

CAN BAD PLAY WIN AT ROYAL AUCTION?

Only When Opponent's Play Is Worse Can Conventions Be Disregarded.

SOME COMMON ERRORS

During the process of examining the many example hands that correspondents are good enough to send to THE SUN every week as illustrations of the value or the defect of some theory or another...

The general tone of many of these letters is, "You do not approve of this system of bidding; but here is a hand that shows it is all right, because I won out on it."

It is an easy matter for any one to produce a number of hands in which the grossest violation of convention has led to large gains in the score; but in the majority of cases, if the situation is more closely examined, it will be found that the losing side was equally at fault.

One of the most common errors in bidding is overcalling no trumps second hand with a suit when the hand holds out no particular promise of going game.

"We pushed him up a bit, anyway," remarks the one who bid the suit; to which his partner might very aptly retort: "Thank goodness, they were foolish enough to take you out."

The principal matter of disagreement among the general run of players at present seems to be on this second hand overcalling no trumps with a suit, and this is continually in receipt of hands played in various parts of the country which seem to prove that the bid is all right, and it is worthy of note that in many cases the sender seems to glory in the weakness of the hand that made the bid.

Z dealt and bid no trump. A two hearts. The argument in favor of this declaration is that A has six trumps and a missing suit. It looks as if some persons would never learn that no suit is trump until the bidding is finished.

What A actually holds is six worthless little hearts and a possible trick in spades, yet he undertakes to win the game against a no trump. If A can do game with his partner's assistance the combined hands should be strong enough to save it against the no trump.

Now look at the compensating errors that lead A to believe that his bidding was all right and that encourage him to make the same sort of bids on hand after hand afterward, always with the memory of this glorious success as his excuse.

Y bid two spades and B assisted his partner's hearts, bidding three. Z bid three spades.

This bid is a gem. Z has not a trick in the spade suit nor in hearts, and is opposed by players who think they are strong enough to win nine tricks against an alleged no trump.

It would have been very fortunate for Z that A were dealt with four hearts which he did not double if either of them thought the other had any sure tricks in spades.

Decided by his partner's absurd support of the spade bid, Y led a spade and the jack won the first trick. There is no escape after that.

Too late. Dummy wins with the ace and leads a diamond, with the result that A gets in three ruffs in that suit and B ruffs two clubs.

If A sits tight and says nothing about the hearts, but leads a small one, B may ace and return the ten, clearing the suit.

Now for the other side of the question, which involves the second principle. Y's two spades bid is all right, but the moment B goes to three hearts Z should have dropped the matter, his assistance to the spade bid being quite unwarranted.

Therefore, when your partner has bid

no trumps and drops out in the face of an adverse trump declaration on your opening lead should always be the trump. Apply this principle to the foregoing hand and A's heart contract to win four odd should have been set for two tricks, or for one trick if Z drops out and lets A have it at the three hearts bid by B.

If the opponents have the top hearts Z must have the top in all Y's queen suits. If the opponents have not the top hearts Y's lead of the king of hearts does Z no harm. The play could then go only one way.

Turned with the ace of hearts and leads the club so as to establish the cross ruff. Z wins with the king and leads the queen of trumps, which holds. The eight of spades then forces A to cover with the jack or Y will let the eight ride. Worse than that, A loses two clubs at the end.

After that dummy has only one ruff in clubs instead of two, and makes only two spades tricks instead of three. This looks as if A's heart bid was a mistake after all, as it gives Y and Z 116 or 117 points, instead of 20 only, and if they doubt as they should have done when hearts went to four, it would have been 316 instead of 20.

Just as a matter of curiosity transposes the hands of Y and B, giving A all the top hearts and kings of hearts, and A still goes down on a contract to make only two hearts!

Here is the other side of the problem, when the suit bid against the no trump can be hopelessly wrong, but there is enough on the no trump side of the table to be sure of game. The hand was played at the Knickerbocker last week.

Z dealt and bid a diamond, although his cards would be considered quite good enough for a no trump by most persons. Z's personal objection to the no trump bid is that if his partner takes him out with two hearts Z cannot support it, but if Y has a chance to bid one heart it shows strength and then Z can go to no trump.

A passed and Y thought if his partner had two sure tricks in diamonds he could risk the spades, so he bid no trump. B bid two hearts.

Here we have the same fallacy, excusing the bid on the ground that the player has six trumps and two singletons, whereas the truth is that he has nothing but six little hearts and a trickless hand.

In order to show his full strength in case Y could stop the hearts, which seems certain in view of the fact that he has bid no trumps without any top in diamonds or spades, Z bid two spades. As A thought he had the spades bottled up west three hearts, but Y bid three no trumps at once.

Y could have set the heart contract for 400 if he doubted, as neither A nor B ever win a trick in the plain suits and make only five trump tricks if Z leads the trump.

As the play goes at no trumps, Y makes four odd. A heart led goes to the ace and the nine is covered by the ten, leaving Y with the major tenace in the suit over B. As B has the diamonds stopped, he starts to take out dummy's reentries in spades.

Y put himself in with a small club, led the jack of diamonds and let it ride. Then he put dummy in with a club and led three rounds of diamonds, discarding one heart and two clubs, so that the queen of diamonds was the only trick for A and B.

It is doubtful if the game is worth as much as the penalties in this case, although the game seems certain. When the losing partner has nothing to say better to play for the penalties. Take this case, sent to THE SUN last week. It was played in a duplicate match. West dealt.

Z and A both passed without a bid. Y said two diamonds and B had two no trumps, which is pretty forward bidding when the partner has had nothing to say on the first round.

When Z passed A warned his partner of bidding three spades, whereupon Y went to four diamonds, as he could not risk spades. Inconceivable as it may seem, B went to four spades. Not only that, when Z doubled the four spades B redoubled and was set for 400 points, as Y and Z made a diamond, two clubs and two trumps.

The bidding in this hand is all right up to the four diamonds if we except B's two no trumps. Y is quite right in fearing that A will go game in spades if B has a no trump, with the diamonds stopped, but B's support of the spades suit is premature. He does not know how good his partner's spades are as trick winners.

With such a strong bid as four diamonds from Y, without any assistance from Z, B should have passed. It is a certainty that Y cannot go game in diamonds unless he can trump two of B's aces, as the king of diamonds is not made, if he wants to encourage A to bid Y some high cards in spades he can double the four diamonds.

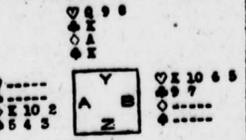
At one table Y bid four diamonds after starting with an intended shutout of three against which A bid spades and B doubled the four diamonds. B led ace and a small club. Two rounds of trumps followed and B led a third club.

PROBLEMS FOR 'SUN' READERS TO SOLVE

No. 355, by Jay Reed, Not So Easy as It Looked on First Glance.

WITH THE CHECKER FANS

Bridge problem No. 355, which was typical of the composer, Jay Reed, seemed very simple to some persons, but not so easy to those who examined it more closely.



Clubs are trumps and Z is in the lead. Y and Z want five tricks against any defense.

In the actual game, Z led the smallest of his two trumps, putting Y in, and Y led the king of spades, expecting B to make his losing trump. This was the trap, but B did not fall into it.

If B trumps the spade and leads the king of hearts, Z trumps it and makes his two established spades, the long trump and Y's ace of diamonds. If B trumps and leads the small heart, Z discards the diamond, letting Y with the heart trick with the queen, making ace of diamonds, the trump and the spade at the end.

This was the solution picked out by several who apparently thought any six card problem must be for beginners and therefore easy. But the trump lead will not solve, because B will not trump the spade, discarding a heart instead.

This leaves Y in the lead. If he follows with a diamond, B will still refuse to save his losing trump, discarding another heart. Now Y is forced to lead hearts, and no matter which one he plays, B just covers it. No matter what Z does, B must make a heart trick and a trump, or two hearts.

The only correct opening is for Z to lead the deuce of spades, allowing B to trump the king. A trump lead from B's hand would be obviously fatal at once, as it would leave Z with the long trump to bring in the spades when Y leads the heart, so B must lead a heart.

If he leads a small heart, Z discards the diamond, Y wins the trick, pulls B's remaining trump, makes the ace of diamonds and leads a heart for Z to trump and make the last trick with the spade queen.

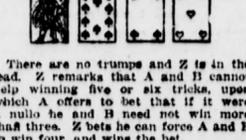
If B leads the king of hearts after trumping the spade, Z trumps and leads another spade, for Y to trump on the king of trumps. Now Y leads the best heart and Z discards the diamond, so as to be ready to overtrump B when Y leads the ace of diamonds.

If B refuses to trump the first trick, Y is in the lead. This is a pretty variation which many solvers missed. Y leads the diamond. If B passes up this trick, Y and Z have a cross ruff, as Z can afford to trump hearts twice and Y can make his king of trumps on the spade.

If B trumps the diamond and leads the king of hearts, Z will trump and lead another spade for Y to trump on the king of trumps. Now the queen of hearts and the queen of trumps are good for two more tricks. A pretty problem for only six cards.

Correct solutions from: Frank S. Bussie, F. W. Trimble, E. W. White, Walker McMartin, Oscar Schoenherr, W. Perry, C. F. Johnson, J. W. Wortz, Roscoe C. Harris, R. M. White, Leal, L. S. Hart, Jr., W. B. Brush, J. Warren Miller, E. H. Fairhead, W. P. V. Henry Andressen and C. P. Morse. All others missed the important variations in the defense.

Here is a rather interesting situation, sent to THE SUN from London by a composer who has already set the cracks some hard tasks.



These blocks are accurately cemented together, so that the cross is practically one solid piece. The problem is to divide the surface of it by a series of straight lines in such a manner that if the cross were divided into pieces they could be rearranged so as to form a perfect square.

THE MAGIC SQUARE. A number of interesting descriptions of the methods of reasoning out the solution of such problems as this one by Algernon Bray have come to hand, the following being a good example of the method usually followed by successful solvers.

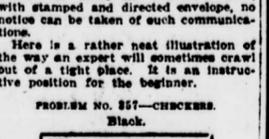
not find a draw. The trap in this problem was the difficulty of eliminating the superfluous plays, which tended to confuse the analysis.

Table showing the distribution of pieces in a game: White, Black, White, Black. Lists cards like A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z.

Among the many puzzling variations which are sound, but take much longer to prove, is a slight departure from the play given in "A." If white plays 10-10 instead of 11-11, and black replies with 11-11, it is still a draw for white, but the 10-10 move is not as good as 11-11.

Correct solutions from: John Victory, H. A. F., A. Campbell, C. E. Cortina, J. H. Noremac, Thomas Foy, John Daly, J. P. DeGroot, Thomas Inglish, J. F. Brown, James Hyland, John Ryan, Marshall, Hoboken, James G. Pinkerton and L. S. Hart, Jr. These all got the trump play, and some of the variations, but the list is not given as final.

Here is a rather neat illustration of the way an expert will sometimes crawl out of a tight corner. It is an instructive position for the beginner.

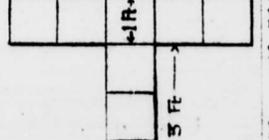


Music Cabinets, \$15.25 up; Piano Benches, \$6.50 up; Piano Scarfs, \$2.50 up; Music Rolls, 25c up; Sterling Medley Rolls, 65c; Victor Records, 75c up.

Write to play and draw. The distribution of the pieces is: Black men on 9, 13 and 18; king on 24. White men on 21, 30 and 31; king on 4.

Here is another one from Harry A. Sayles, which is guaranteed to keep the geometrical sharp busy until Christmas, but if they do not get it by that time they will have to work over it until next year.

This is a plain ordinary every day Latin cross, in fact it is the same old cross which gave the cross no much trouble in that wiring problem. The only additional information about it is that the lower arm is three feet long, the rest of the cross being composed of blocks one foot square.



These blocks are accurately cemented together, so that the cross is practically one solid piece. The problem is to divide the surface of it by a series of straight lines in such a manner that if the cross were divided into pieces they could be rearranged so as to form a perfect square.

THE MAGIC SQUARE. A number of interesting descriptions of the methods of reasoning out the solution of such problems as this one by Algernon Bray have come to hand, the following being a good example of the method usually followed by successful solvers.

From the conditions of the problem, that each of the twelve rows and the two diagonals must add alike, it is evident that the figures must meet the following conditions:

Table with 4 rows and 4 columns of numbers: 1 59 71 79 81 9; 86 84 16 14 86 84; 6 58 78 78 88 2; 68 82 18 18 88 82; 6 84 76 74 84 6; 81 89 11 19 81 89.

Correct solutions from: M. H. H. W. A. Bultley, Gordon Ireland, Phillip L. Alger, B. W. Pettin-gill, Achilles H. Kohn, O. H. Boston, Charles D. Shuldham, L. McGrath, West Hartford, J. Q. Adams, H. E. Ahern, Thomas J. Wetstein, Samuel W. Balch, W. F. W. and H. McK. Winkley.

His Overall Saved Him. ST. PAUL, Minn., Dec. 11.—Saved from death when his overall caught on a switch post, Charles Johnson, who said he lives in Arco, Minn., lost three fingers on his right hand in the St. Paul railroad yards at Sixth avenue south, Minneapolis, when he tried to board a moving train.

Handsome 4 Piece Library Suit, \$24.00. Solid oak frames, brown fumed finish, best upholstery, and covered in fine grade imitation Spanish leather, a covering that will wear longer and look finer than some grades of real leather.

Fulton St. and DeKalb Avenue

THE HOLIDAY TEST. Over Half a Century of Reputable Service and Established Values. A Safeguard to the Piano Purchaser. The name Sterling in the Piano business is known as a protection, and means more than the money you pay. Wouldn't it be a satisfaction to have the name STERLING safeguard your gift to a friend? It represents indisputable art worth, established values, protective service and reputable business methods.

BROOKLYN FURNITURE CO. Furniture the Best Gift. Prices That Make Buying Certain. Nothing quite so good for a Christmas gift as furniture—it is always a constant reminder of the good will of the giver. The Christmas stock is now full of gifts that make for good will in every part of the home. Little at a Time Payments enable you to make your gifts reach the entire circle of your friends without feeling the stress of paying. An Exceptional Christmas Bargain. Handsome 4 Piece Library Suit, \$24.00. Solid oak frames, brown fumed finish, best upholstery, and covered in fine grade imitation Spanish leather, a covering that will wear longer and look finer than some grades of real leather. Fulton St. and DeKalb Avenue.