

# Nulló Auction

Florence Irwin



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**By Florence Irwin**

**The Fine Points of Auction Bridge**

**The Development of Auction Bridge under  
the New Count**

**Auction High-Lights with a Full Exposition  
of the Nullo Count**

**Nullo Auction**

# Nullò Auction

By

Florence Irwin

Author of "The Fine Points of Auction Bridge,"  
"Auction High-Lights," etc.

Together with  
The Laws of Auction  
As adopted by  
The Whist Club, Nov., 1913  
And  
Differences between these and  
The English Laws  
As adopted by  
The Portland Club, May, 1914

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No. 1,

## **MY NULLO CREED**

*It is not only when my cards are poor and I "cannot wait for luck to turn" that I want nullos. I want them equally when I hold high cards! I want them :*

*Because the other man should have his chance.*

*Because easy winnings do not appeal to me.*

*Because I prefer a good fight to a hold-up.*

*Because I do not find it amusing to rifle victims who are practically bound and gagged.*

*And because I have no desire to be either victim or thug in such an encounter !*

**FLORENCE IRWIN.**



## PREFACE

THE advent of nullos has tremendously enlarged the game of Auction. My previous book, *Auction High-Lights*, was the first in the world to treat of nullos in Auction; all that I wrote there, I emphatically confirm here. But there is now much more to say.

My readers and I have blazed the nullo-trail; all others are our followers. Whoever essays to teach or to learn nullos, to-day, treads a safe and smooth road, made possible by our pioneer efforts. Sign-posts mark the pitfalls; we reared those posts. Lights illumine the way; we placed them there.

As in all pioneer experiences, new vistas are constantly opening, and much interesting nullo information has recently been added to the sum of human knowledge. It demands recording.

Following my *Auction High-Lights*, numerous books appeared, containing nullo-chapters. But

these chapters were distinct and detachable from the book proper. *Nullos were not treated as an integral and accepted part of the game, but merely as a possible novelty.* Auction was one thing,—nullos were another. To my mind, the great field of nullo-Auction has never yet been adequately covered.

It is no longer correct to regard Auction and nullos separately. A comprehensive study of the game with the nullo as one of its component parts, seems to me a necessary addition to the card-literature of the day. I therefore present:

### NULLO AUCTION

F. I.

Hastings-on-Hudson, N. Y.,

October, 1914.

*Author's Note:* Much of the ensuing material has already appeared in the *New York Sunday Times*, which was the first newspaper in the world to conduct an Auction-nullo campaign.

F. I.



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# **Nulla-Auction**



# Nullo-Auction

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## CHAPTER I

### THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE FORCED BID

THE most sensational Auction change in years, has taken place in England. I am sure that America will soon follow suit.

The change in question is the abolishment of the forced bid from the dealer, who is now permitted to pass. Not since the supplanting of the old count by the new, has anything so radical been done to the game.

Nullos have been introduced in the interim, but nullos are not a *change*. They are a much-needed and highly scientific *addition*. To adopt them is to give the game fascinating additional possibilities hitherto unknown; to omit them is merely to limit and contract your field of action,

but it is entirely possible. Whether they are in or out, the old part of the game remains unchanged.

But the abolishment of the forced bid goes to the root of the old game. It breaks the first principle laid down by the original laws,—and it breaks it rightly.

The forced opening-bid is a relic of barbarism. The early days of Auction were full of errors that have since disappeared.

“Waiting” spade-bids, made on good hands with the object of gleaning information,—were once considered intensely clever. They put the dealer on a pinnacle of advantage and moved the responsibility on to the subsequent bidders. Those primitive “subsequent bidders” assumed the proffered burden. Soon, they began to ask themselves *why* they were so obliging; they ceased to bid against a spade, unless to go game. And, immediately, the waiting spade-bid disappeared—killed by the clever counter-thrust. No one any longer bid a spade unless he really had to.

There were also the doubles of one-bids,—

made simply to show a stopper in the suit. A little experience as to the ease with which a player could change a one-bid, or the plight in which a doubler might find himself—if left in with his double—soon cured players of such primitive ideas on doubling.

The passing of the breathless no-trump race was accomplished by the proximity of the new suit values. The overthrow of the various complicated “calls” was the result of the good sense and good taste of the large majority of players. As one well-known authority has put it: you don’t send to an Auction, scouts who are instructed to utter cryptic mouthings; you go yourself and bid, in clean plain language, for the thing you want.

The “heart-convention” and the “weak-suit convention” are also things of the past. Who ever hears of them now?

All these things, however, were merely matters of opinion and taste. They could be assumed or cast aside, argued for or against, according to fashion or the player’s bias. *They were never governed by law.* And the forced opening-bid

*was* so governed. It was impossible to avoid until the day should come when a sufficient number of intelligent and important players should agree to make new laws and to dispense with it.

In America such a responsibility has been often discussed but never assumed. It was feared that too many hands would be thrown out, that the dealer's "pass" would be followed by three other passes,—and that a new deal would be necessary.

In England, representatives from all the important clubs have unanimously decided that the forcing of the opening-bid was a senseless and unnecessary custom, and that it should be abolished. It is asserted that in three months' steady play, but four deals have been discarded,—and that all four of those deals were exceedingly mediocre and uninteresting, and could have scored but the odd.

With the overthrow of the forced bid *there will be no longer any false or distorted bids. Every bid will mean what it says.* And that is an end for which I have been fighting ever since the



## Abolishment of the Forced Bid 5

beginning of my Auction career. My readers will not need to be reminded that I have always detested artificial bids.

Let us look for a moment on the results of the new change. Let us suppose the dealer to have opened with "one spade" and second-hand to sit next with quite a good general hand,—a hand containing two or three aces or kings, but not a startling no-trumper. Second-hand would say to himself: "I am not going to bid; he cannot make more than two, or four, and I may make a hundred." But under the new régime this cannot happen. Second-hand must bid, or risk forfeiting his hand. If he forfeits it, his next one may be worse. *He will have to shoulder his own responsibilities instead of sitting calmly in the lee of the dealer's bid.*

Then, suppose the dealer and second-hand each to have an exceedingly light no-trumper. The dealer may now bid, or he may pass,—according to his temperament, his degree of caution, and his bidding theories. If the dealer passes and second-hand chooses to bid (fearing that two more passes will cost him his possible no-

trumper),—he will find himself with a much more formidable adversary than he imagined.

The gambling element will be tremendously increased. “Pass,” from the dealer, will be much less informatory than a bid. Position, the score, and state of the penalty column, can all be subtly utilized in the decisions as to bid and pass.

If the dealer finds himself with a strong general hand and heavy penalties already scored against him, he may think it clever to “pass,” in the hope of defeating any adverse bid and of recovering some of his lost penalties. And he may hear three answering “passes,” and find himself forced to resign the best hand he has yet held,—or he may not.

Auction has been called “Bridge with an infusion of Poker”; it has heretofore been admitted, however, that bluffing (the essence of Poker) was impossible in Auction because every hand was played to a finish. Under the new régime, every hand will not necessarily be played at all. Nevertheless, the fact that one has a partner in Auction and no partner in Poker, will tre-

## Abolishment of the Forced Bid 7

mendously lessen any advantage of bluff, in the former game.

There are endless bidding possibilities in the new field,—and endless barriers destroyed by the sane abolishment of the forced bid. To my mind, the greatest point is that it sounds the death-knell of the last *set*, and *false*, bid.

The two-spade bid will be quite annihilated by the change. It is a bid which I discarded, personally, years ago, as entirely unnecessary in these days of light no-trumpers. Knowing its popularity with certain players, I never attempted to dislodge it,—contenting myself with seeing it disappear amongst my own friends and pupils. Now, however, I see its twilight deepening into night. On all hands which have heretofore been “two-spaders,” players will find themselves obliged to bid “a no-trump,” “a nullo,” a suit, or to pass,—according to the type of the hand and the state of the score. Nullos have so enlarged the field of bidding, and the elimination of the forced bid has so enlarged the field of passing, that the days of our emancipation have come.

Nullos give a man a chance to *bid* on certain hands that have hitherto been impossible, and to *play* those hands to profit; the new English law gives him a chance to *pass* on certain other hitherto impossible hands. Increased opportunities for bid, play, and pass, go hand-in-hand.

All is real, all is sane, all is as it should be.

Spades at two a trick will cease to exist. The suit will have but one value—nine. There will be no “one spade,” “two spades,” “three spades,”—nor any other spades. In fact, *the tendency of certain players to take advantage of the low suit and to ruin the game with false, illegitimate, and unethical bids* was the actual reason for the abolishment of the two-value.

Since America is still using the forced opening-bid, it is still necessary to write of bidding “one spade.” When she decides to discard it, simply substitute the words, “to pass,” for “to bid a spade,” and you will find all the rules laid down in the following pages, to be entirely correct.

## CHAPTER II

### NULLOS

No Auction development has ever been so maltreated as nullos. It is sufficient proof of their worth, virility, and desirability, that they continue to live and flourish after more than a year of horrible misuse. Had they been merely a fairly good thing,—an interesting but non-essential adjunct,—they would have been dead and buried long ago,—killed by abuse and over-work.

I do not mean that there are no good nullo-players; there are scores of them. But they are outnumbered a hundred to one by players who think they understand nullos, and who use them constantly and atrociously.

People seem to labor under the mistaken idea that it is an easy thing to lose tricks; it is a very difficult thing when your adversaries are doing

their best to thrust tricks upon you, when you are carrying an exposed Dummy that you have not seen during the bidding, and when every trick must be lost a second time by that Dummy (after being lost in your own hand)—in order to be lost at all.

As I look back over the history of Whist, Bridge, and Auction, I can think of no development that has been handled as ignorantly as nullos. When Bridge superseded Whist, all those who wanted to learn the new game went at it seriously; they took lessons, studied profoundly, spent hours over knotty problems, and treated the novelty with deference. When Auction crowded out Bridge, it was accorded the same respect; players would say: "I don't understand this new game yet; I shall have to study it longer before I try it publicly. There is a lot to it." If they didn't enjoy it at first, they realized that their inexperience and half-knowledge were to blame. Auction-teachers found the days too short to fill the demands on their time. Then followed the revolutionary New Count, and it was handled just as carefully.

But nullos were apparently supposed to be self-teachers. The average player thought they "must be just like Hearts" (imagine Hearts with bidding, with a partner, and with an exposed Dummy to carry). Scientific Auction players and old Skat-players realized immediately the wonderful scope of the new suit; the mass of players most certainly did not.

You have heard of the man who said he didn't doubt that he could play the violin—though he had never tried. Imagine the results,—and also his probable subsequent opinion of the virtues of the violin as a musical instrument!

Just so with nullos; the man who abuses them may not care for them; the man who has mastered them, will never give them up.

No one bids hearts on spade-hands; no one bids hearts on diamond-hands, or club-hands; no one forces in a heart-bid on every deal that occurs; no one expects to pull off a successful heart-bid unless he has the stuff; no one goes on raising his own heart-bid indefinitely, with an obviously unwilling partner; and no one plays hearts improperly, and then lays the blame on

the heart-suit. As players treat hearts, so should they treat nullos.

Yet players constantly bid nullos on absolutely impossible material; they raise their nullo-bid to almost any point without waiting to hear from their partners,—or even in the face of those partners' warnings; they play nullo-hands most horribly; and then, in all probability, they lay the blame at the door of the nullo-suit. As a child turns and hits the "bad old table" against which he has just bumped his head,—so do they turn and rend the suit they have just abused. It has been suggested to me by a scientific nullo-lover, that it should be made illegal to play nullos without first passing a nullo-examination.

I once had a partner who was playing a heart-hand; he had ten trumps in the two hands, including all the top ones, and an excellent side-suit. Instead of pulling the adversaries' three little trumps, he played first for his side-suit and then for a ruff. And the adversaries made all three of their little trumps.

At the end of that game I said to myself: "That man cannot play." But I did *not* say:



“The heart-suit is a very dangerous thing to handle, and should be eliminated from the game of Auction.”

Even though a man has grasped nullos himself, he still has the horrible chance of drawing a partner who has no conception of their proper handling. Then let him rave at inexperience, at ignorance, or stupidity, but not at nullos.

Nullos are not only interesting, scientific, logical,—they are entirely essential to a well-balanced game. Any sport-lover will admit that there should be two sides to any game,—attack and defense. Attack is all very well; but the best game is the one that possesses not only an attack *but a defense so strong that it amounts to an attack*. Good cards make a strong attack in the hands of any clever player; poor cards have heretofore made an impossible defense for any player, were he never so clever. Nothing could make them win.

The introduction of nullos has accomplished this end; to-day poor cards are a marvelous defense, a “defense so strong that it amounts to an attack.”

Take two men of equal strength and mentality; arm and equip one of them and leave the other defenseless; what chance has he?

The palsied side of Auction has been vitalized. The game of yesterday was simply the onslaught of high cards against low ones; success depended nearly altogether on holding the larger proportion of those high cards. The Auction of to-day depends but slightly upon the cards dealt; we have at last achieved our perfect defense.

The introduction of nullos has killed any possible monotony in the game. You can get too much of even a good thing; palates become jaded. But when this newly-devised suit lies there in abeyance, a reversal of all old ideas, a weapon of defense when all else fails (and one which must be handled with the greatest skill), an occasional *sauce piquante* for relieving an otherwise hopeless dish,—monotony vanishes. To banish nullos would be to reinvite it and to stultify the game.

Those of us who were merely unprejudiced concerning nullos, a year ago, are enthusiasts to-day. Many players who started as extreme

anti-nulloists have either come over entirely, or are advertising themselves as "quite unprejudiced either for or against nullos." It is as long a step from antagonism to lack of prejudice, as it is from lack of prejudice to enthusiastic support; and it is in the same direction. We started where they are now; some day, they will reach the point where we now stand

Finally, if you meet a man who "doesn't like nullos," ask him how often he has played them. Nearly invariably the answer will be once,—or twice,—or, even, not at all. His opinion doesn't count; it is merely lack of knowledge.

When anyone asks me if I do not consider nullos "dangerous," I always want to answer, "yes indeed; and so are hearts, and royals, and no-trumps, and diamonds, and clubs." It is with cards as with everything else in the world; most good things are dangerous in the hands of the ignorant and the inexperienced.

My purpose in this book is to show my readers how to handle nullos aright; I want to teach them the real make-up of a nullo-hand; the material on which players should bid, raise,

overcall, or pass; and finally, how to play properly the various types of nullo-hands when the bid culminates. Once fully instructed on these heads, I am sure that all superstitious fear of nullos, and all ignorant dislike, will vanish; players will find that the new negative suit can be used with as much ease and accuracy as any of the older suits,—and that it makes a thoroughly fascinating variant and addition to the best card-game in the world.

I shall write of nullos at eight a trick,—“eight-under-hearts.” Long experience proves that to be their perfect value, as I shall demonstrate later.

## CHAPTER III

### COMBINING THE HANDS

THE objects of bidding in Auction are various. These are among them:

To capture the play of the hand, provided you have the requisite material, and provided, also, that your partner is not able to play it to better advantage.

To approximate the amount of help that your partner can furnish; also to leave him a chance to warn you away from a bid in which he would be a dead weight.

To glean useful information from the adversaries. This information will help you to place the important cards, will often warn you of unsuspected pitfalls, will save disaster, and will uncover opportunities of forcing and defeating adverse bids.

And finally, to combine your hand with your

partner's, so as to decide which one shall go to the helm.

The pre-emptive bidder sees only the first of these points. To play every hand and to "shut out" partner and adversary alike, is his idea of Paradise.

The wise bidder is he who grasps all the advantages of the bid and who, if he be pushed to decide upon one phase as more important than the others, will decide in favor of the combining of the hands.

That is pre-eminently what bidding is for; and if it is necessary to combine the hands in positive suits, it is a thousand times more necessary in negative ones.

*A positive hand may easily be strong enough to stand alone. No negative hand can ever stand alone.* It might, if the partner's hand were to be thrown out; but it can never do so when that hand is to be played.

If you have a very good heart-hand (or a royal-hand, or a no-trumper), it doesn't matter one atom what your partner holds; your cards will take the tricks, no matter what he plays.

But if you have even an ideally perfect nullo-hand, it matters tremendously what your partner holds; *your cards cannot lose tricks unless his cards lose them over again.* Unless every trick is twice-lost, it is not lost at all; it is won.

And there you have the difficulty of nullos, in a nutshell. A trick is won with one card; it must be lost with two. *It won't do you a particle of good to lose every trick in your own hand, if you have to take every trick in Dummy.*

**Therefore:**

**Never insist on nullos with an obviously unwilling partner.**

**Give that partner a chance to tell you whether he is willing or unwilling.**

**Remember that "pass" from his lips, doesn't always mean: "I am pleased with your bid." It may well mean: "Your bid is most unwelcome to me, but I have no way to tell you so."**

Never forget that, whereas in other suits you have a right to expect some help from your partner, *in nullos you must always regard him as a probable hindrance*,—unless he tells you spe-

cifically that he is not one. It is more necessary to think of him than of yourself; *his hand will show!*

In all positive bids, it is desirable that the two hands shall "fit." In nullos, it is positively necessary for them to do so. When you find that they are an obvious misfit,—stop bidding. That hand is not for you; it was marked as the adversary's, from the beginning. You are bidding and announcing your suits, in order to ascertain whether your hand and your partner's will pull well together, and, if so, in which suit it is most profitable to play them. When you find that they are at cross-purposes, be thankful to have made the discovery of your danger, and retire from the field. Particularly, yield all thought of nullos on that hand. You can not expect to play *all* the hands successfully; no amount of forcing or of distorted bidding will achieve that end. The wise man is the man who knows how, and when, to stop.

Did you ever hear a man say this: "Of course, we could have defeated the other side, but that hand of mine was too good to give up. I was



certainly determined to play it;—and, do you know, they doubled me and made 400?" Did you ever hear him chuckle reminiscently over the thought that he had kept the adversaries from playing the hand, even when he might have profited at their expense, instead of permitting them to profit at his?

*I have!*

## CHAPTER IV

### THE NULLO BID, RAISE, PASS, AND OVER-CALL

FOR nullo purposes, the pack of cards is divided into three groups,—high, intermediate, and low.

The high cards are the aces and faces; the intermediate cards are the tens, nines, eights, sevens, and sixes, and are the most dangerous cards in the pack; and the low cards are the fives, fours, treys, and deuces. Therefore, there are but sixteen low cards. The sixes, however, are on the border-line; they are, naturally, the least harmful of the intermediate cards, and may almost be considered “low” for guarding purposes, but never for playing purposes. Every suit holds four cards lower than its six; both adversaries may “duck” a six-spot twice.

When I speak of a “guarded” suit in nullo,

I mean—strictly and technically—a suit that holds at least *one* card lower than the six-spot; in playing, and when the rest of my hand warrants it, I do occasionally count a six as a “guard.” But the nullo beginner will do well to adhere to the stricter rule and to consider no card a “guard” if it is higher than a five-spot.

The dealer must differentiate sharply between a spade-bid and a nullo-bid. He must never bid the one when he holds the material for the other. A spade-hand is made up from the middle of the pack; a nullo-hand from its two extremes. *A spade-hand consists principally of intermediate cards; a nullo-hand, of high cards well guarded with low ones; this is called a “mixed”-hand.*

The absurd theory was once launched, that the dealer should never bid “a nullo,” *for fear his partner might have high cards*; he should bid “a spade” and see if his partner had a nullo. This is as sensible as it would be to say that “the dealer should never bid ‘a no-trump’ for fear his partner might have low cards; he should bid ‘a spade’ to see if the partner had a no-trumper.” *Someone* must be the first to bid

“a nullo,” and it should be the first man who has the material.

“A nullo,” should always be bid in preference to “a diamond,” “a club,” or “a spade,”—unless the score makes a diamond, or a club, as valuable as a nullo. In that case, I should choose the positive bid as easier, though less interesting. On the other hand, a player should always choose a no-trump bid, a royal-bid, or a heart-bid, in preference to a nullo-bid,—because they are more valuable. This is in accordance with the rule: use the process of elimination in your bid; look first for the highest suit; failing that, look for the next-to-highest; and so on down,—stopping the moment your hand answers “yes” to the suit-test. *Bid your highest suit first.*

The ideal nullo-hand is not made up of low cards exclusively; although you bid nullos on such a hand, it is not ideal. First, because if a player held thirteen of the sixteen low cards there could be few left for his partner; and second, because with nothing but low cards, he might be able to *force* the adverse bids, but

he could never *defeat* them, when they obtained against him.

The ideal nullo-hand is therefore a mixed hand, made up from the two extremes of the pack, and with the high cards well guarded. Such a hand leaves plenty of nullo-ground for your partner to stand on; he may easily have another such hand, and, if he has, you have between you a perfect nullo-bid. Again, a mixed hand has a very fair chance of defeating an adverse positive bid. If you play nullos, your high cards (being well guarded) need never take; they will be thrown in discard. But if you play against a positive bid, those same well-guarded high cards will be almost sure to take,—and may defeat the bid, if it is high enough.

The best nullo-hand looks like the first cousin of a no-trumper,—because it *is* a no-trumper; hence the family resemblance. Nullos and no-trumps, you know, are the only two suits that are played without a trump. In both, you want high cards guarded with low ones; in both long sequences, or near-sequences, are a desirable asset. But in the no-trumper proper, the *pre-*

*ponderance* of the cards should be high or intermediate, and in the nullo-hand, the preponderance of the cards is low. Another difference is this: while blank suits and singeltons are deadly in no-trumps, they are highly to be desired in nullos.

The great nullo assets are long sequences, singletons, and blank suits. Sequences, whether they lie in one hand or distributed between the partners, are plate-armor; every break in the sequence is a joint in the plate where the enemy may drive home his lance. Singletons are valuable because they become blank suits after one round. And blank suits are valuable for two great reasons: first, because they mean discards, and discards are the spine of nullos; and second, because with a blank suit in one hand, you have never to lose *twice* a trick in that suit; you have but to lose it *once*, as in all positive suits. Your difficulties are therefore decreased fifty per cent.

It follows, therefore, that the best nullo-hand is the *unbalanced* hand. I do not care for a hand that is parceled out in suits of three and

four cards; no matter how low those cards, it means probable equal suit distribution in the partner's hand, and no chance of discard. Very long suits, and very short ones (or blank suits); high cards and low ones; sequences or near-sequences,—and you have a perfect nullo-hand.

Intermediate cards are undesirable unless they are in sequence with low ones, or unless they are guarded as carefully as high ones. The trouble with intermediate cards is this: that they *look* low, yet are not. Everyone realizes the danger of an ace or a king, everyone sees that it needs a guard; therefore its danger immediately vanishes in that it is apparent. But an unguarded seven or eight is nearly as sure a taker as an unguarded ace; and this is what players fail to grasp. The danger in intermediate cards lies in their apparent safety. I had a letter from a man who had just played his first nullo-hand; he had a handful of intermediate cards which he thought were low. He wrote: "Those sevens and eights took tricks in the most unaccountable manner; I never before realized their power."

Players are too much afraid of high cards and too little afraid of intermediate ones. The region of high cards is like black darkness—everyone enters it carrying a light, and is therefore safe; the intermediate region is like twilight obscurity: because you think you need no light, you are far more apt to stumble.

If you hold a good nullo-hand except for one poor suit, it is better for you to have that suit held on your *right*, than on your *left*. You are safer to play *after* it than *before* it.

The original nullo-bidder may bid nullos with *one* unguarded suit; just as you cannot bid no-trumps with two unguarded suits, so you cannot bid nullos. This rule may, however, be broken in the case of a singleton. *An original nullo-bid may be made with one unguarded suit, or with two, provided the second one is a singleton.*

I should bid "a nullo" on this:

♥ 7 4  
 ♣ 6 2  
 ♦ A K Q  
 ♠ J 9 5 4 3 2



Those three diamonds are high, but they mean only three tricks, and I am permitted six.

I should also bid "a nullo" on this:

♥	A K
♣	J
♦	10 6 5 4 3 2
♠	Q 7 5 3

The second unguarded suit is a singleton; I might get a heart-discard on a second club-round.

*The original nullo-bidder may bid two nullo unaided; but never three.*

No nullo-rule is more important than this. I should never play a second time with any player who disregarded it, though I might be willing to play with the man who broke all other nullo-rules,—provided he kept that one.

Let us imagine the dealer to open with "a nullo"; second-hand bids, and third-hand passes. His story is told; he doesn't like the bid, because he doesn't raise it; his hand would be the Dummy and is bad for nullo,—though it holds no other bid. The dealer should drop his nullo; *a pass from his partner is equivalent to an over-call.*

But suppose the dealer bids "a nullo" and

second-hand passes; third-hand also passes; that "pass" may mean that he likes the nullo-bid, or it may mean that he dislikes it but has no material for a warning-bid. Fourth-hand bids; the dealer may say "two nullo," *on a certain type of hand*. It goes round to fourth-hand who bids again. *Now, let the dealer never say "three nullo," no matter how perfect his hand may look!* Let him first find out what his partner's "pass" meant and whether the two hands fit. If third-hand would make a possible nullo-Dummy, he will raise the bid; if he wouldn't, the dealer should be thankful to be out of his undertaking.

If third-hand has already raised the bid to "two," the dealer may say "three nullo,"—and as much more as his hand warrants. Therefore, let third-hand be sure to give none but standard raises; I will explain later what these are.

The difference between "two nullo" and "three nullo," is as the difference between light and darkness. It might well be called the "great divide"; in no other suit is there such a line of demarcation. One nullo is exceedingly easy to

pull off; two nullos are but little harder; but the three-nullo hand is a difficult hand to play. Very high nullo-bids are constantly successful; it is impossible to tell you how frequently I have made five nullos, and have seen them made. Even nullo-slams, both great and small, are no rarity in either bid or achievement; *but they are possible only when the two hands fit.* Both partners must contribute to their making.

I have said that the original nullo-bidder may bid "two nullos," unassisted, "on a certain type of hand." Very recently, this hand was sent me with a request for my opinion, as to its correct opening bid:

♥ A 3 2  
♣ 6 5 3 2  
♦ A 4 3  
♠ K 3 2

I said instantly that it should be opened with "one nullo," but that its holder should never go to "two," unassisted, unless against an adverse no-trumper. To a novice, that hand would look wonderful; and that is its trouble,—it is *too*

wonderful. It holds all the treys, three of the deuces, a four, and a five. What could be left for the partner?

The hand possesses but one requisite of the ideal nullo-hand,—it is a “mixed” hand, for it holds two guarded aces and a guarded king. But it holds, likewise, nine of the sixteen low cards. With such a hand, find out whether your partner has any of the seven remaining low cards and, if he has, let him be the one to say “two nullos.”

Again, the suit-distribution is too normal; the partner’s hand is probably equally well-balanced. That means no discards, and if his cards are all intermediate or high, he will need discards.

And yet again, there are no sequences in the hand, with the exception of the short club-sequence. There is small chance of making long intermediate-to-low sequences between your partner’s hand and your own. I will revert later to this hand, and show you all of it.

As a definite rule, *the nullo-bidder should never go back to his nullos when he has once been called off by his partner; and he should never go high in*

*them, alone, with a partner who constantly passes.*

Having explained the duties of the original nullo-bidder, I shall pass to the partner, and describe his pass, raise, and over-call ("call-off").

If the partner does not like the nullo-bid and has no suit of his own, his task is easy, provided the intervening adversary bids. A "pass," after this adverse bid, is equivalent to a protest.

If the adversary bids, and the partner *does* like nullos, he should raise them. *It is as wrong to pass a legitimate nullo-raise as to make an illegitimate one.*

A legitimate nullo-raise must have every suit guarded, except in the case of a singleton. An unguarded singleton is permitted, but no other unguarded suit. Did the original bidder allow himself one unguarded suit, and did the partner respond with another, that might mean five or six sure takers; there would be sure to be trouble if the bid went high; and often the effect of a nullo-raise is to send the bid very high. Therefore the rules are made more stringent for the raiser than for the bidder, because his

## Nullo-Auction

hand will be open, and the adversary can attack it more readily.

Take this hand, in illustration:

	♥ K 6 5 4 2										
	♣ K 6 4 2										
	♦ 2										
	♠ 7 4 2										
♥ J 10 ♣ A 10 9 5 3 ♦ K 8 7 ♠ A J 9	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Y</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">A</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">B</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Z</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ 8 7 3 9 ♣ Q 8 7 ♦ A Q 9 ♠ K Q 8
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ A Q										
	♣ J										
	♦ J 10 6 5 4 3										
	♠ 10 6 5 3										

Z bid "a nullo" on two unguarded suits, one being a singleton; A said "a no-trump"; Y's nullo-raise was wonderful: a mixed hand, a singleton, and all four deuces. It is like holding a hundred aces, and hearing your partner say "a no-trump" (the nullo-deuce corresponds to the no-trump ace). Y said "two nullo," and B said "two no-trumps." The two suits were bid

against each other till Z-Y went to "five nullos" and the bidding closed. And they made it. The first lead was correct,—an intermediate club (I will explain nullo-leads to you later). Z put up Dummy's king and threw his own jack; he could take but one more trick. He led the king of hearts and threw his own queen,—to keep the lead in Dummy. Then he led the six of clubs and discarded his heart-ace.

Had A led a heart, Z would have followed the same plan; he would have taken in Dummy, led the club-king, and then a little club, discarding the heart. If A took the club-king with the ace and led a heart, Z would take two heart-rounds and no club-rounds. Against any lead, any defense, Z takes but two tricks and makes his five-odd nullos. (This hand proves the idiocy of doubling high nullo-bids just on principle.)

On the other hand, Z-Y could have defeated any high no-trump bid; they could take three heart-rounds and a club-round. This illustrates what I mean when I say mixed nullo-hands are good forcers and good defeaters.

To return to the nullo-raise: if the raising-hand holds any long suit, that suit to be safe *should contain the deuce*. In the bidding-hand this is not necessary; but the raising-hand is exposed; a raise is not really safe unless it holds the deuce of any long suit. I will ask you to take this on faith now, and will explain it in the next chapter.

If the partner of the nullo-bidder dislikes the bid, and has a legitimate bid of his own, he should make it, whether the intervening adversary bids or not. In the former case, he should make it to stop his partner from going to "two nullo"; in the latter case, he should make it for forcing, warning, and possible playing, purposes. *He should not be deterred from bidding no-trumps because his partner has bid nullo*. I have just shown you how a nullo-bid may be a no-trump assist. And he should certainly never hesitate to venture a sound suit-bid after his partner's nullo,—particularly if the suit is higher and can be bid without increase of contract.

Let us now suppose that the dealer has opened with "a nullo," and that the adversary has



## Nulló Bid, Raise, and Over-call 37

passed, in place of bidding. This puts the responsibility on third-hand.

If the bid suits him, his task is easy; if it does not, and he has a legitimate over-call, it is equally easy. But suppose he lacks that over-call?

He should not be unduly concerned about leaving his partner in with "one nullo," even though his hand is bad. One nullo is not hard to make; two nulloes are rarely defeated; and no good partner will bid three nulloes alone.

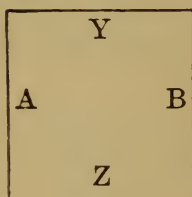
*Don't warn your partner from "one nullo," unless you have a legitimate bid. Otherwise, you will be just as badly off in your bid as he would have been in his!*

Here is a hand to prove the wisdom of this advice:

## Nullo-Auction

♥ J 10 6  
 ♣ J 10 8  
 ♦ K J 10 7 4  
 ♠ J 6

♥ Q 7 2  
 ♣ Q 7 4 2  
 ♦ A 3 2  
 ♠ K Q 10



♥ K 9 8  
 ♣ A K 5  
 ♦ 9 6  
 ♠ 9 8 7 5 4

♥ A 5 4 3  
 ♣ 9 6 3  
 ♦ Q 8 5  
 ♠ A 3 2

Z bids "a nullo" on what has been called "a no-trump-nullo" hand; he has two aces and a guarded queen,—but the balance of his hand points to nullos rather than to no-trumps. Z's bid is correct, yet I do not like the even suit-distribution; and, as is nearly always the case, the other hands are almost equally well-balanced; there is not a singleton or a missing suit anywhere.

A holds the hand that Z wants Y to hold; he passes because he likes the bid. He has three deuces, a trey, and a four; he is like a man who

holds three aces, a guarded king, and a guarded queen, and who hears his adversary bid no-trump. Why should he bid?

If A chooses to force with "a no-trump," Y passes and the bidding closes. But if A passes, the responsibility falls on Y.

Y holds what looks like an impossible nullo-Dummy; there is but one low card in his hand, which is a mass of deadly intermediate and high cards. He has also a perfectly legitimate diamond-bid; five cards to three honors (including the king) is an eight-point make. Unfortunately that is all Y holds; he has no side-strength or ruffs. Nevertheless, he rushes to the breach and bids "two diamonds"; the bid is correct, because it is not forced; it is thoroughly sound.

It looks as though with Z's help (three trumps to the queen and two side-aces), Y should make his bid; Z would even feel himself strong enough to raise diamonds, if necessary. But the fact remains that Z-Y cannot possibly make their diamonds, and they could easily make their nullo. In diamonds, they must inevitably lose three club-rounds, a spade-round,

a trump-round, and a heart-round or two. In nullos (properly played by both sides), Z-Y make two-odd or three-odd according to play. It depends upon whether B does, or does not, get a discard of a high club, and whether he chooses that for his first discard if the opportunity comes. Also upon A's lead; a club-lead looks good in A's hand, yet would be most unfortunate for his partner. A much better lead is the ace of diamonds,—because Y has announced a long diamond suit; because, though Z can throw two high diamonds on the ace, he will positively have to take both deuce and trey, later; because a high lead from A might unblock diamonds in his partner's hand,—enabling him to get out of the way of the deuce and trey; and because with three diamonds in A's hand and a diamond-bid from Y, B may well be diamond-short, and may get a valuable discard on the second or third round. Such situations as this, the case of singletons and doubletons, and one other case which I will explain in my chapter on nullo-leads, are the only excuses for an opening high-card lead, in nullos.

## Nulló Bid, Raise, and Over-call 41

Our present concern, however, is with the fact that no player need be frightened when he hears his partner bid "one nullo,"—even though his own hand looks impossible.

There remain five phases of the nullo-bid and inter-bid: first, when third-hand and fourth-hand want to bid nullos after some different bid from their partners; second, when two adversaries want to bid nullos against each other; third, the forcing-powers of the nullo-bid when it is perfectly apparent that the adversaries are afraid to let you play it (even when you know yourself to be unable to do so); fourth, a warning to the adversaries when they are bidding *against* nullos; and fifth, another warning against over-rash doubling of nullo-bids. It will be necessary to run over these heads separately, and as briefly as possible.

Let us imagine the dealer to be your partner and to have opened with any positive bid; you (third-hand) hold an excellent nullo-hand. *You are at perfect liberty to bid it if the dealer's bid has been anything other than "a spade."* After any legitimate bid, third-hand may bid his nullos, but

*when he bids them after an opening-bid of "one spade," he treads on very dangerous ground.*

Your partner would never choose to play spades at two a trick, if he could play nullos at eight a trick. What, then, did his spade-bid mean? It meant, first, a hand that couldn't bid nullos, so why force it to be a nullo-Dummy? And it meant, secondly, a hand which holds no possible bid with which to call you off from your nullos. Why would your partner open with "a spade" if he could bid "a nullo," or if he had any other legitimate bid? He wouldn't. Now, if he couldn't bid "a nullo" he will make a deadly nullo-Dummy, and if he has no other possible bid (and he denies such a bid when he says "a spade"), how can he get out of the unwelcome nullo-bid?

A heart-hand may also be a nullo-hand; if it isn't it can return to its hearts. A royal-hand may be a nullo-hand; if it isn't it can return to its royals. A no-trump-hand may be a nullo-hand; if it isn't it can return to its no-trumps. *But a spade-hand cannot be a nullo, and cannot return to its spades.* The thing is as clear as daylight.

## Nulló Bid, Raise, and Over-call 43

There is just one case where you might bid "a nullo" against your partner's spade. If your hand consists exclusively of low cards it may make sequences with your partner's intermediate hand, leaving only high cards for the adversary. But it would be a risk, and such a combination wouldn't happen once in a hundred times. Make it your rule to avoid nullo, with a spade-partner.

If your partner is dealer and opens with "a no-trump," if second-hand passes, and if your hand is an impossible no-trump-assist, it is your duty to over-call the no-trump with a two-bid in any suit of which you hold "five to an honor, or six to anything." But, sometimes, you find yourself in the predicament where you would be a fearful no-trump Dummy yet hold no six-card suit and no five-card suit that runs to an honor. "Two nullo" will then be a fitting warning-bid; the original no-trumper may be a perfectly good nullo-assist. If it isn't, your partner will bid "two no-trumps," and you must subside. Don't go on bidding at cross-purposes.

*Bid nullo, if you like, after your partner's "one no-trump"; but, in the name of common-sense,*

*drop your nullos if he raises his no-trumps higher than one.*

In a recent game, I opened with "one no-trump," and my partner answered with "two nullos"; I didn't dare offer my hand as a nullo-Dummy, so I warned with "two no-trumps," to which he blithely responded with "three nullos." Thinking his brain would clear on another round, I said "three no-trumps"; second-hand doubled (I expected that), and my partner kindly "took me out" with "four nullos." This sounds like a fairy tale, but it is true.

I should have yielded in disgust, and left him to his fate, but, unfortunately, his losses would be mine equally. I said "four no-trumps," and was doubled again. With the air of a suffering martyr, he said: "Well, partner, I did all I could to warn you!" Not for a moment did he realize that I had done more than I could to warn him.

We lost 200 on the hand, minus 30 aces. Had he played nullos, he would have been doubled (the adversaries were acute enough to read the situation), and he would have taken every trick but one, with my hand exposed. His book being



three tricks, the adversaries would have scored 900, plus 20 for slam, plus 30 for our aces. Nine hundred and fifty, instead of 170. Which "warning" do you think was more necessary?

One more reminiscence! I opened with "a no-trump" on a clean score and these cards:

♥ 9  
♣ A J 10 9 8 7 4  
♦ A K  
♠ A K 8

I didn't like the heart singleton, but I should rather bid no-trumps than clubs on a clean score, and if hearts were held against me, they would probably be bid.

They were. Second-hand said "two hearts," and my partner passed. That was farewell to my no-trumper, and I said "three clubs."

Second-hand doubled, to my tremendous delight. Of course I could make it; even giving him the king and queen of clubs, he could not possibly take another trump-round; I would draw his trumps, in order to make my side-suits sure; I should lose one heart, and one spade, which—with the two clubs—would make four

tricks, and my three-odd were safe. I couldn't possibly be beaten.

Even had I spoken next, I should not have redoubled, for fear of sending him back to his hearts. I didn't want to play hearts, and I did want to play clubs. My clubs now were worth more than no-trumps; three clubs, undoubled, are not game; but three clubs, doubled, are game.

However, it was my partner's turn to speak after the second-hand's double. And what do you suppose happened? He "rescued" me with "three nullo." Does it seem possible?

Just consider the situation, even granting that he could not see my hand. First, I bid "a no-trump"; after the adverse "two heart" bid I could have said "three nullo" myself had I held a nullo-hand. I should rather have bid nullo at eight than clubs at six. By choosing the lowest of all the suits, I denied possible bids in all the other suits. And a hand that denies nullo is much worse on the board than held up.

I went back to "four clubs," was doubled again, and lost just one trick—100 points minus 12 honors. Failing my partner's unwarranted

interference, I should have landed game and rubber; instead of this, the adversaries went rubber on the next hand. My partner's "rescue" bid cost us about 700 or 800 points.

The case of fourth-hand is decidedly different from that of third-hand; his partner, not being dealer, will never bid "a spade,"—so that the anti-spade nullo-warning will never apply to him. Also, he should be very wary of bidding nullos after *his* partner's no-trump bid; an opening no-trumper may be tentative and may assist nullos beautifully; a second-hand no-trumper is bound to be solid, and will not so often fit in with a nullo-bid. It means all-round strength. If second-hand has made any suit-bid, fourth-hand may bid nullos; a suit-bid shows strength in but one suit. The entire balance of the hand may be weak,—and even the strong suit may be well-guarded with low cards. But any no-trumper, other than the dealer's, is bound to have a good percentage of general strength.

The second situation to consider is that where two adversaries both want to bid nullos.

It is a very usual thing for a player to bid "two hearts," or "two royals," or "two no-trumps," or, in fact, two in *any positive suit*, in which his adversary has just bid one. But in nullo, I don't greatly like it. It means that your adversary has the hand which you need to find with your partner, that your partner will probably get in your way, and that you know it when you bid! The man who bids "one nullo" may have a poor partner, but he has also a low contract. The adversary who follows with "two nullo" will probably also have a poor partner, and he will also have a higher contract and an adversary who has announced himself as dangerous. The first man hopes his partner won't get in his way; the second man is fairly sure that *his* partner will do so.

Position is to be considered in bidding nullo against nullo. It is best done by the person who plays *after* the strong adverse hand, and *before* the adverse nullo.

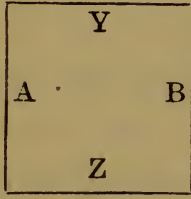
The best time to bid nullo against nullo is when the partner of the first bidder has over-called the nullo-bid,—thus showing an unwilling-

## Nullo Bid, Raise, and Over-call 49

ness to play the suit. He expects to take a number of tricks; seeing this, you can make an adverse nullo-bid; he will probably be as loath to play nullos *against* you, as *with* his partner. Moreover, there *are* times when there are three nullo-hands at a table,—and your partner probably has the third. Let me show you such a hand:

♥ J 5 3 2  
 ♣ J 7 3  
 ♦ J 5  
 ♠ K 7 4 3

♥ K Q 7 6  
 ♣ Q 9 5  
 ♦ A Q 4 3  
 ♠ A J



♥ A 10 9 4  
 ♣ —  
 ♦ 10 9 8 7 6 2  
 ♠ 10 8 2

♥ 8  
 ♣ A K 10 8 6 4 2  
 ♦ K  
 ♠ Q 9 6 5

Z, Y, and B all have nullo-hands. In the original hand, the rubber hung at stake, and A-B had 28 on it, while Z-Y had nothing. Z's clubs would therefore have been a poor suit on which

to go rubber, because it meant five-odd for game. Z bid "a nullo"; A, "a no-trump"; Y, "two nullos"; and B, "*three nullos*," which I think was the most senseless bid I ever heard. He knew that both his adversaries had nullo-hands, and that his partner not only had a no-trumper but had shown a distinct unwillingness to play nullos. Also, he said, "three nullos, unassisted," that forbidden thing!

Of course, he didn't pull off his bid; he should have bid "three diamonds" on his six trumps to an honor, his side-ace, his blank suit, and his no-trump partner.

The time to bid nullos high is when your partner has shown signs of life and when one (or both) of the adversaries is steadily bidding against them. Then, and then only, you may use them as forcers pure and simple, and bid them higher than you have any hope of making. The adversaries will not know of your inability, and will fear to play against nullos with such strong hands. That is your chance for forcing and defeating; take advantage of their nullo-nervousness.

A small or moderate nullo-loss is profitable in order to save rubber; it is better to forfeit rubber, however, than to lose seven or eight hundred at nullos,—or at anything else.

When both adversaries are bidding no-trumps, you and your partner have a good nullo-chance; both adverse hands hold general strength. When one adversary is bidding one suit, and the other another, again there is a nullo-opening for you and your partner. The high cards of two suits are held against you. When one adversary bids no-trump and the other calls him off,—beware of the latter as a nullo-adversary. He has a low hand, and probable singletons or blank suits.

And now for my two warnings; first, regarding foolish bidding *against* nullos. Some hundreds of times in the past year, have I seen players bid suits, or no-trumps, up to three, four, five, and six,—without a particle of excuse except that they are frightened by adverse nullo-bids. They get doubled and lose anywhere from 400 to 800; and always they comfort themselves with this balm: “Well, anyhow, I’m sure we

should have taken every trick if *they* had played nullos."

Don't you believe it! It is astonishing how you can defeat a nullo-bid when you least expect it. A nullo grand slam is a pretty hard thing to achieve,—though, of course, it can be done. But even granting that they made that nullo grand slam against you,—even granting that it was the rubber-game and they went rubber,—the rubber itself isn't as big as the loss you have just assumed by a foolish bid. *If you have to take a big loss, it is always cheaper to take it on the adversary's bid than on your own.* When the adversary is going to score anyhow, let him score on his own bid, not yours. If you play the hand, every trick you go down nets them 50 or 100. If they play the hand, 10 is the most they can possibly make on a trick (unless doubled). That cross-line on the score-card is a ridiculous bugaboo. One hundred is ten times as much as ten, no matter where you write it.

Lastly, never double nullos rashly. When the bid is very high, and circumstances lead you to doubt its genuineness, you may risk an occasional



double. A moderate nullo-bid should *never* be doubled. You have your partner to consider. His hand may be high; even intermediate cards may all take. Small good will it do you to lose all the tricks in your own hand, if your partner takes them all in his.

One of my readers in New Bedford has put this warning better than I have ever heard it put. He says:

*Don't forget that nullos are played with twenty-six cards,—not with thirteen. Be very wary of bidding them high on your own hand alone.*

*And don't forget that nullos are ASSAILED with twenty-six cards,—not with thirteen. By doubling them on your own hand, you may be forced to watch your partner take every trick!*

I should never double a nullo-bid that was under four. Even at the double of a four-bid I should look askance. I have made "four nullos," and seen them made, too often to doubt their possibility.

Let the score be your guide to nullo-doubles. If the rubber is at stake, double adverse nullo-bids that you would not otherwise double (not

ones, or twos, or threes, however); when the adversary is obviously trying to "save rubber," make it cost him more to do so than to close it. Double his desperation nullo-bid,—and, at the same time, double your own profits. But, even in such cases, don't lose sight of the fact that your partner's hand may kill yours.

But be very wary of doubling *any* nullo-bids when the score makes no demands and rubber is not at stake. Then they are apt to be genuine,—particularly if both adversaries have contributed to their making. Nullo-slams, both great and small, are perfectly possible achievements.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DEUCE IN NULLOS

WHAT the ace is to no-trumps, the deuce is to nullos. The ace is the one sure taker; the deuce is the one sure loser. In no-trumps, if you hold the ace of a suit (whether as Declarant or as adversary),—you “command” the suit,—and nothing would induce you to give up that command too quickly; in nullos, if you hold the deuce of a suit (whether as Declarant or adversary), you equally “command” the suit. *Again, you must be careful not to give up your command too early in the game.*

The deuce is of incalculable value to either side, at any point of the game; *but it grows constantly more valuable as the game progresses.* Particularly should a prospective nullo-Dummy be concerned regarding the deuce *of any long suit he may chance to hold!*

## Nullo-Auction

In the hand of the Declarant, a very long suit is valuable, even if its lowest card is the trey,—or even the four; *this is because the adversaries cannot see his hand.* But the hand of the Dummy is exposed and at their mercy. Any long suit should run to the deuce, to be safe.

Not long ago, I bid “a nullo” on this hand:

♥	J 8 6 4 2
♣	7
♦	Q 10 5 3 2
♠	4 3

My partner raised me to “two,” to “three,” to “four,” to “five,” and to “six.” I have since shown his hand to half a dozen players, and they all declared they would have done the same. This is what he held:

♥	5 3
♣	K Q 10 8 6 5 4 3
♦	4
♠	5 2

The only flaw in that hand was that it lacked the deuce of its long suit. Held up, by the Declarant, that flaw would make no difference;

the adversaries wouldn't know about it and couldn't hammer it. But exposed on the board, it was a terrible weakness.

Of course, my partner had said to himself: "Both adversaries can't hold the deuce; if one plays the deuce the other will be forced to take the trick." Of course, again, there was the chance that I held the deuce.

But I didn't. There were four clubs held against us—the ace, the jack, the nine, and the deuce. If those four were divided evenly between the adversaries—two in each hand—they would block, and would not hurt me. If either adversary held the singleton deuce it could do no harm, because if he led it his partner would be forced to play the ace, jack, or nine, and to take the trick.

But, as a matter of fact, one adversary held the singleton nine of clubs and the other held the ace—jack—deuce. I won my contract simply because the latter adversary did not play properly. The moment he saw Dummy he should have led thus:

Two high hearts, to pull Dummy's hearts;

one high diamond, to pull Dummy's diamond; two high spades, to pull Dummy's spades, and to exhaust his exit-cards. Then the ace of clubs, to hold the lead and to unblock clubs in his partner's hand; on this ace Dummy would naturally throw the king; the adversary should then lead the jack of clubs, Dummy throwing the ten. And the adversary should then lead the deuce and land Dummy with six unavoidable tricks. I, myself, held nothing to frustrate this scheme, as all my cards were losers. Had the deuce been led early in the hand, Dummy could have gotten out with a side-card. Had it been led on the first club-round, the partner would have played his singleton nine, and the suit would have blocked.

A long suit on the board should hold the deuce to be safe.

*Lacking the deuce and holding the ace, it should hold one strong side-card, and lacking both ace and deuce it should hold two strong side-cards.*

Suppose the hand just given (Dummy's, I mean) had been this:

♥ A 3  
 ♣ A K Q 10 8 6 5 4 3  
 ♦ 4  
 ♠ 2

When the adversary had picked up the low diamond and club,—he would have started on hearts. I should have played the ace on the first round, and led high clubs, *to hold the lead, and to pull the deuce*. As I commanded the suit, no one could hinder me. The moment the dangerous deuce of clubs fell, I should have walked out of Dummy by leading the remaining low heart.

But suppose Dummy's hand had been this:

♥ A 5 3  
 ♣ K Q 10 8 6 5 4 3  
 ♦ 4  
 ♠ 2

That hand lacks both ace and deuce of its long suit and has but one high side-card. The adversary would have pulled the diamond and spade, and started on hearts. Again, I should have come in on the first round, and led a high

club. He would have thrown his jack. I should have led another high club (because I wanted his deuce); he would have played the ace, pulled my two little hearts, and thrown me in with the deuce. I should have been at his mercy. The hand was unsafe because it was unguarded at *both* ends of its long *suit*, and held but *one* high side-card.

But suppose Dummy held two strong side-cards, thus:

♥	A K 3
♣	K Q 10 8 6 5 4 3
♦	4
♠	2

Then we would be safe, provided the bid was not higher than "three"; even at "four" our losses would have been slight. Dummy would lose the spade-round and the diamond-round; he would come in on the first heart-lead and lead clubs; if the ace took the round, he would come in again on the second heart-lead, lead the king of clubs to hold the lead, then another to pull the mischief-making deuce, and then he would



get out with the trey of hearts, having taken but four tricks.

After working for hours over this and similar hands, I evolved this general rule, *which can never fail*:

*A long suit, exposed on the board, should hold its deuce. Lacking its deuce, but holding its ace, there should be one strong side-card in the hand. Lacking both deuce and ace of a long exposed suit, the hand should hold two strong side-cards. These cards should be guarded once, at least, by a sure loser.*

That discovery was a bonanza! Players I have never seen have written me that it should be placed side by side with the immortal "Rule of Eleven." And haven't we come a long way since the days when our idea of a blissful nullo-hand was a collection of cards that held nothing higher than an eight-spot?





Remember that, in the *closed* hand, the deuce is not an absolute adjunct to a long suit; and that in *neither* hand is it an adjunct to a *short* suit. Simply to a long suit in a Dummy that holds no side-strength.

While a trey may often be a taker in nullos, and may mean much trouble for you (as Declarant), a singleton trey is rarely a taker. It could take only in the case where one adversary held the deuce and the other adversary was blank in the suit. For him to be blank and for you to hold a singleton would mean twelve cards of that suit lying between your partner and the second adversary—an unusual occurrence. All these little points can be memorized, and will prove immense helps in teaching you to recognize a nullo-hand at a glance, to see its flaws, and to discriminate between a safe and an unsafe nullo-make.

Don't you remember the days when you labored over your rules for a no-trump declaration? "Three aces and a guarded honor;" "one ace and three guarded honors"; "a long suit and general strength"; "one long established black suit and a side-ace";—oh, the hours I spent memorizing those formulas! And now, we never consciously remember them. We know a no-trumper at sight,—by its feel, by its look. Even so, will you recognize a nullo-hand and





a nullo-assist, when once you are used to them.

Your partner bids "a nullo," you pick up your hand, and it looks like this:

 3  
 K Q 8 7 6 5 4  
 A K 3 2  
 2

You say to yourself: "I have a long suit that lacks its ace, its deuce, and even its trey. But I have two strong side-cards that will prevent the adversaries from exhausting my exit-cards before my partner can pull the two low clubs. Also, I have two singletons that promise discards." You let the nullo stand, and you even raise it considerably, because you know the type of your hand. You recognize it as "safe."

But your partner bids nullos, and your hand looks like this:

 3 2  
 K Q 9 8 7 6 5 4  
 4  
 4 3

To a novice that would look like a better

## Nulló-Auction

nullo-assist than the other; but you know better. You know that if one of the adversaries happens to hold a hand like this:

♥ K Q 5  
 ♣ A 10 3  
 ♦ A 8 7 6  
 ♠ K J 10

he can make trouble for your partner. He can pull your two hearts, your one diamond, your two spades; he can then lead the ace and ten of clubs, to unblock, and then his trey, and land Dummy with every other trick; and that, although he lacks the deuce of clubs. Your partner may hold that himself; it won't help him any if the adversary holds three to the trey and your lowest card is the four-spot.

On a hand of that sort a safe player will never raise nullos; he will even over-call, once, with "two clubs." Of course, there is the chance that the hand will go perfectly at nullos; but there is also the chance that it won't. It is the sort that is distinctly "unsafe"; knowing nullo types, you know that. You may choose to take the risk, but you won't do it ignorantly.

To make a discovery like that is to know real pleasure. That deuce-rule can never fail. Out of some hundreds of hands that have helped me to make it, I am going to give you a couple.

The first was sent me from the Anthracite Bridge Club, in Carbondale, Pa. It is a hand to which I shall devote some space, later in this book. On its original appearance, nullos did not enter into the bidding; I was asked if they should have done so:

	♥ J 9 7 3										
	♣ —										
	♦ 8										
	♠ Q 9 8 7 6 5 4 3										
♥ A 10 8 6 ♣ K Q J 8 5 ♦ J 9 4 3 ♠ —	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Y</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ K Q 5 4 2 ♣ 10 4 3 ♦ K Q ♠ A K J
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ —										
	♣ A 9 7 6 2										
	♦ A 10 7 6 5 2										
	♠ 10 2										

The original hand was bid, and played, at

royals. But we will imagine it at nullos for our present purposes.

Suppose Z opens nullos on a blank suit and all the rest of the deuces. Y will know himself to be an unsafe nullo-Dummy; he has a long suit unprotected at both ends (lacking both its ace and deuce) and no strong-side-cards with which to hold up the adversaries' schemes. His other suit (hearts) runs also to the trey and not the deuce.

Y could *declare* nullos because his hand would not be seen. He could not be a safe nullo-Dummy; he must over-call his partner's nullos with royals, on the first round.

Z himself holds the deuce of spades, *but not the deuce of hearts*; and that is his undoing.

If Z plays nullos, A's first lead is the nine, or the four, of diamonds,—preferably the former. Dummy gets rid of his eight. But the moment B sees Dummy he should play thus:

The king of diamonds, unavoidably; his three spades, A discarding his highest three hearts and Dummy ducking. It wouldn't help him any to take the third round of spades; he would but

go down one trick more. Then B should play his king of hearts (A throwing the six), and then his five-spot. After that, Dummy takes every trick. He cannot help himself.

One more instance:

	♥ —										
	♣ K Q 9 5 4 3										
	♦ A 3 2										
	♠ A 7 6 5										
♥ Q J 9 5 ♣ A J 2 ♦ J 10 9 ♠ Q 10 8	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Y</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">A</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">B</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Z</td><td></td></tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ A 10 8 7 ♣ 10 8 ♦ 8 7 6 5 ♠ K J 9
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ K 6 4 3 2										
	♣ 7 6										
	♦ K Q 4										
	♠ 4 3 2										

Suppose you are playing nullos with this hand (you are Z, and Dummy has raised you twice; I should rather Y had said "clubs," with his two side-aces, but he didn't).

The way you should play that hand would be to draw the only card you fear (the deuce of clubs) as soon as possible. And the way A

should play the hand is to withhold the card you want. Leaving Z out of the question, if A-B could force Y to duck two rounds of diamonds, three of spades, and two of clubs, A (coming into the lead with his ace, on the second club-round) would lead his remaining club,—the deuce,—and land Y with six inevitable tricks.

A's best lead is the nine of hearts, because it is the only suit, save clubs, of which he holds a low card for later deadly use. His clubs he is saving. He could lead any of his top three hearts, except that the lead of the jack or queen *might* permit Z to throw the ten (it wouldn't, but A doesn't know that). The nine of hearts is a fair, stock lead, and we will suppose him to make it.

Dummy goes down with a long suit that lacks its deuce but holds the two requisite high side-cards. With seven spades in the two hands, it is apparent that Z can duck three rounds and that the ace will probably never take; it will be apt to be a thirteener,—or a discard. But let Z never dream of discarding Dummy's ace of diamonds; he *has* to take two diamond-rounds anyhow; his own cards show that. Let him hold on to his



high diamond in the long club-hand. If that tantalizing deuce of clubs be held up till the third round, Z *cannot* lead a third club-round from his own hand. He will *need* to get into Dummy with the diamond ace (on the second diamond-round, and when his own clubs are gone), pull that deuce of clubs, and walk out with the third diamond.

“Get-outry” is as necessary to nullos as “re-entry” to no-trumps. “Exit-cards” are the most desirable things in the world; and the surest exit-card is the deuce,—unless it happens to be a thirteener. Then, of course, it is as much a taker as is an ace.

## CHAPTER VI

### CORRECT OPENING NULLO-LEADS

OF the various opening nullo-leads, the singleton is the best. *Any singleton* (save the deuce and the trey) *is better than any other possible lead*; but a high or intermediate singleton makes a better opening lead than a low singleton because,—while the Declarant may be enabled to get rid of two dangerous cards on your lead,—you, yourself, will not wish you had it back, later in the hand. When you lead a high, or an intermediate, singleton you get rid of a card that cannot fail to be dangerous at any point of the hand, and you insure yourself of a discard on every subsequent round of the suit. When you lead a low singleton, you equally insure your discard, but you rob yourself of a card that may well prove more valuable later in the hand. I have already shown you how the value of low

cards is enhanced as the hand progresses; they may throw the lead to the Declarant after he is shorn of exit-cards; or they may prove most welcome exit-cards to an adversary who would otherwise be forced to take the balance of the tricks. These facts are true of the deuce and the trey alone. Any card higher than the trey can be ducked in two hands; it therefore cannot be counted on as a sure means of throwing the Declarant in.

The fact that it is a singleton is ample excuse for leading an ace, king, or queen. And it is one of the very few excuses for so doing.

Doubleton leads do not appeal to me greatly, unless the second card is a *sure* loser,—a deuce or a trey. I played once against a man who insisted on doubleton leads; he led the ace of diamonds; I threw the king from one hand and the jack from the other (the king was the one card I had of which I was really afraid). He followed with the seven of diamonds; I ducked with a five in one hand and a four in the other. He took both rounds and never got his discard at all. His partner happened to hold

but the queen (which he threw on the ace), the six, and the trey. I held a long jack-deuce suit in one hand, and the king-four in the other. I got rid of them both. Had the leader held up the suit he might have gotten rid of one of his cards, and he could certainly have forced me to take with my king.

The case is quite different when your second card is a sure loser. If you have no other better lead in your hand, of course lead your doubleton ace-seven, or queen-eight. But they are not good nullo-leads.

Holding a fair hand with which to assail nullos, and one poor suit (consisting of two or three high cards unguarded by any low ones), you are at liberty to lead those three high cards first, on the principle that they are takers anyhow, and that you would rather get rid of them early than be caught with them late. On this hand, for instance:

♥ Q J 9 5 4

♣ K 6 3

♦ J 8

♠ A K Q

## Correct Opening Nullo-Leads 73

you *might* correctly lead out those three spades. I do not care especially for this as an opening lead. Lead them, of course, while you still have exit-cards in your hand; don't get caught with three high hearts, a high club, and three high spades in your hand,—and nothing else. It is dreadful to get thrown in the lead with nothing but a handful of takers. But I have rarely seen a hand when much was gained by three such *opening* leads, and the Declarant's mind is always tremendously relieved when he sees them. What pleases him, shouldn't please you.

If you have no proper singleton or doubleton lead, an excellent opening lead is *an intermediate card* of a long mixed suit. Your partner may be short where you are long and may get valuable discards. If you hold this, for instance:

A J 8 5 2

lead your eight-spot. You will have two low cards for later use and low cards grow more and more valuable as the hand progresses; your ace will probably never take; and *the Declarant can get rid of no very high cards on your eight, unless he*

*takes the trick.* If he ducks, he may have to take your five on the second round (there are not many cards lower than the five, you hold one, he has already ducked once, and there are two other players to hold their share); and you may throw him in later with the deuce.

The next-best lead is a low card from a series of low cards (not necessarily a sequence), *always taking care to retain a card, or cards, lower than the one led.* This is an invariable rule in original nullo-leads, except in cases of singletons.

A king from king-trey-deuce, or an ace from ace-trey-deuce, is an obviously perfect lead.

Later in the hand, internal leads of high cards are often advisable. They are made with the object of holding the lead while exhausting adverse exit-cards. But there should be some very good reason for a high opening lead.

Now, I have told you that a singleton is the best possible first-lead,—and I have told you that deuces should be saved till the hand has somewhat progressed. Suppose your singleton is a deuce; what then?

## Correct Opening Nullo-Leads 75

Don't lead it, if you have any other possible lead. It is a long chance if your partner doesn't block your singleton deuce, but there *is* the chance.

Suppose your hand, against nullos, looks like this:

♥ J 6 5  
♣ K 8 7  
♦ 2  
♠ A J 10 8 6 4

I should lead *any* suit, rather than the diamond; there are a number of possible leads in the hand. You would, of course, have been bidding your royals against the nullos. By leading an intermediate spade (the eight-spot) you might catch the Declarant short, in his own hand or in Dummy. He might hold, for instance, the nine-spot and one ducking card. He must either take your eight-spot and retain his ducker, or he must duck your eight-spot and take the next round with his nine.

Again, that is a very open-looking hand. You are not apt to get caught badly at the end with nothing but takers.

There is one type of hand on which I should lead my singleton deuce, and that is a "stone-wall" hand,—a hand that is all takers, except for that deuce. Such a hand would be this:

♥ K J 10 8  
 ♣ A K J 9 8  
 ♦ 2  
 ♠ Q J 10

That is a perfectly murderous combination with which to assail nullos. You need nothing so much as discards. By leading your diamond deuce, your partner will know it for a singleton; no one but an imbecile would lead a deuce, otherwise. He might take, and lead high diamonds to hold the lead and to give you the discards you demand. On three such leads, you could throw your spades; were his spades low or long you might never take a spade-round between you,—thanks to discard.

An intensely interesting hand was sent me by a reader of *The Times*. A singleton deuce of clubs landed Dummy with a long string of tricks because, though the partner of the deuce-holder was originally burdened with four high clubs, he



## Correct Opening Nullo-Leads 77

was able to get rid of them all in discard. Here is the hand:

♥	10 7 5 2			
♣	K Q 10 8 6 5 4 3			
♦	—			
♠	2			
♥	A K Q J 8	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>Y</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>A</span> <span>B</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center;"> <span>Z</span> </div>	♥	—
♣	2		♣	A J 9 7
♦	J 9 5		♦	Q 10 8 7 6
♠	10 8 6 5		♠	Q J 9 7
♥	9 6 4 3			
♣	—			
♦	A K 4 3 2			
♠	A K 4 3			

A had been bidding hearts, and Z had captured the bid at nullos. A's first lead was fortunately the eight of spades. Had he led his singleton deuce of clubs B would have taken and led three club-rounds, on which A could have discarded three high hearts; but then Z would also have been discarding high spades and diamonds, and A could never have thrown Dummy in, later. Had A led his nine of diamonds it

would have worked just as well as the spade eight except that Dummy would have got one discard.

A led the eight of spades, and B played the seven, so as to leave A the lead; he hoped A would lead high hearts in order to exhaust Dummy's exit-cards. His hopes were realized. A led four high hearts, on which B discarded all his clubs, and A then threw Dummy in with the club deuce.

Z would certainly have taken the first spade-round and led clubs in order to pull the deuce, but that he had no clubs. He might have led his high diamonds and spades, discarding clubs in Dummy, but he would have been taking all the tricks anyhow. It is just as bad to take them in one hand as in the other. And he couldn't possibly pull that dangerous deuce.

Of course, this is an unusual hand. If B had held two of Z's hearts, if Z had had just one club, if Y had held one taking card, outside his clubs, the thing couldn't have worked. But it only goes to show that there are cases in which a singleton deuce, held against a nullo-Dummy, may ruin the Declarant.

## Correct Opening Nullo-Leads 79

And the hand puts still further emphasis on my law of the nullo-deuce. In this hand had Y held a side-ace, Z would have taken the first spade, gone into Dummy with the side-ace, pulled the deuce of clubs, and walked out with the deuce of hearts.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PLAY OF THE NULLO-HAND

*By Declarant*

THERE are so many types of nullo-hands that it is impossible to give one hard-and-fast rule for their play, and to say "All nullo-hands should be played so,—or so." If that could be done, nullos would indeed be a marvel.

Novices always ask me: "Should you play all your high cards first?" or "Should you play all your low cards first?" Until you see a hand, you cannot recognize its type and you cannot advise concerning it.

All beginners skim off their low cards too early in the hand,—and seem afraid to take a single trick. Just so, all no-trump beginners skim off all their aces and kings, and seem afraid to lose a single trick. Gradually they learn that by losing early, they generally take more

## The Play of the Nullo-Hand 81

tricks later. And the nullo-player learns that by *taking* early, he generally *loses* more tricks later.

The next phase is apt to be unnecessary taking. Tricks are taken that should never be taken. Perfectly possible bids are defeated.

The Declarant's first business, when Dummy goes down, is to count the sequences, or near-sequences, between the two hands,—*beginning with the deuce and counting upwards*. Let him look at each suit and count thus: "Deuce, trey (I lack the trey, but both adversaries cannot hold it), four, five, six (I lack the seven but from there up to the ten, my cards are in sequence.\*)" Then let him take stock thus: "In my best suit, I lack the seven and the trey; what can happen if those cards lie separately? What if they lie together? If they lie separately I shall not take a trick in the suit, provided I lead my six-spot. If they lie together, I am bound to take one trick; and, unless I pull that trey, I may take many more."

*If the Declarant is afraid of any one card, he should get it.* He should lead that suit till that

card falls. This is particularly true of an adverse deuce that is provokingly held up.

Lead high cards of a suit when it is desirable to hold the lead for several rounds in order to get a particular card. But, when there is no particular object in holding the lead, *lead low cards when you want low cards to fall*. Just as you lead high cards, in no-trumps, when you want to get high cards, so, in nullo, do you lead low cards when you want to get low cards.

Suppose your Dummy holds the jack-five-four-three of diamonds; the only diamonds against you are the eight and deuce, and you know them to be in the same hand. You must get that deuce, for fear it will throw you in, later, when your cards are all "thirteeners" and you cannot get out. But it would be senseless to lead the jack, in order to pull the deuce; your adversary would but get rid of his eight, on the jack, and you would take two rounds of the suit. Lead your trey,—that is a great coaxer; an unwise adversary will throw the deuce that you want. A wise one will hold it up till the next round but, even so, you take but one trick instead of two.

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*Play touching cards from the two hands.* If you play a ten from Dummy, and a nine from your own hand, no one can get in between them. The adversaries have either to take the trick or to use up two good duckers. If, on the contrary, you play a jack from one hand and a nine from the other, one adversary can play a "between-card" (the ten), and the other can duck. Only one ducker drawn instead of two,—and the throw of a very embarrassing card,—all because your cards didn't touch.

Sequence-holding, sequence-count, and sequence-play are the great nullo secrets.

Don't be in too great a hurry to take adverse intermediate cards. Suppose an eight is led, and you hold but the ten and the six. Don't cover that eight with your ten, on the principle that it "has to take anyhow, and may as well do it first as last." By playing your six, you lose one round and take one; by playing your ten, you will probably take both rounds; you will take the eight with your ten; the next lead may be a four or a five,—and you will take again with your six.

*Senseless taking is as bad as senseless ducking.  
Have a reason for everything you do.*

Never forget a card; never speak while playing a nullo-hand; you simply cannot afford to. Never forget to notice just what cards are held against you and to calculate what can happen if they are together—or separated.

A good nullo-plan for both Declarant and adversary is “middle play.” When you don’t know what to do, play a “middle” card (one that leaves you with both higher and lower cards) and you will be apt to be right.

The Declarant should keep all of Dummy’s suits guarded as long as possible; he should always be glad to “duck” a dangerous card like the nine or the jack—when played by the adversary—particularly if he can get rid of a card like the eight or the ten and still keep a guard in the suit.

The Declarant should *generally* do most of his necessary taking early in the hand, but he should not regard all aces and kings as necessary takers. If they are sufficiently well guarded they will never take.



If the Declarant should find himself "up against it" with an impossible nullo-hand,—a hand that admits of no skill or finesse,—he should simply duck as often as possible. Every duck saves him fifty, or a hundred.

The discard in nullos calls for great acumen. You should always discard your *most dangerous* card,—but that isn't necessarily your *highest*. It is often necessary to hold on to an ace and to discard an eight or a seven.

A cross-discard is as valuable in nullos as is a cross-ruff in any declared trump; but you cannot work it quite as successfully because you would have to continue to take tricks in order to lead a suit from one hand, discard on it from the other,—and then reverse the process. Simply, your cross-discard hampers the adversary horribly in his play (there are two suits he doesn't want to lead), and gives you wonderful chances to get rid of embarrassing cards.

When the adversaries are the ones to hold a cross-discard, the Declarant is the one to be hampered. *No one wants to give his adversary valuable discards, if he can avoid it.* I played a

maddening nullò-hand, the other day: each of my adversaries held a singleton, and was ready to discard on the second round of a suit. I had been congratulating myself on the unusual make-up of my own hand, consisting, as it did, of a blank suit, a singleton, and two six-card suits, one of which ran to the jack, and the other to the king.

Unfortunately one such hand on a deal is nearly sure to mean four unusual hands. My adversaries were as eager for discards as I. The only way to prevent them from discarding was to lead the two suits they both held; and the only way to continue to do that was to hold the lead for several rounds. By following that method, I threw them in, just after I had taken the last trick I dared take. Then they began to lead, and I began to discard; even though they discarded on each other's suits, it did me no harm, for they took all the remaining tricks.

Here is a situation which often causes trouble: Z is playing three nullos. He has taken two tricks and can afford to take two more, and make his bid, or one more, and go game (it is a clean

## The Play of the Nullo-Hand 87

score). He knows the heart situation from the cards that have fallen. He knows that one adversary holds no more hearts and that the other adversary (A) holds the queen and eight of hearts, those being the only unplayed hearts that Z himself lacks. Eight rounds have been played, six of which have gone to the adversaries and two to Z. Each player holds five cards, and Z wants to take but one more trick. He must lead, and his five remaining cards are these:

♥	K J 10 7
♣	—
♦	A
♠	—

The ace of diamonds is a thirteener and Dummy is perfectly harmless.

A holds the queen and eight of hearts, and his other three cards are all high and all takers.

Z must positively lead the jack or ten of hearts, then he is safe, whether A ducks or not. He would be equally safe in leading the king, because A would throw the queen; Z would follow the lead with the seven, forcing A to take with the

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eight and also to take every other trick. But it would be senseless to give A the chance to throw the queen when, by some fluke, it might be made to take.

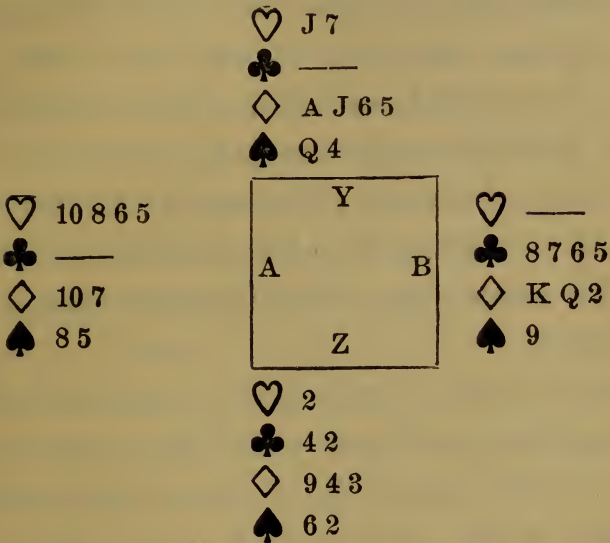
When Z leads the jack, or ten, A should duck, for it means one trick less for him. If he takes that trick he will take them all. After he ducks, Z leads the seven and A takes the balance.

I have seen players in Z's position lead the seven-spot. They apparently hope that A will take the seven with the eight and the jack with the queen, thus taking all the heart-rounds. No A would do that. He would take the seven with the queen, lead his eight, and Z (being shorn of duckers) would take the last four rounds, six in all, defeat for his bid, and a very pretty game thrown away.

It is not always policy to throw a high card and to keep a low one. Particularly in those cases where one of the Declarant's hands is dangerous and the other is harmless, it is nearly always desirable *to keep a high card in the harmless hand*. In proof of this, let me show you a wonderful eight-card nullò-problem sent me by

# The Play of the Nullo-Hand 89

one of the readers of *The Times*, who signed himself "A. F."



Z is playing "five nullos," on almost impossible five-nullo material. He was the victim of his partner's bidding, that partner having raised the bid to "three," to "four," to "five." Thanks to extremely clever playing, "A. F." made his bid. He has lost the first four rounds, and has just taken the fifth in his own hand. He must therefore lead, and may take but one more trick.

Permit me to point out that if "A. F." had

played nullos as half the world plays them he would never have made five. He would have gone on the principle that "as high cards must take anyhow, they may as well do it first as last." He would have taken with the queen of spades, probably with the jack of hearts; he might have led his ace of diamonds, throwing his nine, and permitting B to throw king and A the ten. He would have taken another diamond-round later.

Just look, I pray you, at all the high cards that lay exposed in that Dummy, and that never took tricks—thanks to the skill of the man who played Z.

Z leads a club, discarding Dummy's jack of hearts, and forcing the trick on B. B's best lead is another club, even though it gives Dummy another discard. It will exhaust Z's clubs, and prevent his throwing B in later in the hand. On this second club-lead Dummy must discard the heart seven, in order to unblock hearts for Z's deuce, and prepare the way for a spade discard when hearts are led. (The queen of spades is a much higher card than the seven of hearts, but it would make a fatal discard.)

## The Play of the Nullo-Hand 91

B still holds the lead. He leads his singleton spade, Z ducking in both hands. B's next aim is to unblock diamonds, so as to throw Dummy in, at the end of the hand. To that end, he leads his king. Any nullo amateur, in Z's place, would throw the nine, because it is his highest card. This Z doesn't. *He holds up his nine, because when he gets caught on the third diamond-round he would rather be caught in his own hand than in Dummy.* If he lets Dummy take the last diamond-round, Dummy will also take every remaining trick, five in all—a defeat of three tricks (300 points) for Z.

Z holds up his nine of diamonds, throwing his own four and Dummy's jack onto B's king. B takes the round. B leads the queen of diamonds, Z throwing his own trey and Dummy's six. B takes the round.

B leads the deuce of diamonds. Z takes with his own nine, throwing Dummy's five. He then leads the deuce of hearts. A is forced to take, because Z has already discarded Dummy's seven. Z throws Dummy's queen of spades on the heart-round, and never takes another trick.

I pray you to remember this lesson: *With a dangerous Dummy, unblock the suits, so as to take the final round in the low hand.* Retain a taking card in the hand that holds "exit" cards rather than in the hand that does not. This is not a trumped-up trick-hand. It actually happened and was actually played in this manner by the original Z the first time he ever saw it.

I shall use this hand again, later in the chapter, to teach another lesson to the nullo-adversary. Our present business is with the Declarant.

It will often pay the Declarant better to let an unpleasant suit *come up* to him, than to lead it out. Here is a hand in which I was Z; the score was 28 = all, on the rubber-game:



	♥ 8 5 4 2										
	♣ A 4										
	♦ J 10 8 5 3										
	♠ 5 3										
♥ A K 10 6 ♣ J 9 6 ♦ A 7 ♠ K Q 10 7	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ J 7 3 ♣ K 8 5 ♦ K 9 6 ♠ A J 9 8
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ Q 9										
	♣ Q 10 7 3 2										
	♦ Q 4 2										
	♠ 6 4 2										

I opened with "a nullo," and A said "a no-trump"; Y, "two nullo"; B, "three no-trumps." The two suits were bid against each other until I was left to play "five nullo." That meant I might take but two tricks and A-B stopped bidding because they thought I would never make it.

A led the ace of diamonds, Dummy went down, and I began to count sequences. In diamonds I held deuce-trey-four-five, and then a jump to the eight. Whether or not the six and seven were in different hands, my diamonds were

safe. Hearts, of course, were bad in my own hand, *and I determined not to touch them.* Had they been bad in both hands,—had I held ace in one hand and king in the other,—I should have played them out as soon as I was in the lead, and should have gotten rid of two bad cards at once; but Dummy's hearts were good while mine were short and poor; I determined not to tamper with them. My spades were wonderful, I had the lowest five. And, while my long clubs held low cards, it was apparent I must take one round. Dummy's four, however, need never take, because I held both trey and deuce myself (an exposed four can sometimes do great harm). *I must* take with the club ace, and then I might safely take one heart-round, but not two.

On A's ace of diamonds, Y threw the jack, B the king, and I, the queen. A led the seven of diamonds, Y and I ducking, and B over-taking with the nine. B led the six, to give his partner the desired discard; A had so many cards he wanted to discard, he could hardly choose amongst them. However, his choice of the ace of hearts gave me this idea: *A had high hearts;*

*if I could make him play hearts ahead of me, I might get rid of my nine-spot; if, on the contrary, I played hearts ahead of A, I should probably be defeated by one trick.* It became my immediate object to throw A into the lead; he would lead *up to me*, while B would lead *through me*.

After B took the third diamond-round, he led his king of clubs,—up to Dummy's ace. (In nullo, you lead up to strength, where in other suits you lead up to weakness.) I threw my queen, A threw his jack, and I took with Dummy's ace. I wouldn't lead hearts up to A; I could lead spades or clubs with safety. If I led the spade, B would hardly play his ace,—he would be too much afraid of my throwing a big card. If he played any other spade, A would undoubtedly over-take the trick, because it was his partner's, anyhow. If I led Dummy's club, A would follow the same plan,—he would over-take the trick that was already his partner's.

Then what could A lead? If he led spades, I ducked everything in both hands and got a third-round discard in Dummy. He had no diamonds, and he hated to lead a club and give Dummy a

discard. He went to his doom with a heart-lead, and I made my contract.

If A led the six of hearts, I could take with the queen and return the nine. If he led any other heart, I could throw my nine. **In any** case, I was safe, with but one round.

Either a club or a spade would have been a better lead from A,—even though Dummy discarded. B could have over-taken either black suit, and by leading a heart *through* me (A playing *after* me) could have defeated me by one trick. It is on such slender threads that the fate of nullo-hands sometimes hangs. That is what makes them so fascinating; sometimes they are obvious, but far more frequently they are subtle to the last degree.

### *For the Adversary*

The adversary's play against a nullo should be guided by Dummy, by his partner's signals and discards, and by his own hand. *He should rarely lose an opportunity to give his partner a discard for which he has asked.* Even when the Declarant gets a discard on the same suit, if the *part-*

## The Play of the Nullo-Hand 97

*ner plays after the Declarant*, the discard is still valuable. Sometimes it is valuable anyhow.

Unblocking is a great secret for the adversary, —playing his suits downwards. Beginning in the middle (if [the suit is long) and playing backwards is a good general method.

If an adversary holds a bad suit, with but one ducker, it is generally better to save that ducker for the last. Holding ace-king-four of any suit, and seeing that suit led by partner or Declarant, it is the best plan to save the low card, nine cases out of ten.

The adversaries should avoid giving Dummy a discard or establishing a discard for Dummy by leading up to a singleton. If Dummy holds a singleton king and no blank suit on which to discard it, don't be in too much of a hurry to lead up to that king. It can always be made to take. Suppose Dummy holds this:

♥ A 5 4 3 2  
♣ K  
♦ 10 5 3  
♠ J 10 9 2

Don't be too anxious to lead up to that king

of clubs; it cannot be discarded and will always take. Hammer those spades first and then the king of clubs. If you take out the king first the Declarant can lead little clubs from his own hand and get rid of some of those deadly spades.

The adversaries should notice what suit the Declarant fears, and should lead that suit to him. Signs of fear are discard and avoidance. In the former case (discard), either adversary may lead the suit; in the latter case (avoidance), the suit is preferably led by the adversary who can lead through the Declarant. *The Declarant should not be permitted to play last, on a suit which he is palpably avoiding.*

A good easy point for adversaries to remember is that *so many ducks will defeat the bid.* If the Declarant is playing four nullo, he can afford to take but three tricks. *If both adversaries can duck four rounds, they can defeat him.* And so on with other bids. This is a primitive sort of rule, but a very useful one.

And now I will show you something far from primitive, by reverting to the eight-card problem which we discussed earlier in the chapter. You

## The Play of the Nullo-Hand 99

remember, Z was playing "five nullos," with a very unpleasant Dummy. Z has lost four rounds, and has just taken the fifth in his own hand. He must therefore lead, and the cards lie thus:

	♥ J 7 ♣ — ♦ A J 6 5 ♠ Q 4										
♥ 10 8 6 5 ♣ — ♦ 10 7 ♠ 8 5	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ — ♣ 8 7 6 5 ♦ K Q 2 ♠ 9
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ 2 ♣ 4 2 ♦ 9 4 3 ♠ 6 2										

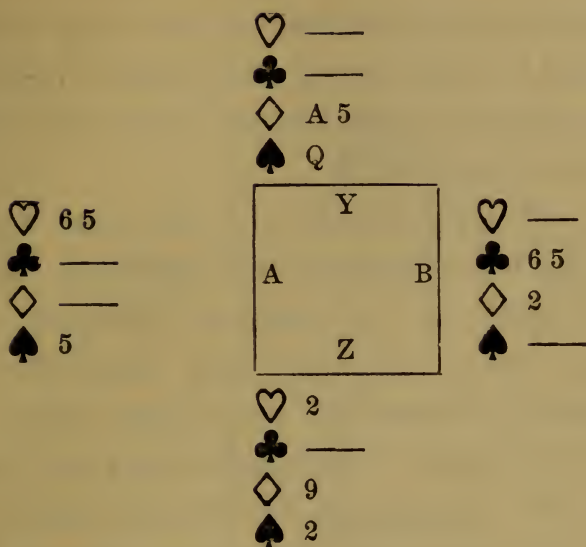
Z leads a club, throwing Dummy's highest heart, and forces the trick on B. B hates to lead another club and give Dummy another discard; but it is his best lead because he must exhaust Z's clubs. Otherwise, Z can throw him in, later in the hand (after his diamonds are gone), by a club-lead, and force him to take every remaining trick.

B therefore leads his club, and Dummy discards the seven of hearts. B leads his spade, which Z ducks in both hands. B sees Dummy with nothing but the queen of spades and the ace-jack-six-five of diamonds. That looks like a wonderful chance. B leads diamond king,—Z throwing his own four and Dummy's jack; B leads queen, and Z throws his three and Dummy's six. Now, before, we took it for granted that B would lead his deuce, in his effort to throw Dummy in. Most players would. But there is a very subtle way in which B can match Z's cleverness and force him to take three tricks instead of two,—thus putting him down one.

Let him refrain from leading the deuce of diamonds, for just one round. Let him lead a club, *in order to give his partner a discard after Z has discarded.* Did A discard before Z, the latter could still win, as he would then have the tremendous advantage of modeling his discard upon his adversary's. As it is, that advantage is A's, not Z's. The cards now lie thus:



# The Play of the Nullo-Hand 101



And Z should take but one trick.

B leads the club, and Z must discard, not the diamond, for that would mean that Dummy would take the last two rounds. If Z discards his heart, A will throw his spade, so that Z can never put him in. If Z discards his spade, A will discard one of his hearts, and the other will immediately fall on the deuce of diamonds, which B will promptly lead. However it is played, Z will take two of the last three rounds, provided B leads a club before he leads the diamond deuce.

It is the old question of discard, so infinitely

more subtle and vital in nullos than in any other suit. And it is the equally old *coup* of forcing the other man to discard ahead of you, in order to fit your discard to his.

“Get out and get under,” is the great nullo war-cry for both Declarant and adversary. But “getting out” is ten times as necessary as “getting under.” I have seen hundreds of hands ruined because all the players were so crazy to “get under” they quite forgot the later necessity for “getting out.” They got under so many of the early tricks that, along toward the middle of the hand, they found they had no way to get out. They were left in the lead, with every card a taker.

I will give you a few actual nullo hands, to emphasize the maxims laid down in the preceding chapters.

# The Play of the Nullo-Hand 103

	♥ K Q 10 5 2										
	♣ 7										
	♦ Q J 4										
	♠ A Q J 10										
♥ J 3 ♣ K Q J 5 ♦ A 10 8 5 3 ♠ 8 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Y</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">A</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">B</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Z</td><td></td></tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ 6 4 ♣ 10 9 8 4 3 2 ♦ 9 7 6 2 ♠ 3
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ A 9 8 7										
	♣ A 6										
	♦ K										
	♠ K 9 7 6 5 4										

In the original hand Z opened with "a no-trump"; I should have preferred "a royal." His side-aces are as useful for royals as for no-trumps; his spades are poor, but long, and would be much better for trumps than at no-trumps. However, he chose the latter.

A passed, Y over-called with "two royals" on his honors, and B said "three nullos." This is against the rule; you shouldn't say three nullos unassisted. However, B was fighting for the rubber; one of his adversaries was bidding the

highest of all the suits and the other the next-to-highest.

Z switched to royals and A gave his partner one nullo-raise because he had every suit guarded. B finally got the bid at "five nullos." Z-Y could have outbid this in royals, but they could not see each other's hands, and they hoped to beat the nullos. Each had a long suit, a singleton, and some low cards.

Z led his singleton diamond, everyone ducking with as high a card as possible. The moment Dummy went down, B's wonderful club and diamond sequences promised him victory. Those sequences are all that save the hand. He expected to take with the spade eight, but Y saved him.

In Z's place many players would next have led the ace of clubs and then the six. It would have been a singularly fortunate lead for B; he could have made a small slam with no trouble and no worry.

The real Z led the nine of hearts, through Dummy's jack. B played the jack, on the principle of keeping Dummy's suits guarded as

long as possible. Y had his choice of taking the trick in order to lead two diamonds and give his partner two discards,—or of playing the ten of hearts. He wisely chose the latter course.

B led clubs twice,—knowing someone must soon take with the ace. He took but two tricks,—the heart-round and one club-round.

Had Y over-taken the heart jack, and led his two diamonds (jack first), Z would have gotten two discards,—either both his clubs, or both his aces. In spite of this, B would have made a slam. As soon as Z's club (or clubs) fell in discard, B would have known the seven of clubs to be a taker and would have ducked it with his five.

Here is a peculiar hand sent me by a reader of *The Times*:

## Nullo-Auction

	♥ 9 7 5 3										
	♣ —										
	♦ K Q J 9 7 5 4 2										
	♠ 4										
♥ J 10 6 4 ♣ A Q J 3 ♦ 8 ♠ 6 5 3 2	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ K ♣ K 10 8 7 6 ♦ A ♠ A K Q J 10 7
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ A Q 8 2										
	♣ 9 5 4 2										
	♦ 10 6 3										
	♠ 9 8										

It was the rubber-game, and A-B were 20—0. The correspondent who sent me the hand was playing “Y”, and bid very correctly.

Z opened with “a nullo”; his hand, I suppose, is a possible nullo, but not a good one. The clubs are good for nullos, the spades and hearts bad, and the diamonds indifferent, but they may land two tricks. I should be more apt to say “a spade” on that hand than “a nullo,” and I never should say “two nullos.” A and Y have good nullo-hands, but A’s partner would prove his death.

## The Play of the Nullo-Hand 107

Z said "a nullo"; A and Y passed; B, "a royal"; Z, "two nullos"; A, "two royals"; Y, "three nullos"; B, "three royals"; Z, "four nullos"; A, "double"; Y, "redouble"; B, "four royals"; Z, "pass"; A, "pass"; Y, "five nullos"; B, "five royals"; Z and A, "pass"; Y, "six nullos"; B, "double." Closed.

I don't like A's double of "four nullos." With both adversaries bidding nullos and a good nullo-hand himself, A might know that his partner must hold high cards and would get in his way.

I don't like Y's redouble; he risked sending B back to royals, which is just what he did do. If Z had played four nullos doubled he would have scored: six tricks at 16 each, 96; 30 for minus aces; 50 for bonus; 20 for slam; 50 each for two extra tricks, and 250 for rubber—a total of 546, and quite enough for one hand.

And I greatly dislike B's final double of "six nullos." How could B double any nullo-bid? His cards look as though he must take almost every round. And, as a matter of fact, he and his partner did take every round but one. Z took one spade-trick with his nine-spot.

## Nullo-Auction

A-B could have made a small slam in royals, with 80 honors and 250 for rubber—a total of 404; quite an opportunity lost.

This all serves to show, however, what wonderful forcers nullos are. They are not *played* so often as they are *bid*, and when they enter into the bidding it is apt, legitimately, to run very high. We used to have *some* exciting hands and a large proportion of flat and uninteresting ones. In these nullo-days there are interest and excitement in nearly all hands.

Nullos are also wonderful rubber-savers, as witness:

	♥ A 2										
	♣ A 9 5										
	♦ Q J 8 4 2										
	♠ J 9 8										
♥ 10 7 5 3 ♣ Q J 8 7 6 4 ♦ 6 5 ♠ 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Y</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">A</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">B</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Z</td><td></td></tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ K J ♣ 10 3 2 ♦ 9 3 ♠ A 10 7 6 4 3
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ Q 9 8 6 4										
	♣ K										
	♦ A K 10 7										
	♠ K Q 5										



## The Play of the Nullo-Hand 109

Original bidding ran: Z, "a no-trump"; A, "two nullos"; Y, "two no-trumps"; B, "three nullos"; Z, "three no-trumps"; A, "four nullos"; Y, "four no-trumps"; B and Z, "pass"; A, "five nullos"; closed.

B's nullo-raise was illegitimate, because he had an unprotected suit—hearts. Also, his long suit ran to the trey instead of the deuce, but his heart reëntry equalized that. The raise was legitimized by the state of the score and by the fact that both adversaries held no-trumpers. In nullos, as in everything else, you bid to the score and are influenced by information received.

By rare good play A took but three tricks. He lost 50, minus 30 aces, a total of 20 points, and had another even chance at the rubber. Failing nullos, Z-Y would have made four no-trumps, 40, plus 30 aces, plus 250 for rubber, a total of 320 points. The nullo-bid saved A-B 300 points plus another chance.

The lead was the eight of diamonds. A, realizing Dummy's danger with those long spades exposed, put up the nine, at once. He

led the king of hearts, hoping to take, and to lead the jack, thus getting rid of Dummy's re-entry. Y was too clever for him and played his heart ace on the first round. He then started to establish Dummy's spades, hoping to take three rounds, pull Dummy's little diamond, and then throw him in with a heart. That would give B three spade-rounds, a diamond-round, and a heart-round.

A frustrated this scheme by putting up Dummy's ace of spades at once, leading the jack of hearts, and then walking out of Dummy with a little spade. No one could make him take another trick.

I have said that on an impossible nullò-hand, the only thing to do is to duck as often as possible. Take this hand in proof:

# The Play of the Nullo-Hand III

	♥ 10 9 6 ♣ K Q J 8 ♦ 10 9 8 ♠ Q J 10										
♥ Q 8 ♣ A 9 7 ♦ K Q 5 2 ♠ 9 8 7 5	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td style="text-align: center;"> </td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Z</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ K J 7 5 4 ♣ 10 4 ♦ J 7 6 ♠ A 6 4
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ A 3 2 ♣ 6 5 3 2 ♦ A 4 3 ♠ K 3 2										

Z's hand was sent me, asking his proper bid. I said "one nullo, but never two," because it is too low and too even.

Look at that cruel Dummy with never a low card in it and not a take-out bid! It was a case of hard luck, because, had Y held either A's hand, or B's, he would have been much better off. Simply, not one desirable card went to him. Y's hand is a perfect "one spade" hand, which is another proof that "a spade" and "a nullo" will not pull well together, in double harness.

## Nullò-Auction

Actual bidding ran: Z, "a nullo"; A and Y, "no"; B, "a heart"; Z, "two nullo"; closed.

Z lost 250 which was 50 too much. The first lead was the queen of hearts, which Z ducked, properly, in both hands. On the next lead (another heart), he made the mistake of playing his own ace and Dummy's ten. In that way, he took again with the six; he got two rounds and one duck, instead of two ducks and one round.

Granting that Z's second nullo-bid was wrong, and that an experienced nullo-player would not have made it, two hundred is not an unheard-of loss! I have seen that equaled and surpassed in the positive suits, many a time,—haven't you?

Here is a hand in which I was playing "Z," and the score was 24—0 against us, on the rubber-game:

# The Play of the Nullo-Hand 113

	♥ J 9 8 2										
	♣ A Q J										
	♦ K 7 2										
	♠ K 6 3										
♥ A K Q 3 ♣ 3 ♦ J 8 6 5 ♠ 10 9 7 5	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ 7 5 ♣ K 10 6 4 ♦ 9 4 3 ♠ A Q 8 2
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ 10 6 4										
	♣ 9 8 7 5 2										
	♦ A Q 10										
	♠ J 4										

I opened with "a nullo." A liked the bid and passed. Y passed. B passed and closed the bidding.

I am going to show you how the hand *was* played,—not how it should have been.

A led his singleton, which was not a particularly good choice. A high singleton is always good; you get your discards and you never wish you had the card back. With a singleton deuce or trey, you equally get your discards, but you are apt to want your little card later. And A had other possible leads; he might have led a

middle diamond or middle spade. His need of heart discards, however, quite excused his choice. It would not have helped him, at all, to lead his worst suit (hearts), in order to get rid of them. That plan is occasionally—but rarely—advantageous.

The moment I saw his trey, I knew it for a singleton. Except in singleton leads, a player always retains at least one card lower than that led; and I had the club-deuce, myself.

Dummy went down, and his clubs killed my best suit; our diamonds, too, were awful. *A evidently didn't want diamond discards, because I held all the high ones.* He must want to discard hearts or spades,—and it was not for me to oblige him by club-leads; that was his partner's business.

I put up Dummy's ace in order to keep B from coming in and giving A his discards. I could read B's clubs now, and knew there was no hope of making his king take. He threw it on my ace.

I wanted to embarrass A by leading his worst suit, and I had to choose between hearts and

## The Play of the Nullo-Hand 115

spades. I determined on hearts, because I held all the middle ones as well as the deuce; *someone* must hold the high ones. I led Dummy's jack and threw my ten, because they "touched." A took. His desire was to throw his partner in. He led the six of diamonds, I played king and queen, and B threw the nine. I led a heart which A took (I had found his weak spot). He led a spade,—still trying to put his partner in; I played Dummy's king, and B could not resist the impulse to throw his queen,—while I threw the jack. I led another heart, and B discarded the ace of spades. Now the story was told; *B could never get in!* He had discarded all his high spades, I held all the high clubs and diamonds, and A held the hearts. *And B was the only person I feared because he, alone, could lead clubs.*

A ducked this heart-round, and I led another, discarding a diamond in my own hand. A took and led a diamond, which I took; I led a spade, (A ducking), Dummy took and led another spade, and A was forced to take the balance of the tricks. I was safe with my one-odd nullo.

You see it was neither necessary nor correct

## Nullo-Auction

for me to lead those high clubs because "they must take anyhow." With proper care, they never took. A's lead and B's discards were my sign-posts.

Here is another actual hand. Z-Y were 28-0 on the rubber-game; Z bid a spade, A said "a no-trump"; Y, "two clubs" and B, "two nullo." He knew that his partner's no-trumper *might* fit a nullo, and that his adversary's spade would *not* fit a nullo. Take it for a practice-hand, use all the rules I have given you, and just see what a beautiful time you will have (you are B):

	♥ Q 10 4										
	♣ A 10 7 6 5										
	♦ A 10 8 5										
	♠ 10										
♥ A K 8 ♣ K 9 4 3 2 ♦ Q ♠ A J 9 2	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ 9 7 6 2 ♣ — ♦ K 6 4 3 2 ♠ 8 7 4 3
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ J 5 3										
	♣ Q J 8										
	♦ J 9 7										
	♠ K Q 6 5										



# The Play of the Nullo-Hand 117

One more instance:

	♥ J 10 6				
	♣ J 10 8				
	♦ K J 10 7 4				
	♠ J 6				
♥ Q 7 2 ♣ Q 7 4 2 ♦ A 3 2 ♠ K Q 10	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">Y</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">A                      B</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">Z</td></tr> </table>	Y	A                      B	Z	♥ K 9 8 ♣ A K 5 ♦ 9 6 ♠ 9 8 7 5 4
Y					
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Z					
	♥ A 5 4 3				
	♣ 9 6 3				
	♦ Q 8 5				
	♠ A 3 2				

Z is playing nullos with a dangerous Dummy. A leads ace of diamonds; Z *must keep a taking diamond in his own hand*. He wants to take the last diamond-round in his hand, rather than in Dummy.

A would lead another diamond, or assail the hearts or the clubs; the clubs look rather better in Dummy. He leads his seven. B takes the trick, in order to save his one low club. He can lead his remaining diamond, his ace of clubs (to unblock), or his five of spades,—to hit Dummy.

The spade would suit Z; he would put up his ace and Dummy's jack,—his plan being to lead the suit again, and to get a club-discard in Dummy on a third spade-round. Since this pleases Z so well, let us suppose that B unblocks the clubs, by leading his ace, and then his five,—in that way Dummy gets no club-discards.

Or, still better, B himself might get such a discard. Let him lead his little diamond in that hope. He takes the trick. His next lead would be the five of spades.

Z takes in both hands (A throwing king), and leads the suit again. A takes and leads the diamond,—B discarding his club ace.

Z takes with his queen (or eight), and leads a spade to give Dummy a club-discard. A takes.

If A leads a club, Dummy takes and leads the jack of hearts. B, knowing nothing of the suit, would probably duck; so would everyone. Dummy leads heart-ten; the adversaries duck,—and Z never takes another trick. A's deuce of hearts is powerless, because B blocks the suit. Z makes two-odd nullos; against a less clever, though perfectly correct, defense, he makes

three-odd. Against still another defense (though a different one), he makes his two-odd again. And that with one of the worst dummies I have ever seen. The holding up of the taking diamond in his own hand is Z's *coup d'état*.

The best possible way to learn to play nullos (barring lessons from a teacher or practice with experts) is this: sit down to a game of Auction and play all the old suits in the usual manner. But the moment a nullo-bid culminates, play the hand in front of you, in the manner of duplicate. Score it as played, then pick up the hands, lay them out like four exposed dummies, and replay the hand in every possible way. You will be astounded to see how much more valuable it is than it seemed at first, and you will learn a very great deal about nullos.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONDENSED NULLO HINTS

DON'T think every poor hand is a nullo-hand. Spade-hands are made up from the *middle* of the pack; nullo-hands from its *two extremes*.

Even suit-distribution is a drawback. Very long suits and very short (or blank) suits are advantages.

A long exposed suit should hold its deuce. Lacking its deuce and holding its ace, the hand is safe with *one* strong side-card. Lacking both ace and deuce, two strong side-cards are necessary to safety.

Don't be too much afraid of aces and too little afraid of sevens and eights. All middle cards must be guarded as carefully as must aces and kings; they are equally dangerous.

The line between a nullo and a no-trump is often very vague; the line between a nullo and a

spade is always very sharp. The dealer should differentiate clearly between "a spade" and "a nullo"; he should never bid either on a hand that demands the other.

If the dealer opens with "a spade," his partner should rarely bid "a nullo." A spade-hand makes a deadly nullo-dummy. Also, a spade-hand holds no bid with which to overcall an undesired nullo.

If a player make any legitimate bid (anything other than "a spade"), his partner may overcall with "a nullo" or "two nullos." Even after an opening no-trump this is possible. A perfectly good hand will often fit in with a nullo-bid, and, if it does *not* fit, its holder has a bid to which he can return. If he does return to that suit, the nullo-bidder should subside.

A legitimate *two*-bid should never be overcalled with nullos.

It takes almost a better nullo-hand to *raise* nullos than to *bid* nullos. The raising hand goes on the board. Moreover, a raise may send the original bidder very high.

The original bidder may bid as high as "two

nullos," unassisted; he *should never go to three without a raise from his partner*. If his partner raises him from one to two, or from two to three, the original bidder may go as high as his hand warrants.

A player who has once been called off from nullos by his partner should never return to them. He should also *regard his partner's "pass" as a danger-signal*; a "pass" and a "call-off" should both be a warning to drop nullos.

The original bidder may allow himself *one* unguarded suit, but not two; the nullo-raiser must hold *no* unguarded suit. A "guarded" suit is one that holds cards (or a card) lower than the six-spot.

This rule may be broken in the case of singletons. Singletons are always assets, as they mean future discards; and discards are the backbone of nullos. A nullo-raiser may hold a singleton king, even though that king is "an unguarded suit." A nullo-bidder may hold a singleton king and an unguarded suit, even though that is two unguarded suits.

When the two hands "fit," very high nullo-

bids are successful. But it is necessary to know whether or not they *do* fit before bidding nullos high. Your adversary may hold the hand that you want your partner to hold, and your partner may be a dead-weight.

Don't forget that nullos are played with *twenty-six* cards, not with thirteen; therefore don't bid them too high on your own hand alone, or your partner may prove your ruin. Don't forget that nullos are defeated by twenty-six cards, and not by thirteen; therefore, be wary of doubling them. While your hand may be a defeating hand, your partner may take every trick.

Every player should seek discards for himself, and try to prevent his adversary from getting them.

The secret of nullos is "middle-play" for both Declarant and adversary. When you don't know what to do, play a "middle" card (one that leaves you with both higher and lower cards in the same suit), and you will be apt to be right.

In no-trumps, it is a mistake to play out all your aces and kings in the beginning, though all

novices do it. In nullos, it is an equal mistake to play out all your deuces and treys in the beginning, though all novices certainly do it. The nearer a hand approaches its end, the more useful does a deuce become, to both Declarant and adversary. Keep all suits well guarded by low cards, and keep plenty of "get-out" cards, especially in Dummy.

In no-trumps, if you hold the ace of an adversary's suit, you command that suit,—don't give up that command too soon in the hand. In nullos, if you hold the deuce of an adversary's suit you equally command that suit,—again, don't give up that command too soon.

If the Declarant can be harmed by any particular card, he should lead that suit till he draws that card. If you are afraid of a card, *get it!*

The Declarant should count his sequences between the two hands in every suit. Sequences are plate-armor; every break in the sequence is a joint in the plate.

The Declarant should keep all of Dummy's suits guarded as long as possible. He should always be glad to "duck" as dangerous a card as



the jack, or the nine (when led by the adversary), particularly if he can get rid of a card like the ten, or the eight, and still keep a guard in the suit.

The Declarant should do most of his *necessary* taking, early in the hand; but he should not regard all high cards as necessary takers. If sufficiently well-guarded, they need never take.

The adversaries should avoid giving Dummy a discard, or establishing a discard for Dummy by leading up to a singleton. If Dummy holds a singleton king, and no blank suit on which to discard it, don't be in too much of a hurry to lead up to that king. It can always be made to take. Hammer Dummy's other vulnerable point first.

If the Declarant gets a discard, the adversaries should come in immediately *and lead the suit from which he is discarding*. It is certainly the suit of which he is most afraid.

The best opening-lead against nullos is a singleton. After that comes a certain type of doubleton. A doubleton lead is desirable only when the second of the two cards is a *sure* loser.

By leading an ace and then a six (a "high" card followed by an "intermediate" card), you give the Declarant a chance to get rid of two dangerous high cards on your first lead, and to "duck" your second lead in both hands. You take both rounds and leave him better off than he was before.

The next best lead is an intermediate card from a long mixed suit. Your partner may be short where you are long; also, you retain low cards in the suit for later deadly work.

A low card from a series of low cards is a good lead. • The leader, however, should *always retain a card (or cards), lower than the one led.*

It is occasionally advantageous to lead out the only dangerous suit in your hand, if it is short (not more than three cards, and preferably less). This, however, is generally a great mental relief to the Declarant.

If the Declarant *discards* from a suit, *either* adversary should lead that suit. If the Declarant *avoids* a suit (and Dummy gives no reason for his avoidance), that suit should preferably be led by the adversary on the *right* of the Declarant.

A singleton *deuce* or *trey* is rarely a good lead, unless from a "stone-wall" hand that has no other lead and is crying for discard. A *deuce* or a *trey* may often throw the Declarant in, later in the hand. Any card higher than a *trey*, however, is not apt to be useful; *a four can be ducked in both hands.*

High cards are frequently led during the progress of a hand, when it is to the adversaries' obvious advantage to hold the lead and pull Dummy's "exit" cards before throwing him in. But high cards make very poor opening-leads; they often enable the Declarant to get rid of the only cards that could possibly hurt him. Intermediate cards are excellent opening-leads; the Declarant is unable to "throw" any dangerous high cards on them, and he is often forced to choose between taking the trick, and unguarding the suit.

When it is to the advantage of either Declarant or adversary to hold the lead, he should lead, and play, high cards. When he merely wants to coax the play of a dangerous, adverse, low card, he should lead, or play, low cards.

In positive suits, you lead up to weakness. *In nullos, you lead up to strength.*

If an adverse ace does not fall on the first two rounds, and if both adversaries follow to both those rounds, the chances are largely that the ace will fall on the third round. It is generally as safe to lead (or play) a king up to it, as to lead a deuce.

Don't think you understand nullos because you have tried them a few times.

Don't think the failures which were the results of those few trials can be laid at the door of nullos. Use of nullos, and abuse of nullos, are two very different things.

Don't forget the wonderful value of singletons and blank suits; they are as valuable in nullos as they are dangerous in no-trumps. In the former suit they mean opportunities for discards.

Don't fail to remember the play of every card; the difference between a deuce and a trey will often turn the day.

"Ducking" is valuable, but it can be done once too often, as well as once too seldom. The player who tries to do nothing but "duck" from

the beginning of the hand is usually left to do considerable taking as the hand progresses.

Learn to distinguish between "low" cards, and "intermediate" cards; the former are your friends, the latter are your foes.

While nullos are not necessarily for *expert* use, alone, they are certainly for *experienced* use, alone. Practice is the best possible nullo-teacher!

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PROPER VALUE FOR NULLOS

NULLOS are variously played at eight a trick, at ten-under-no-trumps, at ten-side-by-side-with-no-trumps (whichever is bid first outranking the other), and at eleven. There is no question in my mind that eight is their perfect value; it has certainly the largest army of supporters.

For four months, I played, wrote, and taught nullos at ten a trick. If their value should ever come to be ten, I should have led the march. But I tell you frankly that the ten-count is far from flawless, and that the eight-count is perfect. Those who want nullos at ten, stand to-day where we stood more than a year ago.

Under the old count, the suits were dead. Nine-tenths of the hands were no-trumpers. One of the best effects of the new count was that

it restored the importance of the suits and put a pin into the inflated value of no-trumpers. Monotony vanished.

It has been authoritatively stated that with nullos placed at ten, seventy-five per cent. of the hands played are either no-trumps or nullos. In other words, fifteen out of every twenty hands are no-trumpers, positive or negative; and only five out of every twenty hands are left to be divided among clubs, diamonds, hearts, and royals. What will become of our suits under such conditions?

With nullos at eight a trick, about one hand in ten is the average proportion for nullos. They are *bid* constantly, and *played* about once in ten times,—a very desirable proportion.

One of the greatest experts in New York wrote asking me to come and demonstrate nullos to him. At the end of three hours he expressed himself as entirely convinced of the advantage of the eight value over the ten. And he placed nullos at eight in a booklet which he subsequently wrote. I am sure that any one who gives them a fair trial at eight will support that count. The

amusing thing is that those players who didn't want nullos at all, now want them to excess. While we, who have wanted them from the start, are content to have them in moderation.

Nullos at eight a trick make just as good forcers as at ten. Two nullos will beat one no-trump; three nullos will beat two no-trumps; four nullos will beat three no-trumps; five nullos will beat four no-trumps. It is not till the other man has bid "five no-trumps" that the jump occurs, and you have to bid "seven nullos" to beat it. But the man who has bid five no-trumps has his work cut out for him,—particularly if the adversaries hold some guarded court-cards.

Again, nullos at eight make almost as good game-scorers as at ten; it takes four-odd of the former and three-odd of the latter. The increase in difficulty in a nullo-hand comes between two and three—not between three and four.

Nullos at eleven are played locally. It is a pity to make a low hand *more* valuable than a high one; you want to be able to use your low hand, but you should not expect it to *out-rank* everything else. The large proportion of hands



is played at the three major-suits, — hearts, royals, and no-trumps,—and should continue to be so played. It is absurd to make a deuce *more* valuable than an ace. Also, nullos can grow just as tiresome as anything else if overdone. They are the cayenne pepper of Auction, —marvelous for seasoning, missed if lacking, but deadly when used to excess. Too little makes for flatness; too much is worse than none.

I have been asked if I did not think “high cards ought to win”; I have replied “yes, but not too easily.” It is too easy to get the bid at one-odd on a hand that says “six-odd,” the minute you look at it; and all because you hold all the high cards and the low cards (having no value) cannot even force you.

With nullos at eight *the high cards WILL win, if they are high enough and well-enough played.* With nullos at eleven, the low cards will win.

The excuse made for counting nullos at ten is that “they are no-trumpers.” What if they are? That has nothing to do with their value. No-trumps used to be no-trumps at twelve a trick, and they are still no-trumps at ten. It

would be as sensible to say that all declared trump suits must count the same, because they were "all suits."

The excuse made for the eleven count is that nullos are the hardest suit to play. What if they are? That has nothing to do with their value. A no-trumper is admittedly the easiest hand to play, but it is worth the most. Nullos should be placed with reference to the beauty of the game!

Then the honors; as long as the other suits have honors, nullos must also have them.

Why should there be six suits with honors and one suit without? There are many players who want all honors abolished; if that ever happens, then nullo-honors must go, too, and all the suits will be honorless.

But until that does happen nullos must have their honors. Only, as nullo-tricks are counted differently from all other tricks, nullo-honors must be counted differently from all other honors. If tricks count negatively, honors must also count negatively. Nullos are negative no-trumpers. In all no-trumpers the honors are the aces. In positive no-trumpers you score

positive aces; and in negative no-trumpers you score negative aces. That is certainly logical. ("Negative" aces are aces that you *don't* hold.)

Therefore:

The proper nullo-value is eight.

Ten is too high; it kills hearts and royals and causes an undue preponderance of no-trumpers—positive or negative.

Eleven is obviously absurd. Low cards should be biddable but they certainly should not be more valuable than high ones. Don't put the bottom on top; don't use the floor for a ceiling! Eleven also kills the time-honored no-trump precedence.

As long as six suits have their honors, the seventh suit must have its honors. A combination of *negative* tricks and *positive* honors (whether aces or deuces) would be an illogical hodge-podge. You certainly should not count tricks that you *don't* take and honors that you *do* hold.

Those who place nullos at ten or eleven make the game subservient to nullos. Those who place nullos at eight, make nullos subservient

to the game and its best interests. *It is the game that counts!* It should be well-rounded and perfectly proportioned. Give the suits values as nearly identical as possible. Don't put both black suits on top and both red suits underneath,—or both red suits on top and both black suits underneath. Put one black suit at the bottom and one on top and the two red suits in between,—higher than one black and lower than the other. Then, when it comes to a question of trumps or no-trumps,—don't put *both* no-trumps *under* all the suits, or *over* all the suits. Put one on top and one between. I think your proportion is distinctly clever and entirely perfect when the suits range thus (beginning at the bottom and counting upwards): black, red, no-trump, red, black, no-trump!

Doesn't that balance better than this: black, red, red, black, no-trump, no-trump? See how top-heavy such an arrangement would be.

## CHAPTER X

### WHO MADE NULLOS?

No one made Auction-nullos; that is, no one person.

Certain card games have always had negative bids; all card games are made either to take or to lose tricks, and the game that combines both these points is, of course, the broadest game.

Skat, solo Whist, and Boston—all have negative bids. Hearts is played entirely to lose; many juvenile games are played with the object of losing cards.

The fact that I have always been a miserable holder impressed me, personally, with the certainty that the luck percentage in Auction was far too high. Any player, whether he holds well or badly, must admit that a game is raised to a higher level when its skill percentage is increased and its luck percentage decreased.

I, however, was so used to poor cards that when, at long intervals, I would get a short run of good ones and would win on hands that could have played themselves—which required no skill to handle—my winnings gave me small pleasure. I felt as though they were a *gift*, not an *achievement*. Always the desire for equalization was strong within me, whether I lost or won.

It had frequently been said that it was a pity that Auction could not have a negative bid—a “nullo” that could be bid to lose tricks. The exposed Dummy was felt to be the stumbling-block, and the fact that it seemed to be taken for granted that “nullo” must mean “no trick at all.” How could a man bid to lose every trick and carry an exposed Dummy of which he knew nothing?

One day the idea occurred to me to allow six safe tricks on a one-nullo bid, five safe tricks on a two-nullo bid, and so forth. I decided instantly that the Dummy must be retained, as it is the backbone of the game; and I began to work out a set of rules for the proper inter-play and inter-bid of the two hands; also a system of bids, over-

calls, raises, leads, attack, defense, etc. To say that I was astounded at the possibilities I found is to put it mildly. As I worked, I heard constant assurances that nullos were "a mere fad," and prophecies that "they could never come." To-day, those prophets are writing about nullos.

While no one "made" Auction-nullos, I believe firmly that my readers and I developed and established them. If anyone else ever contributed a suggestion, or an addition to the sum of nullo-knowledge, I certainly never heard of it.

I hold a letter written me by an absolute stranger. He says that, ten years ago, he tried to introduce nullos into plain Bridge; though he failed at the time, he was "morally certain that they would come some day." He continues: "Imagine my feelings now." He is unknown in the Auction world at large, in connection with nullos; yet he and his friends will cheerfully testify that they tried nullos ten years ago.

I hold another letter that was written in Scotland. The writer and his friends tried

nullos four years ago, abandoned them, and are now enthusiastic nulloists.

The want has always been there; the idea has long existed; it needed but someone to develop it and make it practical.

In the old Whist days there were but the four suits. Later, with Bridge, players found the fascinating possibility of a suit that meant general strength. They adopted no-trump and became its slave.

Now, the mere fact that one hand holds more than average strength, has its inevitable correlation in the fact that some other hand must hold more than average weakness. It is as necessary to provide a bid for one hand as for the other; a scattered distribution of low cards should be considered as carefully as a scattered distribution of high ones. In other words, nullos are as necessary as no-trumps.

If one hand holds more than its share of hearts, some other hand is sure to be short on hearts and long on some other suit. The two hands are at liberty to bid each other up.



*Until nullos came, a no-trumper was the only hand that lacked its converse!*

Every day I ask myself why this one side of Auction was the only one neglected. Why provide for a certain plethora of "pianola" no-trumpers by providing a bid for the hand that is abnormally high, and neglecting to provide one for the hand that is abnormally low?

*Let every hand have its counter-hand, and you achieve balance!*

## CHAPTER XI

### SOME DISCARDED NULLO-SUGGESTIONS, AND THE REASONS FOR DISCARDING THEM

IN the infancy of nullos, it was persistently suggested that the hands should be exchanged when nullos were played, and that the hand of the original nullo-bidder should be exposed as Dummy.

Unless this were really necessary, it would be an unwarranted liberty with the established routine of the game. The fact that it is not necessary is proved by the high nullo-bids that are constantly and successfully pulled off.

One hand has to be exposed—we all grant that. Now, if third-hand realizes that he is to be the Dummy (just as he has always been), and if he sees that his hand will hurt the bid, he will be far more particular about over-calling or passing than if he thought his hand would be held up.

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In the latter case he will hope that his dangerous strength will not be known, and he will therefore neglect the danger signals. He is safer if he knows he must be Dummy.

A strong, or intermediate hand is always a menace to nullos, whether it be exposed or held up. I think the fact that it is to be exposed will not only make its holder much more careful about warning signals, but I think that original nullo-Declarants will learn more quickly to consider their partners' hands if they get their fingers burned a few times with the exposure of impossible Dummies. It simply means that the *making*-hand is allowed more latitude than the *raising*-hand, instead of *vice versa*. And it is certainly better to do your bidding on the hand you are eventually to play.

I hold a letter from an old and important player, who asks that his name be considered confidential. He thinks nullos "the most scientific, fascinating, strong and vital variant of the other makes," and says that "they fill an aching void." He also insists that I am perfectly correct in regard to the "status of nullos

in Auction, and the precision with which they can, and should, be handled." Then he concludes:

"The hands should not be exchanged in nullos, as that is unnecessary interference with the routine machinery of the game and would tend, as you say, to prejudice correct bidding. You have this right and use the proper argument."

Experts have agreed in vetoing this idea of exchanging hands.

The proposition was made, at one time, to throw out the Dummy-hand, when nullos were played. This would be ruinous. The backbone of Bridge and Auction is the exposed Dummy. If you play with all four hands held up you are playing Whist, not Auction. And if you throw out Dummy's hand altogether, you spoil the game. There is no possible science in a game where one quarter of the cards are thrown aside. No one can calculate. It would reduce Auction to the level of all "widow" games.

The exposed Dummy need not be a terror in nullos. Follow the rules for nullo team-work that I have been giving you, and you won't get hurt.

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Another idea was that nullos should count above the line only, for both Declarant and adversary. That would not do at all; when the Declarant makes his bid, he must always be entitled to a score below the line.

Still another suggestion was that when one side successfully played a nullo-bid the value of the hand should be deducted from their adversaries' score, instead of added to their own. This would soon land us in the region of minus scores, and would, therefore, be undesirable.

One of the most fantastic of ideas was this: if the Declarant loses his bid in a positive suit, his adversaries score the fifties above the line. Therefore, if he loses it in a *negative* suit *he* should be the one to take those fifties.

Now, it would be very odd if a nullo-Declarant should score on the hand whether he made his contract or lost it. If he scored when he won and scored when he lost, every player would be a nullo-Declarant. The dealer would open every hand with "seven nullos" because he couldn't be beaten; he would score below the line if he won, and above the line if he lost.

It was frequently suggested that instead of having one nullo-bid, we should have five nullo-bids, corresponding to the five actual bids; thus, a player could bid "a no-trump," or "a nullo no-trump"; "a royal," or "a nullo royal"; "a heart," or "a nullo heart," etc. Fancy the labyrinths that we should have faced under such a system!

Another suggestion was that nullos should be played to *take* tricks instead of to lose them, but that every trick should be won by its lowest card instead of its highest. That wouldn't be *nullos*, at all! Nullo means "no trick," so if your effort is to take as many tricks as you can you are not playing nullos. You are simply playing an inverted, *taking*, no-trumper where the low cards take the high ones. Such a hand would be easier than nullos, because it takes but one card to win a trick and two to lose it; but it would lack the spice, novelty, and snap of nullos. And the game would lose its newly acquired variety; all hands would be taking hands. This form of no-trumper is used in some localities under the name of "Inverts"; but

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players write me that it is incredibly flat, in comparison with nullos.

Someone wrote me proposing that when either side lost a trick in nullos, that side should be permitted to lead. This would be a disadvantage; long suits and thirteeners would be deadly, because, by leading them, you would take instead of lose. Suppose you had all the remaining clubs and no one else had any; in nullos you are safe, in such a case, because you don't have to lead and the adversaries cannot throw you in. But suppose you lose a trick and must lead; you lead a club and take the trick. Then the other man leads and you discard a club; but in losing the trick, you are again forced to lead. You would *take* half of your club tricks, in place of losing them all.

I think nullos have settled. All these suggestions were interesting but none of them was necessary and none could improve nullos as they stand to-day.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE PLAY OF THE HAND IN POSITIVE SUITS

I WILL show you a hand that was played in Nassau, Bahamas, and which I consider one of the most subtle and interesting combinations of cards that I have ever seen. I was playing Z:

	♥ Q 10 5 4 ♣ 7 3 ♦ J 9 7 ♠ 9 7 5 4										
♥ 3 ♣ K Q 10 8 6 4 ♦ A K ♠ K Q 10 8	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">A</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Z</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ J 8 2 ♣ 9 5 ♦ 10 8 6 5 4 2 ♠ 6 2
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ A K 9 7 6 ♣ A J 2 ♦ Q 3 ♠ A J 3										

I think the score was somewhere in the twenties for each side; the fact that I chose to



open with "a heart" instead of a "a no-trump," and that I did not dare let A play his clubs, shows that the game was well along. On a clean score, I should have chosen a no-trump declaration, and I should never have risked anything against an adverse club, because I should have known that it could not land game.

Actual bidding ran: Z, "a heart"; A, "two clubs"; Y, "by" (entirely correctly; he had not a trick in his hand, outside of trumps and not a ruff; "you must not raise on trumps alone"); B, "by" (B had not yet learned nullos and, even if he had, his partner would not have let him play them); Z, "two hearts"; A, "three clubs"; Y and B, "by," and it was up to Z again. As I have said, I was Z.

The score forbade my allowing A to play his clubs; to defeat "three clubs" meant that I must take five tricks, and, with a silent partner, I did not see how I could do it; particularly as my trumps would surely be led through and the jack must be lost.

On the other hand, if I could force A to "four clubs" I thought there was the chance of

defeating him. I must make some forcing-bid.

I feared "three hearts"; suppose A held all the hearts that I lacked, and that *he* were forcing *me* with a view to doubling! My partner could not hold two side-kings, or a side-ace and a side-king; had he held such cards, he would certainly have raised me. But there was the chance that he held some guarded queens, or guarded jacks; these would not be "raisers" for a heart-make, nor would they be useful in any declared trump; but they might fit my hand beautifully in no-trumps. Suppose my Dummy held a long queen-suit of spades (spades had never been mentioned), and a guarded king or jack of diamonds. We should have an invulnerable no-trumper between us.

You remember that A held the bid at "three clubs," and that I wanted to force him to "four." I decided to switch my suit, and said "three no-trumps," realizing, the moment the words were out of my mouth, that two would have been sufficient.

Under the American law, I could have changed

my bid to "two," because I perceived my own error before anyone else spoke, and it would have come under the head of an "inadvertent" bid. I was playing with three Englishmen, under the English flag and the English laws. The English law reads: "No bid once made may be altered, except in the case of insufficient bids." And England is right! Never under any circumstances, in any country, or with any companions, should I dream of taking advantage of that "inadvertent bid" law.

A promptly doubled, and the bidding closed.

A's first lead was a peculiar one; he chose the king of spades. He had placed the ace and jack of clubs with me, immediately. If he led the king up to the ace-jack, he gave me two rounds, and left himself with a minor ten-ace (queen-ten). If I refused the first round, he was forced to lead again from queen-ten up to ace-jack, in order to clear his suit—a very unpleasant position.

If A could get the clubs *through* my ace-jack, he would make both his king and queen (instead of losing one of them), and would cut me down to

one club-round in place of two. Every trick counts in a bid of three no-trumps, doubled.

By leading the king of spades, A announced the ace or the queen, and gave his partner a sure indication of the way to put him in when his clubs were established.

It is a well-known play for fourth-hand, having ace-jack and others, to hold up his ace on the first round,—especially if the king be led. I think it is called the “Bath Coup.” But Dummy’s four spades to the nine-spot determined my play to the trick. Had A led a club, I should never have put up my ace, because Dummy held no club help. But I reasoned in this way: I could afford to lose but four tricks; if I passed both black kings, and lost the ace and king of diamonds (inevitably), that would be my four; both black queens were on the wrong side of me, and one, if not both, must make. That would be defeat. Whereas, if I killed one of the black kings, I should be one trick richer; and the only one I could afford to kill was the spade.

If I took the king with the ace, Dummy’s

four-spot would fall; if, later, the spades were led through me, A's queen would kill my jack, and Dummy's five-spot would fall. That would leave me with a perfectly protected nine of spades. I played ace on A's king, and started on my long hearts in order to get discards. I hoped to cripple A in one or the other of his black suits. And that, of course, was the only possible way to play the closed hand.

After taking the spade and five hearts, I had my book; and I needed three more tricks. In order to let the spades and clubs come to me (as they must be made to do), I threw the lead with my queen of diamonds. If A took the round, he would "come to me" in the black suits, and that was what I wanted.

If B came in, it would be unpleasant, but no worse than if I led a black suit myself. Suppose B led the spades through my jack-small; Dummy's nine would be a stopper. And suppose he led a club, as he certainly should do. My jack would force A to lead to me on the next round, and I should be no worse off (though no better) than if I led clubs myself. And there was the

chance that A, and not B, would win the diamond-round. Fortune was kind to me there; A took my queen with his king.

He led the king of clubs, and I played the deuce. He made his queen of spades, his ace of diamonds, and then threw me the lead with the ten of spades; I, of course, was left with the ace-jack of clubs, and he with the queen-ten. If he led to me, I made both rounds; if I led to him, I lost the jack. And that is what happened.

I lost one doubled trick, minus thirty aces (70 points), and saved rubber.

Now let us go back to the second round of the hand, immediately after I took with my ace of spades. With the entire hand lying open before one, it is apparent that the jack of diamonds could be made to take a trick. Suppose I made the very peculiar lead of the queen of diamonds, in order to establish Dummy's jack, and to save the heart-queen for re-entry. The jack of diamonds would certainly be the commanding card after two diamond-rounds. But it would have been an absolutely unwarranted play on a closed hand; all the experts to whom I have

shown the hand, agree with me emphatically in this.

One reader of *The Times* wrote me and insisted that Z would be entirely justified in leading the *trey* of diamonds on the second round. That is "playing results" with a vengeance. Z holds nine hearts in the two hands, including the ace, king, and queen. He holds but five diamonds (three to the jack in one hand, and two to the queen in the other), and lacks both top cards. Why should he choose to start on the latter suit, —particularly when he wants to force discards?

Suppose the hand had lain thus:

	♥ Q 10 5 4										
	♣ 7 3										
	♦ J 9 7										
	♠ 9 7 5 4										
♥ 2 ♣ K Q 10 8 6 4 ♦ A 5 2 ♠ K Q 10	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Y</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ J 8 3 ♣ 9 5 ♦ K 10 8 6 4 ♠ 8 6 2
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ A K 9 7 6										
	♣ A J 2										
	♦ Q 3										
	♠ A J 3										

## Nullo-Auction

A could have doubled on his club-suit and sure re-entry in diamonds and spades. And where would Z land with his second-round lead of the trey of diamonds? Legitimately played, on a closed hand, it is worth two no-trumps and no more.

If you want to see how a pretty hand can be mangled, behold this:

	♥ 10 ♣ — ♦ K 10 9 7 5 ♠ K 10 9 8 7 5 4										
♥ Q J 6 2 ♣ K Q 6 4 2 ♦ 6 3 ♠ 6 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; text-align: center;">Y</td><td style="width: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">A</td><td style="width: 20px;"></td><td style="text-align: center;">B</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px;"></td><td style="text-align: center;">Z</td><td style="width: 20px;"></td></tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ K 8 5 4 ♣ J 10 8 7 3 ♦ 4 2 ♠ Q J
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ A 9 7 3 ♣ A 9 5 ♦ A Q J 8 ♠ A 2										

It was the first hand of the rubber, I was Y, and my partner opened with "a no-trump" on his hundred aces. As A, I should have bid "two



nullos," but the original A didn't; he passed and put it up to me. Of course, I bid "two royals"; seven trumps to two honors (but the suit not established), a side-king, a side-singleton, and a blank suit constitute a hand that should distinctly be played at declared trumps rather than at no-trumps.

B passed, and my partner over-called with "two no-trumps." A, pleased to see us at cross-purposes, and infinitely preferring no-trumps to royals, passed again. I have repeatedly said, and repeatedly written, the words, "don't warn twice; a word to the wise is sufficient." Nevertheless, there are those who are not "wise," and I feared my present partner was one. If he had the strong no-trump hand that his second bid showed, I saw a royal grand slam looming up. I smelt a hundred aces in the air, but I didn't care. I said "three royals." Z over-called with "three no-trumps," and of course I retired from the field.

It will be apparent at a glance that I could have made my royal grand slam, scoring 40 for slam, 18 for honors, and 63, a total of 121.

Nevertheless, Z should also have made a grand slam and should have scored: 70 points, 100 aces, and 40 for slam,—a total of 210. If you will believe me, he went down one, taking 50 from his hundred aces, and making the hand worth 50 above and nothing below. This is how he did it:

A led the four of clubs, B played ten, and Z took with his ace. He led his ace of spades, then his deuce, and finessed Dummy's ten (instead of playing the king). B came in with his unguarded queen, and he and A made four straight club-tricks.

Z should have played Y's king on the second spade-round. It was an even chance that the queen would fall. If it didn't, he could switch to diamonds and make game and bid, before he stopped. One round of hearts, one of clubs, two of spades, and five of diamonds make nine rounds and game.

*Never finesse in a nine-card suit when you want to catch the queen. There are but four of the suit against you; the chances are against the queen being guarded.*

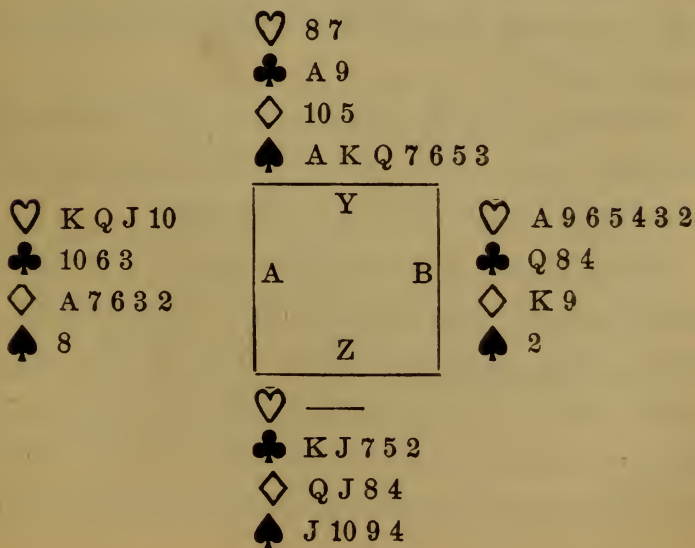
*It is too late to finesse when the adversaries' suit is established against you.*

*When once you have lost control of the adversaries' suit, land your bid first and do your finessing afterward.*

*Finally, never finesse with game in sight.*

Four excellent and time-honored maxims, any one of which would have saved the present situation.

Here is another hand that was played in Nassau, Bahamas, and that carries an exceedingly useful lesson:



The original bidding ran as follows:

Z, "a club" (weak, but possibly permissible with the heart-ruff); A, "a heart," on his 64 honors; Y, "a royal"; B, "two hearts"; Z, "two royals"; A, "three hearts"; Y, "three royals"; B, "four hearts"; Z, "four royals"; A, "five hearts"; Y, "five royals"; B, "six hearts"; Z and A, "by"; Y, "six royals," *on the almost certainty (mark this) that hearts would be led, and the hope that Dummy had none.*

And hearts were, most incorrectly, led, giving Y a grand slam. B, who had already overbid his hand, and announced more "raisers" than he had, now made the terrible mistake of leading his ace of hearts.

Granting that B could not see the hands, and that we can, there was still but one possible lead for him—the king of diamonds.

B held seven hearts and his partner could not possibly have bid on less than four, making at least eleven between them. One of the adversaries was, in all probability, blank in hearts, and there was the chance that it was the weak hand. If so, the ace lead was a gift to the weak-hand ruff.

A must hold something besides hearts; royals were announced strongly against A-B. That left clubs and diamonds, and Z had already bid clubs. Therefore, *the only possible chance of defeating the bid was that A's "outside hand" consisted of the ace of diamonds.* That, too, might give B a third-round ruff.

Had B chosen the diamond lead, Y would have been defeated by five points (50 minus 45 honors); as it was, he scored 63 points, plus 40 for slam, plus 45 honors—a total of 148 and game-in, and a difference of 153 points on the result of the hand. And all through a badly-chosen lead.

The following hand was played at the Anthracite Bridge Club, Carbondale, Pa. All four players were known for their game, and "B" was an especially strong player. Nullos were not being used and though Y, in this instance, bid high on a queen-suit,—he was not in the habit of so doing. Z-Y were game-in and 600 to the good on the honor-score (that sounds like some plunging, to me):

## Nullo-Auction

	♥ J 9 7 3										
	♣ —										
	♦ 8										
	♠ Q 9 8 7 6 5 4 3										
♥ A 10 8 6 ♣ K Q J 8 5 ♦ J 9 4 3 ♠ —	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ K Q 5 4 2 ♣ 10 4 3 ♦ K Q ♠ A K J
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ —										
	♣ A 9 7 6 2										
	♦ A 10 7 6 5 2										
	♠ 10 2										

Actual bidding: Z, "a diamond"; A, "two clubs"; Y, "two royals"; B, "three hearts," and I have been puzzling my head to decide why B said "three hearts" instead of "two no-trumps," after he knew about his partner's club-suit. On a clean score I should certainly have chosen the declaration that meant game in three-odd. Perhaps he feared his short diamonds, with diamonds bid by Z. Perhaps, again, B wanted to force Y's royals. By declaring no-trump he would show general strength and a royal-stopper, and Y might not go up. Whereas, by declaring

hearts, B showed but one suit, and might tempt Y to his ruin. However—to continue the bidding: B, “three hearts”; Z and A, “pass”; Y, “three royals”; B, “double”; closed. “And,” my correspondent wrote, “of course Y made it.”

B’s double was poor, because three royals would not put Z–Y game, and three royals *doubled* would put them game,—if they made it. Again, the trouble was with a faulty lead.

Let B lead his king of trumps. He will know from the bid that the queen lies with Y; by leading the king of spades, B gets a look at Dummy and still retains a *fourchette* over Y’s queen (ace-jack lying over the queen). The moment Z sees Dummy’s blank suit, he will lead his ace of spades,—to stop a weak-hand ruff,—and will then lead his hearts. Y cannot possibly take three-odd.

The real B led his hearts first, thus making Y a present of an immediate cross-ruff. The opening-lead of the spade-king could lose nothing and would permit B to choose his next lead intelligently.

Again, too many players neglect to lead trumps

## Nullo-Auction

up to weakness, when playing against the make. Take this instance, sent me by a reader of *The Times*:

“There is no score on the rubber game; a heavy honor-score in favor of Z-Y, Z therefore being willing to incur a penalty to save rubber.”

	♥ 9 8 6 5	
	♣ Q 5	
	♦ Q 6 4 3 2	
	♠ J 4	
♥ Q J ♣ J 9 3 ♦ A K J 9 8 5 ♠ 3 2	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>Y</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; height: 100px;"> <span>A</span> <span>B</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center;"> <span>Z</span> </div>	♥ A K 10 7 4 3 ♣ A K ♦ 10 7 ♠ 9 8 6
	♥ 2	
	♣ 10 8 7 6 4 2	
	♦ —	
	♠ A K Q 10 7 5	

Actual bidding: Z, “a royal”; A, “two diamonds”; Y and B, “pass”; Z, “two royals”; A and Y, “pass”; B, “three hearts”; Z, “three royals”; A and Y, “pass”; B, “three no-trumps”; Z, “four royals”; B, “double”; closed.



A led diamond-king, Z trumped and led club-six; B took with the king and led king of hearts, following with ace of hearts. Z trumped the second heart and led deuce of clubs; B took with the ace and led ten of hearts, which Z trumped. He next led a small club, trumping with Dummy's jack; then a small trump back into his own hand, making his remaining trumps and clubs.

That was clever playing from Z, but I cannot approve of B's bid or play. The rest of the bidding was good.

My first objection is to the statement that, as Z-Y were heavily ahead in penalties, they could risk something to save rubber. When I am "heavily ahead in penalties" I risk nothing. My risks are the only possible means of restoring these penalties to the adversaries. I sit tight; bid solidly; *forfeit rubber, if necessary; but keep the big penalties which are better than rubber.*

My next criticism is B's bid of "three no-trumps" without a stopper in Z's suit. Suppose he played it; Z would lead and would take six tricks without stopping, forcing three discards from B. That was an awful bid!

Had I been Z, I should have left B in with his three no-trumps, in spite of my honors. I suppose he feared a guarded jack of spades. And, had I been B, I should have led trumps, "up to weakness," every time I was in. *When the Declarant refrains from trump-leads, he has a reason. The adversaries should always force him to play trumps, particularly that adversary who can lead them up to weakness.* B could easily have defeated the four royals. He was in an ideal position to lead trumps, and it was only too apparent why Z, himself, was refraining from trump-leads.

One more instance of a faulty lead! Score, 20—0 in favor of A-B, on the rubber-game; A-B also being 300 ahead in penalties:

	♥ 5 2 ♣ A Q 4 2 ♦ A J 10 9 7 6 3 ♠ —							
♥ 8 4 ♣ K J 10 9 8 7 5 ♦ Q ♠ 7 4 3	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Y</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Z</td> </tr> </table>		Y	A	B		Z	♥ A K J 10 9 7 6 3 ♣ 6 3 ♦ 5 ♠ K 6
	Y							
A	B							
	Z							
	♥ Q ♣ — ♦ K 8 4 2 ♠ A Q J 10 9 8 5 2							

Z is playing five royals, doubled by B and redoubled by himself. B has been bidding hearts strenuously, A has bid clubs once, and Y has bid diamonds frequently. Finally, B has doubled Z's bid of "five royals,"—a very poor double, by the way; better to play it undoubled and to risk nothing; then, to defeat the bid would be to make 50 a trick, and to see Z win would only be to let him take a score that was nearly wiped out by B's own "velvet." B's long hearts would certainly be ruffed soon, his barely-guarded trump-honor was in a poor position,

and his singleton was useless, in that he hadn't trumps enough to use a ruff. Also, his double gave Z the chance of a redouble, and of an enormous profit.

The first lead was the ten of clubs, which permitted Z to discard his heart-queen, and made him a present of an extra trick. He made a small slam and scored 216 points plus 20 for slam, plus 72 honors, plus 100 for contract, plus 100 for extra trick, plus 250 for rubber, a total of 758. The original Z also counted 18 for chicane, but there is no longer any score for chicane.

B should have refrained from doubling, and A should have led a heart to his partner's bid. *He did not hold enough hearts to make this lead dangerous*, and he had no good lead of his own, and no card which would permit him to hold the lead until after he had seen Dummy.

There is a good deal of serious discussion concerning ace-leads. If you lead out an ace, everyone throws trash on to it, whereas, if you hold it up, you may kill a king or queen with it,—and the function of aces is to kill kings and queens. On the other hand, an ace always per-

mits you to hold the lead and to choose your second lead with your eyes open. Also, it gives your partner a chance to tell you whether, or not, he holds the king of the suit. If he does, he will play an "encouragement"-card on your king (seven-spot or higher); if he hasn't the king, he will play a "discouragement"-card (under seven), and you can read the suit.

In no case must you "lead away from an ace,"—that is, lead low from an ace-suit. If you hold ace-king and one or more cards, lead your king first. *In all other cases, lead your ace or let the suit alone.* Never lead fourth-best from an ace. (Of course I am speaking of original leads, and of declared trumps).

Passing from the *play* of positive hands, to their *bid*,—there is little new to say,—except that conventional bids are dead and buried; miles and miles under the sod.

From the beginning I have carried on an unwavering campaign against two forms of bidding: the conventional bid and the preemptive bid. The conventional bid has ceased to exist; it would be a waste of breath to discuss

## Nullo-Auction

it further. With the possible exception of "two spades" (which is still used by some players), "high spades" are deep in the discard.

I meet very few pre-emptive bidders, but the race exists. Let me give you two instances of this form of bidding; in the first case, I was in the game; and the second hand was sent me by an unknown correspondent in Boston.

	♥ Q 3 ♣ Q 10 6 3 ♦ Q 6 5 2 ♠ J 3 2										
♥ A K ♣ K 9 8 7 4 ♦ 10 9 8 7 3 ♠ 10	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; text-align: center;">Y</td><td style="width: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">A</td><td style="width: 20px;"></td><td style="text-align: center;">B</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Z</td><td></td></tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ J 10 9 7 6 5 4 ♣ A J 5 ♦ A K J ♠ —
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ 8 2 ♣ 2 ♦ 4 ♠ A K Q 9 8 7 6 5 4										

The score was 8—0 on the rubber game in favor of Z—Y, and I was playing B.

Z opened with "two royals" on a nine-card

spade-suit headed by the ace-king-queen, and four trashy side-cards.

Second-hand passed, third-hand passed, and failing that pre-emptive bid, I (fourth-hand) should certainly have passed also. My only suit was headed by the jack, and I am not a jack-bidder.

Presupposing good bidding (what I consider good bidding) on the part of my adversaries, it would not occur to me to bid a jack-suit on the first round.

I think it is generally acknowledged that no one opens with a two-bid, in these advanced days, if he holds strong trumps *and strong side-suit*. On such a hand as that, a pre-emptive bid is unnecessary, because no adverse bid can possibly win out; the player who holds nine spades to the ace-king-queen and four invulnerable side-cards will be quite content to open with "one royal"; he will dread no communication between his adversaries, because he will be sure of his ability to outbid them.

He would even like them to bid, and to take his choice between defeating them and outbidding

them, except for the fact that the pre-emptive bidder scorns defeating the bid; his one idea is to play the hand. He holds two hundred and fifty points so close to his eyes that he cannot see four hundred points a yard away.

In this hand, had Z opened with "a royal," it is a self-evident fact that no one would have bid against him. My partner couldn't bid; his partner wouldn't have to. I had no bid but an illegitimate one which I should never have dreamed of making; the rubber was not apparently near its close, and I should simply have hoped to save it. Z would have captured the bid at "one royal"; he would have made three-odd and landed rubber.

But the moment he said "two royals" he announced: "I am afraid of something—please don't bid it. If you two adversaries only knew what I know, I should be done for." We sat up and began to take notice; my partner's hand solved no mysteries, and he passed. My hand screamed the secret from the housetops, and I promptly answered with "three hearts."

It is true that I lacked my ace, king, and



queen. But Z didn't hold them—he had practically said so. It was an even toss between Y and my partner; if Y held them, we had no chance of rubber from the beginning of things. If my partner held them, there might be some fun. There was.

Z could make three-odd in royals—no more, no less. I could make a grand slam in hearts, and I should never have known it, never have tried, never have bid, never have established the slightest communication with my partner, except for the particular form of Z's opening-bid.

My partner held the ace-king of my suit, a side-singleton and a side-king. He could have raised twice, or thrice, but he didn't have to. One raise from him was enough for me. I should have bid my hand to almost any point. The "pre-emptive" bid didn't pre-empt, you see.

Remember this, then, if a man opens with a pre-emptive bid, he fears something. If your hand gives no indication of what he fears, pass; your partner's hand may be more illuminating. But if you have reason to think you know his weakness, *bid*; bid even two or three tricks in

excess of what your hand warrants. Don't be "shut out." Then no one but the dealer's partner can possibly be inconvenienced by the bid.

This comes from a pre-emptive bidder (it is approximate; I haven't the exact quotation with me): "It is laughable to see the strong hands on which we are supposed to open with two-bids. Granted a strong major-suit and strong side-support, we always open with a one-bid. But if we hold one major-suit, and are very weak in the other, we open with a two-bid to prevent communication between our adversaries and the ultimate establishing of the suit we fear."

How can any one be fooled with such sophistries? How could such a system work more than once? The moment a man opens with a two-bid, you say to yourself: "He is afraid of some suit; which is it?" You look at your hand and decide, and you bid that suit. You bid it if you break every rule in the list; you bid it at the expense of two or three tricks, because he has virtually told you that you must. And if your hand doesn't warrant it, your partner's probably

does. One of you is apt to hold a preponderance of the suit which the dealer fears; and the one who holds such length must bid it.

Then there is the remaining chance that the long adverse suit is held by the dealer's own partner, that there was no necessity for the shut-out bid, that the two hands don't "fit," or that you and your partner were out of the race from the beginning.

The man who bids unnecessarily high is afraid of something; he talks loud to cover the fact,—like a bully who swaggers to hide his fear. Here is the Boston hand that I promised you:

	♥ J 8 7 6	
	♣ K Q J 9 8 7 6	
	♦ —	
	♠ J 10	
♥ A 5 2 ♣ 10 4 ♦ — ♠ A Q 7 6 5 4 3 2	Y A                      B Z	♥ Q 4 3 ♣ 3 ♦ K 9 8 7 6 5 ♠ K 9 8
	♥ K 10 9	
	♣ A 5 2	
	♦ A Q J 10 4 3 2	
	♠ —	

Z opened with "four diamonds," to shut out any adverse royal-bid.

A was perfectly able to make this royal-bid and to keep it. But he didn't bid. He realized that Z had probably bid his hand to the top-notch, and that four diamonds wouldn't put him game (he had nothing on the score). He passed, and left Z with a ten-trick contract.

Y didn't care to say "five clubs" with six losing cards and lacking the ace of his suit. Besides, his partner's bid had said: "Get out of my way, I don't need you." He passed, and of course B passed,—tickled to death.

The success of pre-emptive bids pre-supposes the inability of the adversaries to pass,—or to make their bid, *if* they bid. A could have bid, and made, "four royals"; then the shut-out bid would have been futile, because it didn't shut out. B might have been foolish enough to double; then Y would have tried his clubs.

Of course, Z was defeated. Properly bid, the hand would have been played at clubs,—because Y would have made one warning over-call and Z would have switched. Z-Y could have made a

small slam in clubs or could have defeated an adverse "five royals." The partner, and not the adversary, was inconvenienced by the opening-bid.

I played, the other evening, against a pre-emptive bidder, and the results of his methods were startlingly poor.

He opened with "three royals" on eight spades to the ace-jack-ten, in order to shut out an adverse bid in hearts (he held but one small heart). His partner, and not his adversary, held those hearts; sixty-four honors, and enough cards to land three-odd in hearts, but not four-odd. He had not a spade in his hand. And the left-hand adversary held three spades, including the king and queen, and the three top diamonds, which all took tricks.

An opening-bid of "one royal" would have produced a call-off of "two hearts" (from the partner), and no one else would have bid. The hand would have landed 24 points and 64 honors, instead of achieving defeat.

The next pre-emptive flier was an opening of "two nullos" on an absolutely perfect nullo-

hand. Alone, it would never have taken a trick. The partner's hand would have taken seven, at least. He was obliged to warn with "two no-trumps," which closed the bidding. He landed one-odd and went down 50. Those two hands were a misfit, and an opening bid of "one nullo" would have disclosed the fact and saved disaster.

The "shut-out" bids didn't succeed in keeping us from bidding. When we had good hands we bid them and played them, in spite of the effort to block us. When we hadn't, we didn't want to bid, anyhow. And when the partner had a wail to make he found himself bound and gagged.

After the bidding is in progress, on the second or third round, I do occasionally bid a trick in excess of necessity, but never to open. When I know the lay of the land, have given my partner a chance to warn, have discovered that our hands fit, that mine should be the one to play and his to assist, then, and then only, I sometimes block or force the adversary with a bid that is one trick higher than it need be. I know then the position of the adverse suits, instead of trying to guess them. And I know that my hand should

be used for playing, and not for defeating. But that is a very different story.

When all four players at a table are pre-emptive bidders, when they are accustomed to that form of game, its faults are not so apparent. They simply play a very good form of bid-bridge; the first man in, gets the hand to play, and makes the most he can out of it. Possible penalties are ignored unless they are very big. When a bid goes down because a helpless partner's lips were sealed by a pre-emptive opening, it does not strike them forcibly because they are all quite used to it. Each suffers from it in turn, but, at any rate, they have "kept the adversaries out of the play."

But put two such players against two others who do not believe in pre-emptive openings, and the difference is soon apparent. I saw it tested recently in twenty-four duplicate hands. The result was over 400 in favor of the non-pre-emptives, though each pair had played the same big hands and the same small ones. Each had had the same chance of gathering information or of blocking it.

The partners who opened their ears and listened were 400 points points richer than the ones who closed their ears and bellowed. It is the old story of "I talk so loud and so much that I have no time to listen," *vs.* "There are so many instructive things to which I want to listen that I talk only as much as is really necessary to my business."

In addition to this, there is a very irritating feeling that the beauty of the game and the delicacy and subtlety of the bidding are entirely lost in the hands of heavy pre-emptive bidders.

The advent of nullos makes the first excuse for a pre-emptive opening-bid. It *will* sometimes pay a dealer to open with "two hearts," or "two royals," or "two no-trumps," to shut out a possible adverse nullo-bid, or even to lay a trap for an opposing "three-nullo" bid.

When you consider, however, that this could only be possible on fifty per cent. of the hands (the hands when you are dealer),—that on only about half of *that* half could you hope to have the material for a pre-emptive opening,—that on a half of that quarter the adversaries may not



want nullos anyhow,—and that on fully a quarter of that eighth your partner may hold the nullo-hand and may want to give you a desirable warning which you have silenced,—you will realize that in only about three hands in thirty-two is it wise, profitable, possible, or necessary to make a pre-emptive opening against a possible nullo.

*How are you going to recognize those three hands?*

It is against the pre-emptive bid from dealer or from second-hand that I wage my war. *Those two players have yet to hear from their partners!* Warning-bids are one of the game's most delicate points and they ceased to exist with pre-emptive openings. But after dealer and second-hand have spoken, there are often occasions when an unnecessarily high bid is advantageous. Such bids should not become a habit; they should never be made without a reason, or without proper material. But granting these two requisites, their effect is most happy. Here is a brilliant instance:

## Nullo-Auction

	♥ —										
	♣ A K Q 9 4 2										
	♦ K Q 6 2										
	♠ 8 7 5										
♥ 10 9 7 4 ♣ 10 8 7 ♦ 5 3 ♠ J 10 9 6	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Y</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">A</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">B</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Z</td><td></td></tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ A K J 8 6 2 ♣ J 5 3 ♦ 8 ♠ 4 3 2
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ Q 5 3										
	♣ 6										
	♦ A J 10 9 7 4										
	♠ A K Q										

Z opened with "a no-trump," *thus showing that he held but one unguarded suit*. A passed, and it came to Y. Y feared a heart-bid from B, which would determine A's lead. He knew that, in all probability, his partner (Z) held a heart-stopper,—as his "unprotected suit" was almost certainly clubs. Y, therefore, cleverly bid "two no-trumps," *to shut out a heart-bid or nullo-bid from B, or to push that bid to three*. B passed, and A, unaware of his partner's suit, led the jack of spades,—thus enabling Z to make a

grand slam. With a heart-lead, he could have made but five-odd.

Of course, A-B couldn't have made three hearts,—they couldn't have made two. But B could have invited a heart-lead by a "two-heart" bid,—while he hesitated to bid three against two no-trump adversaries.

Y's bid was a very clever *coup!*

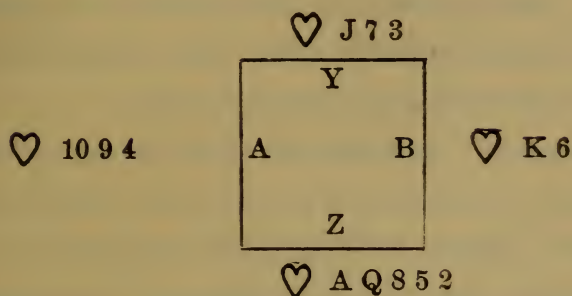
## CHAPTER XIII

### HINTS FOR THE PLAY OF THE POSITIVE SUITS

NINES and tens are the indicators as to the proper method of taking a finesse. Holding (in the two hands) the ace, the jack, and *either* the king or queen (but lacking the other of them), your object is to catch that missing honor by a fortunate finesse. Everyone knows enough to finesse from the low hand to the high. Not everyone knows the proper way to do it.

Let us suppose that the jack lies in the Dummy and the ace-queen in your own hand. Of course, you must never lead up to the jack; that would make the king a taker, no matter where he lay. You must get into the jack-hand by a side-lead, and lead up to your ace-queen.  *Holding in either hand, the nine, the ten, or both, lead your jack towards your ace-queen. Holding neither the nine nor the ten, lead a low card towards your*

*ace-queen.* A concrete example will make this plain:



The lead is with Y. It does not look as though A's ten should ever take, with but two cards to guard it. Yet if Y's jack is led, A's ten *will* take. Y plays jack, B king, Z ace, and A four. Z has then to lead the ace; and, on the third round, A's ten is good. Did A hold one more small card, *both* his nine and ten would take.

Let a small card be led from Y. B plays king, Z ace, and A the four. Z leads back to the jack, and then to his own queen,—and Y's ten never takes.

Did Z hold the ten, nine, or both, in either of his hands,—it would be impossible that they should take against him. He would then lead his jack towards his ace-queen. Remember, then:

*Holding the nine, the ten, or both, finesse the jack towards the ace-queen. Holding neither nine nor ten, finesse a low card towards the ace-queen.*

The same rule holds when the queen lies in one hand and the ace-jack in the other.

The nine and ten should also be guides towards the advisability of covering an honor with an honor. Seeing neither nine nor ten in your own hand nor on the board, cover an honor with an honor; you may establish the nine or the ten for your partner.

Never finesse with game in sight.

Don't jeopardize your bid by a risky finesse; land your bid first.

It is too late to finesse when a suit is established against you.

Don't finesse in a nine-card suit *when you want to catch the queen*. There are but four cards against you; three of them, including the queen, must lie together in order to protect her. The chances are that she is unguarded. *Do*, however, finesse in a nine-card suit when you want the king; it takes but one card to guard him.

Take every finesse as late as possible. Never

take a finesse on the first round that could be taken on the second, nor one on the second round that could be deferred till the third. Every additional round furnishes additional information as to who is short, how the cards lie, and where and how the missing court-cards are guarded.

In playing against the bid, avoid giving information to the adversary by your discard. If a ten-ace suit lies on the board, remember that he will watch discards in order to place the missing honor. Don't tell him what he wants to know.

If an ace-queen suit lies exposed on your left, and you hold the king, he is in a bad position. If you hesitate to lead the suit, the Declarant will spot your king and will lead through him. Whenever you have cards enough of the suit, lead through the ten-ace, to fool the Declarant. You cannot fool your partner; he *knows* he hasn't the king.

Don't lead "thirteeners" except at no-trumps. To do so in declared trumps, is to give the adversary a wonderful chance; he

can ruff in one hand and discard a loser in the other.

Don't give the weak hand ruffs.

Don't establish a ruff for the weak hand.

Don't lead up to a king-and-one; you establish him firmly for the first round or the second.

Lead *through* a king-and-one, whenever you have a chance.

Lead through a ten-ace, but never up to one. To lead up to ace-queen, or king-jack, is to allow the Declarant to get his trick as cheaply as possible. It is better to lead up to ace-king than ace-queen.

Lead through strength, *but not through a sequence.*

"King ever, queen never." If the king-and-one are on the board and are led through, put up the king. If the queen-and-two be led through, keep your queen.

In no-trumps, don't lead your suit up to a declared stopper that is not the ace.

Avoid a deuce-lead against no-trumps. It tells too much. It shows at once that your suit is but four cards long. Holding two four-card



suits, one running from king to deuce and the other from king to trey,—always choose the latter for a blind lead.

Don't forget the "one-card echo" at no-trumps. *If your partner leads and Dummy plays a card that you cannot cover, play your next to highest card.* This enables your partner to read the suit.

Never fail to show five cards of the suit that your partner leads, at no-trumps. If you hold five to a face-card and your partner leads a high card, *play your next to highest and then play down.* If you hold five to a plain card, and your partner leads high, *play your next to lowest and then play up.* These methods avoid possible blocking, and permit the long hand to get in last. Your partner may hold anywhere from four to eight cards of a suit in which you hold five. He will not lead in no-trumps from a suit that is shorter than four. He will not lead a *high* card, unless he has *seven cards or three honors.*

If your partner leads in no-trump and you hold but two cards of his suit, and if the rule of eleven shows that the adversary on your left

(the Declarant) holds *but one card* higher than the one led, *always play the higher card of your two to the first trick*. This, to unblock.

When each side has been bidding a suit very high, *it is probable that each is bidding on a shortage of the other's suit*. Remember this when you lead. Make some eccentric lead rather than lead your long suit. It will often enable you to defeat the bid before the Declarant gets in. He is counting on an immediate ruff of your suit.

When you play last to a trick, and hold ace-jack and another (or others), generally hold up both ace and jack on the first round,—particularly if a king be led.

Remember the difference between making the adversary “come to you” on the last two rounds, or of “going to him,” on those same rounds. Suppose you hold ace-jack and he holds queen-ten. If he leads, you make both rounds; if you lead, you lose one. In other words, *in order to take the twelfth and thirteenth tricks, it is often necessary to throw the lead to the adversary on the eleventh trick*. The tenth is too soon,—he will throw it back to you on the eleventh, and you

will "go to him," on the twelfth and thirteenth. Anything after the eleventh is too late. This fact is so important that a great English authority has called the eleventh trick the "pivot" trick. Don't "throw the lead" senselessly. Wait and throw it, with a purpose, *on the eleventh trick*. Hold up your *coup* until then. For instance, I was playing a big heart-hand with a very valuable cross-ruff. Trumps had not been drawn. I held also a ten of spades which was high. *I held it till the eleventh trick*. My hand at the opening of that trick looked like this:

♥ A Q  
♠ 10

The adversary on my left held more trumps than I; he was all trumps and he held the king, thus:

♥ K 9 8

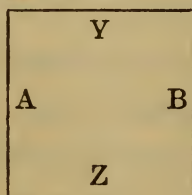
His king was on the safe side of my ace-queen, and looked safe. If I led on the twelfth round, it *would* take. If he led, it wouldn't.

On the *eleventh* trick (no sooner, no later) I led my spade. He trumped, he led to me, and

his perfectly-guarded, safely-placed, trump-king never took.

Similarly, suppose while the hand is young, you (as Declarant) find yourself with a six-card suit,—three to the jack in one hand, and three to the ace-queen in the other,—or reversing the positions of the jack and queen, thus:

♣ Q 8 3



♣ A J 7

To lead that queen towards the ace-jack would be to invite a certain third-round loss. Lead a low card from Y, and finesse your jack. If the finesse goes, the king is marked with B. *Drop that suit entirely, play your other suits, and retain a sure loser till the eleventh round, a loser that you know will throw the lead to B. Throw him in on the eleventh round.* He will then be holding the king and one small club while you hold queen-small in one hand and ace-small in

the other. He must lead; and whatever he leads, you take both rounds.

Did you make the twelfth lead, his king would take inevitably.

Let the Declarant remember to false-card constantly. Let him mix immaterial low cards habitually. This will puzzle and hamper the adversary. But let no one attempt to false-card when playing *against* the bid; such false-carding would deceive the partner of the player who attempted it. *The Declarant having no partner to deceive, is the only player who can afford to false-card.*

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SHIFT

IN old Auction, if you held more than one possible bid, it was considered best to name your *lowest* suit first, so that you could go, later, to a higher one without increase of contract.

In present-day Auction, it is admittedly better to name your *highest* suit first; first, because if no one else bids, you play your hand to its best value; and second, because if there are several rounds of bidding and you name your lower suit last,—your partner can go back to your higher one, without increase of contract,—if it happens to suit him better than your lower one. This is known as the “shift”; it is like walking *down*-stairs, one step at a time, instead of *up*-stairs; and it is a very useful form of bidding.

The other evening I dealt myself the following hand:

♥ K J 9 5 4 3  
 ♣ 3  
 ♦ —  
 ♠ K Q J 5 3 2

That is a wonderful combination for royals, hearts, or nullos. I opened with "one royal," in accordance with the process of elimination ("bid your best suit first") and to try the hand.

Second-hand said "two clubs," and my partner passed. Evidently royals didn't suit him.

Fourth-hand said "two diamonds," to my joy. I always love to have my opponents bidding against each other.

I shifted to "two hearts," to see how that would strike my partner. Second-hand shifted to his partner's suit and said "three diamonds," and my partner passed. He didn't like hearts any better than royals.

Fourth-hand passed, and I said "three nullos"; I held a blank in one of the adversaries' suits and a singleton trey in the other. Also, each of my own strong suits was thrice guarded with low cards.

I have told you never to say "three nullos"

unassisted; but this was different. I had already given my partner two positive suits with which to take me out, if he didn't want nullos.

He *did* want them. There followed some lively bidding; my partner raised and raised my nullos, and finally went to "seven nullos," over an adverse "five no-trumps." We were promptly doubled and the bidding closed.

And I made it!

Seven nullos are 56; doubled, they are 112; 50 for contract; 40 for slam, and 40 more for the adverse aces held by the adversary. Two hundred and forty-two points on the hand.

This is the way the cards lay:



	♥ 2 ♣ Q 10 5 4 2 ♦ 8 7 5 4 3 2 ♠ 4										
♥ 8 7 6 ♣ A K J 9 8 ♦ Q 6 ♠ A 7 6	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30px;"></td> <td style="width: 30px; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td style="width: 30px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 30px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td style="width: 30px;"></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ A Q 10 ♣ 7 6 ♦ A K J 10 9 ♠ 10 9 8
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ K J 9 5 4 3 ♣ 3 ♦ — ♠ K Q J 5 3 2										

Now, you see, after my opening-bid of “a royal” A could not say “a no-trump,” because—though he stopped my suit—he held two unprotected suits of his own. He made his only possible bid when he said “two clubs.”

As Y, I should certainly have said “two nullos” very promptly. Then, if Y’s partner (Z) didn’t like the nullos, he could go back to his own suit.

This Y refrained from the nullo-bid for several reasons. First, he liked the clubs, holding five to two honors and two side-singletons. Then, he held such a wonderful nullo-hand that he

didn't see how I could possibly have one; he was afraid that his nullo-bid would strike me badly, would drive me back to "two royals," and that he would be a dead weight in my royal-bid. And, thirdly, if nullos were played between us, he distinctly wanted his hand to be the Dummy. This it could not be if he first said nullos.

Coming to B, he would very much like to bid no-trumps (after his partner's "two clubs"), but he didn't hold a stopper in my royals, and didn't know that his partner held such a stopper. That was my advantage; one of my adversaries failed to stop one of my suits and the other failed to stop the other. And neither one could see the other's hand. I bid royals, then hearts. A couldn't stop hearts, and didn't know B could; and B couldn't stop royals, and didn't know A could. Nevertheless, they risked the no-trump plunge later, when we ran the nullos too high for their club and diamond bidding.

Not only could we make our seven nullos, but we could defeat any adverse overbid. Clubs and diamonds cannot be bid to beat seven nullos;

there are but three possible bids—"seven hearts," "seven royals," and "six no-trumps"; you can see for yourself how they would fare.

This is "the Shift." Suppose my partner's hand had been different from what it really was and mine had been the same; suppose I had opened with my lowest suit first, instead of my highest; "one nullo" meeting with no response from my partner, I would then have gone to my next higher suit and covered the adversary's "two diamonds" with "two hearts." Then, with no raise from my partner, I should have said "three royals" (over "three diamonds").

Now, *if it should happen that my last bid suited my partner even less than my first, he would have to go to "four" in one of my former suits in order to call me off from my last bid; he would have to assume a contract that was heavier than mine.*

By bidding my highest suit first, then the next to highest, then the lowest, I allow him a return to either of the first two without increase of contract. If he doesn't like "three nullo," he can take his choice between "three hearts"

and "three royals" without adding another trick to the contract.

Don't forget this "shift" in your bidding; it is exceedingly useful.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE DISCARD

IT is perfectly proper to use the discard from strength, the discard from weakness, or the odd-and-even discard (odd for strength, even for weakness),—if you like them. But I think the best and most up-to-date discard is that made by “encouragement,” and “discouragement” cards. If you play a seven, or higher, on the first round of a suit, you want that suit led to you. If you play under seven, you *don't* want it.

All other discards can be used as *discards only*; encouragement and discouragement cards on the contrary, *can be used equally in following suit and in discarding*.

Suppose you are playing against a heart-declaration, and your partner leads the ace of clubs. He hasn't the king, for he would lead it if he had. It is within your power to tell him

whether or not you hold that king; and he will know, accordingly, whether to lead the suit again, in place of merely chancing it. If you play seven, or higher, on his ace, you say: "I have the king; come on." If you play under seven, you deny the king, and he tries another suit.

It sometimes happens, of course, that you lack the proper card for encouragement or discouragement. No system is absolutely perfect; this I think comes nearer to perfection than any other, because it gives you a longer list of possible cards any of which will say what you mean; because it can be used in following as well as in discard; *and because it permits you degrees of insistence.* If you discard a seven, an eight, or a nine, you want the suit; if you discard a ten or a jack, you demand the suit; and if you discard a queen, a king, or an ace, you are screaming for the suit.

Try it, and see if you don't like it.

## CHAPTER XVI

### DECISIONS

OF the hundreds of decisions that have been referred to me during the past year, I have chosen a few of the most interesting.

The first is from Amherst, Mass.:

“A rather pretty little question arose in a game where Rule 52 (Whist Club of New York, and printed in your *Auction High-Lights*) was called into use. Y had made a bid of ‘four nullos’ (a fool bid, but that is not the point); B passed; Z (Y’s partner) did not want nullos, but the bid was so high that he was compelled to pass; A passed. Z–Y were delighted that the nullo-bid was not doubled.

“After deliberation, A changed his mind and wanted to double. Z asked him if he passed in good faith. A answered that he did, but that under Law 52 he had a right to change his mind.

Z claimed that if this were allowed it would be possible for B (A's partner) to hold up his lead a long time, and A might then be able to change his mind as often as he pleased, with nothing to stop him but the play of B's card. Of course, had A made any declaration but 'pass,' Y might re-enter the bidding. But Y was in a hole, and whatever he did would take deliberation.

"When A passed, Y was debarred from doing anything, and B might delay his lead until A got the idea that it would be a good thing to change his mind and double. A claimed that, although he passed 'in good faith,' his pass might be called 'an inadvertent bid.' Z claimed that it could not. We agreed to leave it to you. I wish also to say that nullos have made Auction the finest game in the world."

You see the trouble arising from the wording of Law 52, and the advantage it gave A-B. Y made a poor bid; B, Z, and A passed; Y could say nothing to clinch A's "pass" and to prevent his changing it to the dreaded double, because he had no further chance to speak. He could not clinch it by a lead because the lead was B's.



Everything was A-B's. B could delay his lead indefinitely, A could reconsider as often as he chose, and Y-Z could do nothing, being debarred from both speech and action.

A's claim while technically within the letter of the law is certainly opposed to its spirit; and only the loose wording of the law allows it a moment's consideration. The bidding is closed after three consecutive passes. But equally of course the last speaker may always technically claim that his bid was "inadvertent," and may change it if no one else has spoken, or played.

Who shall define "inadvertent"? It might mean, "I spoke too hastily, and named the wrong suit, or bid too much. As no one has spoken, I will therefore alter my suit or lower my bid." Or it might mean, "I spoke too hastily and before I had taken sufficient stock of the possibilities of my hand. As no one has spoken, I will therefore change my pass to a double."

A request for an explanation of this same law (Law 52) came from an Englishman in Saskatchewan:

"The dealer bid 'one club.' The next player

was weighing his hand before bidding, when the dealer, having discovered on further investigation of his hand that it held a better suit than clubs, said: 'No, I'll bid a heart.' We mildly protested that this was hardly in order, but on consulting the rules we found this amazing law, as laid down by the Whist Club of New York (Law 52).

"Who, may I ask, is to define that word 'inadvertent,' and where might it not lead? If a player 'inadvertently' drops a card he is penalized. If he 'inadvertently' underbids his hand he is penalized. And yet the law permits him 'inadvertently' to bid two, three, or all five suits, thus conveying infinitely more information than any of the above breaches and nothing happens to him. The thing is simply absurd.

"I quite understand the cases it is intended to cover, but the point is that nearly all penalties are occasioned by carelessness, and why this particular piece of carelessness should be condoned in preference to any other I cannot for the life of me understand.

"P. S.—Curiously enough, since writing the

above, another similar case has arisen. My partner—a very good player—dealt and bid ‘a no-trump.’ It passed to fourth-hand, who said, ‘Two diamonds.’ My partner said, ‘Pass,’ then suddenly changed his mind and said, ‘Three clubs.’ We protested and called the hand off, but, according to the American rules, it was perfectly in order.”

The English law covering a like situation reads: “A declaration once made cannot be altered (except in the case of under-bidding, as provided by the rules).” And that, it seems to me, is the proper ruling.

I have always wondered greatly at the latitude permitted by Law 52; it is intended, I suppose, to cover those cases when a player names one suit, intending to name another; or when he bids more than he need and discovers his own mistake before any one else discovers it. But I cannot see why he should be so privileged, even then.

These two questions are from Albuquerque:  
1st. “Z is playing no-trumps; A leads and B (fourth-hand) takes the trick; while B is studying Dummy, preparatory to leading,—A inad-

vertently leads again; B protests that it is *his* lead; Z-Y declare that they want the lead to stand, and that it is optional with them to say whether it shall do so. Are they right?"

No. A's card is either an exposed card, and must be laid face-up, on the board subject to the call of the Declarant, in which case B has a right to his lead; or, Z may permit A to return his card to his hand, and may call a suit from B. The Declarant *could refuse to accept a wrong lead*, but he cannot *insist on retaining one*.

2d. "The Declarant takes the first trick in his own hand, and leads. He plays from Dummy, before second-hand has played and then (while second-hand is still thinking) the Declarant wants to replace Dummy's card, claiming it was played out of turn. Can he do this?"

No, a touched card in Dummy is a played card, under the American rules. The Declarant has no right to shove Dummy's cards in and out. If he plays ahead of his turn he must abide by his play.

This comes from Johnstown:

"Three or four tricks have already been

played. It is the Declarant's lead from his own hand, but he pulls a high card from Dummy. His opponent, to the left, immediately says, 'wrong side,' but before the words have left his mouth his partner has trumped with a lone king. The Declarant then pushes back Dummy's card, leads a small trump from his own hand, puts up Dummy's ace of trumps, and catches the lone king, which has been exposed. Is this permissible? Or, what should have been done? It has caused considerable argument."

Law 77 reads: "If the declarer lead out of turn, either from his own hand or Dummy, he incurs no penalty, but he may not rectify the error unless directed to do so by an adversary. *If the second-hand play, the lead is accepted.*"

When the Declarant makes a mistake, it is not for an adversary to help him. It is always best for the adversary who will play *last* on the trick, to wait and see whether his partner is advantaged by the error.

This is from Vermont:

"We were playing Auction with nullos counting ten. Z dealt and bid 'a no-trump'; A

said 'two royals'; Y, 'three diamonds'; B, 'two nullos,' which, being only 20 would not beat three diamonds (21). It was up to Z; A said, 'Are you going to make B go up to three nullos, or are you going to play your three diamonds?' Z answered, 'Neither; I am going to bid three no-trumps.' A then bid 'four nullos'; Y said, 'four no-trumps'; B and Z passed; A, 'five nullos'; Y and B passed; Z doubled, and the bidding closed. Z led. A threw down the hand calling for a new deal because Z had (so he claimed) led out of turn. He held that as long as Z had not forced B to raise his insufficient bid, that bid did not count; that, therefore, he (A) was the first nullo-bidder, and that Y, not Z, was the proper leader."

A was wrong. The moment a bid is covered, it stands as good, even though it be insufficient. Z's bid of "three no-trumps" legitimized B's insufficient bid of "two nullos." B was therefore the original nullo-bidder, and Z was the proper leader.

Moreover, the Declarant cannot call for a new deal simply because the wrong adversary leads.

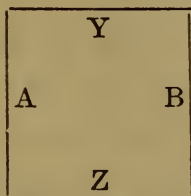
That point has been explained earlier in this chapter.

This comes from Rancagua, Chile:

“It is the beginning of the rubber-game; A-B are 300 to the good, on the honor-score; and these are the cards:

♥ 7 6 5 3  
 ♣ A 10 8 7 6 4  
 ♦ 6  
 ♠ J 10

♥ A  
 ♣ 5  
 ♦ K J 5 3  
 ♠ A K 9 8 7 6 4



♥ K 9 8  
 ♣ K Q 9 3 2  
 ♦ Q 10 7 4  
 ♠ 5

♥ Q J 10 4 2  
 ♣ J  
 ♦ A 9 8 2  
 ♠ Q 3 2

“Actual bidding ran thus: Z, ‘a spade’; A, ‘a royal’; Y, ‘two clubs’; B and Z, ‘No’; A, ‘two royals’; Y, ‘three clubs’; A, ‘three royals’ closed.”

Y led the six of diamonds, Dummy played the

four, Z the ace, and A the trey. The point in discussion was Z's proper return-lead.

Of course, Y wanted a diamond, but I cannot see why Z need be expected to give it. The rule of eleven showed that there would be *five* diamonds higher than the six-spot held against Y, —provided he had led fourth-best. With *six* diamonds higher than the six-spot shown on the table and in his own hand, Z knew the lead could not be fourth-best. It must be short, but not necessarily a singleton.

It might be the higher of two. With the four played from Dummy, the trey from A, and the deuce in Z's own hand, there was still the five-spot to account for. It might lie with Y as easily as with A.

Again, it might be that Y's clubs on which he had bid were in a combination which must be led to. They might be headed by the ace-queen, and he might have led from a weak suit, hoping to throw his partner in, so as to get a club-lead through the Declarant's hand.

The fact that the king of clubs was shown in Dummy's hand would nullify the advantage of



Z's return club-lead, even provided Y held ace-queen. Nevertheless, I think Z had a right to his singleton lead, in the hope of a ruff. He could not know that A would over-ruff, and his (Z's) queen of trumps was in a bad position and might never take legitimately.

. Either the club or the diamond was a correct return lead from Z. Neither could be fairly criticized. They evidently know good Auction in Rancagua!

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE QUESTION OF HONORS

SCIENTIFIC Auction players are inclining more and more to the belief that honors should not be scored. They say it is like giving a man money, and then paying him for having it. If a player holds all the high cards of his suit, the mere fact that he holds them is a tremendous advantage to him. Why, then, should he be given an extra score on the honor-column for a piece of luck for which he is not personally responsible, when the earning power of his high cards should be luck enough in itself?

Again, honors sometimes pervert the bidding. Every card-hand holds certain intrinsic possibilities; to obtain the highest form of Auction, every hand should be played by the person whose cards best warrant it; he should be forced to bid as high as possible, and then to buckle down and

work hard to pull off his bid—the result being sometimes success and sometimes defeat. The state of the score should be the only thing that would warrant any player in voluntarily assuming certain defeat; he would then be choosing a small loss in preference to a big one.

But the moment a player bids to his honors alone, knowing that he cannot score in points, but that his honors will wipe out his losses, he makes a violent assault on the real beauty of the game. It is poor Auction to play his bad hand when there is another hand at the table which is capable of winning by sheer force of skill. The intrinsic possibilities of the card-combinations are butchered and distorted.

The man who can say, "I think my hand combined with my partner's is worth four-odd in hearts, if I make no mistakes and have average luck," is the man who should play that hand, unless there is a better at the table, or unless the score demands that the players choose between a small loss and a greater one.

But when a man says: "This hand isn't worth a picayune, but it holds 90 honors, so I am going

to play it even if I go down two or three"—the beauty and enjoyment of that particular hand is lost. There is no real skill in it.

Of course, we all play such hands. As long as honors exist it is necessary. No one can throw away 90 points if he knows his adversary is going to lose no chance to harvest them. But if they didn't exist everyone would be forced to play to the best real possibilities of his hand.

I should be rather sorry to part with honors. They have always existed, and, as far as my feelings go, I fear I am a sad "standpatter." But my reason shows me how tremendously the game that I love is benefited by each step away from luck and toward skill. I have allied myself firmly with all pro-skill, anti-luck movements, and I can see the tremendous fairness in the arguments against honors.

Points and penalties (and the rubber-value, because it is achieved by points and by hard work) are really the only things that should count.

What we resist to-day we accept to-morrow;

we grow accustomed to it the next day, and in an incredibly short time we look back aghast at what once satisfied us. This is the history of all progress.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE REVOKE

WHY should a revoke be more expensive to one side than to the other?

Formerly it was not. If the Declarant detected one of his adversaries in a revoke he might choose between three tricks or their equivalent, 150 honor-points; that is, he might have the value of three tricks above the line or below it.

If either adversary detected a revoke on the part of the Declarant, the adversaries might not take three tricks, because adversaries can never score below the line; but they might take the value of three tricks above the line, 150 honor-points.

Last autumn this law was altered. As it now stands, the Declarant may still take his three tricks in case of a revoke, or (if he prefers) 100

honor-points. He would rarely hesitate, I fancy, in choosing the tricks. But the poor adversaries may take but 100 honor-points as their reward for a detected revoke. In other words, *they may have but the value of two tricks, while the Declarant may have three.*

The logic of this change is made even more incomprehensible by the new law that Dummy may now call attention to a revoke. That is an improvement, and is a point for which I have been clamoring for years. But I did not foresee that when it came it would be accompanied by this astonishing discrepancy in the revoke penalty.

Dummy sits there doing nothing. He can help protect his partner from a revoke by asking if that partner really lacks the suit which he has just refused. Dummy, having no hand to play, no cards to manipulate, can sit and watch the adversaries for a revoke. If he discovers one, it means three tricks for him and his partner.

The adversaries, both of whom are forced to play, have less leisure to watch for a revoke. Yet, if they do detect one, their reward is but 100, the value of two tricks instead of three.

The moment I read this new law, I was struck by its lack of logic. Had I been its creator, I could not have received more protests concerning it. The burden of all these protests was this: the revoke penalty should have been increased instead of decreased. And so say I.

Nothing is so upsetting as a revoke. Nothing is so profitable as an intentional one. A man was playing "four royals" doubled and redoubled. The losses would be 200 a trick; the adversaries had a cross-ruff, on which they were using their little trumps, and he stood to lose four more tricks than he should, 800 points. By coming in, he could exhaust the adverse trumps, and then make his side-aces and side-kings, in place of having them ruffed.

He deliberately refused to follow to one of the side suits, trumped with a high trump, pulled trumps, made his side-cards and his contract, and showed down his revoking card on the thirteenth round. Of course, he could not score on the hand; but as he had made his contract, the adversaries' profits were cut down to 100 for the revoke, in place of the 800 which they should



have scored had the hand been fairly played. This is a true story, and that man saved 700 points by a deliberate revoke.

As intentional revokes can be so profitable, the revoke penalty should be increased. Penalties are for preventing carelessness and for protecting honest players against dishonest ones.

And since revokes are as upsetting to one side as to the other, both sides should suffer equally for committing the error. Three tricks for one side and two tricks for the other is eminently unfair.

And, finally, if either side is to profit less than the other from a detected revoke, it should be the side of the Declarant, who has an unemployed partner to *protect* him and to *detect* the opponents.

## CHAPTER XIX

### PARTIAL-HAND PROBLEMS

It has been said that when eight rounds of an Auction-hand have been played, every player at the table should be able to place the remaining twenty cards absolutely and accurately. In other words, the last five rounds of every hand should be exactly the same as an "open" hand.

I do not agree with this in the least. There are plenty of hands where it can be done, of course; but there are certainly plenty more where it cannot. And I should greatly like to see it put up to the players who make the claim.

The big cards can nearly always be placed, of course—the aces and faces—and even cards considerably lower than those. But all the rules in the world (including the rule of eleven), all the acumen, the memory, the inference, and the

observation, will not enable any one always to place unerringly the final twenty cards of a hand.

Again, it has been said that all vital plays—the plays that land game or lose it—are made during the last five rounds. And again, I disagree. Plenty of games are lost on the very first round. A game may be lost wherever a mistake may occur, and mistakes may occur anywhere. And yet,—there is a very large grain of truth in both of these statements.

At the close of the eighth round we should all know approximately the distribution of the remaining cards. Sometimes we should even know it accurately. Also, the play is likely to become more concentrated on the last five rounds; with so many cards accounted for, more scope is given for brilliant and unusual play.

Therefore it is, that the problems of open hands, and partial hands, are useful. On those occasions when we are able to place the remaining cards, we can reason out the solutions just as though the hand was open. The only difference is that we cannot actually play the cards until

after our decision is made—we must imagine them played.

It has been argued that partial-hand problems are “all tricks.” If they covered situations that could be handled in the usual way, they would be no problems at all. But we all know that while rules must be obeyed in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the hundredth situation does sometimes arise and the rules must then be broken.

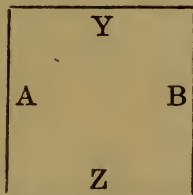
These problems help one to recognize the “hundredth situation.” And nearly every trick-problem covers some great principle that can be profitably marked for future use.

Here are three of the cleverest partial-hand problems I have ever seen. Their solutions are given in the following chapter.

Ist

♥ 8 7  
 ♣ A 2  
 ♦ J 3  
 ♠ —

♥ —  
 ♣ J 3  
 ♦ Q 5  
 ♠ Q 7



♥ —  
 ♣ 8  
 ♦ 10 8 6  
 ♠ J 5

♥ —  
 ♣ 10  
 ♦ A K 9  
 ♠ 10 9

Hearts are trumps, Z is to lead, and Z-Y want all of the six remaining tricks. How can they take them against *any* defense?

## Nullo-Auction

2d

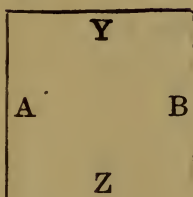
	♡ Q 8 6 5 ♣ A Q J 10 ♦ — ♠ K 10										
♡ A K J ♣ 9 8 6 3 2 ♦ K Q ♠ —	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♡ 9 ♣ 7 5 4 ♦ 10 9 5 4 ♠ Q 7
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♡ 10 7 4 3 2 ♣ K ♦ J 8 6 3 ♠ —										

Hearts are trumps, Z is to lead, and Z-Y want eight of the ten remaining tricks, against any defense.

3d

♥ A K 8  
 ♣ 10  
 ♦ 5 4  
 ♠ —

♥ 10 6 3  
 ♣ 8  
 ♦ Q J  
 ♠ —



♥ Q J  
 ♣ K  
 ♦ A K  
 ♠ —

♥ 9 5  
 ♣ A 2  
 ♦ —  
 ♠ 4 3

Royals are trumps. Y leads. And Z-Y must take all six tricks against any defense.

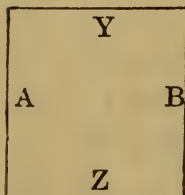
# CHAPTER XX

## SOLUTIONS

Ist

♥ 8 7  
 ♣ A 2  
 ♦ J 3  
 ♠ —

♥ —  
 ♣ J 3  
 ♦ Q 5  
 ♠ Q



♥ —  
 ♣ 8  
 ♦ 10 8 6  
 ♠ J 5

♥ —  
 ♣ 10  
 ♦ K 9  
 ♠ 10 9

HEARTS are trumps, Z is to lead, and Z-Y want all of the six remaining tricks. The hand was sent me with the word that it had puzzled



clubs both here and abroad, and the query as to whether it was "sound."

Z leads his king of diamonds, throwing Dummy's jack. He must do this in order to unblock for his own nine-spot later in the hand, when he wants to finesse the diamonds from Dummy and through B. If Dummy retained the jack, Z couldn't get into his own hand with the nine-spot.

Z's next lead is the nine of spades. It doesn't matter whether A covers or not; Z trumps in Dummy.

He then leads the eight of hearts, in order to force discards. Z, himself, will not be hurt by a discard; he has a perfectly useless card to throw—his ten of clubs. He can make his club-ace anyhow, because the lead is already in Dummy. Therefore the club-ten is superfluous. But A will be seriously hurt by the discard; he must do one of three things: discard a club and establish Y's deuce; discard a diamond and make Z's later diamond-finesse good; or discard the leading spade.

Z has forced him to this position by the first

two leads; he wants A to discard from one of the two *vital* suits (diamonds or spades) before he himself discards from either of those suits. Position is against him, and unless he retained that useless ten of clubs for a first discard he would be forced to make a vital discard before A did so. As I have said, it is necessary to his purpose and his future play that this first vital discard should be thrust upon A. Z will then model his later play on this discard.

A's best discard is the spade-queen, because B holds the jack of spades; it matters not, however, what A discards—Z makes his six rounds. B's discard on the trump-lead should be the eight of clubs.

Z next leads the ace of clubs. If A has already thrown the queen of spades and B now throws the jack, Z's ten is good. If A has played spade-queen and B plays a diamond, both of Z's diamonds will be good. If A has thrown the diamond-queen, whether B now plays the spade or the diamond, Z's diamonds are good; he can finesse Dummy's trey through B's ten-eight up to his own ace-nine. He therefore throws his

spade. And if A's first discard was a club, Dummy's deuce is established and Z has no trouble at all.

The point is that A must be forced to discard one spade, one club, or one diamond before Z discards anything vital. Z's second discard depends on A's first one.

If Z chooses a spade for his first lead he fails to prepare the diamond situation. A still has two diamonds; if he discards the low one and retains the queen (on Z's third-round trump-lead) he can force Z into his own hand and make him lead diamonds to B; Z will then lose the sixth round, thus:

First round—Z, nine of spades; A, seven of spades; Y, seven of hearts; B, five of spades.

Second round—Y, eight of hearts; B, eight of clubs; Z, ten of clubs; A, five of diamonds. Z must now lead the ace of clubs, or he will never get back to do it.

Third round—Y, ace of clubs; B, jack of spades; Z, ten of spades or nine of diamonds. And A's play depends on Z's; if Z throws his spade, A throws his; if Z throws a diamond, so

does A. The advantage of position is A's and not Z's.

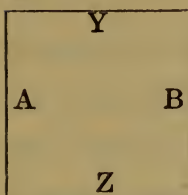
If they both throw diamonds, it is obvious that A takes the spade in the end. If they both throw spades, Y's next lead is the jack of diamonds, which he is forced to take with the king, in order to keep A's queen from winning. And he will then have to lead from his own hand up to B's, and B's ten of diamonds will be good.

And finally the only other lead in Z's hand, and apparently the most obvious one, is the ten of clubs. This deprives him of a superfluous card for his first discard; and, provided the adversaries play properly, he cannot take more than five out of the six rounds. The lessons in this hand are, first: the throw of an unnecessarily high card, in order to unblock; and second, *forcing the adversary to discard ahead of you.*

2d

♥ Q 8 6 5  
 ♣ A Q J 10  
 ♦ —  
 ♠ K 10

♥ A K J  
 ♣ 9 8 6 3 2  
 ♦ K Q  
 ♠ —



♥ 9  
 ♣ 7 5 4  
 ♦ 10 9 5 4  
 ♠ Q 7

♥ 10 7 4 3 2  
 ♣ K  
 ♦ J 8 6 3  
 ♠ —

Hearts are trumps, Z is to lead, and Z-Y want eight of the ten remaining tricks. That means that A will take with his ace and king of trumps (as he must, of necessity), but that he will take no other trick. His jack must never take, and B must take no tricks at all.

The first noticeable thing is that Z holds more trumps than he needs. He won't mind wasting a few.

The second thing is that his jack of diamonds will be high on the third round.

The third is that his highest trump is, most conveniently, just one spot higher than B's. If B trumps the fourth round of clubs, Z can over-trump. And there is no other suit which B can trump.

The next is that, by leading diamonds up to the long diamond-hand (B), and clubs up to the long club-hand (A), Z can establish a very pretty cross-ruff that cannot be over-ruffed.

All this for Z. Considering Y's hand, Z realizes that Y must never lead either trumps or spades up to A. If he led trumps he would establish A's jack; and if he led spades A would over-trump Z. Therefore, the only thing Y can lead is clubs; if he continues to hold the lead with those clubs, the time will come when they will be gone. Then he will have to do one of two forbidden things—lead spades or trumps.

*The only way to obviate this difficulty is for Z to trump his partner's good clubs with some of his own superfluous hearts. Did he not do this, he would have to discard diamonds on them. And he needs those diamonds in his business; he needs them to lead.*

If Z didn't have diamonds to lead, he would have to lead trumps. That looks at first glance like a good thing to do; Dummy's queen sits nicely over A's jack. And if A were obliging enough to play his jack, just to get it killed, it would all work very nicely. But A won't; his hopes are centered on that jack. Why should he sacrifice it? A will come in with the king of trumps. Y's five will fall, and A will force Y with a diamond. That cuts Y's trumps to two; one more diamond force and his trump-queen is all alone and a prey to A's ace.

Three things become apparent from this: first, that Z must never lead trumps, but must allow Y's trumps to make separately from his own; second, that if he does not retain all his diamonds, he will not only unguard his jack but will have nothing to lead save trumps; and, third, that A must not be allowed to get in during the early rounds, or he will take matters into his own hands and use the diamond force. And the only way to keep him out is to avoid trump-leads.

But two leads remain to Z—diamond or club.

It appears later that the diamond lands the lead in the wrong place as the hand progresses.

Z leads club-king, taking with Dummy's ace. Leads club-ten and trumps. Leads small diamond and trumps in Dummy. Leads jack of clubs and trumps it. Leads diamond-six and trumps in Dummy. Leads club-queen and trumps (using his ten, if B trumps). And then leads the jack of diamonds, which is now high. A holds but the nine of clubs (which is high) and his three trumps. If he discards the club, Z discards Dummy's small spade and leads another diamond (you see now why he needed all his diamonds). If A trumps with the jack, Y overtrumps and leads king of spades. And if A trumps high, Y discards and holds a protected queen of trumps. A's next lead of the club is trumped by Z, who leads the diamond through A, up to Y's two trumps.

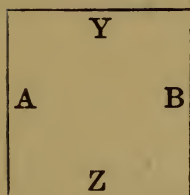
Of course it is a "trick" to trump all one's own taking cards; but look at the subtlety of the situation. Z needs his trumps less than his diamonds. And I need hardly warn players not to make it a general rule to trump their own tricks.



3d

♥ A K 8  
 ♣ 10  
 ♦ 5 4  
 ♠ —

♥ 10 6 3  
 ♣ 8  
 ♦ Q J  
 ♠ —



♥ Q J  
 ♣ K Q  
 ♦ A K  
 ♠ —

♥ 9 5  
 ♣ A 2  
 ♦ —  
 ♠ 4 3

Royals are trumps. Y leads. And Z-Y must take all six tricks against any defense.

Y leads the king of hearts and Z throws his nine. The entire solution depends on this play of Z's, as it prepares the way for a later heart-finesse from Z's hand, through A's ten-spot, and up to Y's king-eight. Did Z not unblock hearts on this first round he could never enter Y's hand with the eight-spot.

Y's next lead is a diamond, which Z trumps.

He then leads his remaining trump to force discards. Y discards club-ten. If B discards a diamond he makes Y's little diamond good; if he discards a club, he makes both Z's clubs good, and if he discards his heart he permits Z to finesse hearts through A's ten-six, and up to Y's ace-eight.

## CHAPTER XXI

### DUPLICATE AUCTION

DUPLICATE Auction, or "Compass" Auction is thoroughly described in my first book, *The Fine Points of Auction Bridge*. In playing, it is impossible to count games or rubbers. The score is kept on a long sheet, the points made on each hand being scored below the line, and the penalties above. At the close of the play the entire gross score is added, points and penalties together, with no extra count for rubber.

This being so, it often paid a player to bid to his honors alone. The points above the line were just as valuable as those below, since the latter were not enhanced by any rubber-winning capacity. The bidding suffered.

A remedy for this weakness suddenly occurred to me one summer day about two years ago. If the rubber is worth 250, a game is worth 125,

since a game is half of a rubber. I determined to give 125 honor points to every player who made 30 or more trick points in one hand (game in the hand).

The improvement was marked and immediate. Every one began to bid to the trick possibilities of his hand; every hand was a proper effort on the part of the Declarant to go game in the hand, and an equally proper effort on the part of the adversaries to foil such efforts.

Since that day two years ago my coterie and I have always played Duplicate Auction in this way. I mentioned the method in the columns of the *Times* in my first book—*The Fine Points of Auction Bridge*—and to a member of the committee of the Whist Club (New York). It was considered so valuable that, to my very great delight, it was formally adopted by the Whist Club, in December, 1913, is now embodied in the laws of that club, and is played universally. So much for a flash of inspiration on a summer's day!

## CHAPTER XXII

### A PLEA

I HAVE a plea to make! Not for nullos,—they don't need it,—but for self-restraint in their use. I beg of my readers to treat the new suit *rationaly*. Nullos are not patent, adjustable, self-regulators,—warranted to fit any hand successfully! If too greatly abused, they will be killed, and we shall revert to nullo-less Auction,—which will be a very long step backward!

Numbers of good players have told me that, while they believed absolutely in nullos, they dreaded to play them because of their partners. It is my sincere hope that all of my readers will prove to be partners that are universally desired, not partners that are universally shunned. To be welcomed as a partner and feared as an adversary, is to have reached the top rung of the Auction ladder.



# The Laws of Auction

As Adopted by  
The Whist Club

Also

Laws of Three-Handed and Duplicate

Together with the  
Etiquette of the Game

---

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THE WHIST CLUB, NEW YORK

At a meeting of the Board of Managers of  
The Whist Club the following laws applicable to  
Auction were approved and adopted.

THE WHIST CLUB.

NEW YORK,  
*November, 1913.*



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# THE LAWS OF AUCTION

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## THE RUBBER

1. The partners first winning two games win the rubber. When the first two games decide the rubber, a third is not played.

## SCORING

2. Each side has a trick score and a score for all other counts, generally known as the honor score. In the trick score the only entries made are points for tricks won (see Law 3), which count both toward the game and in the total of the rubber.

All other points, including honors, penalties, slam, little slam, and undertricks, are recorded in the honor score, which counts only in the total of the rubber.

3. When the declarer wins the number of tricks bid or more, each above six counts on the trick score: two points when spades are trumps, six when clubs are trumps, seven when diamonds are trumps, eight when hearts are trumps, nine when royal spades are trumps, and ten when the declaration is no-trump.

4. A game consists of thirty points made by tricks alone. Every deal is played out, whether or not during

it the game be concluded, and any points made (even if in excess of thirty) are counted.

5. The ace, king, queen, knave, and ten of the trump suit are the honors; when no-trump is declared, the aces are the honors.

6. Honors are credited to the original holders; they are valued as follows:

#### WHEN A TRUMP IS DECLARED

3*	honors held between partners	equal value of 2 tricks	
4	" " " " " "	" " " "	4 "
5	" " " " " "	" " " "	5 "
4	" in 1 hand	" " " "	8 "
4	" " 1 " {	5th in partner's hand	" " 9 "
5	" " 1 " }	" " " "	" " 10 "

#### WHEN NO TRUMP IS DECLARED

3	aces held between partners	count 30
4	" " " " " "	40
4	" " in one hand	100

\*Frequently called "simple honors."

7. Slam is made when partners take thirteen tricks.\* It counts 40 points in the honor score.

8. Little slam is made when partners take twelve tricks.† It counts 20 points in the honor score.

9. The value of honors, slam, or little slam, is not affected by doubling or redoubling.

\* Law 84 prohibits a revoking side from scoring slam, and provides that tricks received by the declarer as penalty for a revoke shall not entitle him to a slam not otherwise obtained.

† Law 84 prohibits a revoking side from scoring little slam, and provides that tricks received by the declarer as penalty for a revoke shall not entitle him to a little slam not otherwise obtained. If a declarer bid 7 and take twelve tricks he counts 20 for little slam, although his declaration fails.

10. At the conclusion of a rubber the trick and honor scores of each side are added and 250 additional points added to the score of the winners of the rubber. The size of the rubber is the difference between the completed scores. If the score of the losers of the rubber exceed that of the winners, the losers win the amount of the excess.

11. When a rubber is started with the agreement that the play shall terminate (*i.e.*, no new deal shall commence) at a specified time, and the rubber is unfinished at that hour, the score is made up as it stands, 125 being added to the score of the winners of a game. A deal if started must be finished.

12. A proved error in the honor score may be corrected at any time before the score of the rubber has been made up and agreed upon.

13. A proved error in the trick score may be corrected at any time before a declaration has been made in the following game, or, if it occur in the final game of the rubber, before the score has been made up and agreed upon.

## CUTTING

14. In cutting, the ace is the lowest card; between cards of otherwise equal value the heart is the lowest, the diamond next, the club next, and spade the highest.

15. Every player must cut from the same pack.

16. Should a player expose more than one card, the highest is his cut.

## FORMING TABLES

17. Those first in the room have the prior right to play. Candidates of equal standing decide their order by cutting; those who cut lowest play first.

18. Six players constitute a complete table.

19. After the table has been formed, the players cut to decide upon partners, the two lower play against the two higher. The lowest is the dealer, who has choice of cards and seats, and, having made his selection, must abide by it.\*

20. The right to succeed players as they retire is acquired by announcing the desire to do so, and such announcements, in the order made, entitle candidates to fill vacancies as they occur.

### CUTTING OUT

21. If, at the end of a rubber, admission be claimed by one or two candidates, the player or players who have played the greatest number of consecutive rubbers withdraw; when all have played the same number, they cut to decide upon the outgoers; the highest are out.†

### RIGHT OF ENTRY

22. At the end of a rubber a candidate is not entitled to enter a table unless he declare his intention before any player cut, either for partners, for a new rubber, or for cutting out.

23. In the formation of new tables candidates who have not played at an existing table have the prior right of entry. Others decide their right to admission by cutting.

24. When one or more players belonging to an existing table aid in making up a new one, which cannot be formed without him or them, he or they shall be the last to cut out.

\* He may consult his partner before making his decision.

† See Law 14 as to value of cards in cutting.

25. A player belonging to one table who enters another, or announces a desire to do so, forfeits his right at his original table, unless the new table cannot be formed without him, in which case he may retain his position at his original table by announcing his intention to return as soon as his place at the new table can be filled.

26. Should a player leave a table during the progress of a rubber, he may, with the consent of the three others, appoint a substitute to play during his absence; but such appointment becomes void upon the conclusion of the rubber, and does not in any way affect the rights of the substitute.

27. If a player break up a table, the others have a prior right of entry elsewhere.

## SHUFFLING

28. The pack must not be shuffled below the table nor so the face of any card be seen.

29. The dealer's partner must collect the cards from the preceding deal and has the right to shuffle first. Each player has the right to shuffle subsequently. The dealer has the right to shuffle last, but should a card or cards be seen during his shuffling or while giving the pack to be cut, he must reshuffle.

30. After shuffling, the cards, properly collected, must be placed face downward to the left of the next dealer, where they must remain untouched until the end of the current deal.

## THE DEAL

31. Players deal in turn; the order of dealing is to the left.

32. Immediately before the deal, the player on the dealer's right cuts, so that each packet contains at least

four cards. If, in or after cutting, and prior to the beginning of the deal, a card be exposed, or if any doubt exist as to the place of the cut, the dealer must reshuffle and the same player must cut again.

33. After the pack has been properly cut, it should not be reshuffled or recut except as provided in Law 32.

34. Should the dealer shuffle after the cut, his adversaries may also shuffle and the pack must be cut again.

35. The fifty-two cards must be dealt face downward. The deal is completed when the last card is dealt.

36. In the event of a misdeal, the same pack must be dealt again by the same player.

#### A NEW DEAL

37. There *must* be a new deal:

- (a) If the cards be not dealt, beginning at the dealer's left, into four packets one at a time and in regular rotation.
- (b) If, during a deal, or during the play, the pack be proved incorrect.
- (c) If, during a deal, any card be faced in the pack or exposed, on, above, or below the table.
- (d) If more than thirteen cards be dealt to any player.\*
- (e) If the last card do not come in its regular order to the dealer.
- (f) If the dealer omit having the pack cut, deal out of turn or with the adversaries' cards, and either adversary call attention to the fact before the end of the deal and before looking at any of his cards.

\* This error, whenever discovered, renders a new deal necessary.



38. Should a correction of any offense mentioned in 37 *f* not be made in time, or should an adversary who has looked at any of his cards be the first to call attention to the error, the deal stands, and the game proceeds as if the deal had been correct, the player to the left dealing the next. When the deal has been with the wrong cards, the next dealer may take whichever pack he prefers.

39. If, prior to the cut for the following deal, a pack be proved incorrect, the deal is void, but all prior scores stand.\*

The pack is not incorrect when a missing card or cards are found in the other pack, among the quitted tricks, below the table, or in any other place which makes it possible that such card or cards were part of the pack during the deal.

40. Should three players have their proper number of cards, the fourth, less, the missing card or cards, if found, belong to him, and he, unless Dummy, is answerable for any established revoke or revokes he may have made just as if the missing card or cards had been continuously in his hand. When a card is missing, any player may search the other pack, the quitted tricks, or elsewhere for it.

If before, during, or at the conclusion of play, one player hold more than the proper number of cards, and another less, the deal is void.

41. A player may not cut, shuffle, or deal for his partner if either adversary object.

## THE DECLARATION

42. The dealer, having examined his hand, must declare to win at least one odd trick,† either with a specified suit, or at no-trump.

\* A correct pack contains exactly fifty-two cards, one of each denomination.

† One trick more than six.

43. After the dealer has declared, each player in turn, beginning on the dealer's left, must pass, make a higher declaration, double the last declaration, or redouble a declaration which has been doubled, subject to the provisions of Law 54.

44. A declaration of a greater number of tricks in a suit of lower value, which equals the last declaration in value of points, is a higher declaration; *e. g.*, a declaration of "three spades" is higher than "one club."

45. A player in his turn may overbid the previous adverse declaration any number of times, and may also overbid his partner, but he cannot overbid his own declaration which has been passed by the three others.

46. The player who makes the final declaration\* must play the combined hands, his partner becoming Dummy, unless the suit or no-trump finally declared was bid by the partner before it was called by the final declarer, in which case the partner, no matter what bids have intervened, must play the combined hands.

47. When the player of the two hands (hereinafter termed "the declarer") wins at least as many tricks as he declared, he scores the full value of the tricks won (see Law 3).†

47a. When the declarer fails to win as many tricks as he declares, neither he nor his adversaries score anything toward the game, but his adversaries score in their honor column 50 points for each undertrick (*i. e.*, each trick short of the number declared). If the declaration be doubled, the adversaries score 100 points; if redoubled, 200 points for each undertrick.

\* A declaration becomes final when it has been passed by three players.

† For amount scored by declarer, if doubled, see Laws 53 and 56.

48. The loss on the dealer's original declaration of "one spade" is limited to 100 points, whether doubled or not, unless redoubled. Honors are scored as held.

49. If a player make a declaration (other than passing) out of turn, either adversary may demand a new deal, or may allow such declaration to stand, in which case the bidding shall continue as if the declaration had been in turn.

If a player pass out of turn, the order of the bidding is not affected, *i. e.*, it is still the turn of the player to the left of the last declarer. The player who has passed out of turn may re-enter the bidding in his proper turn if the declaration he has passed be overbid or doubled.

50. If a player make an insufficient or impossible declaration, either adversary may demand that it be penalized. The penalty for an insufficient declaration is that the bid is made sufficient in the declaration named and the partner of the declarer may not further declare unless an adversary subsequently bid or double. The penalty for an impossible declaration is that the bid is made seven in the suit named and the partner of the declarer may not further declare unless an adversary subsequently bid or double. Either adversary, instead of penalizing an impossible declaration, may demand a new deal, or that the last declaration made on behalf of his partnership become the final declaration.

50a. If a player who has been debarred from bidding under Laws 50 or 65, during the period of such prohibition, make any declaration (other than passing), either adversary may decide whether such declaration stand, and neither the offending player nor his partner may further participate in the bidding even if the adversaries double or declare.

50b. A penalty for a declaration out of turn (see Law

49), an insufficient or impossible declaration (see Law 50), or a bid when prohibited (see Law 50a) may not be enforced if either adversary pass, double, or declare before the penalty be demanded.\*

50c. Laws which give to either adversary the right to enforce a penalty, do not permit unlimited consultation. Either adversary may call attention to the offense and select the penalty, or may say, "Partner, you determine the penalty," or words to that effect. Any other consultation is prohibited, † and if it take place the right to demand any penalty is lost. The first decision made by either adversary is final and cannot be altered.

51. At any time during the declaration, a question asked by a player concerning any previous bid must be answered, but, after the final declaration has been accepted, if an adversary of the declarer inform his partner regarding any previous declaration, the declarer may call a lead from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead. If the Dummy give such information to the declarer, either adversary of the declarer may call a lead. A player, however, at any time may ask what declaration is being played and the question must be answered.

52. A declaration legitimately made cannot be changed after the next player pass, declare, or double. Prior to such action a declaration inadvertently made may be corrected. If, prior to such correction, an adversary call attention to an insufficient or impossible declaration, it may not thereafter be corrected nor may the penalty be avoided.

\* When the penalty for an insufficient declaration is not demanded, the bid over which it was made may be repeated unless some higher bid have intervened.

† The question, "Partner, will you select the penalty, or shall I?" is a form of consultation which is not permitted.

## DOUBLING AND REDOUBLING

53. Doubling and redoubling doubles and quadruples the value of each trick over six, but it does not alter the value of a declaration; *e. g.*, a declaration of "three clubs" is higher than "two royal spades" doubled or redoubled.

54. Any declaration may be doubled and redoubled once, but not more; a player may not double his partner's declaration, nor redouble his partner's double, but he may redouble a declaration of his partner which has been doubled by an adversary.

The penalty for redoubling more than once is 100 points in the adverse honor score or a new deal; for doubling a partner's declaration, or redoubling a partner's double it is 50 points in the adverse honor score. Either adversary may demand any penalty enforceable under this law.

55. Doubling or redoubling reopens the bidding. When a declaration has been doubled or redoubled, any one of the three succeeding players, including the player whose declaration has been doubled, may, in his proper turn, make a further declaration of higher value.

56. When a player whose declaration has been doubled wins the declared number of tricks, he scores a bonus of 50 points in his honor score, and a further 50 points for each additional trick. When he or his partner has redoubled, he scores 100 points for making the contract and an additional 100 for each extra trick.

57. A double or redouble is a declaration, and a player who doubles or redoubles out of turn is subject to the penalty provided by Law 49.

58. After the final declaration has been accepted, the play begins; the player on the left of the declarer leads.

## DUMMY

59. As soon as the player on the left of the declarer leads, the declarer's partner places his cards face upward on the table, and the declarer plays the cards from that hand.

60. The partner of the declarer has all the rights of a player (including the right to call attention to a lead from the wrong hand), until his cards are placed face upward on the table.\* He then becomes the dummy, and takes no part whatever in the play, except that he has the right:

- (a) To call the declarer's attention to the fact that too many or too few cards have been played to a trick;
- (b) to correct an improper claim of either adversary;
- (c) to call attention to a trick erroneously taken by either side;
- (d) to participate in the discussion of any disputed question of fact after it has arisen between the declarer and either adversary;
- (e) to correct an erroneous score;
- (f) to consult with and advise the declarer as to which penalty to exact for a revoke;
- (g) to ask the declarer whether he have any of a suit he has renounced.

The Dummy, if he have not intentionally looked at any card in the hand of a player, has also the following additional rights:

- (h) To call the attention of the declarer to an established adverse revoke;

\* The penalty is determined by the declarer (see Law 66).

(*i*) to call the attention of the declarer to a card exposed by an adversary or to an adverse lead out of turn.

61. Should the dummy call attention to any other incident in the play in consequence of which any penalty might have been exacted, the declarer may not exact such penalty. Should the Dummy avail himself of rights (*h*) or (*i*), after intentionally looking at a card in the hand of a player, the declarer may not exact any penalty for the offense in question.

62. If the Dummy, by touching a card or otherwise, suggest the play of one of his cards, either adversary may require the declarer to play or not to play such card.

62*a*. If the dummy call to the attention of the declarer that he is about to lead from the wrong hand, either adversary may require that the lead be made from that hand.

63. Dummy is not subject to the revoke penalty; if he revoke and the error be not discovered until the trick be turned and quitted, whether by the rightful winners or not, the trick must stand.

64. A card from the declarer's hand is not played until actually quitted, but should he name or touch a card in the dummy, such card is played unless he say, "I arrange," or words to that effect. If he simultaneously touch two or more such cards, he may elect which to play.

### CARDS EXPOSED BEFORE PLAY

65. After the deal and before the declaration has been finally determined, if any player lead or expose a card, his partner may not thereafter bid or double during that declaration,\* and the card is subject to call.† When the

\* See Law 50*a*.

† If more than one card be exposed, all may be called.

partner of the offending player is the original leader, the declarer may also prohibit the initial lead of the suit of the exposed card.

66. After the final declaration has been accepted and before the lead, if the partner of the proper leader expose or lead a card, the declarer may treat it as exposed or may call a suit from the proper leader. A card exposed by the leader, after the final declaration and before the lead, is subject to call.

### CARDS EXPOSED DURING PLAY

67. After the original lead, all cards exposed by the declarer's adversaries are liable to be called and must be left face upward on the table.

68. The following are exposed cards:

- (1) Two or more cards played simultaneously;
- (2) a card dropped face upward on the table, even though snatched up so quickly that it cannot be named;
- (3) a card so held by a player that his partner sees any portion of its face;
- (4) a card mentioned by either adversary as being held in his or his partner's hand.

69. A card dropped on the floor or elsewhere below the table, or so held that it is seen by an adversary but not by the partner, is not an exposed card.

70. Two or more cards played simultaneously by either of the declarer's adversaries give the declarer the right to call any one of such cards to the current trick and to treat the other card or cards as exposed.

70a. Should an adversary of the declarer expose his last



card before his partner play to the twelfth trick, the two cards in his partner's hand become exposed, must be laid face upward on the table, and are subject to call.

71. If, without waiting for his partner to play, either of the declarer's adversaries play or lead a winning card, as against the declarer and Dummy and continue (without waiting for his partner to play) to lead several such cards, the declarer may demand that the partner of the player in fault win, if he can, the first or any other of these tricks. The other cards thus improperly played are exposed.

72. If either or both of the declarer's adversaries throw his or their cards face upward on the table, such cards are exposed and liable to be called; but if either adversary retain his hand, he cannot be forced to abandon it. Cards exposed by the declarer are not liable to be called. If the declarer say, "I have the rest," or any words indicating the remaining tricks or any number thereof are his, he may be required to place his cards face upward on the table. He is not then allowed to call any cards his adversaries may have exposed, nor to take any finesse not previously proven a winner unless he announce it when making his claim.

73. If a player who has rendered himself liable to have the highest or lowest of a suit called (Laws 80, 86, and 92) fail to play as directed, or if, when called on to lead one suit, he lead another, having in his hand one or more cards of the suit demanded (Laws 66, 76, and 93), or if, when called upon to win or lose a trick, he fail to do so when he can (Laws 71, 80, and 92), or if, when called upon not to play a suit, he fail to play as directed (Laws 65 and 66), he is liable to the penalty for revoke (Law 84) unless such play be corrected before the trick be turned and quitted.

74. A player cannot be compelled to play a card which would oblige him to revoke.

75. The call of an exposed card may be repeated until it be played.

### LEADS OUT OF TURN

76. If either adversary of the declarer's lead out of turn, the declarer may either treat the card so led as exposed or may call a suit as soon as it is the turn of either adversary to lead. Should they lead simultaneously, the lead from the proper hand stands, and the other card is exposed.

77. If the declarer lead out of turn, either from his own hand or Dummy, he incurs no penalty, but he may not rectify the error unless directed to do so by an adversary.\* If the second-hand play, the lead is accepted.

78. If an adversary of the declarer lead out of turn, and the declarer follow either from his own hand or Dummy, the trick stands. If the declarer before playing refuse to accept the lead, the leader may be penalized as provided in Law 76.

79. If a player called on to lead a suit have none of it, the penalty is paid.

### CARDS PLAYED IN ERROR

80. Should the fourth-hand, not being Dummy or declarer, play before the second, the latter may be required to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick. In such case, if the second-hand be void of the suit led, the declarer in lieu of any other penalty may

\* The rule in Law 50c as to consultations governs the right of adversaries to consult as to whether such direction be given.

call upon the second-hand to play the highest card of any designated suit. If he name a suit of which the second-hand is void, the penalty is paid.\*

81. If any one, except Dummy, omit playing to a trick, and such error be not corrected until he has played to the next, the adversaries or either of them may claim a new deal; should either decide that the deal stand, the surplus card (at the end of the hand) is considered played to the imperfect trick, but does not constitute a revoke therein.†

82. When any one, except Dummy, plays two or more cards to the same trick and the mistake is not corrected, he is answerable for any consequent revokes he may make. When the error is detected during the play, the tricks may be counted face downward, to see if any contain more than four cards; should this be the case, the trick which contains a surplus card or cards may be examined and such card or cards restored to the original holder.‡

## THE REVOKE §

83. A revoke occurs when a player, other than Dummy, holding one or more cards of the suit led, plays a card of a different suit. It becomes an established revoke when the trick in which it occurs is turned and quitted by the rightful winners (*i.e.*, the hand removed from the trick after it has been turned face downward on the table), or when either the revoking player or his partner, whether in turn or otherwise, leads or plays to the following trick.

84. The penalty for each established revoke is:

\* Should the declarer play third-hand before the second-hand, the fourth-hand may without penalty play before his partner.

† As to the right of adversaries to consult, see Law 50c.

‡ Either adversary may decide which card shall be considered played to the trick which contains more than four cards.

§ See Law 73.

- (a) When the declarer revokes, he cannot score for tricks and his adversaries add 100 points to their score in the honor column, in addition to any penalty which he may have incurred for not making good his declaration.
- (b) When either of the adversaries revokes, the declarer may either add 100 points to his score in the honor column or take three tricks from his opponents and add them to his own.\* Such tricks may assist the declarer to make good his declaration, but shall not entitle him to score any bonus in the honor column in case the declaration has been doubled or redoubled, nor to a slam or little slam not otherwise obtained.†
- (c) When, during the play of a deal, more than one revoke is made by the same side, the penalty for each revoke after the first is 100 points.

The value of their honors is the only score that can be made by a revoking side.

85. A player may ask his partner if he have a card of the suit which he has renounced; should the question be asked before the trick be turned and quitted, subsequent turning and quitting does not establish a revoke, and the error may be corrected unless the question be answered in the negative, or unless the revoking player or his partner have led or played to the following trick.

86. If a player correct his mistake in time to save a revoke, any player or players who have followed him may

\* The Dummy may advise the declarer which penalty to exact.

† The value of the three tricks, doubled or redoubled, as the case may be, is counted in the trick score.

withdraw his or their cards and substitute others, and the cards so withdrawn are not exposed. If the player in fault be one of the declarer's adversaries, the card played in error is exposed, and the declarer may call it whenever he pleases, or he may require the offender to play his highest or lowest card of the suit to the trick, but this penalty cannot be exacted from the declarer.

87. At the end of the play the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks. If the cards have been mixed, the claim may be urged and proved if possible; but no proof is necessary and the claim is established if, after it is made, the accused player or his partner mix the cards before they have been sufficiently examined by the adversaries.

88. A revoke cannot be claimed after the cards have been cut for the following deal.

89. Should both sides revoke, the only score permitted is for honors. In such case, if one side revoke more than once, the penalty of 100 points for each extra revoke is scored by the other side.

## GENERAL RULES

90. A trick turned and quitted may not be looked at (except under Law 82) until the end of the play. The penalty for the violation of this law is 25 points in the adverse honor score.

91. Any player during the play of a trick or after the four cards are played, and before the trick is turned and quitted, may demand that the cards be placed before their respective players.

92. When an adversary of the declarer, before his partner plays, calls attention to the trick, either by saying

it is his, or, without being requested to do so, by naming his card or drawing it toward him, the declarer may require such partner to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick.

93. An adversary of the declarer may call his partner's attention to the fact that he is about to play or lead out of turn; but if, during the play, he make any unauthorized reference to any incident of the play, the declarer may call a suit from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead.

94. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred, the offender is bound to give reasonable time for the decision of his adversaries.

### **NEW CARDS**

95. Unless a pack be imperfect, no player has the right to call for one new pack. When fresh cards are demanded, two packs must be furnished. When they are produced during a rubber, the adversaries of the player demanding them have the choice of the new cards. If it be the beginning of a new rubber, the dealer, whether he or one of his adversaries call for the new cards, has the choice. New cards cannot be substituted after the pack has been cut for a new deal.

96. A card or cards torn or marked must be replaced by agreement or new cards furnished.

### **BYSTANDERS**

97. While a bystander, by agreement among the players, may decide any question, he should not say anything unless appealed to; and if he make any remark which calls attention to an oversight affecting the score, or to the exaction of a penalty, he is liable to be called upon by the players to pay the stakes (not extras) lost.

## ETIQUETTE OF AUCTION

In the game of Auction slight intimations convey much information. The code succinctly states laws which fix penalties for an offense. To offend against etiquette is far more serious than to offend against a law; for in the latter case the offender is subject to the prescribed penalties; in the former his adversaries are without redress.

1. Declarations should be made in a simple manner, thus: "one heart," "one no-trump," "pass," "double"; they should be made orally and not by gesture.

2. Aside from his legitimate declaration, a player should not show by word or gesture the nature of his hand, or his pleasure or displeasure at a play, bid, or double.

3. If a player demand that the cards be placed, he should do so for his own information and not to call his partner's attention to any card or play.

4. An opponent of the declarer should not lead until the preceding trick has been turned and quitted; nor, after having led a winning card, should he draw another from his hand before his partner has played to the current trick.

5. A card should not be played with such emphasis as to draw attention to it, nor should a player detach one card from his hand and subsequently play another.

6. A player should not purposely incur a penalty because he is willing to pay it, nor should he make a second revoke to conceal a first.

7. Conversation during the play should be avoided, as it may annoy players at the table or at other tables in the room.

8. The Dummy should not leave his seat to watch his partner play. He should not call attention to the score

nor to any card or cards that he or the other players hold.

9. If a player say, "I have the rest," or any words indicating that the remaining tricks, or any number thereof, are his, and one or both of the other players expose his or their cards, or request him to play out the hand, he should not allow any information so obtained to influence his play.

10. If a player concede, in error, one or more tricks, the concession should stand.

11. A player having been cut out of one table should not seek admission in another unless willing to cut for the privilege of entry.

12. A player should not look at any of his cards until the end of the deal.

### **THE LAWS OF THREE-HANDED AUCTION**

The Laws of Auction govern the three-handed game except as follows:

(1) Three players take part in a game and four constitute a complete table. Each plays for himself; there are no partners, except as provided in Law 7.

(2) The player who cuts lowest selects his seat and the cards with which he deals first. The player who cuts next lowest sits on the dealer's left.

(3) The cards are dealt in four packets, one for each of the three players and one for the Dummy.\* The Dummy hand is not touched until after the final declaration has been made.

(4) The dealer declares, and the bidding continues as in Auction, except that each player bids exclusively on his own account.

\* This hand is generally dealt opposite to the dealer.



(5) The penalty for a declaration out of turn is that each of the other players receives 50 points in his honor score. A declaration out of turn does not affect the right of the player whose turn it is to declare, unless both he and the other player, either by passing or declaring, accept the improper declaration.

(6) If a player declare out of turn, and the succeeding player either pass or declare, the third player may demand that the mistake be corrected as is provided in Law 5. In such case the player who first declared out of turn is the only one penalized.

(7) The player making the final declaration, *i.e.*, a declaration that has been passed by both of the others, plays his own hand and that of the Dummy against the other two, who then, and for that particular hand, assume the relationship of partners.

(8) It is advisable that the game be played at a round table so that the hand of the Dummy can be placed in front of the declarer without obliging any player to move; but, in the event of a square table being used, the two players who become the adversaries of the declarer should sit opposite each other, the Dummy being opposite the declarer. At the end of the play the original positions should be resumed.

(9) If, after the deal has been completed and before the conclusion of the declaration, any player expose a card, each of his adversaries counts 50 points in his honor score, and the declarer, if he be not the offender, may call upon the player on his left to lead or not to lead the suit of the exposed card. If a card be exposed by the declarer after the final declaration, there is no penalty, but if exposed by an adversary of the declarer, it is subject to the same penalty as in Auction.

(10) If a player double out of turn, each of his adversaries counts 100 points in his respective honor score, and the player whose declaration has been doubled may elect whether the double shall stand. The bidding is then resumed, but if the double shall be disallowed, the declaration may not be doubled by the other player.

(11) The rubber continues until two games have been won by the same player; it may consist of two, three, or four games.

(12) When the declarer fulfils his contract, he scores as in Auction. When he fails to do so, both of his adversaries score as in Auction.

(13) Honors are scored by each player separately, *i. e.*, each player who holds one honor scores the value of a trick; each player who holds two honors scores twice the value of a trick; a player who holds three honors scores three times the value of a trick; a player who holds four honors scores eight times the value of a trick; and a player who holds five honors scores ten times the value of a trick. In a no-trump declaration, each ace counts ten, and four held by one player count 100. The declarer counts separately both his own honors and those held by the Dummy.

(14) A player scores 125 points for winning a game, a further 125 points for winning a second game, and 250 points for winning a rubber.

(15) At the end of the rubber, all scores of each player are added and his total obtained. Each one wins from or loses to each other the difference between their respective totals. A player may win from both the others, lose to one and win from the other, or lose to both.

## THE LAWS OF DUPLICATE AUCTION

Duplicate Auction is governed by the Laws of Auction, except in so far as they are modified by the following special laws:

A. *Scoring.* In Duplicate Auction there are neither, games nor rubbers. Each deal is scored just as in Auction with the addition that whenever a pair makes 30 or more for tricks as the score of one deal, it adds as a premium 125 points in its honor column.

B. *Irregularities in the Hands.* If a player have either more or less than his correct number of cards, the course to be pursued is determined by the time of the discovery of the irregularity.

- (1) When the irregularity is discovered before or during the original play: There must be a new deal.
- (2) When the irregularity is discovered at the time the cards are taken up for overplay and before such overplay has begun: It must be sent back to the table from which it came, and the error be there rectified.
- (3) When the irregularity is not discovered until after the overplay has begun: In two-table duplicate there must be a new deal; but in a game in which the same deals are played at more than two tables, the hands must be rectified as is provided above and then passed to the next table without overplay at the table at which the error was discovered; in which case, if a player have less than thirteen cards and his adversary the corresponding surplus, each pair takes the average

score for that deal; if, however, his partner have the corresponding surplus, his pair is given the lowest score and his opponents the highest score made at any table for that deal.

C. *Playing the Cards.* Each player, when it is his turn to play, must place his card, face upward, before him and toward the centre of the table. He must allow it to remain upon the table in this position until all have played to the trick, when he must turn it over and place it face downward, nearer to himself; if he or his partner have won the trick, the card should point toward his partner and himself; otherwise it should point toward the adversaries.

The declarer may either play Dummy's cards or may call them by name whenever it is Dummy's turn to play and have Dummy play them for him.

A trick is turned and quitted when all four players have turned and ceased to touch their respective cards.

The cards must be left in the order in which they were played until the scores of the deal have been recorded.

D. *The Revoke.* A revoke may be claimed at any time before the last trick of the deal in which it occurs has been turned and quitted and the scores of that deal agreed upon and recorded, but not thereafter.

E. *Error in Score.* A proven error in the trick or honor score may be corrected at any time before the final score of the contestants for the deal or deals played before changing opponents has been made up and agreed upon.

F. *A New Deal.* A new deal is not allowed for any reason, except as provided in Laws of Auction 36 and 37. If there be an impossible declaration some other penalty must be selected.\* A declaration (other than passing)

\* See Law 50. The same ruling applies to Law 54.

out of turn must stand;\* as a penalty, the adversaries score 50 honor points in their honor column and the partner of the offending player cannot thereafter participate in the bidding of that deal.

The penalty for the offense mentioned in Law 81 is 50 points in the adverse honor score.

G. *Team Matches.* A match consists of any agreed number of deals, each of which is played once at each table.

The contesting teams must be of equal size, but each may consist of any agreed number of pairs (not less than two). One half of each team, or as near thereto as possible, sits north and south; the other half east and west.

In case the teams are composed of an odd number of pairs, each team, in making up its total score, adds, as though won by it, the average score of all pairs seated in the positions opposite to its odd pair.

In making up averages, fractions are disregarded and the nearest whole numbers taken, unless it be necessary to take the fraction into account to avoid a tie, in which case the match is won "by the fraction of a point." The team making the higher score wins the match.

H. *Pair Contests.* The score of a pair is compared only with other pairs who have played the same hands. A pair obtains a plus score for the contest when its net total is more than the average; a minus score for the contest when its net total is less than the average.

\* This includes a double or redouble out of turn. See Law 57.



A Reprint from  
**LAWS OF ROYAL AUCTION BRIDGE**

Adopted by  
**THE PORTLAND CLUB, LONDON,**

**May, 1914**





**A Reprint of Those Sections of the Laws of  
Royal Auction Bridge Adopted May, 1914,  
by The Portland Club, London, Which  
Differ from the Laws of Auction Adopted by  
The Whist Club, New York, Nov., 1913.\***

**SCORING**

4. When the declarer (*vide* Law 50) makes good his declaration by winning at least as many tricks as he declared to win, each trick above 6 counts:

6	points	when	Clubs	are	trumps
7	"	"	Diamonds	are	trumps
8	"	"	Hearts	are	trumps
9	"	"	Spades (Royals)	are	trumps
10	"	"	there	are	no trumps

These values become respectively 12, 14, 16, 18, and 20 when the declaration has been doubled; and 24, 28, 32, 36, and 40 when the declaration has been redoubled (*vide* Law 56).

8. Chicane is thus reckoned:

If a player holds no trump, he and his partner score for chicane twice the value of a trump-suit trick. The value of chicane is in no way affected by any doubling or redoubling.

\* The remaining sections of the English laws agree with the American laws.

9. Slam is thus reckoned:

If a player and his partner make, independently of any tricks taken for the revoke penalty:

- (1) All 13 tricks, they score for grand slam 100 points.
- (2) 12 tricks, they score for little slam 50 points.

### **FORMATION OF TABLE**

20. Two players cutting cards of equal value, unless such cards are the two highest, cut again; should they be the two lowest, a fresh cut is necessary to decide which of those two deals.

21. Three players cutting cards of equal value cut again; should the fourth (or remaining) card be the highest, the two lowest of the new cut are partners, the lower of those two the dealer. Should the fourth card be the lowest, the two highest are partners, the original lowest the dealer.

### **ENTRY AND RE-ENTRY**

25. Any one quitting a table prior to the conclusion of a rubber may, with consent of the other three players, appoint a substitute in his absence during that rubber.

26. A player joining one table, whilst belonging to another, loses his right of re-entry into the latter, and takes his chance of cutting in, as if he were a fresh candidate.

### **SHUFFLING**

29. The pack must not be shuffled during the play of the hand.

30. A pack, having been played with, must neither be shuffled by dealing it into packets, nor across the table.

### A NEW DEAL

VI. Should the dealer deal two cards at once, or two cards to the same hand, and then deal a third; but if, prior to dealing that card, the dealer can, by altering the position of one card only, rectify such error, he may do so.

41. A player may not look at any of his cards until the deal has been completed; should he do so, and a card be afterwards exposed, the adversary on his left shall have the option of allowing the deal to stand or not.

42. If the dealer, before he has dealt fifty-one cards, look at any card, his adversaries have a right to see it, and may exact a new deal.

### DECLARING TRUMPS

47. The dealer, having examined his hand, may either pass or may declare to win at least the odd trick, but he may declare to win more. Should he make a declaration, he must state whether the hand shall be played with or without trumps; in the former case, he must name which suit shall be trumps. The lowest declaration he can make is "one club," *i. e.*, he declares to win at least one odd trick, clubs being trumps.

48. A declaration of a greater number of tricks in a suit of lower value, which equals the last declaration in value of points, shall be considered a higher declaration—*e. g.*, a declaration of "three clubs" is a higher declaration than "two spades" (royal), and "four clubs" is higher than "three hearts." If all the players pass, the hand is abandoned, and the deal passes to the next player.

51. If a player make an illegal declaration, such as declaring an impossible number of tricks, the adversary on his left may demand a new deal, may treat such declara-

tion as not made, or may permit it to stand. The player in error cannot be penalized for more than grand slam.

54. After the final declaration has been made, a player is not entitled to give his partner any information as to a previous declaration whether made by himself or adversary, but a player is entitled to inquire, at any time during the play of the hand, what was the final declaration.

61. A declaration once made cannot be altered, except as provided by Law 53 [corresponding to American Law No. 50], but if a declaration is obviously a misnomer and is amended practically in the same breath, it stands as corrected.

### **DUMMY**

66. When the declarer draws a card, either from his own hand or from Dummy, such card is not considered as played until actually quitted.

67. A card once played, or named by the declarer as to be played from his own hand or from Dummy, cannot be taken back, except to save a revoke.

68. The declarer's partner may not look over his adversaries' hands, nor leave his seat for the purpose of watching his partner's play.

### **EXPOSED CARDS**

71. If all the cards have been dealt and before the final declaration has been made any player expose a card from his hand, the adversary on his left may demand a new deal. If the deal be allowed to stand, the exposed card may be taken up and cannot be called.

72. If, after the final declaration has been made, and before a card is led, the partner of the player who has to

lead to the first trick exposes a card from his hand, the declarer may, instead of calling the card, require the leader not to lead the suit of the exposed card.

### CARDS LIABLE TO BE CALLED

78. If all the players throw their cards on the table face upwards, the hands are abandoned, and the score must be left as claimed and admitted. The hands may be examined for the purpose of establishing a revoke, but for no other purpose.

79. A card detached from the rest of the hand of either of the declarer's adversaries, so as to be named, is liable to be called; but should the declarer name a wrong card, he is liable to have a suit called when first he or his partner has the lead.

83. If any player lead out of turn, and the other three have followed him, the trick is complete and the error cannot be rectified; but if only the second or the second and third have played to the false lead, their cards, on the discovery of the mistake, can be taken back; and there is no penalty against any one excepting the original offender, and then only when he is one of the declarer's adversaries.

### THE REVOKE

91. The penalty for each revoke shall be:

- (a) When the declarer revokes, his adversaries shall score 150 points, in addition to any penalty which he may have incurred for not making good his declaration.
- (b) When either of the adversaries revoke, the declarer may score 150 points, or may take three

tricks from his opponents and add them to his own. Such tricks, taken as a penalty, may assist the declarer to make good his declaration, but they shall not entitle him to score in the case of the declaration having been doubled or redoubled.

96. If the player in fault be the declarer, the eldest hand may require him to play the highest or lowest card of the suit in which he had renounced, provided both of the declarer's adversaries have played to the current trick; but this penalty cannot be exacted from the declarer when he is fourth in hand, nor can it be enforced at all from Dummy.

100. Should both sides subject themselves to the penalty for a revoke, neither side should score anything except for honors or chicane; should either or both sides revoke more than once, the side making the fewest revokes scores 150 points for each extra revoke.

### **GENERAL RULES**

110. Once a trick is complete, turned, and quitted, it must not be looked at [except under Law 89 (corresponding to American Law No. 82)] until the end of the hand.

### **THREE-HANDED ROYAL AUCTION BRIDGE**

IV. If, after the deal has been completed, and before a card is led, any player expose a card from his hand, he shall forfeit 100 points to each of the other players; and the declarer—if he be not the offender—may call upon the eldest hand not to lead from the suit of the exposed card. If he does not exercise this right, the card must be left

on the table as an exposed card. If the card be exposed by the declarer, after the final declaration has been made, there is no penalty.

V. If a player double out of turn, he forfeits 100 points to each of his adversaries, and the player whose declaration has been so doubled shall have the right to say whether or not the double shall stand. The bidding is then resumed; but if the double has been disallowed, the said declaration cannot be doubled by the player on the right of the offender.

IX. One hundred points are scored by each player for every game he wins, and the winner of the rubber adds a further 250 points to his score.

## A COMPARISON OF THE AMERICAN AND ENGLISH LAWS

### CHICANE

Taking the laws in their order, the first difference is the scoring of chicane. America has abolished a chicane-value, England has not. And here I think America is right. Chicane has no place in a *bidding* game. In old Bridge, no one but the dealer, or his partner, had a chance to make the trump or to play the hand. In Auction that chance is open to every one. In Bridge, any one who lacked cards of the suit named as trump deserved some compensation. To lack one suit means to hold an over-supply of some other suit; and in Auction *such a holder has a chance to bid his long suit*. His lack is an advantage instead of a disadvantage and therefore requires no compensation. Whether or not he gets the bid, he has his chance.

### THE CUT

American laws reverse the suits in cutting,—hearts being low and spades high. English laws do not. American laws provide that if, in cutting, a player expose more than one card, the higher is his cut. English laws provide that he must cut again. I prefer the latter ruling; also, I can see no reason for reversing the suit-values.



## FORMING TABLES

After a table has been formed and the four players have cut to decide partners, the lowest cut is, of course, the dealer. Both countries allow him the choice of cards and seats and force him to abide by such choice once made. A footnote to the American laws permits him to consult his partner before making his decision; this seems good to me. England makes no such provision.

England is forced to make various provisions for recutting, when cards of equal face value are cut. America, giving the suits rank and order, is never forced to recut. Two eight-spots, for instance, can not be "equal" for the suit of one outranks that of the other. Here, America takes the palm. Time and trouble are saved. The English ruling is an antiquated survival from the days of Whist when suits had no rank.

## SHUFFLING

England forbids explicitly any shuffling during the play of a hand. This is good.

## THE DECLARATION

England permits the dealer to pass. This is excellent.

England emphatically forbids that any bid previous to the final bid (any "back-bid"), shall ever be asked after the bidding is closed. America merely permits the adversaries to "call a lead" in case of such an offense. Again, England is right.

America permits "inadvertent" bids to be changed, provided the next player has not passed, declared, nor

doubled. This, I think, is the worst flaw in the American rules. England says that "if a declaration is obviously a misnomer and is amended practically in the same breath, it stands as corrected." This is an improvement on the American law; but, to my mind, no bid once made should be alterable, except in the case of an insufficient bid.

### **DOUBLING AND REDOUBLING**

America provides a penalty for doubling more than once,—100 points on the adverse honor-score, or a new deal; also a penalty for doubling a partner's declaration or redoubling a partner's double,—50 adverse honor points or a new deal.

### **DUMMY**

In regard to rulings concerning Dummy, I think America wins, "hands down."

America permits Dummy to call attention to an adverse revoke, an adverse exposed card, or an adverse lead out of turn (this, provided Dummy has not voluntarily looked into the hand of either adversary). English Dummies are debarred from such privileges.

In America, a touched card in Dummy is a played card, unless the declarant preface the act with the words "I arrange," or with similar words. English declarants can pull and push Dummy's cards in and out and they are not "played" cards unless they are quitted. I dislike such easy-going methods. In duplicate Auction, if the declarant name a card to Dummy, that card is "played." In plain Auction, if the declarant touch a card of Dummy's, that card should be "played."

## EXPOSED CARDS

A card exposed between the completion of the deal and the final declaration, is differently penalized in the two countries. America debars the partner from bidding and doubling during that declaration, and makes the exposed card subject to call,—a double penalty. England permits the left-hand adversary to call a new deal. If this is not done, the exposed card may be taken up.

England has but two classes of exposed cards, *i. e.*:

- I. Two or more cards played at once.
- II. Any card exposed in any way on, or above, the level of the table.

America very properly adds a third class, namely:

Any card mentioned by either adversary as being held in his or his partner's hand.

If two or more cards are played simultaneously by an adversary of the declarant, America gives the declarant the right to call any one of such cards to the current trick, *and also* to treat the other card, or cards, as exposed. This seems to me a double penalty.

If an adversary detach from his hand a card that can be named, it can be called. But in England, *should the declarant name it wrongly*, he may be penalized by having a suit called on his or Dummy's first lead.

## THE REVOKE

Here, America loses. England retains the original revoke penalty,—“three tricks, or 150 points,”—the latter being the perfect equivalent of the former. America makes it “three tricks, or 100 points,”—a very unbalanced ruling.

**GENERAL RULES**

America has established the excellent new penalty of 25 adverse honor-points, for turning a quitted trick. England still lacks this desirable penalty.

England rules that if any player claim a penalty to which he is not entitled, he loses his right to exact *any* penalty.

America provides that either adversary may call his partner's attention to the fact that he is about to lead, or to play, out of turn. But that, if "he make any unauthorized reference to any incident of the play," the declarant may call a suit from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead.

"Calling suit" appears to be the favorite American penalty. It is called into play in numerous situations where England either rules for a new deal, or says simply that the thing *must not happen*.

England has increased the slam-values to 50 and 100, respectively.

Many slams are scored on hands that play themselves,—hands on which the veriest beginner could scarcely avoid taking all the tricks. Such slams deserve no compensation whatever; they are the result of luck, pure and simple.

Many other slams are the result of the most consummate skill. Where an excellent player can make but five-odd on a hand, an expert will often pull out a sixth trick. This trick is sometimes the result of brilliant foresight, sometimes of sound judgment and close calculation, sometimes of an almost audacious willingness to take a long chance. Such skill, or such courage, deserves an adequate reward. Twenty and forty are absurd values to place. They are *Bridge* figures, not *Auction* figures.

In Bridge, all numbers ran lower than they do to-day. There were but two ways to achieve the magnificent sum of one hundred,—going rubber, and holding all four aces in one hand (this latter, of course, being a very unusual bit of luck). There were no fifties, and no two-hundred-and-fifty.

In Auction there are countless hundreds, countless fifties, a rubber-value that is two-and-a-half times what it used to be, and a new suit (royals) whose honors are capable of totalling very tidy sums. Twenty is a figure to smile at; forty is but little better.

It is therefore plain that *the slam-values should either be abolished, or raised to adequacy*; the former, if the majority of slams are the result of luck,—the latter, if they are the result of skill. And, *as all slams must be rewarded alike, it follows that they must all be scored as the majority deserve*. It remains but to decide between the two causes—luck and skill.

The answer seems obvious. Luck-slams are achieved by perfect, or almost perfect, hands. And perfection is as rare in Auction-hands as in anything else. Just as a three-ace hand is more common than a four-ace hand, so is a four- or five-trick hand (or a hand that contains four- or five-odd for the player of average ability) more common than a six- or seven-trick hand. But *while luck is variable, skill (if it exists at all) is constant*. In other words, the material for an obvious slam-hand is rather rare; but the skill of the expert is always there, always ready to make the most of an unpromising hand, or to squeeze an extra trick out of a good one.

Therefore:

The present slam-value is an absurdly inadequate reward for skill.

## 290 American and English Laws

Luck deserves no reward whatever.

Slam-values should be abolished or raised.

It is obvious that all slams must be treated alike, and also that more slams are the result of skill than of luck.

Their value should thus be raised.

If you are tempted to grumble when your adversary occasionally scores fifty, or a hundred, on a pinochle slam-hand, comfort yourself with the thoughts of those countless other hands where your skill can squeeze out an extra trick and where a proper reward will await your success.

If I seem to be disloyal in frequently favoring the rulings of a country other than my own, it is in the interest of fairness and desire for perfection. Self-satisfaction is admittedly death to progress. It is better to acknowledge a weakness than to foster it. The wise parent is not the one who sees no faults in his offspring, but the one who recognizes and corrects such faults. The true patriot is not the blatant idiot who can perceive no mistakes in his own country and no good in any other ("little old America's good enough for *me*"),—but the thoughtful man who loves his country in spite of his realization that she can, possibly, learn some profitable lessons from others.

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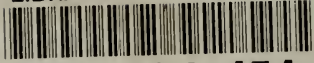








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