



What Are the Odds?

By Jared Johnson
ScoreCard Editor

The numbers may be huge but this isn't an article on astronomy. Here are some things you shouldn't be waiting for at the bridge table.

- Getting every possible hand: There are 635 billion.
- You and your partner getting all 40 high card points: Odds of about two million to one.
- Odds of getting a perfect hand that will produce 13 tricks in notrump regardless of the opening lead or the composition of the other three hands: About 169 million to one.
- Getting a hand with all four aces, all four kings, all four queens, and a jack in any suit: Odds of about 159 billion to one.
- All four players at the table having 13 cards of the same suit: Odds of about two thousand trillion trillion to one or two billion billion billion to one.

As is noted in *Bridge Odds for Practical Players* by Hugh Kelsey and Michael Glauret, "If the entire adult population of the world were to play bridge in every waking moment for ten million years, it would still be ten million to one against one of these perfect deals turning up."

Here are some more probabilities. Think you've seen everything at the bridge table? Not likely. The total number of possible (different) deals is:

53,644,737,765,488,792,839,237,440,000. Or about 54 thousand trillion trillion for short. And the number of possible auctions (even if they wouldn't make any sense) with *North* as dealer, assuming that *East* and *West* do not pass throughout: About 129 billion trillion trillion.

Let's get away from those astronomical figures for a moment and get a bit more down to earth. Of course, the odds of getting a really rotten hand are much better, as we all know. We've picked up so many of them. The odds against a yarborough, the

official definition being "no card higher than a nine," are only 1,827 to one. The same term is also often used to describe any hand with no card higher than a 10 - no aces, no face cards, odds of 274 to 1.

Of course, wrapping one's mind around really huge numbers can be difficult.

At a certain point you don't really even think about certain probabilities in terms of simply being highly unlikely. You just proceed on one reasonable assumption: It ain't gonna happen!

In the Kelsey-Glauret book (most recently reprinted by Cassell and Co. and distributed in this country by Trafalgar Square of North Pomfret, Vermont), the authors lead the reader into the realm (wilderness) of bridge statistics and probability, and talk about the improbability of flipping a fair coin and getting 100 heads in a row. That's one chance in two to the hundredth power (you just keep doubling and doubling a hundred times).

The authors write, "This is too small a chance to comprehend. It is over a million times more likely that two people, each selecting a grain of sand at random from the Sahara Desert, should chance to pick on the same one."

And there are a lot of grains of sand in the Sahara Desert. Been there a few times. Tried to count them once. Gave up.

And finally, the odds against you and your partner getting through an entire session of bridge without making a single mistake: A gazillion to one.

P.S.: And let's throw in a few of those astronomy statistics.

The biggest known stars in the universe (three red giants) are over one billion miles (!) in diameter, which means that if you put them down in the center of our solar system, they would essentially engulf the entire solar system. These stars are so large that you could put well more than 1000 trillion trillion of our suns inside them.

Cool, huh? And you're worried about a losing finesse?

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!

Tournament Chairs

Charles Kelley (480) 513-7966 cek99999@cox.net
JoAnne Lowe (480) 836-7296 pnutlowe@cox.net
Janet Newman (480) 326-7144 jnewman@cox.net

Partnerships

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

Director In Charge

Gary Zeiger

www.unit354.com
Sanction # S1002077

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

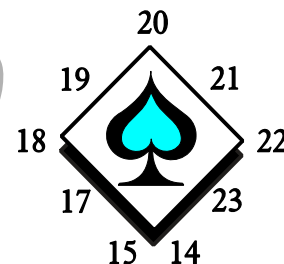
- Cafeteria open during tournament
- Hospitality breaks every session
- Non-smoking facility
- No alcohol allowed on campus



GREAT WESTERN SPRING FLING STAC XI

The Second Largest Sectional In the World!

May 3-9 2010



GREAT WESTERN SPRING STAC XI

Tired of winning only a point or two at your local Club Games?

Like to win 20 silver points or more just for playing in a friendly atmosphere?

Well, the odds might be STACed a little against you, but it's possible at the Great Western Spring Sectional Tournament at Clubs, May 3-9 in Districts 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 & 23.

This 11th Great Western Spring STAC is now the second largest sectional in the country! The other two Western Conference STAC are the August (Summer Fun STAC III) & the traditional December Great Western Holiday STAC.

Contact your clubs for information, dates and times of specific games.

Clubs: Register at www.TheWesternConference.com