

# Interview with Bob Hamman

Member of USBC 2012 Winner – Team Nickell. Photo: Hamman-Lall the new partnership

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By **BBO**

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**Bob Hamman.** Photo: Peg Kaplan

[Bob Hamman](#) needs no introduction. He has been #1 in the world for such a long time that his name is synonymous with the phrase “bridge legend”. Read more about Bob’s impressive list of achievements [here](#). When Bob was included in ACBL’s Hall of Fame, the ACBL site interviewed him and published his story [here](#). Other more recent interviews can be read [here](#) and [here](#).



Today, Bob shares his thoughts about winning yet another USBC with team Nickell, about his plans for the future and about what he dreams for bridge. Bob would like to thank all BBOers for their support.

Can you walk us through your feeling right before, during, and after the finals? Was the atmosphere tense?

At this stage in my career, the order of business is to maintain concentration and be physically ready to play.

Why do you think Nickell has been, and remains so successful?

For a few years, it was because we were the best. After a while we were among the best and had the edge of intimidation and we were “battle hardened”. At this point the team is an old team but still good enough to win on occasion. The intimidation factor is seriously reduced. Even though Levin / Weinstein are significantly younger than Zia and myself, age and energy will remain a factor.

How does Nickell compare with dominant teams of past years (Blue Team, Dallas Aces)?

The state of the art continues to advance, so to compare teams from different era’s is very difficult. The Aces, relative to the competition were probably a bit better, but we were the only true professional bridge team.

Is sponsorship good for bridge?

It is a virtual necessity for the top pro's to earn a living. I still believe that a prize money individual circuit would be a better format.

How do you feel about leaving Nickell?

Life goes on, one must deal with the future and not worry about the past. I am quite happy to have the opportunity to play with my new team and Justin (Lall) has already proven to be a great partner.

Do you have a pre-game ritual, and a victory ritual?

The most important pre game ritual is to show up. Post game there is always either exhilaration and usually a bit of celebration if we have won.

Form your own all American dream team. Who will it comprise from today's players?

Since bridge is a partnership game, and a game of current form, it is impossible to predict to will play best tomorrow.

Apart from Petra (Ed. Bob's wife), who has been your favorite partner?

Bobby Wolff.

What's it like playing with your wife in high level bridge?

Petra is an excellent player who gives it her all.

**A humorous bridge story by Robert/Phillip King said you were street smart. Do you have a retort for that?**

I view it as a compliment.

What are the 3 things you wish to happen to bridge?

- 1) Prize Money Tour of individual events,
- 2) A truly legitimate timing mechanism which would force all bids and defensive plays to be made with an even tempo.
- 3) A limited number of allowable conventions including the elimination of any system or convention which requires prepared defenses.
- 4) And let the directors call the game with the complete elimination of appeals.

Was there a memorable hand in this championship that you'd like to talk about?

The most memorable hand was ♠x ♥AKQ ♦x ♣AKQ109xxx

None of the great masters were able to bid 6 clubs when partner had an Ace. In fact 5♣ with an overtrick was the best result achieved.

How about an all time memorable hand?

Probably the most memorable hands were hands where very good players who were very tired after a long tournament did something inexplicable on the next or next to last hand to hand my team a win when defeat seemed inevitable.

These include the last hand of the 1971 Vanderbilt semifinals. The 1983 and 2003 Bermuda Bowls, next to last and final hands respectively. The 2003 Vanderbilt final hand. (Ed: I think Bob meant 2000 Vandy, not 2003 Vandy).

Say something cool.

I will quote my old partner, Bobby Wolff who said, after a particularly poor performance by us, "Losing is a lot like dying, but losing is worse, because the chances are you're going to have to do it again".

Seriously, what have you been thinking of these days?

Time to get ready for the next game.