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AUCTION OF TO-DAY

By

MILTON C. WORK

Author of "Whist of To-day"



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THIS BOOK
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO
THE AUCTION PLAYERS OF THE RACQUET CLUB
OF PHILADELPHIA,
WHO, WHILE OTHERS DOUBTED AND WAITED,
WERE SUFFICIENTLY BROADMINDED AND DISCERNING
TO ADOPT THE "NEW COUNT"
AND WHO, THEREFORE, PLAYED AUCTION OF TO-DAY
MONTHS BEFORE IT WAS IN VOGUE
ELSEWHERE

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INTRODUCTION

With so many excellent textbooks now in circulation, it seems almost audacious to add another treatise to current card literature. It happens, however, that the game of Auction, or Auction Bridge, as it is generally called ("Auction Whist" is perhaps a more appropriate title), has been so completely and so suddenly revolutionized that books written upon the subject a few months ago do not treat of Auction of to-day, but of a game abandoned in the march of progress. Only a small portion of the change has been due to the development of the game, the alteration that has taken place in the count having been the main factor in the transformation. Just as a nation, in the course of a century, changes its habits, customs, and ideas, so Auction in a few months has developed surprising innovations, and evolved theories that only yesterday would have seemed to belong to the heretic or the fanatic. The expert bidder of last Christmas would find himself a veritable Rip Van Winkle, should he awake in the midst of a game of to-day.

The present tourist along the newly macadamized Auction highway has no modern signpost to guide him, no milestone to mark his progress. The old ones, while most excellent when erected, now lead to abandoned and impassable roads, and contain information that of necessity confuses and misleads.

Beyond doubt, the present game, like other modern improvements, has come to stay, and with that belief the following pages are offered as an aid to the thorough understanding of the new order of things.

Until the latter part of 1911, practically all players used the same count in Auction that had for years obtained in Bridge; namely, No-trump, 12; Hearts, 8; Diamonds, 6; Clubs, 4; and Spades, 2. The change was first suggested by the author, and it, therefore, seems only appropriate that he, having had the good fortune to conceive a system which has been endorsed by general adoption, should have the privilege of giving to the Auction-loving public his views upon the most advantageous methods of playing the game under the new conditions, and thus possibly help to allay the confusion created by the introduction of an innovation so drastic.

In this connection, it may be interesting to recall how this new count, which is now so universally used that it should be called, not the "new" count, but "the" count, came to be suggested, and why it met with popular favor.

When Auction first took the place of Bridge as the paramount game in the club and social life of the scientific card-player of the United States (just as Bridge had previously superseded Whist), it was but natural that the Bridge count should be continued in Auction.

Admitting that these values were the best possible for Bridge (and of that there is considerable doubt in the mind of the player of to-day), it, nevertheless, did not mean that for the new and very different game of Auction they would of necessity be the most suitable. It was soon found that the No-trump was so much more powerful than any other bid that competition was almost eliminated. With even unusually strong suits, only occasionally could a declaration valued at 12 be successfully combated by one valued at 8 or less, and the vast majority of hands were, consequently, played without a Trump.

The inherent theory of the game of Auction provides for a bidding in which each one of the four suits competes with each other, and also with the No-trump. Using the Bridge count, this does not take place. The two black suits, by reason of their inconsequential valuation, are practically eliminated from the sea of competitive bidding. The Diamond creates only a slight ripple, and even the Heart has to be unusually strong to resist the strenuous wave of the No-trump.

Players in different parts of the country realized that as long as the Bridge count was used, five bids could not compete in the race, as, due to unequal handicapping, the two blacks could barely pass the starter, while the two reds could not last long in a keen contest.

The desire to make the Spade a potent declaration had appeared in Bridge; Royal Spades, valued at 10, having been played by some unfortunates who believed that, whenever they had the deal, the fickle goddess favored them with an undue proportion of "black beauties." As competitive bidding is not a part of the game of Bridge, that could not be offered as a reason for increasing the value of the Spade, and to be logical, Royal Clubs should also have been created. Naturally, Royal Spades never received any very large or intelligent Bridge following, but as making the Spade of value was in line with the obvious need of Auction, as soon as that game became the popular pastime, Royal Spades (or Lilies, as they were perhaps foolishly called in some places, the pseudonym being suggested by the color of the Spade), valued at 11 and at 10, were accorded a more thorough trial.

They met objection on the ground that three Royals, equally with three No-trumps, carried a side to game from a love score, and, therefore, while some continued to experiment with Royals, it cannot be said that they were anywhere accepted as a conventional part of Auction. Finally, some clever Bostonians suggested that their value be made nine, and this proved both more logical and more popular.

With affairs in this state, the author determined that it would materially improve the game to arrange the count so that the various bids be as nearly as possible equalized, every suit given a real rating, and the maximum competition created. After some little experimentation, the very simple expedient now in vogue was suggested. It makes the game *in reality* what it previously was *only in name*.

In September, 1911, the Racquet Club of Philadelphia, the first club to act upon the subject, incorporated in its club code the count of 10 for No-trump, 9 for Royal Spades, 8 for Hearts, 7 for Diamonds, 6 for Clubs, and 2 for Spades. Other clubs in this country and abroad slowly but surely followed, and the card-playing public in its social game adopted the new plan as soon as it received a fair trial.

Early in 1912, the Whist Club of New York, a most conservative body, yielded to the pressure, and accepted the new count. Since then, it has been universally used.

It has been given various names, such as the "new count," which is, of course, a title that cannot long be retained; the "Philadelphia count," which is now inappropriate, as it is played in all parts of the country; the "game of Royals," which is grossly incorrect, as it is not a game of Royals any more than of any other suit, and certainly is not one-tenth as much a game of Royals as the old count was a game of No-trumps. One writer, who ably advocates the new count, calls the present game "Royal Auction Bridge," yet frankly admits that No-trump is still played more frequently than Royals, and Hearts almost as often. There can be no question that the number of Diamond and Club declarations has materially increased, so the only apparent reason for calling the game Royals is the desire for some name to distinguish the count now used from its predecessor. That, however, is totally unnecessary. The old, or Bridge count, is a thing of the past—dead and almost forgotten. The "new" count is "Auction"—"Auction of To-day" if you will, but unquestionably the best Auction yet devised, the only Auction now played, and destined to be Auction for all future time, unless some system be suggested which will create keener competition in bidding. It is generally conceded that this is practically impossible.

In this book the author does not attempt to drill the uninitiated player in the intricacies of the game. The rudiments can be learned far more satisfactorily by watching a rubber, or by receiving the kindly instruction of a friend or teacher.

In perusing these pages, the beginner will seek in vain to receive such information as that

the 10 is a higher card than the 9; or that the Third Hand plays after the Second. The reader is supposed to thoroughly understand the respective values of the cards, as well as the underlying principles and the rules of the game.

Neither is this book intended for the player who recognizes himself as an expert and continuously prates of his own ability. Even should he condescend to read, he would find either "nothing new," or "nothing new worth knowing." Why, indeed, should he waste his valuable time considering the ideas of others, when by his brilliant exposition of his own inimitable theories, he can inculcate in the minds of his inferiors a new conception of Auction possibilities? Such a player may at any time confuse a conscientious partner by making an original bid without an Ace or King, or by committing some equally atrocious Auction *faux pas*, but as even a constant recurrence of such "trifles" will not disturb his equanimity, why suggest ideas for his guidance?

The real purpose of this little book is to point out to the moderate player the system of bidding and methods of play now adopted by the best exponents of the game, and to advise generally how to produce a satisfactory result at the end of the rubber, sitting, or season.

Much of the success of an Auction player is due to his ability to concentrate his entire attention upon the game. If it were possible to make only a single suggestion to a beginner, the most important point that could be called to his attention would be the necessity for concentration. From the moment the first bid is made until the last card is played, the attention of every player should be confined to the declaration and the play, and during that time no other idea should enter his mind. This may seem rudimentary, but as a matter of fact, the loss of tricks is frequently blamed upon various causes, such as "pulling the wrong card," forgetting that a certain declaration had been made, or that a certain card has been played, miscounting the Trumps or the suit in question, etc., when the lack of complete concentration is the real trouble.

Success in Auction is indeed difficult, and the player who would grasp every situation, and capture every possible trick, must have the power to concentrate all his faculties upon the task before him. No matter how great his capacity, he cannot do thorough justice to any hand, if, during the declaration or play, his mind wanders. Too often do we see a player, while the play is in progress, thinking of some such subject as how many more tricks his partner might have made in the last hand; whether his partner has declared in the manner which he believes to be sound and conventional; what is going on at some other table; whether this rubber will be over in time for him to play another, etc.

When this is the mental condition of a player, the best results cannot be obtained. If a trick has been lost, it is gone. Thinking over it cannot bring it back, but may very quickly give it one or more comrades. As soon as each deal is completed, it should be erased from the mind just as figures from a slate. In that way only can be obtained the complete and absolute concentration which is essential to perfect play, and goes a long way toward securing it.

Auction is beyond doubt the most scientific card game that has ever become popular in this country. The expert has the full measure of advantage to which his skill entitles him, and yet the game possesses wonderful fascination for the beginner and player of average ability. It is doubtless destined to a long term of increasing popularity, and it is, therefore, most advisable for all who participate that they thoroughly familiarize themselves with the conventional methods of bidding and playing, so that they may become intelligent partners, and a real addition to any table.

AUCTION OF TO-DAY

I

THE DECLARATION^[1]

It is well to realize from the start that the declaration is the most important department of the game, and yet the most simple to master. A foolish bid may cost hundreds of points. The failure to make a sound one may lose a rubber, whereas mistakes in the play, while often expensive and irritating, are rarely attended with such disastrous results.

Any good player who has to choose between a partner who bids well and plays poorly, and one who is a wild or unreliable bidder, but handles his cards with perfection, without hesitation selects the former.

To be an expert player requires natural skill, long experience, keen intuition, deep concentration, and is an art that cannot be accurately taught either by the instructor or by a textbook. Bidding has been reduced to a more or less definite system, which may be learned in a comparatively brief space of time. Consequently, any one possessed of ordinary intelligence, regardless of sex, age, temperament, or experience, may become an expert declarer, but of all who attempt to play, not more than forty per cent. possess that almost indefinable characteristic known as a "card head," without which it is impossible to become a player of the highest class.

The average club or social game, however, produces numerous expert players, while the sound bidder is indeed a *rara avis*.

The explanation of this peculiar condition is not hard to find. Most Auction devotees began their card experience with Whist, a game in which, beyond doubt, "The play's the thing"; then they transferred their allegiance to Bridge, where the play was the predominant factor; and now they fail to realize that in their new pastime *the most important part of the game is concluded before the first card leaves the leader's hand*.

It must encourage the student to know that he may surely and quickly become a sound bidder, and that he will then be a more valued partner than a Whist or Bridge celebrity who does not accord to the Declaration the care it deserves and rewards.

Many methods of bidding have been suggested; some have been so absurd that they have not warranted or received serious consideration; others have been accorded a thorough trial, and found wanting.

The system which is herein advocated is believed to be the most sound and informative yet devised.

Before taking up the declaration by each hand, it is important for the player to realize that with the introduction of the count of to-day, much of the bidding previously in vogue has, of necessity, passed into disuse. For example, under the old count, a player, knowing that the Club suit would never be played and that there was no danger of that declaration being continued by his partner, very properly called a Club to show the Ace and King, even when these two cards were the only Clubs in his hand.

In Auction of to-day, it being possible to score game with any declaration, a suit cannot be safely called unless it be of such length and strength that the partner may continue it as far as his hand warrants. In discussing the subject of Bidding, under the subheads of DEALER, SECOND HAND, etc., this will be considered more thoroughly, and it is referred to at this time only for the purpose of pointing out that informative bids from short suits containing high cards are no longer included in the vocabulary of the Declarer.

Another difference between the old and the present game is worthy of notice. In the old game a marked distinction was drawn between the color of the suits in the make-up of a No-trumper, it being more important that the black suits should be guarded than the red. Using the Bridge count, the adversaries, if strong in the red suits, were apt to bid, but the black suits, by reason of their low valuation, frequently could not be called. Black was, consequently, the natural lead against a No-trump, and therefore, required more protection.

Now, as every suit can be named with practically equal effectiveness, the color distinction has ceased to exist. The original leader, when No-trump has been declared, no longer attempts to guess his partner's strength by starting with a black suit, in preference to a red; and in bidding one No-trump, strength in one color is just as valuable as in the other.

When Auction was first played in England, it was believed that the deal was a disadvantage, that the Declarer should disguise his hand as long as possible and use every expedient to force his adversary to be the first to show real strength. This doctrine has been found to be ridiculous. The premium of 250 for winning the rubber is a bonus well worth having, and the player who, when his cards justify a bid, unduly postpones his declaration, belongs to an antiquated and almost extinct school.

It is now conceded that the best results are obtained by that character of bidding which gives the partner the most immediate and accurate information regarding the strength of the Declarer.

There are still the "old fogies" who preach that, as there are two opponents and only one partner, all information is doubly advantageous to the adversary. This "moss-covered" idea was advanced concerning the play in Whist and Bridge, but experience proved it fallacious. In Auction, its folly is apparent, not only in the matter of the play, but even more surely when applied to the bidding.

A moment's consideration causes the realization that the declaration would become an easy

task if the exact composition of the partner's hand were known; it should, therefore, be the aim of the bidder to simplify the next call of his partner by describing his own cards as accurately as possible.

True it is that the deceptive bidder at times succeeds in duping some confiding or inexperienced adversary and thereby achieves a temporary triumph of which he loves to boast. For every such *coup*, however, he loses many conventional opportunities, frequently gets into trouble, and keeps his partner in a continual state of nervous unrest, entirely inimical to the exercise of sound judgment. Nevertheless, the erratic one rarely realizes this. He gives his deceptive play the credit for his winning whenever he holds cards with which it is impossible for him to lose, but characterizes as "hard luck" the hundreds that his adversaries tally in their honor columns by reason of his antics, and is oblivious of the opportunities to win games which he allows to slip from his grasp.

The difference between informative and deceptive bidding is shown in the harmony of a partnership. When the former is practised, the pair pull together; the latter results in misunderstandings and disputes.

It must not be understood, however, that the ability to give accurate information comprises the entire skill of the bidder. It is most important that he possess the judgment which enables him to force the adversary into dangerous waters without getting beyond his own depth.

It is no excuse for a player who has led his partner on to their mutual destruction to murmur, "I could have made my bid." An early bid being allowed to become the final declaration is exceptional. Whether or not it could be made is, therefore, immaterial, but the result it may produce is vital.

In club circles the story is told of the player of experience, who, after he had been deceived by his partner's declaration, said: "Partner, if you were reading the paper to a stranger, you would not vary a word of even an unimportant item. Why, then, should you, in describing your thirteen cards, deliberately misinform a trusting partner?"

Another exploded idea is that an advantage can be obtained by so-called "misleading" or "trap" bidding. There are some players who imagine that, by calling one Spade with an excellent hand, they can induce the adversaries to believe that the bidder possesses a trickless combination, and as a result, some ridiculous declaration will follow, which will give an opportunity for a profitable double. Experience has shown that in practice this idea does not produce satisfactory results. Adversaries will not bid to a point where they are apt to be doubled, except in the face of competition. When the Dealer has called one Spade, his partner, unless he hold very strong cards, will not materially elevate the declaration. If both partners have strength, it is not probable that the adversaries can do much bidding, so that it is only in the unusual case, and against the inexperienced and unskilled, that such a scheme is apt to prove successful. On the other hand, it transfers the advantage of being the first to show strength and abuses the confidence of the partner. It is a tool which should be employed only by the Declarer of ripe experience, and he will limit its use to the unusual hand.

The bidder should remember that part of the finesse of the game, when partners vary considerably in their respective skill, is to so arrange the declaration that the stronger player is at the helm most of the time. A weak player with a strong partner should not jump with undue haste into a No-trump, Royal, or Heart declaration; but rather, wait for the partner, and then back up his call. The weak player should also hesitate before taking away his partner's bid, although of course, there are many situations which thoroughly justify it, regardless of the greatest difference in the skill of the players.

The objection to the game of Auction which makes it the subject of the most severe criticism is the possibility that improper information may be conveyed to the partner by the manner of making the bid.

After starting to bid, by using the word "one" or "two" there should never be any hesitation, as that tells the partner that there is more than one call under consideration. The same comment applies to hesitation when it is evident to the partner that it must be caused by a doubt whether or not to double, and the opportunity so to do still remains with him. An extended delay in passing or bidding one Spade also conveys an obvious suggestion. It goes without saying that no honorable partner would avail himself of such information. Being the unwilling recipient of it, however, places him in an awkward position, as he must cross-examine himself as to whether any questionable bid or double he contemplates is in any way encouraged by it. If he have even a scintilla of doubt, he must pass.

A few principles of bidding applicable to all conditions may be stated at the beginning of the consideration of the subject.

Adopt informatory and conservative methods.

A good player may bid higher than a poor one.

When your partner fails to assist your bid, do not count on him for more strength than a Dealer who has bid one Spade.

Any overbid of an adversary shows strength; an overbid of a partner who has declared No-trump may show weakness.

Overbidding a partner who has declared Royals or Hearts shows weakness in his suit.

Being without a suit, or holding a singleton, is an element of strength for a Trump declaration; of weakness for a No-trumper.

When, if you do not bid, the adversary will be left in with a declaration with which he cannot make game, do not take him out unless you expect to score game with your declaration.

Do not, by reckless bidding, make the loss of one rubber equal the usual value of two.

With a love score, it requires three tricks in No-trumps, four in Royals or Hearts, and five in Diamonds or Clubs, to make game. It is an exceptional hand in which the Declarer does not lose more than two tricks. Diamonds and Clubs are, therefore, rarely played in preference to one of the three declarations of higher value, which are spoken of as "game-going" declarations.

There is very little declaring to the score in Auction, as the majority of deals in which the contract is fulfilled score game, so that most of the time the score is love. In a certain percentage of cases, however, there is a score, and it affects the bidding to the following extent:—

If it be 2 or more, Diamonds should be treated as Royals or Hearts would be at love; if it be 6 or more, Clubs should be similarly treated.

If it be 3 or more, Royals, with a holding of five or more, should be bid in preference to No-trump, even with all the suits stopped, and if it be 6 or more, Hearts should be similarly treated.

When the score reaches a higher figure, such as 16, for example, holding five Diamonds, Hearts, or Spades, suit bids should be given the preference over No-trumpers.

The reason is plain. The winning of the game is the object of the bidder; when that is in sight with a suit declaration, No-trump should not be risked unless in the higher declaration the fulfilment of the contract be equally sure.

The establishment of an adverse suit is the rock which sinks many a No-trumper. There is little chance of this with a suit declaration. Therefore, especially when it does not require any more tricks to go game, the suit should be selected, if the No-trump present any element of danger.

The state of the score never justifies an original bid which would not be conventional at love. In other words, while being the possessor of a score may make it wise for a bidder to select a suit instead of a No-trump, it never justifies his calling a suit in which he has not both the length and strength requisite for a declaration with a love score.

Bidding by the different hands is so varied in its character that each must be considered as practically a separate subject, and they will, therefore, be taken up *seriatim*. In all cases where the score is not especially mentioned, it should be understood that neither side is supposed to have scored.

II

ORIGINAL DECLARATIONS BY THE DEALER

The Dealer, in making the initial declaration, obtains a valuable strategic position whenever his hand justifies an offensive bid (*i.e.*, anything but one Spade); but when he is compelled to assume the defensive, this advantage passes to his opponents. By any declaration which shows strength, he materially aids his partner and places difficulties in the path of his adversaries. A No-trump is naturally his most advantageous opening.

There are many hands in which the strength is so evenly divided that the advantage of playing the Dummy enables the player who "gets to the No-trump first" to make good his declaration, and frequently, in such equally balanced hands, one No-trump is the only bid that can be made. One No-trump eliminates all adverse calls of one, and sometimes when the strength of the opponents is considerable, but divided, results in shutting out a

productive declaration. The Dealer, therefore, whenever his hand warrants it, should grasp his good fortune and declare his strength.

He should not, however, rashly assume the offensive. There is no way in which he can more thoroughly deceive his partner, create greater havoc with the bidding of the hand and cast deeper distrust upon his future declarations than by using the keynote bid to announce strength which his hand does not contain.

He must thoroughly understand the conventional declarations, and when in doubt should bid one Spade, as the damage which is apt to result from an overestimation by his partner of his winning cards is much greater than any benefit gained by starting the attack.

THE BID OF ONE NO-TRUMP

The Dealer is justified in basing his declaration upon the assumption that his partner has one-third of the high cards not in his own hand. He may, therefore, *bid one No-trump with any holding better than the average* whenever he has

- (a) Four suits stopped.
- (b) Three suits stopped and his hand contains an Ace.
- (c) Three King suits, all of which contain in addition either Queen or Knave.
- (d) A solid five-card Club or Diamond suit and another Ace.

The first question to determine is what, from the standpoint of the Declarer, constitutes a guarded or stopped suit.

That an Ace comes under that head is self-evident.

So also must a King, if accompanied by one small, because the lead comes up to the Declarer, and the King must either be able to win the trick or be made good.

A Queen and one other manifestly will not stop a suit, and a Queen and two others is not apt to do so unless the leader hold both Ace and King. Queen and three others is, however, comparatively safe, and Queen, Knave, and one other is a most satisfactory guard.

Knave, Ten, and two others surely stops a suit, but Knave and three small is about as unreliable as Queen and two small. It, therefore, becomes evident that the Dealer, to count a suit as stopped, must have in it one of the following holdings:—

- Ace.
- King and one other.
- Queen and three others.
- Queen, Knave, and one other.
- Knave and four others.
- Knave, Ten, and two others.

Some experts, with three suits stopped, bid No-trump with exactly an average hand, but experience has shown that this is advisable only when supported by exceptional skill, and cannot be recommended to most players. The average holding of high cards is one Ace, one King, one Queen, and one Knave. From the average standpoint it is immaterial whether they are all in one suit or divided. Any hand containing a face card or Ace above this average is a No-trumper, whenever it complies with the other above-mentioned requirements. When the average is exceeded by holding two Aces, instead of an Ace and King, a No-trump should be called, but two Kings, instead of a King and Queen, or even a King and Knave, is a very slight margin, and the declaration is doubtful for any but the most expert. A hand with two Queens instead of one Queen and one Knave, while technically above the average, cannot be so considered when viewed from a trick-taking standpoint, and does not warrant a No-trump call.

In bidding No-trump with three guarded suits, it does not matter which is unprotected. For example, the minimum strength of a No-trumper composed of one face card more than the average is an Ace in one suit; King, Knave, in another; and Queen, Knave, in a third. This hand would be a No-trumper, regardless of whether the suit void of strength happened to be Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, or Spades.

The above-described method of determining when the hand sizes up to the No-trump standard is generally known as the "average system," and has been found more simple and much safer than any of the other tests suggested. It avoids the necessity of taking the Ten into consideration, and does not involve the problems in mental arithmetic which become necessary when each honor is valued at a certain figure and a total fixed as requisite for a No-trump bid.

The theory upon which a player with possibly only three tricks declares to take seven, is that

a hand containing three sure tricks, benefited by the advantage derived from having twenty-six cards played in unison, is apt to produce one more; and until the Dummy refuse to help, he may be figured on for average assistance. The Dealer is expecting to take four tricks with his own hand, and if the Dummy take three (one-third of the remaining nine), he will fulfil his contract. Even if the Dummy fail to render the amount of aid the doctrine of chances makes probable, the declaration is not likely to prove disastrous, as one No-trump is rarely doubled.

It is also conventional to declare one No-trump with a five-card or longer Club or Diamond suit,^[2] headed by Ace, King, Queen, and one other Ace. This is the only hand containing strength in but two suits with which a No-trump should be called.

As a rule a combination of high cards massed into two suits does not produce a No-trumper, although the same cards, divided into three suits, may do so. For example, a hand containing Ace, Queen, Knave, in one suit; King, Queen, Knave, in another, and the two remaining suits unguarded, should not be bid No-trump, although the high cards are stronger than the example given above with strength in three suits.

Admitting all the advantage of the original No-trump, even the boldest bidders do not consider it a sound declaration with two defenseless suits, unless one of the strong suits be established and the other headed by an Ace. The reason for this is easily understood. When the adversaries have a long suit of which they have all the high cards, the chances are that it will be opened; but if not, it will soon be found unless the Declarer can at once run a suit of considerable length. When a suit is established by the adversaries, the Declarer is put in an embarrassing position, and would probably have been better off playing a Trump declaration. It is a reasonable risk to trust the partner to stop one suit, but it is being much too sanguine to expect him to protect two. Should he fail to have either stopped, the Declarer's loss is so heavy that only with a long and apparently established suit and an additional Ace is the risk justified. It is realized that the case cited, namely, Ace, King, Queen, and two others, may not prove to be an established (or solid, as it is often called) suit. If however, the division be at all even, as it is in the vast majority of cases, the suit can be run, and it is cited as the minimum holding which may be treated as established.

With the present value of Clubs and Diamonds, either suit presents an effective original declaration. There is, therefore, much less excuse than formerly for a reckless No-trump bid, based upon five or six Club or Diamond tricks and one other suit stopped. When, however, an Ace of another suit accompanies the unusual Club or Diamond strength, the advantage of being the first to bid No-trump makes the chance worth taking.

The hands above cited as containing the minimum strength to warrant the call are all what are known as "weak No-trumpers." This kind of bidding may not be conservative, but experience has shown it to be effective as long as it is kept within the specified limits. A No-trump must, however, justify the partner in acting upon the assumption that the bidder has at least the stipulated strength, and it merely courts disaster to venture such a declaration with less than the conventional holding.

A few examples may possibly make the above somewhat more clear, as by that means the various "minimum-strength" or "border-line" No-trumpers, and also hands which fall just below the mark, can be accurately shown. It will be understood that an effort is made to give the *weakest* hands which justify the No-trump declaration, and also the hands which fall short by the smallest possible margin. In other words, the hands which puzzle the Declarer. With greater strength or greater weakness the correct bid is plainly indicated.

The suits are numbered, not designated by their respective names, in order to emphasize that it does not matter where the weakness is located.

HANDS IN WHICH THE NO-TRUMP DECLARATION IS DOUBTFUL

Suit 1	King, Knave, X	Does not contain an Ace, but is above the average and has four suits stopped. It is a No-trump bid.
Suit 2	King, X, X	
Suit 3	Queen, Knave, X	
Suit 4	Knave, Ten, X, X	
Suit 1	Ace, Knave, X	Has an Ace, three suits stopped, and a Knave over the average. It is a No-trump bid.
Suit 2	X, X, X	
Suit 3	King, X, X, X	
Suit 4	Queen, Knave, X	
Suit 1	Ace, Queen, X	Has an Ace and two face cards more than the average, but, not having three suits stopped, is <i>not</i> a No-trump bid.
Suit 2	King, Queen, Knave	
Suit 3	X, X, X, X	

Suit 4	Knave, X, X	
Suit 1	King, Queen, X	Has three suits stopped, but is without an Ace, and is one King short of three King suits all with another face card. It is <i>not</i> a No-trump bid.
Suit 2	King, Knave, X, X	
Suit 3	Queen, Knave, X	
Suit 4	X, X, X	
Suit 1	King, Knave, X	Has three King-Queen, King-Knave suits. It is a No-trumpor bid.
Suit 2	King, Queen, X	
Suit 3	King, Knave, X	
Suit 4	X, X, X, X	
Suit 1	Ace, X, X	Has three suits stopped and is above the average. It is a No-trump bid.
Suit 2	Ace, X, X, X	
Suit 3	Queen, Knave, X	
Suit 4	X, X, X	
Suit 1	Ace, X, X	This is the border-line hand mentioned above. It may be a No-trump bid for an expert, but the moderate player is hardly justified in risking it. The presence of one or two Tens would add materially to the strength of this hand and make it a No-trump.
Suit 2	King, X, X	
Suit 3	X, X, X, X	
Suit 4	King, Knave, X	
Suit 1	Ace, X, X, X	Only above the average to the extent of a Queen in place of a Knave. No-trump is not advised unless Declarer is confident he can outplay his adversaries.
Suit 2	King, Queen, X	
Suit 3	Queen, X, X, X	
Suit 4	X, X	
Suit 1	Ace, Knave, X	An average hand. With this holding only an expert is justified in bidding No-trump.
Suit 2	King, X, X	
Suit 3	Queen, X, X, X	
Suit 4	X, X, X	
Suit 1	Ace, X, X	Below the average, and, therefore, only "one Spade" should be bid.
Suit 2	King, X, X	
Suit 3	Queen, X, X, X	
Suit 4	X, X, X	
Clubs or Diamonds	Ace, King, Queen, X, X	Has the weakest "solid" suit that with one other Ace warrants a No-trump bid.
Suit 2	Ace, X, X	
Suit 3	X, X, X	
Suit 4	X, X	
Clubs or Diamonds	Ace, King, Knave, X, X or Ace, Queen, Knave, X, X	Absence of Queen in one case, and of King in the other, keeps the suit from being established. Even the presence of the additional Queen in Suit 2 does not make this a No-trumper.
Suit 2	Ace, Queen, X	
Suit 3	X, X, X	
Suit 4	X, X	
Clubs or Diamonds	Ace, King, Queen, X, X	Absence of additional Ace makes a No-trump inadvisable.
Suit 2	King, Queen, X	
Suit 3	X, X, X	
Suit 4	X, X	

It is realized that in the last three cases cited the margin is unusually close; the last one, should the partner happen to have either Suit 3 or 4 stopped, and the Ace and some length of Suit 2, would be very much stronger than the example justifying the bid. It is also true that a fortunate drop of the King or Queen of the long suit, with a little help from the partner, would make the next to the last the strongest of the three. It is idle, however, to speculate on what the partner may have. In such close cases it is most important to invariably follow some fixed rule. The player who guesses each time may always be wrong, while the player who sticks to the sound bid is sure to be right most of the time. Experience has shown that, when only two suits are stopped, it is not wise to bid No-trump without both an Ace and a solid suit, and experience is the best teacher.

An original bid of more than one No-trump is rarely advisable, as it is important that the partner be given the option of bidding two of a suit. With great strength such a call should never be made, as in that case there is no good reason for attempting to shut out the adversary. The only character of hand which justifies starting with two No-trumps is the rare combination in which a long, solid suit of six or seven Clubs or Diamonds is held, accompanied by an Ace or guarded King in at least two of the remaining suits, the idea being to shut out adverse Royals or Hearts.

Some players believe in bidding two No-trumps with "every Ace and not a face," but that sort of an effort to "steal" the 100 is not justified as the partner's hand may make a game, which could not be won at No-trumps, obtainable in a suit declaration. A game with the incidental score is worth much more than "one hundred Aces" and only two odd tricks, or perchance an unfilled contract. It is also important that the bid be limited to the one case mentioned, as in that way it gives the most accurate information.

EXCEPTION TO THE NO-TRUMP RULE

There is one important exception to most of the No-trump bids above described, and that is when the hand, which otherwise would be a No-trumper, contains as its strong suit five or more Spades or Hearts. It takes only one more Royal or Heart than it does No-trump to win the game, and with a suit unguarded, it is far safer and wiser, with such a holding, to bid the Heart or Royal than the No-trump. For example, with Ace, King, Knave, and two small Clubs; King, Queen, Knave, and one Diamond; Queen, Knave, and one Heart; and one Spade, the bid would unquestionably be No-trump. If, however, the Club and Spade holding be transposed, a Royal should be declared. When there is a score which places the Club or Diamond within four tricks of game, these suits become as valuable as the Heart or Royal, with the score at love, and should be treated accordingly.

The Declarer should bear in mind that as the game is the desideratum, the surest, not the most glorious or enjoyable, route of reaching it should be chosen. When No-trump is declared with a hand containing a defenceless suit, there is a grave chance that the adversaries may save game by making five tricks in that suit before the Declarer can obtain the lead. With five or more strong cards of a suit and two other suits stopped, four tricks are more probable with the suit declaration than three with No-trump, but three with the No-trump are more likely than five with the suit. It, therefore, depends upon which suit be held whether it or No-trump should be bid. The inclination which many players have for a No-trump bid should be firmly curbed, when the holding is of the character mentioned and the strength is in Spades or Hearts.

A very different case arises, however, when all the suits are stopped; the Dealer is then, the game being probable with either declaration, justified in bidding either the No-trump or the suit, as he may prefer, and the value of the honors he holds should be an important factor in guiding his decision. When he has more than five Spades or Hearts, the suit declaration is generally to be preferred, even with all suits stopped, unless the hand contain four Aces. A few examples follow:—

Spades	Ace, King, Queen, X, X	While this hand contains three Aces, it is more apt to score game with Royals than without a Trump. With the Spade and Club or Spade and Diamond suits transposed, it is a No-trumper.
Hearts	Ace, Queen, X	
Diamonds	Ace, Knave, X, X	
Clubs	X	

Spades	Ace, King, Queen, X	Not having five Spades, this hand is a No-trump bid. The fact that it contains a singleton is an argument in favor of a suit declaration, but with only four Spades it is safer to risk the Clubs than long adverse Spades with one more trick required for game.
Hearts	Ace, Queen, X, X	
Diamonds	Ace, Knave, X, X	
Clubs	X	

Spades	Knave, Ten, X, X	A No-trumper, as it has three suits stopped and contains an Ace. A transposition of the Clubs to Spades or Hearts would make it a Trump declaration.
Hearts	Ace, Queen, Knave	
Diamonds	X	
Clubs	King, Queen, Knave, X, X	

Spades	King, Queen, Knave, X, X	Can be declared either Royals or No-trump, as four suits are stopped and it has five strong Spades. The 30 Aces as compared with 18 honors in Royals and
Hearts	Ace, Queen	
Diamonds	Ace, X, X	

Clubs	Ace, Knave, X	the absence of a singleton make the No-trump more attractive. If, however, the Ten of Spades be substituted for a small Spade, the 72 honors would make it a Royal.
Spades	King, Knave, X	While the four Suits are stopped, the length in Hearts makes the suit call the more advisable.
Hearts	King, Queen, Ten, X, X, X	
Diamonds	Ace, X	
Clubs	Ace, X	
Spades	King, Queen, Ten	The Diamond is tempting, as a score of 56 honors is compared with possibly 30 adverse aces. If, however, the three missing Aces be held by the adversaries, game cannot be scored in Diamonds, and a game is always worth more than 100. It is therefore a No-trump.
Hearts	King, Knave, Ten	
Diamonds	Ace, King, Queen, Knave	
Clubs	King, Queen, Knave	

SUIT DECLARATIONS

For some reason the Dealer is more apt to make faulty suit bids than unwarranted No-trumpers. It seems as difficult for the old Whist and Bridge player as it is for the novice to realize that even excessive length does not justify an original suit call, unless the suit contain either the Ace or the King. It, also, is just as important to remember that if the suit does not contain *both* the Ace and the King, the hand must in addition have at least one other honor in the suit named,^[3] and one other sure trick. By "sure trick" in this connection is not meant merely a suit stopped, but a trick that can be won not later than the second round; in other words, either an Ace or a King and Queen, or King and Knave, of the same suit.

Stating in another way the combination of high cards requisite for an original suit bid, it may be said that a suit should never be originally declared unless the hand contain two sure high-card tricks, one of which must be in the suit named. These sure high-card tricks must be either two Aces or their equivalent in value for trick-taking purposes. The reason is obvious. The declaration of a suit by an informatory bidder tells the partner, not only that the bidder is satisfied to have that hand played with the suit named as the Trump, but also that his holding will be helpful to the extent of at least two tricks, one of which is in his suit, should the declaration be shifted to No-trump. This is one of the simplest and most vital rules of bidding, yet it is probably the most frequently disregarded. Innumerable points have appeared in the adverse honor column because a partner has properly assumed that an original suit call showed the high-card strength just mentioned, only to find out too late that the bidder, with perhaps a couple of Kings, had yielded to the lure of length. Even at the risk of seeming repetition, it is necessary to be a little more explicit upon this subject.

When the Dealer bids a suit, he says: "Partner, I have great strength in this suit; it is probable that I have both the Ace and King, but if not, I have either the Ace or King, supported by at least one other honor,^[4] and the Ace or the King and Queen, or King and Knave, of some other suit; you can bid No-trump or double any adverse declaration, positively assured that I will support you to the extent named."

The holding in the suit which is declared, is vital. Take, for example, such a hand as Queen, Knave, and five small Hearts; and the Ace and King of Clubs. Of course, the Dealer wants to play this hand with Hearts as Trump, but he should not bid a Heart at the start, as he has not the Ace or King. The fact that he has both the Ace and King of Clubs does not justify a Heart call without either the Ace or King of Hearts. With the hand cited there will be plenty of time to bid Hearts later.

The rule which governs this case is the foundation of modern bidding; it is without exception, is not affected by the score, and is the most important of all Auction conventions.

Every player should resolve that, whatever his other shortcomings may be, he will treat it as a veritable law of the Medes and Persians, and that never, as Dealer, will he call a suit unless he hold the Ace or King of it, and the other requisite strength.

The combination of high cards above mentioned, however, is not in itself sufficient to justify a suit declaration. There must, in addition, be length in the suit. This is just as essential in Clubs or Diamonds as in Hearts or Royals. The partner may have great strength, and yet be unable to stop the adverse suit. A No-trump being thus eliminated, he, acting on the assurance given by the original call, may carry the suit to high figures. This is sure to prove disastrous, unless the original bidder has length as well as strength.

As a general rule, five is the minimum length with which a suit should be called, but with great strength, such as Ace, King, Knave; Ace, Queen, Knave; or King, Queen, Knave, in the suit, coupled with another Ace; or a King and Queen, a bid with a four-card combination may be ventured. A four-card suit, headed by Ace, King, Queen, may be called without other strength.

A short suit, that is, one of three cards or less, should never be bid originally, regardless of its strength. Even the holding of Ace, King, Queen, does not justify the naming of such a suit.

While the doctrine above enunciated as to the minimum strength required for a Trump bid is unquestionably logical and is now regarded as conventional by a very large proportion of the expert players of Auction, it is only natural that there should be some dissent. There is a certain character of mind that always desires to carry any sound theory to dangerous extremes, and, consequently, some players and writers have seen fit, while adopting the theory which has altered the old system of always starting with one Spade into the modern informatory game, to advocate extensions which would practically eliminate the defensive declaration.

These extremists desire to permit a Dealer to bid whenever he has a long suit, regardless of whether it be headed by high cards, and also whether it would aid a No-trump. One system suggested is that a Trump be called whenever the Dealer holds any suit which counts 7, on the basis of an Ace or face counting 2, and any lower card, 1. The believers in this doctrine would, therefore, bid a Club from such a hand as Queen, Knave, X, X, X, without any possibility of another trick; or even from Knave, X, X, X, X, X. The absurdity of this becomes obvious when it is remembered that the only real object in bidding a Club or Diamond is to show strength which will justify the partner in declaring one of the three game-going declarations. Any such holding as that mentioned not only does not help any other declaration, but as a matter of fact is a hand so far under the trick-taking average that, if any method could be devised by which weakness could be emphasized more strongly than by making the defensive declaration, such a hand would fully justify employing it. It is difficult to conceive what benefit can result to a partnership from any such weakness being, for the purpose of the declaration, changed into alleged strength. If a player declare with any such combination, his power to give information when he really possesses strength of course immediately ceases to exist, and the entire structure of informative bidding thereby drops to pieces.

The system of suit declarations above outlined, and upon which all that is hereinafter suggested in relation to bidding is based, must be followed by players who wish to give their partners accurate data, and while it may be tempting at times to depart from the conventional, the more frequently such exception is made by the Dealer in his bid, the more often does misunderstanding between the partners ensue.

VARIOUS IDEAS OF THE TWO SPADE BID

Every game of the Whist family has some point upon which experts disagree, and which, consequently, produces apparently interminable discussion.

In Auction, it is the two Spade bid, and no less than four recognized factions have widely divergent views concerning it. These views may be briefly stated as follows:—

(a) With the border-line No-trumpers now in vogue, a hand not strong enough to bid No-trump is too weak to warrant any call but one Spade. The two Spade bid is, therefore, useless and should never be made.

(b) The two Spade bid should be used as a No-trump invitation with any hand not quite strong enough to justify a No-trump call. Having this meaning it does not matter whether the hand contain any Spade strength.

(c) The two Spade bid should be used as a No-trump invitation, but must also give the additional information that the hand contains at least one trick in Spades.

(d) The two Spade bid should be used to tell the partner that the hand has the high-card strength to bid one Royal, but not sufficient length. It thus becomes either a No-trump or Royal invitation.

All these systems have their advocates, most of whom refuse to see merit in any plan but their own. It is only fair, however, before reaching a definite conclusion to accord to all a fair and dispassionate consideration.

(a)

The argument that, as long as light No-trumpers are conventional, any hand not sufficiently strong to call No-trump is too weak to justify declaring more than one Spade, has considerable force. Beyond question, many followers of plans "b" and "c" call two Spades when their holdings do not warrant such action, but the fact that a declaration is at times abused is far from being a sufficient reason for wiping it off the Auction map, and saying to

those who desire to use it rationally, "No, because some players see fit to make this bid with two Knaves and a Queen, it is not safe to allow you the privilege of using it sanely, wisely, and at the appropriate time."

The supporters of "a," however, go further, and say that the hands in which a No-trump cannot be called, but with which the invitation should be extended to the partner to bid it, are so rare that the retention of the two Spade call merely encumbers the catalogue of the Declarer with a bid that is practically obsolete.

This, if it be true, would be most convincing, but it is so surprising a statement that it should be examined before being accepted.

Every hand that class "d" would bid two Spades would be similarly called by "b" and "c," and at least ninety-nine per cent. of expert Auction players concede that such a bid is sound. For example:—

Spades	Ace, King, Knave
Hearts	X, X, X, X
Diamonds	X, X, X
Clubs	Ace, Queen, X

has strength which deserves, if possible, to be shown.

This is merely a sample of a hand which would be a Royal, if length in Spades accompanied the strength. Such hands come within the "d" classification, and are not rare. This must be admitted when it is considered that three- or four-card suits are much more frequently held than suits of greater length. Therefore, two Spades should be bid more often than one Royal. With the single exception of No-trump, Royals is the call most frequently played; consequently, as a preliminary call, two Spades must be used more constantly than any declaration, except No-trump.

Experience bears out this argument, and it, therefore, seems that the "a" allegations are not supported by examination.

It is obvious that the more original calls with which it is possible to equip a Dealer, the more accurately can he distinguish for the benefit of his partner between the different classes of holdings. It therefore seems absurd to contend that the bid of two spades should be eliminated.

(b)

The argument presented by the "b" school is also at first quite convincing. Take such a hand as

Spades	X, X, X
Hearts	Ace, X, X
Diamonds	King, Knave, X
Clubs	Knave, X, X, X

It is just too weak for a No-trump, but at first glance seems too strong for a Spade.

Why, however, should it be too strong for a Spade? It is under the average, which means the holding of the partner must be quite a bit better than the average to get one odd. If he have such a hand he will declare it in any event, and the dealer can then help. Furthermore, this system does not point out any one suit as stopped, and, therefore, gives the minimum degree of information. It is practically saying, "I bid half a No-trump." It is quite doubtful whether the holding essential for such a bid can be properly limited and whether it will not tempt bidding with too great weakness.

Furthermore, it must be taken out. The Third Hand cannot allow his partner to play two Spades, and if he be weak, all he can do under this system is to call three Spades, which only makes matters worse, as it is sure to be doubled, and the dealer must in turn take that out. To do this with the hand above cited, he must either call two Clubs with four to a Knave, or one Diamond with three to the King, Knave.

The trouble is evident—the result apt to be unfortunate. If the partner with average strength accept such a No-trump invitation, the contract cannot be fulfilled; while if he be strong, he will bid in any event, so where is the advantage of the call?

For one purpose, however, this system of bid seems sound. If the dealer be a poor player and the Third Hand an expert, it is for the benefit of the partnership that the Third Hand be the Declarer. When the Dealer holds a real No-trumper, but wishes his partner to become the Declarer, the two Spade,—not invitation, but command,—has real merit, but as few players either concede their own inferiority or are willing to allow their partners to play a majority of the hands, this apparent argument in favor of the plan will not appeal to many, and will, therefore, seldom prove of service.

(c)

This comes nearer being logical, as it shows one Spade trick, and, therefore, indicates help for a partner's Royal, but with that exception, it is subject to the same objections as "b." It is troublesome to take out, and when compared with "d" gives extremely limited information.

It may, however, be of distinct advantage for a player who does not approve of light No-trumpers. Followers of the theory that the call of one No-trump means four or five sure tricks will certainly find "c" or even "b" an advantageous system, but the advantage of "getting to the No-trump first" is so manifest that the light declarations have become generally popular, and but few of the "I-will-not-declare-unless-I-have-the-goods" bidders are now to be found.

If a player believe in calling No-trump with the minimum strength now considered sufficient, he has little use for either "b" or "c."

It is self-evident that "c" cannot be used as often as "b," so the Declarer who likes always to say something will prefer "b," but the bidder who wishes, when he calls, to have distinct value attached to his announcement, will elect in favor of "c" rather than "b," and for the same reason will find "d" the best system of all.

(d)

It is toward this system that the evolution of modern bidding is turning. True, two Spades cannot be declared as frequently when "d" is used as when "b" or "c" is employed, but the "d" bid conveys information so comprehensive and important that one call is of greater value than several "b" or "c" bids, which, at best, furnish the partner with indefinite data.

It makes the weakness take-out of the partner, namely, one Royal, easy and logical, and in every way seems the soundest, safest, simplest, and most conducive to game-winning of all the plans suggested.

It invites equally the two most important declarations, makes easy the position of the partner when he holds long, weak Spades, and is doubtless destined, in a short time, to be the only two-Spade system in use, unless it be found advisable to include in the repertory of the original declarer both "b" and "d."

This can be readily accomplished by calling two Spades for "b"; three Spades for "d"; and four Spades for the combination hereinafter given, for which the declaration of three Spades is suggested.

No serious objection can be advanced to this plan, except that it is somewhat complicated, and for a light No-trump bidder, possibly unnecessary. It is a totally new idea, but believed to be of sufficient value to entitle it to a trial.

As it is impossible to declare or play intelligently when any doubt exists between partners regarding the convention employed, and as it is wise not to follow unsound theories, no further reference will be made to "a," "b," or "c" plans. The "d" system will be fully described, and all suggestions that hereinafter appear will be based upon the supposition that it is being used.

THE TWO SPADE BID^[5]

The bid of two Spades is a showing of Spade strength, with a hand which does not contain Spade length sufficient to justify the bid of one Royal.

The latter is the more advantageous declaration, and should be made whenever five Spades with the requisite high-card strength are held. When, however, the hand contains the strength, but not the length, for a Royal call, the bid of two Spades is a most useful substitute.

It may be made with three or four Spades in any case in which, with five, one Royal could be declared, except the solitary instance of holding Ace and King of Spades without another trick of any kind. A Royal may be called with five, headed by Ace, King, as, should the bid stand, the three small Trumps would surely take one trick. Every original offensive declaration is based upon a minimum of three tricks. This principle applies to the bid of two Spades, and, therefore, a hand containing less than five Spades, headed by Ace, King, and no other winning card, is a one Spade call, as it is one and one-quarter tricks below the average.

When a player bids two Spades, he sends his partner a message which gives information about as follows: "I have three or four Spades with two or three high honors, and in addition, unless I have Ace, King, and Queen of Spades, I have one other suit well stopped. My hand does not warrant a No-trump, because I have only two suits stopped. As I have not more than four Spades, I do not wish to bid a Royal; I am too strong to be satisfied with one Spade, so I bid two for the purpose of encouraging you to call No-trump or Royals."

Such a declaration certainly gives very accurate information, and should be used whenever such a hand occurs, but not under any other circumstances.

THE THREE SPADE BID^[6]

The declaration of three Spades by the Dealer is a very recent idea and is also most informatory. It says: "Partner, I am anxious to have Royals the Trump, but I cannot make that declaration now, as I have not the requisite high cards. I probably have not the Ace of Spades, and the chances are that I am without the King also. Either because the balance of my hand is so strong that I fear I will be left in with one Spade, or for some other reason, I do not wish to open with the defensive declaration and wait for a later round to show strength. You can count on me for five or more (probably more) Spades and other strength."

WHEN TO BID TWO IN EITHER ROYALS OR HEARTS

Another case to consider in bidding by the Dealer is when more than one of any game-scoring suit should be declared.

The original theory of declaration was to withhold from the table as long as possible all information regarding the strength of the hand; therefore, to start with one in the real suit was regarded as most unwise, and to bid two would have been deemed the act of a lunatic.

Now, however, the original suit declaration of more than one is generally acknowledged to be an important part of the finesse of the skilled bidder, and such bidding, when justified by the hand, is recognized as eminently wise and proper.

When the "two" and "three" original Trump bids first came into vogue, they were used indiscriminately with great length, regardless of whether or not high cards headed the suit. The meaning of the bid was "Do not take me out," and it was made under widely divergent conditions. No distinction was drawn between a hand which might be trickless as an aid to, or defense against, a No-trump declaration, and one which would produce seven or eight tricks under such circumstances. This kind of bidding was found to be much too confusing for the partner, and prevented him from rendering intelligent support.

It is now realized that it is far wiser with length, no matter how great, but without commanding cards, to start with a Spade and then bid the long suit on the succeeding round, thus practically photographing the hand for the partner and energetically waving the red flag for any declaration but the one suit.

Take, for example, such a hand as seven Hearts, headed by Queen, Knave; Ace, Knave, and two Clubs; two small Diamonds, and no Spades. An original two Heart or one Club call would grossly mislead the partner without being of any real advantage, but one Spade followed by two Hearts, or even three, if necessary, shows the exact situation. As long as the hand containing a long suit is not so strong that there is grave danger of its being left in with one Spade, it should be started with the defensive declaration. When such great strength exists, a sound opening bid invariably presents itself.

It, therefore, becomes apparent that an original suit bid of two or three, just as necessarily as a bid of one, should demonstrate the underlying principle of original suit declarations—namely, strength, as well as length.

The incidental object in bidding more than one originally is to warn the partner that the Dealer prefers to play the suit named rather than a doubtful No-trump; the main reason, however, is, if possible, to shut out adverse bidding. When there is great length in either Spades or Hearts and distinct weakness in the other, a two or three bid is most advisable. In that case, the strength in the other suit may be entirely with the adversaries and may be divided between them. They could readily find this out, if allowed to start with a cheap bid, but it frequently happens that neither is sufficiently strong to make a high declaration without assistance from his partner.

When the Dealer has sufficient strength in either Royals or Hearts to bid more than one, and, in addition, has considerable strength in the other suits, it is as a rule advisable to bid but one, as in that case he does not wish to frighten off adverse bidding, but prefers to encourage it with the hope that it may reach a point which will give him a safe and profitable double.

Six sure tricks with the possibility of more is the minimum strength for an original call of two Hearts or two Royals.

WHEN TO BID THREE IN EITHER ROYALS OR HEARTS

An original bid of three Royals or Hearts is justified by a hand in which sufficient strength exists to make it probable that the declaration will be successful, and which nevertheless

cannot effectively defend against a high bid by the adversaries in the other suit. As a rule this is a two-suit hand, and in a genuine two-suiter it often happens that one side may be able to win eleven tricks in Royals or Hearts, while their adversaries can capture a similar number in the other.

The three bid is, of course, a "shut-out" measure, and should be employed for that purpose only.

Seven sure tricks, with the possibility of more, is the minimum strength for an original call of three Hearts or three Royals.

THE TWO BID IN DIAMONDS OR CLUBS

The original bid of two in either Diamonds or Clubs with the score at love is a totally different character of declaration from two Hearts or two Royals. The Dealer does not with this declaration say, "Let me stay in and make game," but he does say, "I have a long suit (at least five cards) headed by Ace, King, Queen, with no considerable support on the side. (If I had another Ace, I would bid No-trump.) Now you know my exact hand."

When there is a score which places Diamonds or Clubs within four tricks of game, the original bid of two or more in either suit is of exactly the same significance as a similar call of Royals or Hearts, with the score at love.

HOW TO DECLARE TWO-SUIT HANDS

The only remaining case of original declaration by the Dealer is the hand with two suits, both of which are of sufficient strength to bid. As a general rule, it is wiser first to call the lower in value, and then to declare the higher on the next round. This gives the maximum amount of information, but should only be attempted when the hand clearly indicates that there will be another opportunity to bid, as otherwise the Dealer may be left in with a non-game-producing declaration.

The Dealer must determine from the composition of his hand whether a second opportunity to bid is assured. When he is not very strong, the chances are that some one else will declare. When he is without a suit or has a singleton, it is a reasonably safe assumption that some one will be strong enough in that suit to call it.

A few examples follow of hands which have the minimum strength to justify the various Trump calls and also of hands which, by a small margin, fall short:—

HANDS IN WHICH A TRUMP DECLARATION IS DOUBTFUL

Spades	Ace, King, X, X, X	Has five Spades headed by Ace and King. With Royals Trump has two high-card tricks, and can take at least one with small cards. It is, therefore, a one Royal bid.
Hearts	X, X, X	
Diamonds	X, X, X	
Clubs	X, X	
Spades	King, X, X, X	Has not high-card strength sufficient for either a Heart or two-Spade bid. One Spade is the correct call.
Hearts	King, Knave, X, X, X	
Diamonds	X, X	
Clubs	X, X	
Spades	X, X	Complies with all the requirements of a Heart bid.
Hearts	King, Queen, X, X, X	
Diamonds	Ace, Knave, X	
Clubs	X, X, X	
Spades	X, X, X	Has only four Hearts; is, therefore, a one Spade call.
Hearts	King, Queen, X, X	
Diamonds	Ace, Knave, X	
Clubs	X, X, X	
Spades	X, X, X	Has only four Hearts, but has sufficient high-card strength to justify a Heart bid.
Hearts	Ace, Queen, Knave, X	
Diamonds	Ace, Queen, X	
Clubs	X, X, X	

Spades	Ace, Queen, X, X	A two Spade bid; with one more Spade, it would be one Royal.
Hearts	X, X, X	
Diamonds	Ace, X, X	
Clubs	X, X, X	
Spades	Ace, Knave, X	A two Spade bid. With two more Spades, it would be one Royal.
Hearts	X, X, X,	
Diamonds	King, Queen, X	
Clubs	X, X, X, X	
Spades	Ace, Knave, X, X	Either two Spades or one Club could be bid, but the Club is distinctly preferable.
Hearts	X, X	
Diamonds	X, X	
Clubs	Ace, Queen, Knave, X, X	
Spades	King, X, X, X	A one Spade bid, as it has not two honors in Spades.
Hearts	Ace, X, X	
Diamonds	Knave, X, X	
Clubs	Knave, X, X	
Spades	Queen, Knave, Ten, X, X, X, X	A three Spade bid; cannot be started as a Royal without Ace or King, and so strong, one Spade might not be overbid.
Hearts	Ace, Queen	
Diamonds	King, Knave, X	
Clubs	King	
Spades	None	A two or three Heart bid.
Hearts	Ace, King, Knave, Ten, X, X	
Diamonds	Queen, Knave, Ten	
Clubs	Ace, X, X, X	
Spades	Ace, King	A one Heart bid. So strong that a higher call is unnecessary, as adverse bidding is desired.
Hearts	Ace, King, Knave, Ten, X, X	
Diamonds	Queen, Knave, Ten	
Clubs	King, Queen	
Spades	Ace, King, Knave, Ten, X, X, X	A three Royals bid. Important to shut out adverse bidding.
Hearts	None	
Diamonds	X, X	
Clubs	Ace, King, X, X	
Spades	X, X	A two Diamonds bid.
Hearts	King, X, X	
Diamonds	Ace, King, Queen, X, X, X	
Clubs	X, X	
Spades	Ace, King, Knave, X, X	Should either be bid one Club and subsequently Royals, or started at two Royals to shut out other bidding.
Hearts	X	
Diamonds	X, X	
Clubs	Ace, King, X, X, X	
Spades	King, X	While this hand has more than sufficient high-card strength to justify an offensive bid, it is only a Spade. Two Spades would mislead the partner as to length and strength of Spades and might induce him to bid high Royals; one Heart would mislead him as to length of Hearts; having, however, called one Spade, the hand can advance any declaration of the partner and if the partner bid either Clubs or Diamonds, can call No-trump.
Hearts	Ace, King, Queen	
Diamonds	X, X, X, X	
Clubs	X, X, X, X	
Spades	King, Knave, X, X, X, X, X	Should not be bid one Royal, as that deceives partner as to high-card strength; two Spades invites a No-trump, which is not wanted. Either three Spades or one Spade should be called. The hand,
Hearts	X, X	
Diamonds	X, X	
Clubs	X, X	

outside of Spades, is so weak that the latter is the wiser bid.

Spades Queen, Ten, X, X
Hearts Ace, X, X
Diamonds X, X, X
Clubs X, X, X

Spade honors are too weak for two Spades. One Spade is the only sound bid.

Spades X
Hearts Queen, Knave, Ten, X, X, X, X
Diamonds None
Clubs Ace, King, X, X, X

One Club should be bid, followed, regardless of the partner's declaration, with Hearts.

Spades Queen, Knave, Ten, X, X, X
Hearts King, Knave, Ten, X, X, X
Diamonds None
Clubs X

Three Spades, and on the next round, Hearts, unless the partner has bid *two* Royals.

Spades Knave, Ten, Nine, X, X, X
Hearts None
Diamonds Ace, Knave, X
Clubs Ace, Queen, Knave, X

This very interesting hand affords a number of correct original bids. One Club, three Spades, and one Spade are all sound; the latter is not apt to be left in, as a Heart call is most probable, the long hand in that suit containing at least five. Three Suits being stopped, with more than an average hand, one No-trump is also technically correct. The chances are, however, that the hand will produce better results if the Trump be Royals, and as the call of one No-trump may stand, it is not wise to open the bidding that way. Three Spades seems the most advisable declaration, as it gives the information most important for the partner to receive. The risk in calling one Spade, while slight, is totally unnecessary, and one Club does not warn the partner not to bid Hearts, if he have anything in Spades.

Should three Spades be called and the partner declare one Heart, the dealer on the next round could try No-trump, but one Club, followed by one Heart from partner, would necessitate a Royal from the dealer, as the absence of Spades in the partner's hand is not then announced.

In the event of the small Club being transposed to a Diamond, so that the hand contain four Diamonds and three Clubs, three Spades would unquestionably be the most advantageous original call.

III

SECOND HAND DECLARATIONS

The Second Hand bids under two totally dissimilar conditions. The Dealer of necessity has declared and, either by a call of one Spade, shown comparative weakness, or, by an offensive declaration, given evidence of strength.

It is obvious that whether the Dealer be strong or weak materially affects the question of

how the Second Hand should bid, as it makes quite a variation in the number of tricks he has the right to expect to find in his partner's hand. This, however, is not the only, and, possibly, not the most important difference.

When the Dealer has called one Spade, it is practically certain, should the Second Hand pass, that he will have another opportunity to enter the bidding. When, however, the Dealer has declared a suit or No-trump, it is possible, if the Second Hand fail to declare, that no other bid will be made, and the declaration of the Dealer will stand.

It is, therefore, readily seen that, in the first case, the Second Hand is making an initial declaration; in the other, a forced bid.

BIDDING OVER ONE SPADE

When Auction was in its infancy, the authorities advised the Second Hand, regardless of the character of his cards, to pass a declaration of one Spade. The reason given was that the Third Hand would have to take his partner out, which might prove embarrassing, and that a bid by the Second Hand would release his left-hand adversary from this, possibly, trying position.

Modern Auction developments have proven the futility of this idea. The Third Hand of to-day is not troubled by any obligation to take the Dealer out of "one Spade," and will not do so without considerable strength. Should the Second Hand pass, with winning cards, the Fourth Hand may be the player who finds himself in the awkward position, and if, adopting the conservative course, he allow the Spade declaration to stand, a good chance to score game may be lost by the failure of the Second Hand to avail himself of his opportunity.

Second Hand silence is not now regarded as golden, but there is still some question as to the amount of strength required to make a declaration advisable. Some authorities believe the Second Hand should pass, unless his cards justify him in expecting to make game. This theory was for a time very generally accepted, and even yet has a considerable following. Experience, however, has convinced most of its advocates that it is unsound, and it is being rapidly abandoned.

It is now conceded that the deal is quite an advantage, because of the opportunity it gives the Dealer to strike the first blow. It follows that when the Dealer has been obliged to relinquish his favorable position, it is the height of folly for the Second Hand, when he has the requisite strength, not to grasp it. Furthermore, the Dealer having shown weakness, the adverse strength is probably in the Third Hand. Should the Third Hand call No-trump, the Fourth Hand will be the leader, and it will then be important for him to know which suit his partner desires opened. On the first round of the declaration, this can be indicated by a bid of one, but after the No-trump, it takes two, which, with the strength over the bidder, may be dangerous.

The bid of the Second Hand, furthermore, makes the task of his left-hand adversary more difficult and may prevent a No-trump. It certainly aids the Fourth Hand—indeed, it may be just the information he needs for a game declaration.

It seems clear, therefore, that the Second Hand should show his strength when he has the chance. He should not, however, carry too far the principles above outlined. It is just as fatal for the Second Hand as for the Dealer, to deceive his partner.

WHEN TO BID NO-TRUMP

The rules governing an original offensive bid by the Dealer apply to the Second Hand, after the Dealer has called one Spade, in practically every instance. The only possible exception is the holding necessary for a border-line No-trump. When the Dealer, with the minimum strength, declares "one No-trump," he figures on the probability that his partner holds one-third of the high cards not in his own hand. When the Second Hand declares after "one Spade," it is reasonable for him to count upon his partner for a slightly greater percentage of strength; therefore, he may bid No-trump a little more freely.

To justify a No-trump by the Dealer, he should have slightly better than average cards. The Second Hand, with exactly an average holding, may make the bid. The No-trump requirements,—namely, four suits stopped, three suits stopped and an Ace, three King-Queen or King-Knave suits, or at least five solid Diamonds or Clubs and an Ace,—which limit the declaration of the Dealer, apply, however, with equal force to the Second Hand, and should never be disregarded.

WHEN TO MAKE A TRUMP DECLARATION

The Dealer, having declared one Spade, a Trump declaration of one, two, or three by the Second Hand is subject to exactly the same rules as in the case of the original call by the

Dealer. Precisely the same reasoning holds good and the same danger is apt to arise, should the Second Hand digress from the recognized principles of safety, and bid a long suit which does not contain the requisite high cards. The Second Hand will have an opportunity to declare his weak suit of great length on the next round, and there is no necessity for deceiving the partner as to its composition by jumping into it with undue celerity.

THE DOUBLE OF ONE SPADE

The question of when the Second Hand should double is covered in the chapter on "Doubling," but as the double of one Spade is really a declaration, rather than a double, it seems proper to consider it here, especially as it is of vital importance that it be accurately distinguished from the Second Hand bid of two Spades, with which it is very frequently confused. Many good players treat the two declarations as synonymous, although by so doing they fail to avail themselves of a simple and safe opportunity to convey valuable information. The reason for this apparent carelessness on the part of many bidders is that no scheme of declaring that accurately fits the situation has hitherto been generally understood.

The idea that follows has been found to work well, and while as yet not sufficiently used to be termed conventional, seems to be growing in favor with such rapidity that its general adoption in the near future is clearly indicated.

The Second Hand doubles one Spade, with practically the same holding with which the dealer bids two Spades, not with the expectation or wish that the double will stand, but as the most informatory action possible, and as an invitation to his partner to bid No-trumps or Royals. In a general way his bid of two Spades has the same significance, except that it more emphatically suggests a call of Royals. By accurately distinguishing the two, the partner may declare with much greater effect.

The double shows short Spades (two or three), with at least two high honors in Spades, and one other trick, or the Ace of Spades and two other tricks.

THE BID OF TWO SPADES^[7]

The bid of two Spades shows exactly four Spades and the same high-card holding which justifies doubling one Spade.

The Second Hand, when he doubles one, or bids two Spades, says: "I have not three suits stopped, so I cannot bid No-trumps. While I have sufficient high-card strength to call one Royal, I have less than five Spades, and, therefore, am without sufficient length. I can, however, by this declaration, tell you the exact number of my Spades, and I expect you to make the best possible use of the exceptionally accurate information with which you are furnished."

As much care should be taken in selecting the correct declaration, when in doubt whether to bid two Spades or double one, as when determining whether to call a Royal or a Heart. Many a player doubles one Spade with five or six, headed by Knave, Ten, apparently never realizing that with such a hand he wishes the trump to be Royals, and yet, by his bid, is inviting his partner to call No-trump; or he bids two Spades with the Queen of Spades and a couple of Kings, and after his partner has declared a Royal, or doubled an adverse No-trump, counting on the announced Spade strength, says: "I realize I deceived you in the Spades, but I had two Kings about which you did not know."

That sort of a declarer makes it impossible for his partner to take full advantage of any sound bid he may make.

Every Second Hand bidder should remember that when he doubles one Spade or bids two, he tells his partner he has short or exactly four Spades, as the case may be; that he has not three suits stopped, and that his minimum high-card holding is one of the following combinations:—

SPADES	MINIMUM STRENGTH IN OTHER SUIT
Ace, King, Queen	No strength required
Ace, King	Queen, Knave, and one other
Ace, Queen	King, Knave
Ace, Knave	Ace, or King and Queen, or King, Knave, Ten
Ace	Ace and King; Ace, Queen, Knave; or King,

	Queen, Knave
King, Queen	Ace, or King and Queen, or King, Knave, Ten
King, Knave, Ten	Ace, or King and Queen, or King, Knave, Ten
King, Knave	Ace and King; Ace, Queen, Knave; or King, Queen, Knave
Queen, Knave, Ten	Ace and King; Ace, Queen, Knave; or King, Queen, Knave

In order that the distinction between the various Second Hand Spade declarations may be clearly marked, take such a holding as

Spades	Ace, King
Hearts	Three small
Diamonds	Four small
Clubs	Ace

Only ten cards are mentioned, and the remaining three are either Spades or Clubs.

***Making the number
of Spades in the***

<i>When the missing cards are</i>	<i>Hand</i>	<i>The Second Hand should</i>
All Clubs	Two	Double
Two Clubs and one Spade	Three	Double
One Club and two Spades	Four	Bid two Spades
All Spades	Five	Bid one Royal

The method suggested above is not the only plan for distinguishing between the double of one and the bid of two Spades.

Some players think the double should mean a No-trump invitation, without any significance as to strength in the Spade suit, and two Spades should show two honors in Spades. The same comment applies to this as to a similar declaration by the Dealer; namely, that with the light No-trumpers now conventional, the invitation without Spade strength is unnecessary and possibly dangerous.

Those, however, who wish to have the privilege of issuing such an invitation, are not obliged to deprive themselves of the undoubted and material advantage of being able, when strong in Spades, to distinguish between a holding of short Spades (two or three) and of exactly four. They can convey to their partners that very important information by using the following system:—

THE BID	THE MEANING
Double of one Spade	A No-trump invitation. No information as to Spade strength
Two Spades	Short Spades with two high honors and one other trick
Three Spades	Four Spades with two high honors and one other trick
Four Spades	Same as bid of three Spades described immediately below

This system is entirely new, is somewhat complicated, and is suggested for what it is worth for those who wish, without Spade strength, to invite a No-trump.

As the bid of four Spades can be taken out by the partner with one Royal, the system is not subject to objection, on the ground that four Spades forces the partner to an unduly high declaration. The scheme is, as yet, merely an experiment, and of doubtful value except for the purpose of enabling a poor player to place with an expert partner the responsibility of the play.

It is not hereinafter referred to, but the suggestions made regarding Third and Fourth Hand bidding can be readily adapted to comply with its self-evident requirements.

THE BID OF THREE SPADES^[8]

The bid of three Spades when made by the Second Hand shows a holding of at least five (probably six) Spades, almost certainly without the Ace and probably without the King, but with some side strength. It says, "I want this hand played with Royals as the Trump, but I cannot bid that suit now, as I have not the requisite high-card holding. Either because the

rest of my hand is so strong that I fear neither the Third Hand nor my partner can bid, or for some other good reason, I prefer now, rather than later, to give my partner all possible information."

This system of bidding differentiates most accurately between the various lengths of Spade holdings and enables the partner to elect between No-trump and Royals, with an exact knowledge of the situation not otherwise obtainable.

HOW SECOND HAND SHOULD BID AFTER AN OFFENSIVE DECLARATION

When the Dealer has made an offensive declaration, the Second Hand must bear in mind that it is possible this may be his last opportunity to declare. A declaration under such circumstances being what is very properly termed "forced," is of a totally different character from the "free" declaration heretofore considered, and is not limited by any hard-and-fast rules as to the presence of certain cards. For example, should the Dealer bid one Royal, and the Second Hand hold seven Hearts, headed by Queen, Knave, he obviously must declare two Hearts; otherwise, even if the Fourth Hand hold the Ace and King of Hearts, and other strength, the declaration of one Royal might stand.

The principle is that an offensive bid having been made, the declaration of the player following does not of necessity show high cards, but does suggest the ability of the Declarer to successfully carry out the proposed contract.

When the Dealer has called a No-trump, the Second Hand is obliged either to pass, or declare two of some suit, or of No-trump. He must remember that against the Dealer's No-trump he is the leader, and as the information regarding his strong suit will be given to his partner by the first card played, it is not important that he convey it by a bid.

The No-trump may be only of minimum strength, but it may, on the other hand, be of much more than average calibre. The Third Hand has yet to be heard from, and if, as is possible, he have considerable strength in the suit that the Second Hand thinks of declaring, such a bid will offer an ideal opportunity for a profitable double. The Second Hand, therefore, should be somewhat diffident about bidding two in a suit. He should make the declaration only when his hand is so strong that in spite of the No-trump, there seems to be a good chance of scoring game, or he has reason to think he can force and defeat an adverse two No-trumps, or the No-trump bidder is a player who considers it the part of weakness to allow his declaration to be easily taken away, and can, therefore, be forced to dangerous heights.

This is an opportunity for the Second Hand to use all his judgment. The Dealer may be taking desperate chances with a weak No-trumper, and the balance of strength may be with his partner and himself, in which case it is important for him now to show his colors; yet he must always keep in mind that conservatism, in the long run, is the main factor of Auction success. It is the ability (possibly "instinct" is the proper term) to act wisely in such cases that makes a bidder seem inspired.

With a strong Club or Diamond holding and a reëntry, such a hand as, for example,—

Spades	Two small
Hearts	Two small
Diamonds	King, Queen, Knave, and two small
Clubs	Ace, Knave, Ten, Nine

it is generally unwise to bid Second Hand over one No-trump.

There is little danger of the adversaries going game in No-trumps, but they may easily do so in Hearts or Royals. A Second Hand declaration in this position may point out to the opponents their safest route to game, and is not apt to prove of material benefit, as with such hand, eleven tricks against a No-trump is extremely improbable.

A similar principle presents itself when the holding is five of any suit, headed by the four top honors, or even by the three top honors, and no other strength. With such cards, the No-trump can almost certainly be kept from going game, and if the partner be able to assist, the declaration may be defeated. If, however, two of that suit be called, the adversaries, not having it stopped, will not advance the No-trump, but if sufficiently strong, will declare some other suit in which they may score game.

THE SHIFT

Holding six or more of a suit, headed by Ace, King, Queen, some writers have very properly called it an Auction "crime" to double. The question arises, however, "What should the Second Hand do under such circumstances?" A bid of two in his solid suit will eliminate any chance of the No-trump being continued, and an adverse call of two No-trumps is just what the holder of the solid suit most desires, as he can double with comparative safety, being

assured both of the success of the double and of the improbability that the Declarer will be able to take himself out.

There has been suggested to meet this emergency a declaration called the "Shift." It consists in bidding two of a suit in which the Declarer has little or no strength. For this purpose a suit of lower value than the solid suit, should, if possible, be selected. The theory of the bid is that either the original No-trump declarer or his partner, having the suit securely stopped, will bid two No-trumps and that the double can then be effectively produced. The advocates of the Shift urge that should the worst happen, and the declaration be doubled, the player making it can then shift (this situation giving the declaration its name) to his real suit, and that no harm will ensue.

The trouble is that a double under such circumstances is not the worst that can happen. When the Shift was first suggested, players were not familiar with nor on the lookout for it. Success, or at least the absence of failure, therefore, often attended its use. Now, however, it is generally understood, and players will not either overbid or double a declarer they suspect of it. They merely allow him to meet his doom attempting, with weak Trumps, to win eight tricks against an adverse No-trumper.

While, therefore, at long intervals and under advantageous circumstances, the Shift may be successfully utilized, against experienced players it is a dangerous expedient, especially for any one known to be fond of that character of declaration.

The conservative and safe course to follow with a holding of the character described is to pass the one No-trump.

WHEN TO BID TWO NO-TRUMPS OVER ONE NO-TRUMP

The bid of two No-trumps over one No-trump is a more or less spectacular performance, that appeals to those fond of the theatrical. There are some hands that justify it, but it is safe to say that in actual play it is tried far more frequently than Second Hand holdings warrant.

Such a bid may be made with a strong suit—not of great length—and the three other suits safely stopped, with the four suits stopped twice, with a long solid Club or Diamond suit and two other suits stopped, or with some similar, and, under the circumstances, equally unusual combination.

HOW TO BID AGAINST TWO OR THREE SPADES

With two Spades bid by the Dealer, if the Second Hand have a suit he desires led against a No-trump, it is of the utmost importance that he indicate it to his partner.

Under such conditions, the Second Hand should declare a suit headed by King, Queen, Knave, or some similar combination, but should avoid bidding a long, weak suit, as the No-trump declarer may hold Ace, Queen of it, and the partner may, by the call, be invited to lead his King into the jaws of death. Of course, if the hand contain reëntries, it may be advisable to make such a bid, although even then it may advantageously be delayed until the second round, since against a two Spade declaration the Second Hand is sure of having another opportunity to speak.

With three Spades declared by the Dealer, the Second Hand expects a Royal from the Third Hand. He knows that he will have another chance to bid, but, as he will then probably have to go much higher, it is just as well not to wait if the hand contain any advantageous declaration.

WHEN TO BID NO-TRUMP OVER A SUIT

The question of what amount of strength warrants the Second Hand in bidding one No-trump, after a suit has been declared by the Dealer, is somewhat difficult to accurately answer. It goes without saying that to justify a No-trump under such circumstances, the Second Hand must have much better than merely an average holding. The suit that the Dealer has bid should be safely stopped, and when the declarer has only one trick in that suit, at least four other tricks should be in sight.

Occasionally cases arise in which the Second Hand may bid one No-trump over a suit declaration without the suit that has been declared being stopped, but these are rare and such a call should only be made with unusual strength, as it gives the partner the right to assume that the adverse suit is stopped and he may consequently advance the No-trump to dangerous figures.

It is probably a good rule that a No-trump should not be called over a declared suit, that suit not being stopped, with a holding of less than six sure tricks. Even with one stopper in the suit bid, it is generally better to declare either Royals or Hearts in preference to No-trump,

provided the hand contain sufficient length and strength to warrant such declaration.

IV

THIRD HAND DECLARATIONS

Third Hand declarations can best be considered by dividing them into three classes:—

1. When the Dealer has called one Spade, and the Second Hand passed.
2. When the Dealer has made an offensive declaration, and the Second Hand passed.
3. When the Second Hand has declared.

The distinction between these three situations is so clearly drawn that each is really a separate and distinct subject. They will be taken up *seriatim*.

WHEN THE DEALER HAS CALLED ONE SPADE, AND THE SECOND HAND PASSED

In the old days, when the Dealer's "one Spade" was without significance, the Third Hand was always obliged to declare, in order to give the Dealer the opportunity to get back into the game, as it was possible that he had great strength. Now the Third Hand recognizes that there is not the least obligation upon him to bid, and that it is inadvisable for him to do so unless his hand be so strong that, even with a weak partner, game is in sight, or unless it be important for him to indicate to the Dealer what to lead if the Fourth Hand make the final declaration.

Should the Third Hand pass, and the Fourth Hand also pass, allowing the one Spade declaration to stand, the liability of the Declarer cannot exceed 100 points, but if the Third Hand bid, the liability becomes unlimited. While the Dealer and Second Hand both have the right to assume that their partners have an average percentage of the remaining cards, the Third Hand is not justified in any such presumption, after the Dealer, by bidding one Spade, has virtually waved the red flag. True it is, a similar warning has appeared on the right, but if both danger signals are to be believed, the only inference is that the strength is massed on the left. The bidding by the Third Hand must, therefore, be of a very different character from that of the Dealer or Second Hand. He should not venture a No-trump unless he have four sure tricks with the probability of more and at least three suits stopped. When in doubt whether to declare No-trump or a suit, it is generally wise for him to select the latter.

Third Hand suit declarations should be made under either of two conditions:—

- (a) When the hand is so strong that there appears to be at least a fair chance for game with the suit he names as Trump.
- (b) When he expects a No-trump from the Fourth Hand and wishes to indicate to his partner the lead he desires.

In the former case, it is often good policy for the Third Hand to start with a bid of two. This serves a double purpose, as it shows the Dealer the character of the hand and helps to shut out an adverse declaration.

If the main idea of the bid be to indicate a lead, it is advisable to make it on the first round, when one can be called, rather than wait until it becomes necessary to bid two, which, against a No-trump, may prove dangerous. If the Third Hand have any such combination as King, Queen, Knave, with one or more others of that suit, and a reëtry, a declaration at this stage is most important, as unless the partner open that suit, it will probably never be established against a No-trump. Even if the long suit be headed by Queen, Knave, it may be important to show it, as the partner may hold an honor, in which case the suit may be quickly established. When the long suit is headed by a Knave, it should not be shown unless the hand contain more than one reëtry. It may be so necessary for the Third Hand, in the position under consideration, to indicate a lead that no absolute strength requirement, such as a fixed number of tricks, is essential for a bid. It frequently keeps the adverse No-trumper from going game to have the right suit called originally—otherwise, the Dealer has to lead his own suit, and when the Third Hand is without strength in it, such a lead greatly facilitates the Declarer.

WHEN THE DEALER HAS SHOWN STRENGTH AND THE SECOND HAND PASSED

One of the cardinal principles of harmonious team play is that when the partner has made a suit declaration which is apt to result in game, it is inadvisable to "take him out" merely with the hope of obtaining a slightly higher score. Suppose the partner has declared a Heart and the Third Hand holds three Hearts, headed by the Ace, four Clubs headed by the King, no Diamonds, and five Spades with three honors. Of course, the partner may have an honor and some other Spades, and, therefore, a bid of Royals may produce a higher count than Hearts, but that is only "may." The Declarer certainly has Heart strength, and the Third Hand, valuable assistance. It takes the same number of tricks to score game in each suit. Why, therefore, risk the game for a paltry addition to the trick and honor score?

One of the most remarkable features of Auction is the extraordinary desire, exhibited by a large percentage of players, to play the combined hands. This comment is not applicable to a strong player, who, for the good of the partnership, is anxious to get the declaration himself, in order that during the play two or three tricks may not be presented to the adversaries, but is intended for the general run of cases where the partners are of equal, or nearly equal, ability.

A player, before determining to overbid his partner's call, should remember that one of the greatest pleasures of the game is facing the Dummy, especially when the declaration is apt to be successful, and he should assure himself beyond peradventure that, in bidding his own suit in preference to advancing his partner's, he is not in any way influenced by his own selfish desires. He should be sure that, with the positions reversed, he would thoroughly approve of just such action by his partner; and, if his partner be the better player, he should also convince himself that his suit is at least two tricks stronger, as his partner's superior play probably makes a difference of at least one in favor of his declaration.

It should be put down as axiomatic that, when a partner takes out a Heart or Royal with a bid of another suit, he denies strength in the suit originally declared and announces great length with probably four honors in the suit he names; also, that when a Heart or Royal is taken out by a No-trump declaration (except with a four-Ace holding), not only is weakness in the declared suit announced, but also the fact that every other suit is safely stopped.

This must not be understood as a suggestion that a partner should seldom be overbid. Quite the reverse. The informatory school of modern bidding, which attempts, as nearly as possible, to declare the two hands as one, has as an essential feature the overbidding of the partner in an infinite number of cases. It is against the foolish and selfish instances which occur with great frequency that this protest is directed.

WHEN "TWO SPADES" HAS BEEN DECLARED

When the Dealer bids two Spades, he gives explicit information regarding the contents of his hand.^[9] The Third Hand is, therefore, practically in the position of having twenty-six cards spread before him, and the question of what he should declare is not apt to be at all confusing.

If his hand be trickless, or practically so, he must bid one Royal, as that reduces the commitment from two tricks to one, and increases the possible gain per trick from 2 points to 9.

It is a noncommittal bid, as it may be made with great weakness or moderate strength. With considerable Spade strength, however, two Royals should be declared.

When the Third Hand has other than Spade strength, he will, of course, bid in accordance with his holding, but it goes without saying that he should make the best possible use of the accurate information he has received. With four strong Spades, even with sufficient additional strength to justify a weak No-trump, a Royal is generally preferable, and with more than four Spades, two Royals is unquestionably the bid, regardless of the strength of the remainder of the hand, unless, of course, it contain the much looked for, but seldom found, four Aces.

WHEN "THREE SPADES" HAS BEEN DECLARED

When the Dealer has called three Spades, the Third Hand has quite accurate data with which to work.^[10] In this case, even if his hand be trickless, he must bid one Royal, as his partner's three Spades might otherwise be left in by the Fourth Hand. With some strength in other suits, one Royal is his bid, unless his cards justify him in telling the Dealer that, in spite of the announced long, weak Spades, the combined hands are apt to sail more smoothly and on more peaceful seas to the port called "Game" by the No-trump than by the suggested Royal route.

Should the Third Hand overbid three Spades with either Hearts, Diamonds, or Clubs, he shows great strength in the suit named and absolute weakness in Spades; the bid of two Royals shows assistance in Spades, and probably other strength.

WHEN "ONE CLUB" OR "ONE DIAMOND" HAS BEEN DECLARED

When the Dealer has called one Club or one Diamond, the Third Hand (the score being love) must realize that going game with the declaration made is most unlikely. He should, therefore, overbid it whenever he has sufficient strength to justify such action. With strong Hearts or Spades, he should bid Hearts or Royals; without such Heart or Spade strength, but with three tricks and two suits stopped, he should bid No-trump. In the rare case in which game seems probable with the Club or Diamond declaration, he should advance his partner's call to two or three.

WHEN "TWO DIAMONDS" OR "TWO CLUBS" HAS BEEN DECLARED

When the Dealer has called two Clubs or two Diamonds with the score at love, the Third Hand should allow the declaration to stand, unless his Heart or Spade holding be such that he believes, with the assistance of his partner's Club or Diamond suit, he may win the game; or unless able to bid two No-trumps. With the information that his partner has an established suit, it does not require much strength to justify the two No-trumps call. With all the other suits stopped, no matter how weakly, the bid is imperative. With two securely stopped, it is advisable, but with only one stopped, it is entirely out of the question.

With a score in the trick column, the Third Hand will treat either a one or two Club or Diamond declaration just as, with the score at love, he treats a similar call in Hearts or Royals.

WHEN "ONE HEART" OR "ONE ROYAL" HAS BEEN DECLARED

When the Dealer bids one Heart or one Royal, the Third Hand should not overbid unless without strength in the declaration. By this is meant not only the absence of high cards, but also the absence of length. With four small Hearts or Spades, and that suit bid by the Dealer, it is almost invariably the part of wisdom to allow it to remain.

The Third Hand should bid one Royal over one Heart, or two Hearts over one Royal with strength sufficient to justify an original call in that suit, and distinct weakness in the partner's declaration. The theory is that the Third Hand knows he cannot help his partner's declaration, while it is possible his partner may help him.

When the Third Hand has such strength in Hearts or Royals that he would advance his partner's declaration of either, in the event of an adverse bid, it is wise for him to bid two on the first round, in order, if possible, to shut out such adverse declaration and the information thereby given to the leader.

The Third Hand should call two Diamonds or Clubs over one Heart or Royal when he holds a long and practically solid suit. The original bidder can then use his judgment whether to let this declaration stand, continue his own, or try two No-trumps.

With a score, two Clubs or Diamonds may be bid more freely over the partner's Heart or Royal.

The Third Hand should not bid a No-trump over the Dealer's Heart or Royal, unless he have the three remaining suits safely stopped, or his hand contain solid Diamonds or Clubs, and one other suit stopped.

WHEN "TWO HEARTS" OR "TWO ROYALS" HAS BEEN DECLARED

The declaration of two Hearts or two Royals is practically a command to the partner not to alter the call. It indicates at least six sure tricks, probably more, and a valuable honor count, in the Declarer's hand, provided the suit named be the Trump. The Third Hand should only change such a declaration when convinced beyond reasonable doubt that his holding is so unusual that he is warranted in assuming the responsibility of countermanding the order that has issued.

Weakness in the Trump and strength in some other suit is far from being a sufficient justification, as the chances are that the Dealer is weak in the suit of the Third Hand, and called "two" mainly for the purpose of keeping it from being named. To overbid two Royals or Hearts with three Diamonds or Clubs is obviously absurd, unless holding *five honors* and such other strength that game is assured.

To overbid two Hearts with two Royals, or two Royals with three Hearts, is almost tantamount to saying, "Partner, I know you are trying to shut out this declaration, but I am strong enough to insist upon it." Such action is only justified by 64 or 72 honors, and a sure game.

To overbid two Hearts or two Royals with two No-trumps, as a rule, means 100 Aces. High-

card strength assures the game in the partner's call with probably a big honor score; only the premium of 100 makes the change advisable.

With strength, in the case under consideration, the Third Hand should advance his partner's call with much greater confidence than if it were an ordinary bid of one. He should not worry even if absolutely void of Trumps; in that suit his partner has announced great length as well as commanding cards; Aces and Kings of the other suits are what the Declarer wishes to find in his hand, and with them he should bid fearlessly.

The same line of comment applies with even greater force to the action of the Third Hand when the Dealer has bid three Royals or three Hearts.

WHEN TO OVERBID A PARTNER'S NO-TRUMP

When the Dealer bids one No-trump and the Third Hand holds five or more of any suit, one of the most disputed questions of Auction presents itself.

The conservative player believes that with five Hearts or Spades, inasmuch as but one more trick is required to secure game, it is safer to bid two Hearts or Royals, except, of course, when the Third Hand, in addition to a five-card suit, has the three remaining suits stopped. The theory is that if the combined hands are very strong, the winning of the game is absolutely assured with the suit in question the Trump, but may possibly be lost in the No-trump by the adversaries running a long suit. The chance of a hostile suit being established is unquestionably worthy of the consideration of the Third Hand whenever, with great strength in Hearts or Spades, he allows his partner's No-trump to stand. Five adverse tricks prevent a game. In the majority of cases, the leader opens a five-card suit. When it is not stopped, the game is saved by the adversaries before the powerful No-trump hand can get in; if it be stopped but once, the game is still in grave danger unless the Declarer take nine tricks before losing the lead.

With a Heart or Royal declaration the adversaries are not apt to take more than two tricks in their long suit, which, at No-trumps, may produce four or five (in rare cases six), and yet the Trump bid requires only one more trick for game.

It is unquestionably true that, with great strength, the game will be won nine times out of ten with the No-trump declaration, but in every such case it is absolutely "cinched" by the Heart or Royal call.

It is further argued that, when the combined hands are not quite so strong, a game is more frequently won with the Trump declaration, as the small Trumps are sure to take tricks, but the long suit may not be established in the No-trumper.

The believers in taking a chance, however, view the situation from the opposite standpoint. Their argument is that the game requires one more trick, when a Trump is declared, but does not count as much, that the original declarer may be weak in the suit named, yet strong in all the others, and therefore, with a good hand, it is wiser to leave the No-trump alone.

It is possible that the question is one rather of the temperament of the player than of card judgment. It is susceptible of almost mathematical deduction that five or more cards of a long suit are of greater trick-taking value when that suit is the Trump than when No-trump is being played, and it does not require any argument to substantiate the proposition that the slight difference in the score, between the total in the trick and honor columns netted from a game made without a Trump and a game made with Royals or Hearts, is so infinitesimal as not to be worthy of consideration. Nevertheless, players possessed of a certain temperament will, for example, refuse to overbid a partner's No-trump with Ace, King, Ten, and two small Spades, King of Hearts, and Ace of Diamonds, on the ground that the hand is too strong, although the No-trump bid may have been thoroughly justified by such a holding as Ace, Queen, Knave, of Hearts; King, Queen, Knave, of Diamonds; and Queen, Knave, of Spades. In that event it is practically sure the adversaries will open the Club suit and save the game before the Declarer has a chance to win a trick. This and similar situations occur with sufficient frequency to make them well worthy of consideration, and when such a hand fails to make game, it certainly seems to be a perfect example of what might be termed "useless sacrifice."

In spite of all this, however, probably as long as the game lasts, in the large proportion of hands in which the taking-out does not make any difference, the Declarer will say, "With such strength you should have let my No-trump alone"; or the Dummy will learnedly explain, "I was too strong to take you out."

It would be in the interest of scientific play, if, except when all suits are stopped, the theory, "Too strong to take the partner out of the No-trump," had never been conceived, and would never again be advanced.

The same comment applies with equal force to the remark so often heard, "Partner, I was too weak to take you out."

This generally emanates from a Third Hand who has a five- or six-card suit in a trickless hand. He does not stop to realize that his hand will not aid his partner's No-trump to the extent of a single trick, but that in a Trump declaration, it will almost certainly take two tricks. The Trump bid only increases the commitment by one, so it is obviously a saving and advantageous play. Furthermore, it prevents the adversaries from running a long suit. It, also, in Clubs and Diamonds, is a real danger signal, and, in the probable event of a bid by the Fourth Hand, warns the partner away from two No-trumps.

The advocates of the weakness take-out realize that in exceptional instances the play may result most unfortunately. When the Dealer has called a border-line No-trump, without any strength in the suit named by the Third Hand, and one of the adversaries has great length and strength in that suit, a heavy loss is bound to ensue, which may be increased 100 by the advance of the bid from one to two. This case is, indeed, rare, and when it does turn up the chances are that the Declarer will escape a double, as the holder of the big Trumps will fear the Dealer may be able to come to the rescue if he point out the danger by doubling the suit call.

The fact, however, that a play at times works badly is not a sufficient argument against its use, if in the majority of cases it prove advantageous, and that is unquestionably true of the weakness take-out.

The strength take-out, above advocated, applies only to Spades and Hearts. With Diamonds and Clubs, at a love score, the distance to go for game is in most cases too great to make it advisable, but the weakness take-out should be used equally with any one of the four suits, as it is a defensive, not an offensive, declaration. With a score, Clubs and Diamonds possess the same value that Hearts and Spades have at love, and should be treated similarly.

WHEN TO OVERBID WITH STRONG CLUBS

The question of whether the Third Hand, with strong Clubs, should overbid his partner's No-trump has aroused considerable discussion. The argument in favor of such a declaration in Clubs, which does not apply to any other suit, is that the difference between a strength and a weakness overbid can be made apparent by calling three and two respectively, and yet the show of strength will not force the Dealer higher than two No-trumps, when his hand is such that the announcement that the Third Hand holds strong Clubs, but nothing else, makes the return to No-trump advisable.

On this basis of reasoning some believe in calling three Clubs whenever an otherwise trickless Third Hand contains five or more Clubs headed by Ace, King, Queen. This, it is conceded, only results advantageously when the No-trump has been called with one suit unguarded, and Clubs is one of the protected suits. When the No-trump has been declared with such a hand as

Spades	Ace, King, X
Hearts	X
Diamonds	Ace, King, Knave, X, X
Clubs	Knave, Ten, X, X

the employment of such a system of declaration is exceptionally advantageous; as the game is assured in Clubs, while if the No-trump be left in, the adversaries will probably save it by making all their Hearts before the Declarer secures the lead.

It is admitted that this case is somewhat unusual, but the advocates of the system, conceding this, argue it is advantageous to have this bid in the repertory, and, in the exceptional instance, to obtain the benefit, which is bound to ensue from its use. The contention is that it can do no harm, with such a Club holding, to force the partner to two No-trumps, if he have all the other suits stopped, and the fact that three Clubs is called with strength more clearly accentuates the principle that the two Club takeout means nothing but weakness.

Admitting the force of this argument, and conceding that the system advocated should be universally adopted were there not a wiser use for the three Club take-out, first brings forth the question of whether the case does not more frequently arise in which the long Club holding of the Third Hand is headed by King and Queen, and is it not much more probable, when the Third Hand has *long* Clubs, that the No-trump maker has the suit stopped with the Ace than with *four* headed by Knave, Ten?

It must be remembered that the three Club take-out with Ace, King, Queen, at the head of five or more, is only advantageous when the No-trump has been called with a hand in which only three suits are stopped, of which the Club is one. If the Club be the suit unstopped, the call merely forces an advance in the No-trump.

If, however, the convention be to use three Clubs to overbid the partner's No-trump only when holding an otherwise trickless hand which contains either at least five Clubs headed by King, Queen, Knave, or at least six headed by King, Queen, would not the number of

instances in which the call proves of benefit appreciably increase, and would not every reason applicable in the former case be even more forceful in the latter?

It cannot be questioned that the partner having called No-trump, the Third Hand is more likely to hold either five Clubs headed by King, Queen, Knave, or six headed by King, Queen, than five or more headed by Ace, King, Queen. The greater probability that the Dealer will have the Ace than four headed by Knave, Ten, is just as obvious.

Take such a No-trump declaration as

Spades	Ace, King, Knave
Hearts	X, X
Diamonds	Ace, King, Knave, X, X
Clubs	Ace, X, X

and the advantage of the proposed system becomes apparent. The game, which is almost sure to be lost by the Heart lead in No-trump, becomes almost a certainty with Clubs Trump. When this plan is used and the Dealer has the other suits stopped but has not the Ace of Clubs, he can easily decide whether to go to two No-trumps, as he can estimate from the length of his Club holding whether he can establish the long Clubs or the adverse Ace will block the suit. When the latter is the case, he should not bid two No-trumps unless his own hand justify it, as the Third Hand has announced the absence of a reëtry.

Take such a No-trump declaration as

Spades	Ace
Hearts	Ace, King, X
Diamonds	Ace, King, X, X, X, X
Clubs	X, X, X

and suppose the Third Hand hold one or two small Diamonds; six Clubs, headed by King, Queen, Knave, and no other face card.

In such a case Clubs is the call most likely to produce game.

Another and possibly the wisest theory of the three Club take-out, is that it should be reserved, not for any one particular holding which may not occur once in a year, but for any hand in which the Declarer wishes to say, "Partner, my cards are such that I believe we can go game in Clubs; with this information, use your judgment as to whether or not to return to your more valuable declaration."

A NEW PLAN FOR OVERBIDDING

In this connection, a new scheme of take-out is respectfully called to the attention of the thoughtful and studious Auction players of the country. It is not in general use, is not recognized as conventional, has never been given a satisfactory trial, and is, therefore, suggested merely as an experiment worthy of consideration.

The idea is that when a partner has called one No-trump, Second Hand having passed, the Third Hand with five or more Spades or Hearts, unless he have four suits stopped, should bid his long suit in the following manner: if the hand be weak, the bid should be two; if strong, three. This warns the Dealer, when two is called, to let the declaration alone, as it is defensive.

On the other hand, when three is bid, the Dealer knows that his partner is strong, and he may then use his judgment as to the advisability of allowing the bid to stand or going back to the No-trump, which he can do without increasing the number of tricks of the commitment.

It must be remembered that, with great strength, it is as easy to make three No-trumps as one, three are needed for game, and, therefore, nothing is lost by the expedient.

Playing under this system, should the Third Hand hold four or five honors in his suit, and earnestly desire to play it for the honor score, it would be a perfectly legitimate strategy to deceive the partner temporarily by bidding two, instead of three.

WHEN TO OVERBID ONE NO-TRUMP WITH TWO NO-TRUMPS

When the Dealer has bid one No-trump and the Second Hand passed, the Third Hand, much more frequently than most players imagine, should call two No-trumps. It must be remembered that should the Third Hand pass, the Fourth Hand can, by bidding two of a suit, indicate to his partner the lead he desires. This places the adversaries in a much more advantageous position than if the leader open his own suit without information from his partner. The bid of two No-trumps by the Third Hand generally prevents the Fourth Hand from declaring, as it necessitates a call of three, which, sitting between two No-trump

bidders, is, in most cases, too formidable a contract to undertake.

It is, therefore, advisable for the Third Hand, on the first round, to advance, from one to two, his partner's No-trump declaration, in every instance in which, in the event of an adverse bid, he is strong enough to call two No-trumps. This convention, while as yet comparatively new, and, therefore, but little used, works most advantageously, as it frequently shuts out the only lead which can keep the No-trump from going game. It is important for every player to understand the scheme, and never to overlook an opportunity to make the declaration.

WHAT THIRD HAND SHOULD BID WHEN SECOND HAND HAS DECLARED

This situation involves so many possibilities that it is hard to cover it with fixed rules.

The Third Hand in this position should reason in very much the same manner as the Second Hand, after the Dealer has made a declaration showing strength.^[11] There is this distinct difference, however: in the case of the Second Hand, he only knows that the Dealer has sufficient strength to declare, and is without any means, other than the doctrine of chances, of estimating the strength of his partner's hand. The Third Hand, however, in the situation under consideration, is not only advised that one adversary has sufficient strength to declare, but also knows whether his partner's cards justify an initial bid. When the Dealer has shown strength, he can be counted upon for at least the minimum that his bid has evidenced; when he has called "one Spade," it would not be wise to expect him to win more than one trick.

The Third Hand should consider these features of the situation, and satisfy himself, when his partner has not shown strength, that he is taking a wise risk in bidding over an adverse declaration. To justify a call of No-trump over a Trump, he should either have the declared suit stopped twice or, if it be stopped but once, he should also have solid Clubs or Diamonds. When the Dealer has declared Hearts or Royals, and the Second Hand made a higher suit call, it is, as a rule, wiser for the Third Hand to advance his partner's declaration than to venture a No-trump unless he have the adverse suit stopped twice.

When the Dealer has bid No-trump and the Second Hand two of any suit, the Third Hand should not bid two No-trump unless he have the declared suit stopped and at least one other trick. Without the declared suit stopped, he should not bid two No-trump unless his hand be so strong that he can figure with almost positive certainty that the No-trump bid of his partner could not have been made without the adverse suit being stopped. When in doubt, under such conditions, as to the advisability of either bidding two No-trumps or some suit, the latter policy is generally the safer.

When the Dealer has called No-trump and the Second Hand two of a suit, the Third Hand must realize that his partner has already been taken out, and therefore, under no circumstances, should he bid in this situation, except for the purpose of showing strength; or with the conviction that, aided by his partner's No-trump, he can fulfil the contract he is proposing. For example, Dealer bids one No-trump; Second Hand, two Royals; Third Hand holds six Hearts, headed by the Knave, without another trick. Under these conditions, a Heart bid would be most misleading, and probably most damaging. The Dealer may not be able to help the Heart declaration, and he may very properly be encouraged by it to believe that the Third Hand has considerable strength, especially in Hearts, but is very weak in Spades. If, in consequence of this supposed information, he return to his No-trump declaration, or double an adverse three Royals, the result is apt to be extremely disastrous.

The Third Hand must distinguish this case carefully from the situation in which the Dealer has bid one No-trump and the Second Hand passed. With the combination mentioned, he should then, of course, most unhesitatingly take out his partner by bidding two Hearts; that bid, under such circumstances, not showing strength.

Another situation that arises more frequently than would be supposed, and the advantage of which it is most important for the Third Hand to grasp, is when the Dealer has bid No-trump; the Second Hand, two of a suit; and the Third Hand, without the adverse suit stopped, holds great strength in Clubs, with such a hand that he desires his partner to go to two No-trumps; provided he have the adversaries' suit stopped. The bid of three Clubs does not increase the No-trump commitment which the partner is obliged to make, and is much safer than for the Third Hand to bid two No-trumps without the adverse suit stopped. It is a suggestion to the partner to bid two No-trumps, provided he can take care of the suit which the Second Hand has declared.

FOURTH HAND DECLARATIONS

Some of the principles that have been considered in connection with certain Second and Third Hand bids are also applicable to similar Fourth Hand declarations. These are easily pointed out, but the bidding by the Fourth Hand presents other problems much more difficult.

Each player who has an opportunity to declare materially complicates the situation, and makes it harder to accurately describe. As three players declare or pass before the Fourth Hand has his turn, it is almost impossible to anticipate every contingency that may arise. The best that can be done is to subdivide Fourth Hand declarations as follows:—

1. When the Dealer's defensive declaration has been the only bid.
2. When the only offensive declaration has been made by the Dealer.
3. When the only offensive declaration has been made by the Second Hand.
4. When the only offensive declaration has been made by the Third Hand.
5. When the Dealer has made a defensive, and both the Second and Third Hand, offensive declarations.
6. When the Dealer and Second Hand have made offensive declarations and the Third Hand passed.
7. When the Dealer and Third Hand have made offensive declarations, and the Second Hand passed.
8. When all three players have made offensive declarations.

1. WHEN THE DEALER'S DEFENSIVE DECLARATION HAS BEEN THE ONLY BID

As a general rule, when this situation arises, the Fourth Hand holds a combination of cards which makes his bid unmistakable. The other three players having shown weakness, or, at least, the absence of offensive strength, the Fourth Hand almost invariably has a No-trumper of such strength that his pathway is plain. Of course, his hand may, by reason of Spade or Heart length, call for a Royal or Heart declaration in preference to a No-trumper, but nevertheless, under these circumstances, it is generally easy for the Fourth Hand to declare.

When, however, the exceptional case occurs, in which the Fourth Hand finds himself, no previous offensive declaration having been made, without a plainly indicated bid, it is difficult to lay down a rule for his guidance. Three players have shown weakness, and yet his cards assure him that one or more of them is either unduly cautious, has passed by mistake, or is trying to deceive. If the strength be with his partner, it may be that, by passing, he will lose an opportunity to secure the game. On the other hand, if the adversaries have the winning cards, he may, by declaring, allow them to make a game declaration, whereas they are now limited to an infinitesimal score.

He must also consider that, should he pass, the maximum he and his partner can secure is 100 points in the honor column. This is a position to which conventional rules cannot apply. The individual characteristics of the players must be considered. The Fourth Hand must guess which of the three players is the most apt to have been cautious, careless, or "foxy," and he should either pass or declare, as he decides whether it is more likely that his partner or one of the two adversaries is responsible for his predicament.

It sometimes, although rarely, happens that the strength not in the Fourth Hand is so evenly divided that no one of the three has been justified in making an offensive declaration, and yet the Fourth Hand is not very strong. When this occurs, a clever player can as a rule readily and accurately diagnose it from the character of his hand, and he should then pass, as he cannot hope to make game on an evenly divided hand, while as it stands he has the adversaries limited to a score of 2 points for each odd trick, yet booked for a loss of 50 if they fail to make seven tricks; 100, if they do not make six. In other words, they are betting 25 to 1 on an even proposition. Such a position is much too advantageous to voluntarily surrender.

It is hardly conceivable that any one would advocate that a Fourth Hand player with a sure game in his grasp, instead of scoring it, should allow the adverse "one Spade" to stay in for the purpose of securing the 100 bonus.

Inasmuch, however, as this proposition has been advanced by a prominent writer, it is only fair that its soundness should be analyzed.

The argument is that the score which is accumulated in going game is generally

considerably less than 100, averaging not over 60, and that, therefore, the bonus of 100 is more advantageous. The example is given of a pair who adopted these tactics, and on one occasion gathered eight successive hundreds in this manner, eventually obtaining a rubber of approximately 1150 points instead of one of about 350.

The answer to any such proposition is so self-evident that it is difficult to understand how it can be overlooked. It is true that a game-going hand does not average over 60 points, which is 40 less than 100, but a game is half of a rubber. Winning a rubber is worth 250, without considering the 250 scored by the adversaries, if they win. A game, at its lowest valuation, is, therefore, worth 125 plus 60, or 85 more than the 100.

Examining the case cited, it will be seen that even had the pair, who are so highly praised for their self-control in scoring eight hundred before going game, known that for ten successive hands they would hold all the cards, and, therefore, that they had nothing to fear from adverse rubber scores of 250, they, nevertheless, made but poor use of their wonderful opportunities. If, instead of accumulating that 800, they had elected to win five rubbers, they would have tallied at the most moderate estimate five times 350, or 1750, in place of the 1150 of which they boast.

If, however, during that run of luck the adversaries had held two game hands—say, the 5th and 10th, the exponents of self-control would have made on the ten hands about 450 points, instead of approximately 1350, which would have been secured by players who realized the value of a game.

In the event of an even and alternate division of game hands, the non-game winners at the end of twelve hands would have lost three rubbers and won none, as compared with an even score had they availed themselves of their opportunities.

It is, therefore, easily seen that the closer the investigation, the more apparent becomes the absurdity of the doctrine that it is advantageous to sacrifice a game for a score of 100.

2. WHEN THE ONLY OFFENSIVE DECLARATION HAS BEEN MADE BY THE DEALER

In this case the Fourth Hand, before making a declaration in any manner doubtful, should remember that his partner has, by failing to declare, announced that he has not sufficient strength to overbid the Dealer. This does not, however, signify that he has a trickless hand, and the Fourth Hand may even yet count upon him for some support. There are two features—both of importance—one weighing in favor, the other against, a declaration under these circumstances. One is, that the strength being over the Fourth Hand, he is placed in the worst possible position in the play, and there is more probability of his being doubled than under any other conditions. If he be doubled, it is not likely that his partner can take him out or prove of material assistance, as the double is apt to come in the case in which the partner has passed with a practically trickless hand.

On the other hand, the lead is with the partner, and especially when a No-trump has been declared, it may be of great advantage to indicate the suit which should be led. The Fourth Hand should, therefore, if possible avoid placing a large bonus in the adversaries' column, yet he should not hesitate to take a chance when his hand indicates that the lead of a certain suit will be likely to save game.

In the event of a Dealer's declaration which is not apt to produce game coming up to the Fourth Hand, he should pass, unless his holding convince him that he will be able to go game should he declare.

3. WHEN THE ONLY OFFENSIVE DECLARATION HAS BEEN MADE BY THE SECOND HAND

In this situation the Fourth Hand is in much the same position as the Third Hand when the Dealer has made an offensive declaration, and the Second Hand passed.^[12] The only difference is that the Fourth Hand knows that both of the adversaries are apparently weak, whereas in the previous case the Third Hand had that information as to only one. The Fourth Hand can, therefore, act much more freely, and should, if in any way possible, increase a declaration which is not apt to result in game to one of the three game-producing bids. At a love score, a Club or Diamond declaration should be allowed to stand in two cases only:—

(a) Weakness, which does not make any further declaration reasonable.

(b) A combination of cards which makes it probable the Club or Diamond call will result in game.

When the Second Hand has declared No-trump, Royals, or Hearts, his bid should be accorded exactly the same treatment that a similar call of the Dealer receives from the Third Hand.^[13]

Neither a two nor three Spade declaration made by the partner should under any circumstances, be passed. In these cases, the Fourth Hand can have little doubt what course to pursue. His partner's hand is spread before him almost as clearly as if exposed upon the table.^[14] With weakness, or with a moderate hand, he should bid one Royal, this being merely a takeout, and not giving any indication of strength. In this position he is placed in the same situation as the Third Hand when the Dealer has made a similar declaration,^[15] and these two propositions are the only instances in the modern game of Auction where a player without strength is required to assume the offensive. No matter how weak the hand may be, the Fourth Hand must declare one Royal, so as to reduce the contract, and also to increase the advantage obtained from its fulfillment. The partner must read "one Royal" to be an indication of weakness, or, at least, not a showing of strength.

With Spade length or strength, the Fourth Hand, especially in the case of the three Spade declaration, should bid two Royals. If he declare anything but Royals, he says to the partner, "I realize perfectly what you have, but my hand convinces me that the declaration I am making will be more advantageous than the one you have suggested."

In the event of one Spade doubled coming to the Fourth Hand, he is also accurately informed as to his partner's holding, and suggestion.^[16] In this case, it is the rare hand which does not warrant an offensive declaration.

It is not so great an advantage for the Fourth Hand to call two No-trumps over one No-trump declared by the Second Hand as it is for the Third Hand to similarly overbid the Dealer.^[17] The reason for this is, that the main purpose of this overbid by the Third Hand is to prevent the Fourth Hand from indicating the suit he desires his partner to lead, but the Dealer, having already declared weakness, is not so likely to be able to make a bid which will in any way interfere with the success of a No-trumper. It is, however, not at all impossible that a declaration of the Dealer's long weak suit, especially when the Second Hand has an honor or two of it, may be awkward for the No-trump declarer, and therefore, with the holding which justifies it, the bid of two No-trumps, under these conditions, is distinctly commendable.

4. WHEN THE ONLY OFFENSIVE DECLARATION HAS BEEN MADE BY THE THIRD HAND

In this position the Fourth Hand is informed of his partner's weakness. This weakness is probably quite pronounced, as the Second Hand has passed the Dealer's defensive declaration, and although it is doubtless reasonable for the Fourth Hand even yet to count upon his partner for one trick, he certainly would not be justified in expecting much greater aid. It is a place for caution; although he is in the advantageous position of sitting over the adverse strength, he should bid only if he see a fair chance for game, or think his hand is such that he may safely attempt to force the adversary.

5. WHEN THE DEALER HAS MADE A DEFENSIVE, AND BOTH THE SECOND AND THIRD HANDS OFFENSIVE, DECLARATIONS

In this situation, the Fourth Hand comes more nearly within the category of a second round, or late bidder; that is, he is in the position in which a player often finds himself when, after some bidding in which he has not participated, he is in doubt whether he has sufficient strength to advance his partner's declaration.

Under such circumstances, a player should always remember that his partner has counted upon him for a certain percentage of high cards. If he have not more than that percentage, it would be the part of extreme folly for him to declare. When the partner has made a suit declaration, and he has weakness in the suit, but some strength elsewhere, he should be especially careful, and, before bidding, convince himself that his side strength is more than his partner expected. Advancing a partner's suit bid by reason of strength in other suits, while, when the strength warrants it, unquestionably sound, is apt to deceive the partner, as his first thought necessarily is that the bid indicates help in the suit declared.

When the partner has declared No-trump, and the Third Hand has called two in a suit, the Fourth Hand is in much the same position regarding the advancement of his partner's No-trumper as the Third Hand when the Dealer bids a No-trump, and the Second Hand, two of a suit.^[18] The only difference is that in this case there is little probability of high-card strength being developed on the left.

6. WHEN THE DEALER AND SECOND HAND HAVE MADE OFFENSIVE DECLARATIONS, AND THE THIRD HAND PASSED

It is an exceptional hand which justifies taking the partner out of a suit declaration, called over a No-trump bid by the Dealer. The partner has the advantage of sitting over the Dealer, while the Dealer would have this same advantage should the Fourth Hand declare some other suit.

In this position the partner having bid two Clubs or Diamonds, the Fourth Hand, with the other three suits stopped, is justified in assuming that the original No-trump was made with the minimum strength, and the chance of game, as the declaration stands, being remote, should try a bid of two No-trumps.

When the Dealer has declared a suit, and the Second Hand, No-trump, the Fourth Hand should overbid the Second with a suit declaration (except, of course, in the almost inconceivable case in which the strength of the Fourth Hand is in the suit named by the Dealer), with the same holding that the Third Hand is justified in overbidding the Dealer's No-trump.^[19]

7. WHEN THE DEALER AND THIRD HAND HAVE MADE OFFENSIVE DECLARATIONS AND THE SECOND HAND PASSED

In this case, both adversaries having shown strength, and the partner weakness, it is dangerous for the Fourth Hand to declare, and he should do so only when his holding convinces him that his declaration is not likely to be successfully doubled.

8. WHEN ALL THREE PLAYERS HAVE MADE OFFENSIVE DECLARATIONS

This case is entirely analogous to the second round or late bidding, and is covered under the head of CONTINUATION OF THE BIDDING.

VI

CONTINUATION OF THE BIDDING

After the completion of the first round, the situation of the bidder becomes so complex that it is most difficult to apply general rules. Some principles, however, should be borne in mind.

Bidding one Spade, or passing, places a player with two tricks in a position to increase his partner's call; but when a bidder has already shown the full strength, or practically the full strength, of his hand, he should not, under any circumstances, advance either his own or his partner's declaration. The temptation to disregard this rule is at times exceedingly strong. For example, the dealer declares one Heart, holding King, Queen, at the top of five Hearts, and the Ace of Spades. The partner calls one No-trump, and the Fourth Hand, two Royals. In such case, the original Heart bidder frequently advances the No-trump to two, because he has the adverse suit stopped, without considering that his partner, in bidding one No-trump, counted upon him for either that Ace of Spades, or the equivalent strength, and, therefore, he should leave the question of the continuance of the No-trump to the player who knows its exact strength.

Another example of this proposition may be worthy of consideration. The dealer holds

Spades	X, X, X
Hearts	Ace, X
Diamonds	King, Knave, Ten, X, X
Clubs	X, X, X

He bids one Diamond; Second Hand, pass; Third Hand, one Heart; Fourth Hand, one Royal.

In this position a thoughtless player might call two Hearts, but such a declaration would greatly exaggerate the value of the hand. The dealer by his first bid has announced his ability to take at least three tricks if Diamonds be Trump, and at least two tricks if the deal be played without a Trump. His hand justifies such a call, but that is all; having declared his full strength, his lips must thereafter be sealed.

His partner is already counting upon him for two high-card tricks, which is the maximum his hand can possibly produce; should he call two Hearts on the basis of the Ace, the original Heart bidder would expect assistance to the extent of at least three tricks. He might receive only one.

If, however, the dealer's hand be

Spades	X
Hearts	X, X, X, X

Diamonds	King, Knave, Ten, X, X
Clubs	Ace, X, X

a very different proposition presents itself. While this combination, had No-trump been called, would not be stronger than the other and should not advance the bid, with Hearts Trump it is a most valuable assistant, and being worth at least three tricks, is fully warranted in calling at least two Hearts.

The fact that it contains four Hearts is one material element of strength and the singleton Spade is another, neither of which has been announced by the original call.

One of the most difficult tasks of the bidder is to accurately estimate the number of tricks the combined hands of his partnership can reasonably be expected to win. It sometimes occurs, especially in what are known as "freak" hands, that one pair can take most of the tricks with one suit declaration, while with another, their adversaries can be equally successful. This is most apt to happen in two-suit hands, or when length in Trumps is coupled with a cross-ruff. In the ordinary run of evenly divided hands, there is not such great difference in the trick-taking ability of two declarations. The player who, except with an extraordinary hand, commits his side to ten or eleven tricks, after the adversaries have shown that with another declaration they do not expect to lose more than two or three, is extremely venturesome, and apt to prove a dangerous partner. In normal deals, a change in the Trump suit does not produce a shift of seven or eight tricks.

WHEN TO ADVANCE THE BID

It is frequently most difficult for a bidder to determine whether he is justified in advancing his own or his partner's declaration, and when in doubt it is generally better to err on the side of conservatism.

The continuation of a No-trump without the adverse suit thoroughly guarded is most dangerous, and should be risked only when the Declarer is convinced beyond doubt that his holding justifies it, or when the partner has shown that he can stop the threatening suit.

When the partner, either as Dealer or Second Hand, has declared one No-trump, the bid has unquestionably been based upon the expectation of average assistance, and unless able to furnish more, a higher call should not be made. If, however, the partner bid twice, without aid, two tricks unquestionably justifies assisting once.

The minimum trick-taking ability with which an original suit declaration is made being appreciably greater than the number of tricks contained in a border-line No-trumper, the former should be assisted with less strength than is required to advance the latter. With two sure tricks the partner's suit call should be helped once by a player who has not declared, but whether a No-trump should be aided with just two tricks and no chance of more is a question depending upon the judgment of the bidder and upon whether one of the tricks is in the adverse suit. With two sure high-card tricks and a five-card suit, but without the adverse suit guarded, the five-card suit is generally the call, especially if two in it will be sufficient. Three Clubs, however, should not be declared without due consideration, as that declaration is recognized as demanding two No-trumps from the partner if he have the adverse suit stopped.

Being void or holding only a singleton of a suit, especially if it be the suit declared by the adversary, is to be considered in reckoning the trick-taking value of a hand which contemplates assisting a partner's Trump declaration. For example, four small Hearts, the Ace and three other Clubs, and five small Diamonds, when the partner has called one Heart, are worth three or four tricks, although the hand contains but one Ace and no face card. Holding such a combination, a partner's bid of one Heart should be advanced at least twice.

When a declaration by the dealer is followed by two passes and an overbid by the right-hand adversary, the dealer is frequently placed in a doubtful position as to whether he should advance his own bid. Some authorities contend that with less than six tricks he should wait for his partner, and while no inflexible rule can be made to cover all such cases, the follower of this proposition has probably adopted the safest guide.

When the original call has been one No-trump, it is the part of wisdom with less than six tricks, even if the adverse suit be stopped twice, to give the partner a chance. If he can furnish more than two tricks, he will declare, and the Dealer can then, if he so desire, continue the No-trump, but to bid without first hearing from the partner is obviously venturesome. If the Dealer have five tricks, that is enough to save game, but is three tricks short of making two No-trumps.

When the Dealer has declared a strong No-trump with one unprotected suit and his right-hand adversary calls two in that suit, it is manifestly unwise to continue the No-trump. Holding six sure tricks in a higher-valued suit or seven in a lower, it is probably wise to bid two or three, as the exigencies of the case may require, in that suit.

In close cases, when advancing or declining to advance the partner's bid, the personal equation should be a most important, if not the deciding, factor. Some players are noted for their reckless declaring; with such a partner the bidding must be ultra-conservative. Other players do not regard conventional rules in their early declarations. The bids of a partner of this kind should not be increased unless the hand contain at least one trick more than the number that normally would justify an advance.

When playing against a bidder who has the habit of overbidding, full advantage should be taken of his weakness, and whenever possible he should be forced to a high contract he may be unable to fulfil.

When a dealer who has opened with one Spade, or any other player who has passed the first round, subsequently enters the bidding, he gives unmistakable evidence of length but not strength. This is a secondary declaration, and the maker plainly announces, "I will take many more tricks with this suit Trump than any other; indeed, I may not win a trick with any other Trump."

Overbidding a partner's secondary declaration, or counting upon it for tricks when doubling an adversary who has overcalled it, shows inexcusable lack of understanding of the modern system of declaring.

WHEN TO OVERBID THE PARTNER

Overbidding a partner with a declaration which he has once taken out is only authorized by an honor count which is of material value, or a sure game. For example, if a player declare one Royal, holding four or five honors, and the partner overbid with a No-trump, the original declarer should bid two Royals; but without the big honor count it is wiser to let the No-trump stand, as the partner has announced weakness in Spades.

The same line of reasoning should be followed when the partner has called two of a suit over a No-trump. As a rule, under these conditions, it is most unwise for the original No-trump declarer to bid two No-trumps, but with four Aces, the value of the honors thoroughly warrants such a declaration, unless the partner's call has evidently been a "rescue."

The "rescue" or weakness take-out is a warning not to be disregarded. Two Clubs or Diamonds over a No-trump is the most self-evident example, and after such a call by the partner it takes a holding of eight sure tricks to justify two No-trumps. Of course, with four Aces, seven tricks would warrant the call, on the theory that at the worst the 100 for the Aces would set off the possible loss by the double, and more than equal the loss if a double be not made.

FLAG-FLYING

The practice generally called "flag-flying" consists in overbidding an adverse declaration, which will surely result in game and rubber, with a holding which is not of sufficient strength to carry out the contract.

While at times flag-flying is of great advantage, in inexperienced hands it is apt to prove a dangerous expedient. The argument in its favor is obvious. The bonus of 250 points for the rubber really makes 500 points the difference between winning and losing, and in addition there must be computed the points and honors which would be scored by the adversaries in the deal with which they go game, and the points and honors which may be scored by the flag-flyers in the succeeding deal which they hope will carry them to their goal. On this basis flag-flyers estimate that it makes a difference of 600 points whether their opponents go out on the current deal or the flag-flyers score game on the next, and they claim that any loss under 600 is a gain. The estimate is correct; the claim, ridiculous. Whenever the next deal furnishes the player who offers the gambit sufficient strength to capture the rubber, he gains, when his loss has been under 600, but at best it is not more than an even chance that he will win, and when the pendulum swings in the adverse direction, the only result of the performance with the flag is to increase the size of the adversaries' rubber by the amount of the sacrifice. This continued indefinitely is bound to produce Auction bankruptcy.

The player who figures that, on the doctrine of chances, he and his partner will hold the strong cards once in every two deals, should remember that the fickle goddess would never have deserved nor received her well-earned title had she been even approximately reliable.

A run of bad luck may continue for an indefinite period. It has pursued good players not only for a day or a week, but continuously for months and years. It does not sound warnings announcing its appearance or disappearance. To attempt to fight it by the flag-flying process as a rule only multiplies the loss many fold. And yet, it must not be understood that the flag-flyer should always be shunned and condemned. When his loss amounts to only 100 or 200, or when, not detecting his purpose, the adversaries fail to double, and the loss is, therefore, smaller, the odds favor his exhibition of nerve. Flag-flying, however, is like dynamite: in the hands of a child or of one unfamiliar with its characteristics, it is a danger, the extent of

which none can foretell; but used with skill, it becomes a tool of exceptional value.

It is only during the rubber game that even the most enthusiastic and expert flyer of the flag should allow it to wave. With a game out, to make the play successful Dame Fortune must bestow her favors twice in succession. Before taking such a long chance, a player should realize that there are future rubbers which he has an even chance of winning, and that it is better to minimize the present loss than to allow it to become so great that, even if good fortune follow, it will be impossible to recoup. On the first game of the rubber, or with a game in, and the adversaries still without a game, it is plainly too early and the situation is not sufficiently desperate to resort to any real flag-flying. Except when playing the rubber game, a voluntary loss of over 100 should never be considered.

VII

DOUBLING

All doubles, except the double of one Spade by the Second Hand, which is really an informatory bid,^[20] are made for the purpose of increasing the score of the doubler.

The old idea of informatory doubles has been abandoned. Now when a player doubles, he does not invite a No-trump by showing one or more tricks in the adversary's suit, but he practically says, "Partner, I am satisfied that we can defeat this declaration, and I desire to receive a bonus of 100 instead of 50 for each trick that our adversaries fall short of their contract. I do not wish you to overbid, unless your hand be of such a peculiar character that you have reason to believe the double will not be very profitable and feel sure that we can go game with your declaration."

Although doubles are made under widely divergent conditions, they may be subdivided into two classes:—

1. The double of a declaration which, if successful, will result in game, regardless of the double, such as four Hearts, with a love score.
2. The double which, if unsuccessful, puts the Declarer out, although if undoubled, he would not secure the game by fulfilling his contract, such as two or three Hearts, with a love score.

In the first instance, the doubler has nothing to lose except the difference in points which the Declarer may make as a result of the double. When, for example, a bid of four Hearts is doubled and the Declarer fulfils his contract, the double costs exactly 82 points. If the Declarer fall one trick short, the double gains 50 points. When, however, there is a redouble, the loss is increased 114 points, the gain 100 points. The doubler is, therefore, betting the Declarer 82 to 50 that he will not make his contract, and giving the Declarer the option of increasing the bet, so that the odds become 196 to 150. It is evident, therefore, that even when the Declarer will go out in any event, it is not a particularly advantageous proposition for the doubler to give odds of 8 to 5 or 20 to 15, if the chances be even. When the declaration is Royals or No-trumps, the odds against the double are increased. If four No-trumps be doubled, the figures are 90 to 50 with the option given to the Declarer to increase them to 220 to 150.

The explanatory remark so often heard after an unsuccessful double, "It could not cost anything, as they were out anyhow," is not an absolutely accurate statement. It may be worth while to consider one ordinary illustration of how many points may be lost by a foolish double of this character. A bid of four Hearts is doubled and redoubled. The Declarer takes eleven tricks, as he is able to ruff one or two high cards which the doubler hoped would prove winners. This is an every-day case, but the figures are rarely brought home. Without a double, the Declarer would have scored 40 points; with the redouble, he scores 160 points and 200 bonus, or 360, presented by an adversary, who hoped at most to gain 50 and thought his effort "could not cost anything."

A doubtful double should not be made when the partner has another bid, as, for example, when the adversary to the right has called four Hearts, over three Royals declared by the partner. Under these circumstances, the double, on the theory that the doubler expects to secure a large bonus, may properly deter the partner from a successful four Royals declaration. Even when the double is successful to the extent of 100, that is not a sufficient compensation for losing the opportunity to win the game.

The fact that a good player has declared an unusually large number of tricks, as, for example, five Hearts, is not in itself a reason for doubling. A player of experience, when he makes such a declaration, fully realizes the difficulty of the undertaking. He does not take the chance without giving it more consideration than he would a smaller bid, and it is only

fair to assume that he has a reasonable expectation of success. Doubling, therefore, merely because the bid requires ten or even eleven tricks, is folly, pure and simple. This comment, however, does not apply when the bid is of the flag-flying character.^[21] As to whether or not it comes within that category the doubler will have to determine. The Auction expert is always on the lookout for an opportunity to gather a large bonus at the expense of a flag-flyer, and as unduly sanguine players indulge in that practice more than others, their declarations should be subjected to the most rigid scrutiny.

The doubtful double, which, should it prove unsuccessful, will result in the Declarer scoring a game he would not otherwise obtain, is, as a rule, inexcusable. By this is not meant that a bid of two or three Hearts or Royals, or of three or four Clubs or Diamonds, should never be doubled. That would be absurd doctrine, but such a double should never be made with the chances even, or nearly even. An experienced bidder will not risk presenting the adversaries with the game and a bonus unless reasonably sure of defeating the declaration.

Another absurd notion is doubling because of the partner's general strength. The partner has an equal opportunity to double, and is much better posted in relation to his own cards. If the strength be his, he should decide whether or not to take the chance. When, however, one partner has some strength in the suit the adversaries have declared, and the other, high side cards, the double is more apt to confuse the Declarer if made by the player without the Trump strength.

The above refers to doubtful doubles only; when the indications are that the Declarer can be decisively defeated, the double is most important. It is worth 100 if the Declarer go down two; 150, if he lose three, etc. These additional points should not be allowed to escape.

Even the most venturesome doublers realize that, except in the unusual case, it is unwise to double a bid of one, whether it be in a suit or No-trump. Some players hesitate about doubling a bid of two, preferring to take the chance of forcing the bidder higher. No general rule covering the situation can be laid down, as it depends greatly upon the character of the doubler's hand whether the adversary is apt to advance his bid.

A double of a No-trump is much safer than of a suit declaration. The doubler of the No-trump knows approximately what to expect from his long suit, what suits he has stopped, and if one be unguarded, can estimate how many tricks it may be possible for the declarer to run. The doubler of a suit declaration cannot figure with any such accuracy. He rarely has more than two winning Trumps, and therefore, as a rule, must depend upon side Aces and Kings for the balance of his tricks. It is always possible that the Declarer or his partner may be absolutely void of the suit or suits in which the doubler expects to win his tricks, so that sometimes a hand with which the most conservative player would double, goes to pieces before a cross-ruff. When one hand is evenly divided, the chances are that the others are of the same character, but it is not a certainty that they are. When one hand has a very long suit, and is either blank in some other suit, or has but a singleton of it, the other hands are apt to contain very long and very short suits. Therefore, if the doubler be without, or have but a singleton of, a suit, he should be more conservative, in doubling a suit declaration upon the expectation of making high side cards, than when he has an evenly divided hand.

Probably the most advantageous situation for a double is when the partner has declared No-trump, and the adversary to the right, two of a suit, of which the doubler, in addition to other strength, holds four cards, at least two of which are sure to take tricks. This comes nearer being an informatory double than any other in vogue in the game of to-day. The partner, however, should not take it out unless his No-trump consist of some such holding as a solid suit and an Ace.

A hand of this character may not prove formidable against a suit declaration, and it justifies the original Declarer, as he knows that the adverse suit is well stopped, in bidding two No-trumps. It is one of the few cases where it is not advisable to allow the double of a partner to stand.

It is generally conceded that the double, although a most powerful factor in the game, and the element which is productive of large rubbers, is used excessively, especially by inexperienced and rash players. If a record could be produced of all the points won and lost by doubling, there is little doubt that the "lost" column would lead by a ratio of at least two to one.

The double in the hands of a discreet player of sound judgment is, indeed, a powerful weapon greatly feared by the adversaries; when used by the unskilled, it becomes a boomerang of the most dangerous type.

A player cannot afford to have the reputation of never doubling, as that permits his adversaries to take undue liberties in bidding, but it is better to be ultra-conservative than a foolish doubler who continually presents his opponents with games of enormous proportions. A player should not double unless able to count with reasonable exactness in his own hand and announced by his partner a sufficient number of tricks to defeat the Declarer. It is not the place to take a chance or to rely upon a partner, who has not shown strength, for an average holding. It must also be remembered as an argument against a doubtful double that

the Declarer is more apt to make his declaration when doubled, as he is then given more or less accurate information regarding the position of the adverse strength, and can finesse accordingly. A double frequently costs one trick—sometimes even more.

THE CHOICE BETWEEN A GAME AND A DOUBLE

A most interesting question arises when a player is placed in the gratifying position of having the opportunity of electing whether to go game or secure a bonus by doubling.

Which course he should take depends entirely upon the state of the rubber, and the size of the bonus that the double will probably produce. A game is always to be preferred to a double which is not apt to net more than 100. When 200 is sure and a greater bonus probable, the double should be made during either the first or second game of the rubber. During the rubber game, however, the doubler should be more conservative, and should "take in" his rubber unless satisfied that the double will produce 300, with a potential possibility of more.

The reason, which may not at first be apparent, for this difference in the situation, may be briefly explained as follows: Before a game has been won, the securing of a large bonus in the honor column places the fortunate doubler in a most advantageous position, as he starts the rubber insured against loss unless he suffer a similar penalty.

When the only game finished has been won by the adversaries, a large bonus should be preferred to game. As the adversaries already have a game, the next hand may give them the rubber, and should it do so, its amount will be most materially affected by the action of the player who has the chance either to score a bonus or win a game. If the first game be of normal size, a large bonus will nullify the result of the rubber, but if instead a game be taken in the adversaries will score an average rubber.

When the player considering a double has a game and the adversaries have not, he is in a most excellent position to double with the hope of a big winning. To secure the enlarged rubber, it is only necessary for him to obtain one game before the adversaries get two, and as the odds are greatly in his favor it is a chance worth taking.

When, however, each side has a game and the question is whether to obtain a bonus or score rubber, the bonus must be large and sure to justify giving up a rubber practically won for merely an equal chance of capturing a larger one. It has been elsewhere stated that when a player who has an opportunity to win a rubber fails to avail himself of it, and on the next hand the adversaries reach the goal, the loss may be roughly estimated at 600 points. The player who doubles during the third game knows that the next hand may see the adversaries score the rubber. Even if he obtain 400 points by doubling, and this happens, the adversaries gain to the extent of approximately 200 points by his action. On the other hand, he has an equal chance for the game, and if he win it, he will be the gainer by the amount secured by the double. When he has a sure 400 in sight, or even a sure 300, with a reasonable chance of more, the odds favor the double, but it is the height of folly to take an even chance of losing 600 unless 300 be the minimum return.

Advice as to whether to double or go game is useful only for players who can with accuracy estimate the trick-taking value of their hands. To refuse a double which would net several hundred for the sake of going game and then fall a trick short of both the game and the declaration is most exasperating, while on the other hand to double for a big score, instead of taking in a sure game, only to have the double fail, is equally heart-breaking.

The player who takes either horn of this dilemma must be sure of his ground and must figure the chances with the greatest care.

WHEN TO REDOUBLE

The question of when to redouble is so intricate that it is hard to consider, except when the specific case arises. Some players frequently redouble, as a kind of bluff, when convinced their declaration will fail, the intent being to frighten either the doubler or his partner into another declaration. Against a very timid player, this is sometimes successful, but unless it catch its victim, it is expensive bait.

Nine out of ten redoubles, however, are *bona fide*, and made because the fulfilment of the contract seems assured. Even then, however, a player should not redouble unless practically positive that neither of his adversaries can get out of the redouble by making a higher bid.

The player who has been doubled and is sure of his contract is in a most enviable position; game and a handsome bonus both are his, and it would be most foolish for him to risk so much merely for the chance of the extra score. If, however, there be no escape for the doubler, the redouble is most valuable, and a real opportunity for it should never be overlooked.

The player who, whenever his partner's declaration is doubled, becomes frightened, concludes that the worst is sure to happen, and that it is his duty to come to the rescue by jumping headlong into some other declaration, even if it require an increased number of tricks, is a most dangerous *vis-à-vis*. A double does not justify the assumption that the Declarer is beaten, especially when the partner has any unannounced help. If the partner be weak, it is folly for him to go from bad to worse; if strong, he may enable the Declarer to make a large score. In any event, in nine cases out of ten, "standing pat" is his best policy.

VIII

LEADING

The selection of the correct lead in Auction is not attended with so many difficulties as in Whist, or even in Bridge. In Whist, the original leader is obliged to begin the play in the dark, the turn-up constituting his entire knowledge of the strength or weakness of the other players. In Bridge, the extent of his information is limited to the inferences that can be drawn from the declaration and the double, but in Auction every player has made at least one announcement which is more or less instructive.

When there has been considerable bidding it is frequently possible to accurately estimate the length and strength of the suit of each player and the trick-taking value of the balance of his hand. When only one or two declarations have been made, so much information may not be obtainable, but even then the leader, from the failure of certain players to bid, may be able to make deductions of considerable value.

The Auction leader, therefore, must remember the various declarations, draw both positive and negative inferences therefrom, and whenever it is not advisable to open his partner's suit or his own, should follow the old principle which, since the days of Pole, has been applicable to all games of the Whist family, and realize "'Tis seldom wrong to lead up to the weak and through the strong."

The original opening is materially varied by the character of the final declaration, the system of leading against a No-trump being quite different from that employed when a suit is Trump.

HOW TO LEAD AGAINST A NO-TRUMP

When the partner has not shown strength, the leader, against a No-trump, should open his own long suit. If he have two long suits, he should pick the stronger except when he has declared it, and has not received support from his partner, in which case it is generally wise to try the other. The possible exception to the lead of a long suit against a No-trump is when that suit has been declared, has not been helped by the partner, and the No-trump has been subsequently bid to the right. In this situation, with a tenace in the long suit, it is sometimes advisable to try, by leading another suit, to get the partner in, so that he may lead through the Declarer's strength in the suit called by the leader. This, however, is a dangerous expedient when the partner has not declared. Should a suit be guessed which the partner cannot win, one of his high cards is apt to be sacrificed, and not only nothing gained, but the advantage of the lead transferred to the adversary. If two high cards be missing from the tenace suit, as in the case when it is headed by Ace, Queen, Ten, or King, Knave, Ten, and the Declarer hold the missing honors and one small card, it will take two leads to establish the suit. It is not likely that a partner without sufficient strength to declare will be able to get in twice, and trying to put him in once is most apt to establish a suit for the Declarer. Therefore, as a general proposition, unless the partner have declared, the tenace suit should be led. When, however, the partner has shown a suit, opening it, in preference to a tenace, is elementary and compulsory.

When the partner has declared, the leader should open the suit named unless satisfied that his own affords a more potent weapon for the attack.

There are only three conditions which justify the leader in assuming this, viz.:—

- (a) When the leader has called his suit and his partner has advanced the declaration.
- (b) When the leader's suit is headed by Ace, King, Queen, or King, Queen, Knave.
- (c) When the leader has only a singleton of his partner's suit and has several reëntries.

Innumerable tricks, games, and rubbers have been thrown away by a leader who, considering solely his own hand, has started with his suit in preference to that of his partner. There is some peculiar characteristic in the composition of many players which magnifies the value of their own cards, so that they seem of greater importance and more desirable to establish than their partners'. Even experienced players have been known to commit such an Auction absurdity as opening a suit headed by a Knave, in preference to the suit named by the partner, which, of necessity, contains the strength requisite for a Trump declaration.

It is fair to estimate that ten tricks are lost by denying the partner's declaration to one that escapes the player who leads his partner's suit in preference to his own.

When the partner has declared, his suit can be counted upon for both length and strength, and unless it be practically solid, his hand contains at least one reëntry. The leader by his opening can attack only one-quarter of the No-trump fortification, and it is his duty to pick out the spot which promises to be most vulnerable. A No-trump call is very likely to spell game unless a suit can be established against it. In order to accomplish this it is generally necessary to start with the first card led. Therefore, making the right original opening is probably the only opportunity to save the game. When the leader selects his own suit in preference to his partner's, he should be able to say, "In spite of the strength you have declared, I am reasonably sure that we have a better chance to establish this suit than yours."

As a rule, however, the leader does not have sufficient strength to support such a statement, and, therefore, his lead generally says, "Partner, I know you have considerable strength, you may have declared expressly for the purpose of asking me to lead your suit, but I selfishly prefer to play my own hand rather than act for the benefit of the partnership."

It is but a puerile excuse for a leader who does not open his partner's suit to explain that the No-trump was called by the right-hand adversary after the partner's declaration, and that the bid, having been made with the anticipation that the suit named would be led, he should surprise the Declarer. It is true that the Declarer expects that suit, but it may be the only opening he fears. It is more than possible that the suit is stopped but once, and that leading it will save the game, even if it do not defeat the declaration. It is certainly a very short-sighted or unduly sanguine player who selects a suit of his own, which has not nearly the strength of his partner's, merely on the wild chance that his partner, rather than the No-trump bidder, has the missing high cards.

When the partner has declared two suits and the leader has length or strength in one of them, he should open it, but when he cannot assist either, he should open the suit named first, as it is probably the stronger.

As will be seen from the tables of leads against a No-trump declaration, in some cases whether the leader has a reëntry materially affects the manner in which he should open his long suit. By a reëntry in this connection is meant either an Ace or King, unless the suit containing the King have been bid by the adversary to the left of the leader. In that case the King cannot be expected to win unless accompanied by the Queen. A Queen, or even Queen, Knave, cannot be considered a reëntry, as the suit may not be led three times.

The reason for varying the lead, depending upon the presence of a reëntry, is that the sole thought of the leader against a No-trump is to establish the suit led, and to insure so doing he opens his suit exclusively with that end in view, regardless of whether it would otherwise be the opening most apt to prove trick-winning. He knows that the Declarer will, if possible, hold up a winning card until the Third Hand is unable to return the suit. Therefore, if he be without a reëntry, he must do all in his power to force the winning card from the adversary's hand as early in the play as possible. If he have a reëntry, he may play much more fearlessly. An example of this is a long suit, headed by Ace, Queen, Knave. The most advantageous lead from this combination is the Ace (as an adversary may hold an unguarded King), and that would be the lead with a reëntry; but the chances are that the partner does not hold more than three cards of the suit, and, if it be opened in the usual way, the King will be held up until the third round. The leader without a reëntry, therefore, is compelled to open with the Queen, so as to establish the suit, while the partner, who probably has a reëntry, still retains a card of it.

Another important convention which applies to the opening of the leader's suit against a No-trump declaration (but, of course, against a No-trump declaration only) is that the original lead of an Ace calls for the partner's highest card. An Ace, therefore, should be led from such a combination as a suit headed by Ace, King, Knave, Ten, since the drop of the Queen will permit the suit to be run without hesitation, and the failure of the partner to play the Queen will permit the leader to place its position positively, and to continue the suit or not, as his judgment and the balance of his hand dictate. This doctrine is extended to all cases of the original lead of an Ace against a No-trump declaration.

The Ace should not be led unless the partner's best card, regardless of its size, be desired, and the partner should play it unhesitatingly, be it King, Queen, or Knave, unless the Dummy convince him that meeting the demand of the lead will be trick-sacrificing, in which

case the leader's command should be ignored.

In leading a partner's suit, the general rule of selecting the fourth best, when opening with a small card, is not followed. The object in leading that suit is to strengthen the partner, and it is more important to do that and also to tell him what is the leader's highest card than to post him regarding exact length. Holding either two, three, or four of a partner's suit, the top, therefore, should be led, followed on each succeeding trick by the next in order, the lowest being retained until the last. This is sometimes called the "down and out." The one exception to the lead of the top of the partner's suit is when it consists of three or more headed by Ace or King, and the right-hand adversary has called No-trump after the suit has been declared. In that case, it may be that the stopper which the Declarer thinks he has in the suit can be captured, and the lead, therefore, should be a low card.

NUMBER-SHOWING LEADS

The lead in Auction is materially simplified by the fact that number-showing is not nearly so important as in Whist, and really only becomes of value when opening a small card against a No-trump declaration. In that case the lowest should always be led with four in the suit, because the partner, having the Dummy spread before him, being able to count his own hand, and being informed by the lead regarding the leader's length in the suit, can generally tell the exact number held by the Declarer, and can, therefore, accurately determine whether it is better to continue that suit or try some other. It happens more frequently than would be supposed that when a four-card suit is opened with a small card, the Dummy and Third Hand have only four cards of it between them. The Third Hand can then, if the leader have shown exactly four, mark it as the long suit of the Declarer, and make an advantageous shift. This is the only method of giving this warning. If the fourth-best lead be not adopted, the suit must, in most cases, necessarily be continued to the great benefit of the Declarer.

Number-showing by the lead of a small card (one of the rudiments of Whist) is doubtless thoroughly understood by most Auction players; it consists in leading the fourth best, when the suit is not of such a character as to demand a high card or intermediate sequence opening. This informs the partner that the leader has exactly three cards in that suit higher than the card led, and that he may or may not have any smaller card.

For example: the leader has Queen, 7, 6, and 4; the Dummy, a singleton (the 3); and the Third Hand, who wins the trick with the Ace, only two others (the 8 and 2). The Third Hand can place the Declarer with five, as the leader, having opened his lowest, can have had only four originally.

Number-showing leads in high cards, so advantageous in Whist, are absolutely unimportant in Auction, and only complicate the situation. They are not given in the table of leads appended at the end of this chapter, nor is their use permissible, even by the Whist-player of the old school who is thoroughly familiar with their meaning. He must realize that Auction is not a number-showing game, and must be content to limit his skill in that respect to the fourth best, which is advisable when it is not higher than the 7. The limitation of the fourth-best lead to a 7 or lower card is a useful modern innovation. When the 8 or a higher fourth best is led against a No-trump, the Declarer, with his twenty-six cards at his command, and with great strength in his own hand, is apt to receive information as to the exact high cards held by the leader which will prove of greater value to him than to the partner. Furthermore, the lead of an 8 or 9 as a fourth best is bound at times to conflict with the valuable lead known as the "top of an intermediate sequence."

The holdings from which the top of an intermediate sequence should be led are shown in the tables, and while some of the leads in such cases, which are absolutely conventional in Auction, may shock the Whist-player, they have, nevertheless, been found to be advisable in the present game. Trick-winning is far more important than giving numerical information, and the top of an intermediate sequence often succeeds in capturing a valuable card in the Dummy, does not give too much information to the Declarer, helps to establish the suit, and seldom interferes with the play of the partner.

Much has been written by those who contend that the fourth-best lead against a No-trump gives the Declarer too much information, and, therefore, should never be employed. The writers, however, do not consider that practically the only cases in which the lead is objectionable for the reason cited is when it is an 8 or higher card, while the great advantage of the lead is the warning above mentioned.

There are also instances in which the Third Hand is at some time in the play in doubt whether to return the original lead or try his own suit. The knowledge of whether his partner holds three or more of the suit first led may in such case be of the greatest value.

The idea of leading the fourth best only when it is a 7 or smaller card eliminates the objection, yet in practically every case affords the advantage.

A player who adopts this system may at times, as, for example, with such a holding as Ace, Queen, 10, 8, 2, be obliged to open the 8, but inasmuch as he would lead the same card from

Ace, Queen, 8, 7, 2, the Declarer cannot bank upon the 8 of such a leader showing three higher cards of the suit in his hand, and, therefore, no harm is done.

If the leader have any such four-card combination as Ace, or any one face card, accompanied by 9, 8, 2, or 8, 7, 2, showing that the lead is from four only is more important than opening the top of a two-card intermediate sequence. When, however, the intermediate is headed by a Knave or 10, the opening of the top of it becomes advisable regardless of the length of the suit. Of course, the 2, in the examples just given, is used to represent any small card, and the fourth best should be led if it be a 3, 4, or 5.

THE LEAD AGAINST A SUIT DECLARATION

Against a suit declaration, the original lead of the longest suit is not in the least imperative. Strength is far more important than length. As the tables show, many high-card combinations are opened very differently, the theory being to win with honors, not to establish small cards. If the leader be a Whist-player, he must remember that Auction is a very different game. The Trump has not been selected by chance, but has been named because of his adversaries' great length and strength. The establishment of an adverse suit against a Trump declaration is, therefore, an almost unknown proceeding.

The object of the leader against a suit declaration is to get as many tricks as possible, and he should utilize the two best methods for so doing: namely, winning with his own and his partner's high cards, and ruffing with weak Trumps.

He should avoid opening a tenace suit, regardless of its length. A singleton, if he be short in Trumps, is probably his best lead; his second choice should be high cards in sequence. When his hand does not contain either of these advantageous openings, he should try his partner's suit.

It goes without saying that if the leader have both the Ace and King of a suit, it is always well to lead the King, not only for the purpose of giving information and taking a practically assured trick, but also in order to obtain a look at the Dummy, which will enable him to more advantageously size up the entire situation.

When his partner has not shown strength, the leader need never hesitate about starting with a strengthening card of a short suit which has not been declared. He is also thoroughly justified, if weak in Trumps, in asking for a force by leading the top of a two-card suit. This, while not nearly so desirable an opening as a singleton, is better than leading from a tenace. When the leader is long in Trumps, he should open his own or his partner's strength.

The leader should bear in mind as a vital principal that, against a suit declaration, a suit containing an Ace should never be opened originally, unless the Ace (or King, if that card be also held) be led. The leader should observe this convention, regardless of the length of the suit. The knowledge that a leader can be relied upon not to have the Ace unless he lead it will be of material assistance to his partner in the play. It is sometimes very tempting to lead low with an Ace, hoping that a King may be found in the Second Hand, and that the partner's Queen may capture the first trick. This play will occasionally prove successful, but in the long run, it is a trick-loser, there being so many instances of singletons, even of single Kings, and also of two-card suits, where, unless the Ace be led, the Declarer will win the first trick and discard the other card.

The leader must observe the distinction between opening a long and a short suit which has always been in force in Whist, Bridge, and Auction—that is, when leading a suit headed by a Knave or smaller card, if long, open from the bottom; if short, from the top. For example, holding Knave, 9, 7, 2, the 2 should be led, but holding Knave, 7, 2, the Knave is the card to open.

One other conventional lead should be mentioned, which, as an original opening, is advisable against a Trump declaration only. It is the lead of a two-card suit consisting of Ace, King. The Ace first, and then King, signifies no more of the suit, and a desire to ruff. Of course, by analogy, the lead of the King before the Ace shows more of the suit.

HOW TO LEAD TO A DOUBLE

The question of what lead should be made when the partner has doubled is comparatively simple, although the answer depends materially upon whether the double has been of a No-trump or a suit declaration. When a No-trump has been doubled, the original lead should invariably be the suit the doubler has declared. When the doubler has not made any declaration, the suit the leader has called should be opened. When neither the doubler nor the leader has declared, a case that rarely occurs, the lead should be either the best Club or the highest card of the leader's shortest suit, depending upon which of these two conventions the doubler approves.

The theory of the advocates of the Club convention is that it is important for the doubler of a

No-trump to know exactly what suit will be led, and that he is more apt to desire Clubs than any other, as the other suits, being of greater value, are more likely to be bid. The argument of the advocates of the high card of the short suit convention is that it enables a double to be made with any long suit.

The Club convention is much safer, and is used by most conservative players.

In the event of there being any doubt what the lead should be, if the leader be fortunate enough to hold an Ace, it is good policy for him to lead it for the purpose of taking a look. The contents of the Dummy will probably furnish the desired information.

When a suit declaration has been doubled, a singleton is always an advantageous opening. The lead of a high card is also advisable for the purpose of taking a look. If the leader be without either a singleton or high-card lead, his partner's suit is unquestionably his wisest opening.

THE TABLES

The tables which appear at the end of this chapter should be carefully examined by all who are not absolutely letter perfect in the conventional leads. The present tendency of players taking up Auction is to regard the leads as unimportant, and this often results disastrously. The quondam Whist-player realizes the necessity of having every lead at his fingers' ends, but for the benefit of those who have never participated in the older game, it may be said that the conventional leads have been determined upon only after years of experimentation; as a consequence of which it is known just which card, in the long run, will win the most tricks.

A leader who, on the spur of the moment, during the play, tries something else, is taking a course sure to deceive an intelligent partner, and one which will probably reduce the number of his tricks.

The one combination that seems to tempt some players to disregard the conventional, is the King, Queen, Ten, against a No-trump. With this holding the King is manifestly most advantageous, as if the Declarer hold Ace, Knave, it will either force the Ace and hold the tenace over the Knave or win the trick. Without the Ten, a small card should be led, but many players fail to recognize the important distinction.

Every one attempting to play the game should learn the conventional leads, and having once mastered this comparatively easy lesson, should never allow a childish impulse, such as "having a hunch," to induce an experiment with a lead not recognized as sound.

The various tables follow.

OPENING LEADS AGAINST A NO-TRUMP DECLARATION

Holding	With a Reëntry	Without a Reëntry
Ace, King, Queen, Knave, with or without others	Ace	Ace
Ace, King, Queen, Ten, with one or more others	Ace	Ace
Ace, King, Queen, Ten	King	King
Ace, King, Queen, with three or more others	Ace	Ace
Ace, King, Queen, with one or two others	King	King
Ace, King, Knave, Ten, with two or more others	Ace	Ace
Ace, King, Knave, Ten, with one other	Ace	Knave
Ace, King, Knave, Ten	King	Knave
Ace, King, Knave, with three or more others	Ace	Ace
Ace, King, Knave, with two others	Ace	4th best
Ace, King, Knave, with one other	King	King
Ace, King, and five others	Ace	Ace
Ace, King, and four others	King	4th best
Ace, King, and two or three others	4th best	4th best
Ace, Queen, Knave, Ten, with or without others	Ace	Queen
Ace, Queen, Knave, with one or more others	Ace	Queen
Ace, Queen, Ten, Nine, and three others	Ace	Ten
Ace, Queen, Ten, Nine, with less than seven	Ten	Ten
Ace, Queen, and five others	Ace	4th best
Ace, Queen, and two, three, or four others	4th best	4th best
Ace, Knave, Ten, with one or more others	Knave	Knave
Ace, Knave, with two or more others	4th best	4th best
Ace, Ten, Nine, with one or more others	Ten	Ten

Ace, Ten, Eight, with one or more others	4th best	4th best
King, Queen, Knave, Ten, with or without others	King	King
King, Queen, Knave, with one or more others	King	King
King, Queen, Ten, with one or more others	King	King
King, Queen, with five or more others	King	King
King, Queen, with four or more others	King	4th best
King, Queen, with two or three others	4th best	4th best
King, Knave, Ten, with one or more others	Knave	Knave
King, Knave, with two or more others	4th best	4th best
King, Ten, Nine, with one or more others	Ten	Ten
King, Ten, with two or more others	4th best	4th best
Queen, Knave, Ten, with one or more others	Queen	Queen
Queen, Knave, Nine, with one or more others	Queen	Queen
Queen, Knave, with two or more others	4th best	4th best
Queen, Ten, Nine, with one or more others	Ten	Ten
Knave, Ten, Nine, with one or more others	Knave	Knave
Knave, Ten, Eight, with one or more others	Knave	Knave
Knave, Ten, with two or more others	4th best	4th best
Ten, Nine, Eight, with one or more others	Ten	Ten
Ten, Nine, Seven, with one or more others	Ten	Ten

In all the above cases in which the fourth best is given as the lead, should the hand contain an intermediate sequence, headed by an 8, or higher card, the top of such sequence should be led instead of the fourth best. For example, King, Knave, 9, 8, 2, lead the 9; King, Knave, 9, 7, 2, lead the 7.

In any case not mentioned, in which there is not an intermediate sequence, headed by an 8 or higher card, the fourth best should be opened.

The lead of the fourth best, when it is an 8 or higher card, should be avoided whenever possible. For example, Ace, Queen, 10, 8, 6, 2, lead the 6; but never lead the lowest when holding more than four, so from Ace, Queen, 10, 8, 2, lead the 8.

In all the Ace-King combinations in the above table, in which the Ace is the conventional lead, it is selected in preference to the King, because the highest card of the partner is desired; when the King is the lead, the suit is not of sufficient strength to make that play advisable.

OPENING LEADS AGAINST A TRUMP DECLARATION

Holding	Lead
Ace, King, Queen, Knave	King, then Knave
Ace, King, Queen	King, then Queen
Ace, King, Knave	King
Ace, King, and one or more others	King
Ace, King, without any others	Ace, then King
Ace, Queen, Knave ^[22]	Ace, then Queen
Ace, Queen, and one or more others ^[22]	Ace, then lowest
Ace, Knave, Ten ^[22]	Ace
Ace, and one or more small	Ace
King, Queen, Knave, with or without others	King
King, Queen, Ten, with or without others	King
King, Queen, with or without others	King
King, Knave, Ten, with or without others ^[22]	Knave
King, Knave, and one or more others ^[22]	Lowest or 4th best
King, Ten, Nine, and one or more others ^[22]	Ten
King, and two or more others ^[22]	Lowest or 4th best
Queen, Knave, Ten, with or without others	Queen
Queen, Knave, Nine, with or without others	Queen
Queen, Knave, and two or more others	4th best ^[23]
Queen, Knave, and one or no others	Queen
Queen, Ten, Nine, with or without others	Ten

Knave, Ten, with or without others

Knave

Ten, Nine, with or without others

Ten

IX

THE PLAY

It has been stated elsewhere that it is easier to advise an Auction player how to declare than how to play. This is unquestionably true, and as a rule instruction in print relating to intricate situations in the play is of little benefit to the reader.

End situations, and even those which arise earlier in the hand, seldom exactly repeat themselves. Pages may be filled with the description of brilliant plays by the Declarer and his opponents. The reader may study such examples until he becomes thoroughly familiar with every detail, and yet, so great and infinite is the variety of Auction hands, many play for years without ever having one of them arise. Mathematicians state that the 52 cards may be distributed in 53,644,737,765,839,237,440,000 different ways, and that a player may receive 635,013,559,600 different hands. There is no reason to question the accuracy of these figures, but even if they be grossly excessive, it is still self-evident that each deal is apt to produce some totally new situation.

All that will be attempted, therefore, in considering the play, is to offer a few general suggestions that it is believed will be found applicable to a considerable percentage of hands, and that it is hoped will prove useful.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PLAY IN AUCTION AND BRIDGE

There is little difference between the play in Auction and Bridge, although in Auction, due to the bidding, all the players have much greater information regarding the strength and weakness of the various hands.

There is one point of variance, however, worthy of consideration:—

In Bridge, the player of the open hand is generally striving for the game as his only object. In Auction, the Declarer has two purposes in view; first, to fulfil his declaration; and second, when the making of the declaration does not in itself secure game, to obtain that also.

Naturally, the opponents of the Declarer play with exactly the opposite idea, their first object being to prevent him from going game, and their second, to keep him from fulfilling his contract.

PLAYING FOR GAME

The Declarer should never take a finesse or make any other play which, if it succeed, gains one or more tricks, but which, if it fail, risks the fulfilment of an otherwise assured contract. Having once made sure of his bid, he should apply a similar rule to the winning of the game. An extra trick counts comparatively little, but the failure to carry out a contract or to capture a game may alter the result of the rubber.

The game is, of course, far more important than the contract, and the Declarer, when he has a reasonable chance of obtaining it, should, if necessary, risk his declaration. On the other hand, his opponents should save the game beyond peradventure, even if by so doing they lose an opportunity to defeat the Declarer.

A couple of examples will show this more clearly than pages of explanation.

Suppose, the score being love, the Declarer, who has bid three Royals, has about exhausted the possibilities of his cards. He has won eight tricks and has the lead in his own hand, with an Ace and Queen of the same suit in the Dummy. One more trick will fulfil his contract, two will give him game. The development of the play has shown that the adversaries will make the rest of the tricks whenever they obtain the lead, and consequently, if he finesse and lose, the eight tricks already taken will be all he will secure, his Ace will "die," and he will be "one down."

He is without information as to the location of the King; neither adversary has declared, and

neither has by discard or otherwise in the play given a reliable hint as to the absence or presence of the all-important card.

His duty is plain. By finessing he may lose 27 points and a penalty of 50, 77 in all, but the finesse gives him an even chance to win the game; and whether it be the rubber, with its premium of 250, or merely the first game, but still a most important advance toward the goal, he should take his chance, realizing that the value of the object for which he is striving is far greater than the 77 he may lose.

Under similar conditions, however, if the Trump be Diamonds, the finesse should be refused. It would then take three more tricks to make game, and but two are possible. One completes the contract, and winning the finesse adds only 7 points, less than one-tenth of the 71 placed in jeopardy.

The 21 points in the trick column assured by refusing the finesse are, viewed from a practical standpoint, just as near a game as 28 would be, but 21 makes the bidding for game on the next deal much easier than if the effort to win the extra 7 had resulted in the score remaining at love. In this case, therefore, not only when the chances are equal, but even when unmistakable inferences of declaration and play indicate that the success of the finesse is almost assured, the opportunity should be refused.

"Penny-wise and pound-foolish" aptly characterizes a player who would risk advantage of position and 71 points for the chance of gaining a paltry 7.

PLAY FOR AN EVEN BREAK

The Declarer, in the absence of any positive indication to the contrary, should base his play upon the probability of an even division of the cards. That is, with seven of a suit in his own hand and Dummy, he should play for each of the adversaries to have three; with nine, he should play on the basis that the four missing cards are equally divided. In the long run, playing for the even break will net many tricks, but in a small percentage of instances it will result unfortunately. The case in which the question most frequently arises is when either in Trumps or in the Declarer's strong suit in a No-trump, the two hands hold nine cards headed by Ace, King, Knave. The division between the two hands may be

Ace, King, Knave, X, X	and	X, X, X, X
Ace, King, X, X, X	and	Knave, Ten, X, X
Ace, Knave, X, X, X	and	King, X, X, X
King, Knave, X, X, X	and	Ace, X, X, X

or any other.

In all these cases the Knave finesse is tempting, but it should be refused, and the Ace and King played with the expectation of an even break which will drop the Queen on the second round. The exceptions to this general rule occur when

(a) The presence of the Queen in either adverse hand has been indicated by some declaration or double.

(b) When one adversary has shown unusual length in some other suit.

In the latter case, it is sometimes wise to play on the assumption that the adversary, very long in another suit, has but one of the suit in question, and consequently to finesse the *second round* on that basis.

GENERAL PLAY OF THE DECLARER

The Declarer, as soon as the Dummy's cards are spread, should size up the situation, see how many tricks are in sight, what suit or suits it is necessary for him to establish, and what, if any, finesse or finesses he will have to make in order to secure his declaration and his game.

In determining which way to finesse, he should be materially assisted by the bids of his adversaries, and during the play, as situations develop either in his favor or against him, he should be continually figuring on the best method to make his declaration. He should remember that failure to fulfil his contract will not only result in a material loss on the score, but, in the end, may cost the rubber. When the scheme of play he has planned at the start shows signs of becoming unsuccessful, he should, if possible, change it for one more promising.

The Declarer, especially if brought up in the Whist school, should bear in mind that he now has no partner anxiously seeking information regarding the contents of his hand, but that he has two adversaries from whom he should withhold, as long as possible, knowledge of his strength, weakness, aims, and schemes. When any method of play suggests itself which seems more deceptive than another, and yet produces the same result, it should be adopted.

False cards should be used whenever possible, as they are less informatory than the conventional lowest of a sequence. The Declarer should worry his opponents in this way whenever the opportunity offers. In playing small cards, the higher should frequently precede the lower, and every means should be used to make it as difficult as possible for the adversaries to place the cards.

DECLARER'S PLAY OF NO-TRUMP

The Declarer will find that he is obliged to use different tactics when playing a No-trump from those he employs when a Trump has been named. In the former case, his main object should be to establish his long suit or suits, and to shut out those of the adversary. When he has the Ace (without any other stopper) of an adverse suit, unless there be some other he fears more, he should refrain from playing the Ace until the third round, or until sure that the partner of the long hand has exhausted his holding of that suit. The reason for this is obvious. If the holder of the long suit can be kept from the lead, the suit will not be made. He may be without a reëntry, so it is important that his partner be unable to put him in by leading that suit. In this case, the Declarer should take any doubtful finesse, which he has the opportunity of taking either way, so that, if it lose, the holder of the long suit will not be in the lead.

The Declarer should postpone as long as possible leading a suit of four cards in one hand and three in the other, headed by Ace, King, and Queen, but not the Knave, unless he be afraid of a long, adverse run which will force him to awkward discards. The reason is that, should either of the adversaries be long in that suit, three rounds will establish for him one or more cards which otherwise would not be made good. Leading even two rounds will be a warning not to discard from that suit. It should, therefore, be avoided, except for the purpose of placing a lead, until the other strength of the Declarer is exhausted, or until it becomes evident that, when next he loses the lead, the adversaries will control the situation. Then, and not until then, should he lead such a suit with the realization that, having postponed its establishment as long as possible, he has adopted the most probable method not only of shutting out adverse long cards, but also of making an extra trick for himself.

While the probability of establishing an adverse trick is not nearly so great when the Declarer has four cards of such a suit in each hand, it is still possible, and the method of handling it above advised, when the total holding is seven, should be followed even with eight. A thoughtless Declarer who has nothing to fear from an adverse run will often as soon as he gets in (and before he establishes some suit that demands attention) start with a suit of this character. Such tactics sometimes cost a declaration—sometimes a game; yet the thoughtless one rarely appreciates his folly.

An example may make this more evident:—

	DUMMY	DECLARER
Spades	X, X	Ace, Queen, X
Hearts	Ace, X, X, X	King, Queen, X
Diamonds	X, X	Ace, Queen, X
Clubs	Knave, 9, X, X, X	Queen, 10, X, X

The 2 of Spades is opened, and the Declarer wins the first trick with the Queen. He now has assured two Spade, three Heart, and one Diamond tricks, with a chance of one more in both Hearts and Diamonds; six sure and eight possible, without the Clubs. If he establish his Clubs, he can make 3 tricks in that suit, which will insure game.

If he open his Hearts, he may establish one or more for the adversaries and thus give up all chance of the game, as he is at best practically sure to lose two Spades and two Clubs.

It is impossible to gain any advantage by running the four Hearts before the Clubs, even if they all be good; in other words, it is a play which may cost the game and cannot by any possibility gain anything whatever.

When the Declarer holds a suit long in both hands, headed by the three top honors, two in one hand and one in the other, it is wise to win the first trick with one of the honors of the hand which holds two; this is apt to be beneficial in the event of an adversary refusing or having a singleton.

The Declarer, even when he has bid a light No-trump and received little assistance, should play with confidence. His adversaries do not know the flimsy character of his declaration, and will credit him with more powerful cards than he really holds. Even experienced players seem to feel that a No-trump declaration is entitled to greater respect than it deserves when made with the minimum strength which conventionally authorizes it. A clever player will frequently capture the odd with such a declaration, merely because the adversaries do not realize his weakness.

DECLARER'S PLAY OF A SUIT DECLARATION

The Declarer generally has a greater opportunity to display skill in the play of a suit declaration than of a No-trumper. With a suit declared, as soon as the Dummy is placed before him, he must determine which of two plans of campaign it is advisable for him to adopt: that is, he must either lead Trumps until the adversaries have no more, or he must play the ruffing game and make his Trumps separately. The latter is especially advantageous if, with his weaker Trump hand, he can take a trick or tricks that would, of necessity, be lost if he immediately exhausted all the Trumps.

The Declarer, therefore, should first look for a chance to ruff losing cards with his weak hand; when he does not find that opportunity, he should realize that the adversaries will attempt to do some ruffing themselves, and in nine cases out of ten, should exhaust the Trumps.

When the Declarer has a holding which makes him anxious that the Trump lead should come from the other side, and the Dummy contains short Trumps and a short suit (which short suit the Declarer cannot arrange for the Dummy to ruff, either because he has the same number as the Dummy, or because he has winning cards), he can sometimes induce an adverse Trump lead by opening the short suit, thus conveying to his adversaries the impression that he desires to ruff with the short Trumps.

If the Declarer have sufficient Trump length in his weak Trump hand to exhaust the adverse Trump holding, and still remain with sufficient Trumps for all possible ruffs, he should lead Trumps before taking the ruff, so as to avoid any chance of an over-ruff. An obvious case will exemplify this principle:—

The Declarer holds Ace, King, Queen, and one small Trump; the Dummy, four small; the Declarer, King, Queen, and two small Clubs, in which suit the Dummy has Ace and one small. Part of the Declarer's original scheme of play is to have the Dummy ruff his losing Club, yet to lead that suit before three rounds of Trumps would be the height of folly, as a winning card might be ruffed by an adversary or the Dummy over-ruffed.

Managing the Dummy so as to utilize all his small Trumps to the greatest advantage is one of the tests of the skill of the player of the combined hands. A simple example follows: With Hearts Trump, the Dummy puts down one small Club, and three worthless Trumps. The Declarer wins the first trick, has Ace at the head of his long Trumps; also, Ace, King, and two losing Clubs. His play is plain. He should lead his Ace and then a small Club; ruff the latter, lead a Trump from Dummy, and then the remaining losing Club, for Dummy to ruff with his last Trump.

PLAY BY DECLARER'S ADVERSARIES

The adversaries of the Declarer must realize that they are at some disadvantage in the play. The Declarer knows every card in the Dummy, but each of his opponents can at best only guess the holding of his partner. They should, therefore, strive by every means in their power to give each other all possible information.

They should always play the lowest, and (except with Ace, King, and one or more others) lead the highest of a sequence. The only case in which they should withhold information or play a false card is when such action may upset the calculations of the Declarer, and either cannot mislead the partner, or, if it do, will not affect his play. For example, with King, Queen, over an adverse Ace, Knave, 10, a false card is more than justified, as it tempts the Declarer to mould his play for another finesse; so also, in other cases in which the partner is without strength in the suit and his play is, therefore, unimportant, he may be treated as if he were a Dummy.

The advantage of forcing the strong hand is just as great in Auction as in Whist or Bridge, and as a rule it is the best play possible for the adversaries of the Declarer. The only exception is when the Dummy has an established suit and a reëntry.

Suppose, for example, with four tricks to play, the Declarer has the last Trump (Hearts), one Club, and two Diamonds. The Dummy has three winning Clubs, and the leader a Diamond and winning Spades. He knows he can force the Declarer's last Trump with a Spade, and generally this would be his wisest play; but the long Clubs in the Dummy show that the usual tactics cannot now be employed, and his only chance is to lead a Diamond hoping that his partner has one or two winners.

It goes without saying that leading a suit the weak adverse hand can trump, and upon which the strong hand can discard, is carrying out a custom most commendable at Christmas, but which at the card-table does not arouse the enthusiasm of the partner.

A player should be most careful not to indicate by some mannerism that his hand is trickless. By pulling a card before it is his turn to play, by apparent lack of interest, or by allowing himself to be wrapped in gloom, he may give the Declarer as much information as if he

spread his hand on the table.

THE SIGNAL

One of the best and most serviceable methods of giving information is by using "the signal," which is made by the play of an unnecessarily high card. For example, the Ace and King of a suit are led. The play of the 6 before the 5 constitutes a signal, as the 6 is an unnecessarily high card.

The meaning of this signal is that the maker desires the suit, in which it is made, continued. Playing in ordinary order, lower before higher, shows that the continuation of that suit is not requested. It is the old Trump signal of the game of Whist, which, inasmuch as a demand for a Trump lead is not needed in Auction, has been borrowed and transformed into a request to continue the suit. This signal was first used to mean, "I can ruff the third round," but the absurdity of limiting it to any such meaning soon became apparent, and, as it is now played, it means, "Partner, continue this suit. I have some reason for asking you so to do." The failure to give this signal may mean, "Shift the suit," but does not of necessity do so. It merely says, "Partner, I have no reason for asking you to lead this suit a third time."

This signal is a most important part of Auction tactics. It can be given on either the partner's or the Declarer's lead, should always be used when a continuation of the suit is desired, and should be watched for by the partner with the most painstaking care. The first trick sometimes furnishes this information. For example, the play of the deuce, or of any card which the partner can read as being of necessity the lowest, tells him that either the card is a singleton or that the player is not beginning a signal.

When a player is anxious to place his partner in the lead, the signal may be of the greatest possible value. Suppose, for example, he has two suits from which to choose. In one of these suits he is without strength, but his partner may have the Ace. In the other, he has the Ace himself, and his partner may have the King. If he guess the wrong suit, the Declarer will get in and take the rest of the tricks. By leading his Ace and watching the size of the card his partner plays, he can generally tell what to do. If the lowest card be played, he should shift the suit. In such a situation, if the partner wish the suit continued, and has more than two small cards, he should play the highest so as to emphasize the signal.

THE DISCARD

The discard which in Whist has been the subject of so many controversies, and which, even in Bridge, has created some discussion, does not assume nearly so great importance in Auction. The strength of the various suits having been clearly indicated by the bid, there is not as great opportunity to furnish new information by the discard.

It must not, however, be assumed, merely because the Auction discard is comparatively unimportant, that it is not worthy of consideration. True it is that there is no need to worry over any such complicated systems as strength or rotary discards. They are apt to confuse and produce misunderstandings far more damaging than any possible benefit which results when they work perfectly. The strength discard may compel the playing of a card which, if its suit be established, will win a trick, and the rotary is not always reliable, as the discarder may be void of the "next suit," or unable to discard from it because it is composed of high cards only or of necessary guards for single honors. The "odd-and-even" discard, that is, 3, 5, 7, 9, showing strength, 2, 4, 6, 8, weakness, is very satisfactory when the hands are made to order, but a certain proportion of hands fail to contain an odd card when the discarder desires to announce strength, or an even one when he has extreme weakness. The awkwardness, when using this system, of such a holding as 3, 5, 7, is self-apparent.

All these plans or fads had their innings in Whist, where important information had to be conveyed by the discard, but in Auction, they are about as necessary as pitching a curve to a blind batsman.

The plain, simple, old-fashioned discard from weakness is all that is used or required, provided it be understood that a signal in the discard means a reversal of its ordinary inference. A signal by discard (that is, for example, discarding first a 5, followed by a 2) is generally a showing of strength in that suit, and a most pronounced suggestion, if not an imperative command, that it be led at the first opportunity. The only case in which it is not an evidence of strength is when it shows a desire to ruff. The signal in the discard is most serviceable when the Declarer is playing a long suit, and the partner is in doubt which of the two remaining suits to keep guarded. In this case it may not be a command to lead, but merely a wireless message saying, "I have this suit stopped; you take care of the other."

A signal in a discard to show strength is only necessary when it is not advisable to discard once from each of the other suits, which by inference gives the same information, yet does not shorten the strong suit.

Strength information can often be transmitted by the weakness discard, just as quickly and

more simply than by the now generally abandoned strength discard. For example, the discard of the lowest card shows weakness and negatives all possibility of a strength signal, but if the first discard be as high as a 7 or 8, and the partner can read, from the general composition of his hand and the Dummy, that the discarder must hold a lower card in that suit, he gets the information at once.

Regardless of showing his partner strength or weakness, the player has ample opportunity to give evidence of skill in discarding. Too much information should never be given to the Declarer when he is in the lead and controls the situation. There are many hands in which it becomes obvious that all the adversaries of the Declarer can hope to accomplish is the saving of a slam, or the taking of one more trick. The question is not what to tell the partner to lead when he gets in, but how to win a single trick. In such a case, a bluff discard, *i.e.*, showing strength where it does not exist, is sometimes effective, although a keen Declarer is not apt to be easily deceived by any ruse so transparent. One thing to remember under such circumstances, however, is not to help the Declarer by showing weakness, so that he will know which way to finesse. In No-trumps or with the Trumps exhausted, never discard a singleton, or too many cards of a weak suit.

When a suit has been declared, it is unnecessary, by informatory discarding, to repeat the announcement of strength. This principle, just as is the case with other systems of play, is predicated upon the ability of the partner to remember the bids. If, however, he be unable to do so, information by discard will obviously be sowing seed on barren ground, and should be withheld, as the Declarer is the only one who will reap any benefit.

BLOCKING THE DUMMY

When the Declarer is playing a No-trump and the Dummy holds a long suit without reëntry, an adversary of the Declarer may have the opportunity, when he has a card stopping that suit, of blocking it and preventing the long cards from making, by holding the winning card until the Declarer has played what is necessarily his last card of the suit.

AVOID OPENING NEW SUITS

The adversaries of the Declarer should avoid opening new suits unless the situation shows it to be necessary. They should remember that when the honors of a suit are evenly divided, opening it is practically sure to cost a trick, and that the starting of any suit, which is not headed by Ace and King, or a three-card sequence, is almost invariably disadvantageous. The lead by the partner has been made with some object, and should, therefore, be returned, except when the holding of the Dummy or some other development renders such action plainly inadvisable.

Shifting suits is about as advantageous as swapping horses while crossing a stream, and the advice to return the partner's suit rather than risk a new one applies with equal force whether a No-trump or suit declaration is being played, but does not refer to the situation in which the partner evidently desires that the suit he has declared be led through strength up to him.

HOW TO RETURN PARTNER'S LEAD

When the original Third Hand returns a suit opened by his partner, he should lead the winning card, if he hold it. If without the best card, when the lead is against a No-trump declaration, it is far more important that a high card should be led through strength, and also that the holder of the length should be accurately advised as to his partner's high cards, than that he should be told the exact number of small ones. Therefore, when playing a No-trumper, the highest card should be returned from either three or two remaining. With four remaining (five originally), the holding may be longer than that of the original leader, and, therefore, the lowest should be led. If the partner be a keen counter of small cards, the next to the lowest is doubtless more informatory and just as advantageous as the lowest. When the original Third Hand returns a suit opened by his partner against a suit declaration, there is some difference of opinion among good players as to whether he should follow the Whist rule, which is the most informatory as to number, and lead the lowest of three remaining, the higher of two; or whether it is unwise to complicate matters by distinguishing between this case and the return when a No-trump is being played. The question is not very important as long as partners understand which convention is being used.

None of these rules applies in the case, readily distinguishable, in which the adverse strength in the suit is in the Dummy, and it is necessary to hold a high card over that hand; the play must then be made to fit the situation, and not according to any hard-and-fast principle.

THE FINESSE

The cards of the Dummy being exposed make it easy for the player sitting back of him to determine when to finesse. As the object of a finesse is to catch a high card on the right, it is folly to finesse against nothing—for example, the leader opens with Knave against a No-trump; the Third Hand has King and others; when the Dummy has the Queen, it is obvious the King should not be played unless the Queen cover the Knave, but when the Dummy holds only worthless cards, the Third Hand should play the King, as, should he finesse against nothing, he would allow the Queen to win. The leader has opened either from Ace, Knave, Ten, or a suit headed by a Knave-Ten combination. In the former case the play of the King insures every trick; in the latter, it helps clear the suit. It, therefore, is an example of the rule not to finesse when the Dummy has nothing.

An apparent exception to this rule occurs when the lead is made in answer to a declaration, or as an evident effort to find the partner's strength. For example, the original Third Hand, with six Hearts headed by King, Ten, and two reëntries, has called Hearts. The Declarer is playing a No-trumper, and the opening is the Knave of Hearts. The Dummy is without strength. In that case, the Declarer is marked with both the Ace and Queen of Hearts. The Third Hand should, therefore, play small. The play of the King cannot be of any benefit, and should the Declarer have the Nine, will be most expensive. This really is not a finesse against nothing, but, the position of the winning cards being marked, is merely a conservation of strength.

The same general principle applies in many similar cases; when, however, a small card is led, the Third Hand should not finesse, unless the Dummy contain some high card.

Playing No-trump, the following finesses are advisable over the Dummy:—

WHEN DUMMY HAS	FINESSE
King	Ace, Queen
	Ace, Knave
	Ace, Ten
King, Knave	Ace, Ten
	Ace, Nine
King, Ten	Ace, Nine
Queen	Ace, Knave
	Ace, Ten
	King, Knave
	King, Ten
Knave	Ace, Ten
	King, Ten
	Queen, Ten

Do not, however, except with a fourchette, finesse against Queen or Knave singly guarded, when it is evident that the Declarer and Dummy hold only four cards of the suit, and the Ace or King is marked with the leader.

When playing No-trump, as a rule do not finesse if so doing will block the partner's suit.

X

SCORING AND SCORE-SHEETS

The score is a very important incident of the game of Auction, and to keep it properly requires considerable care and skill.

The figures frequently run into high numbers on both sides, and when the rubber continues during three hotly contested games, they become quite voluminous.

The score-sheet should be left on the table, and the writing on it should be of such size that it can be seen at a glance. This saves time and trouble, as it relieves the players from the necessity of asking the state of the score.

In some clubs two scores are kept, so that, in the only too probable contingency of a mistake being made, it may invariably be detected. This, however, is unnecessary, and at times

confusing. The extra sheet is also apt to prove annoying, because of the space it occupies upon the table. One score is quite sufficient, if it be competently kept, and each entry, as well as the additions, verified.

There are two totally different types of Auction score-sheets. The one which is used in perhaps ninety per cent. of the private games, and, strange as it may seem, in many clubs, has absolutely no excuse for its existence, except that it was the first to be introduced and has the reputation of being universally used in foreign countries. It requires scoring above and below the line, which is a most cumbersome and dilatory proposition. Keeping tally by this method involves, at the end of a rubber, long mathematical problems, which, as the scorer is then in a hurry, frequently result in serious, and at times undiscovered, mistakes.

The modern system adopted in the up-to-date clubs, in which the game has received its most scientific development, and in the highest class of social games, does away with the antiquated methods and exacting mathematical problems of the above- and below-the-line system, by using a form of score-sheet which allows and encourages the scorer to mentally compute simple sums during the progress of the rubber. By the elimination of complicated figuring, it minimizes the opportunity for mistake, and delay at the end of the rubber.

All players are doubtless familiar with the old system of above-and below-the-line scoring, but only three classes now use it:

- A. Those who have never had the modern system and its advantages called to their attention.
- B. Those who believe that, having once become accustomed to any method, it should never be changed for a better.
- C. Those who believe that, because foreign clubs adopt a certain method, we should do the same.

It is probably wasting time to attempt to convert any representative of either B or C, and fortunately for the intelligence of American card players there are comparatively few who deserve to be included in either of these classifications.

Class A, however, comprises the vast majority of Auction players, who have either never had the modern system of scoring called to their attention, or, if they have seen it, have not thoroughly grasped its numerous advantages, and have continued the old method merely because they were more familiar with it and did not perfectly understand the new. It is not putting the matter too strongly to assert that every intelligent scorer, who gives the new plan a thorough test, never returns to the trials and vexations incident to keeping the tally above and below the line.

Sample sheets are appended, showing the up-to-date scoring-blank as it appears at the beginning of the rubber; the same sheet with a rubber scored, the net totals being computed at the end of each game; and also with the same rubber scored, the net totals being computed at the end of each deal. One scorer will prefer to make up his totals at the end of a game, another will elect to compute them at the termination of each deal; but either way the advantages of the score-sheet are apparent.

It goes without saying that any system which allows a player to see at a glance, not only the score of the game, but also the exact status of the rubber, is more advantageous than one which, until some time after the rubber is completed, may leave him in the dark as to whether he is ahead or behind. Some players allow, whether they or their opponents are in the lead upon the total score of the rubber, to affect their declarations and doubles. This practice cannot be enthusiastically commended, but all must admit that for such players the new scoring system is most essential.

It is, however, mainly as a labor- and time-saving device that the new plan is advocated. If any one doubt, let him keep the score of any rubber under the old method while the same rubber is being scored by some one familiar with the advantages of the new. The result is sure to be most convincing. Under the new method, the short sums in addition or subtraction are mentally computed, during the deal of the cards, etc. This occupies waste time only, and at the end of the rubber, leaves a very simple, frequently nothing more than a mental, problem.

It has been estimated that during an evening's play, at least one more rubber can be completed when the scoring is conducted under the new method.

The various score-sheets, all showing the same rubber, follow.

SAMPLE OF THE NEW SCORE-SHEET WITHOUT ANY ENTRY

OUR SCORE			OPPONENTS' SCORE		
TRICKS	HONORS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TRICKS	HONORS

SAMPLE OF NEW FORM OF SCORE-SHEET SHOWING A RUBBER SCORED WITH NET
TOTALS COMPUTED AT END OF EACH GAME

OUR SCORE			OPPONENTS' SCORE		
TRICKS	HONORS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TRICKS	HONORS
16	32			18	72
	100				30
60	60	268	120		
		(148)			
	216	266		27	18
20	30	414	145	48	52
		(269)			200
	64	249			100
	36	518	356	24	32
21	56				
36	36				
		(162)			
		250			
		412			

The score included in the circle is the *net* total at the end of each game. It is obtained by subtracting the smaller score from the larger; as, for example, in the first game above, 120 from 268, which leaves a net of 148. If a scorer find it more satisfactory to subtract when the figures are in line, he can always write the smaller amount under the larger; as, for example, the 120 under the 268.

SAMPLE OF NEW FORM OF SCORE-SHEET SHOWING SAME RUBBER SCORED WITH
NET TOTALS COMPUTED AT END OF EACH DEAL

OUR SCORE			OPPONENTS' SCORE		
TRICKS	HONORS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TRICKS	HONORS
16	32	48			
	100	28	42	18	72
60	60	148			30
		103		27	18
	216	319			
20	30	369			
		269		48	52
	64	133			200
	36	69			100
		13		24	32

21	56	90
36	36	162
		<u>250</u>
		412

All figures under the head of totals are net, and show at the end of each deal the exact status of the rubber. It is also possible, when the above method is employed, to further reduce the amount of bookkeeping by making only one entry whenever one pair scores honors and the other a penalty. This method could have been employed above, deal 3 of game 1, by merely entering 70 under "Our Score" Honors, and also in deal 2 of game 3, by entering 64 under "Opponents' Score" Honors.

SAMPLE SHOWING SAME RUBBER SCORED UNDER OLD SYSTEM WITH LONG ADDITIONS AND SUBTRACTION AT END OF RUBBER

WE	THEY
36	
56	
36	32
64	100
30	200
216	52
60	18
100	30
32	72
16	18
60	
20	27
	48
21	<u>24</u>
36	621
<u>250</u>	
1033	
<u>621</u>	
412	

THE SCORE OF THE RUBBERS IS BEST KEPT ON A SHEET OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTER

SCORE BY RUBBERS												
NAMES	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
TOTAL												

THE FOLLOWING SHOWS HOW THIS SCORE SHOULD BE KEPT

SCORE BY RUBBERS												
NAMES	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Smith	2		2			2		3		3		2
Jones		2		2		6		5		5		6
Brown	2		5		5		4		6		6	

White	2		1		1		1		X	X	X	X
Green			3		1		1		3		4	
King			3		1		1		3		4	
TOTAL	4	4	8	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	10	10

It is always well to total at the end of each rubber and to note the size of the rubber. These precautions make it easy to correct mistakes, should any occur.

XI

THE LAWS

In 1902, some years before Auction had been heard of in the United States, a number of the best-known clubs of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and other cities were represented at a meeting held in New York for the purpose of drafting a code of Bridge Laws to be used by the clubs of this country. The so-called "American Laws of Bridge" were adopted, and duly published. It was then expected that they would be universally accepted.

In a few months, however, some clubs, including several that had been represented at the meeting, found that certain penalties of the "American Laws" were not popular with their members. One club after another made alterations or adopted its own code, so that the object in calling the meeting, namely, club uniformity, was soon as far as ever from being attained. Gradually, however, the various clubs began to recognize that the Whist Club of New York deserved to be ranked as the most conservative and representative card-playing organization in the United States. They realized that it devoted its attention entirely to card games, and included in its membership not only the most expert players of the metropolis, but also of many other cities. It was but natural, therefore, that the admirable Bridge Code of the Whist Club should be accepted by one club after another, until in the end the desideratum of the drafters of the American Laws was virtually obtained.

When, in 1909-10, Auction, with its irresistible attractions, in an incredibly brief space of time made Bridge in this country a game of the past, the only Auction laws available had been drafted in London by a joint committee of the Portland and Bath Clubs. They were taken from the rules of Bridge, which were altered only when necessary to comply with the requirements of the new game. It is probable that the intent of the members of the Bath-Portland Committee was merely to meet an immediate demand, and that they expected to revise their own code as soon as wider experience with the game demonstrated just what was needed.

Under these circumstances, it was to be expected that the Whist Club of New York would promulgate a code of Auction laws which would be accepted from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The club, however, did not act hastily, and it was not until May, 1910, that it issued its first edition of "The Laws of Auction Bridge." This was amended in 1911, and in 1912 subjected to a most thorough and comprehensive revision.

Until the adoption of a national code by an American congress of Auction players, an event not likely to occur, it is doubtless for the best interest of Auction in this country that the laws of the Whist Club of New York be generally followed. Uniformity is most important; otherwise, players from one city, visiting another, are sure to find local conditions which will, temporarily at least, prove something of a handicap.

When any improvement is suggested, which, after due trial, meets with local favor, it would seem wise that such suggestion, whether it emanate from a club committee or an individual, be forwarded to the Card Committee of the Whist Club of New York. It may be authoritatively stated that all such ideas will be cordially received, thoroughly considered, and, if approved, incorporated in the club code at its next revision.

Appended hereto will be found "The Laws of Auction Bridge" as published by the Whist Club of New York, November, 1912. These laws should be carefully read, if not studied, by every devotee of the game. No matter how familiar a player may have been with the old laws, he will find an examination of the new to be advisable, as the changes are both numerous and important. If it has not been his practice to keep in touch with Auction legislation, he should realize that a close acquaintance with the code which governs the game he is playing will prove most beneficial.

As the laws speak for themselves, it is not necessary to explain them, or even to point out the various alterations. The wording in many cases has been materially changed, in order to clarify and simplify. Some penalties that seemed too severe have been reduced, and certain modifications have been made which appear to be in the line of modern thought. Special attention is called to the elimination of the law which prevented consultation as to the enforcement of a penalty, and also of the law which provided that when a wrong penalty was claimed, none could be enforced. The laws referring to cards exposed after the completion of the deal, and before the beginning of the play, have been materially changed, and the law covering insufficient and impossible declarations has been altered and redrafted. A point worthy of special attention is Law 52 of the Revised Code. It covers the case, which occurs with some frequency, of a player making an insufficient bid and correcting it before action is taken by any other player. Under the old rule, a declaration once made could not be altered, but now when the player corrects himself, as, for example, "Two Hearts—I mean three Hearts"; or "Two Spades—I should say, two Royals," the proper declaration is allowed without penalty.

The laws follow.

THE LAWS OF AUCTION BRIDGE

THE RUBBER

1. The partners first winning two games win the rubber. If the first two games decide the rubber, a third is not played.

SCORING

2. A game consists of thirty points obtained by tricks alone, exclusive of any points counted for honors, chicane, slam, little slam, bonus or undertricks.

3. Every deal is played out, and any points in excess of the thirty necessary for the game are counted.

4. When the declarer wins the number of tricks bid, each one above six counts towards the game: two points when spades are trumps, six when clubs are trumps, seven when diamonds are trumps, eight when hearts are trumps, nine when royal spades are trumps and ten when there are no trumps.

5. Honors are ace, king, queen, knave and ten of the trump suit; or the aces when no trump is declared.

6. Honors are credited in the honor column to the original holders, being valued as follows:

—

When a Trump is Declared

3 honors held between partners equal value of	3 tricks
4 honors held between partners equal value of	4 tricks
5 honors held between partners equal value of	5 tricks
4 honors held in 1 hand equal value of	8 tricks
4 honors held in 1 hand {5th in partner's hand) equal value of	9 tricks
5 honors held in 1 hand equal value of	10 tricks

When no Trump is Declared

3 aces held between partners count	30 tricks
4 aces held between partners count	40 tricks
4 aces held in one hand count	100 tricks

7. Slam is made when seven by cards is scored by either side, independently of tricks taken as penalty for the revoke; it adds forty points to the honor count.^[24]

8. Little slam is made when six by cards is similarly scored; it adds twenty points to the honor count.^[25]

9. Chicane (one hand void of trumps) is equal in value to simple honors, *i.e.*, if the partners, one of whom has chicane, score honors, it adds the value of three honors to their honor score; if the adversaries score honors it deducts that value from theirs. Double chicane (both hands void of trumps) is equal in value to four honors, and that value must be deducted from the honor score of the adversaries.

10. The value of honors, slam, little slam or chicane, is not affected by doubling or

redoubling.

11. At the conclusion of a rubber the trick and honor scores of each side are added, and two hundred and fifty points added to the score of the winners. The difference between the completed scores is the number of points of the rubber.

12. A proven error in the honor score may be corrected at any time before the score of the rubber has been made up and agreed upon.

13. A proven error in the trick score may be corrected prior to the conclusion of the game in which it occurred. Such game shall not be considered concluded until a declaration has been made in the following game, or if it be the final game of the rubber, until the score has been made up and agreed upon.

CUTTING

14. In cutting, the ace is the lowest card; as between cards of otherwise equal value, the lowest is the heart, next the diamond, next the club, and highest the spade.

15. Every player must cut from the same pack.

16. Should a player expose more than one card, the highest is his cut.

FORMING TABLES

17. The prior right of playing is with those first in the room. If there are more than four candidates of equal standing, the privilege of playing is decided by cutting. The four who cut the lowest cards play first.

18. After the table is formed the players cut to decide upon partners, the two lower playing against the two higher. The lowest is the dealer who has choice of cards and seats, and who, having made his selection, must abide by it.

19. Six players constitute a complete table.

20. The right to succeed any player who may retire is acquired by announcing the desire to do so, and such announcement shall constitute a prior right to the first vacancy.

CUTTING OUT

21. If, at the end of a rubber, admission is claimed by one or two candidates, the player or players having played the greatest number of consecutive rubbers shall withdraw; but when all have played the same number, they must cut to decide upon the outgoers; the highest are out.^[26]

RIGHT OF ENTRY

22. A candidate desiring to enter a table must declare his intention before any player at the table cuts a card, whether for the purpose of beginning a new rubber or of cutting out.

23. In the formation of new tables candidates who have not played at any existing table have the prior right of entry. Others decide their right to admission by cutting.

24. When one or more players belonging to an existing table aid in making up a new one he or they shall be the last to cut out.

25. A player who cuts into one table, while belonging to another, forfeits his prior right of reentry into the latter, unless he has helped to form a new table. In this event he may signify his intention of returning to his original table when his place at the new one can be filled.

26. Should any player leave a table during the progress of a rubber, he may, with the consent of the three others, appoint a substitute to play during his absence; but such appointment shall become void upon the conclusion of the rubber, and shall not in any way affect the substitute's rights.

27. If any player break up a table the others have a prior right elsewhere.

SHUFFLING

28. The pack must not be shuffled below the table nor so that the face of any card may be seen.

29. The dealer's partner must collect the cards from the preceding deal and has the right to shuffle first. Each player has the right to shuffle subsequently. The dealer has the right to shuffle last; but, should a card or cards be seen during his shuffling, or while giving the pack to be cut, he must re-shuffle.

30. After shuffling, the cards properly collected must be placed face downward to the left of the next dealer, where they must remain untouched until the play with the other pack is finished.

THE DEAL

31. Each player deals in his turn; the order of dealing is to the left.

32. The player on the dealer's right cuts the pack, and in dividing it he must leave not fewer than four cards in each packet; if in cutting or in replacing one of the two packets a card is exposed, or if there is any confusion or doubt as to the exact place in which the pack was divided, there must be a fresh cut.

33. When the player whose duty it is to cut has once separated the pack, he can neither re-shuffle nor re-cut, except as provided in Law 32.

34. Should the dealer shuffle the cards after the cut, the pack must be cut again.

35. The fifty-two cards shall be dealt face downward. The deal is not completed until the last card has been dealt.

36. In the event of a misdeal the cards must be dealt again by the same player.

A NEW DEAL

37. There *must* be a new deal—

a If the cards are not dealt into four packets, one at a time and in regular rotation, beginning at the dealer's left.

b If, during a deal, or during the play, the pack is proven incorrect or imperfect.

c If any card is faced in the pack or is exposed during the deal on, above or below the table.

d If any player has dealt to him a greater number of cards than thirteen, whether discovered before or during the play.

e If the dealer deal two cards at once and then deal a third before correcting the error.

f If the dealer omit to have the pack cut and either adversary calls attention to the fact prior to the completion of the deal and before either adversary has looked at any of his cards.

g If the last card does not come in its regular order to the dealer.

38. Should three players have their right number of cards, the fourth, less, and not discover such deficiency until he has played, the deal stands; he, not being dummy, is answerable for any established revoke he may have made as if the missing card or cards had been in his hand. Any player may search the other pack for it or them.

39. If, during the play, a pack be proven incorrect, such proof renders the current deal void but does not affect any prior score. (See Law 37 b.) If during or at the conclusion of the play one player be found to hold more than the proper number of cards and another have an equal number less, the deal is void.

40. A player dealing out of turn or with the adversaries' cards may be corrected before the last card is dealt, otherwise the deal must stand, and the game proceed as if the deal had been correct, the player to his left dealing the next hand. A player who has looked at any of his cards may not correct such deal, nor may his partner.

41. A player can neither cut, shuffle nor deal for his partner without the permission of his adversaries.

DECLARING TRUMPS

42. The dealer, having examined his hand, must declare to win at least one odd trick, either with a declared suit, or at "no trumps."

43. After the dealer has made his declaration, each player in turn, commencing with the player on the dealer's left, has the right to pass, to make a higher declaration, to double the last declaration made, or to redouble a declaration which has been doubled, subject to the provisions of Law 54.

44. A declaration of a greater number of tricks in a suit of lower value, which equals the last declaration in value of points, shall be considered a higher declaration—*e.g.*, a declaration of "Three Spades" is a higher declaration than "One Club."

45. A player in his turn may overbid the previous adverse declaration any number of times, and may also overbid his partner, but he cannot overbid his own declaration which has been passed by the three others.

46. The player who makes the final declaration shall play the combined hands of himself and his partner (the latter becoming dummy), unless the winning suit was first bid by the partner, in which case he, no matter what bids have intervened shall play the hand.

47. When the player of the two hands (hereinafter termed "the declarer") wins at least as many tricks as he declared, he scores the full value of the tricks won (see Laws 4 and 6). When he fails, neither the declarer nor his adversaries score anything towards the game, but his adversaries score in the honor column fifty points for each under-trick—*i.e.*, each trick short of the number declared; or, if the declaration has been doubled, or redoubled, one hundred or two hundred respectively for each such trick.

48. The loss on the original declaration by the dealer of "One Spade" is limited to one hundred points whether doubled or not, unless redoubled. Honors are scored as held.

49. If a player make a declaration (other than passing) out of turn, either adversary may demand a new deal, or may allow the declaration so made to stand, in which case the bidding shall continue as if the declaration had been in order.

50. If a player make an insufficient or impossible declaration either adversary may demand that it be penalized, provided such demand be made before an adversary has passed, doubled or declared. In case of an insufficient declaration the penalty is that the declarer must make his bid sufficient and his partner is debarred from making any further declaration unless an adversary subsequently bids or doubles. In case of an impossible declaration the penalty is that the declarer is considered to have bid to take all the tricks and his partner cannot further declare unless an adversary subsequently bids or doubles. Either adversary, instead of accepting the impossible declaration, may demand a new deal or may treat his own or his partner's last previous declaration as final.

51. If, after the final declaration has been made, an adversary of the declarer give his partner any information as to any previous declaration, whether made by himself or an adversary, the declarer may call a lead from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead; but a player is entitled to inquire, at any time during the play of the hand, what was the final declaration.

52. A declaration legitimately made cannot be altered after the next player has passed, declared or doubled. Prior to such action by the next player, a declaration inadvertently made may be corrected.

DOUBLING AND REDOUBLING

53. The effect of doubling and redoubling is that the value of each trick over six is doubled or quadrupled, as provided in Law 4; but it does not alter the value of a declaration—*e.g.*, a declaration of "Three Clubs" is higher than "Two Royal Spades" even if the "Royal Spade" declaration has been doubled.

54. Any declaration can be doubled and redoubled once, but not more; a player cannot double his partner's declaration, nor redouble his partner's double, but he may redouble a declaration of his partner which has been doubled by an adversary.

55. The act of doubling, or redoubling, reopens the bidding. When a declaration has been doubled or redoubled, any player, including the declarer or his partner, can in his proper turn make a further declaration of higher value.

56. When a player whose declaration has been doubled wins the declared number of tricks, he scores a bonus of fifty points in the honor column, and a further fifty points for each additional trick. If he or his partner has redoubled, the bonus is doubled.

57. If a player double out of turn, either adversary may demand a new deal.

58. When the final declaration has been made the play shall begin, and the player on the left of the declarer shall lead.

DUMMY

59. As soon as the player to the left of the declarer has led, the declarer's partner shall place his cards face upward on the table, and the duty of playing the cards from that hand shall devolve upon the declarer.

60. Before placing his cards upon the table the declarer's partner has all the rights of a player, but after so doing takes no part whatever in the play, except that he has the right:—

a To ask the declarer whether he has any of a suit in which he has renounced;

b To call the declarer's attention to the fact that too many or too few cards have been played to a trick;

c To correct the claim of either adversary to a penalty to which the latter is not entitled;

d To call attention to the fact that a trick has been erroneously taken by either side;

e To participate in the discussion of any disputed question of fact after it has arisen between the declarer and either adversary;

f To correct an erroneous score.

61. Should the declarer's partner call attention to any other incident of the play in consequence of which any penalty might have been exacted, the declarer is precluded from exacting such penalty.

62. If the declarer's partner, by touching a card or otherwise, suggest the play of a card from dummy, either adversary may call upon the declarer to play or not play the card suggested.

63. Dummy is not liable to the penalty for a revoke; if he revoke and the error be not discovered until the trick is turned and quitted, whether by the rightful winners or not, the trick must stand.

64. A card from the declarer's own hand is not played until actually quitted; but should he name or touch a card in the dummy, such card is considered as played unless he, in touching the card, say, "I arrange," or words to that effect. If he simultaneously touch two or more such cards, he may elect which one to play.

CARDS EXPOSED BEFORE PLAY

65. If, after the cards have been dealt, and before the trump declaration has been finally determined, any player lead or expose a card, the partner of the offending player may not make any further bid or double during that hand, and the card is subject to call. When the partner of the offending player is the original leader, the declarer may prohibit the suit of the exposed card being the initial lead.

66. If, after the final declaration has been made and before a card is led, the partner of the leader to the first trick expose a card, the declarer may, in addition to calling the card, prohibit the lead of the suit of the exposed card; should the rightful leader expose a card it is subject to call.

CARDS EXPOSED DURING PLAY

67. All cards exposed after the original lead by the declarer's adversaries are liable to be called, and such cards must be left face upward on the table.

68. The following are exposed cards:—

1st. Two or more cards played at once.

2d. Any card dropped with its face upward on the table, even though snatched up so quickly that it cannot be named.

3d. Any card so held by a player that his partner sees any portion of its face.

4th. Any card mentioned by either adversary as being held by him or his partner.

69. A card dropped on the floor or elsewhere below the table or so held that an adversary but not the partner sees it, is not an exposed card.

70. If two or more cards are played at once by either of the declarer's adversaries, the declarer shall have the right to call any one of such cards to the current trick, and the other card or cards are exposed.

71. If, without waiting for his partner to play, either of the declarer's adversaries play or lead a winning card, as against the declarer and dummy, and continue (without waiting for his partner to play) to lead several such cards, the declarer may demand that the partner of the player in fault win, if he can, the first or any other of these tricks, and the other cards thus improperly played are exposed cards.

72. If either or both of the declarer's adversaries throw his or their cards on the table face upward, such cards are exposed and are liable to be called; but if either adversary retain his hand he cannot be forced to abandon it. Cards exposed by the declarer are not liable to be called. If the declarer say, "I have the rest," or any other words indicating that the remaining tricks or any number thereof are his, he may be required to place his cards face upward on the table. His adversaries are not liable to have any of their cards called should they thereupon expose them.

73. If a player who has rendered himself liable to have the highest or lowest of a suit called (Laws 80, 86 and 92) fail to play as directed, or if, when called on to lead one suit he lead another, having in his hand one or more cards of the suit demanded (Laws 76 and 93), or if, called upon to win or lose a trick, fail to do so when he can (Laws 71, 80 and 92), or if, when called upon not to play a suit, fail to play as directed (Laws 65 and 66), he is liable to the penalty for revoke, unless such play be corrected before the trick is turned and quitted.

74. A player cannot be compelled to play a card which would oblige him to revoke.

75. The call of an exposed card may be repeated until such card has been played.

LEADS OUT OF TURN

76. If either of the declarer's adversaries lead out of turn the declarer may either treat the card so led as an exposed card or may call a suit as soon as it is the turn of either adversary to lead.

77. If the declarer lead out of turn, either from his own hand or from dummy, he incurs no penalty; but he may not rectify the error after the second hand has played.

78. If any player lead out of turn and the three others follow, the trick is complete and the error cannot be rectified; but if only the second, or second and third play to the false lead, their cards may be taken back; there is no penalty against any except the original offender, who, if he be one of the declarer's adversaries, may be penalized as provided in Law 76.

79. If a player called on to lead a suit has none of it, the penalty is paid.

CARDS PLAYED IN ERROR

80. Should the fourth hand, not being dummy or declarer, play before the second, the latter may be called upon to play his highest or lowest card of the suit played, or to win or lose the trick.

81. If any one, not being dummy, omit playing to a trick and such error is not corrected until he has played to the next, the adversaries or either of them may claim a new deal; should either decide that the deal is to stand, the surplus card at the end of the hand is considered to have been played to the imperfect trick, but does not constitute a revoke therein.

82. When any one, except dummy, plays two or more cards to the same trick and the mistake is not corrected, he is answerable for any consequent revokes he may have made. When during the play the error is detected, the tricks may be counted face downward, to see if any contain more than four cards; should this be the case, the trick which contains a surplus card or cards may be examined and the card or cards restored to the original holder, who (not being dummy) shall be liable for any revoke he may meanwhile have made.

THE REVOKE^[27]

83. A revoke occurs when a player, other than dummy, holding one or more cards of the suit led, plays a card of a different suit. It becomes an established revoke if the trick in which it occurs is turned and quitted by the rightful winners (*i.e.*, the hand removed from the trick after it has been turned face downward on the table); or if either the revoking player or his partner, whether in turn or otherwise, lead or play to the following trick.

84. The penalty for each established revoke is:—

(a) When the declarer revokes, his adversaries add 150 points to their score in the honor column, in addition to any penalty which he may have incurred for not making good his declaration.

(b) If either of the adversaries revoke, the declarer may either add 150 points to his

score in the honor column, or may take three tricks from his opponents and add them to his own. Such tricks may assist the declarer to make good his declaration, but shall not entitle him to score any bonus in the honor column, in the case of the declaration having been doubled or re-doubled.

(c) When more than one revoke is made by the same side during the play of the hand the penalty for each revoke after the first, shall be 100 points in the honor column.

A revoking side cannot score, except for honors or chicane.

85. A player may ask his partner if he has a card of the suit which he has renounced; should the question be asked before the trick is turned and quitted, subsequent turning and quitting does not establish a revoke, and the error may be corrected unless the question is answered in the negative, or unless the revoking player or his partner has led or played to the following trick.

86. If a player correct his mistake in time to save a revoke, any player or players who have followed him may withdraw their cards and substitute others, and the cards so withdrawn are not exposed. If the player in fault is one of the declarer's adversaries, the card played in error is exposed and the declarer may call it whenever he pleases; or he may require the offender to play his highest or lowest card of the suit to the trick, but this penalty cannot be exacted from the declarer.

87. At the end of a hand the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks. If the cards have been mixed the claim may be urged and proved if possible; but no proof is necessary and the claim is established if, after it has been made, the accused player or his partner mix the cards before they have been sufficiently examined by the adversaries.

88. A revoke must be claimed before the cards have been cut for the following deal.

89. Should both sides revoke, the only score permitted shall be for honors in trumps or chicane. If one side revoke more than once, the penalty of 100 points for each extra revoke shall then be scored by the other side.

GENERAL RULES

90. Once a trick is complete, turned and quitted, it must not be looked at (except under Law 82) until the end of the hand.

91. Any player during the play of a trick or after the four cards are played, and before they are touched for the purpose of gathering them together, may demand that the cards be placed before their respective players.

92. If either of the declarer's adversaries, prior to his partner playing, call attention to the trick, either by saying it is his, or without being requested so to do, by naming his card or drawing it towards him, the declarer may require such partner to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick.

93. Either of the declarer's adversaries may call his partner's attention to the fact that he is about to play or lead out of turn; but if, during the play of a hand, he make any unauthorized reference to any incident of the play, or of any bid previously made, the declarer may call a suit from the adversary whose turn it is next to lead.

94. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred the offender is bound to give reasonable time for the decision of his adversaries.

NEW CARDS

95. Unless a pack is imperfect, no player shall have the right to call for one new pack. If fresh cards are demanded, two packs must be furnished. If they are produced during a rubber, the adversaries shall have the choice of the new cards. If it is the beginning of a new rubber, the dealer, whether he or one of his adversaries is the party calling for the new cards, shall have the choice. New cards must be called for before the pack is cut for a new deal.

96. A card or cards torn or marked must be replaced by agreement or new cards furnished.

BYSTANDERS

97. While a bystander, by agreement among the players, may decide any question, he should not say anything unless appealed to; and if he make any remark which calls attention to an oversight affecting the score, or to the exaction of a penalty, he is liable to be called upon by the players to pay the stakes (not extras) lost.

ETIQUETTE OF AUCTION BRIDGE

In Auction Bridge slight intimations convey much information. A code is compiled for the purpose of succinctly stating laws and for fixing penalties for an offense. To offend against etiquette is far more serious than to offend against a law; for, while in the latter case the offender is subject to the prescribed penalties, in the former his adversaries have no redress.

1. Declarations should be made in a simple manner, thus: "One Heart," "one No-trump," or "I pass," or "I double"; they should be made orally and not by gesture.

2. Aside from his legitimate declaration, a player should not give any indication by word or gesture as to the nature of his hand, or as to his pleasure or displeasure at a play, a bid or a double.

3. If a player demand that the cards be placed, he should do so for his own information and not to call his partner's attention to any card or play.

4. No player, other than the declarer, should lead until the preceding trick is turned and quitted; nor, after having led a winning card, should he draw another from his hand before his partner has played to the current trick.

5. A player should not play a card with such emphasis as to draw attention to it. Nor should he detach one card from his hand and subsequently play another.

6. A player should not purposely incur a penalty because he is willing to pay it, nor should he make a second revoke to conceal a first.

7. Players should avoid discussion and refrain from talking during the play, as it may be annoying to players at the table or to those at other tables in the room.

8. The dummy should not leave his seat for the purpose of watching his partner's play, neither should he call attention to the score nor to any card or cards that he or the other players hold, nor to any bid previously made.

9. If a player say "I have the rest," or any words indicating the remaining tricks are his, and one or both of the other players should expose his or their cards, or request him to play out the hand, he should not allow any information so obtained to influence his play nor take any finesse not announced by him at the time of making such claim, unless it had been previously proven to be a winner.

10. If a player concede in error one or more tricks, the concession should stand.

11. A player having been cut out of one table should not seek admission into another unless willing to cut for the privilege of entry.

12. No player should look at any of his cards until the deal is completed.

DECISIONS BY THE CARD COMMITTEE OF THE WHIST CLUB OF NEW YORK

Since the adoption of the foregoing code, the Card Committee of the Whist Club of New York has rendered the following decisions, interpreting certain laws that have caused discussion. The cases in question have arisen in various localities,—Number 6, for example, coming from St. Louis, Number 7 from Northern New York, and Number 8 from Mexico.

CASE 1

A bids out of turn. Y and Z consult as to whether they shall allow the declaration to stand or demand a new deal. B claims that, by reason of the consultation, the right to enforce a penalty is lost.

DECISION

Rule 49 does not prohibit consultation. It provides that "either adversary may demand a new deal or allow the declaration to stand." This obviously only means that the decision first made by either shall be final. The old law prohibiting consultation has been stricken from the code, and the action seems wise, as such a question as, "Will you enforce the penalty, or shall I?" is really a consultation, and consequently an evasion of the law.

There does not seem to be any sound reason for preventing partners entitled to a penalty or choice of penalties from consulting, and as the laws at present stand, there is

unquestionably nothing prohibiting it.

B's claim, therefore, is not allowed.

CASE 2

A bids two Hearts, Y bids two Diamonds,—B demands that the Y declaration be made sufficient. Y says, "I correct my declaration to three Diamonds." B passes, Z bids three No-trumps. A claims that Z has no right to bid.

DECISION

Law 50 provides that "in case of an insufficient declaration ... the partner is debarred from making any further declaration." This exactly covers the case in question. True it is that Law 52 provides that, prior to the next player passing, declaring, or doubling, a declaration inadvertently made may be corrected. The obvious intent of this law is that it shall apply when a player says, "Two Diamonds—I mean, three Diamonds"; or, "Two Spades—I mean two Royals"; and that such correction shall be allowed without penalty if the declaration has really been inadvertently made and neither adversary has taken any action whatever. We interpret 52 by reading into it the additional words, "or either adversary calls attention to the insufficient declaration." The construction put upon 52 by Y would result in nullifying a most important part of 50.

The claim of A is sustained.

CASE 3

At the conclusion of the play the cards are turned face downward preparatory to the next deal. It is then discovered that the pack contains two Queens of Clubs and no Knave of Clubs. The score has been claimed and admitted, but not recorded.

Is the deal which has just been completed, void?

DECISION

Rule 39 provides that "If, *during the play*, a pack be proven incorrect, such proof renders the *current* deal void, but does not affect any prior score."

"Current" may be defined as "in actual progress," "belonging to the time immediately passing."

It seems clear, therefore, that as the discovery of the imperfection did not occur during "the current deal," the result of it becomes "a prior score," which under the terms of the rule is not affected.

CASE 4

A player belonging to one table expresses his desire to enter another, and cuts in. At the end of the rubber he claims that he is not obliged to cut with the others.

DECISION

Rule 24 provides that "When one or more players belonging to an existing table aid in making up a new one, he or they shall be the last to cut out." This rule applies only when a player leaves an existing table to help make up another, when, without him, there would not be four players for the new table.

When a player leaves a table and cuts into another, his presence not being required to complete the table he enters, he has the same standing as the others at that table.

CASE 5

A player belonging to one table expresses his desire to join another, cuts for the privilege of entering in accordance with Rule 23, and fails to cut in. At the end of the rubber, must he cut again?

DECISION

By his first cut he lost his rights at his former table and became a member of the new table; at the end of the rubber he has the right to enter without cutting.

CASE 6

The bidding in an Auction deal was as follows:—

	1st Round	2d Round	3d Round
North	3 Royals	Redouble	Double
East	No	No	No
South	4 Hearts	No	Double
West	Double	6 Clubs	Claims new deal

The deal was played and resulted in the Declarer taking six tricks, a loss of 600. The question is whether West's claim should be sustained or this score counted, it being a part of the case stated that the declaration which was the subject of complaint was made inadvertently.

DECISION

Law 54 provides that "A player cannot redouble his partner's double," but does not penalize such action. The prohibition is intended to prevent an increase in the value of the tricks and a penalty is not attached, as the additional double is generally a careless act, not likely to materially benefit the offending player.

It goes without saying that any such double is most irregular, and any suggestion of strength thereby conveyed will not be used by an honorable partner. The same comment applies to the remark, sometimes made, "Partner, I would have doubled if you had not."

A player repeatedly guilty of such conduct, or of intentionally violating any other law, should be reprimanded, and, if the offense be continued, ostracized.

In the case under consideration, this question does not arise, as it is conceded that the act was simply an inadvertence. Even, however, had its *bona fides* been questioned, the decision would of necessity be that the score be counted, as the laws do not provide a penalty for the offense.

CASE 7

The bidding in an Auction deal was as follows:—

	1st Round	2d Round	3d Round	4th Round
North	1 Club	1 Heart	2 Hearts	No
East	1 Diamond	No	Double	No
South	No	No	3 Clubs	
West	No	2 Diamonds	No	

South claimed that his partner, having abandoned the Club declaration, he (South) became the real Club bidder, and, having made the final declaration, was entitled to play the combined hands.

DECISION

Rule 46 provides that when the winning suit was first bid by the partner, *no matter what bids have intervened*, he shall play the hand.

This rule decides the case.

CASE 8

At about the seventh or eighth trick, the left-hand adversary of the Declarer remarks, "If you have all of the tricks, lay down your hand." The Declarer does not answer, but continues the play in the usual manner.

One trick later the same adversary says, "Lay down your hand," whereupon almost simultaneously the Declarer and the adversary who has done the talking place their hands face upward on the table.

The Declarer then states that he can take all the tricks. The play is not completed, but examination shows one trick may be taken by the adversaries of the Declarer if he do not finesse in a certain way.

Under these irregular circumstances, should the Declarer lose the trick?

DECISION

Law 72 provides, "If either or both of the declarer's adversaries throw his or their cards on the table face upward, such cards are exposed and liable to be called; but if either adversary retain his hand, he cannot be forced to abandon it. Cards exposed by the declarer are not liable to be called. If the declarer say, 'I have the rest,' or any other words indicating that the remaining tricks or any number thereof are his, he may be required to place his cards face upward on the table. His adversaries are not liable to have any of their cards called should they thereupon expose them."

Section 9 of Etiquette provides: "If a player say, 'I have the rest,' or any words indicating the remaining tricks are his and one or both of the other players expose his or their cards or request him to play out the hand, he should not allow any information, so obtained, to influence his play, nor take any finesse not announced by him at the time of making such claim, unless it had been previously proven to be a winner."

The case under consideration is covered by the first portion of Law 72. The latter portion of that law does not apply, as the opponent did not place his cards on the table after a claim by the Declarer.

The law seems clear, the cards of the adversary are exposed and subject to call—the cards of the Declarer cannot be called.

The etiquette of the game, however, must not be disregarded.

The plain intent of Section 9 and the justice of the case is that, if the Declarer place his hand on the table claiming the remaining tricks, he should not receive a doubtful trick unless, when he made his claim, he contemplated any finesse necessary to obtain it.

If he did not intend to finesse that way, or did not then realize that a finesse would be necessary, he should, under these circumstances, voluntarily surrender the trick.

The reason for this is that, should a Declarer claim all the tricks, the opponent who requires the hand to be played out would naturally hold the strength; the locus of the request, therefore, suggests the way to win the finesse.

It is most advantageous for the interest of Auction that, when no real play remains, time should not be wasted, but neither side should in any way benefit by an effort to avoid useless delay.

In the case under consideration, however, the adversary suggests that the hands be placed on the table, and the Declarer may naturally expect that the only card which might take a trick will drop.

There is no reason to assume that the Declarer will not finesse correctly, and it is not just that the act of his opponent should deprive him of the opportunity of so doing.

The decision, therefore, is that the Declarer is entitled to the disputed trick.

CASE 9

Dummy leaves the table to get a glass of water. As he returns to his seat, he sees his partner's hand and notices that he is revoking.

Has he, under these circumstances, the right to ask him whether he has any more of the suit?

DECISION

Law 60 gives the Dummy the right to ask this question, and does not specify that he must be in his seat to avail himself of the privilege.

Section 9 of Etiquette provides that Dummy shall not leave his seat for the purpose of watching his partner's play; but even should he do so, his breach of etiquette would not deprive him of the rights given him by law.

An adversary may unquestionably object to the Dummy watching the play of the Declarer.

That, however, is not the case under consideration. The penalty for the revoke is the most severe in Auction, many think it unreasonably so, and a player is unquestionably entitled to every protection the law affords him.

The decision, therefore, is that, under the conditions named, the question may be asked.

CASE 10

With three tricks to play, the Declarer throws his cards face upward on the table, claiming the remaining tricks. His opponents admit his claim, and the score is entered. The Dummy then calls the attention of the table to the fact that, had a certain lead been made, the Declarer could not have taken all the tricks.

Query: Under the circumstances, is the Declarer entitled to all the tricks; first, viewing the question solely from a strict interpretation of the laws; and second, from the standpoint of good sportsmanship?

DECISION

Section 10 of Etiquette provides, "If a player concede in error one or more tricks, the concession should stand." There is no law affecting this situation, and, therefore, the section of Etiquette above quoted clearly covers the first portion of the query.

As to whether good sportsmanship would require the Declarer, under such circumstances, to voluntarily surrender any of the tricks to which he is entitled by law, does not seem to produce a more serious question.

It is true that the adversaries, by overlooking a possible play, made a concession that was not required, and that the Dummy noticed the error of the adversaries. Why, however, should the Dummy be obliged to correct this error any more than any other mistake of his opponents?

It is perfectly clear that, had a similar error been made by the Declarer, the Dummy could not have saved himself from suffering by reason of it, and, whether the question be either a strict interpretation of law or of sportsmanship, it is a poor rule that does not work both ways.

Both parts of the query are, therefore, answered in the affirmative.

CASE 11

The Declarer leads three rounds of Trumps, on the third an adversary refuses.

Later in the play the Declarer leads a winning card which is trumped by the adversary who has refused Trumps.

The player who trumped the trick gathered it.

The Declarer said, "How did you win it?"

The player answered, "I trumped it."

The Dummy then said, "Who trumped it?"

After this remark by the Dummy, the Declarer claims a revoke, the claim is disputed upon the ground that the Dummy called the revoke to the attention of the Declarer. The Declarer states that he would have made the claim, regardless of Dummy's remark.

Query: Should the revoke be allowed?

DECISION

Law 60 prescribes explicitly the privileges of the Dummy after he has placed his hand on the table.

There are exactly six things which he may do and no more.

Law 61 provides, "Should the declarer's partner call attention to any other incident of the play in consequence of which any penalty might have been exacted, the declarer is precluded from exacting such penalty."

Inasmuch as asking "Who won the trick?" is not one of the six privileges allowed the Dummy, such action is irregular, and must, of necessity, call attention to the revoke. Had the Dummy actually claimed the revoke, it would preclude the exaction of a penalty, even had the Declarer been about to claim it. It is, therefore, immaterial whether the Declarer would have noticed the revoke had the Dummy not made the irregular remark.

The question is decided in the negative.

CASE 12

The adversaries of the Declarer take ten tricks, but revoke. Under these conditions, can either side score "except for honors or chicane?"

DECISION

Law 84 provides that "a revoking side cannot score, except for honors or chicane."

It also provides: "If either of the adversaries revoke, the declarer may either add 150 points to his score in the honor column or may take three tricks from his opponents and add them to his own. Such tricks may assist the declarer to make good his declaration."

It is evident that the Declarer is given the option of either scoring 150 points or taking three tricks, should he prefer to make good his declaration rather than receive the bonus.

In the case cited, three tricks could not fulfill the contract, but should a thoughtless or generous Declarer elect to take a penalty which would not benefit him, in preference to 150, he would be acting within his rights.

The rule clearly decides this case. The adversaries "cannot score except for honors or chicane," and the Declarer can "add 150 to his score in the honor column" if he elect so to do.

Acknowledgment is made of the courtesy of The Whist Club of New York in permitting the publication of its code of laws and of the decisions of its Card Committee.

SUMMARIZED PENALTIES

For the benefit of those who wish to hastily ascertain the penalty for an offense or to refer to the law upon the subject, the following table of summarized penalties has been prepared. It does not include every possible penalty, but merely those of most frequent occurrence.

OFFENSE	PENALTY	LAW
Revoke by Declarer	150 points	84 <i>a</i>
Revoke by Adversary	150 points or 3 tricks	84 <i>b</i>
Revoke by Dummy	None	63
Second revoke in same hand	100 points	84 <i>c</i>
Lead out of turn by Declarer	None	77
Lead out of turn by Adversary	Exposed card or Called lead	76
Card exposed during deal	New deal	37 <i>c</i>
Card exposed after deal and before end of bidding	Partner cannot bid nor lead suit of card and card may be called	65
Card exposed after end of bidding and before lead	May be called and if exposed by Third Hand that suit not be led	66
Card exposed during play by	Declarer	None
	Adversary	None
	May be called	{67 {72
Two or more cards played at once by adversary	All may be called	70
Not playing to trick	New deal	81
Playing 2 cards to trick	Liable for revoke	82
Playing with less than 13 cards	Liable for revoke	38
Holding 14 cards	New deal	37 <i>d</i>
Misdeal	New deal	{36
		{37
Dealing out of turn or with wrong cards	May be corrected before last card is dealt	40
Declaration out of turn	New deal	49
Double out of turn	New deal	57
Pass out of turn	None	49
Insufficient declaration	Made sufficient and partner debarred from bidding	50
	Made 7 tricks and partner debarred from	

Impossible declaration	bidding; or new deal; or previous declaration may be made final	50
Dummy's calling attention to any offense	Penalty for offense eliminated	61
Dummy's suggesting a play	It may be required or prohibited	62
Declarer's naming or touching card in Dummy	May have to play it	64
Adversary's calling attention to trick	Partner may be required to play highest or lowest card or win or lose trick	92
Giving information about bidding after final bid	Called lead	51
Fourth Hand playing before Second	Second Hand may be required to play highest or lowest card or win or lose trick	80
Cutting more than one card	Must take highest	16

APPENDIX

QUERIES AND ANSWERS

The introduction of the count now in use has produced so radical a change in the game of Auction that of necessity innumerable differences of opinion have arisen among individual players.

Many questions have been submitted to arbitrators for decision. In some cases the author of AUCTION OF TO-DAY has been complimented by being called upon for his opinion, and a few queries that seem to be upon points of general interest, with the answers given, follow.

QUERY

What is the correct original bid of the Dealer in the following cases?

1. Seven Diamonds, headed by Knave, Ten; Ace of Spades; Ace of Hearts; Ace and three small Clubs.
2. The same hand, except that the Clubs are Ace, King, and two small.
3. The same two hands, with the Diamonds headed by Queen, Knave, Ten.

ANSWER

These hands are evidently conceived for the purpose of proving vulnerable the rule that a suit should not be called without the Ace or King. They doubtless never did and probably never will occur in actual play, but most aptly illustrate a point of declaration, and are, therefore, worthy of consideration.

It must be remembered that in the extraordinary case any convention of declaration may be varied to suit the hand. Undoubtedly, the last rule to permit exception is that above mentioned. For the purpose of emphasis it may properly be said to be without exception, and yet, if any such holding actually happen, it may become necessary for the Declarer to take a little leeway. It cannot affect the confidence of the partner if a player, only under such extraordinary circumstances, departs from the conventional, and the remarkable character of the hand guarantees that harm will not result in the particular instance.

All of the above hands contain three Aces, yet a No-trump should not be bid, as it would probably be left in, and with two singleton Aces they are dangerous No-trumpers, but strong Diamonds.

The hands are much too strong to call one Spade, as that also might not be overbid. Two Spades followed by Diamonds would be quite satisfactory, would avoid breaking the rule, but would not include the effort to eliminate adverse bidding which, with a hand of this character, might be desirable.

Two Diamonds is not permissible, as that is the conventional call for a solid Diamond suit.

There is no reason, however, that three or more Diamonds or Clubs should not indicate a long weak Trump suit with such additional strength that one Spade is an unsafe call. Such a bid would suggest that a game is probable in the suit named. It is not a recognized bid and would rarely be used, but an intelligent partner would at once grasp its meaning.

The answer to the above, therefore, is

1. Three Diamonds.
2. Three, or even Four, Diamonds. (The bid of one Club might be left in.)
3. Three or 4 Diamonds in first; 4 in second.

QUERY

Would it not improve the game of Auction and increase the amount of skill required in the declaration if the value of Royal Spades be altered from 9 to 5?

ANSWER

The basic theory of the present count is to equalize, as nearly as possible, the value of the five declarations, in order to produce the maximum amount of competition in bidding. This has proved most popular with the mass of players, and has been universally adopted not only in this country, but also in England, France, and Russia. To decrease the value of the Royal Spade from 9 to 5, would be a distinct step backward. In that case it would take 4, instead of 3, Royal Spades to overbid two No-trumps; and 6, instead of 4, to overbid three No-trumps. It is not likely that any change, which diminishes the ability of the holder of Spades (or of any suit) to compete with a No-trump, will ever appeal to Auction devotees. The greater the possibility for competitive bidding, the greater the opportunity for displaying skill in that branch of the game.

QUERY

Should the Dealer bid one Club, holding Ace and King of Clubs, four small Spades, four small Hearts, Ace, Queen, and one small Diamond?

ANSWER

No. One Club deceives the partner. It indicates length in Clubs, and may induce him to advance that suit too far. In the event of an adverse No-trump, it will probably result in the lead of the partner's highest Club, which is apt to prove extremely disastrous. One No-trump is far safer than one Club, and might be defended on the ground that with four cards in each of the two weak suits the danger of a long adverse run is reduced.

One Spade, however, places the Dealer in a splendid position to advance any call his partner may make, and is doubtless the sound bid.

QUERY

Is it not an objection to the count now in use that the Spade suit is given two values, and would it not be wise to make Spades 9, and allow the Dealer to pass the original declaration?

ANSWER

The advisability of this plan was thoroughly considered before the present count was suggested. It would make a pass by the Dealer equal to the present declaration of one Spade, and in the event of the four players all passing, presumably would necessitate a new deal. It would eliminate two, three, and four Spade bids by the Dealer and Second Hand, and the double of one Spade by the latter.

It would relieve the Third Hand from determining whether to take his partner out of one Spade, and take from the Fourth Hand the decision of whether to play for a penalty of 100 or try for game. It is evident, therefore, that it would take a great deal out of the bidding of every one of the four players, and it is hard to believe that any scheme tending to decrease the variety of, and amount of skill required for, the declaration, is to the advantage of the game.

The objection to having two Spade values is purely theoretical, as players are not in the least embarrassed thereby, nor is the number of declarations at present a part of the game

cumbersome or confusing. The argument, that if there be two Spade values there might equally well be two values for each of the other suits, almost answers itself. Having more than one Royal declaration would of necessity result in complications, and, of course, only one defensive call is needed. With the advantages of the Spade bid so numerous and evident, and with no real disadvantage apparent, there does not seem to be any sound reason for abandoning it.

QUERY

Dealer bids one Royal. Second Hand holds Ace, King, Queen, Knave, and Ten of Clubs; Ace, King, and two small Diamonds; Ace and two small Hearts; one small Spade. What should he bid?

ANSWER

Three Clubs. The holding thoroughly justifies a No-trump, as the hand contains eight sure tricks. If, however, the partner cannot stop the Spades, the adversaries will save the game at once, while eleven Club tricks is not an impossibility. Furthermore, the partner may have the Spades stopped if *led up to* him, but not if led *through* him.

The Declaration of *three* Clubs (one more than necessary) tells the partner the situation, and accomplishes two purposes:—if the partner have not the Spades stopped, the game is still possible; if the partner have the Spades stopped, if led up to him, it instructs him to call two No-trumps, whereas a No-trump bid by the Second Hand, with the same cards, might fail to produce game, because the position of the opening lead would then be reversed.

QUERY

Dealer bids one No-trump; Second Hand, two Hearts. Third Hand holds

Spades	Knave, Ten, and three small
Hearts	One small
Diamonds	Two small
Clubs	Ace, Queen, Knave, and two small

What should be bid?

ANSWER

Two Royals. This hand, especially with an adverse Heart call, is much more apt to go game at Royals than at No-trump. Two Royals asks to be let alone; three Clubs practically commands the partner to bid two No-trumps if he have the Hearts stopped.

This is but an expansion of the principle that the original call of one Club or one Diamond suggests a No-trump, while one Heart or one Royal indicates a desire to try for game in the suit named.

QUERY

Is it fair for partners to agree that the bid of one Spade shall mean weakness; one Club, general strength; and two Clubs, strength in Clubs?

ANSWER

It is perfectly fair for players to use the above-described, or any other convention, provided their adversaries understand its meaning. Conventions are an essential part of Auction. The lead of a King to show the Ace is a convention—so is every informatory play or declaration. When plays or bids are generally understood, it is unnecessary for players to explain their significance, but the adversaries should have all the information upon the subject possessed by the partner, and nothing approaching a private understanding should exist.

QUERY

The Dealer bids one No-trump, holding

Spades	Ace, Queen, Ten, and three small
Hearts	Ace, Queen
Diamonds	Ace, and one small
Clubs	Ace, and two small

Second and Third Hands pass; Fourth Hand, two Diamonds.

What should the Dealer declare on the second round?

ANSWER

Two Royals. The hand is far too strong to pass, while to bid two No-trumps is foolish, as, unless the partner hold the King of Spades, it is almost certain that the contract cannot be fulfilled.

Two Royals is safe and presents a good chance of game. A game in Royals is far more valuable than 100 for Aces, which may be reduced, if not wiped out, by penalties for under-tricks.

QUERY

Score, Love. Dealer bids one Spade; Second Hand, one Diamond; Third Hand, one Royal; Fourth Hand, two Clubs.

Second round, Dealer bids two Royals; Second Hand, three Clubs; Third Hand, three Royals; Fourth Hand, four Diamonds.

Dealer holds

Spades	Knave, 10, 7
Hearts	King, Knave, 8
Diamonds	7, 4, 3
Clubs	King, 7, 6, 3

Should he double the four Diamond declaration?

ANSWER

A bid of four Diamonds should never be doubled at a love score unless the Doubler be reasonably sure of defeating the declaration. In this case he may expect to win one Club, and possibly one Heart, although that is not sure. Either the Declarer or the Dummy may be without Spades. The double does not seem reasonably safe and may keep the partner from a successful bid of four Royals. The Dealer, therefore, should pass.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Also known as "the Bid" and "the Call."

² With a similar suit in either Spades or Hearts, Royals or Hearts should be the bid.

³ While, as a general rule, to justify an original suit declaration, "one other honor" should accompany either Ace or King, it is not necessary to blindly follow such a requirement to an absurd extreme.

If the suit be headed by the Ace, either unusual length (six or more) or considerable strength in another suit (Ace and King, or Ace, Queen, Knave) would justify a call without "one other honor."

If, however, the suit be headed by the King, the presence of another honor is essential unless the length or additional strength be extraordinary.

⁴ See footnote, page 31.

⁵ See page 89, as to how the partner should treat this declaration; also table on pages 68 and 69.

⁶ See page 90, as to how the partner should treat this declaration.

⁷ See Bid of Two Spades by Dealer, page 47.

⁸ See page 123 as to how the partner should treat this declaration.

⁹ See page 47.

¹⁰ See page 49.

- 11 See page 72.
- 12 See page 86.
- 13 See page 86.
- 14 See pages 67-72 inc.
- 15 See pages 88, 89, 90.
- 16 See pages 65, 66.
- 17 See pages 108, 109.
- 18 See page 111.
- 19 See pages 96-108 inc.
- 20 See pages 65, 66.
- 21 See pages 139-142 inc.
- 22 These suits unless declared by partner should not be opened, as they are disadvantageous leads against a Trump declaration.
- 23 This is the conventional lead from this combination, but many good players prefer the Queen, especially when the indications are that the hand is not evenly divided. When long suits have been announced, the chances are that the suit led will be ruffed on the third round, if not earlier. If the King be in the Second Hand and the Ace in the Third, a trick can be gained by leading the Queen whenever the suit does not last for three rounds. Therefore, unless the hand indicate that the suits are evenly divided, the Queen seems to be the better lead.
- 24 Law 84 prohibits the revoking side from scoring slam or little slam.
- 25 Law 84 prohibits the revoking side from scoring slam or little slam.
- 26 See Law 14 as to value of cards in cutting.
- 27 See Law 73.

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