

ABOUT SVEN'S DECISION TABLES

(for beginning and intermediate Bridge players)

This Bridge booklet is different from any other you have seen before. It describes the most commonly used bidding relationships *from the point of view of a computer programmer or a logician*. Decision tables are constructs widely used in mathematics and Boolean algebra to facilitate decision-making. Bridge bidding is not an exact science, but if the bidding is done according to the logical thread and conventions embedded in these decision tables, the communication between you and your partner will be much improved. Why is it so hard to pick the right bid? Well, here is a bit of trivia for you. There are five bids for each of the seven levels (35 genuine bids in all). If you add Double, Redouble and Pass then you get to a total of 38 different bids from which to choose. Well, I admit 38 is not a lot, but the trouble is that there are no less than 53,644,737,765,488,792,839,237,440,000 different deals you may be asked to bid. Over 53 octillions! A staggering number indeed. I found it in the Help file of "Jack", the best computer Bridge program I know (www.jackbridge.com).

Sven's Decision Tables guide your partnership all the way from the opening bid through to declaring a contract. Yes, the opposition may put some hurdles in your way, but in spite of that, my decision tables are likely to help you and your partner to think more clearly and to draw useful conclusions as the bidding progresses.

Here are the salient points about *Sven's Decision Tables*:

- Most commonly used opening bids are shown in the first decision table based on the strength and shape of your hand.
- Once you have decided that you are in a position to make an opening bid and have done so, your partner is in no doubt about what it means and, most importantly, your partner will also know which decision table to consult for a response.
- Each new decision table attempts to spell out what went before and offers a number of options for further bidding.
- The decision tables are based on a carefully selected subset of most commonly used basic 5-Card Major bidding conventions.

Throughout my 40-year career in computing I have always paid a lot of attention to detail. In *Sven's Decision Tables* I have attempted to combine my programming skills with those of a professional technical writer. This booklet will assist you in mastering 5-Card Major Bridge bidding and is likely to be useful for quite a long time.

I am indebted to my friend Robert Ankerlin who died in 2002 aged a young 61. Together with Robert I put a lot of energy into developing these tables. I hope you will enjoy using them. I am happy to receive email comments at sven@eriksen.com.au.