**Week 8**

Players are often asked  to name  their favourite convention and you will receive votes for Stayman ,Transfers and even Ghestem. My own favourite is the splinter bid.

What is a splinter?

Imagine pard opens the bidding with 1s and we hold

KQxx

Axxx

Kxxx

x

A bid of 4c shows a raise to game in spades with shortage in clubs either a singleton or void. The bid is so specific ( yet frequent ) that it enables opener to make a critical valuation of his hand so the CA or xxx is excellent whereas KQ are wasted cards and so the splinter bid is the key to evaluation  of well fitting slam hands.

An example from a recent duplicate. You pick up the following:

Jxx

KQxx

AQx

Jxx

You open a weak NT and partner shows spades via a transfer you dutifully bid 2s and now partner jumps to 4c.

1nt -2h -2s-4c

So what does this show and how do you like your hand? Partner has shown a hand with 6 or 7 spades and shortage in clubs. Since 3c is natural and forcing to game 4c is not needed in a natural sense so shows a singleton or void club in a hand with some slam interest. Our hand contains very little by way of slow and wasted club honours so has improved a lot ( our red honours are facing length opposite so are good cards ) so we cue bid our DA and now we our on our way to the cold 6s facing.

AKQTxx

Axx

KJx

x

If the bidding goes 1nt -3s followed by a cue bid it is less easy to reach 6s since the club shortage and good fit is the key to the hand.

**Week 7**

A declarer play problem this week.  You reach 6s with the following pair of hands

KJxx

Ax

AT9x

Kxx

AQTxxx

Kx

Qxx

Ax

The lead is the HQ and the slam is excellent and would appear to hinge on avoiding losing 2 diamond tricks but in fact the slam is absolutely lay down.

This is an example of elimination play followed by an end play .So win  draw trumps then cash your  other heart winner and then follow with two top clubs and ruff a club ( eliminating both these suits ) .We end this process in the long spade hand and now play a diamond and insert the 9 or 10 .If RHO wins the trick with the jack his next play will be either a diamond so we do not lose a second trick in the suit or we receive a ruff and discard if a heart or club is played enabling us to discard the diamond loser in hand and ruff in the dummy .

The end position is as follows:-

Kx

void

AT9x

void

AQx

void

Qxx

void

 This is the position at the point when we lead a diamond from our hand and insert the 9 or 10 from dummy.

A useful technique when you are in a trump contract effectively getting the defence to do your work for you and thereby avoiding the guess in diamonds.