

On Balancing by Steve Moese Tue 1/28

At Matchpoints each hand offers an independent opportunity to score. When the opponents settle at the 2-level in an apparent 8+ card fit, it's often right to disturb them. Here's an example of a **balancing auction**. Both Vul:

North	You	South	West
1♠	P	2♠	P
P	???		

East
♠ 10
♥ Q9865
♦ A1076
♣ Q43

While you hold 8 HCP, your hand is not

worth an overcall at your 1st turn. The ♥ suit is poor. When the auction comes back to you, you have a decision to make. Has anything changed to make you want to bid now? **YES!!!**

The opponents have found an 8+ card ♠ fit and they have stopped at the 2-level. What can we infer? North will have 12-15 HCP (13.5) and South will have 5-9 HCP (7) so they will have a combined 20.5 HCP on average (17-24). We hold 8 so partner rates to have 11.5 HCP. Partner has 4 or fewer ♠s – and 9 cards in ♣, ♦ & ♥. (3 each on average). An 8-card ♥ fit is likely.

We have a singleton ♠. 1 loser in their suit means we might be able to make a 3-level contract. Passing here is common, and a poor reflex action (we passed before so we can't bid now. **WRONG!**). We should compete by balancing with 3♥ (our 5-card major). We would double with 4♥ and at least 3 cards in the unbid suits. With 3♥s and two 4+ card minors we bid 2N.

When the opponents have found a fit and stop at the 2-level, on balance we will have about half of the HCP and should attempt to push the auction to the 3-level. Three good things can happen: 1) They let us play and we make or go down for less than their partial; 2) They double us and we make or go down for less than their partial; 3) They bid on and go down giving us a positive score. The auction continued:

North	You	South	West
1♠	P	2♠	P
P	3♥!	3♠	Dbf
All Pass			

South (wrongly) thought with 9 Support Points I am a maximum and should bid one more. HCP

are less important with flat hands than trump length when raising partner. Had South 4♠ cards, 3♠ would

1/28 - Future Master Leaders

1st OA: **Gail Zimmer & Mark Mitchell** (66.6%)

2nd OA: **Evelyn McCarthy & Joan Diers** (58.9%)



♠♥♣♦

Bring your Questions, Hands, Ideas. Let's learn together!

Tues Eve 6:30 PM Sharp!

♠♥♣♦

CBA Newcomer Games – Play Often!

Mon 7 PM	Tue 11 AM	Tue 7 PM	Fri 11 AM	Sat 10-12 AM
		Let's Talk BRIDGE 6:30 PM	Free Lesson 10:30 AM	Supervised Play

♠♥♣♦

Events at the Cincinnati Bridge Center

February is **Junior Fund Month**. Look for special games with extra points. Don't miss **Kay's Friday 1/31 Lecture (Bob Fisk on Drury – 10:30 AM)** & the **Friday NLM & Open games @ 11 AM**. If you need a partner, call Kay at 631-8070

♠♥♣♦

Area Tournaments

Unit 130 IN Sectional	Jan 27-Feb 1
Owensboro, KY Sectional	Feb 8-9
Louisville, KY Sectional	Feb 14-16
February STaC – CBC	Feb 17-23
ACBL Tournaments	http://tournaments.acbl.org/display.php

♠♥♣♦

Board 13 ♠ K9875

North ♥ AJ
Deals ♦ J84
Both Vul ♣ A105

♠ AJ64	N	♠ 10
♥ K743	W	♥ Q9865
♦ 952	E	♦ A1076
♣ K8	S	♣ Q43

EW 3♥;
W 2♦;
E 1♦;
NS 2♠, 2♣;
♠ Q32
♥ 102
♦ KQ3
♣ J9762

be in order. West can see 3-4 tricks in their hand alone, so double is not a stretch. The ♣3 opening lead created a ♣ trick for the defense. Declarer led ♠5 to the Q and A. West returns the ♥3.

North won the ♥A and played ♦4 toward dummy. East won the ♦A, cashed the ♣Q and led the ♣4 for partner to ruff. A ♥ to the ♥Q, then the ♠J scores in time. That's 6 tricks for the defense. 3♠X down 2 for +500 was worth all the MPs for EW.

Bd 13	Scores		MPs	
	NS	EW	NS	EW
2♠ N	110		4	0
2♠ N		100	2.5	1.5
2♠ N		100	2.5	1.5
3♠ N		200	1	3
3♠ x N		500	0	4
2♠ N	110		3.5	0.5
2♠ N	110		3.5	0.5
2♠ N		100	1.5	2.5
2♠ N		100	1.5	2.5
4♠ x N		500	0	4

Newcomer News – by Mike “Keeping Fun On My Convention Card” Purcell 513 702 4007

Weather permitting we will resume playing this Saturday. Here is the schedule for the next few Saturdays:

Feb 1 – Bob Fisk and Judy Ruehl

Feb 8 – Mike Purcell and Bob Fisk

Feb 15 - Mike Purcell and Pat Hoffman (plus New to Duplicate Event at 8:30)

This week we look at using the bidding and signaling agreements to improve our defense and bridge results. Enjoy.

Tuesday 1/28

Board 4

♠ K Q J 7 6
West Deals ♥ J 4
Both Vul ♦ J 10 6
♣ A 10 7

♠ 9 5 2
♥ A 10 9 8 6 5
♦ A K 9
♣ 8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 10 3
♥ K
♦ 8 4 3 2
♣ Q 9 5 4 2

EW 2♥; 1♦
♠ 8 4
♥ Q 7 3 2
♦ Q 7 5
♣ K J 6 3

Bidding – Playing West, I have 11 HCP, 6 hearts and 3 quick tricks and open the hand 1♥. Yes I do not have 12+ HCP but a 5+ card rebidable suit and at least 2½ quick tricks make this hand worth opening. North with 12 HCP and 5 good spades has a clear 1♠ overcall. East has 9 HCP and a spade stopper and most will bid 1NT. My partner decided instead to make a negative double for the minors. South passes and I rebid 2♥ showing my 6-card suit. Most auctions will end there but some N-S pairs will compete to 2♣ which happened at our table.

Defense of 2♠ – My partner open led their ♥K looking for heart ruff later. I know from the bidding my partner has a singleton because if he had two hearts he would have likely raised my hearts after I showed 6 cards. At trick one I need to let partner know the suit to reach me in to get their ruff, in this case diamonds. To signal a diamond switch I played the ♥10 on his ♥K.

This signals the higher of the two side suits, in this case diamonds. Partner plays a diamond which I win at trick two. I can then cash the ♥A and promote a trump in our hands by leading a third heart. This gets us 2 hearts, 2 diamonds, the ♠A and an additional promoted spade to set the contract for +100. Unfortunately this is actually a poor result on this hand. How can we do better? Remembering the auction partner promises diamonds and clubs with their negative double. We know from our hand and the dummy that partner does not have diamond values. With the ♣K and ♣J both in dummy it is very likely partner has the ♣A. If they do not, surely they have spade values for their bid. A better play for me after I get in my hand with a diamond is to switch to a club even though this finesses partner’s ♣Q. Declarer plays on spades. Partner wins with the Ace and returns a club. I ruff. Instead of cashing the ♥A, I lead a low heart. Partner ruffs. Since I led a low heart, partner knows to return another club for one final ruff. We finish our defense by cashing another diamond. In total we get 2 diamonds, 1 heart, the ♠A and three ruffs (1♥, 2♣) for down 2 or +200 and a top board.

Post Mortem – Defense is the hardest part of the game but critical to scoring well. Listening to the bidding and developing defensive signaling with partner is the best way to immediately improve your bridge results.

Bd 4	Scores		MPs	
	NS	EW	NS	EW
2 NT S	120		3.88	0.13
2♥ W		110	2	2
2♥ W		110	2	2
2♣ N		200	0.13	3.88
3♣ S		100	3.67	0.33
2♥ W		110	2	2
2♠ N		200	0.33	3.67

Looking to improve your game? If you have an Intel Computer we highly recommend the free software offered by the ACBL and developed by Mr. Fred Gitelman. Check it out at: <https://web.acbl.org/LearnToPlayBridge/>