



Enabling the Post-Game Postmortems

by Bob Gruber

An article titled *Duplicate Bridge is a Timed Event* covered various reasons duplicate bridge players are frequently late finishing a round/match and offered some suggestions to remedy habitual tardiness. A major reason for habitual tardiness is the postmortem conducted immediately after the hand has been played, and sometimes, even before it's finished. By deferring the postmortem until there is time for it, all players may benefit. If you're among the habitually tardy, some behavior modification may be in order and some additional writing needed—the palest ink is more enduring than the strongest memory—but there can be a significant payoff.

Often, part of the postmortem is reviewing prior results at other tables. Slow pairs know they are behind and therefore know that not only is there no time for an at-table postmortem, there isn't time for both players to extensively review the results. Only one member of the partnership should review the results. After returning the traveler (or Bridgmate) to North, that player could make a note of anything unusual on his/her private score.

The private score just mentioned is the key to the post-game postmortems. The quicker member of the pair should undertake to annotate the private score with pertinent notes. At the start of each round, this player should record the opponents' pair number and the name of at least one of the opponents. This name often later jogs the memory (in the absence of hand records) about the hands played if one of them proves to be of interest.

The designated “recorder” should be selective about additional notes. Not every hand has a significant lesson or problem in it. Only those that truly merit discussion should be noted. Furthermore, too many lessons lead to information overload and diminished learning. And, significance can't be determined until the hand is bid and played.

For a hand that is determined to be significant, future discussion will be aided by the “recorder” noting, say, “1♠ not 1♥,” the opening lead, or something about partner's hand, or something about his/her own hand, or even an opponent's hand, whatever will trigger remembering the event/action of interest. You have to learn to be brief, to abbreviate and probably to write very small. But the more you write “no fin” (for “no finesse”), “♣ hook,” or “♦ sw” (for “♦ switch”), the easier it becomes to both identify the event and then to record it for future discussion.

Having recorded the significant events during the game, when the game is over, not only can you discuss a hand in depth, you can confer with the local experts to find out their opinion. (Also, having recorded the event, it is, perhaps surprisingly, easier to put that hand out of your conscious thinking and concentrate on the next hand.) The result is a speedier game, a less hurried discussion, and outside input to enhance that discussion. Sounds like better bridge in the future and a more enjoyable game starting right now.