

Twenty tables - Wow!! I enjoyed our PRO-AM event on Monday. I saw a lot of CHAT faces. Good! The organizers and directors had their hands full. Thanks to all that managed this event. It was worth it. I played with Marie. It was fun, especially for me. Anytime a hand didn't work out so well, Marie took the blame. I didn't have to own up to any of my mistakes. Thanks Marie.

As other pairs came to our table, I thought the AMs were treating the PROs well. Maybe, too well? Some seemed to be intimidated by their PRO partner. I mean that in a good way (maybe impressed is a better word). But, the objective of the PRO-AM was not to boost the PROS confidence. We don't usually get that kind of respect from our regular partners. Thanks. It was very nice.

Speaking of intimidation, I want to give a report on the personal progress I have made as a mentor. The CHAT group has intimidated me a bit. They are nice people but they ask difficult questions and demand better answers than I have some times. It has been tough, but, my fears are diminishing and my confidence is growing. I am starting to feel at home. I thought you should know.

SLOW PLAY. I have discussed slow play before but maybe a few more thoughts on it. I like John Wooden's quote: "Be quick, but don't hurry". Don't slow the game down but do take the time to think. Club members have been quite patient with me when I obsess over a bid. I finally figured out that it has nothing to do with patience. My slowness is giving them information. Why is he in a quandary? That information is used against me in the subsequent play. Your partner is also getting information from your slow play and that can prompt a director call in subsequent bidding. Not good.

Often the slowness comes when we can't find the right bid. At a CHAT session I walked over to a table having exactly this problem. It looks like the right bid is 1.75 hearts, but we don't have a bidding card for that. All the bids we have thought about are tainted a bit. I have suggested that some bids come from the brain and some come from the stomach (or ... you know). I see, blank stares. You need a better suggestion Arne.

So, I suggest that we choose the bid that has "the most truth" in it (the group frowns on it when I advise them to lie). But "the most truth" isn't working either. Pick the bid that deceives the opponents more than your partner. I have tried to sell the idea that a little deception can be a winning part of your game. Uff Da, I won't bring that up again. I get bewildered looks that seem to scold me (I don't know for sure but I suspect that some of these people are Lutheran). Finally, the frustration sets in and I hear: "just tell me what to bid".

So I do. I pick one of the half-truth bids. But, I am serving notice: I am not going to do this anymore. Don't ask. Telling half-truths multiple times for different players every CHAT session adds up. It's a heavy burden to bear. I need to be able to sleep at night. You might try calling Ann over when you have this quandary. I don't think she is Lutheran.

*Arne Fockler*