

April, 2025

To: Fellow bridge players

From: Bill Voedisch

Re: Bridge Tips

In the past I have on occasion provided bridge tips. I have created a few more and I have also reviewed and edited some of my earlier tips documents. What is attached to this email are my complete tips to date. There are 12 documents total.

NOTE: First, a **warning**. Some of my tips are for everyone but many are meant for the more experienced player. It won't work if you all start diving into these and try to put a lot of this to use right away. It would be too much to absorb, and you and your partner(s) might really get confused, and your game suffers accordingly. Wrong result.

Start with these two: Basic bridge tips (**BridgeTips24**) and a discussion of Key Card Blackwood (**BridgeKeyCardBW**). Both are short and should be helpful for most all players.

What follows is a review of each tip document in the order in which they are attached. I put the file name in bold and a Degree of Difficulty (DoD) rating of: 1 (easy), 2 (harder) and 3 (most complex). Go slow.

*** OK, how do I find this stuff again? First, in the subject line of the email are the words "bridge" "tips" "wkv". Do a search of your inbox later on for these terms appearing in the message SUBJECT. Or just "wkv" alone might find the email. In addition, these will all be loaded up on the **Woodbury Bridge Club** web site by Gail Baev in a permanent "tips" repository along with tips submissions by others.

1. Basic Bridge Tips **BridgeTips24** DoD: 1

This is a 1 page document that starts by answering the following: What's an opening hand? It also contains point count ranges for the various No Trump bids (and rebids) by opener.

2. More Bridge Tips **BridgeTips24More** DoD: 2
Things get more detailed. This one contains 4 declarer tips and one on defense.

3. "Starter" Lebensohl **BridgeLebenStart** DoD: 2

Yes, Lebensohl is not an easy bidding system to use, but you might want to use just a part of it when the opps get in the way, in two situations: (1) partner opens 1NT and they interfere; (2) they open a weak 2, partner doubles and you aren't sure what to do. I call it "Starter" Lebensohl. This document also contains more suggestions on how to bid when they interfere over partner's 1NT opener.

4. "Rule of 11" **BridgeRule11** DoD: 2/3

The "Rule of 11" is a tool that can be used by 3rd hand and declarer to figure what to do after a 4th best lead in a NT contract. It will be helpful in getting better results at NT contracts whether you are declaring or defending. This is not easy stuff and concentrates on 3rd hand play.

5. More 3rd hand play **Bridge3rdHand** DoD: 3

3rd hand play can get complex and after reviewing this you will come to appreciate that "3rd hand high" is often the wrong thing to do.

6. KeyCard Blackwood **BridgeKeyCardBW** DoD: 1

Did you know that Key Card Blackwood is more than deciding if you are playing 14-30 or 30-14? You can also show the Q and ask for the Q.

7. "LAW of Total Tricks" **BridgeLawBergen** DoD: 1/2

There is a way to know if it's right to bid again in a competitive part score auction. It's called the "LAW of Total Tricks." Companion to "The LAW" are Bergen Raises, which are used when partner opens a major and you have 4 card support. This document covers both.

8. Using "Kantar Count" **BridgeKantar** DoD: 2

Partner opens 1NT and you hold:

this 7 hcp hand: Axx Txx Kxxx xxx or this 7 hcp hand: xxx x AKTxxx xxx.

Each hand has an A, K and a T but which is the better hand, worthy of another bid? Clearly the 2nd hand because it contains a long minor headed by multiple honors. Eddie Kantar devised a method of evaluating long minors with honors to better assess their value at taking tricks at partner's NT contract. Denny Cerkenik and I call this "Kantar Count."

9. "Billy's Arabasque" **BridgeBillysArrab25** DoD: 2/3

This is an elegant declarer play at NT I discovered long ago (others surely have as well) that you likely have never seen before. I recently shared it with one of my partners and within the week they got to use it. Talk about fun. 😊

10. Opening Leads and Signals, cover memo **BridgeOpeningLeadsCover** DoD: 2

We have covered "Rule of 11" and 3rd hand play after partner's 4th best opening lead. But what about other opening leads against both NT and suit contracts, specifically those shown at the *bottom of the back of the Convention Card*? The cover memo gets you started and introduces you to the detailed Opening Leads and Signals document that follows.

11. Opening Leads and Signals **BridgeOpeningLeads2024Final** DoD: 3

This is the largest tip document by far as there is a lot to cover. It covers what is shown at the bottom of page 2 on the Convention Card. Perhaps only dig into this with partner a piece or two at a time, and build on your knowledge as you go.

12. Weak 2 Bids **BridgeWeak2** DoD: 2/3

Partner opens a Weak 2 bid. What do I do? There are bids you can make with really good hands down to poor hands with support. You'll find more here than you might expect.

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All great Bill, but what about a treatment of bidding conventions you might recommend?

That will have to wait. I will say this: the more conventions you add the more you will forget, and your results will suffer accordingly.

Seagram and Smith authored "25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know" followed by a book on another 25 conventions. If you want to ruin your game, buy both books and follow them!

I like what Larry Cohen has to say about what conventions to use. He starts with "Bidding Conventions - The First 10 You Should Know." If you read Cohen further you will see advocates "less is better" and recommends about 15 total conventions.

"Simple" really is better when it comes to bidding conventions.