

INTRODUCTION TO DUPLICATE BRIDGE

This book is not about how to bid, declare or defend a hand of bridge. It assumes you know how to do that.

It is your guide to playing Duplicate Bridge, which is how organized, competitive bridge is played all over the World. It explains all the Laws of Duplicate and the process of entering into Club games or Tournaments, the Convention Card, the protocols and rules of player conduct; the paraphernalia and terminology of duplicate.

In short, it's about the context in which duplicate bridge is played.

To become an accomplished duplicate player, you will need to know everything in this book. But you can start playing duplicate immediately after you read Chapter I and skim through the other Chapters.

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INTRODUCTION TO DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Not a word of this book is about how to bid, play or defend a bridge hand.

It assumes you have some bridge skills and an interest in enlarging your bridge experience by joining the world of organized bridge competition. It's called Duplicate Bridge. It's the difference between a casual Saturday morning round of golf or set of tennis and playing in your Club or State championships. As in golf or tennis, your skills will be tested in competition with others more or less skilled than you; this book is about the settings in which duplicate happens. As you see by the size of the book, there's a lot to learn.

As you're already a bridge player, it explains how you can start playing in competition at your local Club, at a Regional tournament or at the Nationals. As in any organized competitive sport or pastime, there are rules of procedure and behavior; language and traditions and paraphernalia that you must understand. Once you understand the context of duplicate, you can concentrate on exercising your bridge skills without concern about violating the rules or embarrassing yourself in a room with hundreds of players. Context is what this book provides.

The book is organized to be read in chronological order. Each Chapter will assume you have digested the previous one(s). The sequencing takes you from a total beginning duplicate player through an evolution that gradually uncovers the whole world of duplicate. (There's a Glossary at the end of Chapter II if you see words you don't understand.)

CHAPTER I - WHAT IS DUPLICATE?

Definitions and a description of the game of Duplicate; differences and similarities with social or rubber bridge; partners and partnerships, how to locate a bridge club and a partner to get started playing, developing a "card" and practicing it with your partner; identifying who your competitors and opponents are.

CHAPTER II - BASIC DUPLICATE

"Pairs" duplicate, meaning two players playing against another pair, is the basic pattern of duplicate. After a few hands, the cards move to the next lower numbered table, and the players move in the opposite direction. This chapter has all the basic information you need about the paraphernalia and terminology of duplicate – travelers and bid boxes and table markers and pick-up slips and convention cards and personal scores, etc. Also, how matchpoint pairs scoring works; how to fill out your convention card, how to keep your personal record of hands played and lots more. With photographs.

CHAPTER III - THE LAWS AND PROTOCOLS OF DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Duplicate bridge, at the Club level or at tournaments, has a stringent set of Laws and patterns of behavior – "protocols" – that you must know, understand and follow. When everyone plays by the same set of rules, players of different backgrounds, skill levels and even languages can play on a level playing field, assuring that duplicate is a game of skill. The Laws and the Director comprise the mechanism that makes it all work smoothly.

CHAPTER IV - DUPLICATE TOURNAMENTS

All the information you need to plan for and attend a Duplicate Tournament. It includes the various levels of tournaments, the types of tournament events, organizing a pair or a team and getting started, the Partnership Desk, Swiss Team and Knockout IMP scoring; Teams event strategy; single and multiple session events.

CHAPTER V – THE GOVERNING STRUCTURE OF ORGANIZED BRIDGE IN NORTH AMERICA

The American Contract Bridge League – The ACBL – governs all organized duplicate play, from your local Club to the Nationals. This chapter contains a brief description of that structure and its role in helping you enjoying the game to the utmost.

Appendix A – Duplicate Bridge in the Coachella Valley, California

There are dozens of duplicate games every week, year around in the Coachella Valley. Here you will find information on where and when and at what level they are held; Directors, Partnerships, the local Duplicate Web site; duplicate clubs, locations, maps, contact names and numbers, game results, upcoming events, awards and promotions - - everything there is to know about duplicate in the Coachella Valley in Southern California.

Appendix B – Partnership Bidding Practice

Partnership bidding practice is a vital technique for rapidly getting to know a new partner and figuring out how you play together before entering a game. This Appendix tells you how that is best done, including how to practice special bidding situations like games and slams.

Appendix C – A Plan for Getting Started at Duplicate

You don't have to read and understand everything in this book to get started at duplicate. In fact, you can start almost immediately using the steps presented in Appendix C.

Appendix D – At Home Duplicate and Online Duplicate

You can organize a fun at-home duplicate evening for 4 or 8 players, or you can play 24 x 7 x 365 online, by yourself or with your partner or partners or with total strangers or even with robots. Find out about these alternate venues here.

Appendix E – Additional Sources of Information, Practice and Learning.

To become a better duplicate player, you need to continually learn, practice and play new techniques, new conventions and styles of bidding, play and defense. None of that information is in this book, but Appendix E provides sources to help you find it.

CHAPTER I - AN OVERVIEW OF DUPLICATE

What is Duplicate Bridge?

The term duplicate comes from a characteristic of organized bridge that differentiates it from social or rubber bridge - - hands are dealt once and then played a number of times without redealing. In other words, a single hand of bridge is “duplicated” so it can be played a dozen or more times in a session of bridge.

Duplication of hands takes the luck of the cards out of play, thus providing fair competition. When you and your partner play a hand that is subsequently played by a dozen other pairs, the resulting range of scores represents a true picture of the relative skill of all the pairs playing that hand and “the luck of the cards” is eliminated.

This overview focuses on “matchpoint” or “pairs” style duplicate, which is the basic and most common form of duplicate scoring, especially at local clubs. For other forms of play and scoring, see Chapter III – Tournament Duplicate.

Is Duplicate a lot different than social or rubber bridge?

No, it's not a lot different. Everything you know about bidding and playing and defending is the same when playing duplicate as when playing socially. The scoring is a little different, because there's no carry-over between one hand and the next. In most forms of duplicate each hand stands alone, so a bad result on one hand doesn't affect the results on the next hand. As in all competitive pastimes, there are additional things to learn, and the level of skill in all aspects of the game gets higher as you advance in competitive play. Top-level duplicate bidding and play is much more precise than at social games. There's a strong emphasis on not making mistakes and on bidding very competitively. As a result, the tiniest margin of victory on a hand is critical in duplicate, whereas an overtrick in a rubber game is almost meaningless.

What actually changes at the table? The mechanics of shuffle, deal and play at duplicate are different. (See Chapter II – Basic Pairs.) The scoring is different because there is no carryover between hands, there are no “rubbers” and vulnerability is determined arbitrarily, not by virtue of scores on prior hands. A “session” of duplicate consists of a fixed number of hands, in the 24 to 28 hands range, taking 3 to 3½ hours to play. Hands, once shuffled, are placed in “boards”, a simple device enabling hands to be played over and over again without redealing, and cards are not placed into the middle of the table to be collected by the winner of the trick.

All these changes can be learned in 3 minutes, and bidding, playing and defending changes hardly at all. Tactics change somewhat as a result of the competitive nature of duplicate and the scoring differences, but duplicate bridge is 95% the same as social bridge.

What Does “95% the Same” Mean? To bid, bridge players everywhere add up their points, evaluate their hands, bid their suits, raise their partner with support, etc. To declare, the dummy comes down, you see where your winners and losers are and play so as to make your contract.

To defend, you bid competitively, lead your partner's suit, take your winners and try to defeat the declarer. All these parts of bridge are exactly the same as a Saturday night bridge game with the neighbors.

But competitive-level bidding has progressed a long way since Goren ruled the scene. One characteristic of duplicate bidding is the proliferation of special calls to make the bidding of unusual hands easier, called "Conventions". A few conventions are so common as to be required parts of your game, like Stayman and Jacoby Transfers and Blackwood.

Duplicate defense is a clear differentiator of skills, because good defenders work hard at keeping declarer to a minimum number of tricks, whether or not she makes her contract. Good duplicate defenders use signals and leads well and they count everything possible to gain every possible advantage over others playing the same cards.

Declare and dummy play is mechanically the same, but the emphasis at duplicate is to take the maximum number of tricks, sometimes even at the risk of failing to make the contract.

Every hand counts the same as every other hand at duplicate, so a 2 Club contract is just as important as a grand slam. Remember all the other pairs will play the identical cards, so a grand slam is just a hand of bridge, not a big deal so far as the competition goes.

The Duplicate Environment

Duplicate bridge is total involvement. There are almost no distractions at duplicate. There is no loud talk; no interruptions; little interest in anything except bridge. It is a social game because there are lots of people. However it's not like party bridge, because it's so intense - just bridge: no party.

After a session, there's lots of party -- talk and discussions and occasionally a minor disagreement. Sometimes there are lessons for your partner: "Why didn't you finesse the other way and keep the dangerous hand out of the lead ? If you would have, we'd be first instead of third", etc., etc.

Duplicate players are not all alike. They are young, old, wealthy, poor; healthy and ailing: all sizes, colors and temperaments. Some are brilliant and some are slow, but none of this matters at duplicate. The only thing that matters is how well you and your partner play compared to the others that played the same hands in your direction that particular day.

To enter and play a duplicate session, you pay your fee, you sit down and play. When you're done, you look at your scores to see where you finished. There's no 'real' reward -- no prizes, no money; no trophies. You can earn "Masterpoints", which are given out by the American Contract Bridge League at Clubs and Tournaments. They mean absolutely nothing to anyone except other duplicate players. "How many master points do you have?" But you can't buy them - - you have to earn them in sanctioned play against worthwhile opponents. That's the challenge of

duplicate bridge: a completely mental struggle operated under stringent rules of fairness and decorum. If that sounds like fun, you'll love duplicate.

When and Where Can I Play Duplicate ?

You can play duplicate every day or even several times a day in large cities. There are often sessions in the afternoon and evenings, and increasingly in the mornings, especially in areas with a lot of Seniors. In smaller towns, there may be only a single duplicate session per week.

You can play once a month or you can make it a big part of your life or do it three times a year, like some play golf. Duplicate never gets old - you can enjoy it 6 times a week or 6 times a year.

(See Appendix A – Coachella Valley Duplicate)

In major cities, you can go to duplicate tournaments almost every weekend. In virtually any city or town in North America, you can find a duplicate game and there are published directories to point your way. (See Chapter III – Tournament Duplicate)

You can even make up your own duplicate game and play at home -- with as few as 4 or 8 players. Finally, you can play online 24 hours a day, 365 days a year! Some of these online games award masterpoints from the ACBL just like your local club does.

(See Appendix D – At Home and Online Duplicate)

Who Can Play Duplicate ?

Anyone. It's not very costly and anyone can play -- wealth, age or strength has no bearing. Many bridge players are Seniors - - but an increasing number of college-age and even high-school and grammar school kids play Duplicate. There are clubs and organization everywhere that sponsor duplicate games, usually on weekday afternoons, but also evenings, weekends, Holidays - - all the time in major metropolitan areas.

Handicapped Players. Duplicate is wonderful for people with physical handicaps that prevent many sports and other leisure time activities, because it only requires you to be able to think. If you can't see too well or hear too well or can't get around very well -- come play duplicate bridge. Provisions are made for handicapped players at all clubs and all tournaments. There are procedures for walkers and for wheelchair-bound people to sit North/South at all sessions so they don't have to move around like those sitting East/West.

Like doubles tennis, duplicate play is very much a partnership game, so the best pairs have complete and flawless understanding of the meaning of all their bids, signals, leads, etc. There is no lapse of concentration or effort by good players, because every trick is important, on every hand, throughout the entire set of hands. And there's always a post-mortem time for spirited discussion and partner education!

Competitors and Opponents. In competitive bridge, your competitors are not at your table. Your competitors are the other pairs sitting North/South or East/West. The people at your table are your opponents. Winning at duplicate means scoring more points or giving up fewer points than your competitors -- those pairs that who play the same cards you do and sit in the same direction as you and your partner. You try to best your opponents at the table, but, since you and they are playing different cards, you actually compete with those who play the same cards you and your partner play. Thus, no “luck of the cards” impacts the results in a duplicate game.

Competitive Bidding. Duplicate bridge is noticeably different from social or party bridge in the area of bidding after the opponents have opened. The ability to compete effectively and to wrestle the contract from the enemy or push them too high is the most exciting part of advanced bridge bidding.

Because of the intense competition, duplicate is strictly regulated in terms of conduct and behavior. This is the only way strangers can play a competitive game and enjoy the activity equally. (See Chapter III – The Laws and Protocols of Duplicate)

Bridge Clubs and Tournaments

Bridge clubs are usually commercial, private venues where duplicate players come together to play duplicate bridge. There may be from 6 to 40 tables of bridge in play at a time in Clubs. Games are held in churches, recreation halls, Senior Centers and all kinds of private or public buildings. Some charge a fee of \$3.00 to \$7.00 per session; others are run entirely by volunteers.

Bridge tournaments are similar to bridge clubs, except they are considerably larger in terms of numbers of players, but also because they provide different types of events – not all Pairs – and some lasting multiple days instead of a single session as at your local club. (See Chapter IV – Duplicate Tournaments)

How Do I Join a Game at a Club or Tournament? There are games and tournaments in towns and cities, online and at the national, international and world levels. You pay your money and take a seat - - that's all there is to entering a club game and most tournaments. You have to bring a partner to a tournament, or you can find one at the Partnership Desk. Almost all club level games and tournament events are open to whoever wants to play, but some National, most International and all World class events are by invitation only.

Competitive bridge is a social game. The more people in a game or tournament, the better it is. At National Tournaments there may be 25,000 tables of bridge played over a 12 day period. At a small club or private game, there may be only two or three tables in play in a once-a-week session.

Masterpoints. The measure of skill in duplicate is the number of Masterpoints you accumulate. The only way to get them is to earn them in organized competitive play at clubs or tournaments. The bigger the game, the more players you can beat and the more Masterpoints you can earn toward becoming a Life Master – the gold standard of your beginning duplicate career.

Starting to Play Duplicate

Finding a place to play. Duplicate clubs are available throughout North America. One place to start looking for a club near you would be the Yellow Pages in a local phone book. A definitive directory of all ACBL Clubs tournaments can be found at www.ACBL.org. They are often held in community or senior centers, churches, club houses and other places with adequate parking and room for enough bridge tables in a quiet location. Games range from just a few tables up to several simultaneous sections of 10 to 15 tables each. Fees range widely, from \$1.50 to \$9.00 per session per player - - about the price of a movie or less.

(See Appendix A – Coachella Valley Duplicate) and
Appendix C – A Plan for Getting Started at Duplicate)

Finding a partner. You need a partner to play duplicate, but often Directors at local clubs will help you find one. Call well ahead of time if you need a partner. Before you start, you could go to a club and watch a duplicate session or two. (This is called “kibitzing” and is allowed by the Laws of Bridge.) Call and ask the Director or Club manager about kibitzing. That’s the best way to quickly get a feel for duplicate competition.

Levels of Games. Duplicate games at Clubs and Tournaments are offered for a variety of levels of players as measured by the number of masterpoints they have accumulated. At various times of the week at your club or at a major tournament, there may be sessions for players with fewer than 5 masterpoints! or 49 or 299 or 500. These are called I-N sections, meaning “Intermediate – Novice” player levels.

Stratification. “Open” club games have no masterpoint restrictions, so everyone plays together. However, even though you may have only 100 masterpoints, you don’t compete with those with 2,000 masterpoints because Open games are “stratified”. Remember the difference between your opponents and your competitors. In a stratified game you **play** against opponents who may have many more masterpoints than you or your partner, but you **compete** with other pairs of similar masterpoint levels and sitting in your direction.

At the end of the session, your scores will be compared to other pairs with a similar number of masterpoints, for example, you may be grouped with all those with under 299 masterpoints (called “299ers”). Stratification allows club games that may only have a dozen tables or so to offer competitive bridge for several skill levels at the same time. Typical levels at clubs are “A”, which is unlimited; “B” which might be from 300 to 1500 masterpoints, and “C”, which could be players with under 300 masterpoints. Only at large tournaments are there enough players with under 49 masterpoints to make up a whole section of players at that level.

Changes or additions to your bidding style. If you don’t play the following conventions or treatments, you should adopt or at least understand them to start playing duplicate bridge.

- 5-Card majors, meaning major suits of just 4 cards are never opened
- 1 NoTrump openings of 15 to 17 HCP (High Card Points)
- Strong 2 Clubs opening for all unbalanced 22+ HCP hands

- Weak Two Openings of Diamonds, Hearts and Spades (6 to 10 HCP or so)
- Negative Doubles
- Limit Raises [1♥ – P – 3♥ ...] shows 10 to 12 dummy points, not an opening hand.
- Weak Jump Overcalls [1♣ – 2♠ ...] showing 6 points or so and a 6-card suit.
- Stayman
- Jacoby Transfers
- Blackwood

Changes because of Matchpoint scoring. Every hand at duplicate is scored separately. This means every hand is played for the highest possible score, and there is no carry-over from one hand to the next. There are large premiums (300 to 500 points) for bidding and making games on one hand, as well as slam bonuses that are the same as in rubber bridge. At pairs duplicate, a score of 430 beats a score of 420, but this small difference can make a huge difference in your results, because winning a hand (board) by any margin whatsoever is paramount. Every overtrick is golden, so declarers play hard for every possible trick.

Changes because of timed play. Duplicate is a timed event, as all players must move at the same time. A 2-board round must be completed in 15 minutes; a 3-board round in 20 minutes, 4 boards in 25 minutes and 5 boards in 30 minutes. Duplicate play is quiet, as others may still be playing when you are finished with your boards, and tables are usually close together. No talk about boards just played is allowed, as others may overhear, distorting the fairness of the session.

A Director calls the rounds and settles any conflicts, applying the Laws of Bridge. He/she may be called at any time during the round if there is a question or procedural error. (See Chapter III)

Changes because of the Convention Card and Personal Score. Each player in a duplicate game is required to keep track of his or her results on each hand, and also to provide a written display of any Conventions or other special bid or play arrangements, visible to the opponents. These are explained in detail in Chapter II – Basic Duplicate

You'll quickly become comfortable playing duplicate and you'll see an opening to a whole new level of fun and excitement. That's because your "luck at cards" has no effect on the fun you can have in competition with others on a level playing field. OK, so now you're ready to start playing duplicate!

Appendix A and Appendix C will help you get started at local clubs.

But you must first read and understand Chapter II – Basic Duplicate and Chapter III – the Laws and Protocols of Duplicate.

Later, when you're ready for your first Tournament, Chapter IV – Duplicate Tournaments will guide you through the process. Tournaments have pairs events that are similar to what play at your local Club, but they also have totally different types of events, particularly Team Games, where teams of 4 or more players play as a team against other teams.

CHAPTER II - BASIC DUPLICATE

This section presents information about Duplicate Pairs.

*For Team duplicate, consult Chapter IV – Duplicate Tournaments.
There are significant differences between pairs and teams duplicate.*

Chapter II includes Matchpoints and Masterpoints and how they are recorded, calculated and sent to the ACBL; Masterpoint colors and Honor Titles; scoring as an integral part of duplicate bidding; where all possible scores can be found; keeping your Private Score, understanding pairs results in Summary and Individual Board formats, filling out your Convention Card and a duplicate scoring table.

Basic, day-to-day duplicate play happens mostly at local Clubs.

Clubs have an amazing variety of configurations: some have permanent buildings with dozens of games per week and a half-dozen Directors; some are a single session per week in a church or a Senior Center. They are owned and, most frequently, directed by an individual, who works overtime to organize games, pay the rent, find partners, direct games, soothe hurt feelings, prepare the snacks, sweep the floor and turn out the lights at the end of the day. Club Directors are the backbone of organized duplicate bridge. There are several thousand Clubs and Directors at work daily in the ACBL – the American / Canadian / Mexican organization of duplicate bridge, whose full name is the American Contract Bridge League.

Almost all Clubs offer only Pairs competition: a room full (hopefully) of tables of East / West and North / South players gathered together for a few hours of intellectual battle. This section describes how it works in Club-level Pairs duplicate.

Other sections of this book describe how Tournaments work: they are usually larger gatherings of players in a higher-level competition than at a Club: more participants, additional kinds of scoring; more players from more locations, more points to be earned, more excitement, more cost, more Directors, more types of events, etc. These additional duplicate event types are described in Chapter IV - Duplicate Tournaments. This section describes the bread-and-butter, basic, Club-level form of duplicate we can all enjoy daily in our neighborhoods.

Basically, it is known as Matchpoint Pairs.

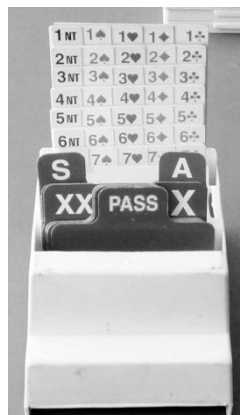
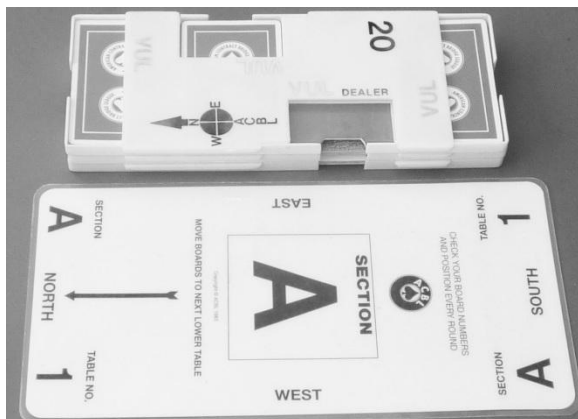
Introduction to Duplicate Bridge



A typical Duplicate Bridge Room

Matchpoint Pairs. In this most common form of duplicate, two pairs of players, called North/South and East/West respectively, sit at a table and shuffle 2, 3, 4 or 5 hands. There may be from 5 to 18 tables of two pairs each in a single section of duplicate, and there can be several sections in each session. The objective is to have every North/South pair play against every East/West pair insofar as possible.

After being shuffled, each hand is then placed in a “duplicate board”, which is a flat metal or plastic carrier that enables each hand to be kept unchanged as the board moves from table to table. The number of boards (hands) depends on the number of tables in play, with the most common configuration being 13 tables and 26 boards (hands) in play, meaning 2-boards per round.



A Table Marker and Duplicate Boards

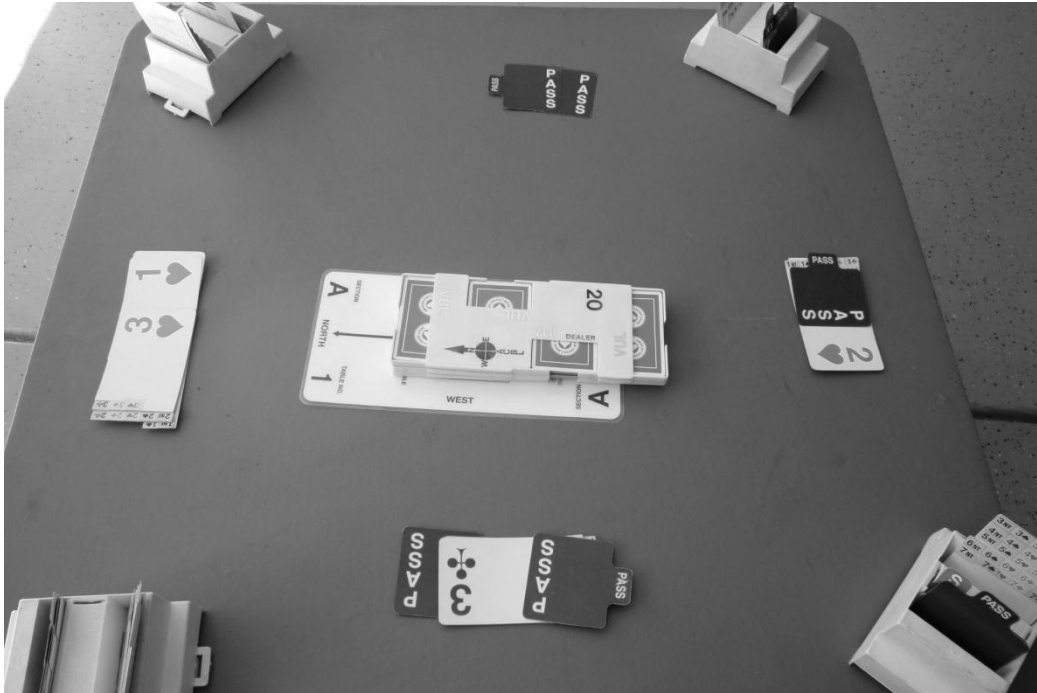
A Bidding Box

An Electronic Scorer

In many Clubs nowadays, and at virtually all Tournaments, boards are pre-shuffled by card-shuffling machines. This saves a few minutes at the start of play, but more importantly, it allows the Director to pre-print complete illustrations of every hand to be played, and an analysis of what contracts can be made. These Hand Records, as they are called, are NOT available until AFTER the round has been played. They enable you and your partner to examine in detail how you did and how your partner could have done better. Your Personal Score sheets are used to compare with the pre-printed Hand Records: that's another reason to keep good Personal Scores, so as to take advantage of this educational opportunity for your partner.

A board, in addition to holding the cards, indicates the dealer, the direction for each player (North, East, South and West) and the vulnerability for each pair. The dealer bids first, using his

Bidding Box. Others follow in turn until there has been three passes, then the opening leader makes the lead, the dummy comes down, and play continues as in any bridge game, with one exception - - see below.



Showing an entire auction using bidding box cards.

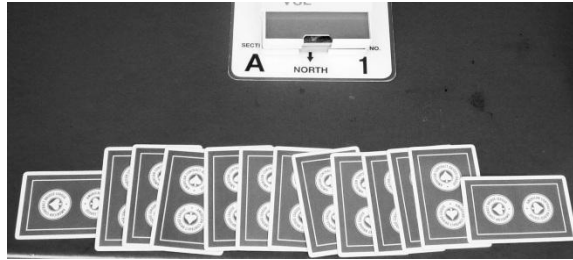
West is the dealer, as indicated on the board, and her first bid is Pass. To bid, she placed a Pass card from her bidding box, facing her partner, not herself. Then, reading around the table clockwise, North bid 1 Heart, East passed and South bid 2 Hearts. Continuing with her 2nd bid, West bid 3 Clubs and North raised to 3 Hearts. Then there were 3 passes in a row, and the auction ended.

Notice how easy it is to review the auction when all bids are in full view all the time. It's also totally quiet, so nearby players at other tables can't hear your auction, and the room is quieter as a result of using bidding boxes. When all 4 agree to the final contract and know the declarer and opening leader, the bid box cards are picked and replaced into the players' bid box.

The One Exception. Cards are not placed in the center of the table when played to a trick, but instead are placed in front of each player, face down, perpendicular to the table edge for winners and parallel to the table edge for losers. This illustration shows winners for the 2nd through the 12th tricks and losers for the first and last, reading left-to-right.

Since the cards for each hand are in front of the person who played them, it is easy to replace them into the board at the end of the hand, ready for the next table to play the same cards.

Introduction to Duplicate Bridge

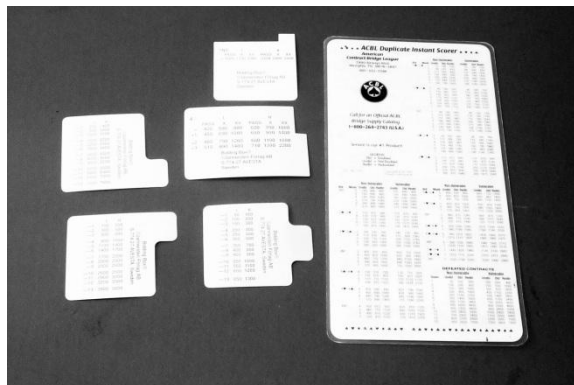


Placement of played tricks

When all 13 tricks have been played, all players agree as to the results and the score is entered by North onto a pre-printed form called a “traveler”, which is placed in each board, folded so as to prevent accidental viewing by subsequent players. In an increasing number of Clubs and at most tournaments, travelers have been replaced by an electronic scoring device that transmits the results of each board to a centrally located computer for faster and more accurate scoring and final tabulation of winners. Each player then records the result of the board into his Personal Score form. This provides a record of each board results for future discussion and possible resolution of differences between pairs by a Director.

The image shows three duplicate bridge forms. On the left is an 'OFFICIAL (Mitchell or Howell) TRAVELER SCORE' form with a grid for recording scores. In the center is a 'Convention - CALL THE DIRECTOR' form with a grid for recording bids and plays. On the right is a 'Personal Score' form for 'BOB + JANE' with a grid for recording scores and a section for 'OTHER CONVENTIONS'.

A Traveler, a Personal Score and a Convention Card



All possible duplicate scores are on the back of the Table Marker and on every bidding box card.

When all boards in the round have been played, or at the expiration of the time allowed for the round, the Director announces the round is over, and East/West players then move to the next higher-numbered table, while the boards move to the next lower-numbered table. Playing of the new set of boards then continues as described above. All 24 to 28 boards are played in this manner.

Mitchell or Howell? This has been a description of the most common “movement” of players and boards; it’s called a Mitchell movement, and is used for all sections of 7 or more tables. If there are smaller number of tables, down to as few as three, a different movement is used, called a “Howell” movement. In a Howell movement, virtually every pair moves, and alternates between N/S and E/W, so as to once again attempt to have every pair play every other pair, keeping the competition as level as possible.

Matchpoints are the name of the scores given to a pair for a win or tie on a hand. When all the plays of every hand are compared, matchpoints are added up to determine two sets of winners: the North /South pairs and the East /West pairs. Winners are awarded Masterpoints. See below for detailed examples of matchpoints and masterpoints in a Pairs setting: the baseline of duplicate play everywhere.

When all the rounds have been played, all the travelers are collected and the winners and placers are calculated. This usually takes just a few minutes, as results are calculated quickly by computers in use at virtually all organized duplicate games. There are winners, placers, etc., for East/West and also North/South. This is because East/West pairs compete only against each other, and North/South pairs do likewise. So “holding cards” is irrelevant at duplicate as identical hands are played by those competing with each other. Your competitors have exactly the same cards as you do. You could win at a duplicate game never declaring a single hand! In Pairs, the results on any one board don’t affect any other board results, because each is scored independently.

Duplicate Bidding Tactics Include Projecting Your Score. You're after the best result on every hand you play. 'Best result' means either the highest plus score or the lowest minus score. There is no negative feeling about going down at any form of duplicate – it’s part of the game.

For example, going down 1400 is a big minus score, but it's a winner for you against pairs who let their opponents make 1430. You will win the hand with minus 1400.

Every possible score for a hand is available in the bidding box: on the bid cards themselves for made contracts; on the Pass card for failed contracts not doubled; on the red X (Double) card for doubled, failed contracts. Redoubled, failed contracts are on the blue XX (Redouble) card. There’s also a Duplicate Scoring Table at the end of this chapter.

Scoring is Part of Duplicate Bidding. It must become automatic to you to compute in your head the scoring possibilities in every hand while you bid. You can't play competitively if you don't learn how duplicate scoring operates. It’s because it’s integral to the competitive bidding

process: it's not a matter of who writes down the score at the end of the hand -- that administration, not bidding.

Duplicate Scoring in a Nutshell: Partial contracts made earn 20 points per trick for Clubs and Diamonds; 30 points each for Hearts and Spades, 10 points extra for NoTrump contracts and all earn 50 points extra for the partial. (3 Hearts bid and made earn $30+30+30+50 = 140$). Game contracts bid and made are awarded game bonuses of 300 for non-vulnerable hands and 500 extra for vulnerable hands: (4 Hearts, vulnerable, bid and made earn $30+30+30+30+ 500 = 620$. Bidding 3 NoTrump, not vulnerable but making 4 earns $40+30+30+30+300 = 430$).

Undertricks are 50 points each not vulnerable and 100 points each vulnerable. Doubled and redoubled undertricks are not simple multiples of these numbers. Consult the red X or blue XX cards for the exact numbers.

Who Keeps Score? You Do! The potential scores for all contracts being bid-for must always be in your thoughts as you make each bid -- not after the hand is over. In duplicate scoring, it's not the absolute size of the score you make or give up that counts -- it's the size of your score compared to the others who play the same hand. There are no carry-overs in duplicate. Every hand is a complete contest on its own.

Example: If E/W lets N/S make 2 Hearts for 110 points when they (E/W) can make 2 Spades for 110, that is a 220 point swing -- the difference between a winner and a loser. Even if E/W go down 1 at 2 Spades, that's only minus 50 or minus 100 points for them -- a winner over the minus 110 points for a 2 Heart contract bid and made by N/S. Minus 100 can be a big win over minus 110.

This kind of mental scoring during the auction must become a habit. Don't think you can become a good duplicate player without it. You just can't and no one else can do it for you, because it must go on in your head while the bidding progresses. Going down is an integral part of duplicate tactics; going down less than the opponents can make in their contract is the *winning* part of duplicate tactics. Good players expect to go down about 1/3 of the time or more. You could go down every single hand in a duplicate session and win the whole event.

Scoring is not really hard, and it's not really math, either: just adding up the trick scores plus partial or game/slam bonuses. If you're smart enough to read this book, you can do it. There's a complete set of duplicate scores at the end of this chapter: refer to it now and start to memorize it as soon as you can. Once you see the patterns, it's not really a big job and all the scores are on the back of the bidding box cards, but you can't look at them during the bidding.

Score-Based Bidding Tactics. Generally, you try to force your opponents to the 3-level for part-score contracts or to the 5-level for game contracts. If you could always play defense against 3-level and 5-level contracts, you would be unbeatable. Opponents will do the same to you, so you can see you're going to have to be able to play the spots off the cards when you're the declarer, and also have a clear picture of the scoring possibilities, plus and minus.

POP QUIZ!

(1) Is it better to go down 2 doubled Vulnerable or let your opponents make a not vulnerable game in Spades?

(2) Should you bid 7 Clubs not vulnerable or let opponents make 6 NT Vulnerable, if you can take only 6 tricks at Clubs?

One rule of thumb relative to competing with the score is not to push opponents into a game they can make -- another is not to double them into game they haven't bid. Most hard decisions occur at the 3-level and at the 4/5 level.

Obviously these rules aren't really rules because you can't follow all of them all the time. But anyone can memorize rules -- the skill and fun of duplicate is in judgment and visualization of abstract situations and outwitting your opponents.

POP Quiz Answers

Down 2 doubled and vulnerable costs you 500 matchpoints. Your opponents can make 420 for a not-vulnerable Spade game. Down one for minus 300 – great for you! But down two for minus 500 when the opponents can only make plus 420 is a bottom board.

6NT making, vulnerable, is 1440. Down 7, not vulnerable and doubled costs you 1700. A close call, but still a bad result for you. You will be doubled, of course. But, if you can hold it to down 6, that's only minus 1400 - - a winner if they were going to make their 1440 point slam.

Private Scores. The Private Score form is printed on the back of your Convention Card. On it, you record the contract and results, plus or minus, for every hand you play or defend. It's an invaluable record of all the hands played in a session, and can be used to study your bidding and play performance. Private Scores must be kept face-down on the playing surface, obviously. Private Scores are required by the Laws of Bridge to be kept for every pair, in order for the Director to resolve questions before the traveler is turned in. They are not optional.

Each player should record the contract and result for every hand played, using the Board number column on your private score as illustrated below. Here's a Private Score for a N/S pair:

Board #	Vs	Dealer Vul.	Contract	Plus	Minus	Est. pts.	Points
1	6	North None	3 NT N - 2		100		
2	6	East N/S	4 Spades S +5	650			
3	6	South E/W	3 Hearts N - 1		50		

Introduction to Duplicate Bridge

In this example, a North / South pair played boards 1, 2 and 3 against E/W pair 6 (shown in column 2). Notice the Private Score form tells you the dealer and vulnerability for every board, in column 3. For example, board 2 is dealt by East and North / South are vulnerable.

On board #1, N/S went down 2 at a contract of 3NT (col. 4) for a minus score of 100 (col. 6)

On board #2, South bid 4 and made 5 Spades, vulnerable for a plus 650

On board #3, North went off 1, not vulnerable, for a minus 50

The corresponding E/W Private Score would show opposite results: a plus 100 on board 1; a minus 650 for Board 2 and a plus 50 for Board 3.

Resolving Problems. If a question is raised during a session as to the correctness of a score on a traveler, the Director can examine the Private Score of the appropriate pairs to verify or correct a score without interrupting play. The Director may ask to see your Private Score at any time: simply hand it to the him and continue play, without comment. If you don't have one, the Director has to ask you if you remember the contract and score to resolve the problem. If you haven't written it down, how can he do that? How can you remember all the hands and results? If you haven't kept a Private Score, you are then the culprit, and the ruling goes against you.

How Matchpoints are Calculated. Matchpoints are what you earn for beating or tying one or more of your competitors on a board. An example traveler for Board #7, with matchpoints.

N/S Pair	E/W Pair	Contract	By	Made	Down	N/S Score	E/W Score	Matchpoints	
								N/S	E/W
1	7	3NT	S	4		630		6	0
2	8	3NT	N	3		600		5	1
3	3	3D	N	4		130		3	3
4	1	3NT	N		1		100	1.5	4.5
5	4	5D	N		2		100	1.5	4.5
6	5	6NT	S		2		200	0	6
7	6	5C	E		3	300		4	2

Matchpoints are calculated as follows:

1 matchpoint for each pair you beat plus ½ for each tie.

In the example above:

N/S #1 had the top score and get 6 matchpoints for beating 6 N/S pairs; E/W #7 gets 0 (zero).

N/S #2 had a plus of 600, beating all but pair #1, and get 5 matchpoints; E/W #8 gets 1

N/S #3 a plus score of 130, beating 3 pairs, getting 3 and E/W #3 also get 3 - a "push"

N/S #4 and #5 had minus 100, beating one N/S pair and tying one for 1.5 each ; E/W's get 4.5

N/S #6 had the worst score, earning 0 so E/W #5 had the best E/W score, earning 6 matchpoints

N/S #7 had plus 300, beating 4 pairs for 4 matchpoints; E/W #6 get 2 for beating E/W #7 and #8.

Matchpoints aren't actually recorded on the traveler anymore, since the advent of computer scoring. In the old days, what you see above is what actually happened: the Director went over every traveler, apportioned the matchpoints as described above, then added up totals for every pair; North / South and East / West. Imagine the time and potential for error in calculation!

If the boards are played an uneven number of times, the ACBL Score program factors the difference automatically. ACBL Score is used by almost every Director at every ACBL game and Tournament. The alternative is the manual calculation described in the preceding paragraph.

UNDERSTANDING PRINTED RESULTS OF MATCHPOINT GAMES

Results from every board at every duplicate game are displayed at the game, on the Internet, and/or by email from the Director of the game directly to you shortly after the game ends.

Reading Matchpoint Results. Understanding those printed results may not be intuitive to the newer duplicate player looking at them for the first time. There are several formats for published results, but the information presented below describes the most common format used by most local Clubs.

You can find the results of all open ACBL sanctioned duplicate games in the Coachella Valley at the Unit 533 website at www.CoachellaValleyBridge.com. (See Appendix A).

COLLECTING THE RESULTS FROM EACH HAND (BOARD)

On each board you play in a duplicate game, you earn a "bridge score", like +620 or -200, as described above. These are recorded on a paper "traveler" by North for later collection and entry by the Director into a computer scoring program *OR* they are entered electronically at the table, by North, immediately after the hand is completed.

In either case, the results of each hand at each table are entered into the Director's ACBL Score computer program. The information presented below is independent of how the result from each hand got into the Director's computer.

The Traveler. Boards should be played in sequence. A pre-printed slip of paper called a Traveler "travels" with each board and is used by the Director to score the hand after all rounds have been played. It is filled in by North after bidding and play of each hand. On it is recorded the contract, the declarer, the result and the score earned by either E/W or N/S. All players are entitled to look at the result after it is scored by North, either on a traveler or an electronic scorer. However done, the important thing is that the correct results get into the Director's computer.

Scorekeeping Process. The scorekeeping process is:

- (1) All 4 players agree to the final result before the cards are removed from the table, i.e., while the trick count is still visible for all four hands. Cards must not be picked up until this agreement is reached.

- (2) North completes the line on the traveler corresponding to his or her pair/table number: the following illustration is for board 4, played at table 3 by pairs N/S #3 and E/W #5. Players fill in the same information on their Private Scores.
- (3) North writes in: the E/W pair #; the Contract; the Declarer (N,E,S,W); either the number of tricks Made or the number of tricks Down and the score for either N/S or E/W. Write *P.O.* in Contract for a passed out hand. All possible scores are on the back of the bidding box cards for the contract.
- (4) East or West should look at the traveler to verify the score is correct and is recorded for the proper side: E/W or N/S. This is not the time to have a discussion about scores made by others who have played the hand - - go on to the next hand immediately.

Board Number ____ 4 ____							
N/S	E/W	Contract	By	Made	Down	N/S Score	E/W Score
1							
2							
3	5	4S	E	5			650

The process described above is the same if there are electronic scoring devices in use. In that case, there is no paper traveler but the steps taken by North and verification by E/W as to the correctness of the score are still followed as described above.

Calculating Matchpoints and Masterpoints. After all the boards are played and the travelers are turned into the Director (or submitted electronically), your total number of matchpoints earned for all the boards you played is added up, converted to a percentage, and then compared to all other pairs sitting in your direction. Then, Masterpoints are awarded the top winners, (3 or 4 places is typical), for both N/S and E/W. (See Understanding Summary and Individual Board Results below.)

This is accomplished in just a few minutes after the last board is played, especially if there are electronic scoring devices in use. Printed final results are then available in minutes, and sometimes Hand Records are also available immediately after the end of play.

Results are first published as a Summary of all pairs, ranked by the winning percentages, and showing the Masterpoints won by the top several winners.

Then, results of every board with the matchpoints awarded for every E/W and N/S pair are published. In this way, you can see for every board you played just how you did relative to your competitors (not your opponents at the table, remember!)

UNDERSTANDING SUMMARY RESULTS - - AN EXAMPLE

Below is an example summary of how everyone did at a Monday AM game, ranked by winning percentage and listed separately for North/South and for East/West.

Reading from left to right, the first column is your pair number, (Pair) the second is your percentage (Pct) (with 100% being a top on every single board - *impossible*), the next is your total number of matchpoints (Score), then your rank if you are a winner (Rank) - 4 places in this example; then the number of masterpoints you won (MPs) and finally, your pair names.

Monday AM Pairs: BOBSBRIDGECLUB Monday Morn Session - - - March 21, 2014

Scores after 27 boards. Average: 63.0 (*Average Matchpoint Score, not Pct*)

North-South

Pair	Pct	Score	Rank	MPs	
5	59.66	75.17	1	1.27	Joan Smith-Judy Smith
8	59.13	74.50	2	0.89	June Smythe-Peter Smythe
3	53.44	67.33	3	0.64	Jean Jones-Joan Brown
6	51.98	65.50	4	0.44	Ken Whirt-Donna Whirt
4	51.45	64.83			Betty Green-Helen Brown
9	48.28	60.83			Linda Washington-Sue Adams
2	46.10	58.08			Eleanor Jefferson-Maureen Truman
1	45.83	57.75			Gloria Andrews-Jim Andrews
7	34.13	43.00			Lucile Fish-Joan Robin

East-West

Pair	Pct	Score	Rank	MPs	
3	52.91	66.67	1	1.27	Doris Perch-Sis Miles
2	52.52	66.17	2	0.89	Rosemary Thompson-Lyn Dennis
6	52.38	66.00	3	0.64	Pat Bonner-Kathy Miles
5	52.18	65.75	4	0.44	Don Peters-Harriet Peters
8	50.00	63.00			Cheryl Harper-Valerie Thune
4	49.87	62.83			Joan McConnell-Lynn O' Shawn
9	49.74	62.67			Alice White-Lindy Green
1	48.81	61.50			Dena Michael-Mary Ann Astrome
7	41.60	52.42			Jane Riccio-Lucy Lindstrom

Understanding Individual Board Matchpoint Results

Following are the matchpoint results of how every pair did on Board 1, followed by the same for Board 2, etc. . . . the complete result for all boards played is displayed in the “Results” on the Unit web site or in an email from the Director - - only 2 boards are shown here for illustration.

All scores are shown as being plus, but of course a plus score for E/W is a minus score for N/S on any given hand. On Board 1, the highest N/S bridge score was +50, scored by N/S #5 Smith - Smith, so they get a "top" score of 6.00 matchpoints. As each board was played 7 times in this example, the maximum number of pairs one could beat was 6, so a top was 6.00

Conversely, the worst N/S score (which is the best E/W score), was earned by N/S #8 Smythe - Smythe who let E/W make +870, so they got a zero and E/W #6 Bonner-Miles got 6.00. The middle score was 110 for E/W, so N/S #9 Washington – Adams and E/W #8 Harper-Thune each got 3.00 - a dead average matchpoint result. There aren't any tie scores on board 1, so look below at Board 2 results to see how that works. There are many ties in duplicate: some hands make 4 Spades no matter who bids and plays it.

RESULTS OF BOARD 1

N-S Score	E-W Score	N-S MPts	E-W MPts	PAIR NAMES
50	5.00	1.00		1-Andrews-Andrews vs 1-Michael-Astrome
100	4.00	2.00		4-Green-Brown vs 7-Riccio-McBain
50		6.00	0.00	5-Smith-Smith vs 9-White-Green
130	2.00	4.00		6-Whirt-Whirt vs 2-Thompson-Dennis
150	1.00	5.00		7-Fish-Robin vs 4-McConnell-O' Shawn
870	0.00	6.00		8-Smythe-Smythe vs 6-Bonner-Miles
110	3.00	3.00		9-Washington-Adams vs 8-Harper-Thune

RESULTS OF BOARD 2

N-S Score	E-W Score	N-S MPts	E-W MPts	PAIR NAMES
400	0.00	6.00		1-Andrews-Andrews vs 1-Michael-Astrome
100	2.00	4.00		4-Green-Brown vs 7-Riccio-McBain
100	2.00	4.00		5-Smith-Smith vs 9-White-Green
620	5.00	1.00		6-Whirt-Whirt vs 2-Thompson-Dennis
620	5.00	1.00		7-Fish-Robin vs 4-McConnell-O' Shawn
620	5.00	1.00		8-Smythe - Smythe vs 6-Bonner-Miles
100	2.00	4.00		9-Washington-Adams vs 8-Harper-Thune

The total E/W and N/S score on each board must add up to 6.00 in this example. 6.0 is a “Top” when a board is played 7 times. So the struggle at the table on each board is to see how much of a possible 6.00 each side can get.

On Board 2, notice that N/S pairs #4, #5 and #9 all earned a score of -100, shown as +100 for their E/W opponents. They earn 1 matchpoint for beating N/S # 1 and ½ each for tying two other N/S pairs: #5 and #9, for example. This is a total of 2.0 for this board. Their E/W opponents earn the inverse of 6, or 4.0 on this hand.

Similarly, N/S #6, #7 and #8 all scored +620. They each earn 4 points for beating E/W pairs #1, #4, #5 and #9 plus 1/2 matchpoint each for tying two other +620 scores, so their matchpoint score on board 2 is 5.00, ($1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 5$) and the corresponding E/W matchpoint scores are 1.00. ($\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$).

It is well worth your while to study this example thoroughly until you understand it completely: until you do, you won't be able to use scoring as part of your bidding strategy with any success. A few minutes spent now will pay dividends for the rest of your duplicate career. Guaranteed.

Masterpoints are points awarded by the ACBL to winners at Sectional, Regional and National Tournaments, at local club games and Unit games and for online play. They are awarded to winners, and for 2nd, 3rd, etc. depending on the number of tables in play and the rank of the event.

There may be fractional masterpoints (1.27 or 0.89) as you see above, and they are awarded in several colors, according to the level of competition in which they are earned. All points at local Clubs award Black Masterpoints, except during STaC Weeks, described in Chapter IV.

Colors of Masterpoints:

Unpigmented Points: These points are awarded for online play and are “colorless”.

Black Points: These points are awarded in sanctioned club games and Unit games.

Silver Points: Silver points are awarded at sectional tournaments.

Red Points: Red points are awarded at Regionals and Regional-rated events at NABCs

Gold Points: Gold points are awarded at Regional and NABC (National) events.

Platinum Points: Platinum points are awarded for NABC+ events (nationally-rated events with no upper masterpoint limit) and include nationally-rated senior and women's events.

Honor Titles are awarded by the ACBL to players for winning a number of masterpoints. Levels and colors of Title qualification are as follows for members joining the ACBL after Jan 1, 2010. Players joining the ACBL prior to 1/1/2010, and maintaining their membership have lower point and pigmented point requirements.

Title	Masterpoints Earned
Rookie	Fewer than 5
Junior Master	5

Introduction to Duplicate Bridge

Club Master	20 (at least 5 black, no more than 15 from online play)
Sectional Master	50 (at least 10 black, 5 silver, no more than 25 from online play)
Regional Master	100 (at least 15 black, 15 silver, 5 red or gold/platinum, no more than 40 from online play)
NABC Master	200 (at least 20 black, 25 silver, 15 red or gold/platinum, 5 gold/platinum, no more than 70 from online play)
Advanced NABC Master	300 (at least 50 black, 50 silver, 25 red or gold/platinum, 25 gold/platinum, no more than 100 from online play)
Life Master	500 (at least 75 black, 75 silver, 50 red or gold/platinum, 50 gold/platinum, no more than 165 from online play)
Silver Life Master	A Life Master with 1000 (no more than 1/3 from online play)
Gold Life Master	A Life Master with 2500 (no more than 1/3 from online play)
Diamond Life Master	A Life Master with 5000 (no more than 1/3 from online play)
Emerald Life Master	A Life Master with 7500 (no more than 1/3 from online play)
Platinum Life Master	A Life Master with 10,000 (no more than 1/3 from online play)
Grand Life Master	A Life Master with 10,000 (no more than 1/3 from online play)

The most coveted title is Life Master, awarded to those who earn 500 masterpoints, including pigmented point requirements. About 1/3 of all ACBL members are Life Masters or above.

Masterpoint Races. The ACBL and each ACBL Unit run two kinds of masterpoint races each year, awarding trophies to those who earn the most masterpoints locally or at any other level.

Mini-McKenny Race: includes ACBL masterpoints won anywhere in the world.

Ace of Clubs Race: includes masterpoints won in your local Unit only (e.g., Unit 533).

How do My Masterpoints get into my ACBL Permanent Record?

Congratulations, you've won some masterpoints in your local Club! How do they get recorded permanently at the ACBL and how can I check them later?

Monthly, your Club director sends a computer file to the ACBL with the results of every session of every game he has held during the month. These are processed by the ACBL and posted to your account, usually by the 6th of each month.

At any time, you can go to MyACBL (at www.ACBL.org), sign in and see every masterpoint you ever won, plus totals by color and any qualifying points you have passed. Many new players keep a private record of their masterpoint wins during each month, typically on their Personal Scores, so they can verify that the correct number got posted. If you find a discrepancy, the Club Director can resolve any problems and correct his submission if necessary.

You will also get a masterpoint summary and monthly additions in your edition of the ACBL Bridge Bulletin, which you will receive monthly as an ACBL member.

The median masterpoint total for all ACBL members is between 175 and 200 masterpoints; meaning $\frac{1}{2}$ of all ACBL members are above that number and $\frac{1}{2}$ are below it.

FILLING OUT THE CONVENTION CARD

The Convention Card is a vital part of every duplicate bridge player's toolkit. Looking at the card and reading what follows about its completion may make it seem too complicated to quickly learn duplicate. It's not true: most players can fill out a new blank convention card form in 2 minutes, because most sections are left blank or only need a word or two or a check mark.

It is a form provided at every ACBL game, where players indicate how they treat a variety of situations during the bidding and play of a hand. The convention card you fill out is for the benefit of your opponents at the table, and for you and your partner to write down your understanding so they are not forgotten or mis-used in play. Most players have one or more Convention Cards that they use with different partners.

The Laws of Bridge require that you and your partner have 2 identically filled-out convention cards available for opponents' inspection at all times. It's not just a convenience for you and your partner - it's a requirement for all duplicate players, at all levels of competition, and you must bid and play as indicated on your convention card.

The most important thing is: if you and your partner don't have any understanding about a convention card sub-section, just leave them blank.


The convention card has upwards of 20 sub-sections, each of which is described in some detail in the pages that follow. The card itself has some rules attached, principally the requirement to have them available for opponent's viewing at all times. See Chapter III - Protocol for more information about the use of the Convention Card during the auction. Personal Records, where you write down details about each hand as it's played, are printed on the back side of the convention card form, making it handy to satisfy the requirements to have a card and to record a round's results hand-by-hand as they are played.



GENERAL APPROACH

Two Over One: Game Forcing ☐ Game Forcing Except When Suit Rebid ☐
VERY LIGHT: Openings ☐ 3rd Hand ☐ Overcalls ☐ Preempts ☐
FORCING OPENING: 1  ☐ 2  ☐ Natural 2 Bids ☐ Other ☐ _____

This portion of the convention card tells opponents about your general approach to bidding.

This shorthand description of your style lets opponents understand 95% of the bids you might make, and precludes the need for them to examine your whole card in detail, which would take far too much time.

In the ACBL, Standard American and Two Over One styles of bidding are overwhelming favorites. Occasionally one runs into a pair playing a big club system, like Precision, where an opening of 1  is the strongest opening bid.

Specifically, you must indicate what your strong, forcing opening is, typically 2 . There are also choices for 1 Club, Other or even strong “natural” 2 level openings, [2  ...], as we played 50 years ago.

Two Over One styles may be game forcing in all cases or game forcing except when the suit is immediately rebid, in which case the game force is cancelled.

NOTRUMP OPENINGS

NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS		
1NT _____ to _____	3♣ _____	2NT _____ to _____ Puppet Stayman <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer Responses: Jacoby <input type="checkbox"/> Texas <input type="checkbox"/> 3♠ _____
_____ to _____	3♦ _____	
5-card Major common <input type="checkbox"/>	3♥ _____	
System on over _____	3♠ _____	
2♣ Stayman <input type="checkbox"/> Puppet <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
2♦ Transfer to ♥ <input type="checkbox"/>	4♦, 4♥ Transfer <input type="checkbox"/>	3NT _____ to _____ Conventional NT Openings _____ _____ _____
Forcing Stayman <input type="checkbox"/>	Smolen <input type="checkbox"/>	
2♥ Transfer to ♠ <input type="checkbox"/>	Lebensohl <input type="checkbox"/> (____ denies)	
2♠ _____	Neg. Double <input type="checkbox"/> : _____	
2NT _____	Other: _____	

Here is where you tell opponents about your NT openings. It is the single most likely section of your card to be looked at by your opponent, so be sure to fill out this section properly.

1NT. This sub-section has two lines: one for your normal 1NT opening HCP range (usually 15 to 17) and one for any other range you might use.

2NT and 3NT ranges are also asked for in another sub-section, as you see above.

It asks about any kinds of transfers you may use, and about how you use Stayman. Common transfers are to 2♠ to 3♣, Jacoby Transfers to 2♥ and 2♠; and Texas Transfers to 4♥ and 4♠.

Direct jumps to 3♣, 3♦, 3♥ and 3♠, if you bid them, are also described here.

Finally, if you use Smolen, Lebensohl or other special conventions in response to your partner's 1NT or 2NT opening, you must indicate that fact here.

MAJOR OPENINGS

MAJOR OPENINGS		
Expected Min. Length	4	5
1st/2nd	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3rd/4th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES		
Double Raise: Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
After Overcall: Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
Conv. Raise: 2NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splitter <input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____		
2NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____
3NT: _____ to _____		
Drury <input type="checkbox"/> :	Reverse <input type="checkbox"/>	2-Way <input type="checkbox"/> Fit <input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____		

MAJOR OPENINGS		
Expected Min. Length	5	
RESPONSES		
Double Raise:	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> X	
After Overcall:	Weak <input type="checkbox"/> X	
Conv. Raise: 2NT	3NT	Splitter
	X	X
	2 Trump	3+ trump
1NT: Forcing	X (by unpassed hand)	
Drury <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> :	2-Way <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

In this section (the left diagram above) you tell your opponents how you treat 1 of a major suit openings and initial responses.

Expected Min. Length is virtually always 5 in all seats. 5 card majors is standard in modern bridge, meaning we never open a major suit with only 4 cards, no matter how strong it is.

Responses. Double Raise is a jump raise, [1♥ – P – 3♥ ...], for example. These are called Limit Raises by modern players, and are almost always Inv. (Invitational), showing 3 or 4 trumps and 10 to 12 dummy points. Years ago, a jump to the 3 level showed opening hand strength with good trump support. (i.e., a Game Force). This line is without competition, i.e., assuming a pass by 2nd seat.

After Overcall: This line asks for your definition of a 3♥ or 3♠ jump response when there is an intervening bid, as in [1♥ – 1♠ – 3♥...]. Again the choices are Forcing (Strong) Inv (invitational) or Weak.

2NT and 3NT: these sections let you describe what such bids mean in response to a 1 Heart or 1 Spade opening. Typically, they show 10 to 12 HCP or 13+ HCP without trump support, and without a 5+ card suit strong enough to bid at the 2-level, and they are meant to play, as neither is forcing. Other Conventions use these bids as well.

Drury ☐ asks about your treatment of a [P – P – 1♥ – P ? ...] auction, where the 3rd seat opens one of a major suit. Many play that such openings can be quite light, and so they have special responses, usually via a convention called Drury.

MINOR SUIT OPENINGS

MINOR OPENINGS				
	4	3	0-2	NF Conv.
Expected Min. Length				
1♣	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1♦	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

RESPONSES	
Double Raise: Force <input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
After Overcall: Force <input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
Forcing Raise: J/S in other minor <input type="checkbox"/>	
Single raise <input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____
Frequently bypass 4+♦ <input type="checkbox"/>	
1NT/1♣ _____ to _____	
2NT: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____	
3NT: _____ to _____	
Other _____	

MINOR OPENINGS	
Expected Min. Length	3
1♣	X
1♦	X

RESPONSES	
Double Raise:	Weak X
After Overcall:	Weak X
Forcing Raise:	
Single raise <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Frequently bypass 4+♦ X	
1NT/1♣ 8 to 10	
2NT:	Inv. X 10 - 12 no 4 cd. major
3NT: 13 - 15. No 4 cd. major	

The diagram on the left shows your opponents how you handle openings of 1♣ or 1♦ and the meaning of your responses to them, in competition or without competition.

Specifically, you must indicate if you open with less than two Club or Diamond cards, with 3, with 4 or some conventional opening with less than 3. Notice that the card says “Expected Min. Length”, meaning that this is what your partner expects if you open in a minor suit. It’s not illegal to open with fewer, so long as your partner expects you to have what’s indicated here.

Responses tell your opponents how you treat Double Raises [1♣ – P – 3♣ ...] and how you treat the same bid over an intervening bid; your point ranges for responses of 1NT, 2NT and 3NT and whether or not you would skip a 4-card Diamond suit to bid a major or 1NT over 1♣ or 1♦.

The set of responses shown at the right above is known collectively as Inverted Minors. The raise responses to a minor suit opening are “inverted”, meaning a single raise is strong-ish and a jump raise is weak, showing less than 10 points.

2 LEVEL OPENINGS

	DESCRIBE	RESPONSES/REBIDS
2♣ _____ to _____ HCP Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> 2♦ Resp: Neg <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting <input type="checkbox"/>		
2♦ _____ to _____ HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/>		2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>
2♥ _____ to _____ HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/>		2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>
2♠ _____ to _____ HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/>		2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>

This section tells opponents how you treat your opening 2-level bids. 2♣ is usually treated as strong, artificial and game forcing. Responses to 2♣ vary considerably. Indicate your choices in the appropriate boxes.

Openings of 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ are usually weak, meaning a preemptive hand of 6 cards, with less than opening hand strength. Virtually no duplicate player makes “Strong Two” bids anymore.

In the Responses / Rebids sub-section, a bid of 2NT is usually a conventional forcing bid asking some question of the 2♦/♥/♠ bidder. If opener can pass a new suit bid by her partner, that must be indicated in the New Suit NF box and alerted during the auction. [2♥ – P – 3♣ – P P ...]

An Example:

	DESCRIBE	RESPONSES/REBIDS
2♣ 21 + HCP or equivalent Strong x 2♦ Resp: _____ Waiting x		2♥ shows bust: no A or K. 2NT = Hearts 2♦ shows Ace or King minimum
2♦ 11 - 15 HCP. Mini-Roman. Any 3 suits, includes Spades 4-4-4-1 or 4-4-5	Conv. x	2NT Force x Ask for stiff / void
2♥ 11 - 15 HCP. Flannery: exactly 5 Hearts and 4 Spades	Conv. x	2NT Force x Ask for fragment
2♠ 6 - 10 HCP Natural: Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		2NT Force x Ask for feature for NT

OTHER CONVENTIONAL CALLS

OTHER CONV. CALLS: New Minor Forcing: ☐ _____ 2-Way NMF ☐ _____
 Weak Jump Shifts not in Comp. ☐ _____ 4th Suit Forcing: 1 Round ☐ Game ☐

This section asks you to explain how you treat some “other bids”, specifically New Minor Forcing, Weak Jump Shifts not in competition and 4th suit bids. It describes whether or not they are forcing to game or for just one round, and whether or not you use other special bids the opponents are entitled to know about.

Other Conv. Calls. New Minor Force is a convention that says when responder bids the “other minor suit” after a rebid of 1 or 2 NoTrump, following a major suit response, it is conventional and asks opener for 3 card support.

[1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 1NT – P – 2♦* ...] 2♦ is New Minor Forcing, showing 5 Hearts and 10+ HCP. With 3 Hearts, opener raises partner’s Hearts to some level.

Also, if responder makes a Jump Shift [1♣ – P – 2♠ ...], is it weak ? and finally, is the 4th suit bid forcing for one round or to game?

[1♦ – P – 1♠ – P 2♣ – P – 2♥ ...] Normally, the bid of the 4th suit (Hearts in this example) is redundant, as one should bid NoTrump if holding the 4th suit, and no suit can be the correct strain. If that call has a special meaning, such as a force to game, it must be indicated and alerted.

On the red line below the pre-printed words, indicate any other conventional calls not shown elsewhere on the card.

Example:

OTHER CONV. CALLS: New Minor Forcing: X
 Weak Jump Shifts not in Comp. X 4th Suit Forcing: Game X
 WJO, WJS always. Western Que (asks for stop)

SPECIAL DOUBLES

SPECIAL DOUBLES

After Overcall: Penalty ☐ _____

Negative ☒ thru 3 Spades _____

Responsive ☒ : thru 3 Spades Maximal ☒

Support: Dbl. ☒ thru 3 Spades Redbl ☒

Card-showing ☐ Min. Offshape T/O ☐

In this section, you tell your opponents what doubles you use that are other than penalty, i.e., “Special”.

A direct double of an overcall is assumed to be a Negative Double and not for penalty. [1♥ – 2♣ – Dbl ...] is not for penalty. If you play that it is, you must note it and alert it.

Negative. A Negative Double is an artificial bid showing the unbid suits, and is considered normal in the auction above. “thru _____” tells how high in the bidding your use of Negative Doubles goes. For example, in [1♥ – 3♦ – ???...], is a double by responder for penalty or does it still show a Negative Double? Not alertable.

Responsive. A Responsive double is a double in the 4th seat showing a hand of some value but unable to bid a suit of its own, as in [1♣ – Dbl – 2♣ – Dbl ...], which means “partner, I don’t have a suit to bid but I have points and will support anything you bid (except Clubs, of course).

As in the case of the Negative Double, you must tell opponents how high the responsive double is in effect. Over that limit, it is for penalty. [1♣ – Dbl – 4♣ – Dbl ...] This double would be for penalty using the Special Doubles section above, as 3 Spades is listed as the limit for showing a responsive double. Not alertable.

Support Double and Redouble. A rebid of Double or Redouble by opener when partner has bid 1 of a major and 4th hand interferes. It shows exactly 3-card support of the major suit. [1♣ – P – 1♥ – 1♠ – Dbl ...] shows 3 Hearts in opener’s hand. Alertable and effective thru some upper limit like Negative and Responsive doubles.

Card Showing and Min. Off shape Takeout doubles and Maximal double are seldom seen in Club play.

SIMPLE OVERCALLS

Overcalls and Responses. Discuss and agree with your partner what each of these situations means and how you will respond. There's no right or wrong except guessing what your partner means! The convention card for Overcalls:

SIMPLE OVERCALL		
1 level	8	to 15 HCP (usually)
Often 4 cards	[x]	very light style [x]
Responses		
New Suit: Forcing	[x]	NF Const [] NF []
Jump Raise: Forcing	[]	Inv. [] Weak [x]

Overcalls at the One Level

- A simple overcall at the one level promises a good 5-card suit and 8+ HCP; ♠KQxxx for example. There's no implied promise to bid again. They are also lead directing.
- With 11+, plan to make an Action Double if you can't rebid your suit on the 2nd round (because it's only 5 cards long) and partner didn't raise. "Action" double means a stronger hand than yet shown, but with no additional suit to bid or rebid of the original suit, showing 6.
- With a 6+ card suit and 10 HCP or less, consider a Weak Jump Overcall as a preemptive tactic, especially when not vulnerable. WJO's can be at the 2 or 3 or even 4-level. The weaker you are, the higher you should preempt. [1♣ – 3♠ . . .]
- A 1 NoTrump overcall requires 15 to 18 HCP and good (double) stoppers in overcalled suit.
- If none of the above apply, pass and considering balancing on the next round.

Responses to One Level Overcalls

- Whenever possible, responses should be raises and not new suits, even with as little as Kx or any 3 card support.
- All direct raises are weak and preemptive. The weaker you are, the higher you should bid.
- Hands of Limit Raise value (10 to 12 dummy points) should cue bid opener's suit.
[1♣ – 1♥ – P – 2♣ . . .] 2♣ is a Cue Bid Limit Raise of partner's Hearts. (10 to 12 points)
- 1NT is a good competitive call if you have stoppers in opener's suit and can't raise partner.
- Responses to a 1NT overcall are the same as though overcaller had dealt and opened 1NT.

JUMP OVERCALLS AND PREEMPTS

<p style="text-align: center;">SIMPLE OVERCALL</p> <p>1 level _____ to _____ HCP (usually) often 4 cards <input type="checkbox"/> very light style <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Responses</p> <p>New Suit: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> NF Const <input type="checkbox"/> NF <input type="checkbox"/> Jump Raise: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">JUMP OVERCALL</p> <p>Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">OPENING PREEMPTS</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Sound</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Light</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Very Light</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3/4-bids</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conv./Resp.</td> <td colspan="3"></td> </tr> </table>		Sound	Light	Very Light	3/4-bids	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conv./Resp.				<p style="text-align: center;">SIMPLE OVERCALL</p> <p>1 level 8 to 14 HCP (usually) often 4 cards X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Responses</p> <p>New Suit: Forcing X Jump Raise: Weak X</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">JUMP OVERCALL</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Weak X</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">OPENING PREEMPTS</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Sound</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Light</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Very Light</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3/4-bids</td> <td style="text-align: center;">X</td> <td style="text-align: center;">X</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Vul</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Not vul</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Sound	Light	Very Light	3/4-bids	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		Vul	Not vul	
	Sound	Light	Very Light																						
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	Sound	Light	Very Light																						
3/4-bids	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>																						
	Vul	Not vul																							

This is the section where you explain to opponents how you treat Overcalls, Responses to Overcalls and Preempts. [1♣ – 1♥ – P – ?] At the left is the blank Convention Card and at the right is an example of how it might be filled out.

A 1-level overcall shows a good suit and 8+ HCP, but doesn't promise an especially strong hand, but a 2-level bid shows about an opening hand and a good suit.

This section tells your pair's HCP range and strength for overcalls [1♣ – 1♠ ...], for jump overcalls [1♣ – 2♥ ...] and for opening preempts: [3♥ ...]. These may vary according to vulnerability.

Also, it indicates your partner's strength to bid a new suit after you overcall [1♣ – 1♥ – P – 1♠ ...] and jump responses to overcalls: [1♣ – 1♠ – P – 3♠ ...].

DIRECT CUEBID

	DIRECT CUEBID	
OVER:	Minor	Major
Natural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strong T/O	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michaels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A Direct Cuebid is a bid of an opponents' suit immediately after she bids: [1 ♣ – 2 ♣ ...].

Usually, such bids show 2-suited hands, and are centered on the major suits, using conventions such as Michaels. The example auction above shows 5 – 5 distribution in the major suits and a hand of 8 to 14 HCP.

Because minor suits are frequently opened with 3 or even 2 cards, it is possible to play such cue bids as natural, i.e., offering to play in that suit. If this is your style, you must indicate it on the convention card and alert it if it occurs. Possible but highly unusual.

There may be differences in your style when cue bidding a major or a minor suit. For example, you could use a cue bid in a minor as a strong takeout of 17+ HCP, and a cue bid of a major suit as Michaels.

In any of these cases, you must so indicate on the convention card in this area, and partner must alert it during the auction.

If you have other conventional meanings of direct cue bids, you must indicate them here and alert.

SLAM CONVENTIONS

SLAM CONVENTIONS Gerber ☐ : 4NT: Blackwood ☐ RKC ☐ 1430 ☐

vs Interference: DOPI ☐ DEPO ☐ Level: _____ ROPI ☐

In this section, you tell your opponents what ace-asking conventions you use, such as Gerber, Blackwood, Roman Key Card Blackwood, etc.

Also, when opponents interfere over a Blackwood or other ace-asking sequence, if you use special conventions you must indicate them here. DOPI is pronounced “DOPEY” but is actually DOP1, meaning “Double with 1 and Pass with 0 (zero) Aces”.

[...4NT – 5♦ – Dbl...] is DOPI showing 0 (zero) Aces by the partner of the 4NT bidder.

Another variety is DEPO, “Double with Even number and Pass with Odd” number
[...4NT – 5♦ – Dbl...] could be DEPO showing 0 or 2 Aces by the responder.

ROPI means “Redouble with 0 (zero), Pass with 1”.

[...4NT – Dbl – ReDbl...] could be ROPI showing 0 Aces by the responder.

In the DOPI and ROPI conventions, the responder bids the next higher level with 2, the second next with 3, etc.

[...4NT – 5♦ – 5♥...] could be DOPI showing 2 Aces by the partner of the 4NT bidder.

[...4NT – Dbl – 5♦...] could be ROPI showing 3 Aces by the responder.

Example:

SLAM CONVENTIONS 4NT: Blackwood Roman Key Card 1430 X

vs Interference: DOPI ☒

LEADS AND CARDING

LEADS (circle card led, if not in Bold)				DEFENSIVE CARDING	
versus Suits		versus Notrump		vs SUITS	vs NT
xx	xxxx	xx	xxx	Standard:	<input type="checkbox"/>
xxx	xxxxx	xxx	xxxxx	Except	<input type="checkbox"/>
AKx	T9x	AKJx	AQJx		
KQx	KJTx	AJT9	AT9x		
QJx	KT9x	KQJx	KQT9		
JT9	QT9x	QJT9	QT9x		
KQT9		JT9x	T9xx		
LENGTH LEADS: 4th Best vs SUITS <input type="checkbox"/> vs NT <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd/5th Best vs SUITS <input type="checkbox"/> vs NT <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude <input type="checkbox"/> vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>				Upside-down: count <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> attitude <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Primary signal to partner's leads Attitude <input type="checkbox"/> Count <input type="checkbox"/> Suit preference <input type="checkbox"/>				FIRST DISCARD Lavinthal <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Odd/Even <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
SPECIAL CARDING <input type="checkbox"/>				OTHER CARDING Smith Echo <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Trump Suit Pref. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Echo <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
				PLEASE ASK	

In this section, you tell your opponents how you lead and signal, against NoTrump and suit contracts. The “standard” leads from a variety of holdings are printed on the form, with the standard in **bold** type. If you systematically lead differently than indicated this chart, you must circle it.

An example convention card, indicating Suit Preference signals, Lavinthal discards and upside-down Count and Attitude signals:

LEADS (circle card led, if not in Bold)				DEFENSIVE CARDING	
versus Suits		versus Notrump		vs SUITS	vs NT
xx	xxxx	xx	xxx		
xxx	xxxxx	xxx	xxxxx		
AKx	T9x	AKJx	AQJx		
KQx	KJTx	AJT9	AT9x		
QJx	KT9x	KQJx	KQT9		
JT9	QT9x	QJT9	QT9x		
KQT9		JT9x	T9xx		
LENGTH LEADS: 4th Best vs NT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd/5th Best vs SUITS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				Upside-down: count <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> attitude <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Primary signal to partner's leads Suit preference <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				FIRST DISCARD Lavinthal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
SPECIAL CARDING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				OTHER CARDING	
				PLEASE ASK	

NOTRUMP OVERCALLS

NOTRUMP OVERCALLS		
Direct: _____ to _____		Systems On <input type="checkbox"/>
Conv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____		
Balancing: _____ to _____		
Jump to 2NT: Minors <input type="checkbox"/>	2 Lowest <input type="checkbox"/>	
Conv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____		

Direct: _____ to _____ Here is where you tell your opponents how you treat an overcall of 1NT by your partner, as in [1♣ – 1NT . . .] This is a “direct” NoTrump overcall. Normally, it is the same strength range you use to open 1NT, with the added assurance that you have the opponent’s (Clubs, in this example) well stopped. The typical high and low HCP range is 15 to 17 or 15 to 18 HCP.

Systems On ☐, if checked, means you play Stayman, Jacoby Transfers and other treatments for responses to a 1NT overcall just as you would if partner had dealt and opened 1NT.

(Recommended) For example, [1♥ – 1NT – P – 2♥ . . .] is a Jacoby Transfer to Spades and not a Heart bid. Conv. ☐ is checked if you have some other conventional treatment when partner overcalls a suit opener with 1NT.

Balancing: _____ to _____ answers the question “How do you handle a sequence such as [1♥ – P – P – 1NT . . .]”? Is this the same as a direct 1NT overcall or something different, in terms of HCP strength. Most play that a 1NT 4th seat overcall of a one-of-a-suit bid, especially in a minor suit, might not be as strong as a regular direct overcall. Typical is a range of 10 to 14 HCP and not 15 to 18 HCP. That’s why it’s called “balancing”.

Jump to 2NT: ☐ Minors and ☐ 2 lowest is where you tell opponents what your bid of 2NT means over their opening bid of 1NT or one of a suit. Usually, this is played as Unusual, not natural, as a natural 2NT bid over 1NT would rarely come up in practice. Most play that Unusual 2NT means 5 – 5 distribution in 2 suits, typically the two lower unbid suits. Some play it always means the 2 minor suits. Example:

NOTRUMP OVERCALLS

Direct: 15 - 18 Systems On X

Balancing: 10 - 14

Jump to 2NT: 8 - 14+ 2 Lowest X

DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP

DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP

VS: _____
 2 ♣ _____
 2 ♦ _____
 2 ♥ _____
 2 ♠ _____
 Dbl: _____
 Other: _____

In this section, you must tell your opponents how you compete over their opening 1NT. If you leave it blank, it means you bid naturally; that is, if you bid 2♦ over a 1NT opening, you have Diamonds and are offering to play in that suit.

Many players have specialized bids showing one long (6+) suit or two 5-card suits over 1 NT openings. Conventions such as DONT, Hamilton or Cappiletti and Brozel are typical.

Example (DONT)

DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP

VS:	Strong	Weak
2 ♣	Clubs and another suit	Clubs
2 ♦	Diamonds and a major	Diamonds
2 ♥	Hearts and Spades	Hearts
2 ♠	Spades	Spades
Dbl:	Any single suit	
Other:		

DONT vs. Strong; natural vs weak

OVER OPPONENT'S TAKEOUT DOUBLE

OVER OPP'S T/O DOUBLE

New Suit Forcing: 1 level ☐ 2 level ☐
 Jump Shift: Forcing ☐ Inv. ☐ Weak ☐
 Redouble Implies no fit ☐
 2 NT Over Limit+ Limit Weak
 Majors ☐ ☐ ☐
 Minors ☐ ☐ ☐
 Other _____

OVER OPP'S T/O DOUBLE

New Suit Forcing: 1 level X 2 level X
 Jump Shift: Weak X
 Redouble Implies no fit X
 2 NT Over Limit
 Majors X
 Minors X
 Other Jordan 2NT = limit raise

This is where you must indicate to your opponents the meaning of your bids after they double for takeout. [1♦ – Dbl – ? ...].

For example, is [1♦ – Dbl – 1♥ ...] forcing in your system of bidding?

Is [1♥ – Dbl – 2♣ ...] forcing?

What does a bid of 2NT mean in this auction [1♦ – Dbl – 2NT ...]?

Is a jump shift (a bid in a new suit one level higher than necessary) Weak? Invitational? Forcing?

Jump responses are usually played as weak, but however you play them, indicate it here.

The Jordan 2NT Convention can be used to show a Limit Raise, as all direct raises are usually played as weak in competition.

This is not a Limit Raise if all direct raises are played as weak. [1♥ – Dbl – 3♥ ...].

This is a Limit Raise, using the Jordan Convention [1♥ – Dbl – 2NT* ...]

VS OPENING PREEMPTS DOUBLE IS

VS Opening Preempts Double Is

Takeout ☐ thru _____ Penalty ☐

Conv. Takeout: _____

Lebensohl 2NT Response ☐

Other: _____

This portion of the convention card tells opponents about your responses to partner's double of opponents opening preempt, as in [3♣ – **Dbl** ...]

Is it for penalty? For takeout? If either of these, how high does your treatment go?

For example [5♣ – **Dbl** ...] Is this double for takeout, or is it for penalty?

Do you use the Lebensohl 2NT Conventionally as a response to partner's double of a weak two opening?

Do you have other special or conventional bids for this situation? If so, you must indicate your treatments on the convention card, and alert them during the auction.

DUPLICATE TERMINOLOGY

Advance the contract	Bid at a higher level or in a higher ranking suit than a previous bidder
A,K,Q,J	Ace, King, Queen, Jack
Auction, the	The entire period of bidding, from opening through the final 3 passes
Balanced; balanced hand	Hand distribution with no void or singleton and no more than 1 doubleton
Bid, bidder	An offer to be declarer; one who makes such an offer other than Pass
Bidding requirements	Opening: 13+ HCP for a suit; 15 to 17 for 1 NoTrump; 6+ to respond
Block, Blocked	When high cards in one hand prevent leading to the other hand
Call	A bid, pass, double or a redouble, i.e., any word during the auction
Captain	One of a pair who is put in charge of the auction for that pair
Closed Hand	Any hand other than the Dummy (the Open hand)
Close-out; closeout bid	A bid intended to finish the auction for a pair. Not recommended.
Contract	An agreement to declare a hand, comprised of a suit and a number of tricks
Convention	An artificial bid, which means something different than the words
Count; point count	A hand evaluation aid where an Ace = 4, King = 3, Queen = 2 and Jack = 1
Counting, count	The number of tricks, points, distribution, etc.
Deal, dealer	To pass out all the cards, one at a time in rotation; One who deals
Declare, to	V. To become the Declarer
Declarer	The player who first names the trump suit, or NoTrump, and manages dummy
Denomination	Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades, NoTrump – the possible suits
Discard, a discard	V. To play a card not of the suit lead; N. Such a card
Distribution	The allocation of suits in a hand or around the table, e.g., 4 – 4 – 3 – 2
Distribution Points	Bidding points used when the dummy has fewer than 3 cards of a side suit
Double	A challenge to a bid, offering to double the penalties or rewards
Doubler	One who doubles a bid. Often for reasons other than penalty.
Doubleton	A holding of exactly two cards in a suit: 2 diamonds, for example
Dummy	The partner of the Declarer; dummy's hand is faced on the table
Duplicate	A form of bridge scoring and play: the other is rubber bridge
Duplicate board	A tray into which hands are stored for play elsewhere
East/West;	Designation of opposing pairs at a bridge table
North/South	
End Play	A tactic to force an opponent to make a trick-losing lead
Entry	A winning card that is used to transfer the lead to another hand
Facing a card, to face	Placing a card face up on the table in rotation following a lead
Fast Tricks	Aces and Kings: cards that win the first round or two of play in a suit
Finesse	A play technique for winning with a card smaller than an opponent's card
Flat hand	A hand with fairly even distribution of suits
Following suit	Playing a card of the suit lead
Game	A contract with a Trick Score of 100 or more

Game Bonus	A bonus of 300 (Not Vul) or 500 (Vul) points for making a Game contract
Go set; go down	To fail to make a contract
Hand	One's cards; 13 cards distributed by the Dealer to start an auction
Hand of Bridge, A	The entire process of dealing, bidding and play of 13 cards
HCP	High Card Points: Ace=4, King=3, Queen=2, Jack=1.
Honor Cards	Cards with point count values: Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks and 10's.
Jacoby Transfer	A major suit transfer response to a 1NT or 2NT opening/overcall
Jump Bid	A bid one level higher than the minimum bid: e.g., 3 Hearts instead 2 Hearts
Jump Rebid	A jump bid of a previously bid suit. Ex. 1 Heart – P - 1NT – P 3 Hearts, etc.
Jump Shift	A jump bid into a new suit. Ex.: 1 Heart – Pass – 2 Spades, etc.
LHO, RHO	Left Hand Opponent; Right Hand Opponent. Opponents to your left or right.
Level	1,2,3,4,5,6,7 – the possible number of tricks one can bid for
Limited Bid	A bid that has known minimum and maximum values, e.g. 1 NoTrump
Loser, A	A card representing a trick will be lost to an opponent
Major Suit; Majors	Hearts and Spades
Make; making	Taking the number of tricks bid for, or more than that number
Make/take a Call	To bid or pass or double or redouble
Minor Suit; Minors	Clubs and Diamonds
North/South;	Designations for opposing pairs at a bridge table
East/West	
Not Vulnerable	A condition, opposite of Vulnerable, in which no extra points are awarded
NoTrump	A contract in which there is no suit designated as trump
Off-the-top	Tricks that can definitely be taken immediately when play begins
“On”, “systems on”;	Conventions are/are not in effect when an opposing action has occurred
Off	
Open, Opening	An initial bid of 1 Club or higher. There is only one Opener for a hand.
Opening Lead	The first card played to a hand, lead by the defender to the right of declarer
Opponent	One's competitors at the table
Overcall	A suit or NT bid by an opponent; Ex: 1 Club – 1 Heart . . .
Overcaller	A player who makes a bid higher than an opponent who bid before him
Overtrick	A trick in excess of the number of tricks contracted-for
Partial, partial contract	A contract below the level of Game
Partner	One's teammate at a bridge table.
Partnership	A pair of players; often a pair that play together exclusively
Pass	A call making no offer to increase the level of a contract
Passed hand	A hand that has passed at its first opportunity to bid, denying opening count
Penalty	Points awarded to opponents for failure to make a contract
Play (of the Hand)	The process of taking or losing tricks until all 13 cards are played

Play (a card)	Placing a card face up on the table, in rotation after the lead.
Play tactics	Any of several techniques of play” finesse, squeeze, ruff-and-sluff, etc.
Point Count; Count Points (bidding)	Hand evaluation where an Ace = 4, King = 3, Queen = 2 and Jack = 1
Points (scoring)	Guidelines for evaluating the strength of a bridge hand
Preempt, preemptive	Rewards to declarer or defenders for making or setting a contract.
Quick Tricks	High bids (2 or more) that try to interfere with opponent’s bidding
Rank of Suits	Aces and Kings: cards that win the first or second round of a suit
Rebid of a suit	(High) NoTrump, Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs (low)
	The bid of a suit bid before, but at a higher level. Ex: 1 Club – 1NT – 2 Clubs
Rebid: general	Opener’s or responder’s 2 nd bid (usually). May or may not be a suit bid before.
Redouble	V. To “double the double”, N. making such a call
Responder	One who answers an opener.
RHO, LHO	Right Hand Opponent; Left Hand Opponent. Opponents to your left or right.
Rubber, Rubber Bridge	Several hands ending when one pair makes 2 games
Ruff, ruffing	To play a trump when you can’t follow suit
Ruff-and-sluff	Ruffing (trumping) a lead while sluffing (discard a loser) from the other hand
Scoring, Duplicate	Scoring in which each hand is separate from all others
Scoring, Rubber	Scoring in which hands may accumulated points toward game
Shuffle, shuffler	To mix the cards in preparation for a deal; one who shuffles
Side suit	A suit other than the trump suit
Singleton	A holding of one card in a suit: one Club, for example
Slam Bonus	Extra points awarded declarer who makes a Slam contract
Slam, slam contract	Bidding and making 12 or 13 tricks
Slow tricks	Potential winning tricks that can win after Aces and Kings have been played
Sluff, sluffing	Discarding a side suit card or a “loser”
Stopper	A winner in an opponent’s bid suit, “stopping” a run of the suit.
Suit, a suit	A designation of Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades or NoTrump; 4 cards
Suit play	Play in which there is a trump suit; i.e., not NoTrump play
Table; to Table	N. The bridge playing surface; V. to place a card face up on a table
The Insult	50 points awarded declarer for making any doubled contract
Takeout; takeout double	An artificial double show HCP and distribution. May sometimes be a NT bid
Transfer; Jacoby xfer	A major suit transfer response to a 1NT or 2NT opening/overcall
Trick	4 cards played in rotation; one each from North, South, East and West
Trick Score	The total of all Trick Scores for a contract
Trick Value	20 or 30 or 40 points awarded for one trick in a suit or NoTrump contract
Trump Suit	A suit named superior to all other suits for one hand
Trump, to trump	N. A card of the trump suit; V. to play a trump suit card

Unbalanced hand

One in which suits are not evenly distributed

Undertrick

A shortfall by declarer

Up-the-Line

Respond with suits in reverse rank order: Hearts before Spades, for example

Void

The absence of any card of a suit: a holding of no Club cards, for example

**Vulnerable,
vulnerability**

A condition reflecting extra rewards or penalties for a contract

Weak Twos

Preemptive bids or overcalls at the two level made with 6+ card suits

Winner, a

A card that should or may take a trick

“x”

In print, an “x” represent a small card of inconsequential rank

DUPLICATE SCORES

Tip: Print this table and memorize it. Learn the scores in Bold type first. Better yet is to realize how it's constructed and be able to compute a potential score in your head without memorizing.

Level	Contract	Trick Score	Partial Score	Game Bonus	Slam Bonus	Game Bonus	Slam Bonus	Game Scores	Slam Scores
	<i>Minors</i>			<i>Not Vul</i>	<i>Not Vul</i>	<i>Vul</i>	<i>Vul</i>	<i>Not/Vul</i>	<i>Not/Vul</i>
1	Club or Diamond	20	70	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Clubs or Diamonds	40	90	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Clubs or Diamonds	60	110	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Clubs or Diamonds	80	130	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	Clubs or Diamonds	100	-	300	-	500	-	400/600	-
6	Clubs or Diamonds	120	-	300	500	500	750	-	920/1370
7	Clubs or Diamonds	140	-	300	1000	500	1500	-	1440/2140
Level	Contract	Trick Score	Partial Score	Game Bonus	Slam Bonus	Game Bonus	Slam Bonus	Game Scores	Slam Scores
	<i>Majors</i>			<i>Not Vul</i>	<i>Not Vul</i>	<i>Vul</i>	<i>Vul</i>	<i>Not/Vul</i>	<i>Not/Vul</i>
1	Heart or Spade	30	80	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Hearts or Spades	60	110	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Hearts or Spades	90	140	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Hearts or Spades	120	-	300	-	500	-	420/620	-
5	Hearts or Spades	150	-	300	-	500	-	-	-
6	Hearts or Spades	180	-	300	500	500	750	-	980/1430
7	Hearts or	210	-	300	1000	500	1500	-	1510/2310

Introduction to Duplicate Bridge

	Spades								
Level	Contract	Trick Score	Partial Score	Game Bonus	Slam Bonus	Game Bonus	Slam Bonus	Game Scores	Slam Scores
	<i>No-trump</i>			<i>Not Vul</i>	<i>Not Vul</i>	<i>Vul</i>	<i>Vul</i>	<i>Not/Vul</i>	<i>Not/Vul</i>
1	Notrump	40	90	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Notrump	70	120	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Notrump	100	150	300	-	500	-	400/600	-
4	Notrump	130	-	300	-	500	-	-	-
5	Notrump	160	-	300	-	500	-	-	-
6	Notrump	190	-	300	500	500	750	-	990/1440
7	Notrump	220	-	300	750	500	1000	-	1520/2320

<i>Overtricks:</i> <i>trick score</i>		<i>Undertricks</i>	Not Doubled	Not Doubled	Doubled	Doubled
		Down	<i>Not Vul</i>	<i>Vul</i>	<i>Not Vul</i>	<i>Vul</i>
Minors -- 20 points each		<i>1</i>	50	100	100	200
Majors / Notrump -- 30 points each.		<i>2</i>	100	200	300	500
		<i>3</i>	150	300	500	800
Non Vul Game in a Major = 420 Down 2 doubled, not Vul = 300, so down 2 doubled wins, or down 8 not doubled! Vul Game in a Major = 620 Down 2 doubled, Vul = 500, so down 2 doubled wins, or down 5 not doubled!		<i>4</i>	200	400	800	1100
		<i>5</i>	250	500	1100	1400
		<i>6</i>	300	600	1400	1700
		<i>7</i>	350	700	1700	2000

CHAPTER III - The LAWS and PROTOCOLS of DUPLICATE

Duplicate play is conducted using a well-defined set of rules, called the Laws of Bridge, and a corresponding set of Protocols that describe acceptable player conduct at the table and at the venue. They are applicable at all forms of duplicate; in local Club games, Online or at National Tournaments.

For your convenience, they are described chronologically; that is, Protocol Before the Start of Play; Protocol During the Auction and Protocol During the Play of the Hand. You must be familiar with all of them. An additional section explains Alerts, Announcements, Using the Bidding Box and other procedural requirements. Finally, there is a description of the rights and obligations of the Dummy at duplicate games.

Duplicate is a highly competitive game: that's why we play it. The luck of the cards has largely been eliminated by the duplication process: everyone gets to play the same cards, so the pair that plays them well are the most skilled, at least on that day, and reap the corresponding masterpoint rewards.

However, this requires a stringent set of rules and protocols to be sure the playing field is as level as humanly possible, as play may be scored across multiple locations and times, or across hundreds of players. Consequently, there are Laws of Bridge, and a clear set of behavioral requirements imposed on all duplicate players. They are enforced equitably by a Director, who is responsible for your entire duplicate game experience: the table setup, the process, enforcement of the Laws, adjudicating differences of opinion among players, timing, etc.

PROTOCOL PRIOR TO THE START OF PLAY

These are things you should know before you enter any bridge event, at your local Club or at the Nationals.

Bridge is a Timed Game. It lets everyone play a set of hands in a reasonable time (3 to 3 ¼ hours), and at the same pace. East/West players usually move to a new table at the beginning of each round. A "round" consists of 2, 3, sometimes 4 or even 5 boards (hands). Rounds are scheduled for 15 minutes (7½ minutes per board) for a 2 board round. 3 board rounds are 21 minutes: 4 board rounds are 25 minutes and 5 board rounds are 30 minutes. All times require steady, uninterrupted play by everyone. Don't be a slowpoke. When one person takes an unnecessary amount of time on a board, there may be 50 other people delayed unnecessarily.

This is obviously unfair, impolite and unacceptable behavior. Of course some boards are more difficult and need more time than others. This is why you must play most boards quickly and without conversation so you have adequate time when that tough hand comes along.

Directors and the Laws of Bridge. The Director is there to keep the game moving, enforce the Laws of Bridge, maintain a level playing field for all players and hear all sides of any disagreement. The Laws of Bridge are not punitive in nature. They are designed to restore equity whenever possible. People, especially bridge players, make mistakes, and Directors will make every effort to restore equity and let the competition continue in a fair manner, both for those at the table and for the other tables in play. When the Director makes a ruling, play on at once without comment.

To Call the Director. Any player except dummy may call the Director if she feels there has been an infraction of procedure or other abnormality. The proper phrase is “Director, please” with a raised hand so the Director doesn’t have to ask “Who Called”. Place your unplayed cards face down on the table and don’t talk to anyone while the Director comes to your table.

Your Convention Card and Personal Record. Each pair is required by the Laws of Bridge to have two identical Convention Cards filled out, available at any time for review by opponents. You may not consult your own convention card during the bidding – it’s a time waster, among other things. At least one of each pair must keep an accurate and complete Personal Score of all bids and results, available to the Director at any time, to correct errors without disturbing play.

Passing the Boards. When the next round is called by the Director, North is responsible for passing the boards to the next lower table. She should do so in a way that does not disturb tables still in play and only after the round has been called.

Moving to the Next Table. East/West players move to the next higher-numbered table when the round is called. Do so promptly and quietly. A quick, quiet greeting should be followed by picking up and counting of one’s cards, face down.

Skip Rounds. If there is an even number of tables in a section, there will be a “skip round” after the half-way round. East/West players will skip one table in their rotation, so as to not play the same set of boards twice. There is no skip round when there’s an odd number of tables.

Your Personal Space at the Table. You are allowed one square foot at the rightmost corner of your table and no more. This must hold your bidding box, your personal record (face-down), convention card, pencil, glasses, coffee - - everything. Bridge tables are fairly small so don’t haul around a lot of extraneous stuff.

Starting a Round. North/South should welcome or greet East/West players and start play immediately. North is the only player allowed to touch the boards. She is responsible for accurately recording the contract and results when play is completed, and for playing without any delay between boards. All players should be in position, ready to start play when a round begins, and they must play all boards with minimum delay, conscious of the allocated time per round.

PROTOCOL DURING THE AUCTION

Players are expected to pay attention to the auction and bid promptly when it is their turn. This does not necessarily mean quickly -- it means without unnecessarily wasting time.

Preparing to Bid. Count your cards face down before looking at any of them. Do not “flash” your cards so that anyone, especially partner, can see them as you count. You can avoid any such possibility by counting them under the table. If there’s a discrepancy after you count them at least twice, call the Director immediately. If there are 13 cards, pick them all up at once, not one at a time. (a time-waster). Sort them into suits as you choose, and prepare to bid. If you are the Dealer, bid promptly without having to be told “It’s your bid”. (another time-waster).

The Language of Bidding. Using the bidding box has eased many problems caused when bids are announced verbally, and it is the standard way to bid in organized duplicate bridge today. All 15 words allowed during the bidding are printed on a card in the bidding box: 7 levels (1 thru 7), 5 suits (♣, ♦, ♥, ♠, NT), and Pass, Double and Redouble. There are also Stop and Alert cards in the bidding box. The only exceptions are to say “Alert” for conventions and for “announcements” such as “Transfer” or “15 to 17”. All announcements are printed in blue type on the convention card. No other conversation of any kind is allowed during the bidding, except to query opponents’ bids when it is your turn to bid. If you don’t understand what an opponent’s bid means, you are entitled to ask before continuing on with your turn. Ask the partner of the bid you don’t understand a simple question: “Is that a weak jump shift?, for example. Or, better yet, just ask what the bid means. The answer provided to you must be the meaning of the bid as defined on the opponent’s Convention Card; you are not entitled to know what specific cards are in the bidder’s hand unless the bid provides such specificity, such as an Ace-showing cue bid or a singleton/void in the suit, etc.

Using the Bidding Box. Using the bidding box allows everyone to review the entire bidding at all times -- it also means all players must lay out their bids in a way that allows unhindered review by all players at all times. Place the bidding box at the right corner of the table. When you are ready to bid, and not before, place your right thumb on the bid you want to make, pick up all the bidding cards behind your bid and lay them all on the table in front of you, in position for everyone else to see, and without comment, emphasis, unusual speed, etc. You may not “fondle” the bidding box cards, touch them and then retract your hand, or in any way make any move that could convey any information to your partner. Make every bid with bidding box cards, except the final (3rd) pass. Don’t snap the bidding box cards on the table.

You may not look intensely at your partner, slam the cards down, act disgusted, etc. Any extra information, such as attitude, is specifically forbidden and is grounds for a Director call, as it is unethical. Bid stoically and only in reaction to the bidding at the table. If you are going to pass, you must do so at an even pace - - not a “slow pass” or a “fast pass”. You may not hesitate for any significant amount of time and then pass, as you have thereby conveyed unauthorized information to your partner: you “almost” bid. If you are going to bid - - not pass - - you may take as much time as necessary, so decide first if you are going to pass: if so, do it at an even pace.

Tempo. Players are required to maintain an even tempo. This means you may not hesitate unnecessarily or bid too quickly, unless an Alert is announced. Strive to make all your bids at the same pace throughout the auction.

Alerts. If an Alert has been signaled by your opponent, you, at your turn to bid, may ask the Alerter for an explanation of the meaning of the bid. (See Alerts and more Protocol in the following section for a more complete discussion of Alerts, Announcements, etc.) All alertable calls should be indicated on the partnership's Convention Card.

Stop Card. If you are about to make any jump bid, you may first place a Stop Card on the table in full view, then place the bidding box cards in their proper place in sequence, then immediately replace the Stop card in the bidding box. The next player must pause before bidding. If the player ahead of you places a Stop card on the table, indicating a jump bid, you must wait "about 10 seconds" after the Stop card is replaced in the box before making any call, including pass. A "Quick Pass" is unauthorized information to your partner. STOP cards are not required, but if you use them, you must always use them and vice versa.

Director Calls During the Auction. A Director call may be required during the auction, such as for a bid out of turn. In all such cases, call the Director immediately to ensure your rights. If you continue on with the bidding, you have sacrificed any redress you may be entitled to. Hesitations, unusual emphasis, conversation, etc., are also grounds for a Director call. The one who called the Director will speak first, and the Director will resolve problems in keeping with the Laws of Bridge.

When The Bidding Is Complete. The auction is over only when there has been 3 consecutive passes. Once completed, you should quickly review the bidding in your mind, considering all implications. You can see all the bids on the table, so there should be no conversation, which might influence the play. All players should quietly agree to the contract before the bidding box cards are removed. "Three Hearts by West", "6 NoTrump in the North", etc. And not so loud as to tell the next table, please! Once agreed, place the bidding box cards back in the bidding box and prepare to declare or defend.

Passed-Out Hands. A decision to Pass is a bridge judgment. If all four players make this judgment, the hand may not be "dealt again" even if it's the first time it has been played. This is specifically forbidden in the Laws of Bridge.

Making the Opening Lead. The opening leader must lead immediately, pausing only to consider her proper lead - - she should not write the contract in her Personal Record first. (a time-waster). While she is considering and making her opening lead, others should write the contract and declarer in their Personal Record on the back of their convention card. Once ready to lead, she must place the card on the table face-down and ask "Any questions, Partner?" This is not an obscure formality. If there are questions about the bidding, they may be asked only at this time, by anyone except the dummy, and asked only to opponents, not your partner! If she has inadvertently led out of turn, the face-down card is withdrawn and her partner then leads. No harm, no penalty and no Director call.

A face-up lead out-of-turn carries complex penalties, an interruption of play for a Director call and declarer options that will usually influence the outcome of the contract. Always make the opening lead face-down, even when you are sure you are on lead, and always ask if there are questions. A face down lead may not be replaced - - once it's on the table, it's played, unless there has been erroneous information provided, which may be learned if there are questions, but only with the permission of the Director. If answers to such questions change the leader's decision about the right card to lead, the face-down lead may be withdrawn and replaced with another face-down lead. Players cannot make these decisions; only the Director does this.

Placing the Dummy's Cards on the Table. Once the proper opening lead is on the table, face up, dummy should place its cards on the table in full view of all players. Don't place them down one-card-at-a-time. (A time-waster and an irritation to defenders). Place an entire suit at one time, alternating colors, facing the declarer, not yourself, and the trump suit to the declarer's left as she faces the dummy.

Once the opening lead is faced and the dummy is down, all players should briefly consider their plan of attack or defense. When declarer's plan is made, she will play the first card from dummy, and we enter the Play portion of these Protocols.

PROTOCOL DURING THE PLAY

Tempo Again. Play at an even tempo, without unusual emphasis, speed, hesitation or any other form of unauthorized information to your partner. If you are even tempted to do so, you are close to a violation for unethical play. Don't be embarrassed by taking such actions. Any hand is certainly not worth gaining a reputation for cheating, and that's what it is, plain and simple. Just play steadily and without comment, verbally or physically, and you'll have no problem.

Playing a Card. Make a decision about what card you are going to play before touching your hand, and then place the card on the table quietly so everyone can clearly see it. Don't snap your cards onto the table. Don't hold a card in the air before playing it - - once out of your hand, it's played. Let everyone see it without hesitation.

Director Calls During Play. If an unusual occurrence happens, any player except the dummy may call the Director. Unusual occurrences might be leads out of turn, revoke, etc. If you feel a need to call the Director, announce the fact, fold your cards and place them on the table, and do not discuss anything with your partner or opponents, whether you are the declarer or defender. Especially, do not play to the next card or trick. If you do, you have accepted the controversial action, and have forfeited all your rights. Even if you are an experienced Director, you may not make rulings at the table. When the Director arrives, the one who called, and only that person, should explain the problem. The Director will solicit information from other players as he deems appropriate. Do not volunteer information, argue, talk over others, shout or become emotional. When the Director makes her ruling, play on at once.

Placing the Completed Tricks in Front of You. When a trick is completed, place a winning trick face down perpendicular to your side of the table and a losing trick parallel to it, positioned sequentially (i.e., left to right) so as to be able to review all 13 tricks when necessary. Once placed face down, cards may not be picked up for review. All 4 players should agree, but you may not correct declarer's or partner's placement of the played cards after the next trick is played to, including the dummy. After all play is finished, you may correct partner's, dummy's or declarer's cards indicating tricks won or lost, but you may never touch another players cards.

Agreement about Results. All players should quietly agree as to the outcome before any cards are removed and replaced into the board. Be aware of the contract and the outcome -- don't waste everyone's time because you haven't played attention.

Recording the Score. North is responsible for accurately recording the score, either on a paper traveler or an electronic scorer, first showing it to East/West players for agreement. If there are travelers in use, she should place it back in the board in the North hand and then move on to the next board. North should immediately call the Director if there is any discrepancy in the information recorded on a traveler, such as a score on the wrong line.

Discussion of Results. If you must discuss one of the hands during a round, wait until all your boards have been played. Talking about a hand before playing remaining boards is the single biggest time-waster in duplicate bridge. If there is time before the next round, discuss hands (not results) QUIETLY, as players at adjacent tables are not supposed to hear any discussion. If you talk loudly about a hand, you can be given a penalty.

The Next Round. Wait until the Director calls the next round before moving ahead. As everyone in the room must start the next round, there's nothing to be gained by moving early, except confusion, noise and disturbing other players. If you stand up and move about the room, you are potentially looking at cards in play at other tables – a violation of ethics.

Session Results. Usually, the results of a session will be available immediately, as the Director can score them very quickly at the conclusion of the game, and they are often available on local web sites. You should keep track of any masterpoints you earn, and verify it with ACBL (www.ACBL.org) by the middle of the following month. Masterpoints are reported to ACBL at month-end, not daily, for all players with an ACBL member number. If you find an error or omission, bring it up to the Director - - she can fix it.

ALERTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MORE PROTOCOL

This section explains many of the proprieties of Duplicate - - how to use the bidding box and the Alert procedure, for example. The numbers in parentheses, e.g., (40) refer to the specific Law in the Laws of Bridge that govern the statement made.

All calls that are not "standard" must be "alerted". (See the Alert Procedure below). Regardless of whether or not any call is alerted, players may, at their turn to bid, question an opponent - - not their partner - - about any call. There are 3 definitions of "Standard" meanings.

- (1) The current convention card used in ACBL sanctioned events
- (2) For calls that are not printed on the convention card, "Standard" is less well defined, but is based on what a typical duplicate player in the event being played would believe to be the meaning of the call.
- (3) Some conventions are allowed only in high-level tournament events or world-class play. (40) See the ACBL website at www.ACBL.org.

IN ALL CASES: Private understandings are specifically prohibited in any ACBL sanctioned event. (40 B, 75) To be accepted as a "standard convention", and thus allowed in ACBL club-level or tournament events, a convention must be approved as such by the ACBL. (40 D)

The Alert Procedure

The Laws of Bridge require players in all ACBL sanctioned events to notify opponents when they make bids that have a meaning other than the "standard" meaning. The fundamental reason is that the Laws insist that all players are entitled to know what all bids mean at all times. (20F).

The correct procedure is for the partner of the player making a non-standard call to immediately say aloud the single word "Alert" clearly enough for all at the table to hear. The Alerter must say "Alert" before the next player bids. Time is of the essence, as the next player may bid quickly, assuming a standard meaning for the call. If later informed by an alert, he may have revealed information in his first call that would be detrimental to his cause. (21) Because of the possibility of an Alert at any time, players should bid in tempo, not too quickly (and not too slowly, of course).

The Alerter must say nothing but the single word "Alert". The Alerter must not volunteer any information unless asked by his opponent, not his partner.

If asked by an opponent, the Alerter quietly explains what the call means. The explanation may include the name of the convention, but must also explain the meaning if requested by the opponent. For example, "Michaels" is the name of a convention whereby the bidder shows two 5-card suits. The meaning is of utmost importance, not the name of the convention. Players may ask for an explanation of an Alert by any simple term such as "Yes?"

The Alert procedure is a required, standard part of the bidding process, and both sides must be courteous and cooperative in order to maintain tempo during the auction. Alerts must be included in any verbal review of the auction. (20 B)

Announcements

Announcements are similar to Alerts, but do not stop the auction. Announcement requirements are printed in blue letters on current convention cards. Announcements, like Alerts, are made by the partner of the player making the call that is to be "announced". They are sometimes warnings that a call is a transfer to another suit, rather than an offer to play. Jacoby or Texas transfers are examples. A transfer announcement is the single word "Transfer". Another announcement is to advise opponents that a 1 NT bid is "forcing" or "semi-forcing". It occurs in response to a major suit opening and means forcing or semi-forcing for one round. The announcement is the single word "Forcing" or "Semi-forcing". NoTrump opening high-card point ranges are also announcements: "15 to 17", for example. Often, players in the US don't announce their NoTrump opening range if it is 15 to 17 HCP, even though it is printed in blue. Certainly any range other than 15 to 17 HCP must be announced every time such a call is made

Reviews of the Auction

The use of bidding boxes has virtually eliminated the need for verbal reviews during the auction. There are other times when a review of the auction or questions about conventions or calls made or not made are allowed. Any call not clearly heard by any player must be repeated forthwith if asked for. (20A)

Reviews after the Final Pass. A request for review of the entire auction may be made by defenders or declarer (not the dummy) whenever it is his first turn to play. Reviews are provided only by the opponent of the player asking for the review. A player may not ask for a partial review nor stop the review before it is complete. (20 C2) All players, including the dummy, are responsible for prompt correction of any error or omission during the review. Unfortunately, to ask for a further review after the bidding box cards have been replaced slows the game and illustrates you are not paying proper attention . . . a further time-waster.

Explanation of Calls

Explanation of calls made during the bidding (as opposed to a review of the calls in an auction, described above) can be requested during the auction period (20F.1) or during the play (20F.2)

During the auction, at his turn to bid, a player may ask for an explanation of opponents' calls, including calls not made that reasonably could have been made. Replies to such inquiries are made by partner of the one making the call in question.

During play, either defender, at his turn to play, may ask for an explanation of the opposing auction. At declarer's or dummy's turn to play, declarer (not dummy) may ask for an explanation of a defender's call, or may ask for an explanation of defenders' card play conventions.

Use of the Convention Card

Players are assumed to know the meaning of their own and their partner's bids. To this end and to conserve time, players are not allowed to consult their own or partner's convention card during the auction, (40 E.2) but they are allowed to consult opponents' convention cards at any time. (40 E.2) To facilitate this activity, pairs are required to have two identically-filled out convention cards on the table at all times for examination by opponents. (40 E.1.)

Both players must employ the same system that appears on their convention card. The system may not be altered during a session of play. At the beginning of a round, players may examine opponents' convention card and alter their defenses to conventional calls and preemptive bids, but they must announce this fact to the opponents. Opponents whose convention cards have been so examined may not then change their convention or convention card during the session of play. (40 E.2)

DUPLICATE DUMMYS

In social bridge, the dummy has no specific definition, other than being the one who plays the cards as directed by the declarer.

In duplicate bridge, the dummy has some rather stringent rules he must follow, so as not to influence the declarer's playing of the hand. These rules are presented here as a True – False quiz, with answers to follow.

Bridge for Dummies Quiz

This is a quiz to test your knowledge about the Dummy. Answers are on the following page.

1. T F Dummy should call the Director when he sees a Defender lead out of turn
2. T F Dummy should ask Declarer if she is out of a suit in which she has not followed
3. T F Dummy should ask Defender if she is out of a suit in which she has not followed
4. T F Dummy can follow the play, and so is entitled to see all cards played by Defenders
5. T F Dummy can call attention at any time to Declarer's trick(s) turned incorrectly
6. T F Dummy may call attention to any irregularity at any time to prevent improper play by either declarer or a defender
7. T F Dummy can ask defender(s) questions about bids before the first card is played from Dummy
8. T F Dummy declares "everyone is responsible for dummy" when a procedural or playing error occurs, such as a card stuck behind another
9. T F Dummy has no absolute rights during the play
10. T F Dummy should tell the Declarer to call the Director when a Defender leads out of turn.

Bridge for Dummies - Answers

1. T F Dummy should call the Director when he sees a Defender lead out of turn
False – Dummy can't call the Director
2. T F Dummy should ask declarer if she is out of a suit when she has not followed. *True . . . but NOT a Defender*
3. T F Dummy should ask defender if she is out of a suit when she has not followed
False . . Dummy can't talk to a Defender
4. T F Dummy can follow the play, and so is entitled to see all cards played by Defenders.
True, absolutely
5. T F Dummy can call attention at any time to declarer's trick(s) turned incorrectly *False. He can do so immediately as the trick is played, but not at a later time.*
6. T F Dummy may call attention to any irregularity at any time to prevent improper play by either declarer or a defender. *False, but she may do so only after all tricks have been played.*
7. T F Dummy can ask defender(s) questions about their bids, but only before the first card is played from Dummy. *False*
8. T F Dummy declares "everyone is responsible for dummy" when a procedural or playing error occurs, such as a card stuck behind another. *False. Dummy is responsible.*
9. T F Dummy has no rights during the play. *False. He can follow the play, give information to the Director when asked, play the cards as agent of the Declarer, and try to prevent an irregularity by declarer, such as leading from the wrong hand.*
10. T F Dummy should tell the declarer to call the Director when a defender leads out of turn.
False. Dummy can't tell or suggest anything to the Declarer.

Dummy can't . . .

- look at declarer's hand before playing
- look at any defender's card
- stand behind declarer to watch his play
- make any comment or question concerning bidding or play
- touch a card as a lead without specific direction from Declarer

CHAPTER IV - DUPLICATE TOURNAMENTS

Duplicate Tournaments are held frequently throughout the year, all over the ACBL. There are local, weekend-long Sectional Tournaments, week-long Regionals and two-week long Nationals. All offer multiple events daily and a variety of event types for all levels of players. It generally doesn't require any special qualification to enter a tournament event; that is, they are not only for top players; they are for everyone from beginner to professional levels of skill.

Tournament Types

Sectional Tournaments are generally held over a weekend and may have a few hundred tables in play during that time. A sectional tournament will typically have 3 or 4 events each day, consisting of both Pairs and Team events. There are events for all levels of skill, from beginners up through completely open competitions for players with an unlimited number of masterpoints. All masterpoint awards at Sectional Tournaments are Silver Points. Silver points are a requirement to become a Life Master, and they are available only at Sectional Tournaments.

An unusual type of Sectional Tournament is held several times a year and is called a **Sectional Tournament at Clubs** – “StaC Week”. During STaC week, all participating Clubs pay only Silver Masterpoints at higher-than-normal rates. Then, daily, all STaC club games played at the same time and with the same qualifications (“Open”, for example) are merged together electronically and masterpoints are awarded as though there was a physical game of that size. Thus, in a club game of 10 tables, if you get a high percentage score, you could win a dozen or more Silver Masterpoints instead of the 1.00 you might win at your Club.

Regional Tournaments are usually quite large and run for about a week. They may attract players from across the Nation as well as professional players. The total number of tables played during a Regional can run into the low thousands. Regional Tournaments offer hundreds of events, dozens each day and some lasting multiple days. Regional events award black, Red or Gold Masterpoints, depending on the number of entrants and the level of competition. Gold and Red masterpoints are required to achieve many ranks of ACBL players: National Masters, Life Masters, etc. and can only be earned at Regional or National tournaments. As with Sectional tournaments, Regionals offer events for all levels of skill, from beginners up through completely open competitions for players with an unlimited number of masterpoints.

National Tournaments (“The Nationals”) are held three times per year, at an Eastern, Central and Western venue in the United States and Canada, during the Spring, Summer and Fall time periods. They run 10 days to two weeks, have thousands of tables of play, with hundreds of events for all levels of players and they draw players from the entire ACBL territory and even from overseas.

National and International Invitational Events are held at The Nationals. These are not open to the general player, they are often several days in length and may require a preliminary qualification round or two to earn an invitation.

Tournament Events

A tournament “event” is the term for a mini-tournament – a tournament within a tournament. An event can be as simple as one session of Pairs, just as you play in your local club game. An event can also be as complicated as a 4-day, eight session Knockout Teams for a National Title. An event can include one section of 10 tables, like you play at your Club, or it might include 15 sections of 13 tables each for a really big event at a major tournament.

Two Session Events. Main events, held daily, are often two sessions; meaning one session of about 3 hours starts about 10:00 AM or 1:00 PM, and the second about 3:00 PM or about 7:00 PM. Formerly, all two-session events had 1 PM and 7 PM start times, but, nowadays most two-session events start at 10 AM and conclude starting at 3 PM, as many players prefer not to play at night.

All sessions have both section and session overall winners, and the whole day's play will be summed up at the end as though it were one 52+ board session. This means two-session winners score big masterpoints, because they have beaten many pairs on many boards. At Regional or National events, these will earn Red or Gold masterpoints. All Sectional Events award only Silver masterpoints, but the numbers will be correspondingly big for winners of two-session events.

Other Multiple Session Events. Tournament managers try to schedule events for all possible customers. Some just want to play an occasional single session and be done with it. Some want to play all day and evening, every day of the tournament, and most are somewhere in between. As a consequence, there are some multiple session events at large tournaments (Regionals and Nationals) that cater, for example, to people who live in the area but work during the day. Thus there can be pairs and team events of several sessions that are held only in the evenings. Many Seniors won't play at night, but still want to play a lot, so there are multiple session events stretching over several days that start at 9 AM. Some can't play every day, but still want to compete in multiple session events where the masterpoint payoffs are large: a corresponding event type is called Continuous Pairs. They are normal single session Pairs events, called Side Games, offered two or three times each day, but whose total scores for several sessions played during the week are calculated as though they were one big event, thus paying substantial masterpoint awards for pairs that did well in several of the Continuous Pairs events.

Single Session Events. There are always single-session events in Morning, Afternoon and Evening timeframes. This means no matter how well you did in an early session, or what time you can get to the Tournament venue, you will be able to play in some event or another.

Levels of Events. Events are available for novice players with very few masterpoints, and will include a series of simultaneous events for different levels of masterpoint accomplishment. At a

Regional Tournament, there can be separate Pairs events for players with 0 – 5 Masterpoints and 0 – 20 and 0 – 50 and 0 – 100 and 0 – 299 and 299 – 500 and 500 – 1500 and 1500 – 3000 and 3000 to 5000 and 5000+ Masterpoints.

Usually, most sessions are Stratified, meaning all the players with under 299 Masterpoints play together, but compete with others in their strata, like 0 – 20 or 0 – 299. Similarly, all players with 300+ to 1500+ play together, but compete with their corresponding levels. Names of these levels are usually A (the top strata), Ax (the second highest), B, C, D, E, and F. There may be more or fewer levels depending on the number of pairs or teams who show up to play. Usually, all players under 299 play in a separate room with separate Directors, and all other players play in the “main room”, again with their own Directors.

Playing Identical Boards. Although there may be hundreds of table, at all levels from 0 – 5 MPs through completely unlimited players with thousands of masterpoints, they all play identical hands in Pairs events. Because hands are pre-dealt by dealing machines at tournaments, Hand Records are published and available immediately after the event is finished. Thus everyone at the event can see how they did on every hand. This makes for interesting and lively dinner conversation, which is a favorite pastime of duplicate players of all ranks.

Of course, pre-dealt hands applies to Pairs events only, as all Team events are shuffle – deal – play, and therefore there are no hand records for post-event analysis.

Types of Tournament Events

There are three types of tournament events: Individual, Pairs and Teams.

In an Individual event, you play with a different partner every round, in a pairs movement. Such events are rare nowadays, but may occasionally be encountered nonetheless.

Pairs Events. These are the same as club-level matchpoint pairs events, except, as noted above, they may include multiple sessions and include many sections and hundreds of pairs of players.

Team Events. Team events are matches between teams of four or more players playing a set of boards against another team. A set of boards may vary from 6 to 56 boards. Boards are not pre-dealt, and they are only played twice.

During the 1st playing of each board, team A plays the North / South hands and Team B plays the East / West hands. At the 2nd playing of the same board, Team A plays the East / West hands and Team B plays the North / South hands. Thus, each board is played from both directions by both teams, so there’s basically a contest over each board, with a winner or loser or tie for each board.

Contrast this with Pairs events, where many players play each board, but each pair plays only in a North / South direction or an East / West direction. In a Pairs event, there are a range of results,

with “tops and bottoms” and many ties. In a Team event, there are only two scores on each board: one for your North / South teammates and one for your East / West teammates.

If the results are identical (e.g., 4 Spades making exactly 4), then there’s no score for either Team. If there’s a different result, then one of the Teams gets a plus score for that board, and the score may be quite large. Unlike matchpoint scoring, where you get only a 1 or a ½ or a 0 against each other pair, in a Team game the size of the score matters significantly. If your North / South make a slam and your East / West beats the other team in the same slam, or if the other Team doesn’t bid the slam, there are huge differences in the score, perhaps enough to win or lose the whole match, regardless of how well you did on the other boards. You could beat the other Team by a few points on 6 boards, but blow the whole match on the 7th board by failing to bid a makeable slam, or by going down 1100 in a sacrifice. In this respect, Team games are more like social bridge, where each board contributes to the final total of points. At matchpoint (pairs) scoring, the results of one board have no effect on subsequent boards.

Levels of Tournament Events

Open: anyone of any rank may play. All compete in one category equally.

Restricted: Players of certain rank or below may compete.

Stratified: Players of several ranks play together, but are only compete against players of equal rank for Matchpoints.

Individual: Players play without a permanent partner, changing partners every hand or two.

Teams: two or three pairs compete as a team against other teams, e.g. Swiss Teams of 4, 5 or 6 players, or Knockout events.

Invitational: restricted to players of some category, as in a 299’er game

Types of Team Events

There are three types of Team Events: Swiss Teams and Knockouts and Extended Team Events.

Extended Team Events are played only for major National Titles, and may occur over several days, with 100 or more boards played. As these are invitational events at very high levels of play, they will not be further explained in this book.

Swiss Teams. Swiss Teams is the most common type of Team Game. A “Swiss Team” consists of 4 to 6 teammates, organized as two pairs (an East/West and a North/North pair). (The 5th and possibly 6th team member sit out during each round.) Teams play each other in a 6, 7 or 8 board “match”. Boards are relayed between the two tables by “caddies”. When all boards have been played by both teams, results are compared board-by-board, and the winner is the team that does better overall. The winning Captain reports the win to the Director, who then assigns the next match to both Teams. Then the cards are shuffled and another match gets underway with a different team.

Winning teams play other winning teams and losing teams plays losers in the second and subsequent rounds. This continues for several rounds with winners and other placers determined by the team record overall. Every member of a Team earns a partial masterpoint for every match won or tied, and Teams with good overall results win major overall awards as well. Even a 1 – 6 record earns some masterpoints, so Swiss Teams are a favorite. Note that, win, lose or tie, each teams plays the entire session or sessions, including all 5 to 8 matches.

IMP’s (International Match Points) are used to determine the score for each hand, not matchpoints as used in Pairs events. Swiss Team process, strategy and scoring are explained in some detail below.

Knockouts (KO’s) are similar to Swiss Teams, except matches are usually 24 boards long and take an entire session of several hours. Pairs play the other team’s N/S and E/W pairs as in Swiss Teams. The difference from Swiss is substantial: Knockouts are a “win or go home” event. If your team loses one match, you’re out of the event. (i. e., “Knocked Out”). Usually 16 teams start a Knockout. Half the teams are knocked out at the conclusion of each round, so it goes 8 – 4 – 2 – 1: there’s one winning team and all other teams are losers. Like Swiss Teams, all Knockout team members earn masterpoints for every match won, even though they may eventually be knocked out before the final round.

Knockout events pay lots of masterpoints and are usually “bracketed”, meaning your team will play other teams with about the same total number of masterpoints. Knockout team players can earn 10 or even 50 masterpoints per player, perhaps Gold, in a two-day, 4-session event.

“Compact Knockouts” play only 6 or 7 board matches, but “Win or go Home” still applies. It’s a convenient format as it’s usually played completely in one day and consists of just 4 matches.

A Day at a Tournament

Partnership Desk. If you need a partner(s), allow an extra 1/2 hour or more and go to the Partnership Deck and ask for a partner (for Pairs events) or a pair (for Team Events). Local volunteers will do their best to match you up with a partner or pair that is approximately at your level of experience and number of masterpoints. No guarantees, remember: they are doing you a favor.

Buying an Entry. You and your partner or teammates first need to decide what event you want to play in and find where it's being held plus the starting time and duration, the masterpoint restrictions, if any, and other administrative facts. You and your partner or team members will buy your entry (pay the card fees and get a table assignment) before the first (or only) session, so plan to be at the tournament site 1/2 hour before starting time. There is always parking to contend with and the lines to buy your entry may be long.

Getting Started in a Pairs Event. Your entry is a colored piece of paper that will tell you the section and table number and direction where you will start for the first (or only) session. Each Section is identified by a Section standard, and the table markers and perhaps even the boards will be of corresponding colors. You'll usually sit the opposite direction in the 2nd session, and perhaps in a different section, for two-session events.

Go to your table, following the section standards. They are tall colored signs with a big colored letter, e.g., **A, B, YY**, etc. There'll be a table marker at the table indicating where the E/W and N/S pairs sit. It will have the table number and direction for each player and will be the same color as your entry form, the section standard, the boards, and maybe even the bidding boxes. If your entry form is blue **BBB**, for example, look for a blue section marker displaying **BBB** and blue table markers to guide you to the right table. Find your table and fill out your entry form. It will ask for your names, ACBL numbers and your number of master points. Leave it visible on the table - - it will be picked up during the first round of play by a caddy.

There may be hundreds of people milling around, so it will be a little confusing. Just let the colors be your guide.

Review your convention card with your partner or fill out two identical ones if you are playing with a new partner. They must be visible and available for opponents to review whenever they choose. Get blank convention cards and extra private score sheets from the supplies desk somewhere in the room -- they're free. Private score sheets are on the back of the convention card form. There are also pencils available; if there aren't any on the table, get some from the supplies table or ask the caddy.

Getting Started in a Team Event. Your assigned section and table will be hand written on the entry form when you buy your entry. It will be your 'home table' for the first round only. The half of your team playing N/S will stay there and the E/W half will move to the corresponding table to play against the other team when the director announces the 'crossover', which is the crossover of the East / West pairs of each team to the home table of the other team. Sections exchange E/W players as follows: A with B; C with D; E with F; etc.

There will usually be 7 or 8 boards to play, starting with 4 at one table and 3 or 4 at the other. There are no hand records or duplication in Swiss Team events, so the boards need to be shuffled (three times only) and dealt before play starts. Each player should help shuffle and put the cards into the boards. Shuffle all the boards before starting to play. Boards should be played in sequence, and handled only by North. When a board is finished, each pair records the score on a special team score sheet – not the back of the standard convention card.

When finished, each board is placed face down, under the unplayed boards, in the center of the table on the table marker. Alternately, North may keep the played and unplayed boards at his side, so as not to have a high stack of boards in the middle of the table. Caddies will come to get boards for relay to the other table and will bring boards not yet played to your table. North should hold up played boards and say "CADDIE" out loud when boards are needed. Hold the boards up so the caddie can see what table is calling. North must check the new boards to be sure they are yours and put them in sequence, face up in the middle of the table, with the arrow pointing towards North.

As you will play 7 or more boards, there's apparently less time pressure than at Pairs, but it's still a timed event – about 45 minutes per match. Don't take any time away from the other players by idle talk or any other time-wasting activity.

When finished with all the boards, compare the scores with your opponents at the table to be sure they agree to the contract, results and score on each hand. If you're East/West, go back to your home table to compare scores with your teammates. They played the same boards, but they sat in the opposite direction. Usually they are four tables away in a straight line from you - - that's how the caddies know where to exchange the boards.

Swiss Teams Strategy. Team games don't use matchpoint scoring - - they use IMP Scoring. (See below). This makes a huge difference in the game. In Swiss Teams play, and other events scored with IMPs, the difference between bidding and making a Vulnerable game and not bidding it can be 500 points, and that's a lot of IMP's -- it could lose the whole match for you and your teammates. Slams are even bigger swingers, of course. So, in Swiss Team play, be aggressive about bidding even skinny games and Slams -- go for Slam if it's even a 50% chance, because of the other team does and you don't, goodbye match. If you both go for it and go down, it's a push, with neither team winning any IMPs. This is much different than matchpoint (Pairs) strategy, as you see. Remember, you can win 6 of the 7 boards and lose the whole match by not bidding a game or slam on the final board: not like matchpoint pairs at all, but certainly more exciting!

Scoring Swiss Team Match Results. Your whole team should sit at your home table and compare the scores on each board. You may have attained the same result, such as plus 420 for North/South and minus 420 for East/West. This is called a 'push', and results in no score for either team. Swiss team hands are scored in IMPs, meaning *I*nternational *M*atch *P*oints.

IMP scores are printed on the special team private score sheet, as shown below. They measure the difference in scores for a hand, and assign IMPs to the winners. If you scored 60 points better than your opponents on a hand, you get 2 IMPs for that hand, as shown in the IMP chart.

The World of Duplicate Bridge

Diff. In Pts	IMPs	Diff. In Pts	IMPs	Diff. In Pts	IMPs	Diff. In Pts	IMPs
20 – 40	1	270 – 310	7	750 – 890	13	2000 – 2240	19
50 – 80	2	320 – 360	8	900 – 1090	14	2250 – 2490	20
90 – 120	3	370 – 420	9	1100 – 1290	15	2500 – 2990	21
130 – 160	4	430 – 490	10	1300 – 1490	16	3000 – 3490	22
170 – 210	5	500 – 590	11	1500 – 1740	17	3500 – 3990	23
220 – 260	6	600 – 740	12	1750 – 1990	18	4000 up	24

Example Swiss Team IMP Score. Suppose you score 620 for making a vulnerable Heart game but your partners give up only minus 500 playing the same cards the other direction – perhaps as a result of a sacrifice on their part. Your team has scored 120 points better than the other team, so you are awarded 3 IMP's margin of victory on that hand. (See the box in **bold** above).

Example Swiss Team Match scoresheet with IMPs won and lost, using the IMP chart :

North South – Team #1 scoresheet						East West – Team #1 scoresheet					
Board	Contract	Plus	Minus	IMP's for	IMP's against	Board	Contract	Plus	Minus	IMP's for	IMP's against
1	3NT S	400		-	-	1	3NT s		400	-	-
2	2S E		140		6	2	4 S E		100		6
3	6 H N	980		-	-	3	6H N		980	-	-
4	2D S	90			1	4	2S E		110		1
5	4 S E	50		10		5	4S E	420		10	
6	3NT E		630	1		6	4H E	650		1	
7	4H N	620		3		7	4Sx E		500	3	

1: Results were the same, scoring 400 points each direction, for an IMP total of 0

2: Team #1 was minus in both directions for a total of 6 IMP's for Team #2

3: Again the results are the same, netting 0 IMPs for either Team. (Called a “push”)

4: North South made 90; East West lost 110, for -20 points and 1 IMP for Team #2

5: North South defeat the Team #2 East West pair for + 50, and the Team #1 East West pair makes a contract for a double plus, totaling 470 and 10 IMPs to Team #1

6: Playing in different contracts, Hearts make 20 more points, for a plus of 20 points and 1 IMP to Team #1.

7: Team #1 East West took the sacrifice against the Team #2 4 Heart contract, going off 500 instead of letting North South #2 play at 4 Hearts, for a net of 120 points and 3 IMPs

Total IMPS for Team #1: 14

Total against Team #1: 7

Net result: Team #1 won the match against Team #2 by 7 IMPs.

The Captain's Job. The captain of the winning team fills out a Win/Loss ticket, which will be on the table. It indicates the winning and losing team numbers and the number of IMPs margin for the winners. The captain should find the losing team and get their team captain's initial on the card, to indicate their concurrence with the result. The card is then taken to the central scoring table, where the director will later assign another team to be your opponents for the next round.

Wins, Losses and Ties: Win – Loss Swiss Scoring. You must have a 'clear win' of 2 or more IMPs for a full score of one (1) on a match, if playing Win-Loss Swiss. If your teams are tied, you each get a tie, worth 1/2. If you have a one IMP winning margin, you get a 'winning tie' and the other side gets a 'losing tie'. Winning ties are counted as 3/4 of a win and losing ties as 1/4. In this way, your total score at the end of a day may be 6 3/4 or 2 1/4. Wins, losses, ties, winning & losing ties are used to match teams with similar records throughout the day.

Wins, Losses and Ties: Victory Point Swiss Scoring. A more common scoring method nowadays is called Victory Point Scoring, wherein winning or tie results are awarded not as 1 or 1/2 or 3/4, but a number from 1 to 20 or 1 to 30, and the losers are awarded the reciprocal amount, depending on the margin of victory. For example, if you win a match by a total of 1 or 2 IMPs, you get 11 Victory Points and the opponents get 9 Victory Points, because it's clearly a nearly identical result. If you win by 11 or 12, you get 15 VP's and the opponents get 5 VP's. If you win by 28 IMPs or more, you get all 20 Victory Points, the maximum possible on a 20 Victory Point scoring system. 30 – point Victory Point scoring is slightly different.

The basic reason for Victory Point scoring is that in Teams play, boards are shuffled, dealt and played, and are played only twice. One team could have all slams, making, and the other teams in the room could have all partials, just by chance. This could provide the winning team of the all-slam hands with an insurmountable advantage for the whole 2-session event, purely due to the luck of the cards. "Luck of the cards" is contrary to all duplicate thinking, which tries to maintain a level playing field at all times, under all circumstances.

Victory Point scoring method keeps all teams in the hunt for the whole day; whereas if, using the Win – Loss method, you lose 2 matches early in the day, you are basically out of the competition but still have hours to play. Some teams, under these circumstances, simply drop out of the competition and go home. (Not a good thing from the viewpoint of the Tournament organizers). Using Victory Point scoring, even a team with a losing record might score a blitz on the last two rounds and come from behind to place in the overalls. That's much better for everyone, as every team is a contender until very late in the day, and they will play Swiss Teams again, as opposed to avoiding that format in the future.

The Next Round. Your team won or lost. Whatever the result, your next round table assignment will be posted on a big board near the scorer's table under your team number. Your N/S pair will go to that table to play the next round and the E/W pair of your team will go to the corresponding table in the other section: A and B; C and D; etc.

For example, if F4 is posted under your team number on the scoreboard, your N/S pair goes to table F4 and E/W pair goes to table E4. Go there immediately when your assignment is posted and repeat the process for the next match. You can change pairs

from N/S to E/W between matches if you want to, or you can even swap partners within the team between matches.

The Final Results. The directors will post the won/loss or Victory Points record for all teams as the day progresses. After the last round, the winners, placers and others will be posted, plus the number of master points awarded to the winners and placers, usually for about 5 to 8 places in a 2-session event.

If you are among the top overall winners in a Two Session Swiss, you will be the recipient of some major masterpoint awards, according to the level of play in which you were entered. Obviously, “A” Teams win more masterpoints than “C” teams, but nonetheless, it’s a major payoff to score in the top several teams of a Swiss Team (or any other Team) event at any level.

Each Match Counts. You win some masterpoints for each match you win or tie, regardless of your final place in the overalls. This is one reason for the popularity of Swiss Teams, as you almost always beat one team or more, and so you get at least a fraction of a master point for your day's effort.

CHAPTER V

THE GOVERNING ORGANIZATION OF DUPLICATE – THE ACBL

In North America, (the USA, Canada and Mexico), there is an organization that supervises all organized duplicate play, called the ACBL – the American Contract Bridge League. (It should be called the American Duplicate Bridge League). There are over 160,000 members of the ACBL. Duplicate play is available daily in cities and towns all over these countries and up to national-level play three times each year. There are similar organizations and tournaments at the International and World levels as well, so duplicate is truly an international game, partly because the language spoken at the table makes little difference.

The ACBL publishes the Laws of Bridge, which govern all definition and enforcement of rules of conduct and procedure at the table. The ACBL monitors and approves “conventions” which are artificial bids used by many players. It tests and certifies “Directors”, who are people that conduct sanctioned games authorized by the ACBL, at local club level up through the Nationals. An ACBL sanctioned game in Alaska, Miami or Cancun will be conducted under the same set of Laws and in the same fashion as every other.

The ACBL monitors and keeps track of the performance of every member, providing a way to measure relative skill of all members in a consistent and fair manner. One measurement of a player’s skill is his or her total number of “masterpoints”, which are points earned in competition at any level of competition. Local Club-level play awards the least number of masterpoints and National-level tournament play awards the most.

Directors send the results of every ACBL sanctioned game and tournament to the ACBL. In most locations, daily club game results are posted on the Internet within hours of completion of the game. Monthly, the ACBL accumulates masterpoints earned by every member, and makes totals available to individuals and on its website, along with lots of other information about upcoming tournaments, masterpoint races, lessons, news, etc. You can find it at www.ACBL.org. Your ACBL dues include a monthly magazine with tournament news, hands, columns by famous bridge writers and players, lessons, etc.

ACBL local and district organizations help organize tournaments and competitions, lessons and encourage new members.

At the local level, the governing body is called a Unit: in the Coachella Valley it is Unit 533. Units encourage local games and promote lessons and recruitment of new members in many ways. Most operate a local website for posting of news and game results. In the Coachella Valley it’s at www.CoachellaValleyBridge.com. They can also conduct Sectional tournaments up to several times per year. Units are partially supported by your ACBL dues. A Unit may consist of just the members of one large city, or may cover many square miles of sparsely populated territory. Units belong to a larger organization called a District, which can consist of several counties or even portions of multiple States. A primary responsibility of a District is to produce and promote Regional Tournaments.

Appendix A – Duplicate Bridge in the Coachella Valley, California

It's possible to play duplicate every day of the week in the Valley, usually in more than one location, and throughout the year.

The primary source of information about duplicate in the Coachella Valley, California is available on the Unit 533 web site at www.CoachellaValleyBridge.com.

There you will find locations, start times, driving directions, levels of play and Director contacts for every ACBL Sanctioned game in the Valley. There's also news about Valley Bridge and Bridge Players; Unit 533 Activities, Unit and Sectional Games, lessons, teachers and an opt-in or opt-out member roster.

Many Valley Directors email results to their players immediately after the game is over. If you play at a new venue or with a new Director, be sure he or she has your correct email address.

Most Valley Directors offer partner-finding services, some automated by email, some personally by phone.

Games are scattered throughout the Valley, with year-around games several times a week in Palm Springs at the Mizell Senior Center, in Cathedral City at the Cathedral City Senior Center, in Palm Desert at St. Margaret's Church, at the Duncan Bridge Center and the Atria Center, and in La Quinta at the PGA West Country Club. Some are by invitation only: consult the Director before attending if they are so listed on the Unit web site.

Because of our large transient population during the winter months, there are additional seasonal games in Palm Springs at the Stroke Recovery Center, in Rancho Mirage at the Rancho Mirage Country Club, in Palm Desert at the Indian Ridge Country Club and others.

There are some beginner and intermediate morning games and some open evening games, but the vast majority of games are afternoon, open and stratified. Most are pairs, but there's at least one open Swiss Game per month. There are 499er games, 299er games and even 49er or 199er games at various times and locations throughout the year.

There are constant additions and changes: consult the Unit web site for current information.

Appendix B – Partnership Bidding Practice

One good way to “get in sync” with your partner is to practice dealing out hands and bid them according to your chosen style. As you lay the cards out on the table, you can see how your partner interpreted your calls, and you can correct his errors.

Dealing out hands for bidding practice:

1. Deal out all four hands and you and your partner pick up one hand each.
2. Any hand that can open does so, and the other partner responds to the opener with each of the other three hands in turn. Bid all the way to completion, assuming no competition from opponents.
3. When done, examine each opener-responder combination in turn to clarify or to discuss bidding choices.

In this way, you get three practice sessions for each deal, and it's legitimate practice, too, as you never know exactly what a responding hand may contain. There's no advantage to bidding only hands with game, as duplicate is about being a complete player -- with bad hands and good ones and everything in between.

But there's a way to practice specific bidding situation, like games and slams or minor suit contracts, etc.

How To Practice Specific Bidding Situations

To practice specific situations like minor suit contracts, slams, major suit contracts, etc., all you need to do is bias the cards toward whatever you want to practice. You bias a deck by removing thirteen cards and playing with three hands - one opener and two others. After you've removed 13 cards, deal out the remaining ones into three hands and bid as above. (One hand opens and the partner bids the other two hands through to completion, then the cards are laid out for analysis.

“Biasing a deck” works as follows:

To practice bidding minor suit openings, remove any 13 major suit cards.

To practice major suit openings, remove any 13 minor suit cards.

To practice game and slam hands, remove 13 2's and 3's and 4's in all suits.

To practice distributional hands, remove all or most of the cards of one suit.

Appendix C – A Plan for Getting Started at Duplicate

Here's a plan to get started in duplicate, assuming you now play contract bridge.

You can be playing duplicate Bridge by the end of this week, even if you read this on Thursday night!

Step 1. Find a partner

He or she has to be able to play decent bridge - just like you. Duplicate games are not for rank beginners – however, many Duplicate Clubs often offer lessons for beginners. If you can't find a partner on your own, ask your local Club Director to help you. But remember, there are no guarantees when she finds you a partner – she's doing you a favor, so thank her regardless of how well it works out!

Most players find a number of partners over time - many have a dozen or more. That way, you can play on Monday with Mary and on Friday with Fred, etc. You and each of your partners must create identical Convention Cards and have them available for opponents at all times. (See Chapter II – Basic Duplicate) for detailed information about filling out a convention card.)

Couples often start out playing together, but some find a better game with other partners, or prefer not to play bridge with their roommate. Many couples only play together, many never do. With a good bidding system, there's no reason to argue -- much.

Good partners will work at it -- they'll read books, talk things over, deal hands, practice bidding, etc. And they'll be gentle when correcting your bidding and play shortcomings!

Appendix B – Partnership Bidding Practice will help you get in sync with a new partner quickly.

Step 2. Find a Duplicate Game

(See Appendix A for Information about every Club in the Coachella Valley, California)

Or look in the Yellow Pages in any major metropolitan area under Bridge Clubs.

Or look up the location of bridge clubs in your area at the ACBL website: www.ACBL.org. Look under “Find a Club” right on the front page of that site. They're listed by also zip code.

There are duplicate games run by employee associations of large companies; by churches and YMCA's, City Recreation Departments, Senior Centers, etc. Some are free.

Or, ask any duplicate player you know where there's a club or where they play. Everyone's welcome -- they're rarely private. Or, if you took bridge lessons, your teacher(s) will be able to point you in the right direction.

Step 3. Start Playing Duplicate Today

There's no reason you shouldn't play today or tonight if you have a partner and can find a duplicate game. You won't win but you'll have a good time.

Club Directors always welcome new players and they'll even find you a partner if they can. Don't be intimidated about playing with experienced duplicate players -- they are playing for the same reason you are - to have fun. There's no money in it, there's only the fun of playing and beating other players.

If you can't find a club game, maybe you can organize your own or play at your home or even online. (See Appendix D – At Home Duplicate and On Line Duplicate).

Wherever you find to play, just do it! Don't put it off until you memorize this whole book and became familiar with 27 new Conventions. Make up your mind to get started ASAP and keep at it. It's just a card game: nothing bad can happen, and you may find you're having the time of your life!

Step 4. Play as often as you can

You will be nervous when you start because there's so much new to learn. Guaranteed. So what? Just remember there is no reason to play except for the fun of good bridge and you'll do just fine. Don't worry -- be polite and you'll be welcomed back to any Club.

Like any game of skill, you want to play against good opponents to improve and keep your skills up.

Play two or three times a week if you can. And Read. And practice with your partner or on your PC or online. (See Appendix E – Additional Sources of Information, Practice and Learning about Duplicate)

Be sure not to “play results” -- it doesn't matter what might happen on any particular hand when you bid and play it -- whether or not a finesse works on one hand has nothing to do with how your bidding systems performs for you and your partner.

Step 5. Study this Book

Work your way through this book -- but don't read it all before starting to play duplicate. Start right away.

Work first on playing whatever bidding system you and your partner now play -- 'Standard American', for instance. Think about it and talk about it and write down how you bid and play in situations that come up as you start to play duplicate. You'll rapidly become a much better bridge player.

The more you study and play duplicate, the better you'll become and the more you'll enjoy it, because your initial nervousness will go away quickly. Guaranteed.

Step 6. Read and Practice and Play Online or on your PC as often as you can.

There is so much information available, and in so many forms that you can learn and practice hours every day if you are dedicated enough. One sure thing: you won't become a good duplicate player just by playing, even though you should play as much as possible.

Bridge is not a physical game, where "practice makes perfect". Bridge is a mental game, where how well you play depends on what you know and how well you apply it in competition at the table.

If you never learn a new technique, or don't understand an opponent's bid, all the playing in the world won't make you any better.

Appendix E is a list of sources for improving your knowledge about duplicate; at the table you will gradually learn how to apply more and more of this learned knowledge, but all aspects are necessary to improve and enjoy duplicate: learn and play; play and perfect; perfect and go on to the next learning experience.

Duplicate bidding, declarer play and defense are evolving disciplines. An amazing amount of new information becomes available and is put into practice every year by active duplicate players. You should plan to keep yourself aware of new things, talk with your partners about them and give them a try.

Duplicate is alive and growing even as you read these words.

Appendix D – At Home Duplicate and On-Line Duplicate

ONE OR TWO TABLE DUPLICATE AT HOME

There is a form of pseudo-duplicate that lets as few as four people play!

It's called Chicago. There's no boards and hands aren't duplicated because they're only played once, like party bridge. But the scoring and vulnerability are done in Duplicate Style – no rubbers or partials. It's how most duplicate players play bridge socially at home.

CHICAGO

In Chicago, 4 hands are played in a round, with each player dealing once. For the first hand, no one is vulnerable; for the second and third hands, the dealer's side is vulnerable and for the last hand of the 4, everyone is vulnerable.

Hands are scored individually, including game and slam bonuses, just like playing at a duplicate club: Trick score plus 300 for a non-vulnerable game, plus 50 for a partial, etc. No scores carry over from one hand to the next, and no "honors" are scored.

Often one or two rounds are played this way (4 or 8 hands) and then the players switch partners, just like switching at tennis between sets. A double round of "Chicago" with 4 players is 24 hands . . . about 2 ½ hours of bridge. Add up each person's scores at the end, and you have a winner. In 24 hands, the luck will about even out, so it's a reasonable test of skill.

Duplicate players are usually very competitive and know the scoring potential of going down vs. letting the opponents make 3 Hearts.

It adds a fun dimension to home bridge, for sure.

ON-LINE DUPLICATE

You can play duplicate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and most of it is free!

There are several on-line clubs, the largest of which is Bridge Base Online, to be found at www.Bridgebaseonline.com.

Sign it to that site, invent a pseudo name for yourself, download a small portal program and you are ready to play, kibitz, practice with your partner and even play for ACBL Masterpoints for a very small fee (\$1.00) for a 12-board session, taking about an hour.

You can even watch major international tournaments online in real time.

Appendix E – Additional Sources of Duplicate Information and Learning

Web Sites

Local Unit 533 site: www.CoachellaValleyBridge.com

ACBL at www.ACBL.org

www.BobsBridgeClub.com

www.BridgeClues.com

www.DynamickBridge.com

www.WoodysbridgeClub.com

Books

Any book written by Mike Lawrence or Eddie Kantar

“Duplicate” by Bob McConnell, in the Valley.

The ACBL Monthly Bulletin is included in your ACBL Membership.

Software – excellent learning and practicing software from <http://bbi.bridgebase.com/index.html>

Free Educational software from the ACBL

On line bridge at www.BridgeBaseOnline.com

Intermediate lessons from local teachers: defense and declarer play and new conventions.

Mentoring Programs sponsored by the local Unit or Clubs.

Paid professional partners.

The World of Duplicate Bridge

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