

Here are some of our mishaps in Chicago!

Alex is north

S A876
H AQ93
D 108
C AQ9

I am south

S KQ
H 62
D AQJ652
C K73

East-West are not bidding.

1NT
4S (2 aces)

4C (Gerber)
6NT

Well, my teacher always told me to add a point when I was Responder to a NT opening bid and have a 5-card suit headed by an Ace or a King. And to add 2 points with a 6-card suit. So I found myself with sort-of 17 points opposite partner's 1NT opener. I could have used a more complex process to bid this, aiming for a Diamond slam but I chose to gamble a bit and now bid 6NT, knowing that we were off one Ace. I only hoped we were not off the Heart Ace and King!!

At this moment, Alex woke up and realized that he had mis-bid and that he actually had THREE aces so he bid 7NT. He did the Diamond finesse and it worked. Making 7NT.

Moral of that story: Use your fingers when using Gerber because it comes up so seldom.

4D = 0 or all 4 aces
4H = 1 ace
4S = 2 aces
4N = 3 aces

Next hand:

Alex (North)

S 1062
H KQ64
D K652
C 85

Me (South)

S QJ7543
H A9
D 83
C K4

1S by me and 2S by North. Pass by me with my minimum.

It was halfway through playing the hand and expecting West to lead a Diamond through my D King in Dummy that I realized that I also held the Diamond Ace which had been hiding in my hand.

Here is the full hand.

S QJ7543
H A9
D A83
C K4

14 HCP + 2 length points to start with and when partner supports your suit, you must then add one extra point for the fifth card in the suit that has been supported and two points for each extra card. I was now at 19 points and should have bid 4S. We languished in 2S, making 4 easily.

Moral of that story: Count your CARDS as you take them from the board and then count them again when they are in your hand. It is always the Aces that hide!!! Groan.

And one more disaster:

Alex (North)

S 2
H AKQ953
D 8
C AQ853

Me (South)

S Q109863
H J7
D 32
C K96

1H by Alex and 2D by my RHO. I now did not have enough points to bid my Spades at the 2-level. So I made a negative double. Pass by LHO and Alex now bid 4NT. Hmm...I assumed he was agreeing Spades and bid 5D (3 or 0 key cards) so he bid 6H.

He figured we had not agreed on a trump suit and therefore, we should be using Regular (old-fashioned) Blackwood. So he thought I had 1 Ace and bid 6H.

To his credit, Alex maintained his composure and did not let on that anything was wrong as he played the hand. But alas, we were missing two aces and were down one.

Moral of this story: When you have NOT overtly agreed on a trump suit, do not use Keycard Blackwood. Revert to Regular Blackwood.

Exception:

1H - 1S

4N

Alex and I believe that this DOES agree Spades and that Key Card Blackwood does apply. Granted that the opener can now go back to bidding 6H or 6NT if they wish but the information they are gleaning in ace-asking is according to 1430 Key Card Blackwood (or whichever version of Key Card Blackwood you are using).

ALEX'S BRIDGE TIPS

A) You open 1H with the hand below. LHO (Left Hand Opponent) passes. Partner bids 1S and RHO bids 2D. You hold:

S Q65

H AQ543

D Kx

C Qxx

What will you bid now?

B) You open 1C and your LHO bids 1H. Partner responds 1S. Pass by RHO. What will you bid next with the following hand?

S KJ109

H 3

D AK8

C KQ765 (Answer to B is at the end of this block)

A) We hope you play support doubles and will therefore bid Double on A). This shows three-card support for Spades. If you had four-card support, you would bid 2S.

It is important to note that if you do NOT play support doubles that you must now raise to 2S. But this is a very inferior auction. The one bid you may NOT make is 2NT as this show 18-19 HCP. Notrump contracts (when partner could have only 6 points) are just too difficult to make opposite your minimum hand.

Click here for more info about Support Doubles

<https://barbaraseagram.com/pdf/SUPPORT-DOUBLES-2020.pdf>

C) And if you held:

S 65
H AQ543
D Kxx
C Axx

AUCTION C:

North (you)	East	South	West
1H	Pass	1S	2D
?			

What is your bid now as North?

You cannot support double now as you do not have three-card support for Spades.

You show a minimum opener by PASSING next. Responder (your partner) still has another turn.

IF you had chosen to bid 2NT now, responder will know you have 18-19 HCP. You see, she knows you have a balanced hand and if you had 15-17 HCP balanced, you would have opened 1NT and you did not. AND she also knows you would have passed with a minimum (knowing that partner can bid again). Thus you have promised 18-19 HCP by bidding 2NT.

Back to B)

S KJ109
H 3
D AK8
C KQ765

North (YOU)	East	South	West
1C	1H	1S	Pass
??			

You (North) have 16 HCP. Which of the following do you bid?

2S
3S
4S
4H

Our vote goes to 4H. This will be a splinter bid showing 19-20 points and four-card support for partner's Spades. It will also show a singleton or void in Hearts. IF it is a singleton, then it will NOT be an Ace or a King.

If you need a write-up on Splinters, just email Barbara.

What should Responder (South) now do after 4H with this hand?

S AQ743

H 876

D QJ4

C AJ

Responder (South) evaluates his hand in light of the fact that you have a singleton or void in Hearts and 19 or 20 points. He has 15 points so he must recognize that this is the sound of slam!!! He normally must not Blackwood with three small or even Qxx in a suit but he knows that you as Opener have a singleton or void in Hearts and thus knows he cannot lose more than one Heart AND he knows that if it is a singleton that it is not an Ace or a King which means that all of Opener's points are located in other suits. He now uses Blackwood and you get to 6H.

If Opener does not use a Splinter bid, then he will next have to bid 4S instead, showing 19-20 points and four-card support for Spades. South (Responder) will now have to bid 5C, showing first-round control in Clubs. This will warm the cockles of North's Heart and you will still likely get to 6H but the Splinter bid is a superior auction.

Declarer Play Techniques

by Bruce Greenspan

Ruffing losers after setting up a shortage in dummy

Dir: South

Vul: Both

	♠K5 ♥A42 ♦72 ♣765432	
♠10632 ♥108 ♦Q109 ♣AK109	N W E S	♠J987 ♥976 ♦KJ84 ♣QJ
	♠AQ4 ♥KQJ53 ♦A653 ♣8	

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Bidding: South decides he is good enough for game and bids 4♥

Lead: ♣A, top from an A-K suit

Play: Ruff the second club and play ♠K, ♠A, ♠Q to discard a diamond from dummy. Then play DA and ruff a diamond. Ruff a club (over-ruffing East if necessary), ruff a diamond, ruff a club and ruff your last diamond with the ace of hearts. You should make at least 11 tricks and maybe 12. A trump lead or a trump switch at trick 2 holds you to 11 tricks.

Wrong play: If you draw trumps first, you have only nine tricks (3 spades, 5 hearts and the ace of diamonds).

Setting up winners to create a shortage in dummy

Dir: West
Vul: Neither

	♠83 ♥109652 ♦AQ ♣Q865	
♠K62 ♥84 ♦J6432 ♣A43	N W E S	♠AQJ109 ♥KQJ ♦97 ♣K72
	♠754 ♥A73 ♦K1085 ♣J109	

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Bidding: After the raise to 2♠, East is worth a try for game. If 26 points are possible, do not pass below game. 3♠ asks West to bid 4♠ with 8-9 points and pass with 6-7.

Lead: ♣J. Top from a sequence.

Play: Take the ace of clubs and play a heart at once to knock out the ace. South should win and continue clubs. Win with the king and cash your two heart winners to discard a club from dummy. Ruff your club loser in dummy (with the king of spades) and then draw trumps.

Wrong play: If you play trumps first, you have only nine tricks (5 spades, 2 hearts and 2 clubs.)

HANDLING TRUMPS

by Jack Brawner: St Petersburg (FL) Bridge Club

The typical newer player's first move is to draw trumps. And frequently this is right – you don't want the opponents to trump your winners IF you can do something about it. But not always!

We are going to spend a little time talking about when to draw trumps, and when to do something else.

DRAW TRUMPS: When you do not need them for anything else. Or... if you will have enough spare trumps to use them AFTER drawing trumps. Let's look at an example.

Spades are trump, and the opening lead is the King of hearts.

Dummy's hand:

S Qxx
H Ax
D AQx
C KQJxx

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Spades are trump, and the opening lead is the King of hearts.

Dummy's hand:

S Qxx
H Ax
D AQx
C KQJxx

Declarer's hand:

S AKJxx
H xx
D Kx
C xxxx

Your plan is fairly straightforward. Draw trump, then play the K-A-Q of diamonds throwing your heart loser away, then attack clubs. If spades and clubs both behave ("split") even close to normally, you will take twelve tricks!

Now let's change the Ace of spades to the Ace of clubs (same distribution and contract), which means you now have:

Dummy's hand:

S Qxx
H Ax
D AQx
C KQJxx

Declarer's hand:

S KJ10xx
H xx
D Kx
C Axxx

Heart King is led once again. If you go after trumps first, when they win the Ace of trumps they will cash a heart. You can prevent this! Play the K-A-Q of diamonds first and get rid of your heart loser, THEN go after trumps and drive out that annoying Ace. (The chances that they trump one of your diamonds is VERY small, and worth the risk!)

You will get twelve tricks if you get rid of your heart loser first, but only eleven if you do not.

Don't draw trump if you have to let them in AND you can dispose of a loser first.

(Ed. Note: If you have quick losers and no Ace of trump, don't draw trump yet, try to make a discard first.)



Attitude or Count by Michael Berkowitz

Don't bring up porcupines around my family. No, there wasn't some pincushiony incident with a beloved family pet.

Porcupine was a language I invented as a four-year-old. My parents were introducing me to new animals as one does. The cow goes moo, the rooster goes cock-a-doodle doo, the rhinoceros goes... you know, that kind of thing. When they got to porcupine I apparently fell in love with the word--can you blame me? It's a great word.

Anyways, I would point and call every animal a porcupine for a while--and my parents would be amused. Then I decided that *everything* was a porcupine; animals, buildings, relatives. This

was less amusing.

If we use a particular word, it should mean a particular thing. As a defender there are many different things we'd like to be able to tell our partner. We sometimes want to tell them whether we like the suit led. Sometimes, we'd like to tell them that we like a specific suit. And, sometimes, we'd like them to know how many cards we have in a suit so that partner knows whether to cash tricks. Unfortunately, we can't always communicate all of that information all at once. Instead, we have to decide what information to give partner to get her to make the right decision. Ultimately a card, like a word, can only mean one thing at a time.

North

S 632
H KQ109
D Q63
C KJ5

East

S J74
H 8643
D 72
C AQ103

AUCTION

1N Playing 2/1
3S

1S Opening bid
2C

All Pass

Partner (West) leads the diamond Ace. What's your plan as East?

Normally we would play high-low with a doubleton. The reason isn't that we are showing two cards, it's that we are telling partner that we want her to continue. This is a clear attitude signal, not a count one. Here, you don't want your partner to continue--why? Well imagine partner continues with two more diamonds. We get a ruff and then? We

can cash our club Ace and that's all we get. Partner has already shown up with seven points so declarer must have almost all of the rest for her opening bid. She can't be missing the heart Ace as well.

Instead of encouraging, we should try to get partner to switch suits. If we play our diamond 2, partner will know that we want her to switch. It's clearly unlikely that we can take two heart tricks on this auction, and with this dummy. If partner switches to a club, now we win and can return with our second diamond. Partner continues clubs and we win the ace, cash our last top club with everyone following and now...?

We know declarer has the Ace so we can't get a heart trick, but what about a spade trick? If partner has the Q, we'll always get a trick, but we might be able to get another trump trick, via promotion. If we play the 13th club, declarer has to decide what to ruff with. Yes, it's a ruff/sluff, but since your partner can also ruff, and since declarer has no more side losers, it might generate an extra trick for your side. On this hand declarer can't help but lose another trick. Instead of four tricks, you'll get six. The full hand:

North

S 632
H KQ109
D Q63
C KJ5

West

S 105
H J72
D AKJ85
C 762

East

S J74
H 8643
D 72
C AQ103

South

S AKQ98
H A5
D 1094
C 984