

## Preparing to Play With a New Partner

These thoughts pertain to preparing to play with a new partner. They also apply when going to a club without a partner, and (usually) ending up partnering with someone with whom you have little-to-no time to discuss methods...

**VERY IMPORTANT!**

Only agree to play conventions and treatments that you know well... Do not be pressured into using a tool with which you are not really comfortable.

If your partner is not as experienced as you are, play what they are comfortable with... It is better to play a simple version of the game and to play it well than to play something advanced and play it poorly.

Prepare a basic convention card in advance; it's quicker to cross things off than to fill out a card at game time, and you are less likely to overlook basic questions when pressed for time. When you discuss items with a new partner, start with Defensive Carding, Signalling, and Leads. Unless you are an overly aggressive bidder, you will end up defending about half of the hands you encounter, and you should address these topics as soon as possible. Don't waste a lot of time on issues that are unlikely to arise, especially if they involve a lot of theoretical situations... you can discuss those as time (or need) permits.

For many common situations, there are fairly "standard" treatments; unless you have discussed otherwise, assume that partner plays:

- Simple Stayman
- Jacoby Transfers
- Simple Blackwood
- Standard Carding and Leads (but verify this, if possible)

Don't spend much time on these items; there are more impactful things to address...!

**For other treatments, assume a common meaning unless you have arranged otherwise. For most, the subtle differences are unlikely to greatly affect your game...**

**But, a few bidding situations can arise where a failure to discuss beforehand can be disastrous; make sure you discuss each of these (at least briefly):**

- **Responses to a 2C Opening**
- **Competing over the opponents' notrump openings**
- **Single (and jump) raises to partner's minor suit opening**

**Unless you are convinced that your partner really knows 2-over-1, start by playing Standard American. It may be less efficient in the long run, but it will not lead you too far astray in the beginning...!**