



BARRIER REEF CONGRESS

EDUCATION PROGRAM – CELEBRITY SPEAKERS

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TOPIC: **COMMON MISTAKES – *HOW TO AVOID THEM***

Sunday 12 June 2011

1. As Declarer, do not trump in the long hand, but do trump in the short hand

	♠Q652	
	♥532	
	♦54	
	♣A654	
♠1084		♠A97
♥A		♥976
♦K832		♦J1097
♣KQJ108		♣973
	♠KJ3	
	♥KQJ1082	
	♦AQ6	
	♣2	

Your contract is **4H** and you receive the lead of the **King** of clubs. How often have I seen players win the Ace in the dummy, ruff a club in hand and play trumps?

Trumping in the hand with the long trumps (South in this example) does not add to your trick count.

All it does is reduce your trump length thus putting your contract in jeopardy. We call it “the best defence to your own contract!”

However, trumping in the hand with the short trumps does add to your trick count.

So let’s ruff a diamond in the dummy. The correct play is to win the **Ace** of clubs at trick one and finesse the **Queen** of diamonds. OK, so this fails and the defence leads another club which you have to ruff in hand. You should now cash the **Ace** of diamonds and ruff a diamond in dummy (the short trump hand) before starting on the trumps. After drawing trumps you can now play spades and make your 10 tricks.

If you do ruff a club in your hand at trick two then:

- a) you will have to play the diamonds from hand; *and*
- b) you will have no trumps left in your hand after you have ruffed a diamond and drawn the trumps. You will go down two, but you will be able to berate partner for his overbidding!

2. Defence – Do Not Establish Dummy’s Winner(s)

Your opening lead is the Ace of a suit and dummy hold QJ65 – please be cautious about cashing the King next because it will set up two winners (Queen and Jack) for declarer.

An Example hand:-

	QJ65	
	832	
	753	
	A54	
AK82		1074
94		J76
964		A82
Q962		KJ87
	93	
	AKQ105	
	KQJ10	
	103	

Contract: 4H (S)

We lead the Ace of spades and partner follows with the four. At this stage we must be careful not to continue this suit in the vain hope that partner has a doubleton 43 when declarer follows with a cunning nine.

Declarer can set up a winning spade in the dummy but not if we knock out that ace of clubs immediately. At trick two we must shift to a small club to beat this rather ambitious contract.

3. Covering Honours with Honours

As beginners we are all taught, when defending, to cover an honour with an honour. The reason for this is that, by doing so, we protect lower honours, either in our own hand, or, more likely, in partner's hand.

Here are a couple of examples:-

Example 1

	J63 (Dummy)	
K94		Q82
	A1075	

When declarer leads the **Jack** from the dummy then we must cover with our **Queen**. Declarer will win his **Ace** but our partner will then have the **K9** sitting over declarer's **10** and he will win two tricks in the suit. Had we not covered that **Jack** with our **Queen** declarer would let the **Jack** run round for our partner to win with his **King**. Subsequently declarer would return to dummy to successfully finesse the **10** and our side would have only made one trick in the suit.

AQT54
AQ5
Q64
T5

Our ‘useless’ heart pitch presents declarer with four heart tricks for his contract, but by retaining our hearts declarer will lose three diamonds and one club for only 9 tricks.

To summarize, when we are defending a hand and partner makes a discard, we are often asked by declarer ‘**what are your discards?**’

A fair question I suppose and we answer truthfully ‘low encourage’ or ‘high encourage’ or whatever our agreed method are, but we are always tempted to say ‘**TLKW**’ (**Throw Losers Keep Winners**)!

5. Poor Leads

Some of our partners can be heard wandering round the bridge scene chanting ‘**we lead our suits, they lead their suits**’.

If we lead a doubleton, especially 9x or 10x or Jx, whether it be against a suit contract, or against a no trump contract, it is highly unlikely that it is ‘**our**’ suit. It’s certainly not the opening leader’s suit, so it’s two to one that the suit belongs to the opponents and that we have helped to set it up.

Yes, you may strike gold once in a while, and you can dine out on those occasions, but we suggest that the boring ‘**4th highest from longest and strongest**’ is the way to go.

Defending **4H** after declarer has shown hearts and clubs, dummy has shown spades what should we lead from?:

Q83
T9763
JT86
K

Some players would lead the singleton CK but this is silly, that is declarer’s second suit and we are not on his side. Guess what, we lead ‘**our**’ suit, the unbid one, i.e. diamonds, the **DJ** from this holding.

Dummy comes down with

KJ976
J
Q52
T952

Declarer wins the first trick in hand with **DK** as our partner encourages. After a heart to dummy's jack declarer plays a club (his suit) to his jack and our king. We continue with the **D10** diamond and declarer has to play his own club suit and must go down.

So another golden rule for you:

If declarer has shown two suits then it is rarely, almost never, correct to lead his second suit. Leave that to him.

6. The pre-emptor Repeater

You open **2S** with:

AQJ643

84

3

QT53

Your LHO overcalls **3H** and your partner chimes in with **3S**. RHO raises his partner to **4H** and it's your go. The opponents are vulnerable and you are not. Should you consider bidding the **4th** spade, maybe as a save, maybe to make? Our view is that if you are looking at your hand then that in itself is a mistake. Partner is aware of the vulnerability (I hope) and is the captain. If it is right to save then he will know what to do. For all you know partner may be waiting with his blood stained axe ready to double the opponent's **4H**.

Again it's a case of 'Tell partner what you've got, but just once will do'.



David has been playing for close to 40 years and lives in Sydney. He is a full-time professional bridge player. His bridge partners have included Ted Chadwick, Khokan Bagchi, Matthew Thompson and Warren Lazer.

He and Ted represented Australia in the Bridge Olympiad in Rhodes in 1996.

As a professional, David has done it all – director, teacher, supervised teacher, player and mentor.

During recent times his focus has been on teaching.