

BONUS SCORES IN DUPLICATE AUCTION

Illustrations of the Injustice of the Present Method of Counting Points.

THE ELEMENT OF LUCK

By R. F. FOSTER.

One of the questions that will probably come up for discussion this summer at the annual meeting of the American Whist League at Spring Lake is of vital importance to every player who is interested in the future of the game of auction, and that is the matter of scoring bonuses for game, room, or for unfinished games, at duplicate.

The fundamental idea of duplicate is to eliminate as far as possible the element of luck, and to get at the results of playing equal cards under equal conditions. That these conditions can never be absolutely equal is universally admitted, because of the disturbing element of the adversary's play, but this factor should be reduced to a minimum.

There is a great deal of luck that cannot be avoided, especially in the hands that are played against certain pairs of opponents. The strongest pair in the room may be opposed to the weakest on four deals that are absolute plums; hands on which the strongest play could not possibly make a difference of more than a few points as compared with the weakest.

At another table the weak pair will be called upon to manage four deals in which there may be the possibility of large swings and the score made on that round alone may settle the result of the whole contest.

The writer has been at great pains to pick out the place at which most of these big swings occur and has come to the conclusion that the greatest element of luck in duplicate, which is responsible for the largest swings in the score, lies in the greatly enhanced value of single tricks, when those tricks win or save the game.

In the last big duplicate game in New York there were three consecutive hands played at one table which showed a difference of 471 points, as compared to the scores made on the other tables. The pair who got the best of these three hands made the top score that year.

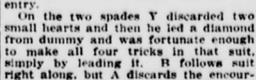
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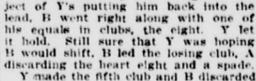
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FIVE JOKERS ARE USED IN THIS NEW GAME OF POKER

WHILE it seems almost impossible to invent anything entirely new in the way of a game of cards, there is a steady stream of original and clever developments in many of the old games.

THE LATEST CANDIDATE FOR PUBLIC FAVOR IS AN INNOVATION IN THE GAME OF POKER, WHICH IS APPARENTLY TO BE KNOWN AS "DOUCES RUNNING WILD."

The latest candidate for public favor is an innovation in the game of poker, which is apparently to be known as "douces running wild," although the joker usually runs with them. This is simply the addition of four more jokers to the one with which poker players have been for some time familiar, but it brings with it some entirely new calculations as to the rank and value of the hands.

It is rather curious that the introduction of a joker to the great American game originated in France. There are no jokers in the European packs, and when American cards were first exported to the Continent the joker was frequently shuffled up with the other cards and the hands dealt before the extra card was noticed, and then it was often mistaken for the ace of spades.

In England this did not occur because the custom house refused to admit fifty-three cards as a pack, the law specifying the duty on a pack of fifty-two cards, and the officials had to take the jokers out and destroy them before wrapping the imported cards under the official stamp. It was some years before this difficulty was overcome and the joker admitted.

The French were already familiar with the old game of three stake cards in which there were three cards that could be called anything the holder pleased. These cards were the ace of diamonds, jack of clubs and nine of diamonds. When the diamonds were dropped there remained only the jack of clubs and the French name for this braquer was mistigris, and so it came to pass that poker with a joker came to be known as mistigris all over the world.

It is only in comparatively recent times that poker with a joker has become popular in America, its chief credit being based on the fact that it largely nullified the book knowledge of the comparative values of hands possessed by players of the old school and practically set at defiance all betting on the probability of improvement, owing to the presence of a card which may be called anything of a small pair up to five of a kind.

The addition of the four deuces gives the player five cards out of the fifty-three which he may call anything he likes, even if he has the actual duplicate of the named card in his own hand. These five cards, the actual joker and the four deuces, are called "calling wild," as they are able to turn up anywhere.

All five jokers in one hand is the highest possible holding, four of a kind and any joker coming next, and then straight flushes, and so on down. The reason that five of a kind will beat a straight flush is that it is harder to get. There are only fourteen hands, five of a kind, but there are 204 straight flushes with each of the jokers.

The introduction of deuces running wild gives four forms of the game which are quite new. One is a five-hand game, without the regular joker; another is the short pack of forty-four cards, the treys and fours being thrown out, and the others are either of these packs with the joker added.

The idea of all these games is to discount the knowledge of card positions by the so-called scientific player, against whom there has always been a conspiracy of some kind or other. Jack pots were invented to force him to ante up, whether he had anything in his hand or not. Now that he has mastered that game, card runners have been invented for his discomfiture.

All poker hands are supposed to be ranked according to the difficulty of getting them, taking into consideration the two elements of getting the original hand and improving it. It is easier to get a hand with ten or eleven natural aces, because there are only four ways to get an ace and the joker, while there are six ways to get a pair of aces, as will be evident if the four aces are laid out in a square, each side and each diagonal of which forms a different pair.

For this reason any hand made with the assistance of the joker will outrank any hand made with the natural cards, but the moment we introduce deuces running wild this condition is reversed, because there are ten ways to get a pair of jokers that may be called aces, as will be seen if we lay the five jokers out in the form of a pentagon, each side and each diagonal of which will give us a different pair.

In addition to this we can combine any natural ace with any of the five jokers, giving twenty more pairs, all called aces, or thirty in all, against six natural pairs. Therefore it is five times as hard to get the natural pair, and it must outrank the pairs made with jokers in the showdown.

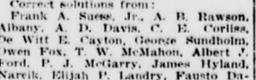
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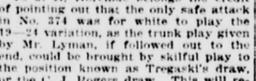
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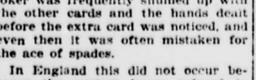
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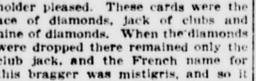
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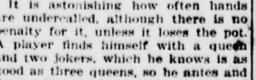
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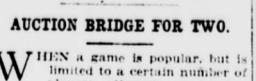
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