

Deadly Bridge Sins

The Seven Deadly Sins were put together by the Dallas Aces (in 1967, according to my copy) as a summary of the categories of mistakes we make as players – they used them when reviewing what they did during training and matches. The team of Bob Hamman, Mike Lawrence and a few other OK players went on to win multiple world championships, so there is probably something to it.

I have noticed that most mistakes partner and I make can be chucked into one of these baskets. If the same sin keeps repeating itself, we work on it.

Seven Deadly Sins

1. Bidding without values
2. System violations
3. Unilateral actions
4. No-Win declarer plays
5. No-Win defensive plays
6. Impulsive plays
7. Mechanicals

We try to identify such things ourselves when reviewing sessions or events. We then discuss specific hands or deal with the topic as a whole. Sometimes we may just identify a problem and that is enough by itself.

For instance, we may have had an evening where sloppy defence caused unnecessary losses. After the session, however, one of us says that the cause was being tired. Neither of us will now pursue any particular boards where the defence was poor.

These sins are basically just you as a player and you can work on them just like you work on your technique. The mistakes you make as partners, however, are just as important to your results.

I have attempted here to generate an effective list of the sins that occur on a partnership level. Surprisingly, the top three had direct parallels.

Broadly speaking, partnership sins are about how you conduct your relationship and how you conduct your defence where winning bridge is based on a fully co-operative effort.

My Seven Deadly Partnership Sins

1. Talking without values
2. Agreement violations
3. Unilateral defence
4. Domestic deafness
5. Body Language
6. Creating Bad Vibes
7. Laziness



Blaine Howe

It will be interesting to see if I have got it right or not. Maybe my partner will tell me if I have missed something. Also, maybe some of you out there can explore the themes. If you want to shield the innocent (such as your good self), then pass material on to me – I promise to protect my sources...

Talking Without Values

Your partner has just gone down in 3NT. You say: "I think you should have made that. Anyway, you could have put us in spades and let me play the hand."

I heard this said recently and, after the dust settled, it turned out that 4♠ had no play but 3NT did. 3NT was a better contract and it only went down because we defended well. Declarer was not a happy camper.

This is a clear case of *Talking Without Values*. Bridge is an emotional game and players get excited easily. This leads to players blurting out their opinions at the table when they are unhappy about something – a very dangerous practice. Take the time to think things through before criticising the actions of your partner or opponents. Criticism, like revenge, is a dish best served cold.

Agreement Violations

You open a weak 2♥ with 6-4 in the reds and two queens. Sounds OK, yes? Well, maybe. You are vulnerable in second seat and your partnership has a strong agreement that Weak Twos are constructive under these conditions. Whatever happens now, you will worry about how your partner views the bid. If the opponents bid 4♠, get doubled by partner and make an overtrick you are in a big hole. Is it worth it?

Of course, the answer is no, and you need to be very clear about what your agreements are. Good partnerships depend on effective agreements. They are as important as system itself. If you won't honour an agreement don't make it. Partnerships regularly break up because of problems in this area.

When you make agreements, you decide whether they are suggestions, strong guidelines or absolutes. You need to learn these better than you learn your formal system and spend time developing them. If you regularly fail in this area and have ambitions, your partnership is doomed.

Unilateral Defence

Defence is how partnerships rise and fall. If you defend well the rest of your game tends to follow.

You are defending 2♠. You have both been working hard to beat the hand. You are on lead at a critical point and have to decide whether to make a passive return to keep on grinding out the defence.

You finally sling out an unsupported ace to get the hand over with. Partner can see you pretty much shrug your shoulders – the defence collapses, and declarer soon claims.

You can almost hear partner thinking “Is it worth all the effort?” If you do this a lot, the answer is no.

Putting effort into beating more contracts is the best way to get partner to believe in your partnership. To be successful at the table, you and partner must think that hard work in defence is worthwhile.

When you start defending solo you don’t pay enough attention to partner’s signals. You should always feel bad when you miss a basic signal. When I miss a couple of these in a session, I start looking in my bridge bag for my knee pads – I know the apology is going to be painful.

Domestic Deafness

Make no mistake, a bridge partnership is a relationship. It has many parallels with marriage and you need to manage it like you manage your relationship with your life partner. This is what makes playing effective bridge difficult for married couples. It is tough enough trying to maintaining one relationship with someone. Maintaining two is impressive.

It is possible, I suppose, to have a personal relationship built on the principles required to play high level bridge successfully. If you have mastered this, I would like to meet you. Maybe we can bottle it and sell it for high prices to bridge couples.

You have to talk to each other regularly about a range of things and the problem is doing this efficiently and without one of you developing into a nag. Or both of you nagging, but about different things. Then you stop listening. We all know about how this happens. If it gets bad, then you have to do something, because domestic deafness can quickly become a habit.

I presume that you are not in the situation where your domestic deafness is due to a lack of respect for your partner’s views – if this is true, don’t bother to read any more of this until you form your next partnership.

Domestic Deafness is the Yin to Nagging’s Yang. Unfortunately, it is mostly the Yang that has to be dealt with if real improvements are to be made. The something you should do is generally trying to stay constructive at all times, keeping your proposals short and letting some things go. There is only so much energy in the tank to keep going over something.

Letting things go is not in a bridge player’s nature and you have to work at it. There are many situations where you know you can do better.

For instance, partner does something bad in a session and you keep on about it because you believe it is an important issue. Perhaps partner says at some point “I just made a mistake, OK?”. You then retort “But why did you do it?”. At this point, partner is turning down the volume on his hearing aid.

Body Language

Body language is unavoidable but we have to make an effort to control it at the table. This is not easy.

There are two kinds of body language. The first is where you pass information because of the manner in which you bid or play. This puts pressure on partner and makes it difficult to bid and play effectively.

1. You think about a bid or play for a long time and clearly show distress about your choice.
2. You move your hand to the Pass side of the bidding box, then change your mind and select a bid.
3. You lead your singleton with gusto as soon as the last pass is completed.

Giving partner ethical problems, or creating a tense environment because the opponents suspect there is one is a really bad thing to do.

The second kind is where you are making loud silent commentary.

1. Partner makes a stupid switch and you roll your eyes and play your card with a lob or lean over the table to inspect partner’s card.
2. Your shoulders slump when dummy comes down or when opponents find the correct continuation after holding the lead. The defence now feels confident and starts looking for that extra one off.
3. Partner gives you a look that makes it clear he wants you to be arrested or exterminated.

You don’t have an unlimited number of get out of jail free tickets so use your tickets carefully.

In a similar vein, asking too many questions, coffee housing or getting involved in opponents’ discussions can do your partner’s head in. If partner shows a distinct dislike of this, pay heed.

Creating Bad Vibes

This is not suggesting you join the silly backslapping of many team sports but that you do not go out of your way to be negative. How often have you heard this sort of banter at score-up:

“We were terrible.”

“We had two disasters.”

“I went down in two laydown games.”

Continued on page 21

Bridge into the 21st Century

TEST YOUR RESPONSES TO MULTI 2♦

What do you bid on the hands below, nil vulnerable:

2♦* (Pass) ?

*Weak two in either major, with no strong option.

1. ♠ 7, ♥ A Q 8 6, ♦ A Q J 7, ♣ K 8 4 2
2. ♠ K 7 4, ♥ Q 7 4, ♦ A 8 6 4 2, ♣ 9 5
3. ♠ 7, ♥ A K J 9 6 2, ♦ K 8 6, ♣ K 6 5
4. ♠ 9 8 7 6 2, ♥ J 9 7 2, ♦ 3, ♣ J 8 6
5. ♠ A 6 5, ♥ Q 10 8, ♦ A K 7 5 2, ♣ A 7
6. ♠ K 3, ♥ K J 4, ♦ K Q 4 2, ♣ K 6 3 2
7. ♠ A J 5, ♥ Q 5 2, ♦ Q 10 5 2, ♣ K 10 7
8. ♠ 7, ♥ 7 3, ♦ A J 5, ♣ K J 10 8 7 4 2
9. ♠ A 10 9, ♥ A 2, ♦ A Q 6, ♣ Q J 9 8 7
10. ♠ A Q 9 2, ♥ 2, ♦ 6, ♣ K Q J 9 8 7 5

1. 2♠. It wasn't my intention to do a quiz on the Multi in this issue, but I have seen it misused so often lately that it is surely time for a refresher. Responses to the Multi cannot be defined, since the responses at the two-level are different to the responses at the three- and four-level. Suffice to say that all responses are pass or correct. On this hand spades will play poorly, so bid 2♠, pass or correct. If partner bids 3♥, then of course you continue on to 4♥.

2. 3♥. You have nine trumps in hearts or spades, and with a nine-card trump fit it is recommended you preempt to the three-level. If you bid only 2♥ then your opponents have a much better chance to get together and find a fit, and perhaps outbid you to the four-level.

3. 2♠. Easy, but bidding 2♥ is a particularly common error. You expect partner to have spades, and if so 2♠ is the contract in which you wish to play. It is just possible partner has something like ♠ 653, ♥ Q108754, ♦ AQ7, ♣ 7. With 11 easy tricks in hearts you would now be playing in 2♥ if you bid 2♥ and not 2♠!

4. 4♥. It is still pass or correct at the four-level. You have 10 hearts or 11 spades, and who knows what opponents can make, probably a slam. You want to take up as much space as possible so preempt to 4♥, and let the opponents guess.

5. 4♥. This time you are bidding to make, but the opponents don't know that. You may find an optimist in the next seat, who may wander in at the five-level, doubled of course.

6. 2♥. This is more judgment than system. Your hand adds up to 15 HCP, but with no ace it is poorly structured. There is a far greater chance you will fail at the three-level, than you will make 10 tricks in hearts or spades. Partner held ♠ QJ, ♥ Q109753, ♦ J1075, ♣ 7, so you are missing the four aces, a poor start when trying for 10 tricks. Also opponents can construct a diamond ruff to hold you to eight tricks. On a bad day they will score two diamond ruffs, and 2♥ will fail by a trick.

7. 2♥. This defensive-type hand may or may not be good enough to make 3♥ or 3♠, so first you try to play at the two-level. This is a delicate area and your LHO opponent may have a close decision whether to come in or not over your 2♥. One thing I find annoying is my RHO asking what 2♦ is, and then passing when told it shows 6-10 points. What do you think, do the askers have two high-card points, or 10 or 11?

8. 3♣. Even if partner has hearts, and you have a 6-2 fit, the bulky club suit on the side will be a burden. You are a chance to make 3♣, so you should be able to simply sign off there by bidding 3♣.

9. 2NT. You want to make an invitation if partner has hearts, but go to game if partner has spades. The common method is that over 2NT opener bids 3♣ with hearts and a maximum, 3♦ with spades and a maximum, and bids 3♥ or 3♠ with a minimum.

I get by with just the 3♣ and 3♦ responses. If, over 3♣ or 3♦, the responder now bids 3♥ or 3♠, the Multi-opener carries on to game with a maximum (so here would bid 4♥ over your 3♥ with a maximum). The major advantage is that the partner of the Multi-bidder is always declarer and has the advantage of the lead coming around to the unknown hand.

10. 2NT. It looks like partner has hearts, but you never know, so there is some risk attached to signing off in 3♣. If there are only two response to 2NT, 3♣ = hearts and 3♦ = spades, then you can have the best of both worlds on this hand. If partner bids 3♣ over 2NT, showing hearts, you simply pass. If partner bids 3♦, showing spades, then you bid 4♠.

*Paul Lavings
Postfree Bridge Books*

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WA Women's Team: Kate Smith, Annabelle Booth, Leonie Fuller, Alida Clark, Lauren Shiels, Allison Stralow, npc., Jill Del Piccolo

Book Review

Improving Your Judgement 1: Opening the Bidding
Audrey Grant. Published by Baron Barclay

There have been other books on this topic, but Audrey Grant fans will welcome this offering.

There are four main chapters on opening bids, while the last part of the book comprises 32 Practice Deals (specially-coded cards can be purchased as an accessory for dealing these hands).

The material is presented very simply to appeal to inexperienced players, but nevertheless the student is invited to progress in skill with moderately advanced concepts such as length points in notrump openings. There are quizzes and summaries within the chapters. As always, the Grant books are built around a sound learning process, with colour used for emphasis.

I'm sure many people have heard of the Rule of 20 (the text refers to it as a guideline), but have you heard of the Guideline of 15? With a borderline hand in fourth seat, add the high card points to the number of spades in the hand. If it comes to less than 15, consider passing. The sample deals are analysed for bidding, play and defence. Here's one to consider.

East deals, NS vulnerable

<p>♠ Q 10 ♥ J 6 3 ♦ A Q J 8 ♣ 10 7 6 3</p> <p>♠ A 8 6 5 3 ♥ 10 5 2 ♦ K 7 ♣ A 8 5</p>	<p>♠ J 7 ♥ A K Q 9 4 ♦ 10 6 3 ♣ 9 4 2</p> <p>♠ K 9 4 2 ♥ 8 7 ♦ 9 5 4 2 ♣ K Q J</p>
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West opens 1♠ in third seat and East responds 2♥, passed out. South leads ♣K, which West wins with the ace. There is at least one spade loser, three diamond losers and two club losers - one loser too many

West could try leading towards ♦K, a 50% shot, or (recommended) try to ruff a diamond in dummy. West should play a diamond from dummy at trick two.

♦K is just an illusion, which may prevent declarer from seeing the correct line. Even though the opponents can lead trumps back twice when they get in with diamonds, there is still one trump left in dummy to ruff the third diamond, and the contract slips home.

John Hardy



John Hardy Bridge Books and Software

Books

Points Schmoints <i>Marty Bergen</i>	\$36.30
Improve Your Judgement1: Opening the Bidding <i>Audrey Grant</i>	\$17.60
How the Experts Win at Bridge <i>Burt & Lynn Hall</i>	\$36.30
Advanced Bridge Bidding for the C21 <i>Max Hardy</i>	\$38.50
2/1 Game Forcing: An Introduction <i>Steve Bruno & Max Hardy</i>	\$19.80
Roman Keycard Blackwood <i>Eddie Kantar</i>	\$29.70
The Fun Way to Better Bridge Play <i>Harry Lampert</i>	\$26.40

Software

JACK 4.0 <i>Upgrades from versions 2 and 3 available</i>	\$104.50
Bridge Baron 17 Upgrade to BB17 (old CD required)	\$104.50 \$50.60
Learn and Practise Bidding Conventions Vol. 1 <i>Easy way to learn basic conventions</i>	\$44.00
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Partnership Defence in Bridge <i>Woolsey's classic on CD for intermediates</i>	\$55.00
My Favourite 52 <i>Over your shoulder test by Larry Cohen</i>	\$30.80
Bridge Master 2000 <i>Challenge your declarer play skills</i>	\$91.30
The Terence Reese Classics	\$63.80
Mike Lawrence's Counting at Bridge and other CDs - each:	\$49.50

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This is your chance to enjoy a game of bridge and have your family and friends learn how to play while visiting exotic ports and being pampered on Australia's new luxury cruise ships.

Be aware that this service will not be available on all cruises! Phone Bridge Travel on (02) 9888 3903 before booking and find out which cruises will have bridge at sea.

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Over and above the basic bridge at sea service our bridge team will host a full bridge holiday of additional bridge games, instruction and group activities on selected cruises. The first of these are shown below

On these special bridge cruise holidays you will receive all the following additional benefits:-

An extra play session each sea day and on many port days with red point championships, prizes and trophies.
 Clinics, workshops and personalised training to improve your bidding and card play.
 Extra lessons and training sessions for new and developing players.
 Group dining in the restaurant, welcome drinks, farewell cocktails/ prize presentation, on board spending credit.

For a small supplement you can enjoy all these benefits, have of an exciting bridge holiday and your non playing friends and family can become competent players by the end of the cruise.

Only those people who book through Albury Kent Travel can participate in these activities. The bridge supplement is \$20 per day for experienced players and \$10 per day for learners.

Sun Princess Asia Cruise

6-21 May, 2008 (15 nights) from \$2895

Hurry! The ship is filling fast for this fantastic deal. We only have a limited number of cabins left.

**Fremantle - Malacca - Penang -
 Phuket - Langkawi**

Kuala Lumpur - Singapore - Fremantle

John Newman will personally be hosting this inaugural bridge holiday on Sun Princess. The bridge supplement is \$300 for experienced players and \$150 for learners. Group members will receive \$125 on board credit on this cruise.

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Onboard group member credit is \$350 for this cruise.

Phone Albury Kent Travel for all group bookings on (02) 9569 1197

Bridge

To play bridge is to play your cards,
For it is a game of 52, witit no room for jokers.
A standard deck with four points of view,
Such as the primary face of a
compass' directional due.

To be complete you need a scoresheet,
To be hidden from view until the hand is through.
Need a director for a misplay or other faultier,
And a clock to reign in the time defaulter.

Its origin I do not know,
Perhaps inspiration over times flow.
There are many systems that can be used,
Generally leading to some getting confused.

You need a partner and an opposition,
Sometimes there is a sit out,
At other times Rover gets a run,
Mitchell sits aside while Howell does
feet, shuffle and growl.

There are points Red and Green,
GNOTs and teams, pairs mixed or the same.
Congress and events without a standby,
Once you're hooked doesn't time fly.

Better a pen than a pencil,
For you need to place or pass a bid in turn.
With a lot of points you may pledge a slam,
For my introduction to this game,
Thank You Ma'am.

Paul Unger, Mardi, NSW

2007 Seniors Interstate Winners



SA Seniors Team: David Anderson (Manager), John Hewitt, Arthur Porter, Bob Clarke, Roger Januszke.

In absentia: David Cherry, John Horowitz

Congratulations also to the NSW Junior Team, Nabil Edgton, J Hornibrook, Daniel Krochmalik, Nick Rodwell, Gabby Feiler, Paul Gosney, who took out the Youth Interstate from SA.

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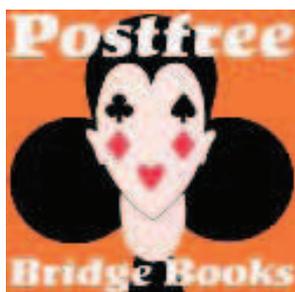
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1997 and 2003 Daily Bridge Calendar
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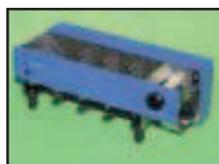
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9-16 January 2008

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The holiday ends in time for those wishing to play in the National Seniors, Womens and restricted teams in Canberra.

Participants will have free time to enjoy the Blues Festival which will be held in Thredbo during this week.



Salamander Shores

Port Stephens 3 nights/ 4 days,
Feb 9-11 or 5 nights/6 days
February 9-14, 2008

Your price from **\$489** Includes 3 nights twin share accommodation, breakfast and dinner daily and all bridge fees. An optional extra 2 days of bridge coaching on the preceding weekend (Feb 9-11) is also available at \$319 or \$759 for the lot

For detailed itineraries and other enquiries relating to these bridge holidays contact John Newman at

Bridge Travel

Phone (02) 9888 3903

Email: bridgetravel@bigpond.com

Not only is this unnecessary but it erodes the confidence of the team (not to mention that of partner) and the confidence of other players in you .

Just do the score-up and get on with it. Some players seem to expend as much energy in post mortems as they do during the match itself. The use of the term post mortem to describe how players review their performance seems to be well chosen.

Jim Borin was at a national teams event many years ago and his pair went for a postcode. At score-up, however, it seems the board had been scrubbed at the other table. Jim took the entirely sensible position that it was not necessary to tell teammates until after the event, so he temporarily buried the result.

If you decide you have to confess to a sin immediately, at least do so with a sense of humour. Since when is one bad board a disaster? Get a grip!

Laziness

This is a tricky one. We can all play better by being physically well prepared. Keep fit, eat well, drink plenty of water and get plenty of sleep.

There is an expectation of a degree of commitment to the partnership that you need to keep up.

It doesn't matter what your level of commitment is, but try to stick to it. Doing the right thing is boring but real – especially once you are past your first year as a unit.

You may be in a freewheeling partnership where you turn up with a bottle of wine under your belt at nationals and wing it at the table. But that's not you, right? For those who want to do well you are expected to keep up certain standards. Some of the areas are:

1. Pay attention to partner's signals.
2. Read and learn your system notes.
3. Put enough effort into defending.
4. Have a system discussion and/or practise to keep your game ticking over between big events – whether for your partnership these are national, state or congress.
5. Turn up on time to stop partner getting tense.
6. Help with the administrative tasks like entering events and the like.

When you get lazy and stop doing these things to the level partner expects (especially the one about looking at those pesky signals), your partnership is starting to slip. We don't want that, do we?

Blaine Howe, Melbourne



The NSWBA and The ABF present the

SYDNEY SPRING NATIONALS

24 OCT - 1 NOV 2007

Open Teams Tournament

Qualifying: Wednesday 24th to Friday 26th October 2007
Final Series: Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th October 2007

Dick Cummings Open Pairs
(A Swiss Matchpoint Pairs Event)

Saturday 27th October 2007 and Sunday 28th October 2007

Manzoni Womens' Teams

Qualifying: Mon 29th to Wed 31st October 2007
Final: Thursday 1st November 2007

Bobby Evans Seniors' Teams

Qualifying: Mon 29th to Wed 31st October 2007
Final: Thursday 1st November 2007

Venue: Hakoah Club, Bondi Convenor: Kim Neale (sn@abf.com.au)

Entry Details: www.abf.com.au/events/spnot
Gold Masterpoints & Playoff Qualifying Points