

EDDIE KANTAR

2ND ED. REVISED & UPDATED



A TREASURY
OF BIDDING TIPS



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*To bid or not to bid, that is the question.
'Tis nobler to pass,' was Eddie's suggestion.
To preempt perchance, maybe to double
'Both of those calls,' he said, 'will spell trouble.'
I ran down the list of the bids that I knew
And Eddie admitted I knew quite a few.
The problem was clearly just evaluation,
Choosing the right bid for each situation.
How often a novice and even a master
Will suffer the slings of a bidding disaster.
That's why, I must tell you, this book is a pleasure.
The bidding tips herein I view as a treasure.
And I have not a doubt, long before the last page
You'll know just why Kantar's my favorite bridge sage!*

Phyllis Fein (1991)

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Introduction

The book you are holding is not meant for beginners, nor is it aimed at experts. It is directed at players somewhere between who would like to improve their game substantially. Could this be you? Let it be said at Trick 1 that few of these tips apply 100% of the time. Bidding tips seldom do. You must factor in variables such as the strength of your opponents, the strength of your partner, the strength of the intermediate cards in your long suit and the vulnerability, etc. However, an average player (your partner) should be able to improve his or her game considerably by following these tips. The reader is going to have to put a certain amount of trust (some would call it blind faith) in me. Most of these tips, a few of which are controversial, come with examples but not always with every supporting reason. If every reason were listed, you would be clutching a tome. An asterisk preceding a tip means that it is a controversial tip — that is, that some, however misguided, may not see it in exactly the same light as I do. Nonetheless, I stand by my asterisks! Actually it means that there is more than one way to play the sequence in question. I favor the method described, but the others have merit.

A ‘must do’ is to be aware of the chapter title in which a tip appears. For example, if the chapter is entitled, ‘When You Are a Passed Hand,’ those words will not appear before every tip. You must add them mentally to the tip for it to make sense. In the interest of brevity, certain abbreviations are used. The ‘+’ means ‘or more.’ 10+ to 12 HCP means a ‘good’ 10 with strong intermediates for notrump evaluation. For suit evaluation, a + means no wasted strength such as jacks and queens in suits bid by the opponents, or perhaps a king or an AQ favorably located given the bidding. Thus, ‘11+ HCP’ means ‘11 or more high-card points.’ ‘Strong suit’ refers to any suit headed by at least three of the top five honors, the kind of suits your opponents hold. It might be wise to take these tips in small doses and try to absorb the messages; that is not to say that you should accept every tip or idea presented. If you play a different system and are comfortable with it, by all means disregard the tip. If it isn’t broken, don’t fix it.

Finally, I would like to thank Ron Garber, Norm Cressy and Allan Falk for looking over the original manuscript (including inserting and deleting some 1,000 commas) thus making my sentences intelligible. I also want to thank Jacqui DeRouin: without her sense of humor and computer expertise this book would never have seen the light of day. Finally, I have updated this edition mainly to include some new bidding ideas that have been introduced since the last edition.

Eddie Kantar

THE OPENING BID

- 1.** Before opening the bidding with a distributional hand, prepare for various responses. Assume partner will respond in your shortest suit... he always does.
- 2.** Deduct one point for any singleton jack, queen or king, as well as QJ doubleton. If you still have 12 points, open, otherwise, pass.
- *3.** With two five-card suits, open the bidding in the higher-ranking suit regardless of relative suit strength. However, with five clubs and five spades, open 1♣ if: (1) The hand is strong enough to jump shift; (2) The hand is minimum and the spades emaciated.

- a) ♠ A 4 ♥ J 8 7 6 5 ♦ A K J 8 7 ♣ 2
- b) ♠ A K J 9 4 ♥ 4 3 ♦ 2 ♣ A K Q J 4
- c) ♠ J 8 7 3 2 ♥ A 2 ♦ 2 ♣ A K 10 8 7
- d) ♠ A Q 9 8 7 ♥ 3 2 ♦ 2 ♣ A Q 10 4 3

With (a), open 1♥, the higher-ranking suit.

With (b), open 1♣; you are strong enough to jump shift.

With (c), open 1♣; the hand is minimum and the spades weak.

With (d), open 1♠; the hand is minimum, but the spades are strong.

- *4.** With 4-4 in the minors, open the stronger suit — partner may wind up on lead. If the suits are of near equal strength, open 1♦.

- a) ♠ A 4 ♥ J 5 4 ♦ K Q J 9 ♣ Q 8 7 6
- b) ♠ A 4 ♥ J 5 4 ♦ Q 8 7 6 ♣ K Q J 9
- c) ♠ A 3 ♥ J 5 4 ♦ Q J 10 4 ♣ A J 7 2

With (a), open 1♦. With (b), open 1♣. With (c), open 1♦.

- *5.** A short diamond is opened with one hand pattern: 4-4-3-2. In addition, the hand must be either too weak or too strong to open 1NT.

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BITE-SIZED BRIDGE ADVICE

Twenty years ago, Eddie Kantar set about distilling his bridge wisdom into a trilogy of books for the intermediate player, one each on Bidding, Play and Defense. Each book contained several hundred short Tips, and the author believes that any reader who absorbs even a fraction of them will improve his or her game by at least 25%.

The Tips in this book on Bidding have been completely revised and updated by the author, and a number of new tips have been added.



EDDIE KANTAR (Santa Monica) is one of the world's best-known and best-loved bridge writers. He is a World and National champion, and has been inducted into the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame.



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