

## 52 FACTS OF BRIDGE LIFE

### Good Advice To Give Your Partner—Handout 1

By Eddie Kantar

Surely a player of your bridge skills is familiar with most or all of the following tips you are about to read. But is your partner?

**Tips 1-20 are bidding tips.**

1. When partner bids two suits and you have an equal number of cards in each suit, take partner back to the first suit even if it means increasing the level. Just do it!

You hold: ♠ Axxx ♥ K10x ♦ Jxx ♣ xxx

Partner You

1♦ 1♠

2♥ ?

Bid 3♦. Raising hearts (see next tip) or passing partner's reverse, a one-round force, puts you back in kindergarten.

2. A direct raise of a second suit promises four card support (in blood).

You hold: ♠ xx ♥ A10x ♦ A10x ♣ K10xxx

Partner You

1♠ 2♣

2♥ ?

Rebid 2NT showing 11-12 high-card points. Don't even thinking of raising hearts with only three.

3. With two five-card suits: open with the higher ranking suit, respond in the higher ranking suit, and overcall in the higher ranking suit. Do not worry about which is the stronger suit.

You hold: ♠ x ♥ J10xxx ♦ AKQxx ♣ Kx

Open 1♥, not 1♦. Respond 1♥ to an opening 1♣ bid and overcall 1♥ if the opening bid to your right is 1♣.

4. When the bid to your right is strong, a jump by you is weak; when the bid to your right is weak, a jump by you is strong.

If partner opens 1♣ and RHO doubles, a jump to 2♠ by you is weak. If RHO opens 2♥ (weak), a jump to 3♠ by you is strong.

5. After you open 1♥ or 1♠ and partner responds 1NT denying support for your major, don't rebid your major unless you have a six-card suit.

6. When holding three four card suits and a singleton, open the bidding 1♦ unless your singleton is in diamonds! If it is, open 1♣. You should have at least 12 HCP to open the bidding with this distribution.

You hold: ♠ AKxx ♥ KJxx ♦ J10xx ♣ x Open 1♦.

7. A takeout double by a passed hand shows 9-11 HCP with shortness in the opener's suit. If the opponents have bid two suits, the double promises at least four-card support for both unbid suits.

You hold: ♠ AJxx ♥ xx ♦ KJ10xx ♣ xx

South (you) West North East

Pass 1♣ Pass 1♥

Dbl.

You show both unbid suits with your double. A 2♦ overcall might lose a spade fit.

8. A good idea when playing Blackwood is to count the king of the agreed suit as an ace! This is called 'Key Card Blackwood' or 'Five Ace Blackwood'. When using this convention do not contract for slam unless you have at least four of the five 'aces'.

9. When responding to a takeout double, jump the bidding in your long suit with 9-11 'revalued' points. An unbid five-card suit is worth 1 extra point and an unbid six-card suit is worth three extra points. Do not count points for jacks and queens in suits they have bid.

You hold: ♠ AQ10x ♥ Kxx ♦ xx ♣ 10xxx

West North East South (you)

1♦ Dbl. Pass ?

Jump to 2♠. Do not bid 1♠ which shows 0-8 points. Also, your jump is not forcing.

10. When responding to a takeout double with 12+ HCP, cuebid the opponent's suit to show a strong hand and then bid your suit(s) later. After you cuebid, any new suit bid by you is forcing.

You hold: ♠ KQxx ♥ AJxx ♦ Qxx ♣ xx

West North East South (you)

1♣ Dbl. Pass ?

Bid 2♣ to show a big hand (12+HCP). You and partner then bid four-card suits up the line until you connect in a 4-4 major-suit fit. If partner bids 2♦, bid 2♥; if partner bids 2♠, raise to 4♠. The one who knows, goes.

11. A 2NT response to a takeout double shows 10-12 HCP and is not forcing. A 1NT response to a takeout double shows 6-9 HCP similar to a 1NT response to an opening bid. Notrump responses to a takeout double guarantee at least one stopper (hopefully two), in the opponents' suit.

You hold: ♠ KJ9x ♥ xx ♦ Q10x ♣ Jxxx (or AJxx)

West North East South (you)

1♠ Dbl. Pass ?

With the ♣ Jxxx, respond 1NT. With the ♣ AJxx, respond 2NT. You don't need stoppers in the other suits. Partner is supposed to have them for the double.

12. If you play 'five-card majors', a short diamond should only be opened with 4-4 in the majors, three diamonds and two clubs. The incidence of a 1♦ opening bid with this exact distribution is less than 3%. Translation: When partner opens 1♦, assume partner has four or more diamonds.

13. After partner opens the bidding and second hand overcalls 1NT to show the strength of an opening 1NT bid, double for penalty if you have 9 or more HCP. Bidding a suit denies the strength to double.

You hold: ♠ 10x ♥ KJxx ♦ AJxxx ♣ J10

North East South (you) West

1♠ 1NT ?

Double. You have them outgunned. You should be able to defeat 1NT easily. If you bid 2♦, you are showing fewer than 9 HCP with at least five diamonds, usually six.

14. It is dangerous to count extra points for short suits or long suits before the bidding starts. If partner bids your short suit, that reduces, not increases, the value of your hand. If one of your opponents bids your long suit, that decreases, not increases, the value of your hand. If you let the bidding develop, you will see whether your long or short suits are working for or against you.

You hold: ♠ Axxx ♥ x ♦ Qxxxx ♣ xxx

What is this hand worth? If partner opens 1♥, it is a minus 6-point hand. If partner opens 1♠, it is a 9-point hand (3 points for the singleton with four-card support). If LHO opens 1♦ and partner overcalls 1♥, the ♦Q has lost its value not to mention the fifth diamond. You are now looking at a minus 4-point hand! Be patient with distributional evaluations until you hear the bidding.