

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

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## Hand Evaluation - the power of ten

When Mr. Milton Work invented the point-count method, ace = 4, king = 3, queen = 2 and jack = 1, he did the ten no favors.

Contrast these two hands:

Hand a)	Hand b)
♠ A 6 3	♠ A 10 4
♥ Q 7	♥ Q 10
♦ Q 6 4 2	♦ Q 10 9 3
♣ K J 7 4	♣ K J 10 9

## For Beginners...

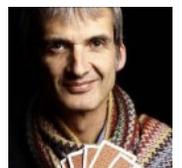
Both contain the same shape and the same jacks, queens kings and aces to make up 12 points. But what a difference!

You would open 1NT with the first, but with huge trepidation. If partner raises to 2NT, a response that invites you to bid again – to go on to 3NT with an upper range hand and pass with a lower range hand – you couldn't pass quick enough. You'll probably not make 2NT, let alone 3NT.

The second is a completely different kettle of fish. Your hand is replete with tens – those minor-suit nines are pretty good too. You'd raise 2NT to 3NT quick as a flash, as your hand is worth (at least) 14 points. Examine the diamond suit and give partner, say ♦J5. ♦Q642 facing ♦J5 will probably generate no tricks at all; ♦Q1093 facing ♦J5 will generate two tricks: for sure. What a difference!

Milton really should have given the ten half a point (or perhaps 0.4) and the nine about a quarter (or perhaps 0.2), but that'd be way too complicated. However, don't forget how useful these intermediate cards can be.

Andrew Robson is a highly accomplished bridge professional, writer and teacher. From his home in the United Kingdom, Robson is the bridge columnist for The Times and Country Life. Andy was born on January 5, 1964 in Chester, United Kingdom



# Hand Evaluation - the power of shape

By Andy Robson

In the previous article, we looked at the power of tens. Here we look at the power of shape. Contrast these two hands:

Hand (i)	Hand (ii)
♠ K J 3	♠ K J 8 5 3
♥ Q J 4 2	♥ Q J 4 2
♦ A 9 6	♦ A 9 6
♣ 10 8 5	♣ 10

Hand (i) is the most barren shape in Bridge, the dreaded 4333. No short suits, no long suits. You would not open the bidding, nor would you bid as an overcall if an opponent opened.

Hand (ii) is far more interesting. 5431 is my favorite of the common shapes (it's also – after 4432 and 5332) the third most common. You will open the bidding (1♠) with this hand – using the Rule of 20 (high-card points added to number of cards in two longest suits getting to 20) and you'll also bid 1♠ after an opposing opening bid. Having your suit lengths the way they are is particularly nice, giving you an easy bidding strategy (1♠ - then 2♥).

Shape is so important that I would recommend looking at your shape before even counting your points. I would mark the common shapes as follows (out of ten):

Shape (in decreasing order of frequency)	Marks/10
4-4-3-2	5
5-3-3-2	6
5-4-3-1	9
5-4-2-2	7
4-3-3-3	3
6-3-2-2	8

**Note: We are no longer snail mailing any issues of this newsletter. Snail mail has become cost prohibitive. The newsletters are available online only at the District 13 website. To access the site and find the newsletters, go to:**

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

**Newsletters at this address go back to 2001. You can read them, print them, and enjoy them from there.**



**2025 La Crosse ACBL  
Fall Bridge Sectional**

Sanction # 2511341

Wed. Nov. 12 – Fri. Nov. 14  
Omni Center  
255 Riders Club Road  
Onalaska, WI 54650

*Fabulous Snacks & Treats  
All Day Long  
With Coffee & Beverages*

*Free Parking &  
Handicapped Parking*

**Schedule of Events**

**Wednesday, November 12**  
10:00 & 2:30 Open Pairs/Teams

**Thursday, November 13**  
10:00 & 2:30 Open Pairs/Teams  
\*Pizza Party & mini educational between sessions - \$5.00

**Friday, November 14**  
9:00 & 12:30 Stratified Swiss Teams – Lunch served between sessions

*All Open Strata: 0-1000 / 1000-3000 / 3000+*

\$10.00 per session for ACBL Members  
Special Student Rate with Student ID

**Partnerships:** Linda Mills  
608-738-8246  
[Onalinda41@hotmail.com](mailto:Onalinda41@hotmail.com)

**Chairperson:** Jeri Sebo  
608-386-5616  
[jvsebo@charter.net](mailto:jvsebo@charter.net)

*Lots of great restaurants & hotels nearby. Please join us!*

# Robson For More Advanced Players...

## Hand Evaluation - not all points are equal

When you count up your high-card points, you should be aware that points in your long suits are likely to be pulling more weight than points in your short suits.

Contrast these two hands:

Hand (i)	Hand (ii)
♠ K Q	♠ K Q 10 7 3
♥ A J	♥ A J 9 8
♦ 9 6 4 2	♦ 4 2
♣ 10 8 7 5 3	♣ 6 5

Both (i) and (ii) have ten points – indeed they each have precisely one ace, one king, one queen...all the way down to one two. They also have the same 5422 shape. Yet there is a world of difference between the two hands. Having honors in long suits, as in (ii) is far more powerful.

Contrast these two suits:

<b>Dummy (a)</b> K Q 6 5 4	<b>Dummy (b)</b> 6 5 4 3 2
<b>Declarer (a)</b> 3 2	<b>Declarer (b)</b> K Q

In (a) you can lead towards the king and queen. If the ace is sitting on your left, in front of KQ, both will be promoted. In (b) the ace will take one of your honours, wherever it lies. Plus the suit is blocked, making trick-taking all the more awkward.

Back to our original hands. It is hard to see you taking even one bid with (i), unless partner shows a good hand. (ii) is probably worth opening and certainly worth overcalling. All those points in the long suits – lovely.

Ed. Note: Hand evaluation is most important in deciding how many tricks for which to contract. Best bidding methods provide a partnership with an accurate picture of both hands so determining both best strain and how high can best be determined. If cross ruffing or reversing the dummy is required, both partners should have a good idea if they have enough trumps between them to make it work.

Sum Sudoku 1

15	7		6	6	7
	6				
		7		9	
4	8		13	8	3
	13	5			
				9	

# Game Page...

Sum Sudoku 2

8	10		4	9	
		6	13		
	13			4	12
		15	10		
4				5	
8				5	

**Puzzle Answers  
No Peeking!**

1	4	3	5	2	9
6	5	2	4	1	3
2	1	5	6	3	4
4	3	1	2	6	5
5	2	6	3	4	1
3	6	1	4	5	2

Sum Sudoku 2 - Solution

5	4	3	1	6	2
6	3	2	5	1	4
4	1	5	2	3	6
3	1	2	6	4	5
1	2	6	4	5	3
3	5	4	6	2	1
2	6	1	3	4	5

Sum Sudoku 1 - Solution

Save the Dates:

**October 16-19**  
**Stan Subeck Central States**  
**Regional... exact location**  
**pending**

**Gold points...**  
**Pairs events...**  
**Open and Gold Rush...**

**Team events...**

**Suzi Subeck, Chair**  
**stansubeck@prodigy.net**

**Jan Churchwell, Partnership**  
**jan8242@gmail.com**

First Name	Last Name	New Rank
Kelly	Anderson	Junior Master
William	Apostolos	Junior Master
Kate	Brown	Junior Master
Elliot	Eisenberg	Junior Master
Janet	Schedler	Junior Master
Yoram	Shenker	Junior Master
Allen	Steinke	Junior Master
Theresa J.	Tobin	Junior Master
William	Bomm	Club Master
Diane	Merna	Club Master
Gina	Myerson	Club Master
Sandeep	Raje	Club Master
Zeyu	Wang	Club Master
Curtis	Cassel	Sectional Master
Eric	Hinds	Sectional Master
Charles	Sauer	Sectional Master
Lori	Schretzma	Sectional Master
Barbara	Doll	Regional Master
Willard	Hartman	Regional Master
James	Jacobson	Regional Master
Henry	Mauer	Regional Master
Margaret	Meyer	NABC Master
Doug	Shuman	NABC Master
Charles	Firke	Life Master
Rahul	Garga	Life Master
Melissa	Graves	Life Master
Richard	Johnsonba	Life Master
Alice	Peterson	Life Master
Carolee	Robel	Life Master
Paula	Slesar	Life Master
Melissa	Graves	Bronze Life Master
Richard	Johnsonba	Bronze Life Master
Alice	Peterson	Bronze Life Master
John	Morgan	Silver Life Master
Sandi	Schlueter	Ruby Life Master
Joan	Nelson	Gold Life Master
Cherrolyn	Woolwine	Diamond Life Master
David	Langer	Emerald Life Master

# District 13 Rank Advancements Well Done!!



**OPEN & 750 NLM SECTIONAL**  
AUGUST 21-23, 2025

**COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
326 S. SEGOE RD  
MADISON  
WISCONSIN

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**Thursday, August 21**

**9:30 am** Open Pair/Team  
0-750 NLM Pair

**2:00 pm** Open Pair/Team  
0-750 NLM Pair

**Friday, August 22**

**9:30 am** Open Pair/Team  
0-750 NLM Pair

**2:00 pm** Open Pair/Team  
0-750 NLM Pair

**Saturday, August 23**

**9:30 am** Open Pair/Team  
0-750 NLM Pair

**2:00 pm** Open Pair/Team  
0-750 NLM Pair

**Hospitality**  
Free coffee, tea, snacks  
On site lunches available for purchase

**Entry Fee \$10 per session**  
Free for ACBL members with 0-5 MP  
\$4 extra for lapsed ACBL members

**Pair/Teams**  
You may choose to pay entry fee as a 4-person pair/team. The director will form everyone else into pair/teams as needed.

**Chair**  
Glenna Shannahan  
madisonbridgeclub@gmail.com

**Partnership**  
David Raitt  
(612) 554-7913 text please  
Partners guaranteed 30 min before game



It's never dull...  
When our side is  
vul!

**Point Count:** Ace = 4 points King = 3 points Queen = 2 points Jack = 1 point

**Total points in the deck = 40**

**Suit Rank** (lowest to highest): **Minors:** ♣ Clubs ♦ Diamonds **Majors:** ♥ Hearts ♠ Spades **Notrump**

**A good trump suit:** A "fit" of 8 or more cards in one suit, combined in your two hands in any way (4-4, 5-3, 6-2, etc.).

**First choice:** A major (hearts or spades) if you have at least an 8-card fit.

**Second choice:** Notrump if you have balanced strength and **no** fit in a major suit.

**Third choice:** A minor (clubs or diamonds) if you have at least an 8-card fit and unbalanced strength.

**Contract requirements** -- What you and your partner need in your two hands to make these contracts:

**Suit partscore** (bid of 1, 2 or 3 in any suit) -- 18-24 points **and** at least an 8-card trump fit.

**Notrump partscore** (bid of 1NT or 2NT) -- 20-24 points **and** preferably **no** 8-card major-suit fit.

**Major-suit game** (4H, 4S) -- 25+ points **and** at least an 8-card fit. (Game and slam contracts pay a scoring bonus.)

**Minor-suit game** (5C,5D) -- 29+ points **and** at least an 8-card fit.

**Notrump game** (3NT) -- 25+ points **and** preferably **no** 8-card major-suit fit.

**Small slam** (any bid of 6) -- 33+ points

**Grand slam** (any bid of 7) -- 36+ points **and** all four aces.

These contract guidelines apply when you have relatively balanced hands. If you have a strong trump fit, long side suits and/or unusual distribution, you'll need fewer points to make these contracts.

## Bidding Cheat Sheet for Beginners by Karen Walker

**Rules for Opener** (the first player to make a bid other than Pass)

**Your first bid:** Always open the bidding at the 1-level if you have at least 13 points You may open a hand of 11 or 12 points if you have a long suit, distributional strength and/or good quick tricks.

**The meanings of your opening bids are:**

**1NT** = Exactly 15-17 points and balanced distribution (at least 2-3 cards in every suit). Balanced distributions are 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 and 5-3-3-2.

**1H or 1S** = 13-21 points and at least 5 cards in your suit.

**1C or 1D** = 13-21 points and at least 3 cards in your suit. Choose your **longer** minor. If you have two 3-card minors, open 1C to keep the bidding low.

This is called a **convenient minor** -- it tells partner you have opening points, but your hand doesn't meet the requirements for an opening bid of 1H, 1S or 1NT.

**2NT** = Exactly 20-22 points and balanced distribution.

**2C** = Artificial bid that starts the description of a very strong hand (22-23+ points). Partner must respond.

**2D, 2H or 2S** = A [weak two-bid](#) -- 5-9 points with a good 6-card suit.

**3 of a suit** = A weak hand (5-9 points) with a long, strong suit (7 cards).

If you have two 5-card suits, open the **higher-ranking** suit, then rebid the lower-ranking suit (if you have 5 clubs and 5 diamonds, open 1D and bid clubs at your next turn). This allows partner to choose between your two suits without raising the level of the bidding.

**Your second bid** (called a **rebid**), A rebid is made after partner responds to your opening bid.

**A new suit** (1C - 1H - 1S) -- At least 4 cards in the suit, 13+ points.

**Simple rebid of your first suit** (1C - 1H - 2C) -- Extra length (usually a 6+ cards) and a minimum (13-15 points). To show a stronger hand with a long suit, you can jump-rebid your suit -- 1C - 1H - 3C.

**Single raise of partner's suit** (1C - 1H - **2H**) -- 4 cards in the suit partner responded and a minimum (13-15 points). To show a stronger hand with a fit, you can jump-raise his suit -- 1C - 1H - **3H** or **4H**.

**Notrump** (1C - 1H - **1NT**) -- A balanced minimum opener (13-14 points) WITHOUT 4 cards in partner's suit and without a new 4-card suit you could bid at the 1-level. To show a stronger balanced hand, you can open 1NT (with 15-17 points). To show a **very strong** balanced hand (19 points), open a suit bid and then jump in notrump -- 1C - 1H - **2NT**.

**As Opener, if you have fewer than 16 points, DON'T go to the 2-level unless:**

- 1 - You're raising partner's suit (to confirm a trump fit (1D - 1S - **2S**); or
- 2 - You're rebidding your own extra-long suit (1D - 1S - **2D**); or
- 3 - You're showing a second suit (4 cards or longer) that is **lower** in rank than your first suit (1D - 1S - **2C**).

Karen Walker  
Cheat Sheet,  
continued from  
page 6)

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**Rules for Responder** (after your partner opens the bidding):

Respond to partner's opening bid if you have **6 points** or more.

**If partner opens 1H or 1S** and you have 3-card support -- Always raise to confirm the 8-card trump fit.

**If partner opens 1C or 1D** and you have a 4+-card major -- Always respond 1 of your major.

If you have two 4-card majors, respond the **cheaper** major to keep the bidding low.

**If you have fewer than 10 points, DON'T** go to the 2-level unless you're raising partner's suit (to confirm a trump fit) or rebidding your own extra-long suit.

With some unbalanced hands, you'll have to respond 1NT to keep the bidding low.

**Your first response (after partner opens one of a suit):**

**1 of a new suit** (1C by partner - **1H** by you) = At least 4 cards in your suit and at least 6 points.

**2 of a new minor** (non-jump) (1H - **2D**) = A 4+-card suit and at least 10-11 points.

**2 of a new major** (non-jump: the auction 1S - **2H**) = A **5+-card suit** and at least 10-11 points.

**Single raise of partner's major** (1S - **2S**) = At least 3 cards in partner's suit and 6-10 playing points To show a stronger hand with support, make a jump-raise -- 1S - **3S** or 1S - **4S**.

**Single raise of partner's minor** (1D - **2D**) = At least 4-5 cards in partner's suit, 6-10 points **and** no 4+-card major suit. To show a stronger hand with support, make a jump-raise -- 1D - **3D**.

**Notrump** (1S - **1NT**) = Weak (6-10 points) with no support for partner's suit **and** no suit you can bid at the 1-level. To show a stronger balanced hand, jump in notrump -- 1S - **2NT** or 1S - **3NT**.

**Jump in a new suit** (1S- **3C**) = Very strong (18-19+ points) and a long, strong suit. This is a **jump-shift**.

**As Opener OR Responder, you are showing your point-count range any time you:**

1 - Open or rebid notrump -- 1C - **1NT** 1C - 1S - **1NT** 1S - 2H - **2NT**

2 - Raise partner's suit (to confirm that you have an 8-card fit) -- 1H - **2H** 1C - 1H - **2H** 1C - 1H - 1S - **2S**

3 - Rebid your own long suit -- 1D - 1S - **2D** 1H - 1S - **1NT** - **3S**

The **level** you choose for these bids shows whether you have a minimum, invitational or forcing point-count range.

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**Rules for Overcaller** (after an opponent opens the bidding)

**1-level suit overcall** (1H by left-hand opponent - **1S by you**) = 10+ points with a good 5+-card suit.

**2-level, non-jump suit overcall** (1H - **2D**) = 12+ points with a strong suit

**Jump overcall** (1H - **3C**) = Weak hand (5-9 points) with a long, strong suit (6+ cards).

**1NT** (1H - **1NT**) = 15-17 points (some play 15-18) with balanced distribution and stoppers in the opponent's suit.

**Double** (1H - **DBL**) = 12+ points, shortness in the opponent's suit, 3+ cards in all unbid suits. This is called a **takeout double** because it asks partner to take it out of the auction by bidding his longest suit.

**Karen Walker** is a National Champion who lives in Champaign, Illinois. She is the editor of the D8 newsletter and the chairman of the annual Champaign Regional. She is both a bridge teacher and writer.

# Give 'Em A Hand!

## The Problems

Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ 7 6 4  
♥ A K J 6 5 3  
♦ 5  
♣ 8 4 3

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

West	North	East	South
—	2 ♥	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3NT <sup>1</sup>	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Promises at least ♥AKJ

West leads the queen of diamonds. How do you propose to make nine tricks?

Dealer West. NS Vul.

♠ 6 5  
♥ K 10 6  
♦ Q 10 8 7 6  
♣ A Q 3

♠ K J 8  
♥ A 8 7 5 3 2  
♦ —  
♣ 10 8 6 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
1 ♠	Double <sup>1</sup>	2 ♠	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 3-card heart support

West leads the four of clubs and dummy's queen wins the trick. You cash the king of trumps and West plays the jack. What now?

(a.) Dealer East. Both Vul.

You, West, hold:

♠ A K 3 2  
♥ A  
♦ 10 8 2  
♣ K J 8 7 3

and the auction proceeds...

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	1 ♠
2 ♣	Double	4 ♣ <sup>1</sup>	Pass
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	Pass
??			
1. Preemptive			

Suppose you pass. What do you lead?

(b.) Suppose you decide to lead the king of trumps and see this dummy:

♠ Q 10 8  
♥ K J 9 8  
♦ J 9 7 3  
♣ A 5

♠ A K 3 2  
♥ A  
♦ 10 8 2  
♣ K J 8 7 3

What do you do next?

Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ 9 8 4  
♥ J 9 4  
♦ A 7 3  
♣ K Q 10 5

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♦	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

West leads the nine of diamonds. Plan the play.

## The Results

♠ 7 6 4  
♥ A K J 6 5 3  
♦ 5  
♣ 8 4 3

♠ A 8 3  
♥ 10 9 7 2  
♦ Q J 10 6  
♣ J 10

♠ K Q 5  
♥ Q  
♦ 9 8 3 2  
♣ Q 9 7 6 5

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

**No Peeking!**

You have six winners and need another three heart tricks to make your contract. If you had an outside entry to dummy, the best play in hearts would be to cash the ace, hoping to drop a singleton queen, and to finesse the jack on the next round of hearts. Without any side-suit winner in the North hand, this play will produce three rather than five heart tricks on the above layout.

Continued on page 9

To make five tricks from the heart suit here, you must duck the first round of hearts completely. As East wins the first heart with his queen and the ace-king-jack are still intact, the heart suit now runs for five tricks. The same would be true if it West happened to have the singleton queen of hearts.

If the queen of hearts doesn't appear on the first round you should cash the ace and king of hearts next, hoping that the suit is 3-2. As a result of managing the heart suit in this way, the overall chance of success is nearly three times in four.

♠ 6 5	
♥ K 10 6	
♦ Q 10 8 7 6	
♣ A Q 3	
♠ A 10 9 4 3	♠ Q 7 2
♥ J	♥ Q 9 4
♦ K 5 3	♦ A J 9 4 2
♣ K 9 4 2	♣ J 7
♠ K J 8	
♥ A 8 7 5 3 2	
♦ —	
♣ 10 8 6 5	

As you need a spade trick should lead a spade to the jack next, hoping that East has the queen of spades. West would surely have led a spade if he did not have the ace rather than a speculative club. Here West wins the ace and plays a second club. (If he was able to lead a trump, trumps would be 2-2 and you would have ten tricks.) You win the ace, cash the king of spades and ruff a spade then lead a club. No matter how East plays, declarer can ruff a club for his tenth trick. All the defence scores is a spade, a trump and a club.

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

A quick, unrepresentative, poll of a few experts suggested that West's best option over one spade was to pass as the club suit is poor and there seems to be little upside for an overcall of two clubs, or even one no trump, particularly as partner is a passed hand.

At the table, West chose to overcall two clubs and continue on to five clubs, which was doubled. On a spade lead, West was able to throw a diamond from dummy on a top spade. However, when West lead a diamond at trick three South won and led the four of trumps. Even though West took the correct view in trumps, playing low from hand, North played ace and another trump to hold West to nine tricks.

I'm not certain that everyone would find the winning defence on this hand. West must cash the major suit aces and exit

with a trump or a diamond, which leaves declarer a trick short. If West shifts to a club at trick two, declarer's club loser disappears. Continuing with ace and another trump is no better for declarer wins, then crosses to hand with a diamond to draw the last trump. Then, after cashing his diamond winners, ending in hand, he leads a heart. As this is a five-card ending and West has only his clubs left, declarer must make the queen of clubs for his tenth trick.

So, the value of West's decision to sacrifice depends entirely on whether he would have found this difficult defence.

### Sydney Or the Bush

Since the 'bush' in Australia is a euphemism for wild country and Sydney is one of our most cosmopolitan cities, the American equivalent of this article's Australian title would be 'go for broke'. I faced such a dilemma on this hand from the Spingold:

♠ 9 8 4	
♥ J 9 4	
♦ A 7 3	
♣ K Q 10 5	
♠ 10 7 3	♠ K Q J
♥ K 10 8 3	♥ —
♦ 9 2	♦ Q J 10 6 5 4
♣ J 8 7 2	♣ A 9 6 3
♠ A 6 5 2	
♥ A Q 7 6 5 2	
♦ K 8	
♣ 4	

West led the nine of diamonds which I took in hand with by my king. As West surely had the four missing trumps, my only chance was that the full deal was similar to this.

So at trick two I led a club to the ten. On this layout I would always make ten tricks. Suppose East took the ten with the ace and returned the king of spades. The simplest plan is to duck, win the next spade then cross to dummy with the ace of diamonds to play the two club winners, discarding spades from hand. Then a heart to the ace and heart towards dummy forces West to win his king of trumps and play a black card. Declarer ruffs, leads a heart to the jack and, as West's opening lead suggested a doubleton in diamonds, he crosses back to hand by ruffing the remaining black-suit card in dummy. The queen of hearts draws West's last trump and the seven of hearts is South's tenth trick.

This is a nice story, but in practice I didn't see Sydney for East had the jack of clubs. Well, the 'outback' has its merits too.

Answers! ↑  
No Peeking  
Before Solving!

## Developing Your Card Sense by Karen Walker

One of the keys to becoming a good bridge player is to develop “card sense”, which is generally defined as an aptitude for card games. Many people will tell you that you have to be born with it, or that it must be acquired at an early age. But is it an inborn talent, or an ability that can be developed? It’s true that some people seem to have a natural gift for cards, and if you played lots of card games as a child, you probably have a head start. Bridge card sense, however, is something that almost any intelligent, motivated learner can develop. It involves knowing the relationships between cards, visualizing how the deck is divided among the four hands, and in general, just having a good understanding of how tricks are won. Even if you’re an adult who’s never seen a deck of cards, you can develop these mental facilities. With practice, you can actually “teach” your brain to process information about cards. In doing so, you’ll develop memory skills that are useful not just for playing bridge, but for many other mental activities. Here are some activities you can use to speed up the process:

### **Try memory exercises.**

Take 6 or 7 cards out of the deck and look at them for 5 seconds. Turn them over and try to remember as many as possible. As you improve, try dealing out more cards and looking at them for a shorter time. Another good memory exercise is the children’s game of “Concentration”.

### **Practice “double-dummy” play.**

You don’t need other people to practice bidding and playing a bridge hand. Deal out a hand with the cards face-up. Decide what each hand would (or should) bid, what the final contract should be, what the opening lead would be, and how you would play the hand if you were declarer. Then play out the hand trick-by-trick, pretending you’re each hand in turn.

### **Experiment with suit combinations.**

One of the best ways to learn how to take tricks with various card combinations is to practice them in isolation. Take 13 cards of one suit out of the deck. For declarers’ and dummy’s hands, take 7, 8 or 9 of the cards out, deal them into two piles (any number in each pile) and turn them face up. Decide how many tricks you think you should be able to take with the two face-up hands and in what order you would play the cards to achieve that result. Next, “test” your play by adding the defenders’ hands. Deal the remaining cards into two piles (any number in each pile) so you have a full layout of the suit as it might be at the table. Decide which card you would play to each trick if you were a defender. Repeat the exercise by making small variations in your original layout. Move a jack from declarer’s hand to dummy’s, change the number of cards in each defender’s hand, etc. and see how it would change your play and the number of tricks you can take.

### **Read and deal.**

Bridge books will teach you how to play card combinations and give you other basic knowledge you need to develop card sense. Reading and practicing don’t have to be separate activities, though. Keep a deck of cards with your bridge book and use it to translate the book’s diagrammed hands into “real” bridge hands. Deal out the cards to match the example in the book and play it out on a tabletop next to the open book. Replay it as many times as you like until you understand the principle or the technique. This exercise is especially beneficial if you’re studying suit combinations or reading a book on declarer play. (Continued on page 10)

Continued on page 11

(Continued from page 9)

### **Practice daily.**

To add continuity to the learning process and keep your brain stimulated, try to spend at least a few minutes with some bridge-related activity every day. Here are some good practice and study activities that are fun, but not time consuming:

- Keep a deck of cards handy — on your desk at work, or on your coffeetable or nightstand at home — and when you have a few minutes (or the boss isn't looking), deal out a practice hand.
- Read the bridge column in the newspaper. Keep in mind that most columnists write for intermediate-level players, so don't be discouraged if some of the bidding and explanations don't make sense. Just use what you know and do your own analysis. Look at the hand diagram and decide what you would bid with each hand, what opening lead you would make, how you would declare or defend the contract, etc.
- Keep your class notes and bridge book accessible. Read a chapter, or even a few pages, during your coffee break, between TV shows, before you go to sleep.
- Bookmark some bridge web sites and visit your favorites to see what's new.
- Play a hand or two on your computer. Download the free [Learn to Play Bridge](#) programs from ACBL and review the lessons and practice hands.
- If your local TV stations are running one of the new bridge programs, tape the weekly show and watch all or part of it whenever it's convenient.
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### **The play's the thing.**

Experience itself is the best teacher of card sense, so the more time you spend actually playing bridge, the faster you'll develop your abilities. Don't feel like you have to know everything to begin playing. As soon as you've finished a few lessons, organize a weekly game with some friends or the people from your class, or recruit co-workers for a lunch-time game at work. You'll pick up more skills every time you play, especially if you can get some more experienced players to join your game. Try to keep playing regularly after you've finished your lessons. One option you should consider is duplicate bridge. You don't have to be an expert, or even a very experienced beginner, to join the games at your local bridge club. Almost every community has at least one weekly duplicate game, and many are for novices only. If you don't have a partner, the director or club manager will usually find one for you, or you can just kibitz the other players if you like. Feel free to ask questions after you play or watch a hand; the more experienced players at your club will be flattered if you ask for their advice. Although you probably won't win (or even avoid coming in last) the first few times you play, it's a great learning experience. Try these suggestions to see which work best for you, and use your imagination to identify other learning and practice opportunities. Developing your card sense will take time, but if you're committed enough to put some effort into it, it will come. And with every small step you make, you'll probably find that you enjoy playing bridge even more than before.

Karen Walker with  
hubby, Mike  
Halvorsen



## The Structure of Organized Bridge:

### Units

**Unit 123**=Chicago and suburbs

**Unit 222**= Milwaukee and suburbs

**Unit 149**=Madison and surrounding area north to the Upper Peninsula in MI

### Districts

**District 13**=all the above

**ACBL:** American Contract Bridge League  
Runs the NABC's

Sanctions Regionals, Sectionals, STACs  
Awards Masterpoints

**USBF:** United States Bridge Federation  
Runs the Competitions to determine the US representatives to International Competition

**NABF:** North American Bridge Federation=  
Players in USA, Canada, Mexico  
Oversees North American Bridge Operation

**WBF:** World Bridge Federation  
Runs the World Championships and promotes:  
**Bridge for Peace!**

**Bottom to Top!**



## Milwaukee Summer Fun Regional

**August 5 – 9, 2025**  
Knights of Columbus Hall  
732 Badger Ave.  
South Milwaukee WI

**DIRECTIONS:** I-94 to College Ave. (Exit 319); go East to N. Chicago Ave. (W32)  
Turn right (South) for .2 miles – then turn left onto Badger Ave.  
The Knights of Columbus Hall is on the left.

### TUESDAY – AUGUST 5

10AM and 3PM	OPEN PAIRS	(0-1500; 1500-3500; 3500+)
10AM and 3PM	GOLD RUSH PAIRS	(0-100; 100-300; 300-750)

### WEDNESDAY – AUGUST 6

10AM and 3PM	OPEN PAIRS	(0-1500; 1500-3500; 3500+)
10AM and 3PM	GOLD RUSH PAIRS	(0-100; 100-300; 300-750)

### THURSDAY – AUGUST 7

10AM and 3PM	OPEN SWISS TEAMS	(0-1500; 1500-3500; 3500+)
10AM and 3PM	GOLD RUSH TEAMS	(0-100; 100-300; 300-750)

### FRIDAY – AUGUST 8

10AM and 3PM	OPEN PAIRS	(0-1500; 1500-3500; 3500+)
10AM and 3PM	GOLD RUSH PAIRS	(0-100; 100-300; 300-750)

### SATURDAY – AUGUST 9

10AM and TBA	OPEN SWISS TEAMS	(0-1500; 1500-3500; 3500+)
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ACBL Members with 0-5 Masterpoints **PLAY FREE**  
GREAT HOSPITALITY - FREE COFFEE AND BREAKFAST TREATS  
Lunch Included with Entry Fee on Saturday

**Tournament Chair:**  
Yvette Neary – 414-526-9035  
Email: yneary@gmail.com

**Partnership Chair:**  
John Pereles – 414-559-3463  
Email: jrpereles@gmail.com



## 2025 WUMBA Wausau Bridge Sectional

**September 11-13, 2025**

**Covenant Community Presbyterian Church**  
1806 Weston Avenue, Schofield, WI 54476

**Sanction # 2509374**

DATE	TIME	EVENT
<u>Thursday, September 11</u>	1:30pm	Open Pairs/Teams 499er Pairs
	6:30 pm	Open Pairs/Teams 499er Pairs
<u>Friday, September 12</u>	9:00 am	Open Pairs/Teams 499er Pairs
	1:30 pm	Open Pairs/Teams 499er Pairs
	7:00 pm	Short Match Swiss 499er Pairs
	9:00 am	Stratified Swiss Team 1
<u>Saturday, September 13</u>	Two Single Sessions	Buffet Lunch between sessions \$10.00
	1:30 pm	Stratified Swiss Team 2

All Pair-Team events: sign up as pair or team

Open Stratified: 0-1000      1000-3000      3000+

499er Stratified by Director      All events stratified by average

**\$10 per session ACBL Member    \$14 Unpaid ACBL Member    Free for ACBL member 0-5 Masterpoints**

Tournament Chairperson: Emalyn Nikstad    715-845-2012    [enmikstad@gmail.com](mailto:enmikstad@gmail.com)

Partnership Chair: Bonnie Mealy    561-302-6403    [bmealybug@charter.net](mailto:bmealybug@charter.net)

Amazing hospitality with free snacks and beverages provided at all sessions!

Free "Lunch and Learn" on Friday geared toward newer players



Game play looks like it is fine!  
Face to face and home online.