



# The Law of Discovery



**By Bud Marsh**  
Scottsdale, Arizona

Over the years, many “rules” and “laws” have evolved to assist us in the bidding and play of our great game of contract bridge. Among these are the “Rule of Eleven” and the “Law of Total Tricks.”

Possibly the least known, but most important of all, is the “Law of Discovery.” This tells us that, both on defense and as declarer, you must try to *discover* as much as possible on virtually every hand before making a key decision. To remind us to concentrate on DISCOVERY we have given it a numerical equivalent; that number is 1492. [Eds. If you don't understand why 1492, ask Google!]

Consider this hand:

- ♠K97
- ♥AQ42
- ♦983
- ♣K32
  
- ♠AQ654
- ♥86
- ♦AK
- ♣AJ54

In our typical pessimistic fashion we have reached the excellent contract of 6♣ (“excellent” in our methods means that the contract we arrive at is not hopeless). *West* leads a trump and we finish drawing them in three rounds (*West* has three and *East* has two). Obviously the chances for making are much higher if the ♥K is onside; if it isn't we'll need clubs 3-3 with the ♣Q on, about a 17% chance. So at trick four we lead a heart to the queen and it wins!

A wonderful DISCOVERY; chances

for success have improved dramatically since we can now afford to lose one club trick. There is a well known safety play to maximize your chances of losing only one trick with ♣Kxx opposite ♣AJxx.

See if you can figure it out before reading on; the answer is at the end of the next paragraph.

**But remember**, this article is about the Law of Discovery. Perhaps we can DISCOVER more before playing clubs. Since we have complete control of all four suits we can afford to play the ace and then ruff a heart to see if we learn anything new. Aha! On the third heart *East* discards a diamond. So now we know that *West* started with three spades and five hearts. (Okay, as promised: the standard safety play if you need three tricks from the club holding above is to play the ace and the king and then lead low towards the jack; in addition to winning when RHO has the queen and when the suit is 3-3, this sequence also wins when LHO has queen and one.)

**Let's DISCOVER more**, if possible. If we play the ace-king of diamonds and *West* follows we have DISCOVERED that he has fewer than four clubs, so the safety play guarantees the contract.

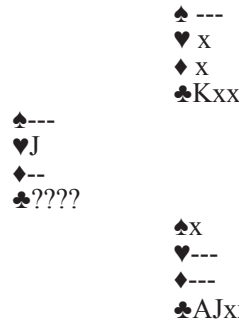
(Don't be lazy; if you don't see it, work it out!)

The Law of Discovery strikes again.

**But wait, there's more:** On the second diamond *West* discards a low heart. Momentarily this seems bad – we have now discovered that *West's* exact pattern is 3-5-1-4. Now it seems as if *East* must hold the queen or we will go down.

But the Law of Discovery to the rescue.

**Since we now know** *West's* exact remaining hand – he has a high heart and four clubs – we have a 100% line (the four question marks in the diagram below mean that *West* has any four clubs – with or without the queen). Try to work out the line before reading on:



## Solution

**Here's the solution:** Simply lead a club to the king and then lead dummy's heart, throwing a club from your hand; *West* must perforce return a club into your ♣AJ.

(No, Virginia, it wouldn't help *West* to throw a club instead of a heart on the second diamond; if he does so, clubs are now known to be 3-2 and your fourth club is sure to set up.)

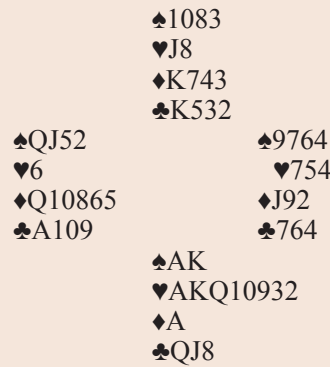
## Improve Your Play



**By Larry Matheny**  
Fort Collins, Colorado

### Slam Bidding

Slam bidding can be difficult. Blackwood and Roman Keycard Blackwood are two of the most popular conventions available, but they don't always answer your questions.



South	West	North	East
-	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

**Opening Lead:** ♣A

**Bidding:** *South* opened a strong 2♣ and *North's* response showed game forcing values. *South* set the trump suit by jumping in hearts. This also asked *North* to:

- (1) bid an ace if he had one
- (2) bid 3NT if he had a king but no ace
- (3) bid 4♥ with no ace or king.

After the king-showing 3NT, *South* asked which king *North* held. The diamond response was of no help since *South* needed a club control. However, after *South* signed off in 4♥ *North* continued with 5♣ showing he also held that king. Knowing that they were missing the ♣A, *South* bid the small slam. Since this was a pairs event, he should have bid 6NT with every suit double stopped.

**Play:** *West* led the ♣A and *South* soon claimed the remaining tricks. This result scored surprisingly well since many N/S pairs did not know how to discover if *North* held a club control. It's clear an ace-asking convention would not help find out about the club suit.

If the bidding used above is not to your liking, then perhaps using Italian cue bidding, where both first and second round controls are shown, would help.

Discuss this first with your partners; this slam was too good to miss.



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BY JERRY HELMS

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**SEMINAR: TAKE MORE TRICKS!!! YOURS AND THEIRS!!!**

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- July 13: Declarer Play – Suit Contracts
- July 14: Declarer Play – No Trump Contracts
- July 15: Defense – Suit Contracts
- July 16: Defense – No Trump Contracts

The morning seminars are followed by tournaments in the afternoons, allowing you to apply what you've learned in the sessions! Lunch is provided every day between the seminars and the tournaments.

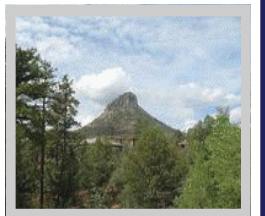
To make a reservation, learn more about lodging options and for directions to Battle Mountain High School contact Pam Elsner at [pamhodg@aol.com](mailto:pamhodg@aol.com) or 970.393.3155.

**ADDED BENEFIT!** The Philadelphia Orchestra will be in residence in Vail during July performing concerts in the evening at the beautiful, open-air Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater.

**All proceeds from the event will benefit local non-profit organizations.**

## PRESCOTT SUMMER SECTIONAL Bridge Tournament

**June 24, 25 & 26, 2016**  
Adult Center of Prescott  
Rowle P. Simmons Community Center  
1280 E. Rosser Street  
Prescott, AZ 86301  
928-778-3000  
[www.adultcenter.org](http://www.adultcenter.org)



"In the Cool Pines"

Sanction #: 1606090  
Unit: 355 District 17

### Friday, June 24, 2016

10:00 am & 3:00 pm  
10:00 am & 3:00 pm  
3:00 pm [Round 1]

Stratified Open Pairs  
Stratified 199ers Pairs  
Bracketed KO Teams

Single Session  
Single Session  
Bracket 1 may be Handicapped

### Saturday, June 25, 2016

10:00 am & 3:00 pm  
10:00 am & 3:00 pm  
10:00 am & 3:00 pm  
[Round 2 & 3]

Stratified Open Pairs  
Stratified 199ers Pairs  
Bracketed KO Teams

Single Session  
Single Session

### Sunday, June 26, 2016

10:00 am & TBA  
10:00 am & TBA

Swiss Teams  
Stratified 299ers Swiss Teams

Stratified by Tm Avg

Tournament Chairperson  
Joan Shay  
928-778-3000  
[acenter@adultcenter.org](mailto:acenter@adultcenter.org)

Partnership Chairperson  
Geri Schaarschmidt  
602-509-1563  
[gerischaar@yahoo.com](mailto:gerischaar@yahoo.com)

Director In Charge  
Gary Zeiger

Stratified Events  
A = 2,000 +  
B = 500 – 2,000  
C = 0 – 500

Stratified 199er Pairs  
0/50  
50/100  
100/200  
(Minimum of 3 Tables)

**Hand Records will be used.**

Smoking breaks, complimentary coffee & refreshments.  
Zero Tolerance observed!  
Use of cell phones prohibited during sessions.  
No host lunch counter available Sunday only.