

We continue to see 7-8 tables at the Monday morning CHAT sessions. It's a noisy place. Good! We are not competing. We are collaborating. It's a friendly place to spend some time and learn some bridge from each other.

Discussions about new conventions occur regularly. Some players are anxious to master the latest and greatest convention. Others are content to grow at a slower pace, making sure they have their current card mastered before adding new conventions. Good idea. Having a convention card that scares you is not healthy. Trust me, I KNOW!

But, adding conventions to your card is something you have to do over time. The negative double is an item you must have on your card eventually. It is very simple (but, undoubtedly someone has written an entire book on it). There are many nuances to the convention, but you don't have to know all of them before you employ a simpler usage of the convention. Here are some convention discussions we have had at CHAT recently.

### NEGATIVE DOUBLE

**1C – 1D – DBL** here shows 4 cards in each major. If you had only one 4-card major, you would just bid it.

**1C – 1D – 1H** here promises 4 hearts. It also says that you have fewer than 4 spades. If you had 4 spades as well, you could have negative doubled (as in the above example).

**1C – 1D – 1S** Similarly, **1S** here promises 4 spades and fewer than 4 hearts.

**1C - 1H – 1S.** **1S** here promises **5** spades. With 4 spades you could have negative doubled. Partner now knows that you have more than 4 spades. Useful!

### CUE BIDDING TO SHOW A LIMIT RAISE

**1H – 2C – 3H** Many of you play that **3H** in this sequence shows a limit raise in hearts. An alternative bidding sequence: **1H – 2C – 3C** (a cue bid) shows the same limit raise in hearts. It says nothing about clubs. Partner gets the same information. Additionally, this this can sometimes complicate the bidding for the opponents. Two benefits: Partner is informed. LHO is annoyed. Nice!

## Negative Double , Limit Raise Bidding

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There is actually a third benefit here. And this is a larger benefit. You can now tell other players that you are using cue-bids. Awesome! Now, when you ask your opponent what their bid means and they tell you "it is a cue-bid", you don't have to wrinkle your brow and look stunned. You nonchalantly shrug your shoulders and say "Of course".

I have said this before. We have smart people playing bridge. They have to be. This is a complex game. Deep thinkers gravitate to Duplicate Bridge. Our club has a lot of exceptional people. We have Doctors, Lawyers, Teachers, Engineers, Programmers, members of the Unemployed Philosopher's Guild, the list goes on.

But, being smart is not enough to get you competing with some of our "elite" players (you know who you are). No, it takes some psychology as well. It isn't well known, but I took a couple of psychology courses back in college (about 50 years ago). So, I am qualified to give advice on this topic. Listen up! A little psychology at the table can be useful.

Ann is declarer and I must make the opening lead. The bidding has convinced me that I should lead a club, but I am not sure which card to lead from **Q 8 3**.

I'm thinking that the 3 is the right card. If I lead the 3, my partner will expect me to have a high card in clubs.

But I know that Ann knows what the lead of the 3 means. On top of that, Ann also knows that I know that she knows. So if I lead the 3, she will think that I am trying to deceive her and that I really don't have a high card in clubs. NOW, the right lead for me is obvious. Lead the 3! Partner knows. Ann doesn't. Just what you want.

Incredible! Without a little Psychology (and deep thinking), I would have just blindly led a small club.

*Arne Fackler*

### Combatting Zero Tolerance

At a tournament, a man was angrily criticizing his partner. RHO took a mint from his pocket, gave it to the critic, then spoke to the others. "Let's keep his mouth busy."