

# Helen's Tips



Helen is the ultimate club player. She is an ACBL Grand Master with 20,000 masterpoints. She won the *Ace of Clubs* award for most points won in clubs eight straight years, and shows no sign of slowing down. She is one of Rich's favorite partners and together they play a straight-forward system, with few conventions. In fact the top of their convention card describes their general approach as "Early American." Helen has graciously offered to share her down-to-earth winning bridge tips with you.

*Helen Stanbury*

**This first tip was published in the American Contract Bridge League's *The Bulletin* in April, 1990.**

- No hand makes 2NT. It either plays 1NT or 3NT.

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- **DO NOT** make a takeout double with three little or queen-third in your right-hand opponent's bid suit. A takeout double shows the other three suits.
- **DO NOT** open the bidding on a bad hand with a bad suit.
- **DO NOT** place cards in your partner's hand. They are not there.
- **DO NOT** lead the deuce from four little in a suit. Guarantee an honor when you lead a low card.
- **DO NOT** abuse or misuse systems. If you forget or do not understand a system, strike it off your card.
- **DO NOT** rescue the opponents. Why do you have to bid when you have their suit?
- **DO NOT** preempt. If you can't make it, why bid it?
- **DO NOT** make frivolous cue bids. Cue bid aces, not deuces.
- **DO NOT** claim the remainder of the tricks. Play out to the end. You cannot win by claiming. You either lose or break even.

- **DO NOT** try to copy someone's style. You can't. Play your own game and use your own good judgment.
- I bid the suits I have, not the suits I don't have.
- When I have good cards, I bid a lot, when I have bad cards I pass.
- I never take the push to three of a major. I double the opponents or I bid four of my major.
- I lead the queen from dummy. If they don't cover, they don't have it (the king).

**And here are a couple of tips from Helen which have not been published!**

- The lead of the jack from J-x is the worst lead in bridge, even in partner's bid suit. If you must lead this suit, lead the small card.
- If I want to be saved (from a doubled contract), I'll go to church!