

Q-BIDS

Thursday, April 22, 2010

Palo Alto Lecture Series

My choice was REVERSES.

Alan Cummings assigned me the subject of “Q-bids.”

I found that the Bridge Encyclopedia lists over 50 conventional Q-bids.

That is not my intent to go over all these – I do not even know 50 different Q-bids ! So, we will not discuss conventional Q-bids like Michaels or Western, Eastern or High-Low. I intend to cover what I think you should know to improve your bridge results – Q-bids that occur frequently and, hopefully, make getting to more playable contracts with less guess work.

Once recently when I was at the table here at the club, my opponent asked me what I would have bid with her hand, I said that I might have Q-bid diamonds at my second turn. The lady replied that “we do not do Q-bids.”

I have heard that Q-bids are “too hard” or “my partner would not know what it means.” Actually I hope to convince you that Q-bids are easy to remember (because they are strange – and all strange bids are forcing !) AND they extend the LANGUAGE OF BRIDGE – a language of only 15 words.

Here is what I will talk about today:

- (1) Fit showing Q-bids – both in offense and in defense.
- (2) Q-bids when a FORCING bid is required during the auction.
- (3) Q-bidding on the way to slam.
- (4) Q-bids that sound like Q-bids but are NOT.

First Section: – Partner overcalls 1H after opponent opens the bidding with 1D.

You hold (say) QJ7, Q82, 9732, AQ4. What do you bid?

You hold a hand worth a 3 card limit raise. Do you take the low road and bid 2H and make 4; or the high road and jump to 3H and make only 2.

The answer is that you make a Q-bid – 2D which shows a hand worth a limit raise or better. Partner now can bit the limit of her hand. If the overcall was an 8-10 hcp variety, then her bid would be just 2H. With a minimum opening bid, she should jump to 3H and with a hand that can make game opposite a limit raise – she should bid 4H.

Say partner held Kxx, KJ109xx, Kx, Kx. Good enough over a Q-bid to bid game.

Another example:

You hold 109x, AQx, AQx, xxxx.

Partner overcalls opponent’s 1D with 1S.

Partner now bids 2S and you can quietly pass.

Partner holds AQJxx, 109x, xxx, K9. Are you not glad that you did not bid 3S.

Furthermore: -- Partner opens the bidding and your RHO overcalls.

Example: you hold Qxxx, KQx, A10xx, xx after a 1S bid by partner and a 2C overcall. The Q-bid of 3C describes the limit raise value this hand.

So, in summary on this section of my talk, try to support your partner's suit when possible and when you have more values than a simple raise – remember to Q-bid with LIMIT raise values or better.

Let us look at Hands 1 and 2 for illustration.

Second Section -- Q-bid when a **FORCING** bid is required during the auction.

Say LHO opens the bidding with 1D and partner makes a take-out double.

What should you do holding – AQxx, AKxx, 10xx, xx (?).

Partner has an opening bid, you have an opening bid; we need to get to game, but where ? The answer is Q-bid 2D and over partner's 2S – jump to game with 4S.

Sometimes you are lucky to be dealt this hand – AKx, Ax, AKQ10x, Jxx

RHO opens with 1H and you double.

Partner bids 1NT (!) – she has no 4 card suit except hearts.

Now what? Bid 2H to show a strong hand. Partner bids 2S.

Now I suggest you bid 2NT to invite partner to bid game with the “right 4 or 5 points.”

Third Section -- Q-bidding when trying for slam.

When a fit has been found below the game level and you are interested in going to a slam, try to use Q-bidding to show first round controls (sometimes even second round control is appropriate). Going to Blackwood immediately should be avoided if you have a worthless doubleton in an unbid suit or if you have a void.

Example – look at Hand 3. Getting to the 5-level is a disaster.

Compare the bidding with Hand 4

I am just touching the surface on Q-bidding controls (or singletons), but this gives you an idea and something to try with your favorite partner.

Fourth Section – Q-bids that sound like Q-bids but are NOT

Say the bidding has gone --- 1C – P – 1H - ?

You hold – xx, KQX, AQ, QJ109xx – bid 2C = natural.

Or, you hold – AJ, KQJ9xx, xxx, xx – bid 2H = natural.

Say the bidding has gone – 1C – P – 1S – P; 1NT - ? – you might try 2C with first hand above -- it is not a Q-bid.

Finally, one of my favorites – called “The Last Train.”

Say you hold – AKJxx, xx, xxx, xx – and the bidding goes 1C – 1S; 4D = splinter by partner. You have a very good hand and would like to suggest slam – try 4H = a last

train bid. It is not showing the ace of hearts but says that I hold a much better hand than you, my partner, expected. If she holds a hand like J10xx, AKQxx, x, AKx, then a Key Card Blackwood auction would get the partnership to slam with a combined 25 hcps.

I recently heard that this 4H bid has been called a “last train Q-bid.” If so, it is appropriate for this lecture. I have been using this method for 20+ years and have always called it “a last train bid.” It is “an alert” during the auction so that the opponents are informed as to what the bid means.

ENJOY !

North

♠ 6 5
♥ 8 4
♦ A Q J 10 8
♣ A K J 3

West(D)

♠ A K 9 8 7
♥ K J 10
♦ 9 2
♣ Q 7 5

East

♠ 4 3 2
♥ 9 6 5 3 2
♦ 7 6
♣ 10 6 4

South

♠ Q J 10
♥ A Q 7
♦ K 5 4 3
♣ 9 8 2

Hand 1 : No one is vulnerable. The bidding:

| <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | | | 1S |
| 2D | Pass | 2S(*) | Pass |
| 3C | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

Notes:

After North overcalls 2D, South Q-bids (*) to show a limit raise or better and when partner bids 3C—confirming a sound overcall – South tries game with 3NT.

North

♠ 6 5
♥ 8 4
♦ A Q J 10 8
♣ A 7 6 3

West(D)

♠ A K 9 8 7
♥ K J 10
♦ 9 2
♣ K Q J

East

♠ 4 3 2
♥ 9 6 5 3 2
♦ 7 6
♣ 10 5 4

South

♠ Q J 10
♥ A Q 7
♦ K 5 4 3
♣ 9 8 2

Hand 2: No one is vulnerable. The bidding:

| <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| 2D | Pass | 2S | 1S |
| 3D | All Pass | | Pass |

Notes:

Compare this with Hand 1. Again South Q-bids to show limit raise values or better, but when North says she has a minimum overcall by bidding 3D – then South should “let it go” and play quietly in the part score.

North(D)

♠ A J 8 2
♥ A Q J
♦ K Q J
♣ 7 5 3

West

♠ 6 4
♥ 10 9 3 2
♦ 10 9 4 2
♣ A K 2

East

♠ 10 3
♥ 8 5 4
♦ 7 6 5 3
♣ Q 10 9 8

South

♠ K Q 9 7 5
♥ K 7 6
♦ A 8
♣ J 4 2

Hand 3: Both sides are vulnerable. The bidding:

| <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1C | Pass | 1S | Pass |
| 3S | Pass | 4NT | Pass |
| 5H | Pass | (?) | |

Notes:

South has no idea what to do now ! Blackwood was not a good idea looking at three losing clubs and signing off at 5S will be a disaster. Let us look at Hand 4

North(D)

♠ A J 8 2
♥ A Q J
♦ K Q J
♣ 7 5 3

West

♠ 6 4
♥ 10 9 3 2
♦ 10 9 4 2
♣ A K 2

East

♠ 10 3
♥ 8 5 4
♦ 7 6 5 3
♣ Q 10 9 8

South

♠ K Q 9 7 5
♥ K 7 6
♦ A 8
♣ J 4 2

Hand 4: Both sides are vulnerable. The bidding:

| <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1C | Pass | 1S | Pass |
| 3S | Pass | 4D (*) | Pass |
| 4H (*) | Pass | 4S | All Pass |

Notes:

Same hand as Hand 3. Now after North jumps to 3S, South investigates for slam by Q-bidding 4D (*) – this denies a 1st round club control. North Q-bids 4H(*) and South has nothing more to say since the clubs are wide open. North should realize that without club control – no slam is possible.

North(D)

♠ J 9 7 3
♥ J 3
♦ K 7
♣ A K 9 8 5

West

♠ A 10 6 2
♥ A Q 7 4
♦ Q J 4
♣ 10 3

East

♠ K 4
♥ K 10 9 8 5 2
♦ A 10 9 8
♣ J

South

♠ Q 8 5
♥ 6
♦ 6 5 3 2
♣ Q 7 6 4 2

Hand 5: North-South is vulnerable. The bidding:

| <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1C | 1H | Pass | 2C(*) |
| Pass | 2D | Pass | 2S** |
| Pass | 3H | Pass | 4H |
| All Pass | | | |

Notes:

2C (*) = limit raise or better. I play East's 2D as a game force with diamonds.

Thus, 2S ** = a Q-bid (could be very strong in Spades). This hand depends on the diamond finesse for slam – we do not want to be bidding slam depending on a 50% chance.

North

♠ Q 7 2
♥ Q J 8 7 4
♦ 6 4 3
♣ 10 4

West

♠ J 10 9 8 6 3
♥ 6
♦ K 9 7 5
♣ 9 2

East(D)

♠ 5
♥ A K 9 5 2
♦ Q J 8
♣ J 6 5 3

South

♠ A K 4
♥ 10 3
♦ A 10 2
♣ A K Q 8 7

Hand 6: East-West is vulnerable. The bidding:

| <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | 1H | Double | Pass |
| 1NT * | Pass | 2NT ** | Pass |
| 3NT | All Pass | | |

Notes:

Hard hand – PABC on 3/24/10. North has not enough to pass 1H doubled non vul versus vul. Bids 1NT.

South has 20 hcps – a 1NT overcall would have shown 15-18 hcps. Thus, 2NT is a value bid showing more than 18 hcps (19 -21-).

A Q-bid at this point would show 21+ to 23. North hopes he has right cards and he does !

North

♠ 9 7 6 4
♥ 9 5
♦ Q J 8 6
♣ Q 5 3

West

♠ 10 8 3
♥ K 8 7 2
♦ 4 2
♣ K J 8 4

East

♠ A K Q J 5
♥ 4
♦ A K 10 9
♣ 9 7 6

South(D)

♠ 2
♥ A Q J 10 6 3
♦ 7 5 3
♣ A 10 2

Hand 7: Both sides are vulnerable. The bidding:

North

1S
Pass

East

2S *
4S

South

1H
3H
All Pass

West

Pass
3S

Notes:

2S * = spades + good hand, vulnerable.

3H is an overbid – could be doubled – but in this case pushed N/S to a making game. Be careful when you do not have the “boss” suit.”