is divided into four suits which, like military personnel, have specific rank and insignia:

Suit	Symbol	Rank
Spades	♠	Highest
Hearts	♥	Second-highest
Diamonds	♦	Third-highest
Clubs	♣	Lowest

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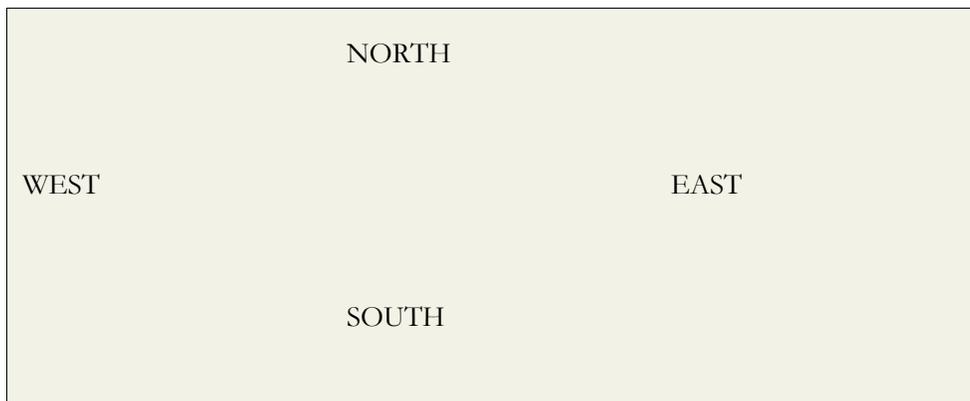
Notice that suit ranks are in reverse alphabetical order. In accordance with their lofty position, the two highest-ranking suits, spades and hearts, are called the major suits; the two lowest-ranking suits, diamonds and clubs, are called the minor suits. The rank of suits applies to the phase of bridge called the bidding or auction.

Each suit contains thirteen cards: ace (highest), king, queen, jack, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, and two or "deuce" (lowest). These ranks are often abbreviated (in order): A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2. The five most powerful cards in each suit (ace through ten) are accorded the privileged title of honor cards; the lower cards (nine through deuce) are referred to as spot cards. The rank of the cards within a suit applies to the phase of bridge called the play.

In order to cram a great deal of information into a small amount of space (and thereby keep bridge books from being thousands of pages long), all bridge writers use diagrams and within them refer to cards by means of symbols. Thus, in a bridge diagram (and sometimes in other contexts) the ace of spades is denoted by ♠ A, the seven of diamonds by ♦ 7, the jack of clubs by ♣ J, and so on. If one player held the ace, king, ten, and seven of spades, this would be expressed concisely as ♠ A K 10 7.

### THE PEOPLE

Bridge is a game for four players. Unlike some activities in which everyone is out for himself or herself, bridge is a partnership game. Two of the contestants sit opposite each other and are partners; the other two participants, who also sit facing each other, are also partners. Thus, each player has an opponent on either side and a partner across the table. In bridge literature, the players are often referred to by compass directions, so North and South are partners and play against East and West, who are also partners (see diagram).



### OTHER EQUIPMENT

Pencil and paper are needed for keeping score. Any player who wishes to do so may keep score; it is an excellent idea to keep score every time you play so that you become familiar with the scoring system. A standard bridge score-pad is convenient but not essential.

The Preliminaries

### CUTTING FOR PARTNERS

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In order to determine the lineups, the deck is spread out face down on the table and each player draws a card. Those with the two highest-ranking cards become partners and play against those drawing the lowest-ranking cards. If two or more players draw cards of the same rank, the tie is broken by the rank of the suits. Thus:

Player	Example 1	Example 2
A	♦ 9	♠ 7
B	♣ A	♥ 7
C	♥ 4	♦ 10
D	♣ 7	♣ 3

In example 1, A and B draw the two highest cards and are partners against C and D. In example 2, C draws the highest card and D the lowest card, while A and B both draw sevens. Since spades are higher-ranking than hearts, A's card is higher than B's card, and the lineup is therefore C and A against B and D. Of course, the partnerships may instead be determined by unanimous agreement among the players. This might occur, for example, if A was married to B and C was married to D. Games in which the partnerships are fixed, rather than chosen by lot, are called set games.

### THE DEAL

The player drawing the highest card (♣ A in the first example; ♦ 10 in the second example) has the choice of seats and becomes the first dealer. For the first deal, the player to the left of the first dealer shuffles (mixes the cards thoroughly) and gives the cards to the dealer. (The dealer is entitled to the last shuffle, but this privilege is usually waived to save time.) The dealer permits the player to the right to cut (place a pile of cards from the bottom of the deck on top), and then deals the cards face down to each player, one at a time, starting with the player to the left and proceeding clockwise around the table until all fifty-two cards have been distributed. While all this is going on, the dealer's partner shuffles the other deck (if there is one) and places it to his or her right near the edge of the table. When it is time for the next deal, the player to the left of the original dealer will take over the task of dealing the cards and will have a freshly shuffled pack ready to use. (The deal continues to pass around the table, clockwise.)

When the deal is completed, each player will have thirteen cards (called a hand). In order to be polite, you should refrain from picking up your hand until the dealer has finished distributing the cards; in order to avoid any disadvantage, you should hold your cards in such a way that no one can see them but yourself.

### SORTING YOUR HAND

When you pick up an unsorted bridge hand, the effect is likely to be quite confusing. To bring order out of chaos, put all the cards of the same suit together, with the highest-ranking cards at the left and the lowest-ranking cards at the right. For example:

♠ 8 5   ♥ A Q 7 6 2   ♦ 10 9 4   ♣ K J 2

To help remind you of the ranks of the suits, we have presented them in rank order (spades, hearts, diamonds, clubs). When you play, however, it is wiser to alternate the red suits (hearts and diamonds) and the black suits (spades and clubs); even experts have been known to mistake a diamond for a heart or a spade for a club (often with catastrophic effect).

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### Tricks

Play at bridge consists of tricks. Each player in turn, proceeding clockwise around the table, removes one card from his or her hand and places it face up in the center of the table. When all four players have done so, the four cards in the middle of the table constitute a trick. Since each player has thirteen cards, and since a trick consists of one card contributed by each player, there are a total of thirteen tricks in each deal.

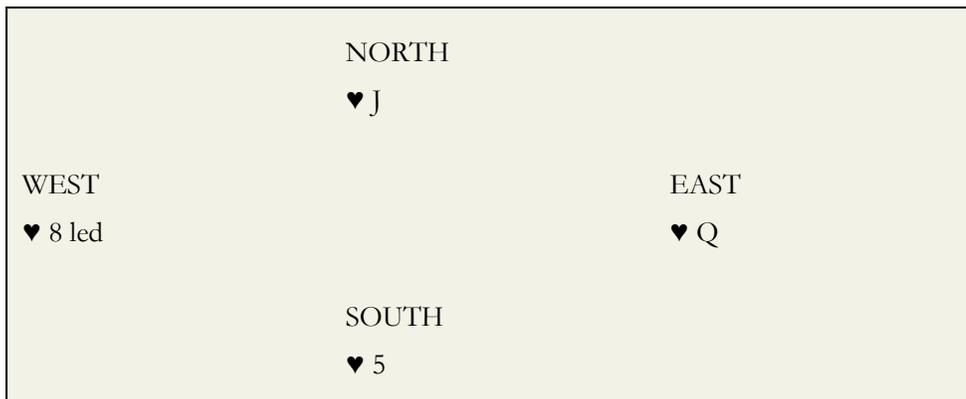
### BIDDING AND PLAY

Each deal is divided into two major phases: bidding and play. During the bidding, which takes place first, the number of tricks that each side must win in order to capture the laurels of victory is determined. Then, the play ensues and each side tries to fulfill its commitment. However, even though the bidding takes place first, to understand what it means it is essential to learn how tricks are won.

### WINNING TRICKS

Whoever plays the first card to a trick is called the leader (and the first card played is called the lead). The leader may play any card. The other players, however, are much more restricted, for they must play a card of the same suit as the one led if they have one; in other words, they must follow suit if they can. For example, if the leader chooses to play a diamond, each of the other players must play a diamond if possible. If, however, a player cannot follow suit (in our example, if some player doesn't have any diamonds), that player may play whatever he or she likes. (A played card of a different suit than the one led is called a discard.)

The trick is won by the highest card of the suit led. The relative rank of the suits themselves is irrelevant, and never matters in the play of the cards. For example:



The positions of the players have been designated in the customary way (by the geographical positions North, East, South, and West). In this example, the trick is won by East, who played the highest card (queen) of the suit led (hearts). The fact that the ace and king of hearts are even higher than the queen is immaterial, since neither was played on this trick.

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	NORTH	
	♥ A	
WEST		EAST
♣ 2 led		♦ 7
	SOUTH	
	♠ 10	

Although North, East, and South have all played higher cards than West, West's card is the highest one of the suit led, clubs, and West therefore wins the trick! North, East, and South, who have discarded, cannot hold any clubs (else they would have to follow suit).

The player who has won the previous trick leads to the next one. In the first example above, East will lead to the next trick; in the second example, West will make the next lead. When a trick has been won, one player from the victorious side gathers the four cards into a packet and keeps them, face down, nearby but out of the area of play. Only one player from each partnership should collect the tricks on any one deal.

### TRUMPS

On many deals, one suit will be designated as the trump suit. This is extremely important in determining who wins each trick, for a trump outranks any card of a different suit. In the following example, suppose that diamonds are trumps:

	NORTH	
	♦ 3	
WEST		EAST
♥ 3		♥ A led
	SOUTH	
	♥ 5	

North wins this trick by trumping (also called ruffing) with the three of diamonds. Since diamonds are trumps, this card outranks even the mighty ace of a different suit. North, however, is permitted to ruff (play a trump) only when he or she has no hearts, for no player is ever allowed to break the rule about following suit. However, a player is not required to play a trump if unable to follow suit. As usual, if you can't follow suit you may play any card.

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Here's a more difficult example. Hearts are trumps:

	NORTH	
	♠ J led	
WEST		EAST
♠ 10		♥ 4
	SOUTH	
	♥ 7	

East and South have no spades and are therefore permitted to trump the trick; West has a spade and must follow suit. The trick is won by South, who played the highest trump. Again, note that a player is not forced to ruff. In the above example, both East and South were perfectly free to discard a diamond or a club had they wished. By doing so, however, they would give up any chance of winning this particular trick.

Since any trump (even the deuce) outranks any card in a different suit, trumps are like money in the bank; everybody wants some. If you have a lot of diamonds in your hand, it may be a good idea indeed to try to make diamonds trumps; a bountiful supply of spades would suggest the desirability of making spades trumps; and so on. If you have a lot of high cards, but not a great many cards in any one suit (no long suit), the presence of a trump suit may help the enemy, and you may therefore wish to play at notrump wherein there is no trump suit at all. However, it is essential to consider your trusty partner, who also has thirteen cards, for your own longest suit may not be a good trump suit at all when the combined partnership holding is considered; and the opponents may have a word to say about the naming of a trump suit, for they will want to make one of their long suits trump. The naming of a strain (trump suit or notrump; the official name for this in the laws is "denomination") is one of the major features of the bidding (also called the auction), to which we now turn.

### The Bidding

Only one suit can be trump during a given deal, and the right to name a trump suit (or notrump) goes to the side willing to risk the highest-level commitment to take tricks. During the bidding, partners exchange information with two primary objectives in mind:

#### 1. HOW MUCH TO BID

The result of each deal depends on the number of tricks won by each side. If a partnership commits itself to taking a certain number of tricks during the bidding, and is successful, it gains points; but if it fails to live up to its promise, it loses points. To avoid excess conservatism, greater rewards are given for high (and hence risky) commitments. Thus, an important goal of bidding is to describe the trick-taking potential of your hand, so that the partnership neither overreaches itself (and thus incurs a penalty by promising to take more tricks than is possible) nor misses a golden

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opportunity to obtain a lucrative reward by failing to set the commitment high enough when ample strength is held.

## **2. WHAT TO BID**

The information exchanged during the bidding also allows the partnership to decide whether its goal of taking tricks will be furthered by naming a trump suit (as opposed to notrump), and if so which suit should be selected.

In order to bid at all, you must promise to take more tricks than the opponents. Consequently, any bid represents a commitment to take at least seven of the thirteen tricks, the first six of which are called the book and are not counted against the number bid. For example, if you bid "one club," (1 ♣ in a bidding diagram) you will be expected to take seven tricks with clubs as trumps (book of six tricks plus one additional trick). If you bid "four spades" (4 ♠), you will be expected to take ten tricks with spades as trumps (book plus four extra tricks). If you bid "two notrump" (2 NT), you will be required to take eight tricks with no trump suit at all (book plus two extra). In each case, you will be rewarded if you live up to your commitment and penalized if you cannot fulfill your promise. The maximum number that can be bid is seven (book plus seven extra tricks), since you cannot take more than the thirteen tricks in each deal; a bid of seven diamonds (7 ♦) would represent a commitment to take all the tricks with diamonds as trumps.

The dealer makes the first call, and may, optionally, bid by stating any number from one to seven together with a strain (one of the four suits or notrump); or, if not wishing to bid, may pass. Suppose that you are South, and East, your right-hand opponent, is the dealer. East has very few high cards and does not wish to encourage West to commit the East-West partnership to take tricks, and thus passes. Bidding proceeds clockwise around the table, so it is your turn next. Let's imagine that you have a generous supply of high cards and a goodly quantity of hearts, and you would like to inform your partner that a contract to take tricks is fully in order. You also wish to suggest hearts as a trump suit, and you accomplish both objectives by opening the bidding, saying "one heart." (The first bid, as opposed to a pass, is called the opening bid.) If no one else says anything else except pass, you will be expected to take seven tricks with hearts as trumps.

It is now West's turn to call. West may choose to pass. Alternatively, West may wish to enter the auction but this requires a higher bid than the previous bid of one heart, just as in an auction sale. To make a higher bid, one must commit the partnership either (a) to take a greater number of tricks, or (b) to take the same number of tricks but in a higher-ranking strain. Among strains, notrump ranks highest; then come the suits, in their rank order: spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs. Therefore, West may, after your bid of one heart, choose one spade. Since spades ranks higher than hearts, a bid of spades is higher than a bid of hearts at the same level (number of tricks). That it suffices to bid one spade does not mean West cannot bid two spades, or three spades, or any number of spades up to seven spades.

Similarly, since notrump ranks above hearts, West may bid one notrump. West may also bid two notrump, three notrump, and so on up to seven notrump. However, West may not bid one diamond or one club. Diamonds and clubs are lower-ranking than hearts, so West must bid at least two to bid in these strains. Thus, all 35 possible bids have a relative rank. The lowest bid is one club (lowest level of bidding, lowest-ranking strain), followed by one diamond, one heart, one spade, one notrump, two clubs, two diamonds, and so on. The highest bid is seven notrump (highest level of bidding, highest-ranking strain); next highest is seven spades, then seven hearts,

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and so on. If you want to enter the auction, you must make a bid higher ranking than the previous one, even if it was made by your partner.

Suppose, in our example, West decides to bid clubs after your opening bid of one heart. This bid must be at the two level or higher; let's say West bids two clubs. (West could, of course, pass if not wishing to bid.)

North is next to speak, and bids two hearts. This is a legal bid after West's two-club bid, because hearts outrank clubs. Since you bid hearts first, North, your partner, is said to be raising hearts.

East now elects to bid diamonds, but cannot bid one diamond or two diamonds because these are lower-ranking than the last bid, two hearts. Consequently, East bids three diamonds. East is permitted to bid despite having passed originally; a player who passes may enter the auction at a later point.

The bids made so far can be summarized conveniently as follows:

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
Pass	1 ♥	2 ♣	2 ♥
3 ♦			

Note that it is illegal to embellish your call with superfluous comments. Do not say "I pass" or "I'll bid a couple of clubs"; use only the exact bidding language: "pass," "two clubs," "three notrump," and so on.

Another example:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Pass	Pass	1 ♦	1 ♥
3 ♣	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

South is the dealer and does not wish to bid; so, South passes. West also passes, and North opens the bidding with one diamond; East bids one heart, a legitimate call since hearts outrank diamonds. South now wishes to bid clubs, but cannot bid one club because clubs are lower ranking than hearts. A bid of two clubs would be legal, but South nevertheless elects to bid three clubs. (Since South has bid more than the minimum necessary, he or she is said to have jumped the bidding, and the three-club bid is called a jump bid.) West passes, North bids three spades, East passes, and South bids three notrump (acceptable since notrump outranks any suit). West, North, and East pass, ending the bidding. It would be immensely unenjoyable for the players to go on passing endlessly after no one wished to make any more bids; boredom would set in and

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<http://acbl-district13.org/ArticlesAndNewsletters.htm>

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everyone would switch to gin rummy. Consequently, with one exception the bidding is ended when there are three consecutive passes. This is the exception:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South (the dealer), West, and North all pass. If the basic rule about three consecutive passes is applied, East will never get to bid, which is decidedly unfair. Every player deserves a chance to bid, so the three-pass rule is suspended in this one situation. If East also passes, the bidding does end; since no one has contracted to take any tricks, the deal (described as passed out) is thrown in and the deal passes to the left. If East bids, the auction proceeds just as it does once any player opens the bidding, and ends when there are three consecutive passes.

The last bid of the auction becomes the final contract. Thus, in the second preceding example (where South's bid of three notrump was the last call other than a pass) three notrump is the final contract and North-South have made a commitment to take nine tricks without any trump suit. At this point, one player on the side bidding the final contract takes over and enjoys the responsibility of playing the cards and trying to win tricks; that player is called the declarer. Declarer's partner, who has nothing further to do, is called the dummy. The declarer is the one for the side winning the final contract who first named the strain (trump suit or notrump) of the final bid. In this example, South is the declarer, because South the first bid notrump for North-South. Other examples:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The contract is two spades; North and South have contracted to take eight tricks with spades as trumps. South, who bid spades first, is the declarer; North is the dummy. (For purposes of determining the declarer, it does not matter which partner makes the final bid.)

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Pass	1 ♥	2 ♣	2 ♦
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

The contract is four hearts. West is the declarer; East is the dummy.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	1 NT	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The contract is two diamonds. East is the declarer; West is the dummy. The fact that South bid diamonds first is irrelevant, for South is not a member of the partnership that bid the final contract.

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## DOUBLES AND REDOUBLES

There are two other calls we have not yet considered. If the last bid has been made by an opponent, you may double (by saying "double") when it is your turn to call. For example:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	2 ♦	Double	

Since the last bid (two diamonds) was made by West, an opponent, North is permitted to double. If the double is followed by three passes, the final contract becomes two diamonds doubled. The effect of a double is to increase all scoring, so East-West will pay out an increased penalty if they fail to make their contract (take eight tricks with diamonds trumps), but they will gain an extra reward if they successfully fulfill their doubled contract. If, in contrast, someone else bids (for example, suppose East now bids two spades), the double is cancelled. Another example:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	Pass
Double	3 ♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			

South cannot double one diamond. A double applies only to the bid made just before the double, and East's bid of one heart makes it impossible for South to double one diamond. (South may, however, double one heart.) Later, South is able to double two diamonds, since there have been no intervening bids. In this example, the final contract becomes three diamonds (undoubled) with West the declarer. West's bid of three diamonds, even though it is in the same suit, cancels the double of two diamonds; South must double again to apply a double to three diamonds. Consider this bidding sequence:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Pass	4 ♥	4 ♠	Pass
?			

Since the last bid has been made by a player of the same partnership, South may not double. Had North passed, South would have been able to double West's bid of four hearts.

When one partnership has doubled and there have been no intervening calls other than passes, a player from the other partnership may redouble. If a redouble is followed by three passes, the rewards for making the contract and the penalties for going set become even greater.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Pass	1 ♦	1 ♠	Double
Pass	Pass	Redouble	Pass
Pass	Pass		

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After East's double, either South or North may redouble. (West cannot, because it was his or her partner who doubled.) North has chosen to do so, and the final contract is one spade redoubled with North the declarer.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Double	Pass	2 ♦
2 ♠	Double	Redouble	3 ♦
Pass	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

After West's double of one spade, North is permitted to redouble but instead elects to pass. South, however, cannot redouble because of East's intervening bid of two diamonds, which cancels the double of one spade. South may double two diamonds, pass, or make a higher bid. In the diagram, South chooses to bid two spades. West doubles, North redoubles, and East bids three diamonds, cancelling both the double and the redouble. South eventually becomes the declarer at a final contract of three spades (undoubled).

Unlike other games with doubling aspects, such as backgammon, in bridge redoubling is not unlimited. In fact, there is only one level of redoubling; thus, you may not redouble an opponents redouble. Therefore, a contract can be played undoubled, doubled or redoubled, but in no other way.

### Games, Slams, and Rubbers

A unit of play in bridge is called a rubber. A rubber ends when one side or the other has scored two games, and a bonus (the rubber bonus) is awarded the side achieving this feat.

The objective of each partnership is to score as many points as possible. One very good way to do this is to score two games before the opponents do. This entitles your side to the rubber bonus, and although winning the rubber bonus does not guarantee that your side will score more than the other, this bonus is so large that the partnership recording it will usually have the superior score. (A normal session of bridge will encompass several rubbers.)

Since a primary objective is to win the rubber bonus, it is of the utmost importance to score a game whenever possible. A game is scored by bidding and making contracts with a trick score of 100 or more. (This may be accomplished in one or more deals.) The trick score depends on the level of the contract, that is, on the number of tricks bid for and made in excess of the book of six. Such tricks are called odd tricks and the trick score for odd tricks is as follows:

Strain (= denomination)	Score for odd tricks
Notrump	40 for the first; 30 thereafter
Major suit (spades or hearts)	30 for each trick
Minor suit (damonds or clubs)	20 for each trick
Minor suit (damonds or clubs)	20 for each trick

Suppose, for example, that your side bids one notrump (contracting to take seven tricks with no trump suit) and fulfills its commitment. You have scored one odd trick at notrump and are credited with 40 points towards making a game. If you had bid two notrump and taken the required 8 tricks, you would get 70 points (40 plus 30) towards a game. And if you bid and make

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three notrump, your trick score is 100 (40 plus 30 plus 30), so it is possible to score a game in just one deal!

Since bidding and making three notrump scores a game, three notrump is called a game contract. Similarly, all higher notrump contracts are game contracts, for if you make such a contract you score a game. Note, however, that bidding and making seven notrump, a trick score of 220, entitles you to only one game, not two. In order to score a second game you must start from scratch after your first game has been made.

Other game contracts are four spades, four hearts, five diamonds, five clubs, and higher bids in those strains. Note that four spades has a trick score of 120 (compared with only 90 for three spades) and five diamonds has a trick score of 100 (compared with only 80 for four diamonds).

When you cannot score a game in one deal you may be able to get a headstart. Suppose you bid and make two spades on the first deal, getting a trick score of 60. You now need only 40 points to complete your game, so bids of one notrump, two spades, two hearts, two diamonds and two clubs (or anything higher) become game bids for you on the next deal. However, points counted towards game do not carry over from one game to the next. If either side makes a game, both must start the quest for the next game from zero.

## **SLAMS**

One of the most exciting features of bridge is the slam. Slams combine opportunities for very high scores with extreme risks.

If you bid and make twelve tricks (six notrump, six spades, six hearts, six diamonds or six clubs), you have made a small slam; if you bid and make all thirteen tricks (seven notrump, seven spades, seven hearts, seven diamonds or seven clubs), you have made a grand slam. Any slam contract is, of course, also a game contract. There are huge bonuses for such magnificent achievements, but caution is required when considering these pots of gold. If you bid six notrump and take only 11 tricks, you have fallen short of your contract and must pay a penalty, incurring a loss on the deal. Not only that, had you stopped in, say, three notrump and taken 11 tricks, you would have registered a game. Thus, there are big risks in trying for a slam bonus, for you may lose a sure game if you bid too high. This feature (weighing risk against potential gain) adds considerable excitement to bridge.

## **The Play**

After the bidding has ended and the contract has been determined, the player to the left of the declarer makes the opening lead, i.e., chooses any card and places it face up on the table (leads it). Then, the dummy places its hand face up on the table, arranged by suits with the trump suit (if any) on dummy's right (declarer's left). Dummy's part in the deal is now finished, for declarer plays both the dummy's cards and his or her own.

After studying the dummy and deciding on a plan of action, declarer plays a card from dummy (the dummy hand, like every other hand at the table, must follow suit if possible). The player to declarer's right plays a card, and declarer plays a card from the so-called closed hand (that is, declarer's hand), to complete the trick. The winner of the trick (the player who played the highest trump or, if no trumps were played, the highest card of the suit led) is determined, the trick is collected by one member of the victorious partnership (declarer always collects tricks), and the

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winner of the trick leads to the next one. If dummy wins a trick, the first card to the next trick must be played from the dummy; declarer may not arbitrarily lead from either of the hands under his or her control). Play continues in this fashion, proceeding clockwise around the table, with declarer battling to take the number of tricks contracted for during the bidding and the defenders (declarer's opponents) fighting to collect enough tricks to stop declarer short of that goal. When all 13 tricks have been completed, play ceases (which is natural enough, since no one has any more cards), and the score for the deal is determined.

## The Proprieties

The proprieties of bridge, principles that govern correct behavior, are vital. A new player is well advised to treat them as just as important as the rules governing the mechanics of the game. Indeed, beginning players sometimes develop behavior that, unknown to them, is unethical or illegal. This may lead to embarrassment or serious arguments when a budding player is ready to take on more experienced opposition, or perhaps compete in tournaments. (Don't brush off the idea of tournament play; there are many events held especially for inexperienced players, and bridge clubs are most eager to interest the new player in their contests. In fact, the odds are that you will want to try your skill at a tournament sooner or later.)

The principles of correct behavior at bridge are much, much simpler than the rules of play. Anyone who learns them correctly at the outset (and thus avoids developing bad habits at an early stage) should have no trouble whatever in this area. Indeed, the Laws of bridge have a special section devoted to the proprieties that can be summarized by the following general principle:

Communication between partners should take place only through the calls and plays that are made. You should not employ any question, gesture or comment that might convey information to your partner; nor should you use any special wording, emphasis, facial expression, inflection, haste or hesitation that might give your partner information. Also, you should refuse to draw any information from any such actions by your partner.

Experienced players will always accept a beginner's errors, but a breach of the proprieties will justifiably render one a social outcast in any knowledgeable game. Here are some examples of behavior to avoid:

### **DON'T INVENT NEW WORDING DURING THE BIDDING**

It is illegal to use "a club" to mean one thing and "one club" to mean something else, or to vary your format from the standard whether or not you are providing information; to say "I'll double three hearts," or to wail "I have a ghastly hand!" Say "one club," "double," and "pass."

### **DON'T VARY THE SPEED OF YOUR ACTIONS**

A typical violation occurs when a player doubles quickly, thinking about inflicting a large penalty on the opponents. Partner, who may get in the way by bidding something new over the double, is not entitled to know doubler's degree of optimism. It is equally improper deliberately to hesitate for a long time and then double when the issue is close. Hesitations are unavoidable, because bridge is a tough game and everyone encounters problems, but you should keep the same tempo whenever possible; take a second or two to act even when your decision is an obvious one.

### **DON'T DRAW INFERENCES FROM THE SPEED OF YOUR PARTNER'S BIDS AND PLAYS**

If your partner hesitates for a long while and then passes, it is obvious that the hesitation

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indicates something of value (else there would be nothing to consider). However, you are ethically obligated not to make any use of this information and to act just as though partner had passed quickly. Notice that although you must try to make your calls in plays in a uniform tempo, there is nothing wrong with thinking at length when it is necessary. What is wrong is for the hesitator's partner to take an unusual action on the basis of this illegal information. Players who take advantage of such hesitations (and, for example, bid further with poor values, expecting to find unannounced strength in partner's hand) deserve to be shunned by those who know better. And they usually are.

### **DON'T MAKE EMPHATIC GESTURES**

It may be tempting to slam a card down if you don't like partner's play or to bid loudly and angrily if partner's bids seem to be heading your side towards disaster, but such temptation must be resisted. Similarly, don't smile or applaud loudly if partner's actions please you. Maintain the same tone and demeanor.

### **DON'T MAKE SUPERFLUOUS COMMENTS RELEVANT TO THE GAME**

Bridge wouldn't be much fun if everyone had to stare grimly into space and say nothing except "pass," "three clubs," and so on. You will certainly want to exchange pleasantries with your partner and the opponents, but you must make sure that they have no bearing on the game. For example, unethical tactics such as asking, "Did you bid diamonds?" when you want partner to lead a diamond don't belong in any bridge game.

### **DON'T PRETEND TO THINK JUST TO FOOL THE OPPONENTS**

If an opponent leads the ace of diamonds and the only diamond in your hand is the seven, you have no problem; you must follow suit, so the only legal play is the seven of diamonds. It is unethical to hesitate in order to mislead the opponents into thinking that you had a choice of plays (and hence more than one diamond). Play at a steady pace.

In short, you should convey and receive information only by means of the bids and plays that you and your partner make, and not through any other actions. We cannot urge you too strongly to pay close attention to the proprieties and become an ethical player who will be welcome in any game.

## **Capsule Summary: The Mechanics of Bridge**

### **I. The deck**

1. Contains fifty-two cards, four suits of thirteen cards each.
2. Suit rank (applies to bidding): spades (highest), hearts, diamonds, clubs (lowest).
3. Card rank (applies to play): A (highest), K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 (lowest).

### **II. The preliminaries**

1. Cut for partners.
2. High card chooses seat and becomes the first dealer. Dealer's left-hand opponent shuffles; dealer's right-hand opponent cuts the deck; dealer deals starting with left-hand opponent. (Players should not pick up their cards until the deal is completed.) Dealer's partner shuffles the other deck, if there is one, and places it to the right.

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### **III. The bidding**

1. Goals:
  - a. How much (to what level) to bid.
  - b. Where to bid (which strain, notrump or a trump suit) to choose.
2. Possible calls:
  - a. Bids: one through seven combined with any suit or notrump.
  - b. Pass.
  - c. Double (provided the previous bid was made by an opponent; applies only to the bid just prior to the double and is cancelled by any new bid).
  - d. Redouble (provided an opponent has doubled and there have been no intervening calls other than pass). No redouble of a redouble.
3. Meaning of bids: Any bid contracts to take six tricks (book) plus the number named by the bid.
4. Procedure:
  - a. Dealer calls first; bidding proceeds clockwise.
  - b. To bid, a player must make a higher bid than the preceding one. (A bid is higher if it contracts for more tricks, or for the same number of tricks in a higher-ranking strain.)
  - c. The bidding ends after three consecutive passes. (Exception: everyone must have at least one chance to bid.)
5. Game bid: A bid of three notrump, four spades, four hearts, five diamonds or five clubs, or a higher bid in the same strain.
6. Small slam: Any bid of six.
7. Grand slam: Any bid of seven.
8. Final contract: The number and strain named in the last bid.

### **IV. The play**

1. Goals:
  - a. Declarer tries to fulfill the commitment made in the bidding.
  - b. The defenders try to prevent declarer from fulfilling the contract.
2. Tricks:
  - a. When each player plays one card, the four cards constitute a trick. The first play to a trick is called the lead.
  - b. Players must follow suit (play a card of the same suit as the one led) if possible; otherwise, they may play any card. The leader to a trick has a free choice of plays.
  - c. The highest card of the suit led wins the trick (unless a trump is played).
  - d. Trumps (if any) outrank any card of a different suit.
  - e. The highest trump played to a trick wins the trick. It is not obligatory to trump when not following suit.
3. Procedure:

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- a. Declarer is the member of the partnership bidding the final contract who first bid the strain of the final contract.
- b. Dummy is declarer's partner.
- c. The opening leader (player who leads to the first trick) is the opponent to declarer's left.
- d. Opening leader plays any card. Dummy exposes its entire hand (arranged by suit, with trumps, if any, at the right = declarer's left). Play proceeds clockwise; the player who wins a trick leads to the next. One player from each side collects tricks and keeps them, face down.

### V. The proprieties

Players may communicate only through calls and plays. It is strictly prohibited to convey information by any of the following actions, or to use information from such actions of your partner:

1. Emphasis of calls or plays.
2. Speed or slowness of calls or plays.
3. Remarks, questions, gestures, facial expressions, inflections.
4. Special wording during the bidding.

### REVIEW QUIZ

This quiz is designed to let you test your understanding of what you have learned so far and put it into practice. If your score is high, proceed onwards with confidence. If you make an error, review the relevant section. Don't be upset about a wrong answer. Don't feel bad about having to review. Among the world's popular activities, bridge is one of the hardest, very likely number one on the list. A firm foundation is an important start towards building something you don't want to fall down later. The quiz is an aid to your evaluating your progress and setting your own best pace.

1. Arrange these bids in order from the highest-ranking to the lowest-ranking: five hearts, seven notrump, one spade, three diamonds, five clubs, one notrump, two diamonds, five notrump, seven spades, one heart, three clubs.
2. If South holds all the diamond honors, West holds all the club honors, North holds all the spade honors, and East holds all the heart honors, what specific cards are held by each player?
3. (a) Who is the first dealer? (b) The second dealer? (c) To whom is the first card dealt?
4. Sort the following hand correctly: ♠ J, ♥ J, ♣ 5, ♣ 8, ♠ A, ♥ 10, ♠ K, ♠ 7, ♣ 4, ♥ Q, ♦ 9, ♠ 6, ♥ 2.
5. South makes an opening bid of one spade and West bids two diamonds. (a) What bids may North legally make? (b) May North pass? (c) May North double? (d) May North redouble?
6. The bidding proceeds as shown below. What calls may South legally make?

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EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
Pass	Pass	Pass	3 ♣
Double	?		

7. In each of the following auctions, determine the final contract, the declarer, the dummy, the opening leader, and the number of tricks declarer must take to fulfill the contract.

a.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

b.

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

c.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	2 ♣	2 ♦	3 ♣
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

d.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Pass	2 ♥	Pass

e.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	1 ♥	Double
Redouble	2 ♣	Pass	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

8. For each of the following tricks, state who has won the trick and who leads to the next trick.

	Contract	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
a.	3 ♣	♦ 6 led	♦ 8	♦ K	♦ 5
b.	4 ♥	♥ 2	♣ K led	♣ 5	♣ 7
c.	2 ♠	♣ 4	♦ J led	♦ 6	♥ Q
d.	3 NT	♥ Q	♠ 10	♦ 4 led	♣ 8
e.	4 ♥	♥ 6	♥ 8 led	♠ 9	♣ Q

9. Summarize the proprieties in one brief sentence.

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10. For each of these contracts--two clubs, one notrump, six hearts, four spades, five diamonds, two hearts, seven notrump:
- (a) What is the trick score for bidding and making each?
  - (b) Which are game contracts?
  - (c) Which are slam contracts?

### SOLUTIONS

1. Seven notrump (highest), seven spades, five notrump, five hearts, five clubs, three diamonds, three clubs, two diamonds, one notrump, one spade, one heart (lowest).

2.

SOUTH: ♦ A K Q J 10

WEST: ♣ A K Q J 10

NORTH: ♠ A K Q J 10

EAST: ♥ A K Q J 10

3. (a) The player who draws the highest card when cutting for partners. (b) The player to the left of the first dealer. (c) The player to the dealer's left.

4. ♠ A K J 7 6 ♥ Q J 10 2 ♦ 9 ♣ 8 5 4

When playing, you should alternate red and black suits; in bridge books, it is customary to list the suits in rank order, as shown here. If you ask an experienced player for advice about a hand you held, always present it with the suits in rank order. Bridge players think in rank order, even though they sort their cards physically with the suits alternating by color.

5. (a) two hearts, two spades, two notrump, any bid at the three level (three clubs, three diamonds, three hearts, three spades, three notrump), any bid at the four level, the five level, the six level, or the seven level.

(b) Yes.

(c) Yes.

(d) No.

6. Pass, redouble, three diamonds, three hearts, three spades, three notrump, or any bid at the four or a higher level.

7.

	Contract	Declarer	Dummy	Opening Leader	Number of Tricks Needed
a.	3 NT	SOUTH	NORTH	WEST	9
b.	4 ♥	EAST	WEST	SOUTH	10
c.	3 ♣ doubled	WEST	EAST	NORTH	9
d.	It is impossible to tell. The bidding has not yet been completed, for there have not been three consecutive passes.				
e.	2 ♥	EAST	WEST	SOUTH	8

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8. In each example, the player who wins the trick leads to the next trick.
- a. NORTH (played the highest card of the suit led).
  - b. SOUTH (trumped the trick; the contract is four hearts, so hearts are trumps)
  - c. WEST (played the highest card of the suit led, and no one trumped the trick).
  - d. NORTH (played the highest card of the suit led, and there are no trumps at notrump).
  - e. WEST (played the highest trump).
9. Partners may communicate only through the call and plays that are made.
10. (a)

Contract	Trick score
2 ♣	40 (20 per trick)
1 NT	40 (40 for the first trick)
6 ♥	180 (30 per trick)
4 ♠	120 (30 per trick)
5 ♦	100 (20 per trick)
2 ♥	60 (30 per trick)
7 NT	220 (40 for the first trick; 30 for each subsequent trick)

(b) six hearts, four spades, five diamonds, seven notrump.

(c) six hearts, seven notrump.

This article dates back several years. It mainly concerns rubber bridge and the joys of the home game.

#### **The District 13 I/N Newsletter, Winter, 2014**

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#### **Upcoming Tournaments**

Wisconsin Holiday Sectional Best Western Hotel Milwaukee, WI Dec 27 - Dec 30, 2014

Valentine Sectional Zoofari Conference Center Milwaukee, WI Feb 4 - Feb 7, 2015

Unit Dinner & New Style Sectional Finals Hilton Garden Inn Milwaukee, WI Mar 8 - Mar 8, 2015

Spring Fling Fountain Banquet Hall Sturtevant, WI Mar 27 - Mar 29, 2015

Ripon Sectional: January 23-25, 2015 at Royal Ridges

Appleton Spring Sectional: March 20-22, 2015 same location as 2014; Holiday Inn at 150 S Nicolet Appleton WI

WinterFest Sectional, January 23-25, 2015 ... Chevy Chase Country Club, Wheeling, IL

**Valentine Regional, February 14-20, 2015 ... Wyndham Glenview, Glenview, IL**

**GNT, February 21-22, Northbrook Hilton, Northbrook, IL**

**Spring Regional, April 28-May 4, 2015 ... Grand Geneva Resort and Spa, Lake Geneva, WI**