

BRIDGE Fit May Be More Vital Than Aces

By CHARLES H. GOREN
Both vulnerable. South deals.

- NORTH**
♦ K Q 6 4 2
♦ K 6 5 3
♦ K 9 2
- WEST**
♦ K Q 8 5 3
♦ 9 8
♦ Q 9 2
♦ 10 6 4
- EAST**
♦ A J 9 4 2
♦ J 3
♦ J 8 7 4
♦ 7 5
- SOUTH**
♦ 10 6
♦ A 10 7 5
♦ A 10
♦ A Q J 8 3

The bidding:
South 1 club
3 hearts
4 diamonds
Pass
West 1 heart
Pass
Pass
Pass
North 1 heart
4 clubs
6 hearts
Pass
East Pass
Pass
Pass
Pass

Opening lead: King of spades.
There is a marked tendency to exaggerate the importance of ascertaining the number of aces held by partner. Mind you, I do not like to assume a snobbish attitude toward the highest ranking cards in the pack. Somehow, I have a superstitious dread of their forsaking me at a time when they are most needed. But it should be obvious that the possession of four aces does not in itself indicate that slam is there for the asking.

Tricks Vital

Many times 150 aces merely take the sting out of a penalty incurred in an unsuccessful game contract. In bidding slams it is much more vital to determine that the partnership has the ability to take 12 tricks.

Occasionally, however, a hand is met in which the bidding indicates a plethora of winning tricks and the only consideration is that of suit controls. It is on hands of this type that conventions like the Blackwood and its near relatives are very effective.

In today's hand, when North's heart response is jumped by the opener, North should sense slam possibilities, and the diagnosis is based on the following considerations.

North himself holds a hand that is the equivalent of an opening bid if the king of clubs is regarded as promoted to the value of the ace by reason of partner's opening bid in that suit. His partner has opened the bidding and jumped. I have many times demonstrated that a player holding the equivalent of an opening bid opposite a partner who opens and then jumps, must consider that he holds a favored candidate for slam.

From North's standpoint, if South happens to hold three aces, there should be a splendid play for the slam in view of the apparent fit. A Blackwood bid might, therefore, be in order, for if it is determined that partner has only two aces, a contract of five hearts should nevertheless be safe.

In the direct method advocated by modern players, after hearts are established as trumps, North can suggest the slam at this point by showing an ace. On the surface, the four club bid would announce possession of the ace; but since it is highly probable that opener has the ace of his own suit, he will understand that partner is attempting to designate the king.

When South cooperates by showing the ace of diamonds, North is in a position to bid the slam on the basis of his singleton spade. South, of course, having two losers in that suit, is not in a position to assume the responsibility.

In this hand the determining factor is not merely aces, but the possession of the right singleton.

Bridge Book

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QUIZ

They Want to Know....

THIS quiz is made up of questions asked at the Information Bureau of THE NEWS, which gets a flood of inquiries on every imaginable subject and answers them if possible. Many of the questions are about current news—politics, disasters, weather, sports, etc.—but there are a lot of miscellaneous matters. Below are ten inquiries of general interest from a week's records at the bureau. See what you can do with them before turning to the answers.

1. What is a finagler?
2. How old is Westminster Abbey?
3. How large does a python snake grow?
4. What is a boll weevil?
5. What is mysophobia?
6. When was the ROTC started?
7. When was the Edict of Nantes?
8. What is a decibel?
9. Who wrote "John Brown's Body"?
10. What is meerschaum?

(Answers on page 24)
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'Plain Clothes' Patrols
The Long Island State Park Commission has announced addition of some plain black sedans to the fleet of regularly marked police cars that patrol Long Island parkways for speeders.



HANDS TIED?

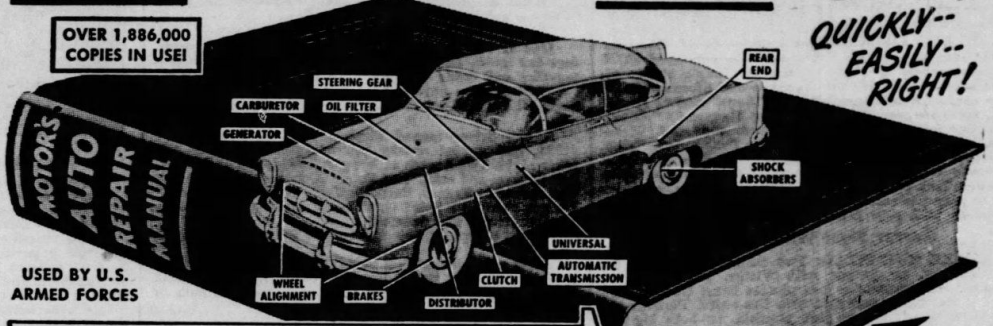
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