

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.

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 \$175. A week-by-week schedule of topics follows.

***For more information or to register, contact Dave LeGrow
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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