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Larry Cohen Standard Bidding Overview

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In this series, I am taking the reader through what I believe to be a simple, yet effective bidding system. It will enable any partnership to "fill out a convention card" in less than 15 minutes--and be ready to play.

There are many options when filling out a convention card/system.

I've taken what I've learned from 35 years playing and 20 years teaching to present what I believe to be the best choices. My overall philosophy is surely KISS (Keep it Simple, Sweetheart). If you enjoy lots of conventions and complexity, you are in the wrong place. To quote (I've modified it a bit), the late Richard Freeman, it is better to play an 80% system with 99% efficiency than to play a 99% system with 80% efficiency.

I strongly believe that the memory portion of bridge needs to be "low-end." At every level, I find players tend to play too much--not too little. They clog their brains with system memory (and often mis-memory) and have no brain power left to play or defend. Furthermore, most conventions don't come up enough to be practical, useful, or memorize-able.

Still, we need more than just [Stayman](#) and Blackwood.

I do have other conventions on my card. But mostly, it is the basics which are stressed. Basic bidding theory, preemptive theory, competitive bidding strategy and some ideas on the partscore/game/slam decision. These concepts are infinitely more useful than cramming your card with the latest fancy convention just to keep up with the Joneses.

I hope many of you will adopt this system. I know you'll enjoy the beauty of bridge much more if you can be at peace with the system/memory issue and just play cards!

In the coming months (a long series of articles), we will go through the ACBL convention card section by section and fill it out. By the time we are done, I hope I will have created a friendly, simple, accurate and easy system ([LC Standard](#)) for all to play.