

AUCTION BRIDGE

By B. M. J.

*I*T is anticipated, and with some show of reason, that there will be a tremendous vogue for duplicate Auction Bridge next winter. The fact that the American Whist League has officially acknowledged the game and permitted contests in it has helped materially to introduce the public into the fascinations of these contests, which have now become the rule rather than the exception at the large whist centers.

Heretofore the difficulty of making a proper and fair adjustment of the relative scores proved somewhat of a barrier, owing to the unequal distribution of the penalties which some pairs, more venturesome than others, meted out to their opponents. As the game had been played these bonuses were in almost every case the deciding factor in the prize distribution, but now this has been overcome by an ingenious system of scoring which, in our judgment, places the game in a category all by itself in which the lucky element is reduced to an absolute minimum, and the result is purely scientific test and skill. In other words, consistency of play will pave the way to success rather than lucky penalties scored against two or three weak combinations.

As possibly many of our readers have not come in contact with this system as yet, an explanation may not be deemed out of place. Let us suppose ten tables in play, i.e., ten pairs in the North and South section and a like number in the East and West. Each hand is discussed without any limitation of penalties whatever in contradistinction to the old three hundred and fifty limit. The pair getting top score on the board get nine. In the event of two pairs getting a top nine and eight are added and divided by two yields eight and one-half to each of the top pairs. In the case of three tying for top nine, eight and seven are added and divided by three, yielding eight to each of the three tops. The next pair lower get six, and so on down the line till the lowest pair get nothing. Should two pairs divide this unenviable honor then each gets one-half.

Now, you will peace no matter how lucky a pair may be in the matter of penalties they can only score a top, which is always one point under the number of tables—explained by the lowest pair getting a zero. Of course, the players of one section are migratory, whilst the pairs in the other section are stationary and the boards travel in the opposite way to the pairs that must move. We have seen this system tried with varying numbers of pairs and boards, and the results in every case gave complete satisfaction.

To resume our discussion of the pre-emptive bid, it ought never be utilized where the card is what is popularly known as a two-suiter. Whenever possible give your partner a free option in helping you in the suit which appears to him to hold the superior advantage on the joint cards. By declaring the higher valued suit first, you will, in the course of development, probably call a higher number in the other suit. He will then have the option—if it suits his hand better—of putting you back into your original make, and this is the important point, without raising the contract. The example we give below was a recent experience in a Duplicate Bridge contest, where the dealer pre-empted with three hearts in which the contract was set by the opponents. Had he called his card properly, a sure game in spades could not have been avoided. We will reserve fur-

ther discussion of this very important branch till our next article.

In the following card East dealt and bid three hearts, there was no interference, and the contract was set for two tricks (undoubtedly). A glance will suffice to show the trap the bidder laid for himself, instead of easily communicating both suits to his partner and arriving at a winning declaration.

♠—A, 6.							
♥—10, 9, 8, 5, 4.							
♦—A, J, 6, 5.							
♣—Q, 4.							
♠—Q, 10, 9, 8.	♥—K, J, 5, 4, 3	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	♥—A, Q, 7, 6,
N	E						
W	S						
♡—Nil.			3, 2.				
♦—K, Q, 8, 7,			♦—9.				
4, 3.			♣—K.				
♣—J, 9, 3.							
			♠—4, 2.				
			♥—H, J				
			♦—10, 2.				
			♣—A, 10, 8, 7, 6, 5, 2.				