

# gamesman bridge

Play Better with Kantar



Edwin B. Kantar &  
Jackson Stanley  
*Foreword by Jim Jacoby*

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*Play Better with Kantar*

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EDWIN B. KANTAR  
AND JACKSON STANLEY

With a foreword by JIM JACOBY



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“Eddie Kantar is the world’s best gamesman.”

—WALTER BINGHAM, *Sports Illustrated*

“Anybody who plays as erratically as Stanley should never win, but Jack often does. I guess he’s become a pretty good gamesman himself.”

—EDWIN B. KANTAR

## FOREWORD

There are two ways to do everything in this world, as anyone who has ever taken a finesse can testify—the right way and the wrong way. The same goes for teaching bridge. This highly original book shows what can happen to a bridge player who has been taught wrong. That happened to Jack Stanley, and he appealed to Eddie Kantar for help. The results of their sessions have been set down in dialogue form to provide a bridge book as entertaining as it is instructive.

Edwin B. Kantar has won two World Championships and has represented North America as both player and coach in International competition. He also holds over a dozen major National titles. He is a columnist and writer for leading bridge magazines and is recognized as one of the best and most entertaining of bridge teachers.

Jackson Stanley now deceased was a novelist and TV writer who began to play bridge the year Edwin Kantar was born. As he put it, he had been making mistakes all Mr. Kantar's life. He was taught to play by his father—an amusing tyrant at the table—and the bad habits he acquired will be instantly recognized by millions of bridge players.

The collaboration proves to be a Palooka's Odyssey, describing in detail Stanley's progress under Kantar's lash. It's a case history of a learning process, and the reader will be encouraged to see that problems which have puzzled him also puzzle others.

Kantar teaches Stanley what to lead and why and how to avoid taking unnecessary finesses. He teaches him to count, to draw inferences from his opponents bids and plays, and to improve communications with his partner.

At last Stanley makes modest progress. He learns to listen to the bidding and to count side suits as well as trumps. He brings off an end-play. On purpose. Then comes the climax. He plays with Kantar in a championship tournament and achieves the dream of every duplicate player, to sit with one of the greats for a full fifty-two boards of play! My partner, the expert!

Anyone who hasn't improved his bridge play after reading this book isn't really trying.

For my part, I was most entertained by Jack Stanley's description of the way his father taught him the game. Fortunately, my father didn't take the same approach. The difference, as Stanley graciously points out in the text, might not have been in the fathers, but in the sons. That's a nice compliment, but anyone who can't learn to play bridge from Oswald Jacoby isn't really trying.

**JIM JACOBY**

ONE

## *Philosophy of the gaffe*

STANLEY: Contract bridge was a Sunday event in my father's house for many years until World War II absorbed most of the players. We always had two tables going, sometimes three. We were young, combative, and vocal. The game itself was young, its major prophets yet to come. Ely Culbertson was the reigning guru, and his Blue Book on Bidding and Red Book on Play were testaments whose word my father never questioned.

I have no idea how many hands of bridge I've played since then, nor how many hours I've spent hashing them over, but when this hand was dealt it became etched into the minds of the survivors, and a lifetime conversation piece:

*East-West vulnerable*  
*South dealer*

	<p>MY GIRL</p> <p>♠ 8</p> <p>♥ A K Q J 10 8</p> <p>♦ 8 6</p> <p>♣ 10 6 5 4</p>										
<p>THE SALTMINE</p> <p>♠ K Q J</p> <p>♥ 7</p> <p>♦ A K Q J 5 4 2</p> <p>♣ A K</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">W</td> <td></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>MY FATHER</p> <p>♠ A 10 7 5 2</p> <p>♥ void</p> <p>♦ 10 9 7 3</p> <p>♣ Q J 9 8</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	<p>ME</p> <p>♠ 9 6 4 3</p> <p>♥ 9 6 5 4 3 2</p> <p>♦ void</p> <p>♣ 7 3 2</p>										

I held the Southern Yarborough, and Mildred, my fiancée, was my partner. Sitting West was a lean schoolmate of mine, a compulsive gambler who nowadays would be called a born loser. Robbie was cheerful and impulsive, ever confident that his fearful streak of bad luck would someday end. Recalling Dostoevski and the dreary Siberian wastes, we had dubbed him the Saltmine.

Robbie was playing with my father. It was not a salutary partnership. My father was splenetic and explosive at the bridge table. He accepted his partners as evidence of the wrath of God, like Job's boils. He was a seething volcano, as frightening before as during his eruptions.

After I passed, Robbie with his five honor tricks made the customary Culbertson forcing call of two diamonds. Mildred was a forthright young woman afraid of nothing. She bid two hearts.

## NOBODY WANTS TO LOSE AT CONTRACT BRIDGE. THIS BOOK WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO WIN.

Whether you're an advanced beginner, an intermediate or an advanced player, this valuable book can help you win more frequently and gain greater personal satisfaction from contract bridge. This is a book on the play of hands, full of wise counsel; it will entertain experts and help them teach others.

- The best way to count — side suits as well as trumps.
- How to draw inferences from your opponents' bids and plays.
- Opening leads — and traps.
- Placing the cards; playing the cards.
- The secrets of improving communication with your partner.

*Anyone who hasn't improved his bridge play after reading this book isn't really trying.* — Jim Jacoby

*A delight.* — Charles Goren

*Kantar teaches, Stanley learns, and the reader has a ball.* — Oswald Jacoby

*An amusing way to learn better card play.* — Edgar Kaplan



**EDDIE KANTAR** (Santa Monica) is one of the world's best-known and best-loved bridge writers. He is a World and National champion, and has been inducted into the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame.

