

Bernard Magee's Tips for Better Bridge

65 invaluable tips in 160 pages available from Mr Bridge, Ryden Grange, Knaphill, Surrey GU21 2TH. (01483 489961)

Bidding Tips

- 01 Always consider bidding spades if you can
- 02 Bid more aggressively when non-vulnerable
- 03 Always double when the opponents steal your deal
- 04 A takeout double shows shortage in the suit doubled
- 05 'Borrow' a king to keep the auction open
- 06 After a penalty double, don't let the opponents escape
- 07 Halve the value of a singleton honour when opening
- 08 Only add length-points for a suit that might be useful
- 09 Isolated honours are bad except in partner's suit
- 10 Use the jump shift sparingly
- 11 Consider passing and letting partner decide
- 12 You need two top honours for a second-seat pre-empt
- 13 Put the brakes on if you have a misfit
- 14 Strong and long minors work well in no-trumps
- 15 One stop in the opponents' suit can be enough for no-trumps
- 16 Keep your two-level responses up to strength
- 17 Use your normal methods in response to a 1NT overcall
- 18 Don't overcall just because you have opening points
- 19 Overcalls can be quite weak, so be prudent when responding
- 20 Weak overcalls must be based on strong suits
- 21 6NT requires 33 points not 4 aces and 4 kings
- 22 Raise immediately, if weak with four-card support
- 23 In a competitive auction, show support immediately
- 24 Bid to the level of your fit quickly with weak hands
- 25 With strength and support, use the opponents' bid suit

Declarer Play Tips

- 26 When your contract depends on a finesse, think 'endplay'
- 27 Consider what a defender might be thinking about
- 28 Always take your time at trick one
- 29 Establish extra tricks before cashing your winners
- 30 Use your opponents' bidding to your advantage
- 31 Avoid the 'baddie' gaining the lead
- 32 Use the Rule of Seven when holding up in no-trumps
- 33 A low lead usually promises length and an honour
- 34 When declaring 1NT, try to be patient
- 35 Duck an early round when you are short of entries
- 36 Lead up to your two-honour holding
- 37 Do not always assume a suit will break well
- 38 Drop a high card to put off the defence
- 39 Play your highest card to tempt a defender to cover
- 40 Draw trumps first unless you have a good reason not to
- 41 Do not waste your trumps
- 42 Consider leaving a lone defensive trump winner out

Defence Tips

- 43 Keep four-card suits intact whenever possible
- 44 Give count on declarer's leads
- 45 Keep the right cards rather than signal
- 46 Take your time when dummy is put down
- 47 High cards are for killing other high cards
- 48 Do not waste intermediate cards
- 49 Pick two key suits to concentrate on during the play
- 50 If in doubt, cover an honour with an honour
- 51 If a lead is from two honours, it is best not to cover
- 52 Keep your honour to kill dummy's honour
- 53 Try to show partner your solid honour sequences
- 54 Lead the normal card when leading partner's suit
- 55 Never underlead an ace at trick one in a suit contract
- 56 Be wary of leading from four cards to only one honour
- 57 Lead a higher card from a suit without an honour
- 58 Lead through 'beatable' strength and up to weakness
- 59 Cash your winners before trying for a trump promotion
- 60 Be patient when defending 1NT
- 61 Trump leads can be safe throughout the play

General Tips

- 62 Do not put important cards at either end of your hand
- 63 Avoid being declarer when you are dummy
- 64 Before you lead, ask for a review of the auction
- 65 Enjoy the Game!