

DAN ROMM

Things

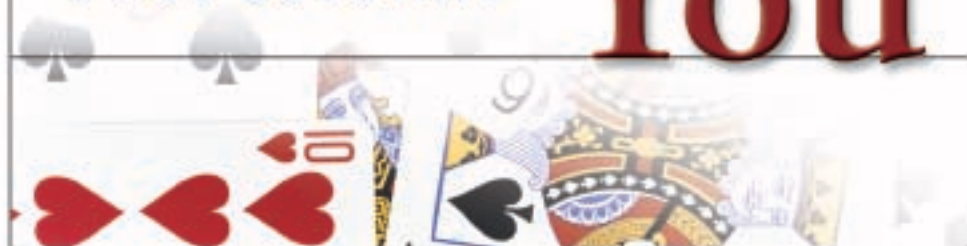
Your Bridge

Teacher

Won't Tell

FOREWORD BY
PAUL SOLOWAY

You



© 2006 Dan Romm. All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce any portion of this material, except by special arrangement with the publisher. Reproduction of this material without authorization, by any duplication process whatsoever, is a violation of copyright.

Master Point Press

331 Douglas Ave.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5M 1H2
(416) 781-0351

Websites: www.masterpointpress.com
www.masteringbridge.com
www.ebooksbridge.com
www.bridgeblogging.com

Email: info@masterpointpress.com

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Romm, Dan

Things your bridge teacher won't tell you / written by Dan Romm.

ISBN 978-1-55494-071-4

1. Contract bridge. I. Title.

GV1282.3.R54 2006

796.41'5

C2006-902110-4

Editor

Ray Lee

Cover and interior design

Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

Interior format and copyediting

Suzanne Hocking

Illustrations

Jude Goodwin

Printed in Canada by Webcom Ltd.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10 09 08 07 06



Table of Contents

<i>Foreword by Paul Soloway</i>	5
<i>Introduction</i>	6
What Makes an Expert? — The 5 Dimensions of Bridge	13
Psychology: Table Presence and Awareness	15
Planning	40
Technique (Counting and Drawing Inferences)	45
Adaptability	52
Judgment	63
Tips	68
Doubles	71
Notrump Openers	74
Patience is a Virtue	76
What is a Good Suit?	79
Directing the Lead	81
The Art of Cuebidding	86
Opening Leads	91
Defensive Signals	97
Trump Management	103

Bidding Conventions (The Good and the Bad)	107
Old-Fashioned Reverse Drury (Highly Modified)	112
Immediate Cuebids by Unpassed Hands	115
Puppet Stayman and Four-Way Transfers after an Opening 2NT (or 2♣ and a 2NT Rebid)	118
Singleton-Showing Bids (i.e. Splinters)	121
Lebensohl after Doubles of Weak Two-Bids	123
Two Diamonds Semi-Automatic after a Two-Club Opener	125
Ace and King Cuebids	127
Four-Card Majors	129
Strong Jump Shifts vs. Weak Jump Shifts	131
Support Doubles and Redoubles	133
High-Level Negative Doubles	134
Systems-On When Opponent Makes a Penalty Double of 1NT	135
Negative Doubles after a 1NT Opener	137
Hamilton (Cappelletti) over 1NT Openers	138
Principle of Fast Arrival (PFA)	139
The 1NT Balancing Bid	141
Multi Two-Diamond Bids	142
Two-Way New Minor Forcing (NMF)	144
Fourth Suit Forcing to Game	147
Namyats	149
Afterword and Recap	152
About the Author	160

PAUL SOLOWAY'S

Foreword

I've known Dan since we were both in our early twenties. In fact, he was one of my first regular partners when I was just beginning my bridge career. Even at that age, Dan showed a keen grasp of the game and had already earned a reputation as one of the rising stars in the Los Angeles area, before mysteriously vanishing from the duplicate scene. It was much later that I learned that he had kept up with bridge as a regular at the prestigious Cavendish West Club, playing against many of the game's stars.

In this book you will look inside the mind of an expert and learn valuable secrets that are indispensable for any player seeking to move to a higher level of expertise at either rubber or duplicate bridge. His illustrative hands are both educational and entertaining. His unique approach will expose you to a different way of looking at the game than you are probably used to and will broaden your perspective. I highly recommend that you make this book a cornerstone of your library and add Dan's potent tips to your bridge arsenal.

Paul Soloway
March, 2006

DR. ROMM'S

Introduction

You have probably never heard of me, especially if you play duplicate bridge exclusively. So why should you listen to me? The short answer is that I have more than held my own for over forty years against the world's best players. I played rubber bridge games in Los Angeles, which were available fourteen hours a day, seven days a week at the Cavendish West Club. Whenever the Cavendish needed a player to start a high-stakes game for any of the regular or visiting stars, I was the one they called. Such stars included Paul Soloway, Bob Hamman, Mike Lawrence, Zia Mahmood, Grant Baze, Billy Eisenberg, Fred Hamilton, Larry Cohen, Meyer Schliefer, Danny Kleinman, Rhoda Walsh and Gene Freed. Many celebrities also regularly visited the club including Lucille Ball, Don Adams, Omar Sharif, attorney Marcia Clark, boxing promoter Aileen Eaton, poker and gin rummy star Stu Ungar, entrepreneur Frank King, pianist Henry Rose, and songwriter George Bassman. Needless to say, there was always a good time to be had by all.

Over that time, I probably held as many or more bridge hands as any duplicate bridge player alive, mostly with or against the recognized stars of bridge, and I won more money in high-stakes games than anyone else at the Cavendish while playing against these same stars. By the time I was twenty-eight I had won or placed in several major tournaments (including the Blue Ribbon pairs and the National Life Master Men's pairs as well as several events at Bridge Week in Los Angeles, a.k.a. the 4th National). I then decided that, instead of pursuing more feathers to add to my cap (which would be an endless quest since I could never add enough to satisfy myself), I would leave the duplicate world for the greener pastures of rubber bridge.

Rubber bridge is an excellent experimental laboratory in which to put unconventional methods to the test to see if they work as well as or better than the accepted wisdom of the day. One gets to play with and against players of all skill levels and can study the thought processes of the weakest as well as the strongest. I spent the first three years of my rubber bridge career devoting ten hours a day to playing in the lowest stakes games so that I could afford to throw caution to the wind. I studied opponents' hesitations and gestures. I analyzed and documented the *results* of various approaches, including overcalling and balancing with three-card suits, deliberately overbidding or underbidding by one or more tricks, opening an unconventional 1NT, bidding 3NT with at most a partial stopper in suits bid by opponents, bidding game on hands of varying strength and/or distribution, preempting on weak and strong hands, making penalty doubles with anything or nothing, and opening hands with eight points. I compared the strengths of various conventions such as four-card vs. five-card majors, weak vs. intermediate vs. strong jump overcalls, penalty doubles vs. artificial doubles, weak two-bids vs. strong two-bids, various forms of Stayman, etc, etc. After each session I reviewed the effect of each action on both strong and weak players. My results steadily improved as I eliminated the ones that didn't work very well and incorporated the ones that did. As I moved into higher stakes games I did some fine-tuning. By the time I arrived at the highest stakes, my methods were so successful that I was winning enough to

support myself through graduate school and beyond, with plenty left over.

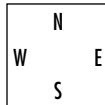
My methods are, for the most part, original; they have been developed and tested heuristically. Many will conflict with what you have already read from experts. Although I have read some of the fashionable bridge books written by the recognized experts, I find that they often contain incomplete or faulty logic. Most bridge experts who write books are seeking to profit and the more books they sell the more money they make. They can't afford to wait until exceptional ideas occur to them; they must continually put out new material. Meanwhile I am under no such pressure. This bridge book, written at age 64, will be my first and last. I am not suggesting that there are no good ideas in such books, but you have to distinguish the good ones from the filler — the authors won't tell you. The more they write, the more filler they produce, hence the need for independent analysis.

To illustrate my point, let's look at a recent example taken from the mixed pairs at the Pittsburgh Nationals:

Helen Abbott

- ♠ KQxx
- ♥ AK9xx
- ♦ 9xx
- ♣ Q

- ♠ Jx
- ♥ QJ108
- ♦ KQJ10
- ♣ J8x



- ♠ 10xxx
- ♥ xxx
- ♦ xx
- ♣ 9xxx

me

- ♠ A9x
- ♥ x
- ♦ A8xx
- ♣ AK10xx

West	North	East	South
			1♣
pass	1♥	pass	1NT
pass	2♦ ¹	pass	3♦
pass	3NT	all pass	

1. New minor forcing.

Opening lead: ♦K

A nice feature of some Nationals is the production and distribution of a booklet containing deal analyses by various experts in addition to the usual hand records. On this deal, the booklet erroneously stated that making five seemed to be the maximum reasonable result. The experts failed to notice that, with correct technique, six always makes whenever West makes the routine continuation of the diamond queen after the king holds the first trick. (A heart shift will hold the contract to five, but this would be a very unusual play.) Do you see how you can make six?

Win the second diamond with the ace and lead a club to dummy's queen. Then make the somewhat unintuitive, but nevertheless correct, play of cashing the king and queen of spades from dummy. Doing so reveals the spade position when you next lead a spade to your ace. You will discover that the spades don't split and that dummy's fourth spade is wrongly positioned to pose a threat. You then cash the ace-king of clubs, discarding dummy's useless spade, getting the good news that the jack drops, and catch West in a heart-diamond squeeze as you play your remaining two clubs.

There are some recurrent themes interwoven throughout this book. I hope that, by way of repetition with variation, they will become ingrained in your psyche without your necessarily noticing. However, as in bridge, you will have to pay attention to nuances. Some messages may seem contradictory unless you notice the essential differences in each case. For instance, I advocate bidding immediately to a high level with some hands and waiting until you gather more information with somewhat similar hands. The key differences

in each situation will be apparent if you attend to the crux of the matter under discussion. As I have limited experience with strong club systems and don't feel qualified to comment on them, the non-general bidding tips in this book are restricted to other types of systems, primarily 2/1.

As you read, always keep in mind that it is unwise to accept the ideas of purported experts in any field without an independent analysis. Even experts can miss things or get them wrong, including me. So before you either accept or reject my techniques, I suggest that you try them and analyze them for yourself.