

Auction Bridge

By R. F. FOSTER, Author of Contract Bridge, Bridge Tactics, etc.

There is one element in the bidding at auction bridge, which was one of the outstanding features of the championship play at the bridge congress in Chicago last December, and that is what is technically known as "camouflage." It is well described in George Keith's book, "The Art of Successful Bidding," which sets forth in detail the system adopted by the players who have won the championship for fours for both men and women, and also the pair championships, for some years past.

Briefly it is the exact opposite of the tactics adopted for Contract Bridge, as camouflage has for its object to convey misleading information to the opponents, which entails giving it to the partner at the same time; whereas in Contract it is essential to give the partner absolutely dependable information, regardless of whether it benefits the adversaries or not.

The success of camouflage bidding depends on there being a safe retreat or shift if the scheme does not work well. Here is an example from Mr. Reith's book:

—A K 8 5		—Q 9 7			
—10 9 7 6 4		—A 8 3			
—4		—10 7 6 2			
—K 3 2	<table style="margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td>Y</td></tr> <tr><td>A B</td></tr> <tr><td>Z</td></tr> </table>	Y	A B	Z	—Q J 6
Y					
A B					
Z					
—3 2		—J 10 6 4			
—K Q J 5		—2			
—K Q J 8		—A 9 5 3			
—A 9 8		—10 7 5 4			

The dealer in this case was John Mattheys, one of the champion four of the Knickerbocker Whist Club, who held Z's cards and passed.

A bid a diamond. This is what is technically known as an "approaching bid," which avoids the danger of bidding no trumps with only one stopper between the two major suits, and gives the other players an opportunity to disclose their holdings by making it cheap to bid.

Y, whose cards were held by George Reith, bids a heart. This is in accordance with the modern idea that when partner has nothing to show, and the probability is that the adversaries will get the contract, it is well to show a lead while it is cheap to do so, even with only four cards.

B, whose cards were held by George Kling, one of the best players in America, bid one no-trump, having every suit stopped and encouraged by his partner's diamond bid, and the dealer's weakness on the left.

Z sees the opportunity to camouflage the hand by concealing his ability to assist hearts, so he bids two clubs. This A doubles, to show B that he need not be afraid of clubs if he wants to go on with his no-trumper. Y passes, as he knows Z cannot have anything worth-while pushing in a minor suit, if he had no original bid as dealer. B goes on to two no-trumps.

Now Z, after some apparent hesitation and discouragement at A's doubling his clubs, goes back to his partner's heart suit, bidding three.

A now sees a chance for some easy pickings by doubling. B's no-trump bid over Y's heart bid, and Z's apparent denial of that suit, indicates that B has the hearts well stopped, but is probably shy on clubs, his suits being apparently hearts, diamond ace, and strong spades.

When Y passed, B thought it better to leave the double in, as the return to hearts made his three to the queen look not quite so promising and Z's

club bid was disconcerting. It is a game hand at three hearts doubled, with four honors. It is also an easy game hand at no-trumps for A and B, but the camouflage tactics adopted by the dealer prevented them from bidding it.

Such tactics would never do at Contract.

This was the distribution in Problem No. 29:

—K		—9 7			
—Q 9 8		—K 10 6 5			
—A		—none			
—K	<table style="margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td>Y</td></tr> <tr><td>A B</td></tr> <tr><td>Z</td></tr> </table>	Y	A B	Z	—none
Y					
A B					
Z					
—none		—Q 8			
—none		—none			
—K 10 2		—5			
—5 4 3		—Q J 2			

Hearts are trumps and Z leads. Y and Z want five tricks. This is how they get them:

Z leads spade deuce. If B trumps and leads club king, Z trumps and leads another spade, which Y trumps and makes the club queen, Z discarding the diamond. The rest is obvious. If B leads a trump instead of the club king, Z's two spades are good.

If B refuses to trump the first trick, Y wins the spade and leads the diamond. If B still refuses to trump, Y and Z have a cross ruff. If B trumps the diamond and leads the club king, Z trumps it and leads a spade, which Y trumps. The false opening is the diamond, as B will trump, lead the club, and if Z trumps and leads trumps, B makes a club. If Z starts with a trump and Y leads spade, B refuses to trump both spade and diamond.

BRIDGE PROBLEM NO. 30

The diagram shows the following card distributions:

- Player A:** ♠ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♣ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♠ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♣ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2
- Player B:** ♠ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♣ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♠ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♣ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2
- Player Y:** ♠ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♣ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♠ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♣ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2
- Player Z:** ♠ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♣ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♠ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ♣ 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2

Hearts are trumps and Z leads. Y and Z want six tricks. How do they get them? Solution in the May number.