

Improving Your Game

Background

- ❖ Everyone can do it!!!
- ❖ All it takes is some combination work and learning – natural ability helps, but is not necessary
- ❖ This presentation focuses on the work and learning portions – those things that we can control.

Assess Your Game

- ❖ Self Assessment or By Your Partner/Coach
- ❖ In my self-assessment, I look at: Bidding, Declarer Play, and Defense
- ❖ Use Hand Records and look at what you bid versus what you could have made or what opponents bid and were allowed to make
- ❖ Compare your score versus the score of others: did you take or give up more or less tricks than other pairs playing your direction (use to hone your play), did you regularly go down for more points than the opponents could have made (used to hone your bidding/play)
- ❖ Assessment helps to identify your strengths and weaknesses so now you know what you're looking to "improve" or "fix"

Read! Read! Read!

- ❖ Using your assessment, find books that will help you with your weaknesses
- ❖ Authors/books recommended to me are:
 - Root – How to Play a Bridge Hand (Any Root)
 - Lawrence – Reading Opponents Cards (any Lawrence)
 - Kantar – Modern Defensive Bridge (a personal recommendation) (any Kantar)
 - Klinger – Modern Losing Trick Count (any Klinger)
 - Terrance Reese – any of his books (many are out of print)
 - Grant – Bidding
 - Seagram/Smith – 25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know
 - Thurston – 25 Steps to Learning 2/1
 - ACBL Bridge Bulletin (free monthly publication with ACBL membership)

Have Questions? ASK!!!!!!!

- ❖ I can't stress this enough
- ❖ Who do you ask?
 - Go back to the books and look for answers
 - Go online
 - BridgeGuys.com
 - BridgeBuff.com
 - People who teach, Experts here on Thursday
 - Opponents you know are good or respect as bridge players
 - Your partner – you want agreement in your bidding and defensive leads
 - Yourself – after a hand, critique yourself by asking:
 - Could I have taken extra tricks (as declarer or on defense)?
 - Did I finesse my partner?
 - Did I not finesse costing me a trick?
 - Should I not have finessed as a safety play against not losing control of the hand?

Other Things You Can Do

- ❖ Use a program like Bridge Baron or download ACBL's Learning software (free)
- ❖ Play online (OKBridge is about \$100 per year, BridgeBase is free)
- ❖ Group Lessons (most of the Directors): usually comprised of a lesson on a convention and then supervised play
- ❖ Individual lessons or Pairs play and critique
- ❖ Play with different partners – see what others are doing
- ❖ Play Up in the Open Games