



### Watch Those Spots!

By Jared Johnson  
ScoreCard Editor

Spot cards can put you on the spot. If you don't have them, that is. Spot cards can be important at the bridge table. It is sometimes recommended that you add a point in evaluating a hand rich in nines and 10's. They provide texture to a suit.

You have heard the phrase "aces and spaces." What suit would you rather hold in the abstract on offense, four to the ace with no spot cards or four to the king-jack-10? Opposite queen-third with the first holding you still have problems, with the second holding you are golden.

Let's bring the point home with two example hands. Here is the first.

None vulnerable, North dealer.

North  
♠AJ87  
♥A103  
♦J65  
♣K102

East  
♠Q32  
♥Q765  
♦A42  
♣J54

West  
♠K4  
♥J842  
♦K87  
♣Q876

South  
♠10965  
♥K9  
♦Q1093  
♣A93

You overbid to 4♣ as South, but with normal trump breaks, you have a good play. You double hook the spades for the expected one loser and knock out the diamond honors at your leisure. You take three spades, two hearts, a heart ruff in hand, two diamonds and two clubs for 10 tricks on most distributions of the opposing cards, hoping for no defensive diamond ruff.

Without the club spots, the opponents could lead clubs and set up a club trick before you finish work in diamonds. But if they start the suit here, you can pick it up on your own playing for split honors. You might even need the ♦9 if the suit doesn't split.

Now we give you this hand, identical except for the spots.

None vulnerable, North dealer.

North  
♠AJ32  
♥A32  
♦J32  
♣K42

East  
♠Q98  
♥Q1098  
♦A87  
♣J109

West  
♠K10  
♥J765  
♦K109  
♣Q876

South  
♠7654  
♥K4  
♦Q654  
♣A53

You are in 4♣ again. How do you like it? It's hopeless! You are faced with two spade losers, three diamond losers and maybe a club loser, possibly a three trick difference from the first hand with the same high card count, all because of spot cards.

You might save a trick if you find KQ of spades in the pocket. Or the opponents may start diamonds for you. But you're probably doomed no matter what, barring demolition derby defense.

Or just imagine being in 6♣ with no side suit losers. Compare the spade holding (odds on for one loser) in the first hand, with the second hand (a slim chance for only one loser).

So don't discount those high spot cards. You never can tell what crucial role they might play.

### The Best Tournaments

Which country runs the best bridge tournaments? An editorial in the *International Bridge Press Association Bulletin* addressed that question. The United States' American Contract Bridge League got high marks for tournaments in this country, but the top nods went to Australia, Brazil, Indonesia and Japan. If they took a poll on the toughest tournaments, the United States would win.

### Bergen Booklets --Booklet Review

By Jared Johnson  
ScoreCard Editor

New Teaching Tools: Multi-national champion Marty Bergen has released the first six of his 24-page booklets in the "Secrets to Winning Bridge" series. The first is *Modern Doubles*. In the early days of bridge, a double usually meant only one thing, a penalty double when you thought the opponents had bid too much. Over the years, the bid proved versatile for a wide variety of other purposes, the takeout double and negative doubles being the most common.

This is your concise guide to all the modern treatments.

The second booklet, *Two-Over-One Game Forcing*, provides an outline of the popular bidding system that is widely used throughout the western United States and certainly District 17.

The third booklet on *Hand Evaluation* provides a plethora of tips for more accurately assessing the true value of your hand beyond basic point count for high cards and shortness.

Next up is *One Notrump Forcing*, a valuable guide to this important convention that helps conserve bidding space, facilitates the bidding of awkward hands, and provides a framework for more complete descriptions of both opener's and responder's hands in subsequent rounds of bidding.

Number five: *Mastering Weak Two-Bids*. This excellent convention is sort of a mini-preempt that gobbles up the opponents' bidding room, while precisely describing your hand. Includes information on follow-up bids by responder to get you to describe

your hand further.

And number six: Marty Bergen is probably ideally positioned to author this booklet. It's called *Bergen Raises*, a popular convention named after Bergen himself, that allows responder with trump support for partner's one of a major opening to describe his hand both as to approximate high card count and number of trumps with one bid.

A lot of information is packed into each booklet. Nowadays, who has time to read long bridge books cover to cover? And particularly for some of the publications, recent and upcoming, on specific conventions, if you are looking to persuade a regular partner to play the convention, he or she is more likely to be amenable to the idea if, instead of handing them a book, you hand them a booklet.

The booklets retailing at \$9.95 each are available directly from the author at 1 800 386-7432, postage included, at two for \$17.00, and \$6.00 for each additional booklet.

### New Life Master



John Shealy  
Colorado Springs



Leslie Williams  
Golden, Colo.

PROUD TO BE AMERICAN

## PHOENIX PRESIDENTS' DAY SECTIONAL



February 12-15, 2010  
ASU West Campus  
4701 West Thunderbird Drive  
Glendale, AZ 85306 (602) 543-7751

#### Friday, Feb 12

10 am & 3 pm	Stratified Open Pairs	Single Sessions
10 am & 3 pm	Stratified 199er Pairs	Single Sessions
7:30 pm	Stratified Open Pairs	Single Session
7:30 pm	Silver Bracketed KOs	1st Round

#### Saturday, Feb 13

10 am & 3 pm	Stratified Open Pairs	Single Sessions
10 am & 3 pm	Stratified 199er Pairs	Single Sessions
10 am & 3 pm	Silver Bracketed KOs (cont'd)	2nd and 3rd Rounds

#### Sunday, Feb 14

10 am & TBD after lunch break	Strati-Flighted Swiss Teams	2 Session Event
10 am & TBD after lunch break	Stratified 199er Swiss Teams	Single Sessions

Cafeteria open for lunch

#### Monday, Feb 15

10 am & 3 pm	Stratified Open Pairs	Single Sessions
10 am & 3 pm	Stratified 199er Pairs	Single Sessions
10 am & 3 pm	Compact KOs	2 Session Event

#### Stratified Events:

A = 1500+	D = 100-200
B = 500-1500	E = 50-100
C = 0-500	F = 0-50

#### Strati-Flighted Events:

A = 5000+	B = 1000-1500
X = 0-5000	C = 500-1000
	D = 0-500

#### Entry Fees:

\$11 per session for paid up members  
\$12 for non or unpaid ACBL members  
Members with < 10 MPs play FREE!

Charles Kelley  
(480) 513-7966  
cek99999@cox.net

Alice Pierce  
(480) 247-8380  
apierce7@cox.net

#### Tournament Chairs

JoAnne Lowe (480) 836-7296  
pnutlowe@cox.net

Gary Zeiger  
Director In Charge

Janet Newman (480) 326-7144  
jnewman@cox.net

www.unit354.com  
Sanction # S1002077

KO teams: Brackets will be based on average MPs for all team members. Top bracket may be handicapped.

- Cafeteria open during tournament
- Hospitality breaks every session
- Non-smoking facility
- No alcohol allowed on campus

## London Bridge Sectional



January 15-18, 2010

NAUTICAL INN and CONFERENCE CENTER  
1000 McCulloch Blvd. (on the Island) Lake Havasu City, Arizona • 928 855-2141

Martin Luther King Weekend - MOUNTAIN STANDARD TIME

Friday, January 15	1:30 p.m.	Bracketed KO Teams I (1st round) Stratified Pairs 99er Stratified Pairs
	7:00 p.m.	Bracketed KO Teams I (2nd round) Stratified Pairs
Saturday, January 16	10:00 a.m.	Bracketed KO Teams I (final round) Single Session Swiss Stratified Pairs
	3:00 p.m.	Bracketed KO Teams II (1st round) Stratified Pairs 99er Stratified Pairs
Sunday, January 17	10:00 a.m.	Bracketed KO Teams II (2nd round) Stratified Pairs (first session)
	3:00 p.m.	Bracketed KO Teams II (final round) Single Session Swiss Stratified Pairs (second session)
Monday, January 18	10:00 a.m.	Stratified Swiss Teams (Stratification by team average) Single Session Stratified Pairs

STRATS All Pair Games Stratified by Pair Average Strat A 1500-unlimited  
Strat B 300-1500 Strat C 0-300 99er Events 0-20/50/100

Entry Fees: \$10 per person for ACBL members, \$11 per person for non or unpaid ACBL members, \$8 per person for 99er Sessions, \$10 Lunch optional on Monday

DIC: Peter Knee • Sanction S1001099 • ACBL Unit 355  
Tournament Chair: Darlene Anderson 928 453-7847, darjerry@yahoo.com  
Partnerships: Lone Dopp 928 453-7229  
Web: www.lakehavasuduplicatebridge.com and bridgeinnorthemarizona.com

NAUTICAL INN HOTEL: Waterfront Suites... Reservation Code 201848  
1 800 892-2141 or 928 855-2141 • Cove Suites \$69... New Beach Suites \$79  
Resort Fee \$15 Reserve by December 16, 2009