The ABC of Bridge
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The three pillars of the ABC of Bridge – Always Be Counting, Communicating, and Curious, have been the foundation of the series of articles in the District 4 publications for the past four years. The third “C”, being Curious, is the one pillar that often is the impetus for improving one’s game.

This became obvious to me this past winter when I played a session of bridge with my son Todd in a Florida duplicate game. Todd, an avid golfer, had just resumed his interest in bridge following a fifteen year hiatus. He opened 2♠ in first seat and I had the following hand:

♣ K864 ♥ A ♦ AKQ ♣ 95432

I responded 2NT hoping to locate an important feature such as the A♣ or K♣. Todd, having no outside Ace or King, rebid 3♠. I then signed off in 4♠ and Todd, through competent declarer play, won 12 tricks as his hand was:

♣ AQJ732 ♥ 94 ♦ 7532 ♣ 7

Following the game we both manifested curiosity relative to how we could enhance our bidding system to identify useful shortness in the weak 2-bidder’s hand. Todd suggested that in the sequence in which responder bids 2NT following opener’s weak 2-bid and the opener denies an outside feature (A or K), then a new suit by responder should ask for shortness (singleton or void) in the bid suit. With a singleton or void in the relevant suit, opener jumps to 6 in the original suit bid by opener, otherwise opener signs off in game.

We both thought that this treatment would be a useful improvement to our bidding system. Todd then asked me why can’t we explore for shortness when the opener discloses an outside Ace or King. I gave this some thought and we agreed that if the responder bids any new suit following the opener’s disclosure of the feature, then that bid asks for shortness and requires the weak 2-bidder to jump to 6 with a singleton or void in the queried suit. To illustrate the value of this approach examine the following hands.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North</th>
<th>South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ KQ10763</td>
<td>♠ A984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ 5</td>
<td>♥ J632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ K54</td>
<td>♦ A7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ 1085</td>
<td>♣ AKQ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the newly enhanced bidding approach the auction should go as follows:

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N 2♠ 3♦ 6♠ 2NT 3♥ P
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The inclusion of this approach in weak 2-bid sequences gives up nothing as the responder can always bid his suit naturally instead of going through the 2NT query. Try adopting this enhancement and you may discover slams that others are failing to reach. So bottom line -- remember the three ABCs and recognize that whatever skill level a player has achieved, it always pays to be Curious!