

1/26 International Fund Game – No Newcomers Game

1/29 Tuesday Eve Leaders

1st OA: **Karen Kalla & Richard Horvitz** (62.9%)

2nd OA: **Mary Rider & Mary Friesen** (55.9%)



CBA Seminars	CBA	Date/PM	Who	Topic
	0-30	Feb 2	Mike	Suit Contract Play -
	Sat		Purcell	Developing Side Suits
	99er	Check back for new 99er seminar plans.		
	Tue			

CBA NLM Games – Play Often!

Mon NLM 7 PM CBA Wed Home Style 11:00 AM CBA

Tues 99er 7 PM CBA Wed 199er 6:30 PM NKY BC

Thurs NLM 7 PM CBA 1st Fri 99er 10:00 AM NKY BC

0-30 Sat 1 PM CBA (Lecture 12:30 PM) Partner provided

Area Tournaments

Feb 9–10 Owensboro KY S

Feb 15–17 Louisville, KY S

Feb 18 – 24 Cincinnati OH D11 STaC S

Mar 1 – 3 Gilbertsville KY S

Mar 4 – 10 Indianapolis IN R

Mar 14 – 24 St Louis MO N

For Details go to <http://www.acbl.org/tournament-calendar/>

Need **SILVER**? Get ready for the Sectional Tournament at the Club (STaC) February 18-24. Silver points galore!

On Suit Combinations by Steve Moese

Knowing how to play suit combinations correctly is part of planning the play of the hand and a critical skill for the advancing player. You want to be in the right hand to start the suit, and you need entries to lead for best advantage. Suit combinations can appear complex. There are many to understand. Let's look at few common holdings to build our skill. We will not cover this topic exhaustively, but plan to review a range of combinations over the course of several articles.

Some common suit combinations are easy to play.

♠ AQ2 6 cards split 3-3 missing KJ10. 2 tricks are possible if LHO holds the ♠K. Lead small to the ♠Q. 1 trick otherwise. Note you can win the A at 1st and lead to the Q later and still make 2 tricks whenever the K is onside. (If you suspect RHO has the K, you can lead to the Ace and lead toward dummy later, ducking, hoping the K is doubleton).

Leading the J toward the A finessing the Q, then finessing

♠ AQ10 Lead low to the 10. You will win 3 tricks about 24% of the time and 2 tricks 76% of the time. 1 trick 24% of the time.

♠ 543

♠ AJ10 If you need 2 tricks lead low to the 10, then low to the J. You make 2 tricks 76% of the time.

♠ 543

♠ KJ10 If you need 2 tricks lead small to the 10. If RHO holds the Ace, finesse the Q the second round. You will make 2 tricks 50% of the time.

♠ 543

♠ KJ2 To win 2 tricks you must find LHP with both the A and Q. Lead low to the J and low to the K if the J wins. You make 2 tricks 24% of the time and 1 trick 76% of the time.

♠ K62 To win 1 trick, lead low away from or toward the K. If the Ace does not appear lead low toward the King. If RHO holds the A, lead 2 rounds ducking twice if RHO has doubleton A. You make 1 trick 50.48%.

♠ Q102 Lead low toward the 10. If RHO plays A or K, lead low toward the Q. Makes 1 trick 37.7%.

♠ 543

♠ K62 To guarantee 1 trick, lead small to the K. If the K loses to the A, then lead small toward the J. Do not lead the J from hand. If LHO plays the Q, cover with the K and decide who has the A.

Other combinations require more thought.

♠ A432 Many would wrongly play the ♠Q toward the A, intending to finesse the ♠K. The right play for 3 tricks in the suit is to play small twice toward the ♠QJ! If RHO has the ♠K, it will not capture an honor. You win the ♠AQJ. If LHO has the ♠K, there is still the chance that ♠s break 3-3 and the ♠2 becomes a winner.

♠ KJ98 Here is a prime example where the best play depends on the number of tricks you must have from the suit. There are 5 ways to play this combination! The best play for 4 tricks is to play A then small to the J, hoping for Q onside. There is a 29% chance at 4 tricks this way. Finessing the 10 on the 1st round is worse, ensuring 4 tricks only 22%. However if we need 3 tricks only, then the right play is small to the K then small to the A, picking up the Qx in either opponent's hand. This offers an 85+% chance for 3 tricks, substantially better than the 1st or 2nd round finesse of the Q. Finessing the 10 or Q for 3 tricks succeeds 76%.

the 10 back toward the A yields 3 tricks 81+% of the time. This is a very flexible holding. Information about honor cards or shape in the opponent's hands can alter the odds and play substantially.

Here the number of cards in the suit and the presence of 8s and 9s changes the play and odds.

♠ A432 Plays to the A and then to the Q. Never lead the
♠ Q765 Q toward the A without touching cards below the
 Q. Yields 3 tricks 33.9% and 2 tricks 86.7% of
 the time.

♠ A432 Play to the A then low to the 10. We expect 3
♠ Q1065 tricks 63.5% and 2 tricks 89.6% of the time.

♠ A432 Lead the Q or 10 to the A, intending to finesse if
♠ Q1098 not covered. Leading the Q picks up 4 tricks
 when the J is singleton to your right. Leading
 the 10 picks up 4 tricks when the K is singleton
 to your left. 4 tricks 2.8% and 3 tricks 78% of
 the time.

♠ A43 Play the 10 (better) or Q toward the A, finessing
♠ Q10982 if not covered. 5 tricks 2.8% and 4 tricks 71.2%
 of the time. The 10 is better if the K is singleton
 on your left.

♠ A432 The 9th card suggests cashing the A first then
♠ Q10765 leading toward the Q. 5 tricks 6.2%, 4 tricks
 82.8% and 3 tricks 95.2% of the time.

We can tell how many possible lies of the cards there are by knowing the number of cards we are missing. Missing 1 card, there are 2 possible holdings 0-1 and 1-0. Holding 2 cards there are 4 possible holdings 2-0, 1-1, 1-1, 0-2. In general for n missing cards there are 2ⁿ outstanding holdings or cases. So if you are looking for the singleton K, it is much more likely to be singleton when you are missing 2 cards than when you are missing 8 cards in the suit. Sometimes holding more length makes playing for the singleton honor a smart strategy.

There are many complex holdings that are not readily solvable at the table. In general, it is right to lead small to high honors rather than honors toward honors. If you know one opponent must have a missing honor (Bidding, signals, play) then cater to that possibility. If you are unsure, go with the odds – do not guess. Don't fret about calculating the exact probability at the table. Instead strive to recognize certain suit holdings and recall the play theme that gets most of the tricks. Playing solidly is often enough to win club games.

Suit combinations require the best chance (highest probability) play when missing significant honors.

1. The right play to make for a given combination is NOT necessarily the right play to make for the hand.
2. The number of tricks required from the suit strongly influence which play is right.
3. Some suit combinations are complex and cannot be worked out at the table – better to remember simple themes that you can apply in diverse situations.
4. Generally do not attack short suits (6 cards or less) unless you have no other choice. Better to let the opponents lead our problem suits for us. Their lead often solves many problems.

The ACBL Encyclopedia of Bridge (Brent Manley, ed.) dedicates 50 pages to the proper play of suit combinations in the absolute (not taking the hand into account). Richard Pavlicek's bridge website has a free tool "Card Combination Analyzer" to allow you to explore various hand combinations.

<http://www.rpbridge.net/xcc1.htm>

The tool calculates the statistics and you provide the scenarios to see what line is successful. The easiest tool available is **Suit Play**. See the CBA website "Improve Your Game" page for a link to get your free copy of this useful software (not for Apple Computers).

Some Key Thoughts:

- Better to lead Low cards toward High Cards.
- Leading an unsupported honor toward a higher honor (false finesse) can lose a trick that might otherwise be ours.
- Ducking or delaying a finesse within the context of the hand can add chances and tricks.
- Playing for split honors often increases our chance of success.
- The best play for most tricks is not necessarily best for the tricks we need to make the contract.
- Starting with an A caters for a singleton K and can add chances when missing 2-5 cards.

Newcomer News –

Hi Everyone,

The Newcomer game resumes in earnest this Saturday at 12:30 and I am looking forward to catching up with everyone. I will be running the game and doing this week's Seminar on Suit Contract Play – Developing Side Suits.

Special congratulations to our own Patrick Hoffmann. Last Saturday Pat's team placed second in the Grand National Team (GNT) District Qualifier for Flight C earning 11.25 Masterpoints. Well done Pat!!!

All the best,
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Looking to improve your game? If you have an Intel Computer we highly recommend the **free software** offered by the ACBL and developed by Mr. Fred Gitelman. Check it out at:

<https://web.acbl.org/LearnToPlayBridge/>