



BY KEN MONZINGO

## Partnership Harmony

1. Always raise your partner, especially with 4-card support (*a magic fit is magic*)
2. Play only conventions your partner is comfortable with - *avoid disasters*
3. Never bid the same values twice, either in your suit length or hand strength
4. If opener is the "describer" then responder is usually the captain - *trust him!*
5. Try to look at the auction through your partner's eyes - *your only friend!*

## Ken's Windows

1. Think in windows: *What kind of hand do I have? What kind does partner show?*
  - a. Is it a **Minimum**? *For the opener, 13-15, and for the responder, 6-9*
  - b. Is it **Good**? *For the opener, 16-18 and for the responder, 10-12*
  - c. Is it an **Animal** hand? *For opener, 19-21 and for responder, 13+*
  - d. Count your high cards *and* your distribution to evaluate your hand
2. Place the final contract at the appropriate level of your *combined* total points
  - a. If *your* window and *partner's* window total *less* than 26, play a part score
  - b. If *your* window and *partner's* window *might* total 26, **invite a good game**
  - c. If *your* window and *partner's* window *equals* 26, **bid the best game available**
  - d. Usually the *responder* makes this final decision, but - "*He who knows, goes!*"

### *What does that bid mean?*

- a. Ask yourself if the bid (*his or yours*) is forcing, if so bid!
- b. Ask yourself if the bid (*his or yours*) is invitational, if so, think about it
- c. Ask yourself if the bid (*his or yours*) is to play (closeout), if so, pass!
- d. Tell your story once - not twice (nor thrice!).

## Thoughts on Competing

1. Find reasons to open the bidding, not for reasons to pass
  - a. Any decent 12-point hand, especially with a 5-card major, is an opener
  - b. Stretch a little to open distributional hands, they need *immediate* attention
  - c. There is no such thing as a "bad" 13. Any 13 point hand is an opener.
  - d. If you can't *open* in a your long suit (6-7-8 cards long), try to *preempt* in it
  - e. Length is more important than strength: *open & respond in your longest suit*
2. Bridge is a *bidder's* game - be very competitive, but watch the vulnerability!
  - a. Use Overcalls, Takeout Doubles and Preempts to obstruct the opponents
  - b. There are no rules for 8-9 card suits ... If you have a *very* long suit, **bid it!**
  - c. When your partner opens 1NT, play in *your* long major suit (five or more)
  - d. When the opponents open with 1NT, try to compete with your long suit
  - e. After you've make your competitive bid, let your partner make the decision

## The Golden Rules

1. Search for the "Golden" 8-card *major suit* fit (4-4 or 5-3)
2. Bid the "Golden Game" - 4 of a major or 3NT (26 points)
3. Bidding is more fun than passing. If in doubt, bid again
4. *Trust Partner*



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## ♠ Deductions & Observations

1. Declarer has the advantage because he sees *all* his cards (his hand plus dummy)
2. Defenders, at a disadvantage, see only half of their cards and half of declarer's
3. When partner opens 1♦, he always has 4+ except with ♠xxxx ♥xxxx ♦xxx ♣xx
4. When partner opens 1♣, don't raise in clubs with less than five-card support
5. When opener jumps in *your* suit or *his* (invitational) he is usually unbalanced
6. There are only two kinds of hands:
  - balanced hands (4-4-3-2, 4-3-3-3, 5-3-3-2) (occasionally 2-2-4-5)*
  - unbalanced (5-4-3-1, 5-5-2-1, 6-4-2-1, 6-3-3-1, 6-4-3-0, 5-4-4-0, 7-3-2-1, etc)*
7. The most common hand patterns are 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2, 5-4-3-1, 4-3-3-3, & 5-4-2-2

## ♥ A Few Choice Tips

1. Bypass a 5-card minor to *respond* in a 4-card major, you may not get another chance
2. Make your competitive bids (overcalls, doubles) early, don't be a "Late Bloomer"
3. Don't double the opponents *before* raising partner (*you might get another chance*)
4. When discarding, *hold your winners* ☺ and *throw your losers* ☹
5. As declarer, do most of your thinking *before* playing the first card from dummy
6. The *overcaller* has shortness somewhere, very often a singleton or void - *use caution*
7. A defender, looking at KJxxx in the dummy, *rarely* underleads the queen, he *often* underleads the ace - but an *opening leader* rarely underleads the ace, often the queen

## ♦ Give It A Try

1. You may overcall light hands (8-10 points) *with good suits* at the 1-level
2. Overcall only *good hands with good suits* at the two or three-level
3. If the opponents preempt in front of you, bid immediately only with *very good* hands
4. When the opponents opens 1NT, don't pass automatically, try to compete
5. Have the *correct* distribution when making a takeout double, or a very BIG hand
6. If possible, don't let the opponents play low-level contracts (2♥) - learn to "balance"
7. The three key words to good bridge: 1. *Partnership* 2. *Counting* 3. *See 1 & 2*

## ♠ Post Graduation

Attend lectures, take lessons, read bridge books and your daily news bridge column, there's a wealth of knowledge there ... Whatever you do, never stop studying the game - *it gets better and better!*

*Remember Those Windows of Strength: Minimum - Maximum - Animal  
& Those Bidding Steps: Opening - Response - Description - Placement*