

My final example is this:

♠ A Q 10 6 4
♥ A K 6 5 3
♦ 9 2
♣ 7

You open 1♠ and partner responds 2♥, showing 10+ points, not a game force. This is a pleasant turn of events! I recommend a 4♣ splinter bid, despite the fact that you have minimum high-card points for your opening bid and a broken spade suit. You know that partner is looking at poor to mediocre trumps, and won't go anywhere without good side-suit controls. In fact, partner had:

♠ K J
♥ Q 8 7 4 2
♦ A 4 3
♣ 9 8 6

Despite a minimum in high cards, a poor

suit, and a poor distribution, partner ekes out a 4♦ cuebid, because of the power of that spade holding and first-round diamond control, prepared to apologize if things go wrong, but comfortable because opener can't really go anywhere without excellent trumps. With the actual hand, opener Blackwoods into slam. However, the shaky five-level won't be reached opposite, say: ♠A Q 10 x x ♥ A x x x ♦ K Q x ♣ x. This is a beautiful hand, but the trumps are not strong. He rebids 4♥ over 4♦ and you end up in a comfortable 4♥ contract.

In Conclusion

Some players don't like "I know that you know" or "he knows that I know" type of bidding, and I agree that it's not super-scientific. But it's easy, it's logical, and it works, especially where good trumps/bad trumps are involved. The bottom line is: Bid aggressively with strong trumps and conservatively with weak trumps.

Around the world with 52 cards

by Migry Zur Campanile

One of my fondest memories is of my first World title win in Ajaccio, on the beautiful island of Corsica, where the 1998 Generali World Masters took place.

Situated at the junction of the maritime lines leading from France to Italy and the East, and from Central Europe to Italy and Spain, Corsica is the third largest isle of the Western Mediterranean and its rich landscape attracts many tourists from all over the world. Its major city is Ajaccio whose main



claim to fame lies in being the birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte. When Emile Zola visited the island more than a century ago, he described Ajaccio as "the memory of the great Corsican with some houses around."

The Generali World Masters has a very intense schedule and did not leave me as much time as I would have wished for sight-seeing. However, the morning after I arrived, I got up early and walked through the city, watching her

awake! I happened to wander into a fruit and vegetable market and bought pears that tasted of honey and sunlight. They became one of the tastes of Corsica for me which still lingers in my senses, together with the wild figs and blackberries that grow in the marquis, the Italian style espressos, served in suitably tiny cups and accompanied with oven warm baguettes and croissants, like some gastronomic translation of Corsican history, constantly buttressed between Italy and France.

I continued down to the waterfront along the winding, narrow streets, listening to the conversations of men sitting outside the cafés sipping their morning coffee. Women were busy working inside or sweeping the sidewalks in front of their shops. I was the only tourist walking down the street, but no one seemed to mind. When our glances happened to cross, residents would just smile and say “bonjour,” and this made me feel like I stepped back in time to a different world set in its own traditional ways, where what we consider an old-fashioned lifestyle is an integral part of everyday life.

The tournament was an exciting roller-coaster of emotions: I was lying sixth before the last of three sessions with 53.7%, a full 6% behind Ruti Levit, who was then my long-time partner, and who had had two great sessions and was leading by two tops over the field. I felt that I had only borderline chances of a podium but as soon as I started, everything seemed to fall into place and I was into the fabled “heat one” state players often dream about, when I could not pull a card wrong. The result was a 64% score, a nice achievement given the quality of the field, which included most of the top women players from Sabine Auken to Jill Meyers and many more.

The Men’s competition was won by Paul Chemla. One of the most interesting hands of the event, however, saw as a protagonist an up and coming player from Norway who had quickly made a name for himself: Geir Helgemo.

After gaining a European and a World title in the juniors, Geir was already representing his country at the tender age of 21 in the 1991 European Open Teams Championships. He went on from strength to strength and gathered an impressive record, including a silver and a bronze in the Bermuda Bowl, several US National titles and many wins in prestigious invitational events like the Cap Gemini, the Macallan and the Politiken Pairs.

In the third set of the Generali Masters he was the only one to find the accurate defense on this complex deal:

Board 6 North
 East dealer ♠ J 6
 E-W vul ♥ A J 10 8 3
 ♦ Q 6 2
 ♣ K J 8



East (you)
 ♠ K Q 10 8 7
 ♥ K 9 6 2
 ♦ K 9 7
 ♣ A

West	North	East	South
Kholomeev	Chemla	Helgemo	Perron
—	—	1 ♠	2 ♦
pass	2 ♥	pass	3 ♦
3 ♠	4 ♦	(all pass)	

At most tables North-South competed all the way to 4♦ and the defense started off with a predictable spade lead. Declarer would then take the ♠A and play back a spade. How do you plan the defense?

If you found the crucial switch of the ♥K, like most Easts in the event, then you should be proud of yourself. What do you think happened next? Here was the full deal:

	North	
	♠ J 6	
	♥ A J 10 8 3	
	♦ Q 6 2	
	♣ K J 8	
West		East
♠ 5 4 3 2		♠ K Q 10 8 7
♥ Q 5		♥ K 9 6 2
♦ J		♦ K 9 7
♣ 10 9 7 5 3 2		♣ A
	South	
	♠ A 9	
	♥ 7 4	
	♦ A 10 8 5 4 3	
	♣ Q 6 4	

Usually the players in the South seat won with dummy's ♥A, played the ♦Q to the ♦K, and ♦A, squashing West's singleton ♦J, and then tried to get back to dummy with a club in order to finesse the ♦9. Bad luck: East took the ♣A and after a heart to the ♥Q, got a club ruff to defeat the contract.



Ajaccio

Note that it does no good for declarer to duck the ♥K when it is played. East can cash the ♣A and play a second heart. Declarer wins and plays trumps leading the ♦Q. However, he cannot get back to dummy.

Is the contract doomed after the ♥K switch?

Not at all. A few declarers demonstrated how by playing a heart immediately after taking the ♦A. West had to win with the ♥Q and play a club to the singleton ♣A of East, who is now end-played into giving declarer an entry to dummy to take the diamond finesse.

Can you see how the defense can prevail against the best that declarer can do?

Well, Helgemo did!

After taking the second spade, the Norwegian realized how declarer could parry an immediate ♥K switch. He first cashed the ♣A and only after that he played the ♥K. Perron in South took with the ♥A and played trumps starting with the ♦Q from dummy. But when he tried to go back to dummy with a club to finesse the ♦9, Helgemo ruffed and then put his partner in with the ♥Q to receive a second ruff, sending the contract two down!