

BRIDGE – INTERMEDIATE LESSONS I - 02

The “Captaincy Principle”

1. The “**Captaincy Principle**” breaks each auction into two distinct parts, the “**Descriptive Phase**” and the “**Captaincy Phase**”. This governs every auction no matter how brief or long.
2. During the “**Descriptive Phase**,” both Players are equal and have one responsibility --- to follow the bidding rules so as to describe their hands accurately to each other’s Partner. In the “**Captaincy Phase**” one Player becomes the “**Captain**” and takes charge of the auction while the other just does what he/she is told. Within each phase the assigned roles do not change and once a Captain has been determined, that Player remains the Captain until the bidding sequence has been completed.
3. During the “**Descriptive Phase**” the object of the bidding is for each of the Partners to explain the size (point count) and the shape (distribution of the cards) of his/her individual hand. During this phase of the auction, neither Player is allowed to take liberties in the bidding or to assume control of the auction as to the final contract
4. The “**Descriptive Phase**” comes to an end just as soon as one Player provides a narrow limit to his/her values, usually a 3-point range and a well-defined shape. That gives the other Player an excellent picture of the two hands together.
5. There are three ways for a Player to narrow the limits of his/her hand and thus to end the “**Descriptive Phase**” of the bidding phase of the game:
 - a) **By bidding No-Trump at any Level:**
 - b) **By Raising or re-bidding a previously-mentioned suit.**
 - c) **By opening or responding with a pre-emptive bid.**
6. As soon as the description ends, the “**Captaincy Phase**” begins. The Player with the combined knowledge of the two hands automatically becomes the “**Captain.**”
7. When it is clear what the final contract must be, the “**Captain**” bids directly to it. When the final contract is not yet clear, the “**Captain**” asks for additional information.
8. The Partner (the “**Crew**”) of the “**Captain**” simply does as he/she is told by either accepting the “**Captain**’s” choice of contracts, or answering any questions that might be asked.