

Lesson – Logic and inference in Bridge by MARVIN 2/20/13

Concept - The goal of this lesson is to make you aware of valuable clues and information that can assist you in defending or playing a hand. There are many tools that each player should use as she plans her play. Four of my favorites are:

- Clues from partner
- Analysis and review of bidding
- Logic and inference, and
- Counting

In order to remember these tools, consider using the acronym, **CALC**, as you develop your strategy for each hand. This lesson gives you an overview of these tools. Future lessons will focus on each tool in more detail.

Clues from Partner – When your partner bids or leads a suit, she is providing you information that can help you make or defeat a contract. Unfortunately, she is also providing information to the opponents! For example, suppose you lead the King of Spades, and your partner plays a high Spade. This can mean that she wants Spades continued; or it could mean that she has Spade strength and hopes you will lead a trump next to prevent the opponents from ruffing Spades; or it could mean that you should shift to the highest ranking other suit; or it could mean that she has an even number of Spades and wants to show it. It is important for your partnership to establish a priority of signals and use common sense.

Analysis and review of bidding – An analysis of the opponents' bidding or lack of bidding provides clues on how to play or defend a hand. As an example, the bidding can point to who has the points and the stronger suits. Opponents may attempt to mislead and confuse you, but generally you can expect opponent bidding to be more reliable than their play may be. Keep in mind that they are trying to communicate with each other, and you are listening to their conversation. Always review your opponents' convention cards so you can understand how they are communicating.

Logic and inference – While there are numerous conclusions one can draw from the action of an opponent, you should remember that they might attempt to distract or confuse you. Every time the opponents play a suit, some sort of inference can be drawn; likewise when they do not play a suit, you may reach another conclusion. The following are examples of conclusions that can be drawn from opponent actions:

- If the opponent leads a small card in a suit contract, she probably doesn't have the ace.
- If an opponent makes a take out double, she probably is short in your suit
- If an opponent overcalls, she probably has 5+ cards in that suit
- If an opponent passes his partner's opening bid, she probably has less than 5 points and less than 3 of partner's suit!

Counting – This is perhaps the most useful tool defenders and declarers have. There are 13 cards in a suit and 13 cards in each player’s hand. The process of counting to 13 is easy once you have the information to work with. However, that information is sometimes difficult to come by, and your opponents don’t help. Much can be gained from the bidding, the opening lead, and reviewing the cards in dummy. As play continues, additional clues can help clarify the count. As a simple example, if one of the opponents bids a major and their partner responds in that suit, they should be expected to hold 8 or more cards in that suit.

REFERENCES:

How to read your opponents’ Cards, by Mike Lawrence
Advanced Bridge Defense, by Eddie Kantar

MDR5 2/20/13

Examples:

The following examples provide opportunities to use one or more of these concepts to improve your card play or defense. Your careful thought in the early stages of play can make you and your partner successful. Think well!

Example 1

Bidding:

N	E	S	W
		1N	P
2C	P	2S	P
3N	P	P	P

LEAD 4 of Clubs

	North (DUMMY)	
	♠ 85	
	♥ J983	
	♦ AK43	
	♣ K73	
West		East (YOU)
♠		♠ T9763
♥		♥ QT63
♦		♦ 86
♣ 4		♣ A3
	South	
	♠	
	♥	
	♦	
	♣	

- How many points does N/S have?
- How many points does partner have?
- Is it likely that partner led fourth from his longest suit?
- How many Clubs does South have?
- How many Spades does South have?
- What is South's distribution in the red suits?
- Could South have 3 Hearts?
- Could West have 5 Diamonds?

Example 2

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
1NT	P	P	2C
P	2D	P	2S
P	P	P	

LEAD: Queen of Hearts

	North (DUMMY)	
	♠ Q76	
	♥ K652	
	♦ J4	
	♣ KJ76	
West		East
♠		♠
♥ Q		♥
♦		♦
♣		♣
	South (YOU)	
	♠ AJT842	
	♥ A74	
	♦ Q5	
	♣ 94	

- What conclusion can be drawn from the Queen of Hearts lead?
- Is it possible for West to have QJT of Hearts or the AKxx Diamonds?
- What specific honor cards does East have?
- Can East have the Queen of Clubs?
- Given an opportunity, should you take the Club finesse?

Example 3

Bidding:

N	E	S	W
1S	2H	2S	3H
3S	P	P	P

LEAD: 6 Hearts

	North (DUMMY)	
	♠ K874	
	♥ 83	
	♦ J72	
	♣ QT83	
West		East
♠		♠
♥ 6		♥
♦		♦
♣		♣
	South (YOU)	
	♠ AQJT3	
	♥ A54	
	♦ Q8	
	♣ K54	

- Could West have a Heart suit headed by the KQ or QJ?
- If East plays the King of Hearts on this trick, who has the Jack of Hearts?
- Is it likely that West has both the King and Queen of Diamonds?
- Does West have the Ace of Clubs?

Note: Example 3 was taken from **How to read your Opponents' Cards** by Mike Lawrence.

ANSWERS

EXAMPLE 1

- N/S have 25-27 points; Game in NT = 25/27 points
- Partner has 6-8 points; $40-26=14-6$ (my points) = approx 8 for partner
- West's Club lead was 4th best from 4;
- South has 4 Clubs; W-4; N-3; E-2; = 9; $13-9=$ # of South Clubs
- South started with 4 Spades; North bid Stayman and South bid the Major with 4 cards, Spades;
- South has 2-3 or 3-2 in the Red suits, since she has 4 Clubs and responded in Stayman with 4 Spades; and she opened with a NT; needs at least 2 in each suit;
- South could not have 3 Hearts because that would leave her with 2 Diamonds and therefore 5 for West, which could be; since with 5 Diamonds West should not have led from 4 Clubs;
- South has 3 Diamonds and 2 Hearts
- After answering these questions, you determine that South started with 4S, 2H, 3 D and 4C!

NOTE: With this information, you can determine that the only defense that can defeat the contract is for you to lead a Heart after you take the Ace of Clubs!

	North	
	♠ 85	
	♥ J983	
	♦ AK43	
	♣ K72	
West		East
♠ A2		♠ T9763
♥ K75		♥ QT62
♦ 9752		♦ 86
♣ T865		♣ A3
	South	
	♠ KQJ4	
	♥ A4	
	♦ QJT	
	♣ QJ85	

EXAMPLE 2

- West probably has the Jack of Hearts as well;
- Most likely QJT of Hearts, otherwise she would probably lead K or A of Diamonds;
- Either K or A of Diamonds, but not both;
- No! Not enough points in deck; W-16; N-10; S-11; Therefore E =3/4;
- We **should** take the Club finesse!

	North	
	♠ Q76	
	♥ K652	
	♦ J4	
	♣ KJ76	
West		East
♠ K5		♠ 93
♥ QJ9		♥ T83
♦ AT96		♦ K8732
♣ AQ85		♣ T32
	South	
	♠ AJT842	
	♥ A74	
	♦ Q5	
	♣ 94	

EXAMPLE 3

- Probably not; with that combination, she would most likely lead one of those honors;
- East would have since we just indicated that West would lead Hearts from QJ9;
- Probably not since if she had both K and Q, she would probably lead the King rather than the 6 of Hearts;
- Thus far, West has only 5/6 points (K/A Diamonds and Q Hearts) and needs about 10 for a 2 Heart overcall, therefore West must have the Ace of Clubs to justify her overcall!

	North	
	♠ K874	
	♥ 83	
	♦ J72	
	♣ QT83	
West		East
♠ 92		♠ 65
♥ QT762		♥ KJ9
♦ AT3		♦ K9654
♣ AJ2		♣ 976
	South	
	♠ AQJT3	
	♥ A54	
	♦ Q8	
	♣ K54	

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