

## UDCA

I've spent considerably time the last couple of years traveling to regional and national bridge tournaments. This sounds like fun, right? Well stay tuned!

Playing lots of bridge is terrific if that is what you like to do. And I certainly do. But..... there are drawbacks. Like getting up early in the morning. Like losing. Like lots of Whoppers and Big Macs. Like exhaustion. Like little or no time for anything else including sightseeing. (I often wonder why they have bridge tournaments in such nice places when so few people avail themselves of the opportunities afforded them while there.)

But to dwell on the positive is a better idea, right?

I've had the opportunity to meet and get to know lots of really nice people some of whom just happen to be good bridge players too. And I've had the opportunity to play with and against some of the best. It's such a thrill to play well enough to hold your own against the better players. And it's even a bigger thrill to beat them!!

Another positive is just talking with others about bridge, hearing the ideas of others and sharing yours. This is an additional way to learn more about bridge. Every dedicated bridge player has his/her ideas about how to bid and how to play this game. But they also like to hear new ideas and to relate their moments of heroism or silliness. One must always be prepared to walk into a room and have someone address you with: "You hold....., and the bidding goes..... What would you do?" Best to learn how to assimilate hands quickly as they'll give them to you in order, spades, hearts, diamonds, clubs, and often very fast.

Also, the postmortems with teammates are usually enlightening too, if only to find out how come you lost!

One of the things that is becoming very common everywhere is reverse carding or UDCA (Upside Down Count and Attitude) as it is called. I suggest that if you have a regular partner and want to try something new, this should be the first thing on your agenda.

Before I explain how UDCA is different from standard carding, let's review the preference rules for signaling in general:

- a) When following to a suit led by your partner:
  - signal attitude with your first card,
  - signal suit preference with your second card.
  
- b) When following to a suit led by the declarer:
  - signal count with your first card,
  - signal suit preference with your second card.
  
- c) When discarding in a suit not led yet:
  - signal attitude with your first card,
  - signal present count\* with your second card.
  
- d) When discarding in a suit already led:
  - signal present count\*.

(\*Present count, or remainder count as some call it, is the method used to show how many cards you have left in the suit after your first card played in the suit showed attitude.)

The concept of UDCA is simple....it reverses how you show attitude and how you show count. UDCA is usually better than standard signals because it avoids wasting a high card to signal positive attitude in a suit and it reduces the possibility of false carding by declarer. It goes like this:

- (1) in attitude situations, a small card is highly encouraging; and conversely a high card is discouraging;
- (2) in count situations, echoing high-low indicates an odd number of cards in that suit; but playing low-high indicates an even number of cards in that suit.
- (3) in suit preference situations most people stick to the old fashioned method. (But I have heard that Meckstroth and Rodwell play reverse suit preference!!)
- (4) in showing present or remainder count, most people stick to the normal way rather than reversing it, but it can be done either way.

Now for a very simple example. You hold: ♠xxx ♥109x ♦AQx ♣xxx. Dummy is ♠KQ9x ♥xxx ♦Kxx ♣Axx. The contract is 4♠. Partner leads the ♥King (which in your methods asks for upside down count), you play the ♥10. Partner continues with the ♥Ace on which you play the ♥9 which is suit preference suggesting a switch to the higher ranking suit....in this case diamonds. Partner dutifully switches to a small diamond and you get to cash two diamond tricks to defeat the contract one

trick.

Hope to see you trying this at the bridge table!!!!

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