PLAY BUMBLEPUFFY BRIDGE

Learn the world's most popular card game in no time

Julian Laderman

An Honors Book from Master Point Press
Dedicated to the members of the American Bridge Teachers’ Association for helping so many enjoy the pleasure of playing bridge.

Illustration Credits

Page 17: George Fitch, “Bridge Whist”, Collier’s The National Weekly, August 1, 1908.

Pages 37, 46, 61, 76, 78: The Rubáiyát of Bridge (Harper & Brothers Publisher, 1909). The author was Carolyn Wells and the illustrator was May Wilson Preston.

Page 82: Punch’s Almanack for 1913.

Page 90: two player game called Double Dummy: Two-Handed Bridge Whist Board, patented Nov. 28, 1905.
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INTRODUCTION

(Questions to the author)

The expression “in no time” on the front cover is an inherent lie. How long in minutes, hours, days etc.?

Bumblepuppy bridge can be played without reading the whole book. It is only necessary to read the first two chapters, follow the first example in Chapter 3, and watch the part of a free video which corresponds to that example. This requires approximately 50 minutes of reading and 15 minutes more for watching the YouTube video. The 10 minutes required for reading this lengthy (probably too lengthy) Introduction is not included in the tally.

How can one learn a complicated game so quickly? Sounds like a total lie!

No, it is only a partial lie. I prefer to call it misleading. A complete beginner will learn to play a game in the bridge family, called bumblepuppy bridge. Some features of this game are identical to standard bridge but in other respects very different. Many difficult aspects of standard bridge were removed. Remember, I am only promising that you will be able to play the game, not that you can play well. Actually, I can even guarantee that you will play extremely poorly.
Why learn to play this artificial game? Let alone, play it poorly?

The primary purpose of this game is to provide a stepping-stone to standard bridge.

I played bridge in college forty years ago. Will that reduce my time commitment?

No. Even though prior bridge experience will make Chapter 1 faster to read, surprisingly, Chapter 2 will be slower. You will be assuming the game is more complicated than it actually is.

Bumblepuppy bridge sounds like a game for children. Is that so?

No. Despite its name, this new game is appropriate for players from age 6 to 106. Nothing dangerous to swallow at either age limit.

What is bumblepuppy bridge and where did it come from?

I will use the term modern bridge to refer to the standard form of bridge that your friends play. Modern bridge is a very involved challenging game. This is what makes playing well so rewarding for the experienced player, but makes the game often overwhelming for a total beginner trying to learn the game. When beginners take lessons, they go through many lessons before they can have the fun of playing bridge.

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As a bridge historian, I am familiar with many earlier forms of the game. Each form had some very simple features and some very complicated ones. I created bumblepuppy bridge by blending (stealing) the simple features from the different forms to create a “new” game. I feel a little uncomfortable even calling it a new game since it is totally based on very old forms of bridge. Sort of like Frankenstein’s monster, I used parts from old dead games.

In 2011, I wrote an article for the American Bridge Teachers’ Association Quarterly describing this game. In 2014, Master Point Press placed an updated description on their website as a free download (updated again in 2017). Those descriptions were meant to be used by experienced bridge players who would like to teach bridge to their non-playing friends. With this website, any experienced bridge player, who is curious about bumblepuppy bridge, can learn in a few pages how the game is played.

The goal of this new small book is to enable total beginners to learn bumblepuppy bridge on their own. No experienced bridge player required.

Bumblepuppy bridge is very similar to the first form of bridge which was extremely popular between 1897 and 1910, but became extinct more than a century ago. In its heyday, this form was usually called bridge but at times by the longer name bridge whist. The longer name reflected its heritage as a descendant of a card game called whist.

If you describe to modern bridge players the mechanics of the game you are learning in this book, they will
understandably tell you that you are not learning real bridge. They will certainly request seeing the book and belittle me. You actually can make the argument that you are the one playing “real” bridge. Modern players play a game called *contract bridge* which is a greatly modified mutation of the original form of bridge. This two-word name was standard in the 1930s and is still often used. Around 1930 when a player used a shorter form of the name, the game would be called *contract*. It would have been confusing to call it *bridge* at that time, since some people would think of the old turn of the century game.

**What is a bumblepuppy?**

In 1880, the word *bumblepuppy* was defined as: “Bumblepuppy is persisting to play whist, either in utter ignorance of all known principles, or in defiance of them, or both”. Even though that word was defined in the days of whist, it was still used occasionally to describe poor bridge players during the first few decades of the 20th century.

I have already indicated that this book will provide you with the mechanics of a game in the bridge family but not with the ability to play it well. Since all new bridge players meet the definition’s requirement “in utter ignorance of all known principles”, I feel bumblepuppy bridge is an appropriate choice as a name for this new game. Besides, I have found that the word bumblepuppy makes people smile. If you wish for a one word name for this game, please call it *bumblepuppy* or *bumblebridge*. For anyone desperate for a still shorter option, *bumble* can be used. I

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don’t particularly like it, but this name is certainly better than calling it bridge, which would be too misleading.

If your annoying modern day bridge playing friends insist that the word bumblepuppy does not exist and go so far as to accuse me of making it up, please suggest that they check The Official ACBL Encyclopedia of Bridge. All seven editions include a definition.

**What is the purpose of this book?**

As already mentioned, I see it primarily as an instructional tool that can be used as a stepping-stone to the modern game of bridge. Bridge teachers can use it as an independent source of enjoyment while they teach the more rigorous aspects of the modern game. At least new students of bridge will quickly be able to enjoy playing a card game.

The lowest level bridge class that one can take is described as a course for beginners. But not all students in the class will actually be real beginners. Most will have had some experience, admittedly possibly not since the Kennedy Administration. Some may have enrolled because they are not quite prepared for the course for advanced beginners. If you are really a total beginner, playing a little bumblepuppy bridge may save you from drowning on your first day of class. You can at least do a dogpaddle.

In **Chapter 4** bumblepuppy bridge players will learn how to convert themselves into modern bridge players. I provide information on how one can find beginner bridge
classes and private teachers in most any locality. I also recommend several books, websites, and software.

In Appendix 3 I describe a version of bumblepuppy bridge that is designed to be an enjoyable single-player game. It has the potential to be an appealing game for a smartphone or an airplane passenger entertainment system.

Most words have the same meaning in both bumblepuppy bridge and modern bridge, but some only apply to one game. Remember to refer to the Glossary that appears at the end of the book.

Bumblepuppy Bridge is far inferior to modern bridge. Hopefully all readers will move on to the much more exciting game. There are unfortunately some individuals who just cannot master the more challenging aspects of modern bridge. But hopefully, they can derive some pleasure from playing bumblepuppy bridge. Studies have shown bridge to be a worthwhile mental exercise for the elderly. It is a shame that many experienced players give up bridge entirely as their skills diminish. Perhaps they can still enjoy themselves with the mental exercise required to play this simpler version.

There is another way bumblepuppy bridge has the potential to generate interest in the game of bridge. A spectator, even if totally unfamiliar with bumblepuppy bridge, will be able to follow a deal being played after merely a two-minute lesson. The two-minute lesson can be removed if a commentator is describing play-by-play. Would it be possible to have bridge stars playing for large cash prizes
on TV, a la Texas Hold’um? Maybe with a mix of celebrities who are playing for their favorite charity. This did actually occur around 1960 on a television show, *Championship Bridge with Charles Goren*. I guess I am dreaming when I think of bridge on TV, but please let me dream for a minute.

*I glanced through the book and you always use the pronoun “he”. Don’t women play, or are you a misogynist?*

Actually, throughout history, more women have played bridge than men. The illustrations in this book depict more women than men, so I compensate by always using the pronoun “he”, except when I am referring to a woman in an illustration or on the video.

*Speaking of illustrations, why do they all depict players in old fashion dress?*

Since bumblepuppy bridge is similar to the form of bridge played around 1900, I use illustrations from books and magazines published at that time. Also, conveniently, these sources are all centenarians so they are no longer under copyright laws. The sources are listed on the same page as the *Dedication*.

*Do readers have to unlearn a lot of stuff when they convert from bumblepuppy bridge to modern bridge?*

I am happy to say that virtually nothing has to be unlearned. I do have to admit that this positive statement is greatly the
result of readers learning so little from this book. But, at least they quickly have a new game to play.

**Was the method used in this book tested on real people?**

To some extent it was tested. I tested it on a few groups of close friends who initially possessed absolutely no knowledge of bridge. In retrospect, apparently, some wished to remain that way. The good news is that they could play the game very quickly. The bad news is that I now have fewer close friends.

This experiment was flawed since my friends are more intelligent than the average person. I tried to compensate by putting up a notice on the bulletin board in my apartment building (600 apartments) requesting neighbors with below average intelligence to take part in my experiment. Would you believe, no one showed up!
You will notice that the title of the chapter does not say bumblepuppy bridge. Nor will I ever need the term in this chapter. All the material in this chapter is relevant to both games, and I will just refer to the game described as bridge.

**Required equipment: cards, table, and people**

A standard deck of 52 playing cards is required (no jokers). Each card is in one of four suits: clubs, diamonds, hearts, and spades, represented symbolically as ♣, ♦, ♥, ♠. Usually the cards in the diamond and heart suits are red while clubs and spades are black. Each suit consists of thirteen cards: Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2. This is all very nice and uniform. We must appreciate what a fine job our forefathers did, more than five centuries ago, when they designed our present deck of playing cards. The above listing indicates the relative ranking of the cards in a given suit (from highest to lowest).

A square shaped table, named appropriately a bridge table, is required. Obviously, four chairs are useful. If all four players are younger than ten, only a floor is required. They prefer it to sitting at a table.

Most bridge tables are folding tables. I recommend that they should be folded and put away when a session of
bridge ends. If a table is not folded, the table will quickly become part of the home office furniture with the chore of supporting books, computer, etc. Having to clear off such a table in order to play bridge is a major deterrent. I speak from multiple bad experiences.

Four people, all eager or at least willing, are required to play bridge. For simplicity, they will be each assigned one of the four names: North, East, South, and West, often abbreviated N, E, S, and W. These names are useful to describe each player’s relative position at the table. Bridge is a partnership game. North and South are playing together as partners while East and West are also partners.

North

West  bridge table  East

South

The bridge arrangement of four players (two partnerships) is ideal in many ways. Everyone has one partner and two opponents. What symmetry! In the mid-20th century, often two married couples would get together, gossip about mutual friends during dinner, and then spend the evening

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playing bridge. Usually the partnerships were one couple against the other or men against women. Rarely did a man play with the other man’s wife, at least at the bridge table.

Players are always sitting facing their partners. Emotions are often all too visible. The woman seated second from the right is clearly not pleased with her partner’s play. We will return to this player in the next chapter when we consider behavior and ethics.

Back in the 1700s, whist writers already realized that having partners facing each other was not best to insure honesty at the gambling game. In 1739, the author Richard Seymour suggested the use of curtains in order to prevent
players from facing their partners. As screens are presently used for top events at major bridge tournaments, the author was quite prophetic.

**The mechanics of dealing cards to players**

After the cards are shuffled by the dealer, all 52 cards are dealt out face down to the four players. The dealer deals the cards out in a clockwise direction, one at a time, with the first card going to the player seated to dealer’s left. Therefore, each player will eventually receive 13 cards. These 13 cards form what is called a *hand*. The four hands together are called a *deal*. After the dealing ends, each player will look at his own hand, but a player is not allowed to tell his partner anything about his cards. Boy, if players could, it sure would make the game much easier. But the limited methods of communication that are allowed between partners is what makes the game so challenging and fulfilling. While perusing their hands, players hope to find great cards, such as aces and kings. After sorting the cards by suit, with suits alternating red and black to avoid mistakes, cards in each suit are ordered by rank (highest to lowest). On the next page a non-color photo of a sorted hand can be found. By fanning it in this fashion all 13 cards can be held with a well-placed thumb at the middle bottom.

But how is the dealer chosen? Prior to the first deal being dealt, each player draws a card. Whoever draws the highest card becomes the dealer for the first deal. For subsequent deals, the dealer is the person sitting in the next position clockwise from the previous dealer.

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**The main building block is a trick**

A *trick* consists of four played cards (one by each player). Confused?? Don’t worry, the remainder of this chapter will provide meaning to this definition.

Many readers may find that they are already familiar with the idea of a trick as there are many games that are in the same family of trick-taking games. Some popular family members are the games, bid whist and spades.

The first card played to a trick is called the *lead*. For example, suppose West leads the diamond 7. This means the diamond 7 is placed face up (exposed) near the center of the table. Obviously, everyone can see it. Since play is clockwise North plays next. North must play a diamond if he has a diamond. It too is placed face up on the table in full view of all four players. Suppose North holds the
diamond queen, diamond 8, and diamond 4. North must play one of those three cards. This requirement on North to play a diamond is called following suit. The laws of the game require each player to follow suit. The lead determines which suit it is. North can decide which of his three diamonds to play. If North has five diamonds, he can choose which of the five cards to play, but nothing else. Even though he has a partner, he cannot consult with his partner as to which card to play. If North has only one diamond, this card must be played: there is absolutely no choice as to which card to play. What if North does not have any diamonds? In five minutes, we will look at that situation. After North plays a diamond, East must follow suit (play a diamond), and South must play a diamond. Now the highest of the four cards wins the trick. We already started with the premise that West led the 7. Suppose North played the diamond 8, East played the diamond king, and South played the diamond Ace. The highest card played on this trick was the ace, so South won this trick. To see this trick in progress, and the order in which the four cards are played, look at the four photos.
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Even though South won the trick, since North and South are a partnership, it is just as correct to say North/South won that trick. Either member of the partnership that won the trick may grab, in a polite fashion, the four cards in the middle of the table and place that trick face down (not exposed) on the table close to where one member of the winning partnership is seated. This is their reward for winning the trick. But, the actual player of the partnership who won the trick must play the first card of the next trick (as already stated, called the lead). In our example, South won the trick and must lead on the next trick, while North, his partner may not.

Let’s now suppose, North rather than East had been dealt the diamond king and played it on that trick, it would seem pointless for South to play the ace on the trick. The ace can be used to win a different trick. Can you think of any reason South would play the ace since North, his partner, will win the trick with the king? Not to mince words, isn’t it totally ridiculous to play the ace? The most likely possibility is that the diamond ace is the only diamond in the South hand, so it must be played. Rules are rules, even when painful. Another possibility relates to the next trick. If North wins this trick, North will be the player deciding which card to play to start the next trick (the lead). Possibly, South very strongly wants to lead from his hand on the next trick. At times, it is indeed beneficial to have one player lead rather than his partner. If South lets North win with the king, even though they are partners, North must play the first card of the next trick. If South plays the ace, South will lead. A third possibility is that South took a nap at the bridge table.

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and had not noticed that his partner had played the king. It is time for South to plan an apology to his partner.

Of course, as tricks are played, the number of cards left in each player’s hand is decreasing. By the end of the thirteen tricks, no cards are left in any player’s hand. On any trick, the first player to play a card, the leader, can play any of the remaining cards in his hand.

Again, following suit is a requirement, not a choice. Not following suit when you hold cards in the suit led is called a revoke. It occurs out of carelessness when a player fails to see all of the cards in his hand. Revoking on purpose is cheating. It is every bit as illegal as trying to move a knight on the chessboard two squares in two directions. At chess, your sin will produce an immediate admonition from your opponent. At bridge, the sin is not apparent until later when you play a card in a suit in which you had previously shown that you had no cards. The resulting penalty will be discussed in the section on scoring in the next chapter.

**The goal of the game**

Since each player starts with 13 cards, 13 tricks will be played. The two words hand and deal both have an additional meaning. They are sometimes used to indicate the play of all 13 tricks. It is common to hear, “After completing a hand, one goes on to the next hand.” or “After completing a deal, one goes on to the next deal.” In summary, the word hand has two meanings: the 13 cards held by each player or the play of all 52 cards. Likewise, the word deal has two meanings: the distribution of the 52
cards or the play of the 52 cards. When these words are used, their dual meaning is clear from the context and creates no confusion at the card table. Please believe me.

The primary goal at the bridge table is to win as many of those 13 tricks as possible. Hence the title of this chapter. Be greedy, the more the better! In many games (even some very early forms of bridge) the goal is to lose tricks. Bridge players only want to win tricks.

Taking possession of your opponent’s cards satisfies two human desires, to gather and to conquer. It is the equivalent of winning an opponent’s piece at the chess table.

It is of no significance which cards have been won in a trick. In some non-bridge games, one wishes to win or lose special cards. Bridge is egalitarian; all tricks are of equal value. The cards in the trick have no impact on the scoring. Only which partnership won the trick is important.

**What if you cannot follow suit?**

In the examples, we saw that when a diamond is led, each player must play a diamond (*following suit*). But we realized that there is a situation where a player cannot play a diamond, because he has no diamonds cards in his hand. It does not mean that this player was not dealt any diamonds. It could be that when he was dealt his 13 cards, he started with two diamonds cards, but two diamond tricks have already been played. This will result in the player no longer having any diamonds. On this third diamond trick, the player cannot follow suit. What are the legal options for

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a player in this predicament? There actually are two answers depending on whether or not this deal is being played with a trump suit (a special privileged suit). The two cases will now be described.

1) If the deal is being played without a trump suit (called *notrump*), there is no way for that player to win the trick. The player must play one of his remaining cards in some other suit. Obviously, it is best to play a card that has little potential to win a trick in the future. This process of playing (disposing of) a worthless card is called *discarding*. The word *discard* (combination of the prefix *dis* and *card*) was originally used in card games in the late 1500s. Nowadays the word is used for discarding anything: clothes, books, old love letters, etc. It is one of many words and expressions in the English language that originated at the card table. Even though the player who is discarding cannot possibly win the trick, it is perfectly acceptable for his partner to win the trick. Obviously, nothing prevents his partner from playing the highest card on this trick.

2) If a deal is being played with a trump suit, there is some special privileged suit. The suit is determined before any tricks are played. Suppose on a hand, the heart suit is the designated trump suit. Now consider the scenario on the last page where a diamond had to be played but a player had no diamonds, so following suit was impossible. As in Case 1, the player can choose to discard by either playing a card in the club or spade suit. BUT, by playing a card in the heart suit (the trump suit), he can probably win the trick. This process is called either *trumping* or *ruffing*. A lowly 2
of hearts can win a trick in which an opponent played the diamond ace. Truly a case of “The meek shall inherit the earth”.

You should be confused to the point of distraction. Your brain is shouting, “How do I know if the deal is being played with a trump suit or in notrump?” Be patient, PLEASE, that is the main topic in the next chapter.

One more comment on ruffing. Suppose hearts are trump, West leads the three of diamonds and North plays the ace. If East does not have any diamond cards but does have a heart, East can ruff with a heart. Nothing new so far. Realize that East cannot be certain that he will win the trick. Suppose South likewise does not have a diamond. He can then overruff by playing a higher-ranking heart than the heart played by East. This is why at the bottom of page 25, I wrote “probably will win the trick” rather than “will win the trick”. When two players each play a trump card, the highest trump wins the trick.

The word *trump* provokes the image of a winner. Doesn’t the name Donald Trump sound more like a winner than Donald Drumpf? According to the biographer Gwenda Blair, several centuries ago his ancestors modified their family name.\(^1\) Even though the word *trump* has had a positive connotation in the card game world since the 16th century, other related words are not as flattering. The

expression “trumped-up charges” and the fancy word “trumpery”, seem to have as their source the French verb “tromper” which translates into English as “to deceive”.

In summary, a trick is won by playing the highest card in the suit lead or by playing the highest trump, if one or more players do not have any cards in the suit lead. It should be clear that it is desirable to be dealt high ranking cards (several aces and kings), and if there is a trump suit a bunch of cards in that suit is very nice. The more the merrier.

**The Good and Bad of Hands**

Certainly, the aces and kings are the most powerful, but several other cards also deserve respect for their trick winning capability. The term *honor card* refers to any ace, king, queen, jack, or ten. With the four suits, the 52-card deck contains 20 honor cards. The hand on page 19 contains eight honor cards. Since an average hand will have five honor cards, by counting honor cards the hand on page 19 seems much better than an average hand.

A much less honorable label is to be a *spot card*. It refers to the lower ranking cards with numerous suit spots. They are less likely to win tricks, but you will learn that even these cards can win their fair share of tricks. You may have noticed that a ten is both an honor card and a spot card. Some books do not include the ten in their list of spot cards even though it has more spots than any of its companions.

Likewise, you can see some virtue in being dealt a short suit. If you are dealt only one card in a suit, you may be
able to have some fun ruffing your opponent’s ace in that suit. Being dealt one card in a suit is called a singleton, two cards a doubleton, and no cards a void. Having a void is often very useful at the bridge table. It is rare in the real world when having nothing is a great virtue.

Every foursome contains at least one sloppy dealer. This will result in one player starting with 14 cards and another with 12. This is called a misdeal. An obvious name. It is very annoying to notice on the eleventh trick that players have an unequal number of cards. Players should make a habit of counting that they were dealt 13 cards. Another simple method is to check that the 52\textsuperscript{nd} card is dealt to the dealer. If not, something is wrong. There is no penalty (the misdealt hand is ignored), but valuable bridge time is lost.

I have a slight confession to make. I have actually explained how a trick is played when playing whist, not bridge. When playing bridge, at a specific time, one of the four hands is placed face up on the table. Those cards obviously become known to all players. In the next chapter, we will see that the exposed hand of a player is called the dummy. The partner of dummy, called the declarer, will decide on every trick which card should be played from that exposed hand. Just some coming attractions for the next chapter on the mechanics of bumblepuppy bridge.

I hope this chapter was easily digested. If not, don’t worry. Chapter 3 will provide you with three examples to help settle your stomach. These examples will be described in the text and each example can be watched on a video.
Chapter 1 introduced readers to some of the vocabulary of bridge: hand, deal, lead, trick, following suit, revoking, discarding, trump suit, ruffing, and notrump. The reader also learned that a trick is won by playing the highest card in the suit that was led or by ruffing. If you have forgotten the meaning of any of these terms, you can check the Glossary on page 94. In addition to the word discard, many of these whist/bridge terms have become part of the vocabulary of the non-card playing world. For example: “I hope you will follow suit and sign this petition”, “Your proposal will trump their proposal”, “Speaking in public is not his strong suit”, “I can still win the debate since I have not yet played my trump card.”

In this chapter the mechanics of the game of bumblepuppy bridge will be described. The method of play will upset your bridge playing friends so it might be best not to describe it to them.

Determining the trump suit for a deal

This is the primary issue where modern bridge follows one road and bumblepuppy bridge follows an entirely different path. The following description is only for the game of bumblepuppy bridge. After the dealer completes his chore
of providing each of the four players with their thirteen cards, he looks at his hand with the hope of finding high ranking cards and a suit with many cards. Suppose his thirteen cards contain seven cards in the club suit. Obviously, he would like the club suit to be the trump suit. He says either “Clubs” or “Clubs are trump” or “Clubs are trumps”. This will make the club suit trump for this deal. You probably feel “What if the player to the left of the dealer has seven hearts, shouldn’t he be allowed to try to make the heart suit the trump suit?” Not when playing bumblepuppy bridge. If the dealer selects clubs, THE CLUB SUIT IS THE TRUMP SUIT. Neither his partner nor his opponents can change the trump selection of the dealer. The dealer has great power. But, even the dealer himself cannot alter that initial selection. He is literally declaring what will be the trump suit for the deal. The only comfort dealer’s opponents can have is that on the next deal, they will have total power to select the trump suit.

**Dealer’s six options when selecting trump**

After admiring his hand, dealer has six options. He can select any of the four suits as the trump suit for the deal, he can say “Notrump” which means this deal will be played without a trump suit, or he can say “Pass”. A pass by the dealer forces his partner to decide. You may feel that I only provided you with three options, but with the four possible trump suits there are indeed six options.

After a pass by dealer, the choice goes directly to dealer’s partner who has all of dealer’s options except the option of

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passing. This player must decide what suit will be trump (or notrump) for the hand. As already stated, the other two players, in the opposing partnership, have no power to influence the selection of what will be trump for this deal. They must wait for the following hand, when one of them will be the dealer. This might seem unfair but as long as an even number of hands is played, and the next dealer is always the person sitting to the left of the last dealer, there is nothing unfair. But indeed, this is understandably frustrating for the player holding seven hearts, as in the scenario on the last page, who could not even try to make the heart suit trump.

**Making an intelligent choice as the dealer**

In the earlier example where dealer was dealt seven clubs, it is certainly desirable to make that suit trump. A very easy choice. Since there are thirteen clubs, and dealer holds seven, the other three players hold a total of six clubs. It would be reasonable for dealer to expect, with average luck, that his partner holds two of those six clubs. Even in the rare unfortunate case that partner has no clubs, dealer should still be rather pleased to have chosen the club suit as trump.

As a guideline for choosing trump, dealer should only choose a suit if he has been dealt five or more cards in that suit. With exactly five cards, he hopes his partner was dealt three or more cards in that suit. Dealer will be disappointed if his partner has no cards in the chosen suit. But that is impossible to know at this time. In any case a five-card suit
should be selected as trump since in the long run it should be a wise decision. After all, the partner of a dealer holding a five-card suit, is more likely to also have five cards in the chosen suit than no cards. If dealer has two suits of five or more cards, pick the longest. If both suits are of the same length, pick the better one in terms of higher ranking cards.

On approximately 65% of the hands, dealer will have dealt himself at least one suit that contains five or more cards. What should dealer do on the other 35% of the hands? Dealer should pass the selection of trump to his partner. You will notice that dealer should never choose the option of playing without a trump suit. Choosing notrump by dealer is not recommended, even though legal, since the selection will prevent partner from making his long suit trump. It is true that choosing a suit by the dealer has the same downside of preventing his partner from naming a long suit trump, but at least in this case, the trump suit will be a long suit in dealer’s hand.

It is important not to confuse guidelines for making an intelligent choice with a legal requirement. The dealer always has six legal options but for any particular hand, some selections would be very foolish. For example, if the dealer has only one card in the heart suit but for some crazy reason chooses to make hearts trump, he is selecting a legal option but a stupid one. He may be incredibly lucky, partner may a half dozen or more hearts, but it is still a ridiculous decision since there was no reason to expect it.
**When dealer passes, making an intelligent choice as dealer’s partner**

Dealer’s partner can almost use the same selection process as the dealer. That is, pick his longest suit providing there are at least five cards in that suit. In case of a tie in length, the one with the higher-ranking cards should be selected. Without a five-card suit, notrump should be selected. When dealer’s partner selects notrump, he has knowledge that neither he nor his partner (the dealer), has five or more cards in any suit. But, how can he know anything about the dealer’s hand? The fact that the dealer did not select a suit to be trump, revealed that the dealer does not have a five-card suit. If he had such a suit, he would have made it trump rather than passing. You have just witnessed your first bridge *negative inference*, which involves obtaining information from what your partner did not do or from what an opposing player did not do. Negative inferences are very common in the game of modern bridge. The ability to recognize them and apply the information gained from them, for decision making, separates the really good players from the average ones.

**Being labeled as the declarer, dummy, and defenders**

On each hand, the player who selects which suit will be trump or that the hand will be played without a trump suit (notrump) becomes the *declarer*. So, whenever the dealer makes the selection, he will become declarer, or whenever the dealer passes the selection to his partner, dealer’s partner will become declarer. The partner of the declarer is
then called the *dummy*. After the player sitting to the left of declarer makes a lead on the first trick, dummy’s 13 cards will be placed face up on the table, with the trump suit laid on the left side from declarer’s perspective. Suppose the heart suit has been selected as trump. This photo shows the dummy exposed on the table after West made the lead of the diamond ace on the first trick. Notice where dummy’s heart suit was placed.

![Image of playing cards]

This entire hand is suddenly known to the other three players. From this point on, dummy has no choice as to how his cards are played. Declarer is in control of dummy’s
hand. Declarer is really playing two hands at the same time. On every trick, he physically pulls a card out of his own hand and politely orders his partner (dummy) which card to play from dummy’s exposed hand on the table. Suppose South (declarer) asks North (dummy) to play the diamond 2, then East plays the diamond 3 and finally South plays the diamond 7. This shows what is visible on the bridge table after all four cards are played on the first trick.
You may not feel comfortable with the last paragraph. Don’t get so nervous!!! You will see this performed on the YouTube video.

The most exciting five seconds of every bridge deal occurs when dummy is placed face up on the table. The declarer has already chosen trump with barely any knowledge of his partner’s cards. Suddenly it becomes known to declarer whether he made a great choice or a terrible one. The fear of dummy not having any cards in the suit chosen will provide an adrenaline rush to the declarer as dummy’s hand appears. Declarer hopes to see several trump cards in dummy while the defenders are hoping for the opposite.

Notice that the word *dummy* has two meanings. It is used for both the human player who is the partner of the declarer, and for the thirteen cards that player exposed on the table. The context makes it clear. In the last paragraph, I wrote “dummy is placed face up on the table”. I am certainly not encouraging any player to lie on his back across the bridge table.

I already mentioned that the dummy is revealed after a player makes a lead on the first trick. Again, I mean the 13-card hand, not the person. The lead on the first trick of a deal is called the *opening lead*. The diamond ace was the opening lead depicted in the page 34 photo. The opening lead is always chosen by the player sitting to the left of the declarer. For the remaining twelve tricks, the lead will be made by the player who has won the previous trick.

The two players that are not labeled as declarer or dummy

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are called *defenders*. Therefore, one can say that the defender sitting to the left of declarer always makes the opening lead.

It is frowned upon for dummy to go behind declarer and watch. It becomes too tempting to offer an opinion on how the hand should be played (totally illegal). In this 1909 illustration, it appears that we are witnessing that crime in progress.
It is not 100% necessary for dummy to remain at the table and personally play the exposed cards requested by declarer, even though it is helpful and polite. Dummy may provide an adequate excuse to leave the table. An important chore such as preparing food, drinks, or even a bathroom break would be acceptable. In that case, all of the exposed cards on the table are pushed slightly toward declarer so that he can physically reach across the table and play them.

**The scoring system for bumblepuppy bridge**

The tricks in all suits or notrump have a trick value of one point. Very egalitarian. A partnership only gets points when their side wins the majority of the tricks. Therefore, only one partnership can earn points on any deal. Since on every deal there are thirteen tricks, every trick won above the sixth by a partnership earns one point. This method of one point per trick, independent of which suit is trump, was used by whist players for several hundred years. Who could argue with such success?

**Some scoring examples and the scoresheet**

Suppose the declarer/dummy partnership wins seven of the thirteen tricks, this partnership receives 1 point. Suppose the declarer/dummy partnership wins nine of the thirteen tricks, this partnership receives 3 points. Suppose the declarer/dummy partnership wins twelve of the thirteen tricks, this partnership receives 6 points. Suppose the declarer/dummy partnership wins only five
tricks, this partnership receives no points, but since the defenders won eight tricks, the defenders earn 2 points.

These scores are entered on a scoresheet as seen below. Rather than using the compass directions, the two partnerships have the names “We” and “They”.

```
  We | They
----|-----
  1  |  3  
  6  |   
  2  |   
  ---|---
  9  |  3
```

Usually one particular player will do the chore of scoring for the whole bridge session. This player will enter a score in the *We* column whenever his side has won points. Otherwise he will enter the values in the *They* column. Not rocket science! Let’s now consider the four scoring examples, and suppose a member of the declarer/dummy partnership on the first hand is the scorer. Since on the first hand this partnership won 1 point, the number 1 is entered in the *We* column. Since the dealing chore alternates between partnerships, the 3 points earned on the second hand are entered in the *They* column since for this hand the scorer’s opponents were the declarer/dummy partnership. On the third hand, the side of the scorer is again the
declarer/dummy, so those 6 points are entered in the *We* column. On the fourth hand, the side of the scorer is not the declarer/dummy, but since the defenders earned 2 points, those points are entered in the *We* column. After the four deals and the official totaling of points, the winners are known.

These names *We* and *They* have not been created for bumblepuppy bridge. These column headings have been recommended by bridge books since 1900.

Four deals are the standard length of play. This enables each player to have the opportunity to be the dealer and both partnerships are dealing an equal number of times. It is essential for fairness that an even number of hands are played so that both sides have an equal number of opportunities to have the advantage of selecting trump. The members of the partnership with the most total points after the four deals are completed become the highly respected winners. In the example on the scoresheet, the *We* partnership beat the *They* partnership by 9 to 3. Playing four hands will take 20 to 30 minutes. If time permits, the players can initially agree to play best two out of three games or even three out of five.

Since a partnership only receives points for winning a trick after their side has won six tricks, it is common to call the first six tricks won by each side *book*. Therefore, one can say, a partnership receives three points for winning three tricks above book.

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On any hand, a tie cannot occur since only one partnership will receive points. After a four-deal game, there may be a tie. This is actually a good thing because it is an excuse to play more hands even if the hour is late.

You will recall that in Chapter 1, I introduced the word *revoke* and stated that a player is severely punished for that careless error. After the hand is completed, two points are subtracted from the trick total for the partnership where one of the players revoked and those two points are given to the innocent side. If the revoke was done on purpose, the punishment is much greater - everyone should refuse to play with that person! This recommendation might seem overly cruel, but this was devised by the leading whist authorities more than 150 years ago.

*The defender’s activities during trump selection*

It would seem that the defenders might as well take a short nap during the trump selection process. After all they have no choice in the selection. In reality, the process is surprisingly exciting. While sorting their cards the future defenders hope to find several aces and kings. Then they take note of which suits they have many cards in, and pray that such a suit will be selected by the future declarer as the trump suit. After a selection is announced, if a defender feels that the declarer/dummy partnership has made a poor choice, it would be unethical for the defender to shout “Yes!!!” since his partner is not entitled to this opinion.

After the trump suit is selected and everyone knows which player is declarer, the defender to the left of the declarer...
Julian Laderman has two options, *pass* or *double*. *Double* means that the points awarded on the hand are doubled. In the last scoring example where declarer only won five tricks, if a defender had chosen to double, the defenders would have received four points instead of only two. Don’t forget that if the declarer wins seven or more tricks, he will receive twice as many points when doubled. If the defender to the left of declarer says “Pass”, the option of doubling now is given to the defender to the right of declarer. Each defender must individually decide whether or not to double. No consultation! If either defender chooses to double, each member of the declarer/dummy partnership has the right to redouble. The player to the left of the doubler gets the first opportunity to redouble. Of course, a redouble means that the standard score, based on the number of tricks won, will be multiplied by four.

Stating which opponent has the right to lead, double, etc. is a little awkward. It is often convenient to use the acronyms, LHO (Left-Hand Opponent) and RHO (Right-Hand Opponent). This enables one to write, “After the declarer is known, his LHO has the first opportunity to double”.

**When to double**

An intelligent option is to double when you feel your hand is good enough to probably win five tricks. You hope your partner will be able to win at least two tricks resulting in a total of seven tricks for your partnership. If your partner has really bad cards and is unable to win any tricks you will regret your double, but that is just part of the game. Bridge
is a wonderful mix of skill and luck. In the long run, it is worthwhile to double with a hand that you believe will win five tricks.

Consider the scoresheet on page 39. With the same results, let us suppose that the first hand had been doubled and the fourth hand had been doubled and redoubled. In this case, the scoresheet would have been:

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{We} & \text{They} \\
2 & 3 \\
6 & 8 \\
\hline
\text{total} & 16 & 3 \\
\end{array}
\]

Does it make any difference if the final score is 9 to 3 or 16 to 3? It would be nice if there is some distinction. It is not uncommon to play bridge for some token small stakes in order to quantify the result. The larger the victory, the greater the transfer of wealth. Even playing for meaningless stakes, surprisingly, adds meaning to the game. The transfer of merely two or three dollars can feel to the winners like an award ceremony after a major world championship.
**Major ethical issue**

Suppose your partner is sitting to the left of the declarer. After the trump selection, your partner thinks for a full minute, then says “Pass”. What was he thinking about? That is an easy question to answer. Since your partner’s only option other than pass was to double, your partner was obviously considering doubling. This means your partner believes he can win several tricks but not quite enough to double. If likewise, you can win several tricks but not quite enough to double, you should not allow partner’s hesitation to encourage you to double. That would be highly unethical. Your partner’s hesitation has given you what is called *unauthorized information*. Your partner should learn to pass more quickly. How is it possible to make a tough decision quickly? By anticipating rather than waiting for the trump selection to end. While the dealer and his partner are doing the trump selection, it is good to be already thinking about your future decision. You may already be prepared that if the dealer or dealer’s partner picks hearts or diamonds, you will double, otherwise you will pass. BUT don’t say “Pass” too quickly either!!! It is not ethical to emphasize the poor cards you were dealt. That emphasis may discourage your partner from doubling based on the unauthorized information you provided.
Many cartoons, tales, and relatively true stories depict arguments, even murders, occurring at the bridge table. Some whist writers in the 1800s saw this as a positive feature (excluding the murders) since the arguments revealed the great amount of excitement generated by the game. In all forms of competition, it is common to have arguments between the two competing sides. Bridge is unusual in that the majority of the arguments occur between two partners rather than with their opponents. One can argue that a bridge partnership is under more strain than a marriage or a business partnership. With these partnerships both members have the same information but often have different opinions on how to handle a situation. At the bridge table, each player in a partnership has knowledge of his own hand but not of his partner’s. What is an obvious decision to one player based on the cards in his hand might be far from obvious to his partner, hence the common shout “Why did you …..!!!!”

The illustration on the next page is a depiction of an early bridge argument between two well-dressed very refined partners. It looks like an episode of Real Housewives of the Bridge World.
The illustration we saw back on page 17 depicts the type of extreme dirty look that has the potential to lead to a nasty argument. Such a facial expression must be avoided by all players. Her partner, however, looks too frightened to fight

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back. While a hand is being played, that woman’s look is not only distasteful but totally unethical. Expressing such anger during the play provides her partner with unauthorized information which may affect future card play decisions. But since the illustration depicts an impossible situation where cards are apparently being played but there is no dummy on the table, it may be trying to depict the players analyzing a hand after its play has been concluded. In this case the angry woman would only be exhibiting bad behavior but not unethical behavior. This image is confusing. I believe the illustrator was probably a whist player rather than a bridge player and mistakenly drew a whist hand being played.

For many decades, the American Contract Bridge League has tried to discourage arguments and bad behavior at bridge tournaments. Barbara Seagram led the way with the “zero tolerance policy”. At many bridge clubs, you will see a sign in large letters that says, PLAY NICE. I have objected to that sign, arguing that it should be PLAY NICELY. Even though the sign is grammatically acceptable as a command, it encourages confusion between adjectives and adverbs. I don’t argue too hard since it would defeat the purpose. Please play nice or play nicely, whichever you prefer.
Summary of the mechanics of a complete deal when playing bumblepuppy bridge:

Step 1: Deal out all 52 cards to the four players (each gets 13). Each player sorts his cards into suits (alternating black and red), and for each suit, sorts the cards by rank.

Step 2: Dealer chooses one of the six options. For any option other than PASS, go directly to Step 4.

Step 3: Only if dealer said “Pass” in Step 2, dealer’s partner chooses one of five possible options.

Step 4: The four players agree on who has become declarer, dummy, defenders, and which defender will make the opening lead. They also agree on which suit became trump or that notrump was selected.

Step 5: Each defender has an opportunity to double (the defender sitting to the left of declarer has the first opportunity). If neither double, go directly to Step 7.

Step 6: Only if a double occurred in Step 5, the declarer/dummy partnership has an opportunity to redouble (the player sitting to the left of the player who doubled has the first opportunity).

Step 7: The defender sitting to the left of the declarer makes the opening lead, and dummy places his thirteen cards face up on the table.

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Step 8: All players must follow suit if they can. The highest card in that suit wins the trick with the exception that one or more players may be able to play a trump card. In this case, the highest trump card played wins the trick.

Step 9: The trick winner or his partner grabs the four played cards exposed on the table and places them face down in front of a member of the trick winning partnership. The actual player who won the trick makes the lead on the next trick.

Step 10: Repeat Steps 8 and 9 until the players have played all of their cards. That is, until all thirteen tricks have been played.

Step 11: Count up the tricks won by declarer/dummy in order to ascertain which partnership will receive points and enter the appropriate amount on a scoresheet.

Step 12: Go to the next deal with the new dealer being the player to the left of the previous dealer.

The three lengthy examples in the next chapter will demonstrate this twelve-step approach. After you play a half dozen hands, you will not even think about these steps. They function like training wheels on a kid’s bike.
You are halfway through the book. If you have read nonstop, you have been reading for an hour or so. Time for a short break.

At this point, the game has been totally explained. The method for playing it and all rules have been provided. BUT understandably, you feel you are on thin ice. The examples in Chapter 3 and the corresponding video should put you at least on solid ice. Chapter 4 will prepare you for your future anticipated conversion. Don’t forget Appendix 3 which on playing bumblepuppy bridge with fewer than four players and most importantly, the Glossary (page 94).

I was not being just silly when I indicated in the Introduction and on the Back Cover that this game is for ages 6 to 106. I started playing at the age of six. My hands were too small to hold the cards so I would expose them on the table (like a dummy). I had no choice but to trust my parent’s honesty. But even as a six-year-old, I was wise enough to refuse to play against them for money. If my doctors are as capable as they claim to be, I can see no reason why I won’t be playing till 106.

This is a terrific feature of bridge. A young person can play in a tournament with their grandparent or even their great-grandparent as their partner. What a wonderful shared multigenerational experience! Bridge is a true bridge across generations.

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CHAPTER 3
Examples of Playing Bumblepuppy Bridge

In this chapter three examples will be followed from beginning to end. Before studying complete deals, it is necessary to introduce the standard method for displaying a bridge hand. Consider this display.

North
♠ K 7 3
♥ 9 6
♦ 8 5 2
♣ Q 9 8 4 2

It describes the hand of the player named North. He was dealt three cards in the spade suit: king, 7, and 3. He was dealt two cards in the heart suit: 9 and 6. You get the idea. It is useful to do a check that this display starts with 13 cards. It does since 3 + 2 + 3 + 5 = 13. When actually playing bridge with physical cards, it is of course also useful to form the habit of checking that you were dealt 13 cards. This checks that the four players are “playing with a full deck”. As the tricks are played each player will have fewer remaining cards. Usually books and newspapers only show the display of a hand with the initial 13 cards.

Do you think North is happy with his hand? Not really, and indeed he has a right to feel somewhat gypped. The deck
contains four aces, four kings, four queens, and four jacks. Since these cards are divided four ways, a player can expect to have on the average, one ace, one king, one queen, and one jack. North was only dealt two honor cards, the spade king and the club queen. It is usually desirable to be dealt a hand that is a mix of long suits and short suits. Being dealt short suits will increase the chance of winning tricks by ruffing. This hand does have one doubleton (in hearts), but that is nothing to get very excited about. The only way to be dealt a hand without a doubleton or an even shorter suit is to be dealt a hand with four cards in one suit and three cards in each of the other three suits. If you are not convinced, try as an exercise to create a different thirteen-card hand without having a doubleton or shorter suit. North’s hand does have a five-card club suit, but often that is only a virtue when this suit has been chosen as the trump suit. In summary, this hand is nothing to write home about. But before feeling sorry for North, remember North has a partner, and suppose South’s hand is:

South

♠ A Q 5
♥ K Q J 10 5 3
♦ 9 7
♣ A K

South has all the riches, and since North is South’s partner, North gets to share those riches. Like a poor person marrying into wealth. South has two aces, two kings, two queens and a jack. With the ten of hearts, this hand has

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eight honor cards, much better than average. If that weren’t enough, South has a six-card heart suit. It is not your imagination if this hands feels familiar in some odd way. It was our example of a fanned hand back on page 19. We will soon look at a full deal of bumblepuppy bridge where North and South were dealt these very hands.

When following each example, you may find it helpful to distribute a deck of 52 cards into the four hands. With all the cards exposed on the table, even one person can follow an example (play cards as they are played) from start to finish. This could of course be done much better with four people. Invite three friends over for a meal and then introduce them to the game. Four people playing in a home is often referred to as social bridge. Try it, be sociable.

A free YouTube video was made to show people playing these three examples. It can be accessed at the Master Point Press website [www.masterpointpress.com](http://www.masterpointpress.com). You click on “by Author”, and then find my name and the title.

I would recommend that you first go through Example 1 in the book before going to the video. Even if you feel you don’t need the video, you should check out the video and see why many in the bridge world call me Bernie. The nickname only started after his presidential campaign, but for decades I have been told that I resemble a senator from Vermont. If he had won I could have started a new career as a presidential double. His security team could have used me as a target decoy on the White House lawn. Now that I think of it, it may not have been a great career move.

Play Bumblepuppy Bridge
EXAMPLE 1: If downloaded, it is essential to see simultaneously pages 54 and 55 to view the complete deal as the cards are played.

Step 1: Suppose for this example, South is the dealer. After the 52 cards are dealt out by South, the four players hold the following cards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ K 7 3</td>
<td>♠ 10 6 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ 9 6</td>
<td>♥ A 4 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ 8 5 2</td>
<td>♦ 10 6 4 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ Q 9 8 4 2</td>
<td>♣ J 6 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West</th>
<th>South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ J 9 8 2</td>
<td>♠ A Q 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ 8 7</td>
<td>♥ K Q J 10 5 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ A K Q J</td>
<td>♦ 9 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ 10 7 5</td>
<td>♣ A K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each player has knowledge of only his 13 cards. The 13 cards are sorted by suit (best to alternate red and black suits) and by rank in each suit. This is just for convenience. Some experts actually feel it is better not to sort one’s cards since sharp eyed opponents may gain some knowledge of your hand by seeing where a card is drawn. It is best to ignore these experts. I am sorry that I even mentioned them.

Step 2: The dealer (South) has six cards in the heart suit, so he selects hearts as the trump suit by simply saying “Hearts”.

Step 3 is skipped.

Step 4: The players agree that the following situation will be in effect for this deal. South is declarer, North is dummy, East and West are the
defenders, and hearts will be the trump suit. Since West is sitting to the left of the declarer, West will be the defender making the opening lead in Step 7.

Step 5: Neither East nor West chooses to double. They can indicate this by saying, “Pass”. The defenders may not consult each other. West has to decide first whether or not to double since West is sitting to the left of the player who decided on the trump suit.

Step 6 is skipped.

Step 7: West makes the opening lead of the diamond ace. North now places his 13 cards face up on the table. North’s role is finished. After the dummy is revealed, the other three players are aware of not only their own 13 cards but also dummy’s 13 cards. (see photo on page 34)

Steps 8 – 10
Let’s suppose this is the order in which the 52 cards are played.

Trick 1  West ♦ ace, North ♦ 2, East ♦ 3, South ♦ 7 – West wins
The photo on page 35 shows the table after the first trick.
Trick 2  West ♦ king, North ♦ 5, East ♦ 4, South ♦ 9 – West wins
Trick 3  West ♦ queen, North ♦ 8, East ♦ 6, South ♥ 3 – South wins by ruffing
Trick 4  South ♥ king, West ♥ 7, North ♥ 6, East ♥ ace – East wins
Trick 5  East ♣ 3, South ♣ ace, West ♣ 5, North ♣ 2 – South wins
Trick 6  South ♥ queen, West ♥ 8, North ♥ 9, East ♥ 2 – South wins
Trick 7  South ♥ jack, West ♣ 7, North ♣ 4, East ♥ 4 – South wins
Trick 8  South ♣ ace, West ♣ 2, North ♣ 3, East ♣ 4 – South wins
Trick 9  South ♠ queen, West ♠ 8, North ♠ 7, East ♠ 6 – South wins
Trick 10 South ♠ 5, West ♠ 9, North ♠ king, East ♠ 10 – North wins
Trick 11 North ♠ 8, East ♠ 6, South ♠ king, West ♠ 10 – South wins
Trick 12 South ♥ 10, anything – South wins
Trick 13 South ♥ 5, anything – South wins

Notice how the player who wins a trick always plays the first card on the next trick.

Play Bumblepuppy Bridge
On the last two tricks (12 and 13), South had two trump cards, but no other player had a trump card. Therefore, South must win those tricks and the other players can only discard.

Step 11: The declarer/dummy (North/South) partnership won ten tricks so they receive 4 points for this deal.

Step 12: On the next deal, the dealer will be West since South dealt this hand and clockwise West follows South.

Comments on this example:

On trick 3, South had already run out of diamonds, so he was able to ruff. It was fortunate for South to have been dealt a doubleton diamond, had South been dealt a third diamond, he would have lost three diamond tricks. Short suits are great, they deserve your appreciation.

On trick 7, South played a top trump card in order to remove the last trump card that was held in East’s hand. This play prevents East from using that trump card (heart 4) to ruff a high card played by North/South. As a general rule, it is usually best for the partnership that has the most trump cards to play cards in the trump suit and remove trump cards from their opponents, thereby preventing the opponents from ruffing. This maneuver is called pulling trump or drawing trumps.

Comments on the video corresponding to this example:

At times the video is repetitive. But, one tends to better remember information that is repeated a few times. The last sentence is really an excuse for being so repetitive.

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During the video the players often announce the card that they are playing. As mentioned in the video, this is really done for the video watchers. At either bumblepuppy bridge or modern bridge only the declarer will speak in order to indicate which card should be played from dummy. The defenders never speak during the card play, nor will the declarer announce what card he is playing from his own hand. The cards they are playing can be seen by all other players. No need to say anything.

At time 4:14 on the video, I stated that the dealer should make a suit trump when dealt “five cards in a suit”. Actually, it would be clearer to have stated “a five card or longer suit”. A six-card suit, as appears in this example, is even better. I repeat my error in other parts of the video.

At times 6:25, the players stated that they, “Do not choose to double”. I should have had them just say, “Pass”.

On the first few tricks, dummy placed her played cards behind the dummy. This is common with tournament bridge players since they never gather up tricks. At one point, you can hear me ask her to place a played dummy card in front of the dummy, which she then does.

After trick eleven, it is common for declarer to expose the last two cards and state, “I have two trump cards and nobody else has trump so I will win these last two tricks.” This is called a claim; its sole purpose is to save a little time. However, if the claim is incorrect it can take a considerable amount of time sorting things out.
EXAMPLE 2: If downloaded, view simultaneously p. 58 and 59.

Step 1: Suppose for this example, North is the dealer. After the 52 cards are dealt out, the four players hold the following cards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>North</th>
<th></th>
<th>West</th>
<th></th>
<th>East</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠️</td>
<td>♣️ 7 6 4</td>
<td>♠️ 10 9 8 2</td>
<td>♠️ A K Q J</td>
<td>♠️ A K Q J</td>
<td>♠️ A K Q J</td>
<td>♠️ A K Q J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥️</td>
<td>♠️ 6 3 2</td>
<td>♥️ K Q J 10</td>
<td>♥️ 9 8 5</td>
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<td>♦️</td>
<td>♦️ A 9 6 5</td>
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<td>♣️</td>
<td>♣️ A 10 4 3</td>
<td>♣️ Q J 8 7 2</td>
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<td>♣️ K Q J</td>
<td>♣️ K Q J</td>
<td>♣️ K Q J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each player has knowledge of only his own 13 cards. The 13 cards are sorted by suit (best to alternate red and black suits) and by rank in each suit.

Step 2: The dealer, North, does not have five cards in any suit so he says “Pass”.

Step 3: The partner of the dealer, South, now must name trump. South has five cards in the diamond suit and says “Diamonds”.

Step 4: The players agree that the following situation will be in effect for this deal. South is declarer, North is dummy, East and West are the defenders, diamonds will be the trump suit, and West will make the opening lead in Step 7. What a coincidence, the declarer, dummy, and

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the defenders are all in the same position as Example 1. This will be discussed on page 66.

Step 5: Neither East nor West chooses to double. West had the first opportunity to double since South chose the trump suit. East had a tough decision since he holds an excellent hand (8 honor cards), but said “Pass”. This decision will be discussed at the end of this example.

Step 6 is skipped.

Step 7: West makes the opening lead of the heart king. North now places his 13 cards face up on the table. The other three players are all aware of where at least 26 of the 52 cards are located: the 13 cards that they are each holding and dummy’s 13 exposed cards. Actually, both East and South have seen a 27th card, the card that is the opening lead.

Steps 8 – 10

Let’s suppose this is the order in which the 52 cards are played.

Trick 1 West ♥ king, North ♥ 2, East ♥ 5, South ♥ ace – South wins
Trick 2 South ♦ 2, West ♦ king, North ♦ 6, East ♦ 3 – West wins
Trick 3 West ♥ queen, North ♥ 3, East ♥ 8, South ♥ 4 – West wins
Trick 4 West ♥ jack, North ♥ 6, East ♥ 9, South ♥ 7 – West wins
Trick 5 West ♠ 10, North ♠ 4, East ♠ 1, South ♠ 3 – East wins
Trick 6 East ♠ ace, South ♠ 5, West ♠ 2, North ♠ 6 – East wins
Trick 7 East ♠ king, South ♠ 7, West ♠ 8, North ♠ 7 – South wins by ruffing
Trick 8 South ♦ queen, West ♦ 4, North ♦ 9, East ♦ ace – East wins
Trick 9 East ♣ king, South ♣ 2, West ♣ 3, North ♣ ace – North wins
Trick 10 North ♦ 10, East ♦ 5, South ♦ jack, West ♦ 9 – South wins
Trick 11 South ♦ 8, West ♥ 10, North ♥ 5, East ♥ queen – South wins
Trick 12 South ♣ 8, West ♣ 4, North ♣ 6, East ♣ jack – East wins
Trick 13 East ♣ queen, South ♣ 7, West ♣ 10, North ♣ 9 – East wins

Step 11: The declarer/dummy (North/South) partnership won only five tricks. Therefore, the defenders East/West won eight tricks and receive 2 points for this deal.

Play Bumblepuppy Bridge
Step 12: On the next deal, the dealer will be East since North dealt this hand and clockwise East follows North.

**Comments on this example:**

It would have worked out well for East/West if East had chosen to double. In that case the East/West partnership would have gained 4 points instead of only 2. East certainly held an excellent hand. But it is not easy to count winning tricks. Consider the spade suit. East won the 5th and 6th tricks with spade winners. Suppose South (declarer) had been dealt seven diamonds and no spades. In that case, East’s beautiful spades would have been useless, unable to win even a single spade trick. This would have enabled declarer to win seven tricks and thereby, with East’s double, receive 2 points rather than 1. East would have regretted doubling, particularly when West started complaining, “Why did you double?”

**Comments on the video corresponding to this example:**

This example begins at time 17:30 in the video.

At times, you may have noticed that each player will glance at a small slip of paper. That paper indicates what cards should be played on every trick in order for the video to be identical to the example in the book.

At time 19:01, I again make the mistake of saying “a five-card suit” when I really mean “a five card or longer suit”. Sorry!

Before going to Example 3, I want to take a break and discuss an important aspect of bridge. It is desirable to have some sort of reward system to honor fine play during an evening of bridge. Tournament bridge players are rewarded by a higher numerical ranking in a league. The most common reward system for social

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players is to play for very low stakes (a few dollars) as indicated on page 43. In the very early days of bridge, the game was viewed as an excellent gambling game. Men tended to play for high stakes while women often preferred the more socially acceptable reward of gifts, as depicted in this illustration.
EXAMPLE 3: If downloaded, view simultaneously p. 62 and 63.

Step 1: Suppose for this example, North is the dealer. After the 52 cards are dealt out, the four players hold the following cards:

North
♠ A K 8
♥ Q J 3 2
♦ 9 6 3
♣ A 6 5

West
♠ 10 3 2
♥ 10 6 5
♦ A K Q J 10
♣ 10 4

East
♠ Q J 9 4
♥ 9 8
♦ 8 5 4
♣ Q J 8 3

South
♠ 7 6 5
♥ A K 7 4
♦ 7 2
♣ K 9 7 2

Each player has knowledge of only his 13 cards. The 13 cards are sorted by suit (remember to alternate red and black suits) and by rank in each suit.

Step 2: The dealer, North, does not have five cards in any suit, so he says “Pass”.

Step 3: The partner of the dealer, South, must now name trump. Since South does not have five cards in any suit, he says “Notrump”.

Step 4: The players agree that the following situation will be in effect for this deal: South is declarer, North is dummy, East and West are the defenders. The hand will be played without a trump suit, and West will make the opening lead in Step 7.

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Step 5: West has the first opportunity to double. West is thrilled with South’s choice of notrump since it means that declarer cannot ruff any of West’s five diamond winners. Being certain of five tricks, and hoping his partner can win two additional tricks, West says “Double”.

Step 6: Neither North nor South choose to redouble. They each have a fine hand, but neither knows much about their partner’s hand. All they know is that their partner does not have a five-card suit.

Step 7: West makes the opening lead of the diamond ace. North now places his 13 cards face up on the table. East and South know the location of 27 of the 52 cards. They can see the 13 cards in their own hand, the 13 cards in dummy, and the opening lead by West (13+13+1=27).

Steps 8 – 10

Let’s suppose this is the order in which the 52 cards are played.

Trick 1 West ♦ ace, North ♦ 3, East ♦ 4, South ♦ 2 – West wins
Trick 2 West ♦ king, North ♦ 6, East ♦ 5, South ♦ 7 – West wins
Trick 3 West ♦ queen, North ♦ 9, East ♦ 8, South ♦ 5 – West wins
Trick 4 West ♦ jack, North ♦ 8, East ♦ 9, South ♦ 2 – West wins
Trick 5 West ♦ 10, North ♦ 5, East ♦ 3, South ♦ 7 – West wins
Trick 6 West ♦ 10, North ♦ ace, East ♦ 4, South ♦ 6 – North wins
Trick 7 North ♦ king, East ♦ jack, South ♦ 7, West ♦ 2 – North wins
Trick 8 North ♥ 2, East ♥ 8, South ♥ ace, West ♥ 5 – South wins
Trick 9 South ♥ king, West ♥ 6, North ♥ 3, East ♥ 9 – South wins
Trick 10 South ♥ 4, West ♥ 10, North ♥ queen, East ♠ 8 – North wins
Trick 11 North ♥ jack, East ♠ jack, South ♥ 7, West ♠ 3 – North wins
Trick 12 North ♠ ace, East ♠ queen, South ♠ 9, West ♠ 4 – North wins
Trick 13 North ♠ 6, East ♠ queen, South ♠ king, West ♠ 10 – South wins

Step 11: The declarer/dummy (North/South) partnership won eight tricks. With West’s double, they receive 4 points for this deal. Without the double, they would have received only 2 points.

Play Bumblepuppy Bridge
Step 12: On the next deal, the dealer will be East. North was the last dealer so East is in the next position using clockwise order.

**Comments on this example**

With experienced players, this hand would end after the fifth trick. South, the declarer would announce: “I have the remaining 8 tricks. I have 2 spade winners, 4 heart winners, and 2 club winners.” A perfectly fine claim after just five tricks. All, would nod to express their agreement, and the players would score this hand and anticipate the next hand.

This hand was initially frustrating for declarer. While West was enjoying his five diamond tricks, South was unable to ruff since the hand was being played in notrump. All he could do was to discard and grimace. The choice of notrump was made because neither North nor South was dealt a five-card suit. But it turns out that both held a four-card heart suit. If they could have played in hearts, they would have won nine tricks rather than just the eight in notrump. You may wish to replay this whole hand with hearts as the trump suit. Declarer should only lose 1 spade trick, 2 diamonds tricks and 1 club trick. But, if hearts had been trump, West certainly would not have doubled, so actually all ended well for declarer.

Was the double a mistake? It sure turned out to be — but with West knowing that he holds five certain winners, it was reasonable to double. Suppose East had been dealt either the hand held by North or South. In either case, declarer would not have been able to win seven tricks.
Comments on the video corresponding to the example:

This example begins at time 29:10 in the video.

At time 32:30, I made a mistake when I said “One notrump”. When playing bumblepuppy bridge, it is correct to say just “Notrump”. When you read Chapter 4 you will realize why I made the mistake.

At time 40:10, I used the word “reversed” when I should have said “switched”. This was explained more clearly at the bottom of the last page.

Summary of examples:

Example 1: South dealt. Since South had a six-card suit, that suit was selected as trump. South was the declarer and won ten tricks, which resulted in the North/South partnership gaining 4 points.

Example 2: North dealt. North did not have a five card or longer suit, so he passed the choice of trump to South. South had a five-card suit and selected it as trump. South was declarer and won only five tricks, which resulted in the East/West partnership gaining 2 points.

Example 3: North dealt. North did not have a five card or longer suit, so he passed the choice of trump to South. Likewise, South did not have a five card or longer suit and therefore decided that the deal should be played in notrump. South was declarer and won eight tricks. Normally eight tricks would result in a score of 2 points,
but with the double, it resulted in the North/South partnership gaining 4 points.

You may have noticed that the bottom position (South) was declarer for all three examples. This has been an accepted convention for displaying a bridge hand in a book, article, or newspaper column. Displays with any position other than South being declarer would feel awkward, sort of like reading a book while holding it sideways. These examples were rigged so that South would always name the trump suit or notrump and thereby be the declarer. In my three examples, either South dealt and had a long suit to name as trump, or North dealt and lacked a five-card suit so the decision was passed to South. This method for displaying an example dates from around 1900 when the first bridge books appeared. I can assure you that when playing bridge, South is not declarer any more often than the other three players.

Inexperienced players often find it convenient when following an example to cross out each of the 52 cards as they are played. This has an advantage since while following an example readers can see clearly which cards have not yet been played. Of course, it makes it very hard to reread (redo) the example. One may have to purchase a new un-tarnished copy of this book. Ok, I admit, I included this crossing out method to increase my book sales. Please accept my apology.
CHAPTER 4
Converting from Bumblepuppy Bridge to Contract Bridge

The good news and bad news

I will start with the bad news. You have not learned how to play modern bridge but only bumblepuppy bridge. And equally painful, you have not even learned how to play bumblepuppy bridge well. You are by definition a bumblepuppy.

The good news is threefold and listed below:

1) You paid very little for this small book.

2) Since virtually all bumblepuppy bridge players have moved on to modern bridge and have quickly forgotten even the mechanics of this game, you are probably among the top one hundred bumblepuppy bridge players worldwide. CONGRATULATIONS!!!

3) After reading the rest of Chapter 4, you will have an excellent background to take beginner courses or read beginner books on bridge. You will not be a bumblepuppy in the admiring eyes of your classmates.

Contract bridge is the real name of the game we have been calling modern bridge. It is usually called by the one word, bridge, since it has been the dominant form for 90 years.
The differences between bumblepuppy bridge and contract bridge

Contract bridge can be thought of as essentially two games combined into one. The first game involves determining the trump suit, how many tricks are required, and who will be declarer, whereas the second game involves actually proving that declarer can win the desired number of tricks. The first game is called either the bidding or the auction, and the second is called the play of the hand. Around one hundred years ago, some bridge books called the play of the hand the show-down. This is a descriptive name that still lives on in the poker world.

The mechanics of the play of the hand phase for contract bridge is identical to bumblepuppy bridge. But as already mentioned, the bidding phase is entirely different.

When playing bumblepuppy bridge, on every deal the primary goal is to win seven tricks. We saw the more the better, but partnerships get points and not their opponents if they win at least seven tricks.

When playing contract bridge, the primary goal is usually set much higher. The declarer may be required to make ten tricks. The declarer/dummy partnership will only receive points if they achieve that high goal. Since each deal involves thirteen tricks and if declarer/dummy partnership needs to win ten of them, the defenders need only win four tricks in order for them to receive points. Suppose the declarer/dummy partnership is required to win twelve tricks. In this case the defenders need to win only two tricks.
to defeat declarer and thereby win points. It may seem unfair that one side wins eleven tricks while the other side wins only two tricks, but the side with the two tricks is the side that gets points. But you will learn that a contract is a contract. If you set your goal at twelve tricks and fail in that lofty goal, you get punished.

I am sure it now seems quite foolish for players to set such an exalted goal. Why don’t they content themselves with the goal of winning just seven tricks, as when playing bumblepuppy bridge? There are basically two reasons:

1) Contract bridge allows both partnerships to try to name which suit will be trump (or notrump). On any given hand, any of the four players can be the declarer, not just the dealer and his partner. Remember the scenario on page 30 where the dealer has seven clubs, and the opponent on dealer’s left has seven hearts. When playing contract bridge, the player with seven hearts may in effect say, I can win eight tricks if hearts were to be the trump suit. After that statement (bid) either the dealer or dealer’s partner has the right to say that their partnership can make nine tricks if clubs were trump. This process is not surprisingly called an auction. The highest bidder wins the auction, but must during the play of the cards, deliver on the promised number of tricks. The promised number of tricks, with a specific trump suit or notrump, is called the contract. This is the reason this form of bridge is called contract bridge.

2) In many cases the scoring system encourages a partnership to set a high goal. If a partnership promises to
win twelve tricks and indeed during the play of the cards achieves this lofty goal, the score received is much greater than if only seven tricks were promised but twelve were won.

**The scoring method**

The scoring system for contract bridge is much more complicated than the one you witnessed in bumblepuppy bridge. When playing bumblepuppy bridge, tricks in all suits have the value 1 point. In contract bridge the value of each trick is dependent on the chosen trump suit. When clubs or diamonds are trump, each trick won by declarer above the sixth is worth 20 points. When hearts and spades are trump, each trick above the sixth is worth 30 points. Notrump is a little more complicated. The seventh trick is worth 40 points while each trick above the seventh is worth only 30 points. If you are curious as to the reason why these values were chosen, you must study the 50 years of bridge evolution from 1886 to 1935. You will find that there is some logic behind these choices.

You may be wondering why I keep saying that the scoring system greatly complicates the game of contract bridge. After all, can’t one easily learn how to score? The complication is not in the process of scoring but in the way the scoring system affects the decision making at the bridge table. For example, based on the above scoring system, winning nine tricks in hearts is worth $30 + 30 + 30 = 90$ while ten tricks in diamonds is worth only $20 + 20 + 20 + 20 = 80$. We see that deciding on the trump suit is not
necessarily determined by the best choice for winning the most tricks, but rather the best choice for obtaining the largest score.

Declarer’s inability to win the number of tricks promised (fulfill the contract) results in the defending side receiving 50 or 100 points for every trick declarer fell short of the contract. These tricks are called *undertricks*. If the contract is to win ten tricks but the declarer only wins seven, the defenders get points for the three undertricks. The desirability of setting a high goal, but facing a risk of failure, requires contract bridge players to become experts at risk-reward analysis on every hand.

*Communication and hand evaluation*

It is natural to wonder how do partners decide what they would like trump to be, as well as how high (number of tricks) to set the goal. It is through communication between the partners. Some forms of communication are legal but, of course, others are illegal. Let’s first consider what types of information you may wish to communicate. This falls into two categories:

1) Tell your partner in which suit or suits you have five or more cards (sometimes even four). From your perspective, these suits seem like desirable choices for trump.

2) Tell your partner the quality of your hand. This will help your partnership assess how many tricks you can anticipate winning.
The first item is obvious. If you were dealt a six-card heart suit, you would like to say to partner, “Good news, I have a six-card heart suit.” The second item requires a method to determine the quality of a bridge hand. Several times in this book, I have stated that it is nice to be dealt aces and kings. But that is a rather crude measuring tool. For example, obviously, a queen is more likely to win a trick than a ten. More than one hundred years ago, Bryant McCampbell created a system that has become the standard hand evaluation tool. Basically, it converts the actual thirteen cards into one numerical value. Each ace is counted as four points, each king three points, each queen two, and each jack one. You will notice that even though the ten is an honor card, the ten is excluded. Using this system, the ten gets no respect. These numbers are then added up to obtain that numerical value, called high card points. If we look back at Example 1 on page 54, North has 5 high card points, South 19, West 11, and East 5. On all deals the total for the four hands will be 40. With the average hand adding up to 10 points, any hand with only 5 high card points is disappointing while a hand with 15 is very good. With a 15 point hand a bridge player would like to announce to his partner, “Good news, I have a very fine hand.”

In Example 1 (Chapter 3) South would wish to tell his partner two things: “Good news, I have a six-card heart suit.” and “Good news, I have an excellent hand.”

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Unfortunately, either statement would result in an arrest by the bridge police. The legal language of bridge is very limited. For example, it would be legal to say “Two diamonds”. These two words mean that, “If diamonds are trump, I can win two tricks above the sixth.” That would be a total of eight tricks. Likewise, saying “Four hearts” means “If hearts are trump, I can win four tricks above the sixth.” That would be a total of ten tricks. With this very limited language, how can a player possibly describe his hand? This is the challenge of bridge. The methods of communication will be left as a cliffhanger. Hopefully it will encourage you to read other books or take lessons.

The conversion process

A fine place to get started is the website of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), www.acbl.org. The main purpose of the League is to organize tournament bridge events for its 167,000 members. It also tries to encourage new players by offering online lessons for beginners. One merely has to click on the learn button. The website contains a directory of bridge teachers. If you enter your address, it will tell you which bridge teachers are in your area, their credentials, and possibly provide you with a picture. One can learn if the teacher has completed the required coursework to be an ACBL accredited teacher.

Another organization that promotes bridge education is the American Bridge Teachers’ Association (ABTA), www.abtahome.org. It is composed several hundred bridge teachers and authors. It annually holds a Convention.
Many YMCAs, YMHAs, neighborhood community centers, and evening education programs offer beginner bridge classes. If you are still having trouble finding a class or teacher, use the above website of the American Contract Bridge League to locate the nearest ACBL sanctioned club, approximately 3200 exist. Don’t show up to play!!! Phone the club manager, explain your predicament, and get advice.

Be forewarned: if you tell perspective bridge teachers that you are an expert at bumblepuppy bridge, they probably will be totally baffled. They may even take a step back from you. It is probably wise to show them this book.

There have been several thousand books written on bridge. I am not recommending that you read them all. Particularly since most of the books describe extinct forms of the game. I am providing below a recommended list of books for total beginners. All, are written by well-respected authors and teachers.


Two of the most successful bridge teachers, speakers, and writers have produced interactive software enabling complete beginners to learn bridge on a computer. Both systems do a great job of illustrating the mechanics of bridge in a colorful, lively fashion.

Grant, Audrey. *Learn to Play Bridge with Audrey Grant*. Great Game Products, 2010.

Harrington, Pat. *Introduction to Bridge Lesson 1-6*. Great Game Products, 2008. (ABTA Software of the Year)

All of the above books and software are available at Baron Barclay Bridge Supplies, [www.baronbarclay.com](http://www.baronbarclay.com). The Baron Barclays catalog and website provide a fuller description of these items.

A wonderful feature of bridge is that it is a game that can be studied, and players can always increase their skill. Even in the days of the earliest form of bridge, there were plenty of books to help players master the game. In this illustration, we see some bridge players working away.
Some readers might be questioning the wisdom in advancing to contract bridge, particularly since at the beginning of this chapter I stated that you are already among the top one hundred players of bumblepuppy bridge in the world. Why not become the world champion at this

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game? After all, with 167,000 members of the ACBL, it is a much harder feat when playing contract bridge.

If, unfortunately, you only want to improve your skill at bumblepuppy bridge, you may be wondering what you can read or study on bumblepuppy bridge playing. Nothing presently exists, and I seriously doubt anything will be written. All is not lost. In any beginner bridge book, reading the chapters on the play of the hand will improve your skill at bumblepuppy bridge. Of course, it is wise to obtain a book that teaches the play of the hand before bidding. Of the six recommended books, the best in this regard is Bayone’s *A Taste of Bridge*. It has twelve chapters on the play of the hand before it covers the bidding. Actually, this new book (available in July 2017), with its approach of play before bidding, is probably your best choice even if you plan to go on to contract bridge.

REMEMBER: If you do take a bridge class, even if you excel at bumblepuppy bridge, you should take a course for total beginners. An all too common mistake is for students to register for classes that are too advanced for their level.

If you really do the conversion to contract bridge, you may eventually find yourself playing duplicate bridge (tournament bridge). In this form of contract bridge, the same deal is played by many partnerships, possibly a dozen times. A partnership’s score on a hand is determined by how well they did with their cards compared to all the other partnerships that played the identical deal. This reduces the luck factor of bridge and will enable you to exhibit your
skill and wisdom. Good luck with your conversion. If you are ever playing against me at a tournament, please introduce yourself and let me know that you are a convert.

Don’t try what these beachgoers are doing. A little breeze, and dummy’s thirteen cards will be swimming in the ocean.
APPENDICES
AND GLOSSARY
Appendix 1 Bridge Roots of Bumblepuppy Bridge

In this appendix, we will quickly look at the ancestors of contract bridge and which features were stolen from those earlier generations in order to create bumblepuppy bridge. I will only provide very short descriptions. If you are curious about these old forms and wish for a fuller description, see my book *Bumblepuppy Days: The Evolution from Whist to Bridge*. (Master Point Press, Toronto, 2014)

**WHIST**

This game was popular from 1670 to 1905. The goal of the game was to win as many tricks as possible. None of the player’s hands were exposed on the table (no dummy). Each player played his own thirteen cards. All hands were played with a trump suit, which was determined by the suit of the 52nd card dealt out. The dealer turned this last card face up. It remained exposed on the table until it was the dealer’s turn to play a card on the first trick. The exposed card was either played on this trick, or it was returned to the dealer’s hand and the dealer selected another card to play on this trick.

The main feature of bumblepuppy bridge stolen from whist is its scoring method. When playing whist, whatever suit was trump, one point was awarded for each trick won above the sixth trick.

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**BRIDGE WHIST (also called simply BRIDGE)**

This game was popular from 1897 to 1910. One major change from whist was the presence of a dummy. The second major change was that either the dealer or dealer’s partner would declare what the trump suit (or notrump) would be for the deal. The non-dealing side could only double; they had no choice of what the trump suit would be. The dealer would always be declarer, and the partner of the dealer would always be dummy. The scoring was much more complicated than that of whist; each suit had a different value for a trick. It ranged from spades with a value of only 2 up to notrump with a value of 12. This would complicate not only the scoring process but, more importantly, the process of deciding which suit is best to make trump. A device (c. 1905) that displays the scoring system appears on the front cover of this book.

The main feature of bumblepuppy bridge stolen from bridge whist is its method for choosing what is trump for a hand. That is, either the dealer or dealer’s partner always makes the choice. The other partnership has no power on a hand to choose what would be trump. But on the next deal, the choice is totally in their hands (literally).

**AUCTION BRIDGE**

This game was popular from 1908 to 1930. This game introduced competitive bidding where both partnerships had the potential to name the trump suit on each hand. When playing auction bridge, no one had the power to simply declare what the trump suit would be. Players had
to outbid their opponents. The declarer was the player who first bid the trump suit of the higher bidding partnership.

The main feature of bumblepuppy bridge stolen from auction bridge is its method for selecting who is declarer. Prior to auction bridge, the dealer would automatically become declarer. When playing bumblepuppy bridge, the declarer will be either the dealer or dealer’s partner, depending on which of them names the trump suit.

This 1913 illustration of four men enjoying bridge has an interesting caption which refers to the era of bridge in the past tense. At that time, the game bridge was considered passé since the card playing world had moved on to a new game that was called either auction bridge or auction.

The caption is “As it was in the days of Bridge”.

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**CONTRACT BRIDGE**

This game has been popular since 1927. As mentioned, it is usually called by the one word name bridge. Since in this book I describe alternative forms of bridge, I will stick to the cumbersome full name contract bridge. It was briefly outlined in Chapter 4. Its main difference from auction bridge is that a partnership will get an extra reward for predicting that the partnership can win a large number of tricks and then accomplishing it. For example, if the trump suit is hearts, a partnership that predicts it can win ten tricks and then accomplishes that feat is better rewarded than a partnership that predicts it can win eight tricks and then wins ten tricks. When playing auction bridge, the awards were identical whether or not a prediction of ten tricks was made. The scoring system provided no reason for making a higher prediction than necessary to become declarer.

When playing bumblepuppy bridge, the winners are proclaimed after four deals (see page 40). Contract bridges players in the 1960s began to use four deals to determine the winners. This form of play is called *Chicago*. Its great advantage over the standard form in the 1950s (called rubber bridge) was the timing element. To determine a winner at rubber bridge may require as few as two deals or possibly a dozen or more deals. This variable length could destroy dinner or theatre plans, whereas the four-deal game is guaranteed to end in 20 to 30 minutes. A new game can be started but at least the time commitment is known. This desirable innovation probably saved many marriages.
Appendix 2 Minibridge

Minibridge (often spelt MiniBridge) was created in Europe in the 1990s. It has the same goal as bumblepuppy bridge, to function as a stepping-stone to contract bridge. After the cards are dealt out, each player counts his high card points (HCP) by the method mentioned in Chapter 4 (Ace 4, King 3, Queen 2, Jack 1). Starting with the dealer and going clockwise each player announces his high card points to the other three players. Assuming no tie, the pair with the higher total will become declarer and dummy. But which player will be declarer and which dummy? Again, assuming no tie, the player with the better hand (high card points) of those two hands will become declarer. At this point, dummy will place his hand face up on the table. After declarer examines the dummy, the declarer will select which suit will be trump (or notrump) and states how many tricks he anticipates winning. The opening lead is obviously made after the dummy is revealed. The scoring method is identical to modern day contract bridge.

**Advantages of minibridge over bumblepuppy bridge:**

1) The partnership with the stronger two hands by HCP becomes declarer and dummy. I would estimate that this is the case on approximately 80% of the hands when playing contract bridge. So, in this regard, minibridge is closer to contract bridge.

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2) The scoring system is identical to contract bridge, so by learning minibridge scoring one learns contract bridge scoring.

3) It is a wonderful exercise for beginners to study the dummy before deciding what would be the best choice for trump and estimating how many tricks can be won.

**Advantages of bumblepuppy bridge over minibridge:**

1) Since players do not announce how many high card points they were dealt, the partnerships are competing at a “real card game”. Certainly, no form of bridge ever allowed such an announcement.

2) Scoring is very simple.

3) The declarer does not see the dummy before selecting trump, so in this regard it is closer to contract bridge. The opening lead is made before dummy is exposed; this feature is the same as when playing contract bridge.

Whether a feature is an advantage or not is really a matter of opinion. The three advantages listed for each game are actually paired up. For example, look at the second item about the alternative forms of scoring. Is it more desirable to be identical to contract bridge or to be a much simpler alternative? Likewise, the first item in both lists about announcing or not announcing one’s high card points can be seen as both an advantage and a disadvantage. The third item in both lists relates to when dummy appears.
As mentioned in Chapter 2, the excitement is most intense when players watch the dummy being exposed. When playing minibridge the selection of trump is only made after the dummy is revealed. The difference is sort of like receiving an unwrapped or wrapped Christmas gift. When playing bumblepuppy bridge, the dummy is an unknown gift: the declarer may be thrilled or disappointed. But when playing minibridge, the dummy is a known gift in the sense that declarer has full knowledge of dummy before selecting the trump suit or notrump. No disappointment with the trump selection is possible, but it is less exciting.

In summary, on one hand, I feel minibridge may be the better instructional tool for preparing a player for a future conversion to contract bridge. On the other hand, bumblepuppy bridge enables beginners to start playing a game very quickly. The game even provides the excitement of a real card game in the bridge family. Its simplicity may even enable the game to draw spectators. Look out Texas Hold’em, we are after your audience. There I go, dreaming again!

If after reading this Appendix with its “unbiased” comparison, you feel that you should have read a book on minibridge rather than on bumblepuppy bridge — SORRY. I hope you don’t feel you totally wasted your time. I must confess, I am a little hurt. Anyway, I would recommend Sally Brock’s 2004 book *Concise Bridge*, D & B Publishing, West Sussex, UK. The first half of her book describes minibridge.

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Appendix 3 Bumblepuppy Bridge for 1, 2, or 3 Players

The simplicity of bumblepuppy bridge makes it more adaptable than contract bridge when the desired number of players is not available. Contract bridge is rarely played without four players. After all, how can you have two partnerships with fewer than four players?

**THREE-PLAYER BUMBLEPUPPY BRIDGE**

For the last few centuries whist and bridge players have tried to modify their wonderful four person games for three players. On the surface, it would seem the experimentation with three person games was a waste of time since none of those games ever achieved much success. But surprisingly, the opposite is true since many features employed in the attempts to devise an excellent three-person game were instrumental in the evolution of the four-person game, such as, playing with a dummy, competitive bidding, and scoring for undertricks. More on this can be found in my book, *Bumblepuppy Days*.

Let us consider the role of the dealer’s partner when playing the four-player bumblepuppy bridge. If the dealer is dealt a five-card suit and names it the trump suit, dealer’s partner will play no role in the selection of trump. Likewise, dealer’s partner will become dummy and will have no role when the tricks are played. The only possible decision will occur when the other partnership chooses to

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Play Bumblepuppy Bridge
double, then the dummy can redouble. Of course, if dealer chooses to pass the selection to his partner, the partner will decide on trump and become declarer. Let’s look at a game where all of these chores disappear.

Modifications of bumblepuppy bridge for a three-player form:

1) Three deals will be played to determine the winner. Each player is dealer once. The missing (nonexistent) player is always the dealer’s partner. This requires at least one player to change his seat after each deal.

2) The dealer will always become declarer. If dealer passes the choice of trump to partner, the missing player will choose what will be trump (to be explained), but the dealer will still always become declarer and his partner, the missing player, will always become dummy.

3) But, how does a nonexistent player choose trump? After passing, dealer (but not the defenders) is allowed to examine dummy’s cards and then must follow a simple procedure for selecting trump. If dummy does not have a five-card suit, notrump must be selected. If dummy has one suit containing five or more cards, that suit must be selected as trump. With two or more five card or longer suits, the decision is based on the following tie breakers: pick the longer suit, if still tied, pick the suit with the greater number of high card points (see page 72), and if still tied, use the alphabetic order of the suits. Even though the dealer (future declarer) has seen his own hand and his partner’s hand, he must follow this procedure even if he knows that there is a

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better choice. Dealer must do it honestly since the defenders will see dummy’s hand after the opening lead is made. Since cheating is impossible, why try?

4) Doubling is allowed but redoubling is not.

Notice that these changes result in dealer’s nonexistent partner being required to do absolutely nothing. The process of trump solution is mandatory, redoubling is not an option, and the dummy never does anything during card player. Any person sitting opposite the dealer is expendable. This results in a fine three player game.

**TWO-PLAYER BUMBLEPUPPY BRIDGE**

With two bridge players, my advice is to play chess, or a card game designed for two players, or to watch a movie or any other activity appropriate for two consenting adults. It is best to avoid playing two-person bumblepuppy bridge.

Even though I am not a fan, I will describe the play of this game for the desperate. Each game involves only two deals, with each player being dealer (declarer) for one of the deals. The player who is the dealer (declarer) on each deal selects trump in the same manner as when playing the three-person game. That is, either the player selects trump based just on his own hand or passes the choice to the nonhuman partner. The dealer does not get to see the hand of his nonhuman partner until after he chooses to pass the choice to partner. At that time, the dealer gets to see his partner’s hand and follows the same compulsory trump selection method as when playing the three-player game.
During the play, both players play two hands, so four cards are played on each trick. Since none of the players’ hands are exposed on the table, a physical device called a card holder is required. It is available at www.baronbarclay.com for about $10. Actually, two card holders are required. Such devices are presently available to aid players with physical hand problems. Also, useful for a six-year old (page 50). This device is placed opposite each human player and is angled so that only that player can see his nonhuman partner’s cards. It is best to order a totally flat card holder and not a fancy schmancy curved version. Doubling and redoubling is not allowed when playing the two-person game. Notice that the two players sit on adjoining sides of the bridge table, as in the illustration.
The women’s eyes reveal that she is absorbed in the game, but the man, who is not looking at his cards seems to be anticipating an amusing time after the game ends. In 1905, at least three manufactures were selling card holder equipment where one holder could hold the cards for both nonhuman players, as seen in the illustration. This was not a brilliant idea. It was very awkward for the players to position themselves properly to play both hands. It involves sliding and continual repositioning. A friend of mine in England, Tony Hall, who is an authority on old games experimented with this device. He reported that it required “prolonged sitting on only one buttock”. It is slightly less awkward when playing with two separate holders, but still not great. Possibly the solution exists in our wonderful computer age where the two nonhuman hands can easily be made visible to only their human partners on a computer screen. Perhaps a decent two player bridge game may be available in the future, but I doubt it.

It is tempting to feel that the solution would lie in one or both nonhuman hands being exposed on the table. The problem with this is that at least one player would be able to see 39 cards (three full hands) and could therefore figure out the 13 unseen cards in the one hidden hand. When two hands are exposed to all, it is called double dummy bridge. Playing this game both players have perfect information: they know where every card is located. This game is more like chess than bridge.

When playing the two-player bumblepuppy bridge game described in this section, since no hands are exposed on the
table, there is really no dummy. In the illustration, we see that a second hand is exposed to each human partner. This is the reason the caption claims that there are actually two dummies.

In summary, before getting into the habit of playing any two-player form of bridge, I recommend that you and your playmate should try to be a little nicer and thereby make two new friends so that you can play the four-person form.

**SINGLE-PLAYER BUMBLEPUPPY BRIDGE**

A few decades ago, if you walked through a business office you could see cards displayed on the old computer monitors revealing a game of solitaire in progress. Of course, these screens were hidden from the boss. Appealing games for smartphones or airplane passenger entertainment systems are almost exclusively single-person games. One can easily envision a single-player form of bridge by just modifying bumblepuppy bridge in the following ways:

It is impossible for one person to play more than two hands, so a computer must have a program to play the defender’s cards. Many such programs exist. The nonhuman players are labeled *robots*. We will designate the single human player as the dealer, even though no physical cards are dealt. The single player (dealer) always becomes declarer even when the dummy selects the trump (as in the three-player version). If the dealer (declarer) passes the choice of trump to dummy, dummy selects trump by the same mandatory method as when playing the three-player game. That is, if dummy does not have a five-card suit, notrump

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must be selected. If dummy has one suit containing five or more cards it must be selected as trump. With two or more five card or longer suits, the decision is based on the following tie breakers: pick the longer suit, if still tied, pick the suit with the most high card points and if miraculously still tied, use the alphabetic order of the suits. This procedure is carried out by the software. This is an improvement over the three-player version where the dealer (declarer) has to examine the dummy’s cards in order to carry out the procedure.

There is no option for the computerized defenders to double. In order to offset the human player’s advantage by always being the trump selector, whenever the human player is unsuccessful in winning seven tricks, he loses 2 points for each undertrick. The human player wins the game if he has more points than the defending robots after four hands are completed. In case of a tie, a fifth hand is played.

Unfortunately, the smartphone/entertainment system version of this game does not exist. Any software developer interested? No patent or copyright exists! My permission is not needed, but I will happily assist any and all potential developers.
GLOSSARY

Most definitions are reasonably appropriate for both bumblepuppy bridge and contract bridge. A note appears if a definition only applies to one of the game. For all definitions, a relevant page number or section in the book is provided.

American Bridge Teachers’ Association (ABTA) (p. 73)

American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) (p. 73)

Auction (bidding) Steps 2 through 6 from the Summary Pages section for playing a deal. (only bumblepuppy) (p. 48) These five steps are replaced by a much more interesting and challenging alternative when playing contract bridge. (p. 69)

Auction bridge Form of bridge popular 1908-1930. (p. 81)

Book First six tricks won by each side. (only bumblepuppy) (p. 40) Similar but slightly different for contract.

Bridge whist Form of bridge popular 1897-1910. (p. 81)

Bumblepuppy Playing whist or bridge poorly. Could refer to either an individual player or the game played by four poor players. (p. 10)

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**Bumblepuppy bridge** A “new” game described in the first two chapters of this book.

**Chicago** A form of contract bridge where four deals are played. (p. 83)

**Claim** When a player exposes his last few cards and explains what will happen on the remaining tricks. (p. 57)

**Contract** Highest bid of the auction. It determines who is declarer, what is the trump suit, and whether there is any doubling. (only contract) (p. 69)

**Contract bridge (Modern bridge)** The form of bridge that has been popular since 1927. (Chapter 4 and p. 83)

**Deal** 1: The process of providing each of the four players with thirteen cards. (p. 18) 2: The complete play of the 52 cards. (p. 23)

**Dealer** The player with the chore of providing all four players with thirteen cards. (p. 18)

**Declarer** The player who chose what will be trump for the hand and then decides on every trick what card should be played from dummy as well as his own hand. (p. 33)

**Defenders** The partnership playing against declarer and dummy. (p. 37)

**Discard** When a player cannot follow suit and plays a card (other than trump) from another suit. (p. 25)
**Double** Before any card play on a hand, either defender may choose to have the score doubled. (only bumblepuppy) (p. 41) Contract bridge is similar but slightly different.

**Doubleton** Being dealt exactly two cards in a suit. (p. 28)

**Drawing trumps (Pulling trump)** Removing trump cards from the defenders in order to prevent them from ruffing declarer’s winners. (p. 56)

**Dummy** 1: The player who exposes his hand on the table. 2: The thirteen cards that are placed on the table. (p. 34)

**Duplicate bridge (Tournament bridge)** A competitive form of contract bridge where hands are played multiple times. This enables a comparison of results. (p. 77)

**Face down** The side of a playing card that does not reveal its value. (p. 22)

**Face up** Exposing the side of a playing card that reveals its value. (p. 19)

**Following suit** Playing a card from the same suit as the lead. (p. 20)

**Hand** 1: The thirteen cards that a player is dealt. (p. 18) 2: The complete play of the 52 cards. (p. 23)

**Hand evaluation** A method to determine the quality of a player’s thirteen cards, it aids decision making and communication between partners. (only contract) (p. 71)
**High card points (HCP)** The most common and easiest method of hand evaluation where ace = 4, king = 3, queen = 2, jack = 1. (only contract) (p. 72)

**Honor card** Any card that is an ace, king, queen, jack, or ten. (p. 27)

**LHO** Abbreviation for Left-Hand Opponent. (p. 42)

**Lead** The first card played on each trick. (p. 19)

**Leader** The player making the lead on a trick. (p. 23)

**Minibridge** A game with the same goal as bumblepuppy bridge: providing a stepping-stone to contract bridge. (Appendix 2)

**Misdeal** Either a player was not dealt thirteen cards, or during the dealing a card was exposed. (page 28)

**Modern bridge (Contract bridge)** The game your friends play and call bridge. (Chapter 4 and p. 83)

**Negative inference** Learning about a player’s hand from what that player has chosen not to do. (p. 33)

**Notrump** Playing a hand without any suit designated as trump. (p. 25)

**Opening lead** The first card played on the first trick. The defender to the left of declarer always makes the opening lead. (p. 36)
**Overruff** Playing a higher trump card than another player who is ruffing. (p. 26)

**Pass** This word is said by a dealer when he wants his partner to select trump or by any player when declining their option of doubling or redoubling. (only bumblepuppy) (p. 30 and 41)

**Play of the hand (card play)** Steps 7 through 10 in the language of bumblepuppy bridge. (p. 48)

**Pulling trump** See entry “Drawing trumps”.

**RHO** Abbreviation for Right-Hand Opponent. (p. 42)

**Redouble** After a defender doubles, redouble will multiply the normal score by 4. (only bumblepuppy) (p. 42) Contract bridge is similar but slightly different.

**Revoke** Not following suit when a player holds a card in the suit led. (p. 23)

**Robots** When playing bridge online or with software, this term is used for nonhuman players. (p. 92)

**Ruffing (Trumping)** Playing a trump card when a player lacks any cards in the suit of the card led. (p. 25)

**Short suit** Any suit where a player is dealt a void, singleton, or doubleton. (p. 28).

**Singleton** Being dealt exactly one card in a suit. (p. 28)

**Social bridge** Four people playing in a home. (p. 53)
**Spot card** A playing card from 2 through 10. These cards have suit spots on their faces. (p. 27) Some book definitions do not include the 10.

**Trick** The four cards played by the four players with the constraint of following suit. (p. 19)

**Trump suit** A designated suit chosen by declarer that enables winning a trick by playing a card in the suit. (p. 25)

**Trumping** see entry “ruffing”.

**Unauthorized information** Any information that is not obtained through the bids made or the cards played. For example: facial expressions, mannerisms, hesitations by partner, etc. (p. 44)

**Undertricks** When the number of tricks won is less than the number of required tricks for declarer, the difference is the number of undertricks. Playing bumblepuppy bridge, the required number of tricks is always seven. (p. 71)

**Void** Being dealt no cards in a suit. (p. 28)

**Whist** A card game that was an ancestor of the first form of bridge. (p. 80)

**Zero tolerance policy** Requirement at bridge tournaments to play like gentlewomen and gentlemen. It gives clubs and organizations strong disciplinary power. Playing at home, you are on your own. (p. 47)
Books written by Julian Laderman

**A Bridge to Simple Squeezes** (2nd edition)

2006 Book of the Year Award from the American Bridge Teachers’ Association.

**A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play**

2009 Book of the Year Award from the American Bridge Teachers’ Association.

**Still Not Finding Squeezes?**

This is a large exercise manual for *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes* and all readers should have first read that book.

**Bumblepuppy Days: The Evolution from Whist to Bridge**

2015 Special Citation Award from the American Bridge Teachers’ Association.
2016 Alan Truscott Memorial Award from the International Bridge Press Association.

The above books were published by Master Point Press. The books on playing bridge (the first three) are only appropriate for experienced players.
WHAT IS BUMBLEPUPPY BRIDGE?

Bumblepuppy Bridge is a wonderful stepping-stone to standard bridge. A total beginner can learn in an hour how to play the game — without any help from a bridge player. This novel game was created by award-winning bridge author and historian Julian Laderman, by blending simple features from several early forms of bridge. The game is appropriate for ages 6 to 106. A free video enables readers to watch the examples in the book being played.

This book is an essential gift for your non-bridge playing friends. This may be your last chance to save them from living their entire life without bridge. Haven’t they suffered long enough?

Warning: Anyone who has played more than three hands of bridge in the last decade is far too advanced for this book.

JULIAN LADERMAN, Ph.D. (New York) is a retired applied mathematics professor (Lehman College, CUNY). His first two books, A Bridge to Simple Squeezes and A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play won the American Bridge Teachers’ Association Book of the Year award in 2006 and 2009. For many years he wrote the bridge column for The Bronx Journal. His recent book on the history of bridge, Bumblepuppy Days, received the Alan Truscott Memorial Award from the International Bridge Press Association.