

The background features a blurred green landscape with a prominent geometric bridge structure made of dark blue and black beams. In the foreground, several playing cards are scattered on a green surface, including a red card with the number '5' and another with a red diamond symbol.

^aBRIDGE_{to}
inspired
declarer play

Julian Laderman *Author of A Bridge to Simple Squeezes*



a BRIDGE to
inspired
declarer play

Julian *Author of A Bridge to Simple Squeezes*
Laderman

MASTER POINT PRESS
TORONTO • CANADA

Text © 2009 Julian Laderman

All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce any portion of this material, except by special arrangement with the publisher. Reproduction of this material without authorization, by any duplication process whatsoever, is a violation of copyright.

Master Point Press

331 Douglas Ave.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

M5M 1H2 (416)781-0351

Email: info@masterpointpress.com

Websites: www.masterpointpress.com

www.masteringbridge.com

www.bridgeblogging.com

www.ebooksbridge.com

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Laderman, Julian

A bridge to inspired declarer play / written by Julian Laderman.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-1-55494-052-3

1. Contract bridge. I. Title.

GV1282.3.L25 2009

795.41'53

C2008-907543-9

Editor

Ray Lee

Copy editor/interior format

Sally Sparrow

Cover and interior design

Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13 12 11 10 09

*In memory of my parents,
Marion and Jack Laderman*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank many individuals who were helpful in creating this book.

My bridge partners Howard Marks and Ivan Petrovic were my 'two right arms' during the writing process. They suggested many important changes and ideas that improved the approach and content of *A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play*.

The following bridge partners and friends helped by either providing me with useful input on the individual problems or the final manuscript: Mohan Dutt, Dennis Kaye, Sandy Prosnitz, Art Seelenfreund, Barbara Skluth, and Stuart Weinberg. Alex Alberts did the photo.

I am extremely grateful to Amalia Ottemberg who suggested many improvements in style and phrasing that helped clarify the presentation.

I want to thank Antoinette Blum, a non-bridge player, but my partner in life for her patience and support. Since she has never played a single hand of bridge, she always feels that my hand analysis is brilliant. A wonderful system of reinforcement!

I am also grateful to Linda and Ray Lee of Master Point Press for suggesting numerous ways to improve the book and for an excellent job of editing the manuscript. I would also like to thank Sally Sparrow for her great copyediting and layout.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	9
Problems	17
Afterword	114
Sample Answers to ‘Create Alternative Deal’ Exercises	117
Appendix 1: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Probability	137
Appendix 2: Much More Than You Ever Wanted to Know About Probability	163
Further Readings on the Use of Probability in Bridge	174
Index of Types of Plays	175

INTRODUCTION

What is 'inspired' declarer play?

Readers of my column in *The Bronx Journal* have often told me that they enjoyed and understood the columns but regretted that in the heat of battle they would not be able to execute the key play. Actually they usually confess that they would not even consider the winning line. This comment certainly points to one of the greatest challenges facing bridge players. When the dummy hits the table, declarer will usually take less than a minute to make a decision on how to approach a hand: endplay, crossruff, suit establishment, etc. The title *A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play* was chosen to indicate that this book tries to attack the problem head-on. The goal is to enable declarer to identify those features of a hand which should inspire him to consider and select the correct line of play.

In a typical textbook on declarer play the reader studies examples and does exercises. Since each chapter usually covers a different type of play, the reader has a wonderful clue on how to approach any hand in the book by merely looking at the name of the chapter. A bridge book of this sort is fine for learning the technique of executing a play, but does little to train a declarer to consider that line of play at the table. Since bridge columns in newspapers or books are not categorized, these hands don't usually 'give away the ending' to the reader before he reads the column.

A few books have tried to develop a declarer's intuition on how to approach a hand. An excellent book that focuses attention on this problem is Freddie North's *Bridge Play Unraveled*.¹ The author begins with a useful 40-page glossary of techniques and then the reader is tested with 58 problems. Guy Levé's recent book *The Encyclopedia of Card Play Techniques at Bridge*² does an excellent job of classifying declarer play techniques and providing numerous examples. In my previous book, *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes*³, the first chapter is

-
1. Freddie North, *Bridge Play Unraveled. Recognition is Everything* (London: Batsford, 2003).
 2. Guy Levé, *The Encyclopedia of Card Play Techniques at Bridge* (Toronto: Master Point Press, 2007).
 3. Julian Laderman, *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Master Point Press, 2007).

entirely devoted to developing recognition of the characteristics of a hand that should inspire a declarer to look for a squeeze. Those features will not mean that a squeeze play can be executed, but will merely trigger the declarer to be on the alert and consider squeeze possibilities. A player cannot recognize the correct line of play if he does not consider that line of play.

A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play consists of 38 problems that are not organized by type of play.⁴ At the end of each problem there is a section that provides information on what features of a hand should inspire declarer to consider the correct line of play.

Correct plays that violate bridge instincts

When I created these deals my goal was to demonstrate principles that were not only useful and simple, but also easily overlooked. A play is easily overlooked if it goes against a bridge player's instinct – for example, winning a trick with a higher card than necessary. We will see deals where declarer plays an unnecessarily high card, possibly to create an entry. An analogous play is when declarer discards a winner and keeps a loser.

Losing tricks also goes against a bridge player's instinct. Since the goal is to win tricks, it is easy for declarer to overlook crucial situations where the winning line involves losing a trick or tricks. One must always remember that the real goal is to win as many of the thirteen tricks as possible. Declarers must think beyond winning the present trick. A relevant expression is 'We won the battle but lost the war'. A common theme of many of the problems in this book is that declarer has to lose a trick that could be won. A variation of this is not losing a trick on purpose, but rather not trying to win one. If your curiosity cannot be contained, go straight to Problem 1. In my usual heavy-handed style, at the end of each problem I comment on whether the correct play involved intentionally losing a trick or not trying to win a trick. While reading this book, one should be on the alert for this technique.

Another theme recurring in the problems is that declarers often concentrate too much on their own hand and not enough on dummy.

4. The deals have appeared with shorter explanations in a newspaper column in *The Bronx Journal*.

It is often easier to count losers in dummy than in declarer's hand. This is particularly true when the trump suit is longer in dummy's hand than in declarer's, such as after a transfer bid. This mistake is partially induced by declarer being focused on his own hand for several minutes prior to dummy making an appearance on the table.

The last but most important theme is that many mistakes occur on the first trick. When dummy hits the table one must plan the hand and carry out many activities: counting winners, counting losers, absorbing any bidding by the defense and digesting the opening lead. In a duplicate event, declarer must even consider alternative contracts that other pairs may be in, both playing in the same direction and in the other direction. Stage magicians know that the key to success is to divert their victim's attention. Unfortunately, so do pickpockets! Declarer, too, can easily fall victim to a diversion. When dummy appears there is so much new information for declarer to absorb, it is easy to forget the bidding or fail to draw all the possible inferences from the opening lead. Declarer should try to get into the habit of concentrating on the defenders' bids while the defense is deciding on the opening lead. Sometimes when I am declarer and dummy has a singleton in the suit of the opening lead, my partner may try to be helpful and push the singleton a few inches to indicate that it is being played. I tell my partner to return the singleton since I want to admire my full dummy. Most of the problems in this book require declarer to avoid a mistake on the first or second trick.

Virtually all books on declarer play, as well as books on common mistakes, tell readers to take their time and plan the whole hand before playing from dummy on the first trick. Beginner/intermediate players mistakenly believe, however, that if they take their time on the first trick, they are revealing that they don't know what to do. They fear that they are demonstrating their inexperience and lack of ability. Quite the opposite is true. Bridge is a challenging game. A good player will not rush and skip any of the activities mentioned in the previous paragraph. At duplicate events a bridge player often faces players with whom he is unfamiliar. It is essential for a defender to try to assess the ability of a declarer. This will enable the defender to draw inferences about declarer's ability to choose the proper line of play. For every minute I must wait as a defender on Trick 1, I assume that declarer has 2000 more masterpoints. The more I wait, the more I am impressed by declarer! Of course, after four minutes, when dummy tells declarer to call a card from dummy and declarer slaps himself on



SECTION 1 Problems

PROBLEM 1 HELP HIS MAJESTY

TO SOLUTION

Dealer: North
East-West vul.

North
 ♠ K 6 3 2
 ♥ J 10 5
 ♦ J 8 7
 ♣ K 5 3

South
 ♠ 9 5
 ♥ A K Q 9 4
 ♦ 10 4 3
 ♣ A 4 2

West	North	East	South
	pass	pass	1♥
dbl	2♥	all pass	

West leads the ♠Q. Where will your eighth trick come from?

PROBLEM 2 HOW A LOSER GOT LOST

TO SOLUTION

Dealer: West
East-West vul.

North
 ♠ Q 10 9 2
 ♥ 9 7 6
 ♦ K 5 4
 ♣ Q J 3

South
 ♠ A K J 8 7 4
 ♥ A 5 3
 ♦ A 8 2
 ♣ 5

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	pass	1♠
pass	2♠	pass	3♠
pass	4♠	all pass	

West leads the ♣A, then shifts to the ♥Q. How will you reduce four losers to three?

Index of Types of Plays

Problem

Assumption	15, 31
Avoidance play	27
Backward finesse	11
Card reading	1, 5, 8, 11, 15, 22, 31, 37
Counting of one suit	25
Counting the full hand	8
Crossruff	14, 24
Deception	36
Discards from a long suit	18
Discovery play	5, 25
Ducking	12
Dummy reversal	23
Elimination (strip)	6, 32
Endplay	6, 16, 32
Entry management	3, 4, 12, 16, 17, 35, 38
Establish a long suit	4, 13, 27
Establish a winner in dummy	1, 2
Hold-up	19
Jettison play	30
Loser-on-loser	2, 9, 27
Memory squeeze	34
Obligatory finesse	15
Ruffing air	7
Ruffing finesse	37
Rule of 11	26
Safety play	25
Sever communications	19, 29
Simple squeeze	10, 22
Strip (see elimination)	
Timing	12, 20, 33
Trump coup	28
Trump management	9, 21, 33
Unblocking	16, 30

If you enjoyed this book, be sure to pick up Julian Laderman's
2006 ABTA Book of the Year:



BUY IT NOW!

“As you may deduce from the ABTA award, the book is easy to read and easy to follow. If you have hitherto thought of squeezes as too difficult, perhaps now is the time to think again.”

Julian Pottage

“The focus is on making simple squeezes accessible, and in this the author succeeds admirably. Just follow the clear explanations and gradually more challenging presentation.”

The Bridge World

HELP what do I do now?

Every bridge player learns basic cardplay techniques – finesses, eliminations, endplays, loser-on-loser, and so forth. The trick is to know which technique to use on each particular deal. What features of a bridge hand lead an expert to select the correct line of play from all those available? The carefully chosen examples in this book will help advancing players recognize those features and take action accordingly.

Praise for Julian Laderman's first book, *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes*:

"As you may deduce from the ABTA award, the book is easy to read and easy to follow. If you have hitherto thought of squeezes as too difficult, perhaps now is the time to think again." - Julian Pottage

"(The) focus is on making simple squeezes accessible, and in this (the author) succeeds admirably. Just follow the clear explanations and gradually more-challenging presentation." - The Bridge World



DR. JULIAN LADERMAN is a New York math professor who writes a regular bridge column in *The Bronx Journal*. His first book, *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes*, was named 2006 Book of the Year by the American Bridge Teachers' Association.

