

## A NOVEL APPROACH TO TEACHING DRURY Agnes W. Lee



At the beginning of the pandemic, most people try to think of productive use of the downtime. Decluttering was at the top of my list. As I went through my accumulated piles of bridge literature, I came across a book review by Fred Gitelman on Eldad “Gino” Ginossar’s *“Power Up Your Bridge Game”* [1] book. I bought the book and Gino did not disappoint. I was fortunate enough to track down his “Zoom Bridge with Gino” online classes. He offered an Advanced class on Mondays and the Intermediate on Wednesdays [2]. The classes were often jam packed with upwards of 70 students. Each class was an hour and a half and he still left the students asking for more! Besides the lesson’s topic material, Gino would review a couple of hands that were played at the Chicago Duplicate Club that day, often related to the lesson or as a review of previous lessons. He would discuss how he and his partner bid and play. It is like getting into the head of an expert. Gino has the knack of explaining things so well to the level of his students. He became the silver lining of the pandemic for me. Seeing his dipping into online teaching also showed me the way to give it a try.

### Thinking Bridge

The cornerstone of Gino’s approach to teaching is an emphasis on thinking rather than memorization. For example, what is refreshing is Gino’s treatment of hand evaluation. He encourages the student to consider upgrading or downgrading a hand based on factors such as:

- Location of honors – concentrated better than scattered values.
- Quality of honors – aces and kings better than queens and jacks (quacks.)
- Discount unsupported honors.

He made “**Strain before Strength**” a religion. I am passing that on to my students and they loved the guidance of an organized approach.

### Drury - The Gino Way

Eldad Gino’s way of teaching Drury is to treat the artificial 2♣ as a “telling” bid. The responder has only one story to tell – “*I have a limit raise with 3 or 4 cards support for the major of a 3rd or 4th seat opener.*”

The responder relinquishes the captaincy to the opener. Looking at the Drury convention in this light, it eliminates the confusion over Drury and Reverse Drury.

At a recent teaching gig with quite a few people

whose first language was not English, they found it difficult to understand the “reverse” concept. As they explained to me, they learned bridge in their native tongue and they had to literally translate my English lesson into their own language. At the time, I just thought that something must be lost in the translation. I could have saved the day by teaching the Gino way.

### A Practical Tip

Gino pointed out that it is important to *always note the partner’s first round bid/call* and draw the right inference.

For example, a **Pass** means less than an opening hand. This tip is crucial for Drury as the most common mistake regarding Drury, a passed hand convention, is to forget the initial pass!

### Conclusion

As teachers, we owe it to our students to keep our minds open and keep learning. Doing the same old, especially when it does not work, is a disservice to the game we all love.

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

### What is Drury?

- An artificial, 2♣ conventional bid by a passed hand that shows 3-card support or more, and a limit raise (10 – 12 points) in response to partner’s opening of a major in the 3rd or 4th seat.
- It is **alertable**.

### Opener’s Rebid

The main premise is that the opener would open light in third only with a good suit. The opener has to recognize the Drury bid and realize that there is a fit.

- Sign off in 2 of a major with up to 12 points.
- Rebid 2♦ to invite with 13 – 14 points.
- Bid game with 15+ points.
- Bid slam or 4NT with 20+ points.

### Responder’s Rebids

- Pass or sign off with a minimum.
- Bid game with a maximum.

[1] Ginossar, E., Bridge Book Press. Lexington, NC, 2019.

[2] On a sabbatical, August – September, 2020.





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**Covid-19 and teaching:  
adapting and succeeding**

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