

# **Making Sound Decisions**

***Making correct decisions – when to bid, when to pass, when to double – is always difficult. Learn how to improve your ‘hit rate’ of good choices.***

**The course consists of seven (7) ninety-minute sessions. Classes will be held on Monday evenings at 7:00 PM.**

**Session dates are:**

**May 6, 13, 20, 27, June 3, 10, 17**

**Instructor: Dave LeGrow**

**Topics include:**

- Topics in hand evaluation – good hand / bad hand
- Factors in Decision-Making
- The role of vulnerability in decision-making
- What is a Free Bid and why should I care?
- Decision-making based on the form of scoring
- When to pass... the hardest lesson to learn..!
- Various game-try methods
  - What’s the difference when you are a passed hand
  - What’s the difference when your partner is a passed hand
- All about low-level doubles
- When (and how) to double the opponents for penalty
  - How to push the opponents further than they want
  - When to double for penalties, and when to retreat
  - When to pull your partner’s penalty double
- Things to know about minor-suit openings
  - Caution about opening minors in third seat...!
- All about balancing (why, when, how...)
- Overcall or double: which is more appropriate?
- Responding to partner’s overcall or double
- Low level cuebids and their role in bidding...

**A minimum of eight (8) students is required to conduct the course. The cost of the course is \$140 (or \$25 per individual session). A week-by-week schedule of topics follows.**

***For more information or to register, contact Dave LeGrow  
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484-433-0098***

**Week 1: Topics in hand evaluation – upgrade or downgrade?**

- Quick tricks and “slow” tricks
- A more realistic view of Honor Points
- Factors in evaluating strength
- Offense or defense – points vs. distribution
  - The value of two-suited hands
  - The “Plus” Factor
  - Downgrading misfit hands
- Respecting (but not fearing) vulnerability
  - The Rule of 1-2-3
  - The Free Bid
    - Definition of a ‘Free Bid’
    - Requirements
  - When to pass... the hardest lesson to learn!
  - Takeout doubles vs. overcalls
  - Avoiding the “power double”

**Week 2: Finding Games That Make and Avoiding Those That Don’t**

- Suit Contracts - Game-try methods
  - Recognizing a game try
  - Help suit
    - What constitutes a “help suit”?
    - What’s the difference when you are a passed hand?
    - What’s the difference when your partner is a passed hand?
    - Game try or slam try?
- Notrump Contracts - All about Stoppers
  - Full stoppers
  - Partial stoppers
  - Conditional stoppers
  - Showing stoppers
  - Asking for stoppers

**Week 3: Low-Level Doubles**

- Is partner’s double an agreed-upon convention?
  - Often a double at the first opportunity is a convention...
    - Double by overcaller – takeout double
    - Double by responder – negative double
    - Double by advancer – (may be) responsive double
    - Double by advancer – (may be) Rosenkranz double
    - Double by opener – (may be) support double
- Distinguishing between takeout and penalty doubles
  - Level-dependent doubles...
    - Has this question been asked before?
    - When to double the opponents for penalty
      - How to push the opponents further than they want
    - When to double for penalties, and when to retreat
      - Remember that doubling usually costs you (at least) one trick
      - When to pull your partner’s penalty double
  - All about redoubles...
    - Low-level redoubles to force the opponents to bid
      - Keeping all of your options open
      - Learn about their holding in case you want to play offense
    - High-level redoubles to protect against missed slams

#### **Week 4: Balancing**

**Exactly what is balancing?**

**Why do we balance?**

**Analyzing the likely holdings**

**What should we hold to balance?**

**“Borrowing a king from partner”**

**The three ways to balance**

**How to respond when partner balances...**

**... with a suit bid**

**... with a notrump bid**

**... with a double**

**Remember, partner is “borrowing” a king from you...**

**When to avoid balancing**

**The importance of establishing a ‘culture’ of balancing**

#### **Week 5: Considerations When Opening Minor Suits**

**General comments on minor suit openings**

**Very important: when opening a minor suit, have a planned rebid**

**For ‘marginal’ opening hands, use alternate point evaluation**

**Opening a minor suit in first or second seat**

**Don’t stretch to open and then look for excuses to pass**

**Pass marginal openers and then look for excuses to bid**

**Opening a minor suit in third seat**

**Don’t stretch to open a minor without a real suit**

**For whom are you opening this hand?**

**Opening a minor suit in fourth seat**

**Remember that you have the option to pass out the hand**

**Inverted Minor Suit Raises**

**The pre-emptive minor suit double raise (alertable)**

**The strong minor suit single raise (alertable)**

**The search for notrump**

**(Optional) Criss-Cross as minor suit limit raise (10-12; alertable)**

**Problems with Criss-Cross sequences**

**What about the traditional single raise with 6-10 HCPs?**

**Slam exploration**

**Splinters (jump shift by opener)**

**Minor suit Blackwood (Minorwood)**

**Control-showing sequence (after 1-2-3)**

**In competition**

**With a Passed Hand**

**Inverted minors and the short club – Warning**

## **Week 6: Cue Bids**

### **What is a Cue Bid?**

**A Cue Bid is defined as a forcing bid in a suit in which the bidder cannot possibly wish to play**

**Cue Bids are more about “what they are NOT, rather than what they ARE”**

**Cue bids ask a question...**

**Cue bids generally ask partner to “do something intelligent”**

**“Tell me something about your hand I did not already know”**

### **Simple Low-Level Cue Bids**

**When partner has opened and the opponents have overcalled**

**Cue Bids That Are Conventional**

**Michaels Cue Bids**

**Balance seat also?**

**Cue Bids When the Opponents Have Bid Two Suits**

**Western Cue Bid (at the 3-level)**

**High-Level Cue Bids**

**Cue Bids When Exploring Slams**

## **Week 7: Overcalls Versus Doubles**

### **Takeout Doubles**

**Recognizing a Takeout Double**

**The Two Types of Takeout Doubles**

**Responding to a takeout double**

**If Your Right-Hand Opponent Redoubles (Free Bid)**

**Converting Partner's Takeout Double to Penalty**

**Caution: Hands Unsuitable for Takeout Doubles**

**The Takeout Double with Equal-Level Conversion (ELC)**

**Simple Overcalls versus Pre-Emptive Jump Overcalls**

**Strategic Passes**