

Duplicate Bridge

Competitive Bidding

by

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Duplicate Bridge

- Competitive
- Rewards moderate risk taking
- Needs a bit more aggressive approach to bidding
- Sacrifice (bidding to go down) common when not VUL
- Many players use “gut feel”
- I try to formalize it to some extent

Duplicate Bridge Continued...

- Statistical, Probabilistic, “Gambling”
- Have to make decisions based on incomplete information
- “Take moderate risk”
- Aim to succeed 80% of the time, means aim to fail 20% of the time
- Often have to choose between multiple bad choices
- Don’t be too safe
- No bidding system guarantees 100% success
- My method is best suited for beginner-intermediates

Bidding Approach

- Bidding is a language - no one is better than others
- I use mostly “Natural” bids, very few conventions. Better for beginners to intermediates
- Based on Audrey Grant’s books
- Fully recommend purchase of booklet “Bridge at a Glance”, \$10
- Use High Card Points (HCP A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1)
- Add “Length Points”
- Add one “Bonus Point” if applicable
- DO NOT add “Distribution Points” for short suits as opener

Length Points

- Theory - You can make more tricks with a longer suit
- Add 1 point for each card more than 4 in a suit
- OK to add points for multiple suits
- Example 6-5-1-1 distribution has 3 length points
- 7-6-0-0 distribution has 5 length points
- 4-4-3-2 (balanced hand) has 0 length points

Bonus Point

- Theory - Sequence of high cards has extra value
- Only 1 point per hand no matter how many good cards you have
- Example of sequences that qualify - AK, KQ, or QJ10

Bidding Summary for Opener

- ALWAYS add length and bonus points to HCP if applicable
- Again, DO NOT FORGET to add length and bonus pt to all hands!
- DO NOT add any “Distribution Points” for shortage like void, singleton, or doubleton.

Distribution Points

- Theory - In a suit contract, shortage in a non-trump suit is an asset
- All hands including responder's start with HCP, Length, and Bonus
- After confirmation of trump fit with partner, responder can SUBSTITUTE length points with distribution points if they are higher
- 5 points for void, 3 for singleton, 1 for doubleton
- CANNOT count both length and distribution! Pick the higher one

Distribution Point Trap

- IMPORTANT - Your hand can only count distribution points if you know FOR SURE that partner holds 4+ cards in trump suit!
- That pretty much means that for the most part, opener cannot count distribution points. Only HCP, length, and bonus
- Put in another way, for the most part, only the “short trump hand”, often the dummy, can count distribution points, not the “long trump hand”, often the opener.
- That is why they are sometimes called “dummy points”

Distribution Points - Further Explanation

- Let's say opener has AKQJ10 (5 cards) of trumps
- And responder has 987 (3 cards) of trumps
- If played straight, there are 5 trump tricks
- If responder can ruff 3 times, he gets those 3 plus 5 opener tricks, total 8 trump tricks!
- But if opener ruffs 3 times, he reduces his trumps to 2, so there are only 3 more trump tricks (2 from opener, 1 from responder), thus only 5 total trump tricks
- Therefore, there is no direct benefit to having shortage in the "long trump hand"

Distribution Points Takeaway

- No extra trump tricks by ruffing in the “long trump hand”, so there is no direct benefit to having shortage (like void or singleton) there
- That is why we don’t count distribution points in opener’s hand
- Distribution points are very valuable in “short trump hand”. So see if you can substitute length points for distribution and gain a couple of points and elevate your hand’s worth
- DO NOT count both length and distribution! Only one

More on Distribution Points

- Most common way for you to know your partner has 4+ trumps is if he opens D, H, or S.
- There is another way. Opener opens 1C, you bid 1H, and opener has 4 hearts. Then opener can count distribution points!
- If opener raises to 2H, you know he has 4 hearts (because he immediately raised your response of 1H which only indicates 4+ hearts), so you can also count distribution points!

General Considerations

- Fit with partner is good
- Fit means you and partner have cards in same suit
- Golden Fit is when you have 8 or more cards together
- Misfit with partner is not good
- Misfit is when you have a void or singleton in partner's suit and vice versa
- Subtract 1-2 points for severe misfits

Opener Hand Valuations

- These are all TOTAL points incl Length/Dist, Bonus, and HCP
- Minimum - 13 to 15 points
- Intermediate - 16 to 18 points
- High - 19+ points

Responder Hand Valuations

- Again, these are TOTAL points incl Length/Dist, Bonus, and HCP
- Minimum - 6 to 10 points
- Intermediate - 11 to 12 points
- Game - 13 to 16 points
- High - 17+

Bidding Sequences

- During bidding, you convey your hand's worth and preferred "strain" (suit or NT) to your partner (and opponents too)
- Final goal is to either reach a good contract, or deter opponents from reaching a good contract
- We will go through many possibilities by using boards from previous tournaments as examples
- It will be a continuing process on Tuesdays