The purpose of this book is to teach you how NOT to lose at Spades.

Most Spades games are won by the team that makes the fewest mistakes, and lost by the team that makes the most mistakes, it is that simple. Learning how to play mistake free (or relatively mistake free) Spades is the key to becoming successful at the game and to maximizing the amount of fun that you will enjoy from the game.

Consequently, this book focuses on identifying common mistakes made by players at all levels of the game, and describing how to avoid these pitfalls. The errors discussed relate to both strategy (concepts concerning bidding and playing that are independent of the cards that you hold in your hand) as well as execution (what cards to play in order to achieve a desired result).

A further objective of the book is to help you develop a general thought process regarding the game that is conducive to winning at Spades. In general, this mental approach to the game concerns moving your thinking outside of your playing hand and into the broader area of how best to achieve the ultimate objective of the game, namely winning... in short, how to move back from the trees in order to be able to see the forest.

Whereas there is material contained in the book that will be of value to players at all skill levels, the information presented will be more easily assimilated if one has at least limited experience in playing or even watching the game. The "something for everyone" approach used in the book is designed to help poor players become better players, average players become good players, good players become excellent players, and, hopefully, to help some players become great players.

An understanding of the underlying principle behind the material presented is essential in order to gain the most benefit from the book. Specifically, the guidelines identified in the following chapters are designed to help you *maximize* the extent to which you win Spades games that you play *over time*.

There is no question that use of some of the various approaches presented will result in you losing some games that you might otherwise have been lucky enough to win. The objective of the book is not to help you win <u>any</u> particular game that you play, but to help you win <u>many</u> non-particular games that you play. *In the long run,*

following the strategy and execution guidelines described in this book will go a long way to helping you reach your maximum potential for winning at Spades.

Although, by definition, Spades is a technically, mathematically, and statistically oriented game, the approach used in the book is non-technical in nature. Common sense and humor are frequently better teachers than calculations and statistics.

Finally, although the various chapters in the book are self-supporting and a player familiar with the game could certainly benefit by picking and choosing topics of interest, the material is designed to be read in the order presented... there is a method to the madness.

Again, the object of playing Spades is to have fun. Please don't ever take the game too seriously. If, however, you are going to frequently spend hours playing the game, the time and effort spent thinking about the ideas presented in *How NOT to Lose at Spades* will be time and effort well spent, and you just might wind up being rewarded in Spades.