

# Kibitzer

Official Publication of the Chicago Contract Bridge Association December, 2025/January 2026

## Stan Subeck Central States Regional

The Stan Subeck Central States Regional was held from October 16th to October 19th at the Patty Turner Center in Deerfield. The location was excellent: great lighting, open and airy, and plenty of easy in and easy out parking.

Attendance, in parity with recent tournaments across the ACBL, was lighter than hoped. There were 195 tables in play over four days, with 207 players earning a total of 1,236.31 masterpoints. Many of our snowbirds had headed south, diminishing the turnout some.

Attendees came from as far as Huixquilucan, MX, Norwalk, Connecticut, Poughkeepsie, NY, Florida state, and Hattiesburg, Mississippi. There were lots of locals, as well as many of our neighbors from Wisconsin.

### Congrats to the top masterpoint winners:

1	39.11	L James Phillips Park Ridge
2	38.75	Jon Sorkin Palatine, IL
3	37.81	Wayne Snider Elk Grove Vlg
4	37.34	Richard Strauss Northbrook
5	28.37	Samuel Miller Glencoe, IL
6	28.37	Howard Engle Highland Park
7	27.82	Sam Nelson Northbrook, IL
8	25.57	Craig Allen Glen Ellyn, IL
9	24.36	Jack Oest Chicago, IL
10	23.47	Stephen Donahue Riverwoods
11	23.46	Craig Gardner Streamwood
12	21.1	Jeffrey Goldman Norwalk CT
13	20.64	Betsy Downs Chicago, IL
14	20.31	Robert Gardner Glenview, IL
15	20.02	Craig Jacobson Skokie, IL
16	19.85	Matthew Dyer Chicago, IL
17	19	Robert Rebelein
18	18.18	Robert Maxson River Forest, IL
19	16.92	James Diebel Wood Dale, IL
20	15.38	David Joyce Kenilworth, IL
21	13.95	Jeff Mandell Northfield, IL
22	13.86	Sriram Datla Naperville, IL
23	13.73	Amin Hakim Glenview, IL
24	13.73	Jack Snyder Rockford, IL
25	13.73	John Russell Barrington, IL
26	13.67	Mark Stein Skokie, IL
27	12.76	Will Engel Freeport, IL
28	12.05	Jeff Schuett Lincolnshire, IL
29	11.95	Tamas Szabo Oconomowoc
30	11.91	David Bogolub Deerfield, IL

### Thanks to the great Unit 123 volunteers:

**Missy Ravid**, on-site tournament chair  
**Suzi Subeck**, off-site tournament chair  
**Jan Churchwell**, partnership chair  
**Betsy Downs**, set-up and hospitality chair  
**Jim Diebel**, lecturer  
**Set-up and Tear-down crew:**  
**Bob Maxson**  
**Jeff Schuett**  
**Steve Donahue**  
**Craig Allen**  
**Jamie Rubenstein**  
**Jim Diebel**  
**John Sorkin ... and many more!**

It takes a village and you are our village!



Photo credit to **Missy Ravid**... returning BOD member, **Craig Allen**, with his back to the camera playing with BOD member and Labor Day Sectional chairman, **Steve Donahue**.

More pics on page 5

# Highlights From the ACBL Advisory Council Meeting

The ACBL Advisory Council (formerly known as the Board of Governors) met on November 9th to discuss upcoming ACBL Board motions.

The Advisory Council (AC), comprised of living ACBL past Presidents plus 3 Representatives of each of the 25 ACBL Districts (we are District 13), provides oversight and advice to the ACBL BOD. Suzi Subeck was the only Unit 123 Representative in attendance.

The purpose of the November meeting was to consider the proposed motions and discussion items on the ACBL Board agenda for the meeting in San Francisco. The following summarizes the most relevant motions to Chicago bridge:

## **Topic: Elimination of Online Events in Conjunction with Face-to-Face tournaments**

The proposed motion would eliminate online events held in conjunction with face-to-face (F2F) tournaments. (District 13 has never run such events but these events are not uncommon, and our members attend these events in other areas.) ACBL finds there is no apparent economic advantage to online/offline events to any portion of the ACBL. The logistics are complicated, rendering them unworthy of continuation. Expect motion to pass.

## **Topic: Regulation of Open and Local Sectionals**

The proposed motion would allow Units to run Local and Non Life Master Sectionals under the direction of local tournament assistants as opposed to ACBL Certified Staff. ACBL certified staff is required to hold for Open Sectionals. Certified staff is significantly more expensive, commanding higher salaries as well as hotel accommodations during the tournament. In the event this motion passes, local tournaments would be assigned a certified Tournament Director to coordinate remotely with the Tournament Assistant(s) when needed. ACBL TD's would handle more than one tournament at a time, significantly cutting costs. For Local Sectionals, ACBL would assess a tournament surcharge to the sponsoring Unit to cover the expense of the ACBL director assigned to the event. This amount would be less than the cost of a certified TD.

As proposed, it is hoped that passage of this motion would cut costs at Local Sectionals. In point of fact, it was largely less than popular in the AC because, as pointed out by Peter Marcus, District 25 rep, doing this would result in less work time for ACBL certified staff which could be ineffective... and the ACBL must be certain that directing expenses are aligned with annual budgetary projections.

Impacting players is the consideration that Local Sectionals would pay far less pigmented masterpoints than Open Sectionals. Today the points in such events are 80% silver and 20% black. If this motion passes, the points will be 50% Silver and 50% Black.

Also, in the past, Local Sectionals were restricted to no more than 25 tables per session. This motion would increase that to 50 tables per session which might require 2 local tournament assistants, diminishing any significant reduction in cost.

## **Topic: GNT entries**

Currently the ACBL absorbs the entry fees at the GNT National level for Flights C, B and A in the GNT. Currently, the Championship Flight pays its own entries throughout.

The proposed change in policy would allow the ACBL to bill the Districts for the Championship entries, giving the top flight players the same advantage as the lower flight players. This was **strongly** opposed in the AC meeting as most Districts (District 13 included), do not have the wherewithal to pay these amounts and still pay their determined GNT stipends.

## **Topic: Rights of Non ACBL members**

Currently there is no discussion in the ACBL Codification of Rights of Non ACBL members. The motion in question would define those rights.

There were no other particularly significant motions. Passage or failure of these motions and more will be included in the February/March 2026 Kibitzer.

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The Kibitzer is published six times per year by the Chicago Contract Bridge Association (CCBA).

Opinions of columnists are their own and may not represent those of the CCBA.

For more information, go to  
**www.bridgeinchicago.com**  
or call the CCBA at 630-235-4718.

First Name	Last Name	New Rank
Gabriel	Collado	Junior Master
Christine	Foh	Junior Master
Margaret	Hart	Junior Master
Emil	Nielsen	Junior Master
Laxman	Singh	Junior Master
Christine	Tierney	Junior Master
David	Brown	Club Master
Roger	Gonnering	Club Master
Sherry	McAllister	Club Master
Eileen	Collison	Sectional Master
Michael	Hagerty	NABC Master
Alec	Sun	NABC Master
Dorie	Isaacson	Adv NABC Master
Milda	Roszkiewicz	Adv NABC Master
Caron	Espinosa	Life Master



Through October 6th

## Rank Advancements!

First Name	Last Name	New Rank
Irshad	Ahmad	Junior Master
Lewis	Collens	Junior Master
Nancy	Field	Junior Master
Zheshen	Li	Junior Master
Sharon	Olsen	Junior Master
Russell	Pedley	Junior Master
Edith	Rasmussen	Junior Master
Valerie	Wheeler	Junior Master
Carol	Cawley	Club Master
Scott	Freer	Club Master
Maria	Ghionzoli	Club Master
Becky	Schenk	Club Master
Nancy	Sindelar	Club Master
Kristin	Warren	Club Master
Lori	Zimmerman	Club Master
Randy	Zimmerman	Club Master
Marcia	Dodge	Sectional Master
Pat	Henahan	Sectional Master
Zeyu	Wang	Sectional Master
Patsy	Magner	Regional Master
Susan	Sullivan	NABC Master
Gregory	Smith	Life Master
Joe	Nolan	Bronze Life Master
Gregory	Smith	Bronze Life Master
Sharon	Solwitz	Silver Life Master
Michael	Ellgass	Ruby Life Master
Sheldon	Natenberg	Gold Life Master



Through November 6th



**Interim Acting Kibitzer Staff:**  
CCBA Communications Committee:  
Suzi Subeck, Editor  
Jan Churchwell  
Jamie Rubenstein

**Barbara Nudelman**, a serious personality in Chicago bridge since the early 60's, passed away on November 14th at the age of 94. Barbara was a past president of the ACBL, a past president of the CCBA, a past treasurer of the USBF, a member of the WBF Executive Council, and an all around great force for Chicago bridge. Barbara never took any prisoners, but her persistence and fortitude kept Chicago Bridge strong and viable and largely what it is today. We will greatly miss seeing her at the table with Randee Machotka, playing in our Sectionals as she did to the end. RIP Barbara.



# Special Club Games... for more, go to [BridgeinChicago.com](http://BridgeinChicago.com)

1-Dec	Chicago Duplicate Bridge Monday - 12:00	Junior Fund
1-Dec	Hinsdale Monday - 12:00	Upgraded Club Championship
1-Dec	Calumet DBC Monday - 11:00	CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
1-Dec	Chicago Cultural Center M Monday - 12:30	Stratified Open Pairs
1-Dec	Lawson Bridge Studio Monday - 18:20	Grass Roots Fund
2-Dec	NaperDBC Tuesday - 11:00	Club Championship
3-Dec	University Club Wednesday - 12:00	Grass Roots Charity Pairs
3-Dec	Lawson Bridge Studio Wednesday - 18:20	Grass Roots Fund
3-Dec	Chicago Duplicate Bridge Wednesday - 12:00	Junior Fund
3-Dec	HealthTrack DBC Wednesday - 12:15	Junior Fund
3-Dec	Fox Bridge Wednesday - 11:00	CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
4-Dec	Hinsdale Thursday - 12:00	Hinsdale Charity Game-Earn Extra Points!

5-Dec	Chicago Duplicate Bridge Friday - 12:00	Junior Fund
5-Dec	St. Charles Duplicate Bridge Friday - 11:00	HOLIDAY PARTY CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
5-Dec	NaperDBC Friday - 11:00	Grass Roots Charity Pairs
5-Dec	The Clare Friday - 12:30	Membership Game
7-Dec	Northwestern Sunday - 11:00	11am Game at Parkes Hall Evanston
8-Dec	Yorkville Duplicate Bridge Monday - 11:00	No Game
8-Dec	Chicago Duplicate Bridge Monday - 12:00	STaC
8-Dec	Hinsdale Monday - 12:00	Club Championship-Earn Extra Points!
8-Dec	Calumet DBC Monday - 11:00	ACBL CHARITY
8-Dec	Chicago Cultural Center M Monday - 12:30	Silver Point STaC Point STaC
8-Dec	Lawson Bridge Studio Monday - 18:20	Unit 123 STaC
9-Dec	NaperDBC Tuesday - 11:00	Silver Point STaC

10-Dec	Lawson Bridge Studio Wednesday - 18:20	Unit 123 STaC
10-Dec	Chicago Duplicate Bridge Wednesday - 12:00	STaC
10-Dec	HealthTrack DBC Wednesday - 12:15	STaC
10-Dec	Fox Bridge Wednesday - 11:00	ACBL CHARITY
11-Dec	Hinsdale Thursday - 12:00	Centennial Red Point Ga
11-Dec	Chicago Duplicate Bridge Thursday - 12:00	STaC
11-Dec	Chicago Duplicate Bridge Thursday - 18:30	STaC
11-Dec	Yorkville Duplicate Bridge Thursday - 11:00	No Game
12-Dec	St. Charles Duplicate Bridge Friday - 11:00	CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
12-Dec	Chicago Duplicate Bridge Friday - 12:00	STaC
12-Dec	Tom's Game Friday - 10:30	Xmas Party - Individual
	NaperDBC	

## District 13 Grand National Teams 2025-2026:

The event is scheduled for February 21-22, 2026. The Conditions will mirror the 2024-2025 CoC. The site is yet to be determined. Pre-registration as always will be required. There will be the usual 4 flights: Championship, A, B, and C. Championship, A and B will play a 2-day qualifying and final. C will be a Swiss Team, played in its entirety on Sunday.

Team registration should be sent to Suzi Subeck, co-ordinator, at [stansubeck@prodigy.net](mailto:stansubeck@prodigy.net). Team captains will receive a confirmation following registration.

Flyers will be email blasted once a site is determined. Watch for it in your email!



**Pics from the  
Stan Subeck  
Central States  
Regional...  
photo credit: Betsy Downs**



## Lakeview Club Attracts First-Timers With Popular Lessons by Jamie Rubenstein

The **Chicago Duplicate Bridge Club (CDB)** is successfully drawing novices to its weekly club games as well as to Unit 123/ District 13 tournaments by hosting an active teacher-driven, on-site lesson program. Since October, the Club, under the direction of President **David Schroeder**, offers a weekly teaching venture adopting ACBL's model of 'Learn Bridge in a Day.'" **Matthew Dyer**, club director, explained that the 4-week class program aims to "bring players from 'there are 52 cards in a deck' to 'bidding and making a game or a slam.'" Instruction takes place on CDB premises in the conveniently located Century Mall at Clark/Diversey.

Dyer credits **Les White** as the brains behind the project. Les took Patty Tucker's "Learn Bridge in a Day" ACBL course, learning such basic skills as holding and placing cards on the table, elementary bidding and necessary conventions, defense, scoring and more. Within weeks, Les became an ACBL-certified teacher. He volunteered to teach at CDB and, after gaining approval from the club board, launched his classes. Twenty-two students showed up for the first class last fall. "Roughly 20 continued through November," Les notes, adding with a smile, "the drop-out rate was less than 10%!"

The club is committed to recruiting new players. It fosters close ties with area colleges and runs frequent "mentor mentee" games in which novices are paired with experienced members... a great learning tool in and of itself. In addition, the Friday club novice games are a bonus. "What seemed to be lacking was beginning bridge lessons," observed Schroeder.

Several club regulars volunteered to participate in the teacher rotation team. One is **Josh Zhao**, who only started duplicate last January, but quickly became familiar with hands-on lesson techniques. Simple basics include "shuffling and dealing a deck of cards and practicing trick-taking without a trump suit." Players play individually and gain experience counting and taking tricks while building confidence... more or less, a "bridge-twist" on a solitaire activity.

The weekly lesson sequence looks like this:

Lesson 1— intro, card shuffle/deal, bridge history

Lesson 2— basic bidding: 1 diamond (4+ cards), 5 card majors, finding fits, practice with handouts, and rebids by opener

Lesson 3— evaluating doubles, overcalls, singletons, voids

Lesson 4— 1NT openers, Jacoby transfers, Stayman and intro to 2/1

With respect to bidding, when players ask "why?," Josh urges them to accept the rules for now and adjust their methods once they start actual play at the table. "I've found that explaining does not seem to help," Josh laments, adding that "They are most concerned about perfection when they play practice hands." Striving for perfection is what keeps us coming back, and Josh encourages his players to persevere. "Some students pick up concepts more quickly than others so class progress may seem uneven. In the end, they catch up with one another and it all comes together," he commented.

The CDB leadership is pleased with the results of the program. Management is scheduling advanced classes this December, continuing into the new year, and recycling beginning classes with fresh faces. Said Schroeder, "We will be holding classes on weak two bids, preempts, handling strong hands and slam bidding, opening leads, signals and more. As long as we have students, we will have lessons!"

For information on joining these classes, contact David Schroeder at (773) 879-0486 or Matt Dyer at (617) 970-6579.



# "Hand"y ... Dandy!

Dealer East. EW Vul.

♠ A 10 5 3 ♥ J 5 ♦ A 9 8 7 3 ♣ 9 3	♠ — ♥ 10 8 7 6 4 3 ♦ K J ♣ Q 10 8 7 5
♠ 7 ♥ A K 9 2 ♦ 10 5 4 2 ♣ A J 6 4	♠ K Q J 9 8 6 4 2 ♥ Q ♦ Q 6 ♣ K 2

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East's initial pass, the vulnerability, South's pre-emptive opening bid and West's reticence conspired to keep East-West out of the auction, where 12 tricks, albeit rather fortunately, are available in hearts.

West led the king of hearts and shifted to the two of diamonds. As the cards lay, playing low from dummy would have been fatal: East would win the trick with the king of diamonds and shift to a club, giving the defenders four tricks before declarer gained the lead.

Instead of playing low at trick two, declarer called for dummy's ace of diamonds and led dummy's jack of hearts at trick three, throwing the queen of diamonds from hand. This loser-on-loser gave declarer a real chance of establishing a long card in diamonds without letting East gain the lead. West won that trick with the ace of hearts and shifted to his seven of trumps. Declarer took this with dummy's ten and followed with the six from hand. After ruffing a diamond high, declarer led the two of trumps to dummy's three to ruff another diamond high. Next came the four of trumps to dummy's five to ruff a third diamond, thereby establishing dummy's last diamond as a winner. All that remained for declarer to do was to cross to dummy with the ace of trumps and discard a club on the good diamond.

If the diamonds had broken 5-1, declarer would have had to hope that the ace of clubs was onside.

Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ 8 7 6 ♥ K 9 7 4 ♦ K 5 3 ♣ A J 5	♠ 9 4 2 ♥ 6 ♦ Q J 8 ♣ Q 9 8 6 4 2
♠ K Q J 10 5 3 ♥ Q 10 8 5 2 ♦ — ♣ 10 7	♠ A ♥ A J 3 ♦ A 10 9 7 6 4 2 ♣ K 3

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♦
2♦	Double	2♠	3♠
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

After West made a Michaels Cue Bid, showing length in both major suits, North doubled to show some values. East's preference for spades gave South a problem and his choice of three spades indicated a powerful diamond-based hand. When North showed diamond support with his leap to five diamonds, South had an easy raise to six.

West led the king of spades to declarer's bare ace. All seemed routine for declarer until West discarded a spade on the ace of trumps. Declarer saw that his main chance of making the contract was to find West with the queen of clubs. However, he noted that there was an extra chance if East began with exactly three spades and one heart, not unlikely in view of his bidding: then East could be stripped of his major suit cards and put on lead with a trump when he would only have clubs left in his hand – then it wouldn't matter who had the queen of clubs.

Putting this plan into action, declarer drew a second round of trumps with dummy's king and ruffed a spade. Next, he crossed back to dummy with the king of hearts to ruff dummy's remaining spade. This was followed by the crucial move of unblocking the king of clubs, to ensure three tricks in the suit when East started with 3-1 in the majors.

Declarer continued with the ace of hearts and East was fixed! If he ruffed with his winning trump he would then have to play a club into dummy's ace-jack tenace, thereby giving declarer two tricks in the suit and a parking place for his heart loser. When East threw a club instead of ruffing, he was put on lead with a trump for the same outcome.

**Dealer North. EW Vul.**

♠ A 7 3  
 ♥ J 9 8 6  
 ♦ A K 7 2  
 ♣ 10 4

♠ 10 8 4 2  
 ♥ 4  
 ♦ Q J 10 9 3  
 ♣ K 7 3

♠ 9 5  
 ♥ A 5 3 2  
 ♦ 8 5 4  
 ♣ 8 6 5 2

♠ K Q J 6  
 ♥ K Q 10 7  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ A Q J 9

West	North	East	South
—	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South's two notrump rebid was forcing, asking for more information about the North hand. The leap to four hearts confirmed that North had four-card support for hearts and South used Roman Key Card Blackwood on the way to bidding the heart slam. North showed two key cards without the queen of hearts.

West led the queen of diamonds and declarer counted ten likely winners, a loser in trumps and a possible loser in clubs. Declarer saw that he would always make twelve tricks if the trumps were no worse than 4-1, whenever East had the king of clubs.

However, this declarer was not one to rely on a finesse when there was a better line available - that of ruffing two diamonds in hand. He took the lead with the ace of diamonds, cashed the king of diamonds and then ruffed a diamond with the king of trumps. Next he led the seven of trumps to dummy's nine. When East allowed this to hold, declarer ruffed a second diamond with the queen of trumps and then led the ten of trumps to dummy's jack. East took this with the ace and shifted to a club. Declarer rose with the ace of clubs and then crossed to dummy by playing the six of spades to the ace. Then he drew East's two remaining

trumps with dummy's eight and six before claiming his contract. He made four spade tricks, three trumps, two diamonds, two diamond ruffs in hand and the ace of clubs for a total of twelve tricks.

**Dealer East. EW Vul.**

♠ K 5 3  
 ♥ J 9 8 6 2  
 ♦ A 6 5  
 ♣ 10 5

♠ Q 10 7  
 ♥ K Q 7 4  
 ♦ Q J 10  
 ♣ Q 9 6

♠ 4  
 ♥ 5 3  
 ♦ 8 7 4 2  
 ♣ K J 8 7 4 2

♠ A J 9 8 6 2  
 ♥ A 10  
 ♦ K 9 3  
 ♣ A 3

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

This deal was played in a teams match and both Wests led the queen of diamonds against four spades after identical auctions.

The first declarer took the opening lead in hand and played a trump to the king followed by a second trump towards his hand. When East discarded a club the contract could no longer be made.

The second declarer saw that if there was a trump loser he would have to find a way to avoid a loser in each of the side suits and then proceeded to show how that could be done. He took the opening diamond lead in hand with the king and cashed the ace of trumps. After both opponents had followed with small trumps, he then made the rather strange-looking play at tricks three and four of the ace followed by the ten of hearts. West rose with the queen of hearts and continued with the ten of diamonds. Declarer took this with dummy's ace and led the jack of hearts, discarding the nine of diamonds from hand after East threw a club. West took this with the king and tried to cash the jack of diamonds. Declarer ruffed this in hand and crossed to dummy with the king of trumps. East's second club discard was a slight disappointment but declarer was still in charge for he could discard his club loser on the established nine of hearts. All declarer lost was two hearts and a trump.

The diamond lead gave both declarers a chance to make the game, while a club lead would have left neither with a way of making four spades.

# Winning With Wimpy by Jim Diebel

I am going to depart from discussing thought-provoking hands for awhile and talk about some basic tools with which all serious players should be familiar. This issue starts a 5-part series on the No Trump Structure. Your most accurate contracts should be reached when one partner or the other opens with 1NT. This is such a descriptive bid (assuming it is not abused) that the partnership assets can often be evaluated to the exact trick. Games, Slams, and sometimes Grand Slams can be bid with relative confidence if you have the tools. Our systems over 1NT are going to be broken down into 5 parts:

**Stayman and Blackwood**  
**Jacoby and Texas Transfers**  
**Minor Suit Transfers**  
**Distributional Conventions**  
**Bidding after Interference over 1NT**



**1NT**  
**Structure**  
**Part 1**

## A. Stayman and Blackwood:

All players who have been playing this game for more than 2 weeks know something about both of these conventions. Stayman is used to find a major suit fit, and Blackwood is used to find out how many aces are held. What is amazing is how much is **not** known about the use of these two conventions.

### Stayman:

Stayman is a convention with varied uses. Responder is going to start with this convention on several different hand types. The most common will be when he has a **game forcing** hand with **at least one 4 card major**. Next most common will be when he has an **invitational** hand **with or without a 4 card major**.. Finally, he is going to use it when he has either a minimum hand with short clubs or a bust hand with both majors.

### Game Forcing Hands:

The most common hand that will use Stayman is generally the easiest to handle. Any balanced hand of 10-14 HCP or as low as 9 HCP with good intermediates or an “establishable” 5 card suit... if that hand that contains a 4 card major.

♠ T4   ♥ KJ83   ♦ KT85   ♣ QT6

When partner opens a strong no trump, this hand will insist on game despite having only 9 high card points. The strength of the 3 tens and 2 eights should not be ignored. Responder will start with 2C and if opener does not rebid 2H, he will sign off at 3NT. It will be shown to be necessary for opener to always bid 2H when holding both 4 hearts as well as 4 spades. Failure to bid hearts first may result in the loss of the heart suit on some hands.

♠ AQ43 ♥ J5   ♦ QJ96   ♣ K83

Again, responder will start with 2C. If opener rebids 2S, he will raise to game in spades. If opener instead rebids 2D or 2H, responder will jump to game in 3NT. Opener will know that responder must have 4 spades for this sequence and will convert the contract to 4S if he holds 4 spades as well as 4 hearts.

♠ KQ6   ♥ A95   ♦ QJT974   ♣ 6

Whether or not the partnership plays 4-way transfers, responder should raise to 3NT. Responder knows that slam is remote and he should **not ask a question that he already knows the answer to**. The preceding statement will become one of the 10 commandments of good bidding.

♠ KQT75   ♥ K97   ♦ A8   ♣ Q94

At the risk of alienating a large segment of my audience, I'm going to suggest using Stayman (rather than a Jacoby Transfer bid) on a hand of this type. Especially at matchpoint scoring, the value of scoring that extra 10 pts cannot be trivialized. A 5-3 major suit trump fit is preferable to 3NT only when either the opponents can establish a suit before you can take your 10 winners, or when the hand **with 3 trumps** can score a ruff. Hands with a 5-3-3-2 pattern with non-minimum values for game will usually score better in no trump than in the major suit if opener has only 3 card support. The way to find out whether opener has only 3 card support, or the far superior 4 card support is to begin with Stayman. If partner does not bid spades, you have at best an 8-card fit, and the hand will very likely score better at no trump. Have you ever been the opening 1NT bidder with a flat 4-3-3-3 distribution when partner transfers to your 3 card major? Now when partner rebids 3NT, you are unsure whether to pass for a top or correct to 4 of the major to go with the field. If you use my guidelines, you will **never** pass 3NT when holding 3-card support, because you know that partner can not hold the 5-3-3-2 non-minimum that you need. If you are worried about IMP scoring, 9 tricks can often be easier to score than 10. The same logic is applicable.

**Invitational Hands:**

Invitational hand can be generally broken down into 3 types: Flat hands with 8-9 points with a 4 card major, the same hands without a 4 card major, and slightly weaker hands with a good six card minor. We will examine the last type in a later lesson, but the first two examples will necessarily start with the versatile 2C Stayman bid.

♠ J85 ♥ KQ93 ♦ QJ84 ♣ 83

This is a common hand that is worth an invitation to game. Responder starts with 2C, and if partner can rebid 2H he will raise to 3H to show the invitational nature of his hand. If opener instead rebids 2D or 2S (which we now recognize **denies** 4 hearts), responder invites game with 2NT. Opener must alert this call, as responder does not necessarily promise a 4 card major on this sequence. *(more on this later)*

♠ KQ93 ♥ J93 ♦ QJ84 ♣ 83

Switching the major suit holdings from the previous hand, we will discover that responder must treat this hand slightly differently. As before, he starts with 2C. As before, if opener rebids 2S, responder will invite game in spades with 3S. If opener rebids 2D he will invite game with 2NT, and opener will **alert** that responder may or may not hold a 4-card major. The difference will occur when opener rebids 2H. This **does not** deny 4 spades, and it becomes responder’s responsibility to find a spade fit if one exists. Unlike the stronger hand, where a jump to 3NT would guarantee 4 spades, with only invitational values, responder must rebid 2S. Opener will recognize this sequence as an invitational hand with 4 spades **and not 4 hearts**. Opener has the option of passing, or correcting to 2NT, 3NT, or 4S depending whether he is minimum or maximum and whether or not he holds 4 spades as well.

♠ KQ9 ♥ J93 ♦ QJ84 ♣ 863

This time responder starts yet again with 2C. Whether opener rebids 2D, 2H, or 2S, responder will invite game with 2NT. When the opener had rebid 2D or 2S, he will **alert** that responder’s 2NT **may or may not** have a 4 card major. When opener had rebid 2H however, he will alert responder’s 2NT that it **denies** a 4 card major. All of this will be proved necessary later when we change the meaning of the direct call of 2NT.

**Hands with Less Than Invitational Values:**

Generally, flat hands with less than invitational strength will pass partner’s 1NT opening bid.

♠ Q963 ♥ J93 ♦ 84 ♣ QJ83

Although we’d very much like to play this hand in 2S if partner holds 4 cards in that suit, there is no assurance that he does, and certainly no reason to believe that any contract other than 2S will be an improvement over 1NT. Pass.

♠ Q963 ♥ J973 ♦ QJ84 ♣ 3

This hand is considerably different from the previous example. We have every reason to believe that 2D, 2H, or 2S will be a considerable improvement over 1NT, so we bid 2C, intending to pass any rebid by opener.

♠ Q963 ♥ J973 ♦ J84 ♣ 83

This hand is so weak that I believe the gamble of improving a likely horrible 1NT contract is worth the risk. If partner can rebid 2 of a major (it only works for the opponents), it will almost certainly be a tremendous improvement. If instead, partner rebids 2D, you have little choice but to bid 2H, expecting to play in a 4-3 fit. Partner should hold a 3 card major, or you can blame this catastrophe on his off-shape choice of 1NT. Opener will pass 2H with 3-card support, or correct to 2S if he holds 3 cards in that suit – (assuming that he has reason to believe that 2S will be a superior contract to 2H). This treatment is known as **Garbage Stayman**.

**Blackwood:**

Players who have become comfortable with the concept of one partner becoming the captain of the auction will realize that after opening 1NT, the opener **can not** ask for aces later. Partner is the captain. Opener can answer questions or make evaluations, but nothing more. Therefore, after using Stayman, responder should rebid 4C (Gerber) if he wishes to ask for aces, and 4NT if he is interested in whether or not partner has a maximum. Thus:

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1NT	2C	1NT	2C
2H	4C	2H	4NT

In the first example, Responder is asking Opener about aces, with hearts agreed as trumps. If the partnership is playing Roman Key Card Blackwood, Opener will treat the King of Hearts as if it were an ace. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> example, Opener is asking responder to pass with a minimum or to bid 6NT (or 6S) with a maximum. Note that responder promises 4 spades with this sequence, or else he would have jumped to 4NT immediately. Remember the rule...

**Jim Diebel** serves on the BOD of District 13. He runs a successful club game in the Western suburbs. In his “free time,” he gives bridge lessons on and off line. For more information, you can reach him at [wimpy@wimpy.biz](mailto:wimpy@wimpy.biz).

**Unit 123 WinterFest Sectional  
January 30-February 1, 2026  
Irish American Heritage Center,  
4626 N Knox Avenue, Chicago, IL**

**Friday Jan 30 10:00 AM pair/ team game\*  
3:00 PM pair/ team game\***

**Saturday Jan 31 10:00 AM & TBD  
Swiss Teams (2 sessions)**

**499er Pairs (2 separate events) 10 AM & 2:30 PM  
6:00 PM annual dinner \*\***

**and Unit 123 membership meeting  
(Reservations will be Required)**

**Sunday Feb 1 10:00 AM pair/ team game\*  
3:00 PM pair/ team game\***

**All pair team events are single session**

\* pair/team games will be held if number of entries allows for this format. Separate pair/team events for under 500's at Director's Discretion.

**Stratification (with masterpoint averaging)  
A=3000+ B=1500-3000 C=0-1500**

**Tournament Chair:**

**Betsy Downs [loverofbeagles@gmail.com](mailto:loverofbeagles@gmail.com)**

**Partnership Chair:**

**Jan Churchwell [jan8242@gmail.com](mailto:jan8242@gmail.com)**

Saturday night inside the venue...

Annual Meeting and dinner on menu!

**Now 'bout the dinner And how to reserve,  
As well as the items That we plan to serve:**

Our subsidized meal like last year will be:

**Pizza and Salad, with chippy Cookie!**

**Your cost:15 dollars, The rest we will pay...**

We hope you will join us **Following play!**

Checks should be sent to **Fran Lyne's** direction.

**By 1/17 wth pizza selection!!**

**Sausage or Spinach Or Pepperoni,**

**If none of those wanted, then cheese it will be.**

**Checks MUST be written to CCBA.**

**The bank has insisted we write them that way!**

**Pick up your tickets from Fran\*\* at the site.**

**And share with your friends, a fun winter night!**

**\*\*Fran Lyne\*\* 6538 N Greenview Avenue, Apt 2  
Chicago, IL 60626**

**773-972-5014 [Thelynes@21stcentury.rsn](mailto:Thelynes@21stcentury.rsn).**

The **WinterFest Sectional** is rapidly approaching. The new venue, The Irish American Heritage Center (see pics and article on p. 6 of the August Kibitzer), is perfect. There are two parking lots surrounding the site: one in the back and one on the side. If you require an elevator to get upstairs, use the back entrance. There are no stairs to that doorway.

FYI: Restaurants in the area are largely ethnic... ranging from Korean to Mexican. There will be a restaurant guide on site. If you prefer something specific between sessions, you can bring something from home.

The restaurant at the Heritage Center does not open until 6PM, however, it is possible that they will open for lunch one or more days for us if it can be worked out easily. That has not been confirmed. We will keep you updated.

On Saturday night, following the 2nd session of play, Unit 123 will hold its annual meeting and dinner. This meeting features the State of the Unit report, the treasurer's report, the election of the slate of board members, as well as discussion of relevant issues. Winners of annual masterpoint awards are celebrated.

The Unit subsidized dinner will take place during the meeting. The menu will feature choice of individual pizza (sausage, pepperoni, cheese or spinach), salad, and cookie from Lou Malnati's. The cost to diners will be \$15, payable in advance, to the Chicago Contract Bridge Association. Reservations are required along with pizza selection.

**To Register:**

Please call or email Fran Lyne, (see bottom of flyer on left) with your selection on or before January 17th and send your check to Fran at 6538 N Greenview Ave, Apt 2, Chicago, IL, 60626. Fran will distribute tickets at the tournament all day Friday or on Saturday afternoon.

Please scan the bar code below for more information:



The bar code is also online at [bridgeinchicago.com](http://bridgeinchicago.com).

**Unit 123 Sectional Entry Fees:  
Pair Events: \$14/person/session  
Students with proper ID \$7  
Swiss Teams: 56/team/session**



## DESCRIBING THE DISTRIBUTION – WHAT IS PARTNER’S LIKELY SHAPE?

By Ginny & Jeff Schuett

Listen to the bidding carefully to determine partner’s likely distribution. In each auction below, try to figure out the likely shape of opener’s and later responder’s hands.

1. 1♣ – 1♥

1♠ – 1NT

2♠ - what is opener’s shape?

2. 1♠ - 2♣ <- Standard American Bidding

2♥ - 2NT

3♥ - what is opener’s shape?

2/1 Bidding -> 1♠ - 1NT

2♥ - 2NT

3♠ - opener’s shape?

3. 1♦ - 1♠

2♦ - 2♥

2NT - 3♠ - what is responder’s shape?

4. 1♦ - 1♠

2♥ - 2NT

3♦ - what is opener’s shape?



1. The opener shows five spades and must have at least six clubs (with 5-4 or 5-5 the opener would have started with 1♠). Opener’s hand is something like ♠AQT63 ♥4 ♦7 ♣AK10752. If responder has something like ♠54 ♥KJ753 ♦QJ8 ♣J98 it is best to take partner back to 3♣ with longer ♣ than ♠. It is a preference, not a raise.
2. The opener has promised five or more spades and at least five hearts. Opener likely has something like ♠AQT63 ♥KQ974 ♦7 ♣K9 but could also have ♠AQT963 ♥AK974 ♦7 ♣9. Responder with a questionable diamond stopper does better showing a preference for ♠ rather than persisting in NT with a hand like ♠K8 ♥J8 ♦Q852 ♣AJ1083.
3. Responder’s second bid of 2♥ already implied 5 card ♠, so the rebid of 3♠ shows 6+ ♠ and 4 ♥. Opener should raise to 4♠ with a hand like ♠K9 ♥J7 ♦AK10742 ♣K96. Many players would incorrectly persist to 3NT with only one ♣ stopper. Much better to play in spades.
4. Opener’s 2♥ rebid is a reverse and shows about 17+ HCP and implies a distributional hand with longer ♦ than ♥. When opener rebids 3♦, that would show 6+♦ with a hand such as ♠K9 ♥AK97 ♦AQJ973 ♣8. With questionable ♣ stopper like Q752, responder might not be wise to persist with 3NT.

Distributional hands are hard to bid properly and often take at least 3 bids to show the proper shape. With good hands, always try to bid your longest suit first and then show second suits or even delayed support for partner. Misfit hands rarely play well in NT unless the NT bidder has good strength and multiple stoppers in partner’s short suit(s). Avoid bidding NT with weak misfit hands. When possible, misfit hands are best played in the long suit of the weaker hand.

Jeff and Ginny Schuett—bridge teaching, directing, play

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