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How to Play BRIDGE

Series 1928-29 by Wynne Ferguson

Author of "PRACTICAL AUCTION BRIDGE"

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ARTICLE No. 15

The English players who have been trying out the informatory double seem to like it very much but, with their customary independence, they have refused to adopt all of the American rules. The following quotation from an article on the informatory double, by a well-known English writer should be very interesting:

"So far as can be observed, the epidemic of doubling informatory is abating, and this double is being played in a much more restrained manner than a few months ago. There appears to be a general desire to make the use of this double as simple as possible, so that every player readily knows whether a double by his partner is informatory or business. The Americans, as usual, are making this convention a very complicated one, but so far as this country is concerned, the informatory double seems to be played on the following lines:

"1. A double of 'one' of a suit or of 'one No-Trump' is an Informatory Double whether the doubler or the doubler's partner has previously bid or not.

"2. A double of 'two' of a suit is Informatory unless the doubler or the doubler's partner has previously bid.

"3. A double of 'three' of a suit or of 'Two No-Trumps' is always Business. "There is common sense in the above, because one practically never wants to double 'one No-Trump' or 'one' of a suit for Business purposes, and these doubles can therefore always be Informatory; while for the opposite reason, a double of 'two No-Trumps' or 'three' of a suit should always be for Business purposes.

Whether or not you agree with the English view-point of the informatory double, you cannot help but admit that it is a sensible one and probably prevents much of the confusion that is prevalent in America.

Here is an interesting hand that has just been submitted:

Hearts—A, Q, 4
Clubs—Q, J, 10, 9, 7, 2
Diamonds—K, Q, 9, 5
Spades—none

If there was no score, what would you bid as dealer with the foregoing hand? The only sound bid with this hand is one club. Then, if your partner bids one spade, bid one no trump. An original no trump with such a holding is very unsound. An alert opponent, with a set-up spade suit and the lead, would pass and you would thus lose a game that could be won at the proper suit bid.

Don't be afraid to bid one club on such a hand, for if your partner is alert he will make a bid and thus give you another chance. Never leave your partner in with an original club or diamond bid if you have any possible bid. The only way to get the best bid of the combined hands is by bidding; so do your part to obtain the desired result.

Here is another interesting question:

Hearts—K, Q, 5, 4
Clubs—A, J, 9, 8
Diamonds—10, 5, 3
Spades—K, 4

Score, Y Z—10: A B—0, rubber game, Z dealt and bid three hearts. A passed, Y bid four diamonds, B doubled and all passed. What is B's proper opening lead?

This question has been submitted to many leading players and very few agree. Some say the king of hearts, others say the ace of clubs; but to the writer, the king of spades seems the ideal lead and the one that offers the best chance for a big penalty.

Z's bid of three hearts, if sound, and there is no reason to believe otherwise, should indicate lack of spade strength. Therefore the spades probably are in the hands of A and Y. If A has the ace of spades, B will be able to make one of his small trumps; and if A has as good as the queen, the lead of the king of spades will do no harm. In other words, there is a trick to gain and very little to lose.

On the other hand, the lead of the king of hearts may give Y a valuable discard, for it is very likely that he has no hearts at all. Otherwise he would hardly have taken out his partner's original three heart bid.

The lead of the ace of clubs also seems to be a bad lead because it may set up two club tricks in Y's hand. All in all, the lead of the king of spades seems to be the only sound lead in this difficult hand.

Here is a pretty hand, one that illustrates a point of play that comes up frequently enough to be well worth of the closest study:

Problem No. 18

Hearts—A, 6
Clubs—K, 7, 5
Diamonds—J, 8, 7, 5, 2
Spades—Q, 6, 3

Hearts—K, 7, 5, 4, 2
Clubs—Q, J, 10
Diamonds—Q, 9, 3
Spades—9, 5

Hearts—3
Clubs—9, 6, 4, 3, 2
Diamonds—6, 4
Spades—K, J, 8, 7, 4

No score, rubber game. Z dealt, bid one heart and all passed. If A opened the nine of spades, how should Z plan the play of the hand? An analysis of this interesting situation will be given in the next article.

Problem No. 19

Hearts—K, 8
Clubs—Q, 4
Diamonds—2
Spades—2

Hearts—3, 2
Clubs—J
Diamonds—6, 4
Spades—Q

Hearts—Q, 7, 5, 4
Clubs—9, 3
Diamonds—none
Spades—none

There are no trumps and Z is in the lead. How can Y Z win five of the six tricks against any defense? See "Notes" in the next article.

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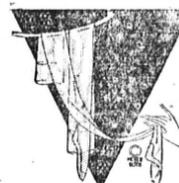
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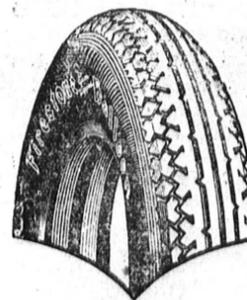
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