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# Bridge:

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Since the Precision System was introduced three decades ago, there has not been a major effort to popularize a new system in the United States. Developments since then have been mostly small improvements in the five-card major style.

Fighting this tide is "The American Forcing Minor Bidding System" by Joe Lutz and Jerry Fink, two young experts from Cincinnati. Their book, which explains their methods, is available for \$12.95 from Baron-Barclay Bridge Supplies, (800) 274-2221.

As in Precision, Lutz and Fink use a strong one-club opening, but their responding structure is different. Their one-diamond opening is natural but practically forcing: a partner is expected to bid with no strength at all if he has four or more cards in either major suit. A major-suit opening is limited and natural, but may be based on a four-card suit, perhaps with a longer minor. One no-trump is weak, with 12-14 points.

The system gives greater definition to many hands early in the auction. It requires considerable effort, and is not intended for the average player, but it will appeal to some serious partnerships wishing to make a mark in tournament play.

Unlike other system inventors, the authors have much to offer in defensive bidding and signaling. One of their ideas they call a "parking lot" action, which gives lead-directing advice to partner in some competitive auctions. An example from a team game is shown in the diagram, with Fink in the East seat.

When his partner's weak-two bid was doubled he could have redoubled to announce a good suit he planned to bid later. His three diamonds was a parking-lot bid, setting up the winning lead against a possible four-spade contract. It can be seen that a diamond lead prepares a ruff that gives the defense four tricks.

In practice, Fink and his partner did better, for an over-cautious South did not bid four spades, but only three. West bid four hearts, since his partner had promised heart support, and North doubled this contract. It proved unbeatable thanks to the position of the club ace.

If South had bid four spades, it is far from clear that East would have been willing to defend: four spades might have been unbeatable, diamond lead or no diamond lead. In the replay, North-South were permitted to play four spades, and this succeeded because West, this time, had no reason to know that a diamond lead would be effective. So the Fink team scored a game in one room and a doubled game in the other.