

FOR THE NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK.....

August is another opportunity to get your silver points!!!

And Unit 174 is the place to be.... There are not one but TWO tournaments for our novice and intermediate players in August. August 13-15 (this weekend) the Awesome August Sectional will be held at the Westchase Marriott and play will commence Friday afternoon and continue Friday evening, Saturday morning and afternoon and Sunday morning and afternoon. More information is available at www.acblunit174.org. Just click on Awesome August Sectional on the far right side of the page. The location is great and it is a very easy drive.

A second tournament for silver points will be held August 28-29. The tournament is for 0-99 master point players and is held by the Houston Bridge Studio at Gessner and the Southwest Freeway. If you want more information go to www.houstonbridgestudio.com. Silver points can only be won at the sectional tournaments, novice tournaments, and the sectional tournaments at clubs (STACs). Both tournament venues are easy to reach and bridge carpools are always fun!

Members who joined before January 1, 2010 need to have at least 50 silver points to make life master and players who joined after January 1 need 75 silver points.

Opening the Bidding:

The Rule of 20 (or the Guideline of 20): In borderline cases in first or second position, add the high card points to the number of cards in the two longest suits. If the total is 20 or more, consider opening the bidding; otherwise pass. Mel Colchamiro has added another component which values quick tricks—aces and kings. He calls it Mel's rule of 22 which helps you determine whether or not to open a hand that qualifies as a Rule of 20 opener. The Rule of 22 adds 2 defensive tricks to the hand qualifying as a Rule of 20 opener.

Defensive tricks: $Kx=1/2$

A=1

KQ=1

AQ=1 ½

AK=2

AJ10=2

Too many to remember right away? Remember that A and K are slightly undervalued and Quacks (queens and jacks) are overvalued in our point counting system and rate your hand accordingly.

Wondering whether to open a hand or not? Jeff Meckstroth, one of the world's top players, says when you are on the borderline of opening it's better to bid than not because

it does cause your opponents a problem. Or Virgil, the great Roman poet said, “Fortune sides with him who dares”.

Add Rule of 20 Openers, the Law of Total Tricks, Losing Trick Count, and High Card Points to your Tool Kit to improve your bidding.

It's a partnership game: Give your partner a little help

Take advantage of the opponents' conventions by sending your partner a message. When Stayman, Jacoby transfers, splinters, Gerber responses, Blackwood responses, new minor forcing or any other conventional bid or answer is made by the opponent, your double of their artificial bid shows length and strength in the artificial suit bid. It dictates to partner to lead the suit you've doubled. It is a free bid at the expense of your opponents and can help your partner know what to lead. It's a partnership game, so help your partner out!

Defense--you do it half the time

Show your preference! When opener makes a lead and the dummy is void or has a singleton, you can show your partner which suit to lead next. When you put out a high card (the highest you can afford) it says, “Switch suits to the HIGHER of the two remaining non trump suits”. Your lowest card asks for the LOWER of the two remaining suits. This is called suit preference carding and it is used when there is a singleton or void on the table and your partner has led.

Director, Please

Occasionally, the director will “award” a result of “Not Played” (often because the round has been called, a table is a full board behind and there is not time enough after the game to do a “late Play”). There is NO Penalty for a “Not Played” – it is scored exactly like a sit-out. You do not get a zero. The score of those affected by the Not Played is factored. It is far better to have a “Not Played” than to rush a board and bid, play or defend in a rush risking making silly mistakes.

Please send comments regarding this newsletter to jryan9620@sbcglobal.net. If you would like to be added to the mailing list just give the ACBL your e-mail address and you will get it automatically.

See you at the tables

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