

Sources for improving your bridge

- **Books:** Texts presented as problems are most useful: What do you bid, lead, play single & double dummy? How do you defend seeing only your hand & dummy? Who was to blame for a disastrous contract or defence? What do you and your partner bid in certain competitive auctions? Are you in agreement?
- **Magazines:** Reports on matches, articles, bidding forum, e.g. NZ Bridge, Bridge World (US),; Bridge Plus (UK) - <http://www.bridge-plus.co.uk/> even Le Bridgeur (France) if you want to improve your bridge and French at the same time
- **CDs & Memory stick:** There are many bridge lessons in digital form nowadays. For example, try the 34 hands that go with these notes on Defence (Leading, Signalling and other aspects of defence) that are on this disc/ USB stick. They were originally set up as animated digital lessons (2008) using a computer program but appear here as a 'final screen'. Declarer is always South and West always on lead so to get best value do not look at North and South hands before you decide on your opening lead and then only at North (the dummy). The comments below the hand originally appeared line by line in the digital lesson but appear also here as a 'final screen'. To get the best out of them read only one line at a time before deciding what to do next.
- **Websites:** e.g. <http://online.bridgebase.com/> - allows one to play online but significantly for improving your bidding and play you can watch Vugraph presentation of international matches (players from our Club have been on recently). Commentators discuss the bidding and play as continuous text messages with each animated hand. The program can be downloaded or accessed free. Many useful articles and links can be found on: <http://www.michaelslawrence.com/About/contact.html>
- **Newspaper columns:** - You can see Bridge content every day on The Times (UK) website <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/puzzles/bridge/> or via the iPad App. This is free if you get The Times every day, alternatively £1 for the first 30 days thereafter £2 a week. For non-subscribers, you can see a taster via <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/bridge/> Also, Andrew Robson (one of the world's best bridge teachers runs a daily "Animated Hand" - a *Son et Lumière* commentary on a hand. Basically he talks through the daily deal, removing the cards as he does so. By way of a taster, here is a fabulous recent deal, aimed at the more experienced player : <http://www.vimeo.com/22402896>
- **System Card:** Fill in a more system (convention) card. This will help you and your partner discuss what you do in many more bidding situations. You can download for free a copy of the Standard English Modern Acol convention card from: <http://www.ebu.co.uk/publications/> or basic Standard American bidding at <http://home.comcast.net/~kwbridge/basics.htm>

BBO match archives

David R. Green

The aim of last week's attachment was to interest members who are keen to improve their bridge to download the free *Bridge Base Online* software (BBO for short, link immediately below) to their computer if they haven't already done so:

<https://www.google.co.nz/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=bridge%20base%20online%20download>

This follow-up article shows you how you can become part of a powerful learning experience. Apart from being able to play bridge online you can also kibbitz international teams' matches with voice commentary (first introduced in 2011) and written comments by experts. Quite a number of these matches have now been recorded and archived for posterity. If you left click on the link below, you will be given the option to connect to an *index of available voice matches*:

http://doc.bridgebase.com/Vugraph%20Voice%20Archives/BBO_Vugraph_Voice_Archives.shtml

You can then select the event you would like to view. Here, select the first item (*2011 World Bridge Team Championships*):

http://doc.bridgebase.com/Vugraph%20Voice%20Archives/2011_World_Bridge_Team_Championships.html

You then have a choice of 16-board broadcasts. Here, select the first on the list - *Round 3: Italy vs Bulgaria; Open Room; Bermuda Bowl* (http://doc.bridgebase.com/WC2011NL/OR_ITvsBG_BB2011/OR_ITvsBG_BB2011.html) with commentators, **Roland Wald**, BBO's broadcasts' chief organiser and commentator; **Dan O'Neill**, American player and writer – particularly knowledgeable on bidding systems (<http://bridgewithdan.com/systems/>); and guest commentator, American writer, teacher and world-class player, **Larry Cohen**, known for *The Law of Total Tricks* - estimating the total combined tricks available on a hand by adding together the two sides' best trump fits, which can give an indication of how far a side can pre-empt or be pushed in the bidding. The commentators and those manning the dialogue windows are excellent at linking viewers to running results and web sites where they can check out conventions, or discussing the meaning and significance of conventional bids or lines of play and defence. It is surprising how quickly one becomes accustomed to players' methods and thinking and can judge what they will bid, lead and play.

A layout of the hand will first appear as below, at left. When you press the start button, the starting screen will appear and the broadcast will begin (sometimes after a short delay before the hand comes up and the voice commentary kicks in). The display can be enlarged to full screen with the usual 'crossed baton' button at the bottom far right of the screen (see below). The broadcast will now stream in, as shown by a lengthening white line at the bottom of the screen. When sufficient streaming has taken place move the white slider at the bottom to show **Hand 6**, and listen to the comments and analysis from Larry Cohen and Roland Wald.

A screenshot of the BBO interface showing a bridge hand layout. The hand is in a 4♠ contract. The players are North (A. SEMENTA), West (V. ARONOV), East (J. STEFANO), and South (G. DUBOIN). The hand is in a 4♠ contract. The interface includes a menu bar at the top with 'Back', 'Home', 'Log off', 'Options', 'BBO Now', and 'Help'. On the right, there is a 'My Results' table.

#	Resu	NS	EW	NS I	EW I
1	4♠N-	100	2		
2	2♠S=	110	5		
3	3♠W-	100	5		
4	6♠N=	1370	13		
5	6♠S+	1390	--	--	
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
		23	2		

As the commentators recognise, in order to make the contract of 4S, declarer needs to lose only one trump trick and the two minor suit Aces. As he can finesse in trumps only once, he must realistically find South with KQx, KQ bare or K(Q)x of spades. Cohen suggests that declarer will win the HA and lead a club to dummy's CQ at trick 2, North signalling his length. If South takes his Ace, as happened, Cohen indicated that this will be the end of the defence. However, if South ducks the CQ, declarer can discard a club on the KH and take the spade finesse to North's SQ, but a club return to South's CA and a third club now promotes North's 9S and, with the DA to come, the contract is down one.

Roland spotted that, even after taking the CA, South could switch to a diamond and achieve a similar outcome. A diamond return from North will then see declarer go down, as after winning the spade finesse, a third round of diamonds from North will allow South to uppercut with his SK, promoting his partner's S9. This is, in fact, what happened at the table, and the commentators were full of praise for the Italians' brilliant defence. However, the Bulgarian declarer could have given himself one further chance of the defence erring, always worth a try. **Can you see how?** Strategy and psychology are often more powerful than honest technique. Here, for instance, there is only a 36% chance the clubs will break 3-3 (48% breaking 4-2) and good pairs will wonder why declarer hasn't drawn trumps at trick two, quickly deducing the situation and looking for the possibility of a club ruff if the suit is splitting 4-2. It may, therefore, be better at trick 2 for declarer to lead a diamond towards dummy's KJT82. If North has the DA and length in the suit, as here, he will most likely grab his DA for fear of a singleton or xx or even Qx with declarer (the 2nd diamond disappearing on the HK) if he ducks. The continuation may produce the same result of down one but you never know.

As far as the bidding is concerned, Larry Cohen criticised South's overcall of 1H on such a weak suit, pointing out that more often than not it gets partner off to a bad lead (*reminds me of my former partner, Henry Levy's remark back in the early 1970s that my overcalls told him what not to lead!*), and that it also allows LHO to differ between showing holdings of four spades (-ve double) and five spades (1S) at the one level. Here, for instance, North may have found the CT lead with South holding up his CA to beat the contract.