

The Pause That Does Not Refresh

Declarer leads 4♥. The board has QT64. Partner (LHO) “**PAUSES**” - about 30 seconds (an eon in bridge). One card is pulled up. Then pushed back down. The “Oh what do I do?” look appears. Pure anguish.

You now know that:

#1 Partner doesn't have a singleton.

#2 Partner must have something above the ten.

If partner does have a singleton or if partner has the Jack and we are pausing this long, the pressure is off. We aren't going to go very far today anyway. Enjoy the day! Bid and play quickly now. No pauses from you. Ask partner about family or sports. Health discussion or aging is always popular and can take up a lot of idle time. Get partner a cup of coffee after this table is complete. Have fun!

It could be that partner is on to something. Attitude and Count - that's old school. The long pause is where you can give partner some really significant information.

Unfortunately, **Frequently takes long pauses** is not on our convention cards. Also, Declarer is probably getting more information from this pause than you are.

Directors hate dealing with these types of issues. They are no fun for anyone.

Plan ahead. You know that this lead is going to happen soon. Be ready for it.

We all take pauses. There are many places where a short pause is warranted. But try to bid and play “in rhythm”. Become aware of what your pause is showing.

Last Topic – Locating Missing Cards.

Ever noticed that some players at the club **seem to know** exactly what cards you are holding. It's very annoying. You are trying to figure out how to play the last 3 cards of a hand and they are yawning. They lean forward and move their cards onto the edge of the table to indicate that this hand is over (you just don't know it). Some stare at you while waiting. It appears likely that they are showing pity for you. Appreciate the sensitivity here (Sensitivity is in all bridge players genes).

They “**seem to know**” all your remaining cards? Huh uh - they do know.

They don't seem unusually smart outside the clubhouse. Maybe they just have better technique than we do. I think they count cards! Not sure, but I think so.

That would give them a big edge. They do other tricky things:

They keep the bidding simple and are usually in synch with their partner on their convention card. They stay focused throughout the hand and seem to be thinking all the time. Uff Da. 24 plus hands of heavyweight thinking? Count me out of that one. I think 14 hands should be enough. That's 2 hands for a dollar. Not bad.

It's going to take work to catch up to this group. Some of us don't plan to catch up. But we all like to improve our game. It's healthy to work on that.

A simple example of reasoning that helps you place the missing cards:

You make an opening lead of the deuce from ♥Q542.

- Dummy shows ♥T63 and the 3 is played.
- Partner plays the 8.
- Declarer plays the King.

After Trick #1, Place the missing cards (A,J,9, 7) ?

- **Declarer has the Ace** – Partner would have played it if he had it (3rd hand high).
- **Partner has the Jack**. If declarer had it, he would have taken the 1st trick cheaply.
- **Partner has the 9**. The 8 pushed out the King.
- **Declarer has the 7**. If partner had it, he would have played it (cheaper of equals).

This is not Rocket Science. The top players at the club are laughing at this example. This is a routine part of their play. They don't need a very long pause to locate the missing cards. If you work on this consistently, it can become routine part of your play as well. Then you will know what cards they are holding!

I borrowed this example from Marty Bergen's column in the Bridge Bulletin (June 2019 Edition, page 57). His article has other good examples on Placing Missing Cards.

Cheers!

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