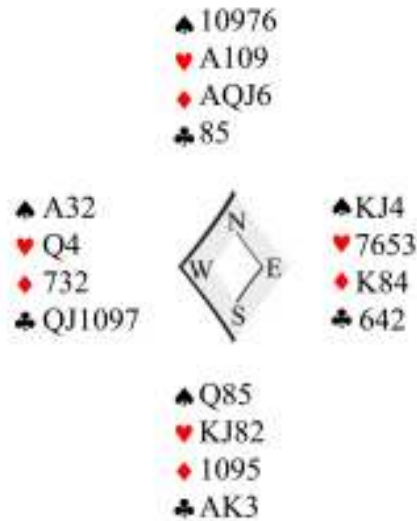


121. Let's Learn Bridge

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Up to this point, the column has followed the ACBL (American Contract Bridge League) convention or bidding card. The topics have not been for beginners but certainly should stir your interest. Starting in this column, you will learn bridge from scratch.

Four Steps:

The first step is to find three friends willing to learn. Perhaps you can talk a friend who knows the basics of bridge to give you a helping hand. If you do not find a friend who knows bridge, that does not matter. These columns will take care of that.

The second step is for the four of you to sit around a card table. The player sitting across from you is your partner.

The third step is to get a standard deck of cards. A casino deck will not do as the cards are too large to hold thirteen cards at once.

The fourth step is to play. This is a fairly big step, but just consider bridge as a complicated version of the child's game 'War,' except you can see and pick your cards. The strength of the cards is the same as in War with the aces the highest and the two's the lowest. Each player puts a card in the center and the highest card of the suit (clubs, diamonds, hearts and spades) led wins the four cards (a trick).

Trump:

From now on, we will leave War behind with the introduction of trump. Each of the suits may be trump as well as there being No Trump. The winner of the trick is the person who played the highest card of the suit led, when there is no trump present, or the person who played the highest trump.

One can play trump either when trump is led or when you do not have the suit being led.

Dummy Whist:

Now let's play a simplified version of bridge called dummy whist. This is probably similar to what you know as standard whist, but it has been modified as an introduction to bridge.

The Deal:

Cut high card to be dealer. The dealer deals thirteen cards to each player. The player with the most high card points, HCP's, becomes the declarer. High card points are counted by giving an ace four points, a king three points, a queen two points and a jack one point.

The Dummy:

The partner of the declarer is now known as the dummy and places his cards face up sorted into suits on the table. Trump becomes the suit which the declarer and dummy combined have eight or more cards. Let's call this the 'golden fit.' If there are no golden fits, then there is no trump.

Dummy moves the suit that is trump to his right side of the dummy and the left hand opponent of the declarer makes the opening lead. From then on, the winner of each trick becomes the leader to the next trick.

At the end of thirteen tricks, declarer gets a point for every trick above six tricks. Six tricks are called the book. The opponents, known as the defenders get a point for every trick declarer is below book.

Looking at the hands above, South is declarer and picks spades as trump. Play the hands, exactly as shown and see if you get the same result that will be discussed in next week's column.

Note:

-All the bridge columns may be viewed at <http://watsongallery.ca> by following the bridge links.

-Email me for the ABC's of Bridge which this column will follow.