

Bridge Player's Bible - Book Review

By Jared Johnson
ScoreCard Editor

Bridge Player's Bible by Julian Pottage (published by Barron's Educational Series of Hauppauge, N.Y.) is one of the most attractive bridge books to come along in years. It teaches you the game from the bare fundamentals on up, but you don't get the regular hand diagrams you see in most bridge books. Each separate hand or full deal is shown as a full color depiction of actual cards so you are basically looking at the same thing you see at the table.

For those of us who have been playing bridge for years, the standard hand diagrams are easy to understand. We are used to them. But for someone learning the game from scratch, this book's graphics make it much easier to visualize everything.

It's all covered from the basics of bidding to those all-important opening leads, and finally play of the hand and defense, including signaling. A tremendous amount of information is packed into the book's 256 pages, including where to look on the Internet when you are hooked on the game and seeking information on duplicate and tournament or online play, or books and magazines.

This hand from the book demonstrates the Scissors Coup (so named because it cuts communications between the opponents):

All vulnerable, *West* dealer.

	<i>North</i>	
	J	
	2	
	Q J 9 7 6	
	K Q J 9 6 3	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
K 8 6 4		10 7 5 3
K J 8 7 6		A Q 10 5
A 4 2		8
2		8 7 5 4
	<i>South</i>	
	A Q 9 2	
	9 4 3	
	K 10 5 3	
	A 10	

West opens 1 , *North* bids an unusual 2NT, showing at least five-five in the minors, *East* bids 3 , and your 5 bid ends the auction.

West leads 2, an obvious singleton. Why obvious? The author suggests that if you get a lead in an unexpected suit, especially if it is a small card and you can see most or all of the honors in the suit, it is often a singleton.

It's possible *West* doesn't want to lead a heart from an A-Q holding, but usually if both opponents bid a suit, they are leading that suit unless they are going after a ruff.

If you win the ace, and lead diamonds, *West* takes the ace (a trump control is nice when you are leading a singleton) and puts partner in with a heart for a club ruff. That makes *East* the dangerous hand. You don't want him in the lead.

What to do?

You could win the first club in dummy and lead the J , planning to finesse with the queen and then throw a heart on the ace if the king is onside, but that doesn't rate to work since *West* opened.

Instead, still win the first club in dummy and lead the jack just to see if *East* covers. When he doesn't, you rise with the ace, and play the Q , covered by the king, you pitching the singleton heart from dummy instead of ruffing.

You have now lost an "unnecessary" spade instead of a heart, but *West* can't get partner in for the ruff. You lose only a spade and a diamond.

The opponents' communications were severed.