

In Depth Bridge Voice Lesson Transcript Demonstration Lesson

This is the transcript for the demonstration lesson of my In Depth Bridge audio lesson series. The demo lesson provides a small sample of an actual lesson. A full lesson is significantly longer, including a 30+ page transcript.

The unique audio-visual format significantly enhances your learning experience:

- Each lesson is comprehensive with several hours of material.
- The lesson includes a complete transcript of every word said
- The combination of voice and visual effects makes it easier to get the most from what I am teaching.
- The lesson is interactive, so students "learn by doing."
- You can proceed at your own pace.
- You can play and replay all or some of the lesson whenever you choose as often as you like.
- The lesson works on all popular devices and browsers, including Windows, Mac, tablets and smart phones.

The purpose of the In Depth Bridge lesson series is to go beyond the superficial knowledge that many players have about bridge topics. I want to provide tips for the non-expert player that are easy to understand and use but are not commonly taught. Although bridge is not easy, it is not nearly as complicated as many experts would have you think. The material in these lessons will give non-experts tools to significantly improve their bridge.

When many players learn about a convention, for example, they usually only learn the initial bids and the first responses. But there is usually much more that they need to know. For example:

- What are the followups after the first round of bidding?
- How do you handle interference?
- Are there additional more advanced responses?

- When should the convention not be used?
- What is the logic behind the convention?
- Why are other factors besides high card points equally important in deciding what to bid?

As a bonus, even when the lesson is focused primarily on bidding, I will present some complete 52-card deals to demonstrate useful declarer play tips.

This demonstration lesson contains a 52-card deal that provides useful tips on both bidding and declaring.

Demonstration Deal

Contract: 6♥

Lead: ♦Q

North

♠ K 10 5 4

♥ K Q 4 2

♦ 8 4 3 2

♣ J

West

♠ 9 7 3

♥ 10 3

♦ Q J 9 6

♣ K 10 8 2

East

♠ J 8 6 2

♥ J 9 5

♦ 10 7 5

♣ 9 6 5

South

♠ A Q

♥ A 8 7 6

♦ A K

♣ A Q 7 4 3

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠*	Pass
4♠*	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♣*	Pass	5♠*	Pass
6♣*	Pass	6♥	All Pass

*3♠ = 1st or 2nd round spade control

*4♠ = Kickback Roman Keycard

4NT = 1 (or 4) key cards

*5♣ = Queen ask

*5♠ = ♥Q and ♠K

*6♣ = ♣K ask

South's hand is obviously strong enough to open 2♣. But anytime you plan on opening 2♣, you should think about how the auction is going to proceed over

partner's most likely response of 2♦. What is South's rebid? Hopefully you agree that it should be 2NT, showing a balanced 22-24, rather than 3♣.

Granted, the South hand, with its 2 doubletons, does not have classic NT distribution. But any time you have a very strong (20+) balanced hand, you should strain to open 2NT with 20-21 or rebid 2NT after opening 2♣ with 22-24. You are already starting the auction at a higher level. So you need to get your strength and balanced distribution across immediately. In fact many experts, even with a singleton ace or king, will open 2NT or rebid 2NT over 2♣ when their hand is suitable otherwise.

North should now think about plausible final contracts. Whenever possible, you should think about likely directions the auction might go, not just think about what your next bid should be. Obviously North's first objective is to find out whether or not their side has a major suit fit. So he is going to bid 3♣ over 2NT. But, if partner responds 3♥ or 3♠, North should realize that he should be thinking about slam before he even bids 3♣.

So North bids 3♣. Although many pairs play Puppet Stayman over 2NT so they can find out if opener has a 5-card major, I am assuming North-South are playing regular Stayman. South responds 3♥. Great! North needs to reevaluate his hand now that he knows their side has a fit. North has 9 HCP. His singleton is worth 3 points because of the 4-card trump support. Because his ♣J is called a "dubious singleton" he should subtract a point. His hand is worth 11 points, meaning the partnership's combined points puts them in the slam zone of 33 points.

So how should North let South know he wants to explore for slam? It is possible (although somewhat unlikely) that North-South might have 2 diamond losers off the top. So North wants to proceed cautiously to make sure that is not the case. He should not just blast into Blackwood. He should make a control bid. He bids 3♠, which shows first or second round control in spades. Note that 3♠ is not natural. There is no reason for 3♠ to mean that

North has spades. Since North started with Stayman, if he had bid 3NT over 3♥, partner would know he had 4 spades (and not 4 hearts).

What should South do now? A good bidding principle in slam auctions is "he who knows, goes". That means, if one partner knows their side has all suits controlled, he should be the one to bid Blackwood. On this hand, South has controls in all of the side suits. So he can now bid Blackwood.

The auction is now going to get a bit sophisticated. But you should be able to follow my explanations. I am not necessarily suggesting your partnership play everything that is discussed here. But you should be able to see that the auction is logical and useful.

I am going to illustrate a Blackwood variation known as Kickback. If you play Kickback, then 4♠, not 4NT, is used as Roman Keycard when hearts are trump. Why play that? If you use 4NT as RKCB for hearts, then if partner bids 5♦ (0 or 3), you cannot make a queen ask without going past 5♥. But if 4♠ is RKCB then the 1430 responses are 4NT (1 or 4) and 5♣ (0 or 3). That still gives you room to make a queen ask of 5♦ when partner has 0 or 3.

So South bids 4♠ as RKCB. North responds 4NT to show 1 key card. South knows their side has all 5 key cards so he is going to bid at least 6♥.

Whenever you bid RKCB, you should bid slam if you have all the key cards or 4 key cards and the trump queen. However, with his hand, South can visualize a grand slam if partner has the ♥Q and ♣K.

South bids 5♣ as a queen ask. If North does not have the ♥Q he will bid 5♥ and South will be content to stop at 6♥. But since North does have the ♥Q he bids 5♠ to show the ♥Q and the ♠K.

Note that when showing a king, if responder has two kings, he makes the cheapest bid possible to show one of his kings. Therefore, from South's perspective, North might still have the ♣K. The way he finds out is by

bidding 6♣. That asks North to bid 7♥ if he has the ♣K. Since he does not, he bids 6♥. That ends the auction.

The opening lead is the ♦Q. What is your plan for making 6♥?

Many teachers tell you to count losers when planning the play. But I don't agree. I think it is much easier and more effective to count winners. This hand is a good illustration of why that is so. If you look at the two hands, you don't have any obvious losers. But if you don't count winners, you could easily come up with a line of play that only nets you 11 winners.

Let's count our obvious winners. Assuming a 3-2 heart split, we can count 3 spades, 4 hearts, 2 diamonds and 1 club for a total of 10. We can ruff a club in dummy for an 11th trick. But how can we win 12 tricks? One way is to try and ruff 2 clubs in dummy. And, if you are careful about how you handle entries and unblock suits, that plan will work. I will discuss that line of play later.

The more straightforward line of play is to set up a 2nd club trick. Since you hold the ♣A, ♣Q, and ♣J, if you knock out the ♣K, you will create a 2nd club winner. So let me illustrate that line of play.

You win the ♦A. You now draw 3 rounds of trump ending in dummy. You now play the ♣J and take the finesse. It might seem to you that you are unnecessarily losing a club trick that you don't have to lose. After all, dummy has a singleton club and you have the ♣A. But that is a mirage, as you will see when I illustrate the alternate line of play. You are going to lose a club trick regardless.

East plays low on the ♣J. You play low. West wins the ♣K. He returns a diamond. You win the diamond. You now unblock the spade suit by playing the ♠A and the ♠Q. You ruff a club in dummy. You play the ♠K pitching your low club. You now have all winners left in your hand. Making 6♥.

Now let's look at the alternate line of ruffing 2 clubs in dummy. You win the ♦A. You play a heart to dummy's ♥K and cash dummy's ♥Q. You might as well draw as many trump as you can before trying to ruff clubs. You now play a spade to your ♠A and cash your ♠Q, unblocking the spade suit. You cash the ♣A and ruff a club in dummy. You cash dummy's ♠K and throw a club. You get back to your hand by leading a diamond and ruff another club in dummy. You now lead a diamond and ruff it. You cash your ♥A for your 12th trick. You concede your last club to the defenders.

This line of play is also reasonable. It just requires a little more care in managing your entries. And it is slightly more dangerous in that if one defender only has 2 clubs, you might go down. With the other line of setting up a 2nd club trick, you can first draw trump and avoid that danger. Also, note that you ended up losing a club trick despite the fact that you did not take the club finesse.