

## **Do you like reading Rakesh Kumar's columns? Would you like to support a good cause?**

The Southern Highlands Bridge Club has recently gained permission from Wingecarribee Shire Council to build its own clubhouse. SHBC is Rakesh's home club and to contribute to the fundraising efforts, he has written two easy-to-read 44-page booklets entitled *Better Partnership Bridge*. These are aimed at improving club players (booklet 1) and intermediate club players (booklet 2).

Booklets are available from the Club in return for a donation of \$15 each (plus postage). All proceeds will go to the building fund of the Southern Highlands Bridge Club.

Booklet 1 covers concepts that are especially relevant to players wanting to consolidate their grasp of the fundamentals of partnership bidding and defence. It also includes some bidding conventions and ideas that could be of interest to intermediate players. *See a sample on page 2.*

Booklet 2 covers a number of topics that are a little more complex. In particular, it focuses on more effective approaches to competitive and slam bidding, as well as more effective defence. *See a sample on page 3.*

Why not acquire a copy of each of the booklets for yourself and for your regular partner? Or if you are a club official, perhaps you might like to order 10 of each for members of your club ...

To obtain copies, please email the Treasurer of Southern Highlands Bridge Club at:

[shbc.treasurer1@gmail.com](mailto:shbc.treasurer1@gmail.com)

and provide your name and address. You will be sent confirmation and SHBC account details, so that you can deposit the appropriate amount (including postage) with your name as a reference. The booklet(s) will then be posted to you.

Sample from booklet 1 for the improving club player:

## #9: BIDDING SLAMS

The LTC is key for suit slams, high card points more so for notrump slams. For both, use Roman Keycard Blackwood to check for top controls.

Effective slam bidding is winning bridge. However, many bridge partnerships are hesitant to bid to a slam, perhaps in part because of a lack of understanding about when it's worth trying to reach the 6-level, and/or because of a lack of suitable tools to investigate whether slam is a safe proposition.

For suit slams, the losing trick count is invaluable. Say the auction commences 1H by partner, 1S by you and 3H by partner. You hold:

♠AKQT2  
♥T96  
♦8  
♣K764

Partner must have a 6-loser or better hand. You also have a 6-loser hand and you have a sure 6-3 fit in hearts. LTC arithmetic says  $24 - (6+6) = 12$  tricks possible. You have an outside source of tricks in the spade suit and a useful shortage. You should go slam-hunting! If partner has even a minimal 3H rebid such as the hand below, slam will be easy:

♠94  
♥AKQ752  
♦J53  
♣AQ

The reason it will be easy is because partner has plenty of top controls. That's the formula for bidding a **slam in a suit contract when you find a fit: LTC consistent with 12 tricks + identifiable non-trump tricks + top controls**. You will note that this slam does not depend on having lots of points – there are only 28 hcp between the two hands.

While there are some similarities in the approach to bidding notrump slams, an important difference is that now the combined high card points

Sample from booklet 2 for the intermediate club player:

## #6: MORE WAYS OF RAISING RESPONDER'S 1M

After an auction such as 1m-1M, opener should raise partner with 3-card support and a shortage, or make a splinter rebid with extra values, 4-card support and a shortage.

Consider the hands below. You opened 1D and partner responded 1S. What will you rebid?

| Hand A | Hand B | Hand C | Hand D |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| ♠KT7   | ♠KT7   | ♠KQ97  | ♠KQ97  |
| ♥Q954  | ♥Q954  | ♥A95   | ♥A95   |
| ♦AQJ8  | ♦AQJ84 | ♦AQJ84 | ♦AKJ8  |
| ♣T4    | ♣T     | ♣T     | ♣QT    |

Hand A is a fairly uninspiring balanced minimum, so even though you have 3-card support for spades, there is no reason to rebid anything other than 1NT. If partner has a 5-card spade suit and game interest, s/he can bid 2C checkback (see booklet 1) and you will be able to describe your hand.

Hand B is quite different. Although it has the same hcp, with the singleton it now evaluates as 6 losers. If partner has a 5-card suit, you want to be in a spade contract, but if you rebid 2D, you may never find the spade fit.

The problem is solved by agreeing that after 1m, **opener is allowed to raise partner's 1M response with 3-card support and a shortage**. Now with game interest, responder bids 2NT to inquire and opener rebids thus:

3 of the minor opened = 3-card support, extra length in original suit

3 of a new suit = 3-card support, second suit

3 of partner's major = 4-card support, minimum

4 of partner's major = 4-card support, better than minimum.

If responder holds e.g. ♠AJ652 ♥K83 ♦76 ♣A63, after opener raises to 2S with hand B, responder can ask with 2NT and opener will rebid 3H. This enables responder to infer opener's shape (3-4-5-1) and to be confident that even if s/he has a minimum hand, 4S is very likely to succeed.

Incidentally, the same approach can be used after 1H-1S.