

**A NEW
BRIDGE MAGAZINE**

**First Edition
January 2018**

**Make Mine a Madeira
Brother Xavier's Double
Bridge With Larry Cohen**



A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

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Under Starter's Orders

Welcome to the pages of *A New Bridge Magazine*. When *Bridge Magazine* announced a few weeks ago that it was ceasing publication Ron Tacchi and I decided that we could not allow the world's bridge playing public to be deprived of their monthly dose of bridge from some of the world's best writers.

As it appears that a subscription based magazine was no longer a suitable model we have decided that *A New Bridge Magazine* will be totally free. In the Internet age that we live in this enables us to make it available instantaneously to anyone in the world who cares to read it.

In order to meet our production costs we are relying on sponsorship, advertising revenue and donations.

Sponsorship can come in many forms – one that is proving popular is the sponsorship of a particular column – as you will see from the association of *FunBridge* with *Misplay these Hands with Me* and *Master Point Press* with *The Bidding Battle*.

We have set ourselves a target of 50,000+ readers, which should be enough to attract a significant level of advertising. As that number increases we will be able to approach more famous companies who might wish to associate themselves with the bridge playing community.

You can help us to achieve our aims in several ways.

Firstly – and by far the most important – by telling all your bridge playing friends that we exist and making sure they register at our web site, www.newbridgemag.com

Secondly by becoming a sponsor. That could

take many forms – I have already mentioned the possibility of being linked to a column within the magazine and you will see from this issue that this is already popular. There

is also the possibility of linking directly to the title.

Thirdly by becoming a Friend of the magazine. That would involve a donation. Anyone donating £500 would become a Golden Friend.

If you would like to discuss any of the above contact me at: editor@newbridgemag.com

Ask not what *A New Bridge Magazine* can do for you – ask what you can do for *A New Bridge Magazine*.



Dramatis Personae

Now let me tell you something about what you can expect to find in the magazine on a regular basis.

David Bird will write about the world famous *Monks of St. Titus* and also report on deals that have attracted his attention – *Deals That Caught My Eye*. Alan Mould will conduct *The Master Point Press Bidding Battle* in which a panel of leading experts from around the world discuss a variety of problems. This will form the basis of a competition open to everyone, with prizes donated by *Master Point Press*. Julian Pottage will test your defensive skills with *Defend With Julian Pottage*. Sally Brock will test your abilities at trick one with her *Leading Questions*. Larry Cohen will explain everything under the sun as he explores a huge range of topics

in *Bridge with Larry Cohen*. You can check declarer play with *FunBridge's Test your Technique*. In *Kit's Corner*, Kit Woolsey will discuss a deal in depth, showing how the expert thinks. Alex Adamson & Harry Smith bring you tales from Oz in their *Over the Rainbow* series. Liz McGowan is going to write about anything that takes her fancy. Samantha Punch will offer us a series of insightful interviews in *Bridge Encounters*. Ron Tacchi will send us an occasional *From Our French Correspondent*. I will report on events from home and abroad and also present *The Auction Room*, where we examine the bidding methods of leading players. We will have a *Reader's Forum* in which we will answer your letters and bridge related questions - send them to me at: forum@newbridgemag.com

Other major attractions are being planned – we will have more news next month.

Please keep in mind that we have had to prepare this issue in somewhat of a rush. There are a number of technical issues we still need to solve. You will see those unwind in the coming months.

Winter is Coming

The 2nd edition of the European Winter Games will be played in Monaco's Hotel Fairmont, from February 17 to 23, 2018.

Bridge players from all WBF zones are entitled to participate in the Championships provided they are members in good standing with a National Bridge Federation (NBO).

Late entries will be accepted if there is sufficient space at the venue.

There is a fabulous prize fund, with the winners

of the main event collecting €30,000 - the details are at: <https://tinyurl.com/ydcg3wrw>

All entries must be submitted electronically via the EBL Website (not by email): <https://tinyurl.com/yc26u3o2>

You can see who has already entered at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybcub36u>

Orlando Magic

The World Bridge Series is an incredibly exciting and challenging tournament, with many different Championships available to participants. All the events are transnational, so that players from across the world, from different National Bridge Organisations, can come together as team-mates or in partnership to compete.

The venue is the magnificent Marriott Orlando World, where the World Bridge Federation has obtained special rates for all participants.

There are several restaurants and lounges within the complex, and excellent amenities and if you are bringing the family there is even a shuttle service to Walt Disney World®! Orlando is a very well-known and popular resort, with plenty to see and do in the area. It's not all Disney – there is the Epcot Centre and Universal Studios as well as other museums and galleries.

The Opening Ceremony will be held on Friday 21st September 2018.

The first events are the Open, Women's and Senior Teams Championships: the *Rosenblum Open Teams* will start on Saturday 22nd September, the *McConnell Women's Teams* and the *Rand Senior Teams* are expected to start a day later.

The Teams Championships are followed by the Open, Women's, and Senior Pairs – the *Open Pairs* starts on Tuesday 25th September, the *Women's* and *Seniors* on Wednesday 26th September. Players eliminated from the KO stages of the Teams, up to and including the semi-finals, will be able to drop into the Pairs events, following the regulations that will be specified in the Supplemental Conditions of Contest for the Championships.

The Mixed Teams will start on Tuesday 2nd October and the Mixed Pairs on Thursday 4th October.

Junior Players will also be able to enter the Youth Triathlon event starting on Monday 1st October.

In addition there will be the Joan Gerard Cup – a pairs event – starting on Sunday 30th September, a Seniors Triathlon starting on Tuesday 2nd October, as well as a Pairs Short Track starting on Friday 5th October and an IMP Pairs starting in the afternoon of Friday 5th October.

Alongside all these tournaments there will be a number of other WBF events of one or two days (Pairs or Swiss) available for those wishing to participate in shorter tournaments.

Players in good standing with their National Bridge Organisations are eligible to compete in any of these events, providing of course they meet all the WBF Eligibility requirements (including those relating to the ages of Senior or Youth players).

Registration must be made through the WBF Website, and the pages for this will be available from April 2018.

Opportunity Knocks

We need a book reviewer. If you want to have an idea of what might be involved I am reminded that Captain Scott placed an advertisement in The Times when seeking out men for his expedition:

Men wanted: Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.

If you are interested please contact me at: editor@newbridgemag.com

In This Issue



Test Your Technique

with Christophe Grosset

see Page 41

♠ KQ754
♥ K2
♦ 65
♣ AQ65

♠ A9
♥ A
♦ AQ432
♣ J9872

West	North	East	South
–	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT*	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

West leads the two of spades. How should you play?

Make Mine a Madeira

The Editor & Ron Tacchi were in charge of the Daily Bulletins at this year's Festival in Madeira.

There is no stopping the extraordinary phenomena that is the Madeira Bridge Festival. This year it celebrated its 20th anniversary – and, to no one's surprise it produced yet another record-breaking entry. There are many reasons why this tournament is so successful; the location, the venue, the nightlife, the weather, the cuisine – they all play a part, but the people who organise and run the event also go a long way to make it special. Miguel Teixeira (and his wife Betty), Carlos Luiz, Pedro Nunes and Jose Julio are the organisers and they have put together a tremendous team, the Directors Rui Marques, Marc van Beijsterveldt, Hans van Staveren and Marieke Quant are all top class and we have been told that the Bulletin team is not too shabby either.

This year's anniversary was celebrated with an extraordinary fireworks display (I thought I was back in London on New Year's Eve) and an announcement that because of the extra level of participation the prize pool would be increased by a massive €5000!



**The playing area in the congress rooms of the
Five Star Vidamar Hotel**

Eye Catching

The great thing about a Pairs event is that you have to be razor sharp if you want to do well, taking risks that you might avoid in the more serious world of team play. Here are a few of the deals that caught my eye in Monday's warm up event.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ KQ	♠ 10985	♠ J7
♥ AQ752	♥ 109643	♥ KJ
♦ 82	♦ J1076	♦ AKQ5
♣ QJ54	♣ —	♣ AK1082
	♠ A6432	
	♥ 8	
	♦ 943	
	♣ 9763	

As you can see, E/W have an easy slam available in clubs or no-trumps. What could possibly go wrong? Well, at one table South opened 2♠ and when West bid 3♥ North raised the ante to 4♠. When East felt compelled to double N/S were sure of a good score.

Probably East has to bid 4NT over 4♠ and when partner bids 5♣ take a shot at 6♣, relying on West having a spade control of some sort.

Board 4. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ 1093	♠ K4	♠ A875
♥ KQ83	♥ AJ1054	♥ 92
♦ AJ85	♦ 1076	♦ 9432
♣ 65	♣ J87	♣ Q43
	♠ QJ62	
	♥ 76	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ AK1092	

If South opens 1NT North will transfer to hearts and then bid 3NT, a game that cannot be defeated as the cards lie. However, not everyone likes to start with 1NT on a 4-2-2-5 pattern and at one table after South preferred 1♣ and West came in with a double. North should bid 1♥ now, but his blood was up and he redoubled. When East bid 1♠ South decided this was one of the times when it was right to defend a doubled contract at the one-level.

After leading the king of clubs, the strongest defence is to switch to a spade – the defenders will be able to play three rounds of trumps and then a heart will put North in to lead a club through for an easy -800. That's not an easy play to find, but after a heart switch North can duck the king and the defenders will still collect -500. However, North took the ace of hearts and returned the jack, declarer winning with the queen and ducking a spade to South's queen (yes, North could have made life a little easier by putting up the king). Hoping North had started with the ♣Q South now tried a low club and thus allowed this 'impossible' contract to roll home.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ A	♠ J98763	♠ 102
♥ A1095	♥ 8762	♥ Q
♦ 106543	♦ J	♦ AKQ72
♣ 1075	♣ J3	♣ K9842
	♠ KQ54	
	♥ KJ43	
	♦ 98	
	♣ AQ6	

What do you think North should do when South opens 1NT? The simplest course of action is to transfer to spades, putting your faith in your long suit. There is also something to be said for jumping to 4♠, but you need strong nerves for that type of action.

One thing in its favour is that if East bids 4NT over it then North will be on lead against 5♦ and the ♣J is thank you and good night.

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ 874	♠ AQ1096	♠ 53
♥ 8	♥ 5	♥ AKQ97432
♦ AQ5	♦ J8	♦ 32
♣ AJ10832	♣ Q9765	♣ K
	♠ KJ2	
	♥ J106	
	♦ K109764	
	♣ 4	

When East opens 4♥, how many of you would be brave enough to bid 4♠ with the North hand? Of course, you would already have opened 2♠.

West doubled 4♠ and the defenders started with two rounds of hearts. Declarer ruffed and ran the eight of diamonds, West winning and making the plausible but mistaken switch to a trump. Declarer won in hand and played a second diamond, West winning and cashing the ace of clubs (a diamond is the way to collect +300). When the king fell West played the jack of clubs and East ruffed declarer's queen. Now it's simple to overruff and play winning diamonds. West can ruff at some point, but declarer overruffs, draws the outstanding trump with dummy's king and cashes the long diamonds.

♠ 874	♠ AQ1096	♠ 53
♥ 8	♥ 5	♥ AKQ97432
♦ AQ5	♦ J8	♦ 32
♣ AJ10832	♣ Q9765	♣ K
		♠ KJ2
		♥ J106
		♦ K109764
		♣ 4

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 9	♠ 9	♠ K82
♥ 86	♥ 86	♥ 952
♦ AKQ1053	♦ AKQ1053	♦ 642
♣ AJ64	♣ AJ64	♣ 9853
♠ AQ7653	♠ AQ7653	♠ K82
♥ 1043	♥ 1043	♥ 952
♦ 9	♦ 9	♦ 642
♣ Q107	♣ Q107	♣ 9853
		♠ J104
		♥ AKQJ7
		♦ J87
		♣ K2

This is all about reaching 6♦ or 6♥.

At one table South opened 1NT and West came in with 2♦, promising one major. North doubled and when East and South passed West bid 2♠. North bid 3♠ and South went 4♥. This was great news, as if South had nothing wasted in spades then N/S were in effect playing with a 30 point pack and it was easy to jump to 6♦.

Plagiarism

To plagiarise a well-known contributor to *Bridge Magazine* here are some deals that caught my eye. I was conveniently ensconced between North and East on table E2. North was Inocencio Arajo – President of the Portuguese Bridge Federation – who was being partnered by his wife Manuela. I shall start my disquisition with Board 6 when the English pairing of David Kendrick and David Cole were at the table.

The three previous deals had North playing in Four Hearts and failing in every case. Then these cards appeared:

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ AK8	♠ AK8	♠ 76
♥ AK9763	♥ AK9763	♥ J4
♦ A43	♦ A43	♦ KJ1075
♣ 3	♣ 3	♣ AQJ5
♠ J1053	♠ J1053	♠ Q942
♥ 85	♥ 85	♥ Q102
♦ 8	♦ 8	♦ Q962
♣ K109642	♣ K109642	♣ 87

West	North	East	South
Kendrick	I. Araujo	Cole	M. Araujo
–	–	1♦	Pass
1♠	4♥	All Pass	

The defence started with the seven of spades to the ten and ace. Declarer drew trumps with the ace and queen and led a small spade from dummy, inserting the eight when West played low. Now his club loser went away on the queen of spades and with the diamond king inside twelve tricks were there for 87%.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ 106	♠ AQ2	♠ J987
♥ 1065	♥ AQ74	♥ KJ3
♦ K984	♦ QJ6	♦ 32
♣ K642	♣ A87	♣ QJ109
	♠ K543	
	♥ 982	
	♦ A1075	
	♣ 53	

West	North	East	South
Melcher	I. Araujo	Brawanski	M. Araujo
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣*
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT

All Pass

3♣ Stayman

When South converted Three Hearts to 3NT your author made a loud aside that this was not Four Hearts!!! East found the best and obvious lead of the queen of clubs, ducked twice by declarer. He then took the losing diamond finesse and West cashed her king of clubs and exited with a spade – a heart might have put declarer to the test earlier. Declarer now cashed the diamonds and East was squeezed in the majors but made life easier for declarer by discarding a spade rather than a heart – the heart discard would allow declarer the opportunity to make a mistake and also win if partner had the queen of hearts. Succeeding in the contract brought in 73% of the matchpoints.

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ 974	♠ QJ	♠ A1082
♥ 832	♥ J654	♥ Q9
♦ 832	♦ KQJ1094	♦ A76
♣ K653	♣ A	♣ Q874
	♠ K653	
	♥ AK107	
	♦ 5	
	♣ J1092	

West	North	East	South
Emanuelsson	I. Araujo	Tjärnemo	M. Araujo
–	1NT*	2♣*	Double
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

1NT 12-14

2♣ The precise meaning of the 2♣ bid was not clear from the explanation that I heard but I think it meant one major.

There are those who would say that North's choice of opening bid was off-centre. This was borne out in the play. East led the seven of clubs. Declarer, who might be described as belonging to the Andrew Robson school of declarer play rather than of Usain Bolt, pondered and played low. The spotlight turned to West who also pondered and also played low and declarer perforce won with his singleton ace. As an aside in situations like this where you want the defender to cover I play the jack at trick one without appearing to stop and think, certainly against less experienced opposition it will nearly always engender a cover. Declarer immediately set about the diamonds with East taking his ace straight away. He continued with clubs and West took his king. At this point he asked dummy what was the strength the opening 1NT and received the answer of 12-14. He then posed a further question of "balanced?" to much mirth amongst the participants and your scribe.

The defence can now cash out to hold declarer to nine tricks and an excellent score but when West continued with a diamond, it was now declarer's turn to consider his contract. If he had four heart tricks then he would make ten tricks but the majority of the field would make eleven tricks with hearts as trumps and his score would be very poor. Thus he decided to play the jack of spades from hand. Again the defence could take their tally of four tricks but East ducked the spade and when the heart queen fell doubleton declarer took the rest of the tricks and 90% of the matchpoints.

At the end of the session Manuela and Inocencio had scored 56.02% leaving them well in contention with two sessions to play.

Beware of Banana Skins

Before the discovery of its comedic potential, the banana skin was considered a real public hazard. In the mid-19th century, a man named Carl B. Frank began importing Panamanian bananas to New York City. The fruit quickly became a popular street food throughout America, but people often tossed their rubbish into the streets and rotting banana peel was a slime-covered booby trap.

According to the book *Banana: The Fate of the Fruit That Changed the World*, the banana peel epidemic in New York was solved around the turn of the century by a public agency headed by a former Civil War colonel. Col. George Waring who organised a fleet of uniformed workers, known as the "White Wings," who swept the streets in shifts and disposed of the waste in public composting facilities.

Today it's quite rare to see a discarded banana peel and since the beginning of the 20th century, slipping on a banana peel has been a fixture in physical comedy. The slipping-and-falling gag is widely accepted to have originated on the Vaudeville stage. Vaudeville comedian Cal Stewart often told many banana peel jokes as his copyrighted stage persona "Uncle Josh." A 1903 recording of the bit "Uncle Josh in a Department Store," features many references to banana peel-laden sidewalks.

The gag first appeared on the silver screen in the Harold Lloyd silent film *The Flirt*. While sitting in a restaurant, Lloyd's character diligently peels a banana then tosses the skin on the floor. A snooty waiter walks by with a full tray, slips and falls. Chaos ensues. Buster Keaton heightened the gag in his film *The High Sign* (1921). Walking down the street, Keaton encounters a banana peel on the sidewalk. He proceeds to walk over it, but contrary to the

audience expectation, he does so totally unharmed. Keaton puts his hands to his mouth and mocks the peel, only to slip on a second peel he didn't see.

Though the traditional gag became very commonplace in silent cinema, comedians continued to find ways to improve the wheel, if not reinvent it. In their 1927 picture *The Battle of the Century*, Laurel and Hardy use the banana peel trick as an impetus for a full-scale pie fight.

You can see it at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDgnqfepRfI>

The silent film era may have cemented the comedic potential of an improperly discarded banana peel, but the gag has continued to hold a place in popular culture to this day. Even Woody Allen fell victim to the slippery effects of an oversized peel in his early film *Sleeper*.

Back in 2009, Discovery Channel's Mythbusters decided to test the slipping-on-a-banana-peel theory. In their experiments, a singular banana peel did not yield any slippage. However, when they filled a concrete surface with many different banana skins, Mythbuster Adam slipped a total of 6 times in one minute while trying to traverse the peel-covered surface. While this particular experiment confirmed banana peels are indeed slippery, it did not guarantee that stepping on a banana peel would definitely lead to a fall. Thus the myth was considered disproved.

How Stuff Works proposed that friction determines the actual likelihood of one slipping on a banana. The less friction between a foot and the peel in question, the more likely one is to slip. The author points out that the soles of today's shoes are designed with risks like these in mind. So the likelihood of you actually slipping on a banana is pretty slim.

However, TV Tropes noted that in 2001 Great Britain reported over 300 banana-related mishaps – the majority due to peel-slipping. In 2011, a woman in California sued a 99 Cent Only store in which she suffered a herniated disk from allegedly slipping on a banana peel left in the middle of an aisle.

So remember, if you ever encounter a freshly shed peel in your path, it's probably harmless. Then again, if you want to avoid becoming a punch line, it's probably best to sidestep it.

The concept of slipping on a banana skin is one that bridge players are all too aware of. It is far too easy to end up looking foolish at this game as you will discover when I show some of the deals from the opening session of the Pairs Championship. Let's start with a very gentle banana:

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ AK 10	♠ Q9863	♠ 72
♥ 108	♥ 7543	♥ J
♦ K643	♦ A5	♦ QJ10872
♣ AK54	♣ 92	♣ Q763
	♠ J54	
	♥ AKQ962	
	♦ 9	
	♣ J108	

After 1♥-(Dble)-3♥* should West double again?

Not doing so and then failing to give partner a spade ruff resulted in -140 and 9.1/158.9 for N/S.

If West does double (for me it's clear to do so) what should East do? If East manages to find 5♦ the best N/S can do is save in 5♥, which gives them only 44.5/123.5.

Now for something more substantial banana-wise:

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 54	♠ AQ1072	♠ K963
♥ A872	♥ KQJ6	♥ 4
♦ Q97	♦ —	♦ A10532
♣ K876	♣ 10542	♣ J93
	♠ J8	
	♥ 10953	
	♦ KJ864	
	♣ AQ	

After 1♠-2♦-2♥-4♥ East led the nine of clubs and declarer won with dummy's ace and ran the jack of spades, East winning with the king and returning a club to West's king, the latter exiting with a spade. Declarer won, played the jack of hearts, ruffed a club and played a heart. West took the ace and thought it was a good idea to exit with a heart.

That saw declarer claim the rest for 153.8/14.2.

If West exits with a diamond declarer will be two down, only 34.4/133.6.

The 4-1 trump break is unlucky, but so is the fact that West didn't hold the ♦A, because then, after taking the ace of hearts he would have to lead it to defeat 4♥.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ AQ5	♠ 1082	♠ 943
♥ A42	♥ Q103	♥ K96
♦ 10	♦ AQ75	♦ K9643
♣ 976532	♣ KQ10	♣ AJ
	♠ KJ76	
	♥ J875	
	♦ J82	
	♣ 84	

At my table the bidding went 1♦-1♥-1NT and East led the six of hearts. West won with the ace and switched to a club for the king and ace and East returned the jack to declarer's queen. East then took declarer's queen of hearts with the king and exited with a heart. After cashing two tricks in the suit declarer played a diamond to the queen and East won with the king and finally got around to playing a spade.

In principle a player is much more likely to hold the ace than the queen in this situation, but here East's reluctance to play a spade at any previous point suggested playing low (and declarer had spotted something else too). West won with the queen and returned a club to the ten as East pitched a diamond. Declarer crossed to the jack of diamonds and West discarded a

spade.

At this point it was clear that one of two slightly odd things had happened; either West had not protected with 2♣ on her 3-3-1-6 pattern holding the ♠AQ and ♥A or East had failed to overcall 1NT with a 15 count.

In the latter case declarer can now make the contract by exiting with a spade, forcing East to lead a diamond.

Here the banana skin was disguised – declarer had forgotten that his side was vulnerable! It was clear that E/W could make 3♣ or 2NT, so simply cashing the ace of diamonds for -100 must be good.

Naturally I tried for the endplay, turning 135.6/32.4 into 40.5/127.5

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

	♠ 53	
	♥ 6	
	♦ AQ9632	
	♣ 10854	
♠ A10942	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q76
♥ J94		♥ AK32
♦ —		♦ 1087
♣ KQ762		♣ AJ3
	♠ KJ8	
	♥ Q10875	
	♦ KJ54	
	♣ 9	

Just about everyone reached 4♠ on this deal.

When North leads the six of hearts declarer wins with dummy's ace and has to decide how to tackle the spades. The odds line is to start with the ♠Q which will give you four tricks just over 71% of the time (and all five if North happens to have the singleton jack).

Luckily our declarer was not *au fait* with this particular banana – sorry combination – and he played a spade to the ace followed by a spade to the queen, turning 107.3/60.7 into 64.8/103.2.

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

	♠ 7	
	♥ J10876	
	♦ A986	
	♣ AJ9	
♠ J10984	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A532
♥ A3		♥ 52
♦ QJ72		♦ —
♣ 107		♣ KQ86543
	♠ KQ6	
	♥ KQ94	
	♦ K10543	
	♣ 2	

This was a case of the double banana.

At our table the auction went (Pass)-1♥-(3♣)-4♥-(Pass)-Pass-(5♣) which North was happy to double. That figured to be an enormous banana, but South led a disastrous king of spades, converting +800 and 164/4 into +500 and 90.1/77.9.

Bananas don't come much bigger than this one:

Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

	♠ QJ985	
	♥ A75	
	♦ Q6	
	♣ Q83	
♠ 107643	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A
♥ —		♥ J109432
♦ A10832		♦ J5
♣ 972		♣ A654
	♠ K2	
	♥ KQ86	
	♦ K974	
	♣ KJ10	

After 1♠-2♣* (game forcing)-2♠ East thought it was a good idea to come in with 3♥. That was -1100 and a rare 168/0.

Postscript

No bananas were damaged during the writing of this report, but a number of the more horrendous accidents have been omitted to avoid undue embarrassment.

Shall we tell the President

I was ensconced once again behind table E2 and as luck would have it the President of the Portuguese Bridge Federation was still sitting in the North seat as the N/S E Section was stationary.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ K975	♠ A J4	♠ Q 10632
♥ KQ973	♥ 106	♥ J
♦ 3	♦ Q42	♦ KJ109
♣ 864	♣ AQJ75	♣ 1032
	♠ 8	
	♥ A8542	
	♦ A8765	
	♣ K9	

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	1♠*	Pass	2♦*
Pass	3NT		

1♠ 0-4 spades

2♦ Could be only 3 cards, denies 4 spades

Not unnaturally East elected to lead the two of spades (3rd and 5th) to partner's king. At this point North reflected at length before playing the ace, a manoeuvre I would have thought to be almost automatic. You have eight top tricks and cannot develop another without losing the lead so ducking the spade would ensure the suit was set up. It is obviously 5-4 so a hold-up would probably achieve little.

Declarer now cashed his five club tricks, East discarding his heart and a diamond with West parting with a diamond and two hearts. He now followed up with the ace of diamonds and another towards his queen which lost to East's king, the jack was cashed along with the queen of spades but declarer now had his ninth trick with the jack and 71%.

As the cards lie the contract is unbeatable but had East elected to lead his singleton jack of hearts North must play the ace, perhaps a counter-intuitive play. Otherwise a wide-awake West could overtake and play a spade through, killing the contract.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 9863	♠ AK102	♠ Q54
♥ A432	♥ K	♥ J9875
♦ 6	♦ AK1094	♦ J82
♣ 10986	♣ QJ2	♣ 75
	♠ J7	
	♥ Q106	
	♦ Q753	
	♣ AK43	

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2NT*
Pass	4NT	All Pass	

2♣ asking

2NT Min. no 3♠, no 4♥

South obviously thought that 4NT was quantitative whilst North firmly believed he was asking for controls. Since South has already described her hand as minimum it would seem unlikely you would ask a second time about its strength. The upshot was a cold slam in no-trumps was missed, the difference being 20% rather than 80%.

Every Hand an Adventure

EHAA (Every Hand An Adventure) is a highly natural bidding system characterized by four-card majors, sound opening bids, undisciplined weak two-bids in all four suits and a mini notrump, usually of 10-12 points.

An EHAA two-bid shows 6-12 high card points, and a five-card or longer suit. There are no restrictions on suit quality (♠87654 and ♠AKQJ8765 both qualify). EHAA bidders use a “get in quick, get out quick” style, which permits interference or an opening bid in nearly every auction, protected by fairly strict requirements on further bids by the partnership. EHAA two-bids are made in all four suits; there is no forcing opening bid in the system.

As you will discover you don't have to adopt such methods for every hand to be an adventure!

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ KJ108	♠ Q76	♠ A9532
♥ A10864	♥ Q752	♥ J9
♦ AJ105	♦ 93	♦ K876
♣ —	♣ AKJ8	♣ 106
	♠ 4	
	♥ K3	
	♦ Q42	
	♣ Q975432	

After West opens the bidding 1♥ East responds 1♠. Now it must be right for West to jump to 3♠, after which the spade game is reached in comfort. Rebidding 2♠ will see partner pass, although at IMPs there would be a case for making a try thanks to the value of the fifth spade once the suit has been raised.

+200 for E/W was worth only 15.2/152.8.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 1052	♠ AKQ864	♠ J7
♥ KQ432	♥ 10	♥ 7
♦ A109	♦ K72	♦ QJ86
♣ 75	♣ AJ10	♣ Q96432
	♠ 93	
	♥ AJ9865	
	♦ 543	
	♣ K8	

You open 1♠ with the North hand and partner bids 1NT. Do you rebid 4♠ or 3NT?

Say you opt for the latter and West leads the king of hearts? At my table my partner won and returned the ♥5 which held the trick. Backing her judgement that the ♦A was onside Arianna Testa continued to play on hearts and took eleven tricks for +660 and 158.8/9.2.


Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 754	♠ AQ2	♠ KJ10863
♥ Q854	♥ K92	♥ 6
♦ J7	♦ AK2	♦ 964
♣ Q965	♣ KJ104	♣ A82
	♠ 9	
	♥ AJ1073	
	♦ Q10853	
	♣ 73	

When East opens 2♠ the practical approach for North is to bid 3NT.

At my table East led a diamond and declarer took five rounds of the suit, discarding a club and a spade. When the jack of hearts was played from dummy West was kind enough to cover so declarer won and cashed five rounds of hearts. East, down to $\spadesuit KJ$ $\clubsuit A$ was thrown in to lead into the spade tenace for 12 tricks, 139.7/28.3.

Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

	\spadesuit 10654	
	\heartsuit 106	
	\diamondsuit J42	
	\clubsuit K653	
\spadesuit A8		\spadesuit KJ932
\heartsuit J9432		\heartsuit AK
\diamondsuit Q105		\diamondsuit 73
\clubsuit 1092		\clubsuit AQ87
	\spadesuit Q7	
	\heartsuit Q875	
	\diamondsuit AK986	
	\clubsuit J4	

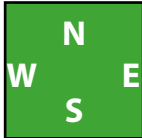
At our table the bidding followed an eventful course. East opened $1\spadesuit$ and South overcalled $2\diamondsuit$. West bid $2\heartsuit$ and East rebid $3\clubsuit$ and then went on to $4\spadesuit$ over West's $3\spadesuit$.

South cashed a top diamond, but then switched to a heart. Declarer won and played a diamond and South won and returned the jack of clubs, simplifying declarer's task.

If South cashes two diamonds and then switches to a heart declarer would have to find the following amazing line to prevail:

Take two hearts, the king of spades and the ace of clubs then play a spade to the ace, pitch a club on the queen of diamonds, ruff a heart and exit with the queen of clubs. North wins, but is endplayed. Allowing $4\spadesuit$ to make gave N/S just 2 matchpoints whereas +100 would have been worth 117.4

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

	\spadesuit AQ	
	\heartsuit J653	
	\diamondsuit 432	
	\clubsuit AQJ4	
\spadesuit K3		\spadesuit J764
\heartsuit Q8		\heartsuit K94
\diamondsuit Q876		\diamondsuit 1095
\clubsuit 108652		\clubsuit K73
	\spadesuit 109852	
	\heartsuit A1072	
	\diamondsuit AKJ	
	\clubsuit 9	

Suppose you reach $4\heartsuit$ and West leads a diamond (a good start for declarer). You play a spade to the queen and when that holds the question is how to tackle the trump suit. The odds line for one loser is to play low to the ten (cashing the ace on the next round if it loses) but the alternative of playing the jack from dummy will deliver 12 tricks as long as you duck the second round of hearts if East covers with the king. 10 tricks was worth 62.8, 11 130.5 and 12 167.0.

Pairs Session 3

With the tables being rearranged I was now watching Carlos Luiz and his partner Nuno Paz who at the start of the session were lying in 10th place. A good showing today and the odd error from those ahead could mean a podium finish.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

	♠ 9	
	♥ QJ5	
	♦ AKJ6	
	♣ AKQJ2	
♠ Q107	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 40px; height: 40px; background-color: #008000; color: white; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 5px;"> WNE </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 5px;"> S </div> </div>	♠ K43
♥ K9		♥ A762
♦ Q75432		♦ 98
♣ 107		♣ 9864
	♠ AJ8652	
	♥ 10843	
	♦ 10	
	♣ 53	

West	North	East	South
	<i>Paz</i>		<i>Luiz</i>
–	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

East led the two of hearts (fourth best) and when West took the trick and continued the suit declarer was booked for two overtricks. West had to switch to a spade at trick two to hold declarer to his contract (or possibly just one overtrick) – not too difficult a play – North's distribution is almost certainly 1345. If North has the spade king then you will not have given anything away, but if it is a small one then you should have two hearts and two spades. This was 85% on the first board.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

	♠ A1095	
	♥ J952	
	♦ 92	
	♣ 843	
♠ K84	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 40px; height: 40px; background-color: #008000; color: white; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 5px;"> WNE </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 5px;"> S </div> </div>	♠ 732
♥ A1083		♥ KQ74
♦ 43		♦ J10876
♣ AQ102		♣ 7
	♠ QJ6	
	♥ 6	
	♦ AKQ5	
	♣ KJ965	

West	North	East	South
	<i>Paz</i>		<i>Luiz</i>
–	–	–	1♣
Double	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♥	Double
Pass	2♠	3♥	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

You could offer me large sums of money but I would still not double on the West cards. And if I had, you would have to offer me an even larger sum of money to bid over the 'unexpected' response of One Diamond. East seemed to assume West's hand was stronger than a minimum and continued to the three-level whereupon North wielded the axe. The defence was excellent although perhaps declarer might have found a better line. North led a small club to the jack and queen. Declarer continued with the ace of clubs and then ruffed one in dummy. She then tried a spade towards the king which lost to the ace. North now switched to a diamond won by South who now tried a small trump and North's nine forced a high honour from dummy. The other heart honour exposed the bad break and dummy exited with a diamond to South who played another. Declarer tried a ruff but this was overruffed by North who exited with his last trump into declarer's ace who now held only losing cards in her hand and so 800 was written in the out column and a plum zero.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

	♠ KJ4	
	♥ Q102	
	♦ AKJ62	
	♣ 64	
♠ 10965		♠ A3
♥ AJ985		♥ K6
♦ 43		♦ Q1095
♣ 72		♣ A10953
	♠ Q872	
	♥ 743	
	♦ 87	
	♣ KQJ8	

West	North	East	South
	<i>Paz</i>		<i>Luiz</i>
Pass	1♦	2♣	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

Carlos and Nuno were now into the swing of doubling opponents as South converted North's takeout double into a penalty one. A diamond from South hit the green baize and was taken by the king – a trump was returned to the nine and jack. South persisted with trumps leading the king (retaining a tenace over declarer's trump holding) which declarer took with his ace. The king and ace of hearts were cashed followed by a diamond from dummy taken by North's ace. The queen of hearts was the next card, declarer electing to discard his losing spade. North exited with a spade to the ace and declarer tried to cash the queen of diamonds but South ruffed in and took his top trump before exiting with a spade allowing North to take the ten of diamonds with his jack at trick thirteen. So another 500 and only 3% away from another complete top.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

	♠ Q852	
	♥ 652	
	♦ 52	
	♣ 7652	
♠ AK96		♠ 43
♥ A1084		♥ KQJ
♦ K64		♦ AJ98
♣ Q8		♣ K943
	♠ J107	
	♥ 973	
	♦ Q1073	
	♣ AJ10	

West	North	East	South
	<i>Paz</i>		<i>Luiz</i>
–	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦*	Pass	2NT*	Pass
3NT	Pass		

The defence got off to a good start when the jack of spades appeared and declarer played sensibly and carefully to take nine tricks and 71%.

Playing South for the ace of clubs gives a very pretty ending; win the spade lead, cash the king of diamonds and play a diamond to the jack and queen. Duck the spade return and win the next spade to reach this position:

	♠ Q	
	♥ 652	
	♦ –	
	♣ 7652	
♠ 9		♠ –
♥ A1084		♥ KQJ
♦ 6		♦ A9
♣ Q8		♣ K94
	♠ –	
	♥ 973	
	♦ 107	
	♣ AJ10	

Now declarer cashes three rounds of hearts and leads a small club towards dummy. If South takes his ace he is endplayed, so he plays low and the queen of clubs wins and dummy's ace of hearts is cashed pitching a diamond causing much discomfiture to South – if he discards a diamond then both diamonds are good and if he discards a club he is thrown in with a club to lead into the diamond tenace.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

	♠ Q853		
	♥ J4		
	♦ 53		
	♣ KQ1042		
♠ 10	<div>W<div>N</div>E<div>S</div></div>	♠ J6	
♥ K865		♥ 10972	
♦ 107		♦ AKQJ842	
♣ AJ9863		♣ —	
	♠ AK9742		
	♥ AQ3		
	♦ 96		
	♣ 75		
West	North	East	South
	<i>Paz</i>		<i>Luiz</i>
—	Pass	1♦	1♠
Double	3♠	4♦	All Pass

It would look as though it was a good score for N/S when E/W played in Four Diamonds rather than the heart game – bizarrely not one pair played in Four Hearts – some played in five but mostly N/S sacrificed in spades at the five-level for scores of 300 and more. So only 16%.

4♠ should fail by three tricks, a feat accomplished by Jan van Cleeff and his partner. He led the ten of diamonds which held the trick with partner playing the deuce. Obviously a clear signal for a club. Jan showed absolute faith in partner and led the nine of clubs for partner to ruff. Notice if he had cashed the ace before giving partner a ruff the club suit will provide discards for the heart loser.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

	♠ K10874	
	♥ K8	
	♦ QJ6	
	♣ 1098	
♠ A9	<div>W<div>N</div>E<div>S</div></div>	♠ J5
♥ A5432		♥ QJ976
♦ 10983		♦ K5
♣ K5		♣ A743
	♠ Q632	
	♥ 10	
	♦ A742	
	♣ QJ62	

West	North	East	South
	<i>Paz</i>		<i>Luiz</i>
1♥	Pass	2NT*	Pass
3♣*	Pass	4♥	All Pass
3♣ minimum			

North commenced hostilities with the ten of clubs to dummy's ace. A losing heart finesse came next with North continuing with the queen of diamonds to the king and ace. South was now at the crossroads, a spade switch and the contract fails, anything else the contract makes. As we can see all four hands we can find all sorts of reasons to lead the spade and I believe it was the right thing to do, I do not see any possible downside but South continued with the queen of clubs and only 16%.

At the end of the session Carlos and Nuno had scored 55.92% – not enough to move them up the rankings. The bridge gods had not been smiling on them.

A small divertissement from Mr Burn.

Board 28. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 65	♠ KQ109742	♠ 8
♥ J94	♥ K10	♥ AQ6532
♦ J106	♦ A932	♦ K84
♣ K9874	♣ —	♣ A32
	♠ AJ3	
	♥ 87	
	♦ Q75	
	♣ QJ1065	

After a Pass from West Burn opened with One Spade, overcalled with Two Hearts. His partner now bid Three Hearts – as they were playing four-card majors this showed four-card support and an excellent hand – perhaps a mild exaggeration, but Burn looked at his four-loser hand and bid the slam in spades. The sight of dummy did not diffuse a warm glow throughout his body, however the lead of the ace of clubs did – amazingly a no-hope slam rolled home for an unsurprising top.

The Last Post

The Last Post is a short melody used in Commonwealth nations military funerals and commemoration ceremonies for those who fell in the war. “The Last Post” is also the name of a Robert Graves poem describing a soldier’s funeral during World War One. It was originally a clarion of the British Army to signal the end of the day in camps. The BBC recently used the title for a drama series set in the backdrop of the Aden Emergency and a unit of the Royal Military Police depicting the conflict and the relationships of the men and their families together and with the local population.

So, in the light of that, here is my last report on the Pairs Championship.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ K84	♠ A1095	♠ 732
♥ A1083	♥ J952	♥ KQ74
♦ 43	♦ 92	♦ J10876
♣ AQ102	♣ 843	♣ 7
	♠ QJ6	
	♥ 6	
	♦ AKQ5	
	♣ KJ965	

One table produced this lengthy auction:

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♣
Double	Pass	1♦	Pass
Pass	1♥	2♦	Double
Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

The less said about West’s initial double the better. East put his faith in his long suit, but 1♥ is a better bid. North’s 1♥ was predicated on the belief that you don’t fly across the world to defend contracts at the 1-level and South’s double was for penalties. Holding an ace, North was tempted to pass, hoping for the ‘magic 200’, but it seemed safer to bid 3♣. West though otherwise, but was quickly disabused, as 3♣ is impossible to defeat. Perhaps it was perhaps poetic justice to score only 6/162 after the initial double.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ —	♠ Q 10 6 3 2	♠ AKJ85
♥ A 10 7 3	♥ QJ	♥ K 9 8 5 4
♦ 9 6 5 4	♦ A J 7	♦ 8
♣ K 9 7 5 2	♣ J 8 6	♣ Q 3
	♠ 9 7 4	
	♥ 6 2	
	♦ K Q 10 3 2	
	♣ A 10 4	

The only question here is what should happen if the bidding goes 1♠-1NT-2♥? Put me down for a raise to 3♥, which should see East go on to game. Stopping in 2♥ and collecting eleven tricks was worth only 71/97 but achieving the game bonus resulted in 23/145.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 8 3	♠ A 7 6	♠ Q 10 9 4 2
♥ K J 10 9 7	♥ 8 5	♥ Q 6 4 2
♦ Q 4	♦ A K 8 7 5 3 2	♦ 6
♣ J 10 7 4	♣ 8	♣ A 6 2
	♠ K J 5	
	♥ A 3	
	♦ J 10 9	
	♣ K Q 9 5 3	

This deal is all about overtricks – I'll bet no-one has ever written about those before when discussing a match-pointed event.

If you are in 3NT and West leads the jack of hearts sooner or later you

are going to have to decide about the spade finesse.

10 tricks were worth 74/94.

11 tricks collected 98/70 and those lucky enough to avoid a heart lead scored 131/37 for +490. A number of pairs attempted 6♦ – the lucky ones who avoided a heart lead amassing 157/11.

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ Q 9 4 3	♠ 10 7	♠ AKJ8
♥ Q	♥ 7 5 4	♥ AKJ86
♦ A 10 8 6 5 4 2	♦ Q J 3	♦ K 7
♣ 5	♣ K J 9 8 6	♣ A 4
	♠ 6 5 2	
	♥ 10 9 3 2	
	♦ 9	
	♣ Q 10 7 3 2	

At one table North opened 3♣ and when East doubled South bid 4♣. West tried 4♦ and East bid 4♥, which ended the auction and resulted in only 22/146.

At another table it was South who started with 3♣! However it did not stop E/W bidding a slam. Reaching one of the making grand slams was 13/155 while at the other end of the scale a couple of pairs did not manage to reach game with the E/W cards.

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 1084
♥ AK72
♦ 82
♣ Q654

♠ KQ63
♥ 1063
♦ 105
♣ AK102

♠ A7
♥ Q9854
♦ 763
♣ 987

♠ J952
♥ J
♦ AKQJ94
♣ J3

W N E S

When West opened 1♦ North joined in with 1♥ and East bid 1NT. South doubled that and when East understandably did not appreciate that his best shot was to run to 2♥ the defenders cashed the first eight tricks for 160/8.

Board 26. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 3		♠ A52
♥ 862		♥ KQ74
♦ J52		♦ AK87
♣ AKQJ109		♣ 54
	<div>W N E S</div>	
		♠ K1076
		♥ J1095
		♦ 1093
		♣ 87
		♠ QJ984
		♥ A3
		♦ Q64
		♣ 632

This deal caught out several declarers. After West opens 3♣ North doubles and South ends up in 4♠.

West starts with three top clubs and the first test is to ruff with dummy's ace of spades. Then you play a spade from dummy and if you put in the

eight you will soon be able to claim. However, that risks losing to a singleton ten with West, so you should play the queen, cash the ace of hearts, cross to dummy with a heart and play a spade to the eight. You go to dummy with a diamond, cash the ♥Q pitching a diamond, ruff a heart, return to dummy with a diamond and you have executed a trump coup, which is not a bad note to end on.

For the record, 18 managed to make $4\spadesuit$ (146/22) while 42 went down (43/125).

The title went to Magnus Eidur Magnusson & Sveinn R Eiriksson, who finished a mere 0.5 matchpoints ahead of Gerbrand Hop & Mark Thiele, who were less than a top clear of Sylvia & Franz Terraneo, these three pairs finishing well clear of the pack.

You can see the detailed results at: http://www.abridgemadeira.com/ficheiros/s171109cl_3.pdf and http://www.abridgemadeira.com/ficheiros/s171109p_3.pdf



Pairs Winners Magnus Eidur Magnusson & Sveinn R. Eiriksson

It Happened one Night

It Happened One Night is a 1934 American romantic comedy film with elements of screwball comedy directed and co-produced by Frank Capra, in collaboration with Harry Cohn, in which a pampered socialite (Claudette Colbert) tries to get out from under her father's thumb and falls in love with a roguish reporter (Clark Gable).

It was the first movie to win all five major Academy Awards (Best Picture, Director, Actor, Actress, and Screenplay). In 2013, the film underwent an extensive restoration.

I doubt any of the deals I am going to report from the opening session of the Team Championship will be in line for an award, but that is hardly surprising when you try to engage your brain after 21.00 hours.

This year there were four BBO tables, allowing us to follow two matches each round.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ A9	♠ J1062
♥ AJ974	♥ 8
♦ K85	♦ QJ1042
♣ AKQ	♣ J76
♠ 7543	♠ KQ8
♥ 1065	♥ KQ32
♦ A97	♦ 63
♣ 532	♣ 10984



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Bong	Babsch	Slikker	Steiner
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣*
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT*	Pass	5♦*
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Played by North 6♥ is a decent contract as declarer has time to test the clubs which may mean that there is no need to rely on the ace of diamonds being onside.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Schreckenberger	Bartolomij	Burg	Kreuning
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4NT*	Pass	5♣*
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Well done to flatten the board.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Peter	van Prooijen	Tomsten	Verhees
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♣*	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♦*
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

- 1♣ Strong
- 2♦ Hearts
- 3♦ 3-4-2-4

It looks to me as if 4♦ was asking for help in the suit.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nab</i>	<i>Iversen</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Skaanning</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣*
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

South should try 3♠ over 3♥, suggesting something useful in the suit as in our other featured match.

Babsch beat Team Six 15-5, 13.78-6.22 VP, while Onstein edged Don Bernado 16-11, 12.05-7.95 VP.

You can replay the deals at: <https://tinyurl.com/y89udcbk>, <https://tinyurl.com/yabw7uqj>

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AKJ109	♠ 4	♠ 87652
♥ AK10	♥ 865	♥ Q2
♦ 1086	♦ AK542	♦ Q93
♣ 62	♣ A1085	♣ J94
	♠ Q3	
	♥ J9743	
	♦ J7	
	♣ KQ73	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Knud</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Camilla</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♠	Double	3♠	4♥
4♠	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

North led the ♦K and continued with the ace followed by the two, South ruffing and switching to clubs for two down, -300. That would have been okay were it not for the small detail that 4♥ was going to fail.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nab</i>	<i>Lisbeth</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Ingrid</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♥*	Pass
3♠	All Pass		

When North didn't enter the auction E/W were able to stop in 3♠. That went one down on an identical defence to that found in the other room, but it was a 6 IMP swing.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ QJ2	♠ 1097	♠ AK653
♥ 972	♥ KQ10863	♥ A
♦ J984	♦ 10	♦ KQ32
♣ Q84	♣ A109	♣ K62
	♠ 84	
	♥ J54	
	♦ A765	
	♣ J753	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Knud</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Camilla</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
Pass	2♥	Double	3♥
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

I'm not sure what to make of 3♠ – but West could be certain his partner did not hold more than one heart which increased the likelihood that there

would be five spades in the East hand. However, there was a major downside to introducing spades from the West hand as North was on lead and after a diamond to the ace and a diamond ruffed North exited with a spade and in due course the defenders collected two clubs for one down, +50.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nab</i>	<i>Lisbeth</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Ingrid</i>
Pass	2♥	Double	3♥
Pass	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

After West's normal pass spades were introduced by East and South led a heart. After winning and drawing trumps, ten tricks were easy, +420 and 10 IMPs.

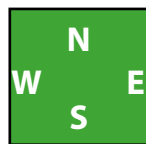
Onstein won this match against Jensen 30-0 which translated into 18.37-1.63 VP.

You can replay the deals at: <https://tinyurl.com/y93a3j4n>

The last match of the night (or to be more accurate the first match of the following day) was the one that contained all the action.

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ A87642		♠ 109
♥ J		♥ 8542
♦ K87		♦ AQJ43
♣ A103		♣ 86
♠ KQJ3		♠ 5
♥ KQ763		♥ A109
♦ 102		♦ 965
♣ 72		♣ KQJ954



Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Paulo</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Palma</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣
1♥	1♠	3♦*	Pass
3♥	Double	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♣
All Pass			
3♦	Fit jump		

West led the ten of diamonds and declarer was down in a trice, -100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Topiol</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Smit</i>	<i>Nab</i>
–	–	2♦	3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

The same lead produced the same result, no swing.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bartnes</i>	<i>Goldberg</i>	<i>Simonsen</i>	<i>Koistinen</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣
1♥	1♠	3♦	Pass
3♥	Double	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

The lead of a small heart gave declarer nine tricks immediately; had the ten of diamonds been chosen that is a fast one down and the king of hearts would have achieved the same result but at a slower pace.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hausler</i>	<i>Bogo</i>	<i>Gromoeller</i>	<i>Easting</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣
2♣*	Double	2♥	Pass
Pass	2♠	3♥	Pass
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

West's 2♣ showed the majors so North's persistence with his spades knowing West had at least four of them showed considerable bravery. The defence collected their three diamond tricks and three trump tricks to inflict a two trick defeat and 13 IMPs to Espada.

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

	♠ 8		
	♥ AQJ963		
	♦ A		
	♣ KJ1085		
♠ KJ1072	<div>W N E S</div>	♠ A5	
♥ 72		♥ K5	
♦ Q986		♦ KJ107532	
♣ A3		♣ Q2	
	♠ Q9643		
	♥ 1084		
	♦ 4		
	♣ 9764		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bartnes</i>	<i>Goldberg</i>	<i>Simonsen</i>	<i>Koistinen</i>
–	1♥	2♦	Pass
2♠	3♣	3♦	3♥
4♣	4♥	4♠	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

South led a heart and North won with the ace and returned the jack of clubs but declarer covered with the queen and now the contract was secure. A club lead would have defeated the contract out of hand.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hausler</i>	<i>Bogo</i>	<i>Gromoeller</i>	<i>Easting</i>
–	1♥	2♦	Pass
3♠	4♣	4♦	4♥
Pass	Pass	4♠	Double
Pass	Pass	5♦	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

The same contract but this time doubled. Would the defence prevail at this table? No, again a heart was led and again the contract succeeded and as a result of the double another four IMPs to Espada.

Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

	♠ 10	
	♥ QJ76542	
	♦ 103	
	♣ A54	
♠ Q976432	<div>N WSE</div>	♠ AKJ8
♥ —		♥ A3
♦ J982		♦ AK76
♣ Q3		♣ J92
	♠ 5	
	♥ K1098	
	♦ Q54	
	♣ K10876	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Paulo</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Palma</i>
–	–	–	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4♠	All Pass

4♣ PKMC

If West had been able to deliver the ♣A it appears that East would have taken a shot at 6♠.

North led the ♦10 and when South pitched a diamond on the trumps declarer took twelve tricks, +680.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Topiol</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Smit</i>	<i>Nab</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	3♥	Double	5♥
5♠	Pass	6♣	All Pass

North led the ace of clubs and continued the suit, -100 and 13 IMPs, the only swing of a well played match. 13-0 equated to 14.68-5.32

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 42	♠ AQ103	♠ 97
♥ 52	♥ QJ1063	♥ A94
♦ AJ54	♦ K982	♦ 73
♣ K8654	♣ —	♣ J109732
	♠ KJ865	
	♥ K87	
	♦ Q106	
	♣ AQ	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bartnes</i>	<i>Goldberg</i>	<i>Simonsen</i>	<i>Koistinen</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

A restrained auction kept Espada from flying too high and they made their contract with an overtrick, losing only the two aces

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hausler</i>	<i>Bogo</i>	<i>Gromoeller</i>	<i>Easting</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

With a five-loser hand North was more forward in his bidding and in response to Keycard Blackwood showed two keycards and a useful void, unfortunately for Elf Holdings it was not as useful as it might have been. On a diamond lead declarer attempted to set up the hearts immediately to provide discards for his two diamonds but East was up to the task. He took his ace and continued diamonds to his partner's ace and received a ruff to take the contract two down and win 11 IMPs.

At the end of the round Espada had won 28-6.

You can replay the deals at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybmt6lug>

On Saturday the teams have to play six matches.

This was round 4:

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ A107	♠ 643	♠ KJ95
♥ 943	♥ A105	♥ KQJ2
♦ 4	♦ AK53	♦ Q9762
♣ AKJ653	♣ 1098	♣ —
	♠ Q82	
	♥ 876	
	♦ J108	
	♣ Q742	

out of hand by two tricks. East won with his ace and returned a diamond giving declarer a chance to make his contract. He must lead a small club towards his queen – not such an unlikely manoeuvre, if clubs are 3-2 chances are excellent. Here West wins with his king and exits with a heart, to succeed take the ace and come to hand with a trump and then finesse against West's club holding and ruff out the clubs whilst still having a trump entry to dummy. My co-editor was wondering if declarer was caught nabbing.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ A2	♠ J4	♠ Q953
♥ 8432	♥ AKQ106	♥ J95
♦ Q1082	♦ K43	♦ 6
♣ Q103	♣ AK8	♣ J6542
	♠ K10876	
	♥ 7	
	♦ AJ975	
	♣ 97	



Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hausler</i>	<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Gromoeller</i>	<i>Zeeberg</i>
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

How do you go down in 3NT? We would never fail as we can see that the jack of hearts is tripleton but world champions like better odds than that so after a club lead declarer tested the diamonds and found out the bad news and then took the percentage play in hearts by finessing against the jack – East having given him a nudge by discarding a heart on the second round of diamonds. The final ignominy was a suicide squeeze on dummy when declarer cashed his hearts.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

With the adverse diamond break the contract had no hope and drifted two off.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ J9	♠ Q6	♠ A5432
♥ A5	♥ 1098432	♥ KQJ6
♦ 854	♦ J10	♦ 7
♣ K97643	♣ Q82	♣ A105
	♠ K1087	
	♥ 7	
	♦ AKQ9632	
	♣ J	



Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Louk</i>	<i>Espen</i>	<i>Ricco</i>	<i>Bodil</i>
–	–	1♠	2♦
Pass	Pass	Double	4♦
5♣	All Pass		

An excellent/brave view by West to reach an unbeatable minor-suit game. Declarer took a conservative line in the play to guarantee his contract.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Guttormse</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Chediak</i>	<i>Nab</i>
–	–	1♠	2♦
Pass	Pass	Double	3♦
All Pass			

Here West was very timid and let the opposition play in diamonds, no doubt the vulnerability was a factor but 12 IMPs were lost.

At the end of the matches To Tette had won by 24-22 against Onstein whilst Monty Zeebergs had beaten Espada 14-2.

You can replay the deals at: <https://tinyurl.com/ycltqj5n>, <https://tinyurl.com/yaqnakug>

http://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?bbo=y&linurl=http://www.bridgebase.com/tools/vugraph_linfetch.php?id=54092

The Fairly Odd Cricket Club

“An assortment of semi-geriatric gentlemen,” is how co-founder of the Netherlands-based Fellowship of Fairly Odd Places CC, Lt-col (retired) Erik Bouwmeester G.G. R.N.L.A, describes his side. Middle-aged men playing cricket together? So far, so unremarkable. But middle-aged men who play cricket against Andorra, who play cricket on a pitch that straddles two countries and who play cricket on uninhabited islands? Now, that’s fairly odd.

With the help of Major RE (res) Dr Michael Bakker, Bouwmeester re-formed the side in 2005, which originally played together as youngsters over 30 years ago. “You know how it is, boys get involved with girls, they start families and they stop playing cricket,” outlines Bouwmeester. “In 2005, I got fed up so I came up with a cunning plan: let’s start again but let’s do something out of the ordinary. Why not try to beat a national side?”

So started a mission which has seen FFOP CC play eight matches in eight unique venues across the world.

The first fixture against a national side was The Vatican. Emails were exchanged and black smoke was released before eventually the match was arranged. Bouwmeester and co were expecting a team of similarly aged priests, they were surprised to see 11 young student priests. “They were all clad in sky blue and all in their early twenties. The outcome was inevitable.

Their second international match, against Iceland at the most northerly ground in the world, was also lost.

So, two attempts at an international victory had led to two defeats – Andorra was next on the list. And this time, success. Not only was it the FFOP’s first victory, it also began a chain of events that means Andorra are still playing cricket today.

Victory over Andorra was followed by victory on the island of Madeira in 2013 in a match between the teams of Fairly Odd Places Cricket Club Madeira XI and the Duke of Clarence’s XI.

Bridge teams only have to field four players, but there can be no doubt that the Madeira Festival is now firmly established as one of the best in the world.

Round 6 of the team championship featured some challenging deals:

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.

	♠ A	
	♥ J10754	
	♦ AKJ4	
	♣ A86	
♠ K8543		♠ QJ102
♥ 963		♥ 8
♦ 652		♦ 1098
♣ J5		♣ KQ1092
	♠ 976	
	♥ AKQ2	
	♦ Q73	
	♣ 743	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Karl</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Aevarsson</i>
–	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Could N/S exploit this opportunity at the other table?

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Palsdottir</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Jorgensen</i>	<i>Nab</i>
–	1♥	Pass	2NT*
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT*
Pass	5♦*	Pass	5NT*
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

2NT Heart support

4NT RKCB

5♦ 0-3 key cards

A deserved swing to Onstein.

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ AQ10	♠ K42	♠ J65
♥ Q9842	♥ 7	♥ J10653
♦ 2	♦ Q10843	♦ AK976
♣ 10876	♣ A432	♣ —
	♠ 9873	
	♥ AK	
	♦ J5	
	♣ KQJ95	



Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Farholt</i>	<i>Simon</i>	<i>Blakset</i>	<i>Artner</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	2♠*	3♠
4♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
5♥	Double	All Pass	

North's initial response reminds me of a system that is popular in

Poland – MAFIA – which stands for 'majors always first in answering'. However, leading the two of spades against 5♥ doubled was not a triumph and when the contract in the other room was 5♣ down two it cost 10 IMPs.

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ K106	♠ AQJ4
♥ AJ84	♥ 9
♦ 1052	♦ KJ76
♣ J107	♣ A653
♠ 9853	
♥ K10752	
♦ 8	
♣ KQ2	
	♠ 72
	♥ Q63
	♦ AQ943
	♣ 984



Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Farholt</i>	<i>Simon</i>	<i>Blakset</i>	<i>Artner</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♦
Double*	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

South led the ♥3 and North won with the jack and switched to the six of spades. When the queen held declarer played a club to the king and ran the eight of diamonds. South won and played a second spade and declarer won with the jack, played the king of diamonds, ruffing when South followed with the three, played two rounds of clubs ending in hand, ruffed a diamond, ruffed a heart and claimed ten tricks, +620.

After North's spade switch there is a line for 11 tricks which involves using dummy's entries to establish the hearts, the losing diamond eventually going on the fourth round of clubs.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Terraneo</i>	<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Terraneo</i>	<i>Zeeberg</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

South led the four of clubs and declarer won with dummy's king and played a diamond for the jack and queen. Back came a heart and North won with the jack and returned a club to dummy's queen. Declarer played a third club to the ace, ruffed a diamond, ruffed a heart, ruffed a diamond and ruffed a heart. When she next ruffed a diamond North overruffed and played the ace of hearts, ensuring one down, -100 and a loss of 12 IMPs.

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ AK98654	♠ Q732	♠ J
♥ 62	♥ K54	♥ Q973
♦ K3	♦ A964	♦ 872
♣ 109	♣ Q6	♣ K5432
	♠ 10	
	♥ AJ108	
	♦ QJ105	
	♣ AJ87	



Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Farmolt</i>	<i>Simon</i>	<i>Blanset</i>	<i>Artmer</i>
1♠	Pass	1NT	Double
2♠	3♦	Pass	Pass
3♠	All Pass		

Opposite a partner who had doubled 1NT for takeout of spades North should have done something over 3♠ – put me down for a double. The contract finished three down, -150.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Terraneo</i>	<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Terraneo</i>	<i>Zeeberg</i>
4♠	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

North led the ♥4 and South won with the ace and switched to the ♦Q for the king and ace. The defenders continued with two more rounds of diamonds and declarer ruffed and played a heart, North going up with the king and switching to the queen of clubs. Declarer ducked in dummy and South won the next club and played a third round of the suit. When declarer made the mistake of ruffing with the ♠5 North could overruff and still had another spade to come for -1100.

To 'escape' for -800, declarer must ruff with the nine of spades. When North discards declarer must play a low spade towards the jack.

The upshot was that E/W lost 14 IMPs and Minty Zeebergs FC had won 31-15.

You can replay the deals at: <https://tinyurl.com/yazgp3o7>

Recorded Highlights

The by-line for Bulletin 5 was Day Night Matches. They are popular in cricket, which I featured in the introduction to the preceding report on some deals from the afternoon session.

Test Matches are generally played between the hours of 11.00 and 19.00 each day and it is not always possible to follow the play (publishers tend to get aggrieved if manuscripts are not delivered on time) but there will always be a highlights programme later in the day showing the best of the action.

So it is with bridge on BBO – you can't really follow everything at once, but you can record matches and check them later for highlights. That's how this report on Rounds 7 & 8 was compiled.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ QJ96	♠ A743	♠ 1082
♥ 9	♥ J852	♥ K10643
♦ J87632	♦ 5	♦ KQ9
♣ 64	♣ AKJ2	♣ 53
	♠ K5	
	♥ AQ7	
	♦ A104	
	♣ Q10987	



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Anne	van Prooijen	Mark	Verhees
–	2♦*	Pass	2NT*
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦*
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

2♦ 11-15, short diamonds

2NT Artificial

The information South was able to glean about North's hand was enough for the excellent slam to be reached.

East led the ♥3 which declarer elected to win with dummy's ace, +920.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Nab	Hop	Drijver	Thiele
Pass	1♣	1♥	2♥*
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Missing the slam cost 10 IMPs.

Note the position in hearts means that it would be your lucky day if you bid 7♣!

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ Q764	♠ K92	♠ 5
♥ A743	♥ –	♥ KJ9652
♦ J82	♦ AK7653	♦ Q4
♣ 96	♣ KQ32	♣ 10875
	♠ AJ1083	
	♥ Q108	
	♦ 109	
	♣ AJ4	



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Layton	Terraneo	Kreuning	Terraneo
–	–	2♦*	2♠
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

2♦ Multi

West led the ace of hearts and declarer ruffed in dummy and ran the nine of spades. When West took this trick, declarer's problems were over. The club return was taken in hand, a heart ruffed with the ♠K, hand entered with a club and trumps drawn followed by a claim, +980.

However, if West ducks the nine of spades, declarer cannot possibly come to more than 11 tricks.

The bidding and play in the other room were identical – no swing and a missed opportunity for both sides.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Anne	van Prooijen	Mark	Verhees
–	–	2♥	2♠
3♥	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

Once again West missed the chance to be a hero.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Nab	Hop	Drijver	Thiele
–	–	2♦*	2♠
3♥	5♥*	Pass	5♠
All Pass			

Stopping in 5♠ is the winning decision – in theory. In practice it cost 11 IMPs.

I wonder, did anyone find the killing defence?

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ 83	♠ AKQ65	♠ 1074
♥ KQ642	♥ J93	♥ A
♦ 4	♦ AK103	♦ Q87652
♣ AKJ65	♣ 8	♣ Q92
	♠ J92	♠ 864
	♥ 10875	♥ K10864
	♦ J9	♦ KQ86
	♣ 10743	♣ 10

♠ K92	♠ 5
♥ –	♥ KJ9652
♦ AK7653	♦ Q4
♣ KQ32	♣ 10875
♠ Q764	♠ AJ1083
♥ A743	♥ Q108
♦ J82	♦ 109
♣ 96	♣ AJ4

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hausler	Paz	Gromoeller	Luiz
–	1♠	Pass	1NT*
2♠*	Double	All Pass	

1NT Forcing

2♠ Hearts and a minor

Feel free to ask East why he did not bid 3♣ (pass or correct) or 2NT (bid your minor) or ask West why he didn't bid 3♣ or even redouble.

North started with four rounds of spades, cashed the ace of diamonds and continued with the three, -800.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Teixeira	Goldberg	Brenner	Koistinen
–	1♠	Pass	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	2♠
3♣	3♦	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

East cashed the ace of hearts and switched to a club. West won and cashed two hearts on which East discarded his remaining clubs. Now a fourth heart from West resulted in a trump promotion, -50 and 13 IMPs for Nuno Matos Team.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ K7	♠ Q932	♠ 864
♥ 73	♥ J5	♥ K10864
♦ AJ10754	♦ 9	♦ KQ86
♣ Q53	♣ AK8742	♣ 10
	♠ AJ105	♠ 864
	♥ AQ92	♥ K10864
	♦ 32	♦ KQ86
	♣ J96	♣ 10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Bertheauvan Prooijen	Skaj	Verhees	
–	–	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT*	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

2NT Asking min/max and 3/4 spades

East led the ten of clubs for the jack, three and two and declarer played dummy's ace of spades followed by the jack, West winning, cashing the ace of diamonds and continuing with the jack. Declarer ruffed, drew the outstanding trump and claimed +650.

♠ Q932			
♥ J5			
♦ 9			
♣ AK8742			
♠ K7			♠ 864
♥ 73			♥ K10864
♦ AJ10754			♦ KQ86
♣ Q53			♣ 10
♠ AJ105			
♥ AQ92			
♦ 32			
♣ J96			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Teixeira	Goldberg	Brenner	Koistinen
–	–	Pass	1♣
1♦	1♠	2♠*	Pass
3♦	4♣	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

2♠ Diamond support

5♣ will make easily if West leads a heart – declarer wins, cashes dummy's top clubs and plays a second heart, quickly disposing over dummy's diamond, but West led the ace of diamonds and continued with the seven. Declarer ruffed in dummy, cashed the ace of clubs, played a spade to the ace and advanced the nine of clubs. When West followed with the five declarer went up with the king – and down went the contract, another 12 IMPs for Team Nuno Matos.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ K9			
♥ 53			
♦ KJ532			
♣ K932			
♠ Q2			♠ A1074
♥ QJ			♥ AK642
♦ A9			♦ Q1084
♣ AQ107654			♣ –
♠ J8653			
♥ 10987			
♦ 76			
♣ J8			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hausler	Paz	Gromoeller	Luiz
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	1♦	Double*	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Nab	Wahlberg	Drijver	Carlsson
–	–	Pass	1♣
1♦	1♥*	3♥*	Pass
4♦	All Pass		

1♥ Spades

3♥ Fit jump

I'll leave you to decide where N/S went wrong.

4♦ was one down, but that was 11 IMPs for Onstein.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hausler	Paz	Gromoeller	Luiz
–	–	Pass	1♣
1♦	1♥*	Double	2♠
Pass	4♠	5♦	Double
All Pass			

1♥ Spades

We have already seen that 4♠ is likely to be made, so bidding 5♦ which costs only -500 is not at all unreasonable.

South led the seven of diamonds and North won with the king and returned the three. Declarer won perforce, unblocked the hearts, cashed the ace of clubs and played the queen of spades for the king and ace, claiming nine tricks, +400.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Teixeira</i>	<i>Goldberg</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Koistinen</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

I was watching this deal for a few seconds – enough time to type in the bidding sequence. However, I did not follow the play, as I had assumed that declarer would have little difficulty in taking at least nine tricks. However, something obviously went wrong as he finished one down, which cost 10 IMPs.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ A 10 7 6 4 2
♥ Q 8 4 2
♦ 6
♣ 8 6

♠ K Q 8
♥ A 9 5
♦ Q J 5 2
♣ A Q J

♠ 9
♥ K 6 3
♦ A K 9 8 7 3
♣ K 5 2

♠ J 5 3
♥ J 10 7
♦ 10 4
♣ 10 9 7 4 3

All four E/W pairs passed this bidding test:

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hausler</i>	<i>Paz</i>	<i>Gromoeller</i>	<i>Luiz</i>
1♦	1♠	3♠*	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4NT	Pass	6♦	All Pass

3♠ Splinter

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Teixeira</i>	<i>Goldberg</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Koistinen</i>
1♦	1♠	2♠*	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Skaj</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1♦	1♠	2♠*	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♠*	Pass
4NT*	Pass	5♥*	Pass
6♦	All Pass		
4♠ Splinter			
4NT RKCB			
5♥ 2 key cards			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nab</i>	<i>Wahlberg</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Carlsson</i>
2NT	Pass	4♠*	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♦	All Pass

Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ AK52	♠ J1096	♠ Q4
♥ 42	♥ AK5	♥ J1083
♦ 763	♦ AKQ109	♦ J542
♣ A1096	♣ 7	♣ Q53

♠ 873	♠ 873
♥ Q976	♥ Q976
♦ 8	♦ 8
♣ KJ842	♣ KJ842



East led the three of clubs and West took dummy's jack with the ace and switched to the two of spades. The defenders played three rounds of the suit and West exited with a diamond. Declarer won, drew the outstanding trump and claimed eight tricks, +110.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Teixeira</i>	<i>Goldberg</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Koistinen</i>
1♣	Double	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Double	All Pass

One way to approach North's type of hand is to overcall 1♦. You may get a chance to double some number of clubs on the next round to show your extra values.

West led the ace of spades and switched to the nine of clubs, declarer taking East's queen with the king and playing a diamond to the nine. East won with the jack, cashed the queen of spades and played a club, West taking his tricks for two down, -300 and 9 IMPs.

You can replay these deals at: <https://tinyurl.com/ycjaft99>, <https://tinyurl.com/y92psjwk>, <https://tinyurl.com/y7jvsw5d>, <https://tinyurl.com/ybzr85ld>

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hausler</i>	<i>Paz</i>	<i>Gromoeller</i>	<i>Luiz</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Double	1♠	All Pass	



It was the team named in honour of Nuno Matos; Nuno Paz, Carlos Luiz, Miguel Teixeira and Diego Brenner (pictured left) that captured the title, a fitting tribute to a man who had attended every one of the previous Festivals before his tragic death at the 2016 tournament.

The main events at next year's Festival take place between 5-12 November and there are warm events on 1-4 November for those who like to arrive early. Don't miss it!

Deals that Caught My Eye

David Bird looks at the semi-finals of the 2017 Gold Cup.

The Patterson team won their quarter-final by the satisfactory margin of 1 IMP and were rewarded with a semi-final against Allfrey. In the other semi-final, Brock faced Reardon. The BBO coverage was not up to its usual wonderful standard, covering only one semi-final for each stanza. Nevertheless, we can look now at some of the big swings that arose.

This deal from the first set was rather unusual, in a way.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

	♠ QJ1072	
	♥ 102	
	♦ 109	
	♣ AJ102	
♠ A9863		♠ —
♥ 6		♥ AQ87
♦ 6432		♦ QJ87
♣ 874		♣ Q9653
	♠ K54	
	♥ KJ9543	
	♦ AK5	
	♣ K	

West	North	East	South
Bakhshi	Hallberg	Forrester	Patterson
—	Pass	1♣	1♥
1♠	1NT	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

David Bakhshi's 1♠ showed 5+ cards and North/South ended in 3NT rather than 4♠. Tony Forrester started well with the ♦Q and Gunnar Hallberg won in the dummy to take a marked finesse of the ♠7, East throwing a club. Four spades, two diamonds and two clubs would bring the total to eight and a heart would make it nine. However, there were potential entry problems.

Hallberg led the ♥10, not covered, and ran the card successfully. When he led a second heart, Forrester rose with the ace and persevered with the ♦J. Declarer ducked this trick and won the next diamond, discarding the ♣2. The ♣K was cashed, leaving this position:

	♠ QJ102	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ AJ	
♠ A986		♠ —
♥ —		♥ Q8
♦ 6		♦ 8
♣ 8		♣ Q96
	♠ K5	
	♥ KJ95	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

Playing the ♠K next will succeed whichever defender holds the ♦8. If West holds the ♦8, he can cash it (declarer throwing the ♣J) but will have to surrender the balance to the North hand. If East has the ♦8, he can win the diamond switch but will then have to play a club or a heart.

Declarer chose to play the ♥K before the ♠K. Bakhshi then won and crossed to partner's ♦8. The ♥Q was the setting trick.

At the other table, Andrew Robson was allowed to make 4♠:

West	North	East	South
Black	Robson	Whittaker	Allfrey
—	2♠	Double	4♠
All Pass			

The 2♠ opening showed five spades and a four- or five-card minor. Robson won the club lead in dummy and played a trump to the queen, East throwing a club. When the ♥10 was led, East rose with the ace and switched to

the ♦Q. Robson scored the two top diamonds and ruffed a diamond in his hand. When he continued with the ace and a mildly deceptive ten of clubs, East needed to cover with the queen. He failed to do so and Robson ran the ten successfully. The ♣J was covered and ruffed with the ♠K, West overruffing with the ♠A. The ♠9 was returned but declarer could not be prevented from scoring three tricks with his remaining ♠J-10-7. So, that was 12 IMPs to Allfrey when the kibitzers had expected 12 IMPs the other way.

On our next deal, a rare type of endplay was missed at one table:

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

	♠ A		
	♥ Q96		
	♦ 10743		
	♣ KJ632		
♠ KQ1096	<div>W<div>N</div>E<div>S</div></div>	♠ 82	
♥ J		♥ 875432	
♦ A92		♦ K6	
♣ 9854		♣ Q107	
	♠ J7543		
	♥ AK10		
	♦ QJ85		
	♣ A		
West	North	East	South
<i>Bell</i>	<i>King</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>McIntosh</i>
2♠	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Mike Bell led the ♠Q, won in the dummy, and David Gold played low when a diamond was played. West allowed declarer's ♦Q to win and East won the second round of diamonds. The ♠8 drew the ♠4, ♠6 and a club from dummy. Declarer won the heart switch with the king, the jack falling from West, and led the ♦J to clear the diamond suit. Since declarer had led the ♦5 on the second round of the suit, his ♦8 now faced the ♦7 in dummy.

West could not afford to cash the ♠K and exited safely with a club to declarer's ace. 'Tosh' McIntosh cashed the ♦8 and led the ♥10 to dummy's

queen. He cashed the ♣K, leaving these cards to be played:

♠ —		
♥ 9		
♦ —		
♣ J6		
♠ K9	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W S E S </div>	♥ 75
♥ —		♦ —
♦ —		♣ Q
♣ 4		
♠ J7		
♥ A		
♦ —		
♣ —		

A club was led to East's queen and an unblock of the ♥A would have forced East to concede the last two tricks to dummy. When declarer discarded the ♠7, West won the last trick with his ♠K and that was one down.

West	North	East	South
<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Robson</i>	<i>Patterson</i>	<i>Allfrey</i>
2♠	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

After the same auction and the same lead, East played the ♠8 on the first trick. He won with the ♦K on the second round and played the ♠2 to partner's ♠6. When Hallberg returned the ♣4 to declarer's ace, Allfrey cashed the ace-king of hearts and exited with a diamond to West's ace. Hallberg played another club and declarer knew that he could not hold the ♣Q after his weak-two opening. He rose with the ♣K and played a low club to East, who had to concede the remaining tricks to the dummy. The resultant +600 gave the Allfrey team 12 IMPs.

Patterson had trailed Allfrey by 55-4 after only 12 boards, but the margin was reduced to 73-47 when this deal arose:

Board 39. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ K
♥ Q96
♦ KQJ109743
♣ 7

♠ 84
♥ AJ103
♦ 6
♣ KQ9863

♠ AJ652
♥ K7542
♦ 5
♣ J10

♠ Q10973
♥ 8
♦ A82
♣ A542

West	North	East	South
<i>Bell</i>	<i>King</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>McIntosh</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	4♦	Double	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	5♦
Pass	Pass	5♥	Double
All Pass			

North/South's 5♦ was cold and David Gold judged splendidly to bid five-over-five. A risky lead of North's singleton club would have given the defenders the first four tricks. Phil King won the first trick with the ♦K. If the defenders take a club ruff now, it will be only one down because declarer can ditch four spades on the long clubs. King defended strongly by switching to the ♠K, won with dummy's ace. To escape for one down now, declarer must cross to the ♥A and finesse North for the ♥Q (way against the odds after the 4♦ overcall). Mike Bell called for the ♣10 and this was allowed to win. McIntosh won the next club, his partner discarding a McKenney ♦Q, cashed the ♠Q and played the ♠9. This promoted a trump trick for North and a praiseworthy +500 was collected.

West	North	East	South
Hallberg	Bakhshi	Patterson	Forrester
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	3♦	Double	Redouble
4♦	Double	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	All Pass

This time the contract was undoubled and played by East. Forrester cashed the ♦A and continued with ace and another club, ruffed by North. That was +100 for one down and a precious swing of 9 IMPs to Patterson.

For some reason, presumably a dearth of willing BBO vugraph operators, only one of the semi-finals was being broadcast on each set. It's a pity when you consider how excellent the coverage is for other events around the world. For the last three 8-board sets, the coverage focussed on the match between Brock and Reardon. We will do the same.

Board 46. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

♠ AK85
 ♥ 73
 ♦ AK9
 ♣ AJ64

♠ 7
 ♥ Q962
 ♦ 73
 ♣ KQ10932

♠ 1043
 ♥ KJ108
 ♦ 10865
 ♣ 85

♠ QJ962
 ♥ A54
 ♦ QJ42
 ♣ 7

West	North	East	South
<i>M. Jones</i>	<i>Collins</i>	<i>Rosen</i>	<i>Law</i>
—	—	Pass	Pass
3♣	3NT	All Pass	

Quite rightly, Martin Jones did not let possession of a 4-card major deter him from pre-empting in the third seat. When the side-suit is hearts, there is no need to fear missing a heart fit. The opponents may then have something

good in spades their way. The same reasoning applies when you are considering such a pre-empt in first or second seat. Pat Collins had an obvious 3NT overcall and the spade fit was missed. That was +460 for Reardon.

♠ 7	♠ AK85	♠ 1043
♥ Q962	♥ 73	♥ KJ108
♦ 73	♦ AK9	♦ 10865
♣ KQ10932	♣ AJ64	♣ 85
<div> <div>♠ QJ962</div> <div>♥ A54</div> <div>♦ QJ42</div> <div>♣ 7</div> </div>		

West	North	East	South
M.Jones	Selway	Butland	Preddy
–	–	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

Kay Preddy rated her hand as an opening bid (why not, indeed?) and 6♠ was easily reached. After a ♣K lead to the ace and a club ruff, she drew two rounds of trumps and took two more club ruffs. The dummy reversal gave declarer an overtrick—six side-suit winners, four trump tricks and three ruffs in the long trump hand.

The scores stood at 98-98 when East had an awkward choice of opening bid on this board:

Board 52. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ 109864	♠ Q53	♠ K
♥ 10643	♥ 75	♥ AKQJ8
♦ 6	♦ K853	♦ QJ107
♣ J64	♣ 10982	♣ AQ7
<div> <div>♠ AJ72</div> <div>♥ 92</div> <div>♦ A942</div> <div>♣ K53</div> </div>		

West	North	East	South
Brock	Reardon	Myers	Butland
Pass	Pass	1♥	Double
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Barry Myers chose the best opening bid of 1♥, as I see it. It's unlikely that the ♠K will be much use, so pretend that it's a low spade. Richard Butland found the good lead of a trump and declarer won with the 8. When his next move was to lead the ♦J, Butland won with the ♦A and had a very difficult chance to beat the contract. Can you see it? He would have to cash the ♠A and exit safely with a trump.

Butland returned a second trump and was then put on lead with the ♠K to his ace. He had no safe exit. If he plays a diamond, declarer will discard a club from dummy and lose just two diamonds and a spade. If instead he plays a spade, declarer can ruff North's ♠Q and cross with a diamond ruff to run the ♠10, discarding one club loser and another one later. Butland chose to switch to a club, allowing declarer to win with the ♣Q and run the ♦Q, ditching a club from dummy. +620.

West	North	East	South
M.Jones	Selway	Butland	Preddy
Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	All Pass

I don't see much merit in 2NT. If partner can advance to game over this opening, he would nearly always be able to respond to 1♥. The spade part-score went two down, -200 and a loss of 13 IMPs.

One board in the eighth and final set delivered an extremely unlucky kiss of death to the Reardon team.

Stanza 8, Board 26. Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ AKQJ9	♠ 10652	♠ 843
♥ K4	♥ J1082	♥ AQ9765
♦ AQ754	♦ K	♦ 98
♣ A	♣ K943	♣ 82
	♠ 7	
	♥ 3	
	♦ J10632	
	♣ QJ10765	

West	North	East	South
<i>Reardon</i>	<i>Jones</i>	<i>Butland</i>	<i>Rosen</i>
–	–	2♥	Pass
5NT	Pass	7♥	All Pass

Although a 5NT bid not preceded by a Blackwood 4NT is often played as pick-a-slam, this would make little sense in response to a weak-two. Since the West hand did not contain a void, simple RKCB could have been used instead. Anyway, East/West knew what they were doing and Butland duly bid 7♥ with two of the three top trump honours.

Looking at all 52 cards, declarer can make the grand slam on a trump coup unless a club is led. When Rosen led the ♣Q, Butland won with the ace and played the ♥K followed by the ♥4. An apparent admirer of the Grosvenor Coup, Martin Jones contributed the ♥8, no doubt enjoying declarer's reaction when he won with the ♥A and South discarded. An unlucky one down.

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Collins</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Law</i>
–	–	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♥	All Pass

Myers started with a multi, his rebid showing a weak-two in hearts. Brock now used RKCB to discover one keycard and continued with 5♠, the trump-queen ask. Their agreed method was to bid 5NT with the trump queen and no outside king. It was a fortunate moment to mistakenly deny the ♥Q and the 4-1 trump break meant a gain of 17 IMPs instead of a more likely loss of 13 IMPs.

Brock won the semi-final by 162-129. This was the third consecutive year that her team had reached the final – a noteworthy achievement.

The other semi-final went to the wire. The massive BBO archive, so valuable to bridge writers and students of the game alike, will sadly contain no record of the last three sets of this match. Suffice it to say that Allfrey won on the cards by 3 IMPs. They then lost an adjudication for slow play by 13 IMPs to 9 and Patterson became the winners by 1 IMP. (On the Bridgewinners site, there is a – typically endless – discussion of the 'slow play' judgement, also of the fact that one set of 8 boards had to be replayed because the teams had been wrongly seated.)

It was a shame that better BBO coverage had not been possible for what were two very exciting encounters. I am indebted to several players who kindly replied to my emails, sending play details that were missing or incorrect in the BBO record.

DEFEND WITH JULIAN POTTAGE



Test Your Technique

with Christophe Grosset

see Page 4

The Questions

Solutions on page 47

1

♠ J52
 ♥ J1065
 ♦ Q52
 ♣ QJ10

♠ 97
 ♥ K93
 ♦ A9863
 ♣ 953

	N		
W		E	
	S		

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
—	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Double	2♠
3♦	3♥	All Pass	

You lead the five of clubs. Partner wins with the king and switches to the jack of diamonds, declarer playing low. What do you do now? If later declarer plays a trump to the ace and leads a low trump, what will you do?

2

♠ J
 ♥ A83
 ♦ AK9
 ♣ AKQ952

♠ —
 ♥ QJ10972
 ♦ QJ5
 ♣ J863

	N		
W		E	
	S		

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
—	—	—	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦*
Pass	5♥*	Pass	5NT*
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

5♦ One key card
 5♥ Do you do have the trump queen?
 5NT Yes

You lead the queen of hearts, won by the ace, all following. Declarer ruffs a heart before leading a low spade from hand. What is your plan?

♠ KQ754
 ♥ K2
 ♦ 65
 ♣ AQ65

♠ 2
 ♥ Q109543
 ♦ J1097
 ♣ 43

	N		
W		E	
	S		

♠ J10863
 ♥ J876
 ♦ K8
 ♣ K10

♠ A9
 ♥ A
 ♦ AQ432
 ♣ J9872

West	North	East	South
—	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT*	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

West leads the two of spades. How should you play? The key to this deal is to resist the natural temptation of playing low from dummy at trick one, with the idea of winning in hand and taking the club finesse. You want to try both the diamond and club finesses, but if West's two of spades is a singleton it would be a mistake to start with the club finesse. It is much better to try the diamond finesse first. If it loses you will be able to fall back on the trump finesse, but if it wins you will be able to play a club to the ace and a club, eliminating all danger.

10 Things I Hate About You

Alex Adamson & Harry Smith regale with Tales from the Over The Rainbow Bridge Club

‘Ahem, ahem, Professor Marvel, Professor Marvel,’ the Chairman of the Lollipop Guild mumbled as he hopped from foot to foot.

‘Yes, yes,’ replied the Professor, smiling at the obvious embarrassment of his fellow bridge player, and wondering what the problem was.

‘We have, yes, we have the annual ladies versus gents match on Sunday, and my partner, em, my partner, the Mayor, is indisposed.’ He shifted uneasily, staring at a corner of the ceiling. ‘Would you, em, would you very kindly, em, be willing to, em, partner me?’ A look of relief spread over the Chairman’s face. Whatever the answer, he had managed to ask!

‘Of course, I would. It will be a great pleasure, indeed an honour, to be partnering the captain of the team, and the Chairman of our club. My usual partner, Miss Gulch, will, I understand, be playing for the opposition, so this should be an interesting match. Now,’ the Professor continued, ‘I would recommend these blueberry and spinach pills.’ The Professor brought a large packet out of one of the many pockets in his jacket. ‘They do wonders for the nerves. And don’t worry – they taste a lot better than the name suggests! Just give me a copy of your system card with the Mayor, and we’ll play that.’

‘Thank you so much, thank you so much,’ the Chairman replied, unable to conceal his delight. ‘I’ll see you at one o’clock on Sunday.’ His joyful mood was somewhat tempered by the flavour of the pill. He made a mental note not to take food recommendations from that source. He looked round to check that the Professor was facing the other direction as he hastily transferred it from his mouth to the nearest bin.

This year it had been agreed that the match would be played over 32 boards, and total aggregate scoring would be used. Each of the four pairs would face each of the opposing pairs for eight boards. A week earlier, the Chairman had been pleased to have three regular partnerships, his own with the Mayor, Zeke and Hickory, and even the Lion and the Scarecrow, if any pairing including the Scarecrow could be called a partnership, or indeed regular. He would now have to do with two, the fourth pair being the explosive combination of the Tin Man and Uncle Henry.

It had been as hard as ever to get these two to play with each other, but

as usual flattery had won the day. ‘He begged me to arrange for him to play with you, after having had such an enjoyable game last year,’ the Chairman had told the Tin Man, exactly as he had told Uncle Henry.

‘I suppose I wouldn’t want to let him down,’ Uncle Henry had replied. ‘There aren’t many willing to put up with his arrogance.’

‘Well so he should,’ the Tin Man had responded unaware that he was being sweet-talked. ‘He could learn so much from a game with me, if only he would let himself.’

The Ladies Team also had its share of problems. Its selection lay in the hands of Dorothy’s Aunty Em. Sometimes the Witches wondered why this was so, but since it seemed to be a thankless task with no obvious benefits they were prepared to leave the task to her. Aunty Em had, as usual, informed Dorothy that she would be playing with her. With Ada and Cissie, a sound but uninspiring fourth pair, Aunty Em had known that she needed the maximum strength she could muster for pairs two and three. With great reluctance, and metaphorically holding her nose, she had sought out the Wicked Witch of the West a few weeks earlier.

‘We cannot take chances with this match,’ she had begun. ‘We have won it for the last three years and would never hear the end of it if that mechanical monster managed to drag the rest of the inferior sex to victory.’

‘We may have our differences,’ sniffed the Wicked Witch, sensing Aunty Em’s distaste, ‘but this isn’t one of them.’

‘That’s just it,’ said Aunty Em. ‘Clearly we need you and your friends, Irritable and Unpleasant, in the team, but Glinda, I’m sure you’ll agree, could be a weak link.’

‘I can usually keep her from throwing too much,’ said the Wicked Witch thoughtfully, wondering where this conversation was leading.

‘Well,’ Aunty Em was clearly embarrassed, not a common sight. ‘We both think the same about that woman, but she would be stronger than Glinda.’

‘The Wicked Witch looked dazed. ‘Are you suggesting that I play with that, that, that,...’ The Wicked Witch choked, and no suitable noun came out.

A week later, the Wicked Witch approached Aunty Em. 'I can't really believe I'm saying this, but winning this match is too important to let minor issues like her personality get in the way. I'll agree to play with Almira Gulch.'

'That's wonderful,' said Aunty Em, 'I'll ask her this afternoon.'

'I'll have to keep Glinda happy,' said the Wicked Witch. 'I suggest we make her non-playing captain. I'll tell her how important it is to have this role with the right sort of person in it, motivating and holding the team together, and that you and I thought she was clearly the best candidate.'

'Good idea,' said Aunty Em, thinking to herself that one of the partnerships would certainly need some holding together.

Glinda looked worried. After the first set of eight boards, her team of Ladies had been in the lead by 950 aggregate points. Had verbal abuse been measured during that hour's play, they would also have led on that count. Indeed, in the Gentlemen's Team even Uncle Henry and the Tin Man had only exchanged insults three times, and not a sound had been heard from any of the other male partnerships.

Glinda tried some positive thinking. Two of her pairs hadn't exchanged an angry word. The same could not be said of Irritable and Unpleasant but they were, after all, no worse than usual. In the context of that partnership, she thought her job as non-playing captain was to ensure that they put at least as much effort into winning as they did into insulting each other.

However, her fourth partnership did present serious signs of instability. Indeed, the Lion and the Scarecrow, their opponents in the first set, had each sat at least four feet from the table throughout the eight boards to avoid getting caught in the crossfire.

'Perhaps you should just open the bidding with 3NT on every hand,' Almira had remarked coldly. 'You clearly intend to declare there anyway,' she continued. 'It wouldn't be quite as bad if you had at least played the last one competently.' The Lion thought he could see the ice droplets, her voice was so cold.

'Perhaps when I show a seven-card suit, you might raise me holding four of them,' the Wicked Witch had screeched. 'Imagine thinking a five-card suit headed by the jack was more important information than four-card

support for my suit.' Her voice had reached a crescendo. The Scarecrow felt he could feel the heat from the flames she was breathing.

'It's not your fault, clearly. I know you learnt the game yesterday, but at what time yesterday?' retorted Almira.

'Well at least one of us then has started learning the game,' responded the Wicked Witch.

Eventually Glinda had come to the table, wearing her most winning smile. 'I'm very sorry to disturb,' she started, 'but the organisers of the children's playgroup next door have come to us complaining about the noise. If you could keep your voices down please, it would help. Please.'

'It's not me you need to tell,' the Wicked Witch and Almira Gulch uttered in unison.

'Oh no, I understand.' Glinda put on her silkiest voice, 'I was referring to the whole table.' She waved her arms to show she was also referring to the Lion and the Scarecrow. The Lion smiled but remained silent. The Scarecrow apparently ignored Glinda. In reality he hadn't heard her as his mind, insofar as he had one, was fully occupied. On the last hand he had realised that he was no longer sure about the responses to Stayman and he was trying to reconstruct them in his head.

Matters had not improved in the second set, and to make it worse, the scoring up had revealed that their lead had turned into a deficit of 840 aggregate points. Glinda sipped her coffee and nibbled at her cake at the half-time break, wondering how she could motivate her team, a situation made worse by the minute as Aunty Em probed to find out what had gone wrong.

'How did we lose 1,080 points on board twelve?' Aunty Em queried in a stern schoolmasterly voice. 'It looked like a simple deal to me.'

This was the hand:

qlmδa



Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ AQJ109	♠ K865	♠ 7432
♥ K73	♥ A6	♥ Q108
♦ Q43	♦ A86	♦ J1072
♣ K10	♣ QJ84	♣ 73
	♠ —	
	♥ J9542	
	♦ K95	
	♣ A9652	

‘I was North. I passed West’s One Spade opener, and when Dorothy doubled in the pass out seat, bid the obvious Three Notrumps. Dorothy’s double is routine, but it’s very difficult to stop after that. On the spade lead, I drifted one down.’ Aunty Em was adamant. ‘I suppose East might show support, but otherwise I thought it was completely routine at our table. Anyway, it only cost 100, and if the clubs had happened to come in we would have had a vulnerable game!’

Cissie looked shamefaced and clutched her handbag tightly to her lap. ‘I was also in the South seat, but when One Spade was passed round to me, I felt I didn’t have enough to bid. I was disappointed when Henry’s dummy appeared. It was clear with them having such a big fit, we had to have a fit somewhere.’ She cast her eyes down. ‘I’m really sorry, but we certainly can’t beat One Spade. Indeed he made eight tricks.’

‘Well,’ Aunty Em was sitting bolt upright, ‘that accounts for 210 points at these two tables. There seems to have been a rather large leak elsewhere.’

‘It certainly wasn’t at our table,’ the Unpleasant Witch of the North glared at Aunty Em. ‘I had been forced to sit West, much against my wishes.’ She glared at Glinda. ‘Even that Scarecrow found a double in the South seat.’ She turned her glare on Cissie who clutched her handbag even more tightly, if that were possible. ‘That cowardly Lion in the North seat just bid One Notrump, and there they played. It’s unbeatable.’

Almira Gulch’s voice piped up. ‘I can tell you what caused the leak. There was a buffoon sitting in the West seat at our table.’ The Wicked Witch shifted in her chair. ‘Our auction started in the same way as at your table,’ Miss Gulch continued looking directly at Aunty Em, ‘I had my spade lead ready and all she had to do was be silent. But could she do that? No! In she came with a double of Three Notrump.’

‘If I’d had a decent partner, I might not have doubled,’ retorted the Wicked Witch of the West, ‘but from experience of the previous eleven boards, the last thing I expected you to do was lead my suit.’

‘But what’s the problem?’ Aunty Em couldn’t stand either of the protagonists, and so was completely neutral as to which of the two got the blame. ‘You must have defeated Three Notrump, and they’ve nowhere to run to. As long as you don’t lead a heart there are only eight tricks.’

‘You’re forgetting it was Professor Marvel who held the South cards.’ Almira took centre stage again. ‘He has a wonderful feel for the game, and such a gentleman too. He bid Five Clubs.’

‘He bid Five Clubs on that holding!’ Aunty Em’s voice had risen several octaves. ‘Surely that can’t make? Declarer has a trump loser and a loser in each red suit.’

‘It’s unbeatable played by an expert,’ Miss Gulch continued, ‘and to add insult to injury, the buffoon doubled it as well!’

The full auction had been:

West	North	East	South
<i>Wicked</i>	<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Miss Gulch</i>	<i>Prof Marvel</i>
1♠	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	Pass	5♣
Double	All Pass		

‘She led a diamond, an unexpectedly sensible choice!’ Almira was in full flow. ‘He won the ace in dummy, and with barely a moment’s hesitation, ruffed a spade in his hand. He now played a heart to dummy’s ace, ruffed another spade, and then put me on lead with a heart. I played a diamond of course, as even SHE could have made it on any other return.’

Flourishing an expensive fountain pen Miss Gulch drew a hand diagram on the back of her scorecard. ‘After another heart ruff and another spade ruff,

this was the situation with five cards left, and the lead in the South hand.'

♠ K		♠ 7
♥ —		♥ —
♦ 8		♦ J10
♣ QJ8		♣ 73
♠ AQ		♠ —
♥ —		♥ J9
♦ Q		♦ 9
♣ K10		♣ A9

'Remember, at this point the defence had only taken one trick. The Professor led out a heart, and there's nothing we can do. If West ruffs low, he overruffs and the trump king now falls. If she ruffs with the king, the losing diamond is discarded. Being charitable by nature, I am going to assume that she,' Miss Gulch's nose twisted as she referred to her partner, 'she actually realised this, and discarded a spade. However, he just ruffed, took another spade ruff, and led another heart. We cannot stop eleven tricks. His two losers, the diamond and the trump become only one.'

The Wicked Witch was looking thoughtful. 'I'm sure it's been very instructive hearing my partner's views on this hand. I'm sure she'll be equally instructive when describing the play of board five in the first set.'

'And what's special about that hand?' Almira had been in the ascendency, but in a split second she was on the defensive. 'Your typical overbidding put me into an unmakeable Four Spade contract.'

'Oh, so bidding 26 point games is overbidding is it? Have you considered a partnership with the Lion? Four Spades is indeed unmakeable, as Deep Finesse verifies on the hand record,' the Wicked Witch spoke quietly and slowly, 'but only on a club lead. I seem to remember you received a diamond lead, after which it is unbreakable. That is, of course, in the hands of a competent declarer.'

This was the hand:

Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ —		♠ K9654
♥ 853		♥ K976
♦ 1098532		♦ 76
♣ KJ63		♣ A8
♠ AJ10		♠ Q8732
♥ QJ1042		♥ A
♦ KQ		♦ AJ4
♣ 1072		♣ Q954

'I don't know what you mean,' Almira replied haughtily. 'With the suits splitting that badly, I doubt if there's even a double dummy line to make it.'

The auction had been straightforward, with Almira using Checkback Stayman to find their spade fit:

West	North	East	South
<i>Lion</i>	<i>Wicked</i>	<i>Scarecrow</i>	<i>Miss Gulch</i>
—	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

The Wicked Witch had muttered audibly as she laid down the dummy, once the Lion had led the ♦10. 'Probably not even got five spades, but would she let me play a hand? Humph.'

'As always, I most certainly have my bidding,' Almira Gulch had replied her nose high in the air, and without further ado, won the first trick in dummy and played two more rounds of diamonds discarding a club.

The Wicked Witch was relishing describing the play of the hand. 'At trick four, she played the ace of hearts, a reasonable play, that would have been, if she had been on lead,' the Wicked Witch sneered. 'Unfortunately, her right hand opponent, bright as ever, was taking his usual time to realise

that having ruffed the third trick, he was on lead for the fourth. He probably hasn't reached that chapter yet.' She found her own joke very amusing. 'However, even he couldn't fail to play the ace of clubs followed by another club, and that was the end of the contract.'

'And what exactly do you think was wrong with my line?' Almira's voice was once more covered in ice droplets. 'I see that it went down at their table,' she added, pointing to Ada and Cissie with her usual contempt, having stretched over to look at Cissie's card.

'Yes, indeed,' Cissie said haughtily, 'but I received a devastating club lead from Hickory.'

'Hickory is a very thoughtful opening leader' Aunty Em broke in, and then turning to Almira Gulch added. 'You may be interested to know that your regular partner, the Professor, made it against us on the same diamond lead that you received.'

'Well,' Almira sneered, 'I can't be responsible for whatever defence you found against him.'

'There was no defensive error, I assure you,' Aunty Em's voice was calm and deliberate. She wanted to enjoy every moment of this. 'He won the diamond lead but instead of wasting that valuable entry to dummy, as you did, he played a heart to his ace and only then did he play the second diamond ending in dummy.'

'He now played the queen of hearts. I ducked and he discarded a club from hand.' Aunty Em was relishing this. 'You can see it would make no difference if I covered it. He now followed this with the jack of hearts on which I played the king and he ruffed with the two of spades. Again, I'm sure you can see that it would make no difference if I ducked again.'

'Now he played a trump to his ace, exposing the bad break, and continued unperturbed with the ten of hearts discarding another club. Finally as he led the four of hearts, this was the situation.' Aunty Em carefully laid out the six-card ending, holding their rapt attention.

♠ —	♠ J10	♠ K965
♥ —	♥ 4	♥ —
♦ 985	♦ —	♦ —
♣ KJ6	♣ 1072	♣ A8
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W S E</div> </div>	
	♠ Q87	
	♥ —	
	♦ A	
	♣ Q9	

'The defence has yet to score a trick. If I ruff the heart low, he overruffs for his eighth trick, and then ruffs the ace of diamonds. Whether I overruff or not, he has two more trump tricks for his contract. If I ruff the four of hearts high, he discards another club and has three more trump tricks for his contract.'

Aunty Em prepared to twist the knife. 'I'm sure you'll agree, my dear Almira, that there was no defence to that line of play.'

Glinda looked on despairingly, not really following Aunty Em's discourse, but just thinking desperately how she could rally her team for the third set. Ada and Cissie were looking very put out after Miss Gulch's treatment of them earlier. Unpleasant and Irritable were arguing, each looking for the worst example of the other's play. The Wicked Witch of the West and Almira Gulch were looking daggers at each other. Getting them to work together was beyond hope. She would settle for them not entirely exploding.

The only partnership that seemed in good shape was Aunty Em and Dorothy. Dorothy was her usual calm self, and Aunty Em was looking very contented. They had discussed two hands, and her two favourite hates had been made to look foolish on one hand each.

(To be continued)

Answers to “Defend With Julian Pottage”

See page 41

1

	♠ J52	
	♥ J1065	
	♦ Q52	
	♣ QJ10	
♠ 97		♠ Q1063
♥ K93		♥ 8
♦ A9863		♦ J107
♣ 953		♣ AK874
	♠ AK84	
	♥ AQ742	
	♦ K4	
	♣ 62	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
–	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Double	2♠
3♦	3♥	All Pass	

You lead the five of clubs. Partner wins with the king and switches to the jack of diamonds, declarer playing low. What do you do now? If later declarer plays a trump to the ace and leads a low trump, what will you do?

You should place the king of diamonds on your right partly because of partner's initial pass and partly because a switch away from the king would be highly risky. You should thus duck the first round of the suit, saving your ace to capture declarer's king.

Let us suppose another diamond comes straight away. You win and exit with a third round of the suit. Declarer ruffs and plays a club. Partner wins and exits with a third round of that suit. After that, aware that the chance of finding East with a guarded king of trumps is very slim, declarer leads a trump to the ace followed by a low one.

If you duck the second round of trumps, you will struggle after taking the king on the third round. Whether you try the nine or your lower spade, declarer can pick up the suit by playing you for a doubleton. Giving a ruff and discard is no better. You avoid this by taking the second round of trumps and exiting with a third round.

2

	♠ J	
	♥ A83	
	♦ AK9	
	♣ AKQ952	
♠ –		♠ A1052
♥ QJ10972		♥ K64
♦ QJ5		♦ 7642
♣ J863		♣ 107
	♠ KQ987643	
	♥ 5	
	♦ 1083	
	♣ 4	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
–	–	–	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦*
Pass	5♥*	Pass	5NT*
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

You lead the queen of hearts, won by the ace, all following. Declarer ruffs a heart before leading a low spade from hand. What is your plan?

A glance at dummy combined with the bidding tells you that your side cannot make any tricks in the side suits. Your side, which in this case means partner, will need to make two trump tricks. While dummy is too short in spades for leading the suit to finesse against partner's holding, a trump coup could have a similar effect. The danger against which you need to guard is that declarer scores further ruffs to come down to the same trump length as East and then gets back to dummy, ready to overruff at the end.

Dummy cannot have two club entries since one of the unseen hands must have a singleton. The only entry that your play might affect is in diamonds. If declarer has 10xx, you can stop the nine from being an extra entry by playing your honours at the right time. If and when your opponent leads the ten, you will duck. You will use your queen and jack on low diamond leads, thereby preventing a finesse of the nine. For the time being, you can discard anything except a diamond.

Puppet, Muppet, or Scrubbit?

by Liz McGowan

I asked Liz McGowan, World & European Champion (oh yes she has won a few other things as well) to write a piece on a relatively new convention that is gaining in popularity. It originally appeared in the Montecatini Bulletins.

Watch out for more articles from Liz in future issues.

Who could not love a convention called Muppet?

Take Puppet Stayman (though some, such as David Burn, prefer to leave it) and exchange the 3♥ and 3NT responses to 3♣. And you have Muppet.

Why? There is a perceived problem over a 2NT opener when responder has a weak hand with five spades and four hearts. Opener may be 2-2 (even 1-3) in the Majors, so if you transfer to 3♠, then bid 4♥ over 3NT, you may reach a silly spot. And when opener has four hearts you have made sure the strong hand is dummy.

Some Puppeteers get round this by using a 3♠ response to show the weak 5-4. Opener will choose the best contract, but if that happens to be 4♠ the wrong hand is declarer.

Others use 3NT. This ensures that opener will declare. But, as Muppeteers point out, it is forgettable. When only one member of the partnership remembers a conventional response the result is generally poor.

Muppet ensures that the strong hand will always declare. Furthermore, it solves the 5-3 conundrum (responder has five spades and three hearts and transfers into spades only to find that opener has two spades and five hearts.)

This is how it works:

- 2NT – 3♣ An enquiry showing interest in opener's Major suit holdings
- 3♦ 'I have at least one four-card major'
- 3♥ 'Sorry, no 4+ card Major'
- 3♠ 'I have five spades'
- 3NT 'I have five hearts'

Further bidding is averagely complicated.

2NT – 3♣

3♦ With one 4-card Major responder bids the one he does not have. With 4-4 in the Majors he bids 4♣ (slam interest) or 4♦ (no slam interest)

Over 4♦ opener bids his major and all is well.

Over 4♣ he can do the same, expecting partner to cue – or, if you like artificiality, you can bid the suit below your real suit, since it may not matter who is declarer and responder can still cue, though we have not saved any space.

Over 3♥ opener bids 3♠ with four hearts and three spades, 3NT with four hearts and two spades, something at the four-level with four spades. Over four of a minor responder retransfers with 4♥, then passes or investigates slam.

Similarly over 3♠ opener bids 3NT with 4 spades, something at the 4-level with four hearts.

2NT – 3♣

3♥ Opener has no majors, but responder may still be 5-4, or 5-3 in the majors

Responder bids 3♠, puppet to 3NT, without 5 spades, and 3NT to show five spades allowing opener to choose, and declare, the final contract.

2NT – 3♣

3♠ Most play that 4♥ is the only slam try for spades and 4 of a minor is natural

2NT – 3♣

3NT To play in 4♥ responder transfers with 4♦. 4♣ could be a mild slam try....

Muppeteers plead their cause further.

With five hearts and four spades you transfer to hearts, and if partner bids 3♥ you bid 3NT, showing four spades. Without four spades you relay with 3♠.

After 2NT – 3♦ if opener has five spades and only two hearts he can bid 3♠, thus finding a 5-3 fit.

With 5-5 in the Majors responder bids 3♣, and over the expected 3♥ he bids 4♥.

(You are NOT worried about what happens when opener shows a 4-card major! See 4♣/4♦ above...)

So Muppet uncovers every possible 5-3 fit and ensures that the strong hand is always declarer.

“Coupled with the use of 2NT – 3♠ for a minor slam try, Muppet always brings home good results.” – Ron Koshoshek

Well, it does if you remember it all.... Is it worth it?

2NT auctions are quite infrequent, perhaps one a session if you also use your methods after a natural 2NT overcall of a Weak Two opener.

The 5-3 fit is overrated when both hands are balanced. To quote Hugh Kelsey: ‘3NT is the contract most often let through when it could be defeated’.

So some experts have given up on the whole Pup-Mup thing, and simply play Stayman and Transfers.



The **World Bridge Series** is an incredibly exciting and challenging tournament, with many different Championships available to participants.

It is made even more interesting due to the fact that all the events are transnational, so that players from across the world, from different National Bridge Organisations, can come together as team-mates or in partnership to compete.

The venue is the magnificent Marriott Orlando World, where we have obtained special rates for all participants – please see below for how to make your reservation.

There are several restaurants and lounges within the complex, and excellent amenities that we feel sure you will enjoy ... and if you are bringing the family there is even a shuttle service to Walt Disney World®! Orlando is, of course, a very well-known and popular resort, with plenty to see and do in the area. It's not all Disney – there is the Epcot Centre and Universal Studio as well as other museums and galleries. For the golfers among you there are golf courses, and there are several parks and lakes to enjoy.

The **Opening Ceremony** will be held on Friday 21st September.

The following is the outline schedule of the main events. A full detailed schedule will be published here in due course.

The first events are the **Open, Women's and Senior Teams Championships**: the Rosenblum Open Teams will start on Saturday 22nd September, the McConnell Women's Teams and the Rand Senior Teams are expected to start a day later.

The Teams Championships are followed by the **Open, Women's, and Senior Pairs** – the Open Pairs starts on Tuesday 25th September, the Women's and Seniors on Wednesday 26th September. Players eliminated from the KO stages of the Teams, up to and including the semi-finals, will be able to drop into the Pairs events, following the regulations that will be specified in the Supplemental Conditions of Contest for the Championships which will be published here in due course.

The **Mixed Teams** will start on Tuesday 2nd October and the Mixed Pairs on Thursday 4th October.

Junior Players will also be able to enter the **Youth Triathlon** event starting on Monday 1st October.

In addition there will be the **Joan Gerard Cup** – a pairs event – starting on Sunday 30th September, a **Seniors Triathlon** starting on Tuesday 2nd October, as well as a **Pairs Short Track** starting on Friday 5th October and an IMP Pairs starting in the afternoon of Friday 5th October.

Alongside all these tournaments there will be a number of other WBF events of one or two days (pairs or swiss) available for those wishing to participate in shorter tournaments. Details of these will be announced on the website in due course.

Players in good standing with their National Bridge Organisations are eligible to compete in any of these events, providing of course they meet all the WBF Eligibility requirements (including those relating to the ages of Senior or Youth players).

Registration must be made through the WBF Website, and the pages for this will be available from April 2018.

We look forward to welcoming many players to Orlando where we are sure it will be an enormously successful Championship!

Stay tuned on championships.worldbridge.org/orlandows18 for further information, including accommodation details

Bridge with Larry Cohen

The brilliant American player, writer and teacher presents the first in a series of articles aimed at intermediate players

I am a staunch advocate of “less is more.” My observation is that at every level of the game, players are using too many conventions. Too often I see players (from beginner to world champion) misusing or forgetting their methods. Everyone would benefit if they would just KISS. (Keep It Simple, Stupid).

If I had to choose just 4 conventions, this would be my list:

1. Negative Doubles

The first important double to discuss with partner is the Negative Double. Many years ago, after we opened the bidding and the opponents overcalled, a double was for penalty. This ineffective method was overturned when Al Roth invented what was first called Sputnik, named after the Russian satellite in the late 1950's. Now, when the opponents overcall, our responder's double is not for penalty. It is “takeout,” or “negative” with the focus on the other major.

There are two crucial issues to discuss and two smaller ones. First the big stuff:

Through what level?

Many players mark their convention card: “through 2♠” or “through 3♠.” This is not a good agreement. If you are writing “through 3♠,” do you mean to tell me that when the opponents overcall, say, 4♣, that you magically expect to have a trump stack and want to double 4♣ for penalties? Pretty silly. I recommend negative doubles “through infinity.” In fact, the higher they bid, the less likely you are ever to be dealt a penalty double. Doubles on any level should NOT show length/strength in the opponent's suit. They should all be takeout/cards. So, don't limit yourselves by marking through 2♠ or 3♠.

What suits does the negative double show?

In general, the other major(s) is promised. If responder can't stand a suit that opener selects, he needs to have a backup plan (often tolerance for opener's first suit). If the opening is 1-of-a-major and they overcall the other major, a negative double typically shows both minors.

Special Sequences

The “smaller” issues are the following two specific auctions, which unfortunately require memorization:

1♣-(1♦)- X

In this exact auction, the double promises both majors (at least 4-4). With only one 4 card major, the responder simply bids it (promising at least 4).

1♣/♦-(1♥)- X

On this specific auction, the double promises exactly 4 spades. With 5 or more, the responder bids 1♠.

These 2 auctions cause confusion among inexperienced players. There is no substitute or shortcut for these 2 “special” rules. They simply need to be studied, studied again, then practiced and memorized.

Other

When playing negative doubles, what if the responder happens to have a penalty double? The way to “get them” is to pass (in tempo is a good idea) and hope the opening bidder can reopen with his own takeout double, to be converted for penalties.

Wrap-Up:

There is plenty more on this topic (such as follow-ups by opener and responder – but none of it needs noting on the convention card. I couldn't live without negative doubles. Everyone should play them, and they should be played on all levels (not just the 2- and 3-level). In general, the negative double shows the unbid suits, with the focus on the majors.

2. Blackwood

First, let it be said that Blackwood is probably the most abused convention in bridge. Really, checking for aces should only serve the purpose of making sure you don't reach 6 off 2 aces (or 7 off 1 ace). However, too many people launch into Blackwood prematurely, just because they sense there might be a slam. Blackwood should not be used until you are sure there is no suit where your side is off 2 fast cashing tricks (this often involves control-bidding first). If you use Blackwood and the answer doesn't tell you where you belong, then you probably shouldn't have used it.

In regular Blackwood, the responses show 0, 1, 2 or 3 aces in order (5♣, 5♦, 5♥, 5♠). With 4 aces, the response is also 5♣, thus 5♣ shows 0 or 4.

Experienced players use Keycard Blackwood. This means there are 5 keycards – not 4. The king of trumps counts as the 5th “ace.” The trump king is presumed to be either a suit that was agreed, or if no agreement was made, then it is the last-bid suit. The answers (as commonly played) are taken from the “Roman” system, thus it is called RKC (Roman Keycard). These are the responses:

5♣ = 1 or 4 of the 5 keycards

5♦ = 0 or 3 of the 5 keycards

5♥ = 2 or 5 of the 5 keycards but no trump queen

5♠ = 2 or 5 of the 5 keycards plus the trump queen

Notice that this schedule is called “1430” because the 5♣/♦ responses show 1-4, 3-0. (This is also the score for bidding and making a vulnerable major-suit slam.) When the convention was first devised, the 5♣ and 5♦ responses were played the opposite of what is shown here. Many players still use the “old” way, but “1430” is slightly superior because the cheaper 5♣ response comes up more frequently. After the 5♣ or 5♦ response, the Blackwooder can bid the next step to ask for the trump queen (after which the most common system is to play 5 of the trump suit denies the trump queen).

Players using RKC need to discuss what a follow-up bid of 5NT means. Is it for specific kings or number of kings? If the latter, what is the schedule of responses? There is no universal way of playing 5NT; be sure to discuss it with your partner.

There is also a place to mark your responses if the opponents interfere with

4NT. This is so rare, that for most players, I wouldn't recommend bothering with it. If you insist, you can play something like D0P1, (called “DOPI”) which means that Double = 0 or 3 Keycards and Pass = 1 or 4 keycards. Bids show 2 keycards (one step without and two steps with the trump queen).

How to respond to Blackwood with a void?

Yikes! I can't believe this article ever made it into print. This is a pet peeve topic for me. I always get asked about it. The problem is (and please don't take this the wrong way) that 99% of the people who ask, should not bother worrying about it.

Why? Because:

- a) It rarely comes up
- b) Even if it does come up, it is needed only for reaching 7 (when just getting to 6 will usually be a good enough result)
- c) When it comes up once every 3 years, who can possibly remember the agreement?
- d) There are many different ways to show the void
- e) It can get quite complicated – and could depend on what is trump (much easier with spades; near impossible with clubs).
- f) You would need to have a regular partner who studies and agrees on the same methods. This is not for casual partnerships.

All of those reasons make this topic completely flunk my: “Is it a convention you should worry about” test. Only if you are a professional or long-term experienced partnership, is this worth delving into.

I finally came up with a good reason to put this on my website. From now on, when faced with the question, I can just say: “Look it up on my website.” I refuse to dictate to a student lines and lines of code to memorize. I can't think of anything more impractical. But, if you asked me, and I said, “see the site” – here you are.

So, now, if you wish to waste hours of study and thousands of brain-cells on an unimportant topic, I refer you to 3 good sources as below. All of these have merit, and are basically similar in approach. These are methods you can rely on (as opposed to some incoherent mumbo-jumbo you might find elsewhere on the internet). With luck, at least some of these links will work when you click them.

- 1) Methods from bridgebum site: <https://tinyurl.com/y7u3p36t>
- 2) Methods from pattayabridge site: <https://tinyurl.com/hpa76ke>
- 3) Martel-Stansby method: <https://tinyurl.com/y8jzndd9>

Or, you can make me happy and not click any of these links and worry about other bridge topics/methods which are infinitely more important.

Other:

5NT (not in a Blackwood auction) – This used to be used as the Grand Slam Force, but a much better and more common use now called Pick-a-Slam. It tells partner, “I want to be in six, but I’m not sure where. You choose.”

Gerber – This is one of my pet peeves. During the 2009 Regional at Sea I gave my “anti-Gerber” lecture. Director Harry Falk loved it and told me that next to Gerber on the convention card he used to write: NITLFY. What does it mean? Not In The Last Forty Years!

3. Stayman

This is probably the most well-known convention (this or Blackwood) in bridge. It is used after a no-trump bid to look for an 8-card major suit fit. After partner’s 1NT opening, responder will want to look for a 4-4 major suit fit, with say: ♠A Q 6 5 ♥6 5 ♦K J 8 7 ♣J 3 2. To ask opener if he has a 4-card major, he responds 2♣.

After a 1NT opening (or overcall), 2♣ asks the 1NT bidder about majors.

The responses to 2♣ are:

2♦ = No 4-card major

2♥ = 4 (or 5) hearts

2♠ = 4 (or 5) spades

After opener’s rebid

Here is the brief overview of what it means if the Stayman bidder takes further action:

On the 2-level, everything is natural and not forcing (example: 1N-2♣; 2♦-2♥). I suggest that auction is “pass or correct” – sometimes referred to as “Garbage” Stayman or “Crawling Stayman. The responder can have only 4-4 in the majors and just wants to stop in 2♥ or 2♠

On the 3-level, responder’s raise is invitational, of course. Other 3-level

bids (using LC Standard) are

Please don’t get turned off by the perceived complexity here. There are many possible choices. I’ve selected what I consider to be a workable framework that doesn’t involve too much memory strain. Yes, there are better ways to skin this cat – please don’t write to me to tell me your way is better.

The Stayman bidder should usually have at least invitational values. The only exceptions would be:

A) A hand that is willing to pass anything opener answers (including 2♦)

B) A hand that has both majors (at least 4-4) and is willing to pass 2♥/2♠ or correct a 2♦ answer to 2♥ to show a weak hand with both majors

After a 2NT opener (or non-jump overcall), 3♣ is Stayman with the same schedule of responses (a level higher).

Puppet Stayman

Some partnerships use this variation of Stayman which uncovers not only 4-card majors, but also 5-card majors. I recommend it only for very experienced players, and only on the 3-level. I like 2♣ to be regular Stayman because it allows for various weak responses (with the ability to stop on the 2-level). In LC Standard, I prefer to use Puppet Stayman only as a jump to 3♣ after 1NT. (After a 2NT opening, I don’t like Puppet Stayman because it is hard to show 5-4 in the majors). Here is more on Puppet Stayman:

This variation of regular Stayman is used by the partner of a no-trump bidder to locate not only a 4-card major with the no-trumper, but also a 5-card major.

I like to use 1NT-3♣ as Puppet. So, I use it only with enough values for game (10+ points for responder). The Puppet Stayman user is looking for a 5-3 major-suit fit. So, he will either have a 3-card major or (maybe a 3-card major and a 4-card major). Never use Puppet Stayman with a 5-card major. The responses and follow-ups are shown below.

I don’t recommend Puppet Stayman on the 2-level (1NT-2♣), because I prefer Garbage/Crawling Stayman – whereby responder can use 2♣ with all junky major-suit hands. I like responder to be able to respond 2♣ with, say, ♠8764♥7652♦J8765♣-. Whatever opener bids, responder passes. (In Puppet Stayman, this doesn’t quite work).

I also don’t like Puppet Stayman after a 2NT opener. It doesn’t work well when responder is 5-4 in the majors. However, many players don’t mind

that problem, so they do use Puppet after 2NT. Just make sure you agree with your partner if 2NT-3♣ is Puppet Stayman or not.

Original Puppet

There are several variations/methods of Puppet Stayman. Here is one of the original methods (after 1NT-3♣):

3♦=One (or two) 4-card majors

3♥/3♠=5 cards there

3NT=No 4- or 5-card major

After 1NT-3♣-3♦, responder, with 4-3 in the majors, bids the 4-card major he doesn't have and opener acts accordingly.

Example: 1NT-3♣-3♦-3♥=4 spades

Puppet is never used with 4-4 in the majors.

New and Improved Puppet

Here is a variation that is an improvement to original Puppet Stayman (and is part of LC Standard):

After 1NT-3♣

3♦=No 5-card major

3♥/3♠=5 cards there

3NT=Does not exist

Follow-ups to the newer variation:

After 1NT-3♣-3♦:

3♥/3♠=4 cards in the other major

3NT=No 4-card major

For either variation, lots of study, practice and concentration are required. If just reading this makes your head spin, then it probably isn't for you. For 99% of my readers, students, I suggest ignoring this section.

Puppet Stayman should be used normally when looking for a 5-card major (seeking a 5-3 fit). Responder should not use Puppet Stayman with 4-4 in the majors, nor with 4-3-3-3 shape. Usually, responder has 3 cards in one major and a doubleton or singleton somewhere. Here are hands with which I would respond 3♣ (Puppet) to 1NT:

♠KJ2 ♥6 5 ♦AQ87♣J765 (After 3♠, bid 4♠, otherwise head to 3NT)

♠Q876 ♥AQ2 ♦3 2 ♣KJ76 (After 3M raise; after 3♦ bid 3♥ to look for a 4-4 spade fit)

4. Jacoby Transfers

After our side opens 1NT, there are many possible ways to go. At the end of this introductory article there are 4 deals to practice and links to more complicated issues.

The easy part of the responses to 1NT:

2♣ = Stayman

2♦ = Jacoby Transfer (5+♥)

2♥ = Jacoby Transfer (5+♠)

Stayman should be used only with game invitational strength. Exception: Responder can be very weak and intend to pass anything opener does (this means responder has to be prepared to play in 2♦, so can use Stayman, with say: ♠ 5432 ♥5432 ♦65432 ♣-.)

With 5-4 in the majors and enough for game, start with Stayman.

With 5-5 in the majors and enough for game, start by transferring to spades, then bidding hearts.

Make sure you know if your partnership uses Texas Transfers.

More on all of this at the end.

For now, here are 4 deals to try – they all have interesting points to the play of the hand:

1 Which Suit and How?

2 Your 50-50 Chance

3 Take All Your Chances

4 A Mirage

Jacoby or Texas with a 6-card major?

Jacoby transfers are on the 2-level, Texas transfers are on the 4-level.

A Jacoby transfer guarantees only five—but could be made with a longer suit.

A Texas transfer is “always” at least a 6-card suit.

A Jacoby transfer could be made with 0 points!

A Texas transfer means the responder has enough for at least game.

If you have only a 5-card major, you will never use Texas.

Jacoby (2♦-2♥/2♥-2♠) Texas (4♦-4♥/4♥-4♠)

5+ cards 6+ cards

0+HCP ‘enough for game’ HCP

Suppose your partner opens 1NT (15-17) and you have a six-card (or

longer) major. Such hands are easy to bid. You will “always” want to play in your major—you know your side has at least an 8-card trump fit. Let’s look at responding hands with 6-card majors:

What level?

1) With a weak hand, you Jacoby transfer and pass – playing on the 2-level.

Example:

♠ KJ9765	♥ 54	♦ 432	♣ 54
1NT	2♥		
2♠	Pass		

(You would do this even without the king or jack. With six little spades and a 0-count, you would Jacoby into 2♠ and then pass).

2) With an invitational hand, you Jacoby transfer and raise (invitational).

Example:

♠ KJ9765	♥ K4	♦ 432	♣ 54
1NT	2♥		
2♠	3♠ (Game invitational, 6♠)		

3) With a game hand (no slam interest), you Texas transfer and then Pass.

Example:

♠ KJ9765	♥ K4	♦ K32	♣ 54
1NT	4♥		
4♠	Pass (No slam interest)		

4) With slam interest, you Jacoby transfer, then jump to Game.

Example:

♠ K J 9 7 6 5	♥ K 4	♦ A 3	♣ 2 K 4
1NT	2♥		
2♠	4♠ (Slam invitational)		

NOTES:

1) The sign-off and invite obviously have to start with Jacoby – this is easy to remember

2) The way to remember whether Texas or “Jacoby-then-jump” is the sign-off is as follows: With the stronger hand (slam interest), go slower (Jacoby) – maybe the 1NT opener can show a sign of life by jumping after the Jacoby transfer. You always want to leave more space in slam auctions. (This also applies after 2NT openings.)

Take the slow (snail-like) route with slam interest.

But, if you want to be only in game, you take the direct route (Texas).

Jump directly to 4♠/♥ to play there.

3) By starting slam hands with Jacoby, you have other tools available. You can Jacoby transfer then jump in a new suit. This is a splinter bid, showing slam interest. For example, 1NT-2♥-2♠-4♦ shows something like:

♠ AQJ642 ♥ K75 ♦ 3 ♣ K53 Accordingly, Jacoby followed by a jump to game, should be a balanced hand (6-3-2-2 type).

4) More experienced players will want to define what 4NT means after a transfer. I suggest that Jacoby followed by 4NT is Quantitative (Invitational). Meanwhile, Texas followed by 4NT should be RKC (or, if you don’t use Keycard, play it as regular Blackwood).

Examples:

1NT-2♥-2♠-4NT: ♠ AKJ54 ♥ A32 ♦ 1093 ♣ K5 (invitational, NF)

1NT-4♥-4♠-4NT: ♠ AQ109765 ♥ 7 ♦ KQ2 ♣ K6 (asks for Key Cards)

If you forced me to choose 4 more conventions, this would be the next group:

5. 4th Suit GF

6. Methods (I prefer “DONT”) vs. Opponents’ No-trump

7. Weak jumps in competition

8. 2NT ask (Feature) after our Weak 2-bids

If you insisted I fill my convention card with 12 conventions, these would be the next four:

9. Unusual No-trump/Michaels bids

10. New Minor Checkback

11. Jacoby 2NT

12. Support Doubles

And, since people just love to learn/play/teach conventions, these would be my D-list – choices 13-16

13. Lebensohl

14. Drury

15. Inverted Minors

16. Splinter Bids

Honestly, I think it would be counterproductive for 99% of players to go any further than this. The memory strain is not worth it. Someone once said, “The Road to Hell is Paved with Good Conventions.”

From Our French Correspondent

by Ron Tacchi

Ron Tacchi is based in France and will entertain you from time to time with stories that have a certain Gallic flavour.

In a previous incarnation I have written 'Letters From France' for a now dormant magazine so this seems a suitable juncture to write another.

Firstly there has been a death in the family: the 4L (pronounced as the name Catrall of the Sex and the City actress) of Mrs T finally failed its *Contrôle Technique* (the French equivalent of MOT, but only every two years) after at least twenty years of faithful service. It is irreparable and Mrs T is inconsolable; apparently it is about to split in two with its two rear wheels disappearing in several directions at once. It was purchased twenty-odd years ago for the princely sum of £700, formerly being a *camionnette* (little van) in the service of the fire department, which explains its vivid red colour. Everyone in our locality knew this was Mrs T's form of transport and I would get regular reports of her 'interesting' driving technique about town. The 4L was introduced by Renault in 1961 as its first front-wheel driven car and sold over eight million before ceasing production in the nineties.

I am writing this the week before Christmas – for me quite an important social time. I have my annual footballers' Christmas dinner on Thursday. From its title you would assume that there is a football team for whom I cook dinner occasionally – there is a hint of truth in that from an historical viewpoint. In about 2010 there were a group of middle-aged chaps who played five-a-side football on a Monday night in the local gymnasium. Afterwards they would visit my favourite café and have a couple of beers and something to eat. I would frequently meet up with them and also enjoy the occasional beverage, but not the meal as the quality was not of a Michelin Star standard. One day the patron said 'I am stopping serving meals on a Monday evening' so I said they could come round to me and I would provide a proper meal and drinks for €5 less than the café. Since that date whenever I have been in town we have eaten together once a week. Things

have changed slightly – they are now all too decrepit to actually play football any more so we changed the evening to Tuesday as during the football season there is a European match on the television. As luck would have it the channel on which one can watch it is not included in the package of the house where we regularly meet. So though it is known as the footballers' evening, football has actually very little to do with it now. In fact only three of the regulars are people who originally played football. This week there is an Italian flying in to be there, also someone from the South of France, but my regulars from Japan and USA are staying at home for Christmas. During the whole period of providing these meals, unless specifically asked, I have not repeated a meal!

Yesterday was one of my Christmas lunches at a café I visit once a month on a Tuesday lunchtime. Again it is a group of people who have changed little of the many years (again about twenty), they include the mayor of the village (though he is one who changes every five years) and also includes one of the two remaining communists in our town. They all arrive at noon but I have the strategy of getting there sometime well after one o'clock as we never eat before two, and that is a lot of rounds of *aperos* and since I have to drive home, the late arrival is a must. Excluding my round of drinks the price is still €12.50 for a four course home-cooked meal with wine and coffee.

Tuesday is also market day and last Tuesday I bought two kilos of the new season prunes, another practice I have followed for many years. When I buy them I arrive with a small pot containing half a dozen prunes from the previous year which have been macerating in Armagnac for twelve months. These are given to the stallholder who always eats one immediately and then hoards the other five for some other time. My two kilos always seem to weigh more than other people's two kilos. So I have now made my prunes in Armagnac for next Christmas and am about to enjoy the ones I made last year.

As this is supposedly a bridge magazine I should turn my attention elsewhere. There are many people who do not seem to improve at bridge and I often wonder why. I realise that some of them do not want to improve – they just come along for a social afternoon and enjoy the company, but there are some who seem keen to actually play but do not progress. I have a theory (one of many) that the reason they do not get better is that they do not know how to get better. Sometimes they read a book and are totally overcome with the sheer quantity of material and decide they could not possibly take it all in. Other times a good player might just say ‘Oh, it was a straightforward elimination’ and totally bamboozle the victim. My theory states that anyone with a sound mind can work out how to play a hand if they know to ask the right questions. Often when I explain slowly and in detail why I played in the way I did it helps people move on – they suddenly see that it is possible to find the right answer and that it can be done in small incremental states. Here is a hand I held against someone I have nicknamed ‘Watson’. Because they are quite good at bidding, as they have learnt by rote the French SEF (five-card major system), they are more frequently in the right contract but their dummy play leaves a lot to be desired and so frequently they finish in second place which causes me to say:

‘Watson second, who’s first?’ – Well it amuses me anyway.

So here is the hand I played the other day at my local club. I, of course was South, as South always plays the contract.

♠ A74
♥ A85
♦ KJ53
♣ 1084

♠ Q95
♥ KJ762
♦ 76
♣ J75

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
All Pass			

The lead was the jack of spades and East won with the king and returned the suit taken in dummy with the ace. I now cashed the ace of trumps and led a small one and when the queen gratifyingly appeared on my right, I won and finished drawing trumps. As we were on the last board of the round and well ahead in time I claimed (giving me time to get a beer from the bar) stating that I was playing West for the ace of diamonds. Watson who was East was suspicious.

He started a dialogue.

‘How can you be sure that West has the ace of diamonds?’

‘Well let’s see if you can work it out. What have you learnt from the bidding?’

‘Nothing, we did not bid.’

‘Wrong, you both said “Pass”.’

‘So’

‘Does not Pass signify something?’

‘Well yes – not enough points to open.’

‘We are beginning to get somewhere. How many points do East and West hold between them?’

‘Looks like 21.’

‘Correct, and if neither East nor West bid what is the maximum number of points they can hold?’

‘Eleven I suppose.’

‘So how are the points divided between you and your partner?’

‘Eleven for one of us and ten for the other.’

‘So we are making progress, so what can you tell me about West’s club holding?’

‘Are you mad? I know absolutely nothing about West’s clubs – I am not a peeker you know.’

‘OK let’s pose a question. If West had the ace and king of clubs what would he have led?’

‘Obviously he would have led a club.’

‘But he didn’t, did he?’

‘Ah, I am beginning to see what you mean.’

‘So if he does not have the ace and king of clubs, will East have at least one of them?’

‘Of course.’

‘So East must have at least the king of clubs, agreed?’

‘Yes.’

‘Now let us count the East hand. What have we seen there and what else do we know is there?’

‘King of spades, queen of hearts and at least the king of clubs.’

‘How many points does that make?’

‘Eight.’

‘So where is the ace of diamonds? And tell me why you know where it is.’

‘It is with West because if I had it then I would have had twelve points and so would have opened the bidding.’

‘Were any of those questions difficult?’

‘No.’

‘In fact they were elementary, my dear Watson. All you actually did was recognise that most people need twelve points to open the bidding and that if you had the ace and king of a suit you would lead it.’

‘So you see by just asking yourself some very simple questions and putting all the answers together you can solve many bridge problems. The difficulty is not answering the questions, but posing the right ones, that comes with experience and practice. But now that you know it can be done you can start asking yourself questions about each and every hand.’

‘By the way I do not have time to get my beer now.’

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Note also that the developers of the app are surrounded by experts... Indeed, Jérôme Rombaut, 2017 Vice World Bridge Champion with France, is by their side. He is in charge of the artificial intelligence of the app. His objective? Make it behave like a human player.

Funbridge is the perfect bridge app. It suits all players with its comprehensive and various game modes. Its weak point? It is highly addictive! We strongly encourage you to try it out if you have not already done so, especially since you get 100 free deals when you sign up. Once you have used them up, you receive 10 free deals every week or you can opt for one of our subscription offers with unlimited deals (from €9 per month).

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Kit's Corner

by World Champion Kit Woolsey

World Champion Kit Woolsey provides insight into the mind of an expert bridge player through in-depth analysis of hands he played at recent Major Tournaments. Kit provides you with the opportunity to play along with him and decide what you would do at each critical juncture.

Frozen Suit

In a round-robin match in the Bermuda Bowl, you must decide whether or not to open a borderline hand.

As West, you hold:

Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ K43
♥ K642
♦ J85
♣ A73

Your 1NT range at this vulnerability is 14-16. If you choose to open, your bid must be 1♦. This shows 11-15 points with at least 2 diamonds, 11-13 if balanced. Your call?

It is true that you are 4-3-3-3 and have no 10's or even 9's, certainly downgradable features. On the other hand you have prime cards rather than a bunch of queens and jacks. While this hand is a dead minimum, it really isn't any worse than partner will be expecting. In general, if you have a choice between passing and bidding it is better to bid if bidding isn't too much of a distortion.

You open 1♦. The bidding concludes:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	3♣
All Pass			

1♦ 11-15, 2+ diamonds, 11-13 if balanced.

Your lead. Third and fifth leads.

Nothing is attractive. Just because partner bid spades doesn't make a spade lead automatic. Partner doesn't have to have strength in spades. He didn't

bid 1♠ as a lead-director. He bid 1♠ because it was his proper response. A spade lead away from the king is risky.

On the other hand, any lead is risky. As least you know that partner has 4+ spades, so you are less likely to run into dummy's main source of tricks or declarer's side suit. You can't say that about either of the red suits. You do have the king of spades, so the spade lead might be productive for either establishing or cashing spade tricks if necessary.

What about a trump lead? It is relatively safe, although it could cause partner to wrongly put up an honour. But it does declarer's work for him. Declarer doesn't figure to be ruffing anything in dummy. His game plan is likely to be drawing trumps. You don't want to be doing his work for him.

You lead the ♠3.

♠ A9
♥ Q98
♦ Q10742
♣ 62

♠ K4
♥ K642
♦ J85
♣ A73



Small from dummy. Partner wins the queen, declarer playing the ♠5.

At trick 2, partner returns the ♣8. Declarer plays the king.

How do you defend?

♠ A9
♥ Q98
♦ Q10742
♣ 6

♠ K4
♥ K642
♦ J85
♣ A7



Dummy's diamonds appear threatening considering your diamond holding. If declarer has Ax or Kx of diamonds, he could be setting up a lot of diamond tricks if the ace of spades isn't dislodged. It is tempting to win the ace of clubs and lead the king of spades. Even if this costs a trick, the trick might come back.

Why did partner return a trump? There is no ruffing threat in dummy. He can see the diamond danger as well as you can, and he can see the value of knocking out the ace of spades. He knows you have the king of spades when his queen holds.

What is going on in the spade suit? The only reason partner didn't return a spade is because he thought it might not be safe to do so. Declarer is known to have the jack of spades since partner played the queen. If partner started with 5 spades he would know a spade return is safe. Also, if partner doesn't have the ♠10 he would know that a spade return is safe and might be quite important if you have ♠K10x or ♠KJx.

The conclusion is that partner's spade holding must be ♠Q10xx, giving declarer ♠Jxx. The spade suit is a frozen suit. Whichever side next leads the suit will be giving up a spade trick.

What is the distribution of the hand? You know that partner responded 1♠ on a 4-card spade suit. If he were 4-4 in the majors his proper response is 1♥, not 1♠. Declarer must have at least 3 hearts. This means that declarer has at most a singleton diamond.

This analysis shows that the diamond threat in dummy is not real. There is no rush to knock out dummy's ace of spades. If declarer's singleton diamond is the king, a spade lead will break even. If it is anything else, a spade lead will cost a trick.

Given that you aren't shifting to the king of spades, there is no reason to win this trick. Declarer clearly has the queen of clubs for his play of the king. You don't know exactly what you should be leading, only what you shouldn't be leading. You might as well duck and see what declarer has in mind.

You play small. Declarer now leads the ♦3 from his hand. You play upside down count and attitude.

Which diamond do you play?

♠ A9
♥ Q98
♦ Q10742
♣ 6

♠ K4
♥ K642
♦ J85
♣ A7



If declarer has 9x of diamonds it would be essential for you to play small. Presumably declarer would play the ♦10 losing to partner's king. When declarer next led the ♦9 you would cover, and your ♦8 would prevent declarer from getting a diamond trick. If you squandered the ♦8, dummy's ♦7 would set up.

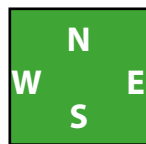
On this hand you know declarer has a singleton diamond, so partner has AK96. It is perfectly safe for you to give count by playing the ♦8. Partner won't know whether you have ♦J8 doubleton or ♦J85, but he will know that you have the jack of diamonds since from ♦85 doubleton you would have played the 5. He will know he has dummy's diamonds covered, so there would be no need for him to lead back a spade.

While playing the ♦8 should suffice, you can do even better by playing the jack. This will leave no doubt in partner's mind that he controls the diamond suit, since after it goes queen, king partner will be looking at his ♦A96 over dummy's ♦1074. Partner knows your jack isn't a singleton, since you opened 1♦. Partner will know that you didn't play the jack of diamonds from J5, since with that you would keep the jack of diamonds to later cover declarer's 8 or 9. If partner really works it out he will realize why you were able to play the jack. But at any rate, partner will know the diamond suit isn't a threat so he won't feel it is urgent to return a spade.

You play the ♦8. Dummy plays the ♦10, and partner wins the king. Partner returns the jack of clubs, covered by the queen.

How do you defend?

♠ K4	♠ A9
♥ K642	♥ Q98
♦ J5	♦ Q742
♣ 7	♣ —



The hand is now clear. Declarer's must have ♠Jxx ♥Axx ♦3 ♣KQ109xx. Only the location of the jack and 10 of hearts is a mystery.

You might as well win this and put the jack of diamonds through. This will clarify the diamond position for partner without cost. You know partner has dummy out-spotted in diamonds, and that declarer doesn't have the entries to establish and get to dummy's long diamonds.

You win the ace of clubs and lead the jack of diamonds. It goes queen, ace ruff. Declarer leads the ♥7.

Do you go up king or duck?

♠ K4	♠ A9
♥ K642	♥ Q98
♦ 5	♦ 742
♣ 7	♣ —



If declarer started with A10x of hearts he would have a heart guess in theory if you duck. In practice, it is no guess. He heard you open the bidding. He has seen partner show up with queen of spades, jack of clubs, and AK of diamonds. He knows where the king of hearts is.

Is there any danger in ducking the king of hearts? There sure is. Declarer can win the queen, and cash all of his trumps and the ace of hearts coming down to a 3-card ending. Declarer has the spade count and knows the spade suit is frozen, since if the suit weren't frozen the defence would have led a second round of spades at some point. Both defenders must keep 2 spades, since otherwise declarer can and will pick up the spade suit, so they

can each hold only 1 other card. Declarer exits with a heart, and whoever wins this trick is endplayed into breaking the frozen spade suit.

You go up king of hearts.

What do you exit with?

♠ K4	♠ A9
♥ 642	♥ Q9
♦ 5	♦ 742
♣ 7	♣ —



Clearly you cannot lead a spade. A diamond is also wrong, as this would allow declarer to establish a diamond trick. Either a heart or a club is okay, but a heart lead puts less pressure on partner.

You lead back a small heart. Declarer wins partner's jack with his ace, and draws your last trump. He discards a diamond from dummy, and partner discards a spade. Declarer now crosses to the queen of hearts and tries unsuccessfully to ruff out the ♦9. He leads a small spade to dummy's ace, and is down 1. The full hand is:

♠ K43	♠ A97	♠ Q1062
♥ K642	♥ Q98	♥ J53
♦ J85	♦ Q10742	♦ AK96
♣ A73	♣ 62	♣ J8



♠ J85
♥ A107
♦ 3
♣ KQ10954

Was there anything declarer could have done to improve his chances?

Declarer has to hope from the start that the spade suit is frozen. If it

isn't frozen the defence can set up another spade trick, and there will be no chance to make.

Entries to dummy are scarce enough, so declarer isn't going to be using any of them to lead a club up. Once declarer chose to play the king of clubs at trick 2 (which is far from clear), he might as well continue with the queen of clubs hoping to pin the doubleton jack. If the jack isn't doubleton, it is hard to see how the hand can make. The defender with Axx of clubs will probably lead a club back, and now declarer can make his diamond play. This could cause the defence problems in some variations. If declarer can get the defence to lead a second round of diamonds, he can potentially use his hoped-for heart entry to ruff a third diamond, and then if West started with 4 diamonds West will be squeezed in spades and diamonds at the end.

When declarer led a heart up to dummy, he might have tried the effect of leading the ♥10. It shouldn't work since West has the count of the hand and knows declarer won't misguess, but a sleepy West might duck hoping declarer lets the ♥10 ride, not seeing the danger.

At the end, declarer certainly should have cashed his last trump before playing the spade. If West did have the last diamond, he would have been squeezed. On the actual hand this wouldn't have succeeded. West has a heart to discard, and East sitting behind dummy discards whatever dummy discards.

Do you agree with East's decision to sell out to 3♣?

East knows his side has the balance of strength, but where is he going? There doesn't figure to be a game opposite West's expected 11-13 hand. At matchpoints East would probably close his eyes and double, since letting the opponents play a low-level partial undoubled isn't going to score well anyway. At IMPs the odds are clearly against this.

One might speculate what would have happened had West passed as dealer. We do have a comparison from the other table. The bidding was short and sweet. It was passed out!



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Planning the Play: The Next Level

Barbara Seagram and David Bird

Seagram and Bird's *Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand* was named Book of the Year in 2010 by the American Bridge Teachers' Association. It introduced the basic concepts of how to go about making a plan as declarer for beginning and improving players, and is a popular text for bridge teachers. This sequel extends the plan to more complex situations, and covers ideas such as safety plays, avoidance play, trump control, dummy reversal, and endplays. It will appeal to players who have a good grasp of the basics of declarer play, and are looking to improve from there.

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Overconfidence

♠ 6
♥ AKJ62
♦ A74
♣ 9763

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♥
Pass	2♣	2♠	3♣
3♠	4♥	All Pass	

♠ 1074
♥ Q105
♦ KJ6
♣ AK52

♠ 6
♥ AKJ62
♦ A74
♣ 9763

This was the full deal:

♠ 1074
♥ Q105
♦ KJ6
♣ AK52

♠ KJ52
♥ 984
♦ 93
♣ Q1084

♠ AQ983
♥ 73
♦ Q10852
♣ J

♠ 6
♥ AKJ62
♦ A74
♣ 9763

At the other table East/West lost 500 in 4♠ doubled.

Bad Timing

The Vanderbilt is one of the toughest events on the calendar. We have survived a three way match, but now face one of the stronger teams. They are out of sorts and we have a fair lead when with both sides vulnerable I pick up these cards:

♠ K4
♥ AKJ1053
♦ 9
♣ Q865

I open 1♥ and partner responds 2♦ which we play as forcing to game. When I rebid my suit partner gives me a single raise, setting hearts as trumps. Rather than simply sign off I try 3♠ and partner replies 4♣, which I take to be some form of control. Although it is not necessarily a good idea to show a shortage in partner's suit I decide to continue with 4♦ and that sees partner bid 4♠. With nothing more to add I go 5♥ but partner has not finished and raises to 6♥. This has been our lengthy auction:

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

West leads the three of clubs and dummy is revealed.

♠ AJ7
♥ Q62
♦ Q108743
♣ A

♠ K4
♥ AKJ1053
♦ 9
♣ Q865

Quite well bid by us! There is only one loser and hopefully I can do something with dummy's diamonds. After winning the club lead in dummy I play the three of diamonds. East plays the ace and returns a trump. I win with the jack, ruff a club, ruff a diamond, ruff a club and ruff another diamond high, on which West discards the two of spades. Neither minor suit king having made an appearance I run my trumps, discarding the queen of diamonds on the last one. East matches that with the king of diamonds and when I take the spade finesse it loses to the queen so I am one down. This was the complete deal:

♠ 109632	♠ AJ7	♠ Q85
♥ 84	♥ Q62	♥ 97
♦ 65	♦ Q108743	♦ AKJ2
♣ KJ93	♣ A	♣ 10742

♠ K4	♠ K4
♥ AKJ1053	♥ AKJ1053
♦ 9	♦ 9
♣ Q865	♣ Q865

Post mortem

East made a clever play in diamonds, but it should not have mattered. If I win the trump switch in dummy I can ruff a diamond, ruff a club, ruff a diamond, ruff a club and ruff another diamond. Then I have enough winners after trumps have been drawn. Apart from the slight risk involved in ruffing two clubs with low trumps this works whenever diamonds are 4-2 and keeps all the other chances intact.

They stopped in game at the other table, so we lost 13 IMPs instead of gaining them.



Brother Xavier's Double

by David Bird

At half-time in the Abbot's county knock-out match against Brother Cameron's novices, he was disturbed to find his team 11 IMPs in arrears.

'Not exactly what I had in mind,' the Abbot declared. 'Still, their good luck can't last forever.'

Brother Lucius nodded politely. Good luck? It seemed to him that the novices were unlucky not to be more ahead. The Abbot and Brother Xavier had played a very moderate first half, letting through two games with no apparent play whatsoever. It seemed that he and Paulo would have to rescue the situation at their own table.

Play restarted and Lucius arrived in a game contract on the first board:

Dealer North. Neither Vul.

	♠ 10862	
	♥ KQ	
	♦ QJ1086	
	♣ AK	
♠ J5		♠ AQ974
♥ 109432		♥ J65
♦ K74		♦ 2
♣ J52		♣ Q1086
	♠ K3	
	♥ A87	
	♦ A953	
	♣ 9743	

West	North	East	South
Brother Damien	Brother Paulo	Brother Cameron	Brother Lucius
–	1♦	1♠	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The ♠J was led and Brother Lucius studied the dummy carefully. East was no doubt going to play a low card. Suppose he won the first trick with the

♠K and crossed to a heart to run the ♦Q. All would be well if the finesse won. If it happened to lose, West might be able to play a second spade through dummy's remaining 1086. East would score four spade tricks and that would be one down.

Brother Lucius moved into action, contributing the ♠3 to the first trick. West was left on lead with the jack and the contract could not then be defeated. Brother Cameron won the spade continuation with the ace and switched to the ♣6. A subsequent diamond finesse lost, but West had no spade to play. Declarer had nine tricks before him, despite making no trick in spades.

Brother Lucius looked at the two novices in turn. 'It'll be a flat board, don't worry,' he said. 'It's obvious to hold up the king, once you think about it.'

Brother Cameron was not so sure. 'I suppose so,' he replied. 'Still, how many would find the play in a monastery duplicate? Not many, I bet.'

A short while afterwards, on the Abbot's table, the players were about to play this board:

Dealer South. N/S Vul.

	♠ KQ85	
	♥ A7	
	♦ AK10862	
	♣ 6	
♠ 742		♠ A
♥ 9		♥ 1086542
♦ J95		♦ 43
♣ AQJ985		♣ 10742
	♠ J10963	
	♥ KQJ3	
	♦ Q7	
	♣ K3	

West	North	East	South
Brother Xavier	Brother Mark	The Abbot	Brother James
–	–	–	1♠
3♣	4NT	5♣	Double
Pass	5♠	All Pass	

Before making his first bid, Brother Mark turned towards the Abbot. ‘How do you play the 3♣ overcall?’ he asked.

‘It’s weak,’ replied the Abbot. ‘Not a method I play willingly, of course. I was outvoted on the matter.’

When Brother Mark bid Roman Key-card Blackwood, the Abbot was happy to raise to 5♣. With any luck, the novices would have no idea what responses to use after such intervention. It might be one of the rare boards where weak jump overcalls actually showed to advantage.

Brother James doubled in the South seat and his partner looked puzzled for a few moments. He eventually bid 5♠ and this ended the auction.

‘You alerted your partner’s double?’ queried Brother Xavier

Brother James shrugged his shoulders. ‘Well, it should show 0 or 3 key cards,’ he replied. ‘After interference we play DOPI, but it’s never happened before.’

Brother Xavier led the ace of clubs and down went the dummy. ‘I knew it couldn’t be three key cards because I’ve got three myself,’ said Brother Mark. ‘There’s barely room for an opening bid if you’ve got no key cards at all. That’s what was worrying me.’

The club ace held the first trick and Brother Xavier switched to the ♥9. Brother James won with the jack and was quick to play the king of clubs, discarding dummy’s ace of hearts. With the threat of a heart ruff averted, the contract was secure. He played a trump to the king and ace, ruffed East’s heart return high and drew trumps. Eleven tricks were there.

The Abbot gritted his teeth. If Xavier had made the world’s most obvious heart lead, the contract would be dead in the water. He really was quite hopeless when it came to opening leads.

Brother Xavier had realized the situation. ‘I didn’t see how leading the ace of clubs could cost,’ he said. ‘Once I’d seen the dummy, I could switch to a heart then if it looked sensible. That was my thinking.’

♠ 742	♠ KQ85	♠ A
♥ 9	♥ A7	♥ 1086542
♦ J95	♦ AK10862	♦ 43
♣ AQJ985	♣ 6	♣ 10742
	♠ J10963	
	♥ KQJ3	
	♦ Q7	
	♣ K3	

The Abbot made no reply, scribbling the result in his scorecard. To any normal bridge player, leading the ♥9 would have looked sensible at trick 1.

Back on the other table, Brother Lucius and Brother Paulo were happy with their second half so far. Their scorecard wasn’t quite Abbot-proof, but it was good enough. Perhaps they could armour-plate it further on the next board:

Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ J1087	♠ AK632	♠ 4
♥ 10983	♥ J64	♥ Q752
♦ Q92	♦ 6	♦ J1084
♣ K7	♣ 8642	♣ AQJ3
	♠ Q95	
	♥ AK	
	♦ AK753	
	♣ 1095	

West	North	East	South
Brother Damien	Brother Paulo	Brother Cameron	Brother Lucius
–	–	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Brother Damien led the ♥10 and Brother Paulo smiled at his partner as he displayed his cards. ‘Some chicken here for you,’ he declared, ‘but, I’m afraid, not much stuffing.’

‘So I see,’ replied Brother Lucius. ‘Mind you, there’s not a very generous portion of chicken either.’

Lucius won with the heart ace and drew two rounds of trumps with the ace and queen, East showing out on the second round. After cashing the ♥K, he played the two top diamonds, discarding a club from dummy. All

followed when he ruffed a diamond in dummy and he then ruffed the ♥J with the ♠9, his last trump. These cards remained:

♠ J 10	♠ K 6	♠ —
♥ 9	♥ —	♥ —
♦ —	♦ —	♦ J
♣ K 7	♣ 8 6 4	♣ A Q J 3
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ 7 5	
	♣ 10 9 5	

When another diamond was led, Brother Cameron had no answer in the West seat. If he ruffed, declarer would throw a club from dummy and the ♠K-6 would score the game-going tricks. If he didn't ruff, declarer would ruff with the ♠6 and make 4♠ just the same.

'Yes, 620, well done,' said Brother Cameron, returning his cards to the board. 'I can't find the club lead, sorry, particularly with a natural trump trick in my hand.'

'No,' agreed Brother Damien.
'Still, it may be a flat board.'

Play had been somewhat slow at the other table and the chapel clock was striking eleven as the players drew their cards for the final board of the match:



Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ Q 10 9 5	♠ 6 4	♠ K J 8
♥ J 9 4 3	♥ 5 2	♥ K 10 8 7 6
♦ 10 9	♦ 7 6 4 3	♦ K 8 2
♣ A 10 9	♣ K Q 7 6 5	♣ J 2
	♠ A 7 3 2	
	♥ A Q	
	♦ A Q J 5	
	♣ 8 4 3	

West	North	East	South
Brother Xavier	Brother Mark	The Abbot	Brother James
–	–	1♥	Double
2♥	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

Brother Xavier could recognise an opportunity to recover some IMPs when he saw one. The Abbot was noted for the soundness of his opening bids. With 7 points and a fistful of middle cards in his own hand, how likely was it that 3NT was a make? Brother James probably didn't know how many points were needed for a double followed by 2NT.

Brother Xavier doubled 3NT and led the ♥3. Down went the dummy and Brother James was distressed at what he saw. 'Only 5 points?' he queried.

'I put you with a 2NT opener,' replied Brother Mark. 'That's right, isn't it?'

Brother Xavier shared a glance with the Abbot. At the very last moment, the tide had turned in their favour.

Brother James won East's ♥K with the ace and played a club to the king. When the ♣J appeared from the Abbot in the East seat, he finessed the ♦Q successfully and led a second round of clubs. Brother Xavier held up the ace once more and dummy's queen won the trick. Declarer finessed the ♦J

and led a third round of clubs to West's ace.

When Brother Xavier played another heart, clearing the suit, the young declarer continued with the ♦A, dropping East's king. He then crossed to dummy with the ♦7. Two club tricks and a spade to the ace gave him two overtricks.

'How many points did you have?' asked a delighted Brother Mark.

'Seventeen,' his partner replied. 'I didn't like to overcall 1NT with four cards in the other major.'

'Well done, anyway,' said Brother Mark. 'That's er... 1150, isn't it?'

'If I lead a spade, it only saves one trick,' Brother Xavier observed. 'Your opening bid was a bit light, wasn't it?'

The Abbot had been waiting for this. Only some hopeless old-timer would pass on his 11-count and now Brother Xavier was trying to shift the blame for his absurd double. Typical!

Lucius and Paulo looked up hopefully as the Abbot made his way towards them. Their card was bristling with IMP potential. Virtually Abbot-proof, was how he would rate it. 'We're quite good,' he said. 'How did you get on?'

'A bit of a mixture,' replied the Abbot.

Brother Lucius winced. He had heard that phrase from the Abbot before. It was not a promising sign.

They soon reached the final board of the comparison. 'And +50 on the last one,' said Brother Lucius. 'They went off in Three Hearts.'

'Yes, well, this was our unlucky one,' declared the Abbot. 'Er... minus eleven fifty. You missed the game at your table, did you? That's 15 IMPs away.'

Brother Lucius, the monastery accountant, was usually quickest to add up the scores. 'I'm afraid that last one was too much for us,' he announced. 'They win by 3 IMPs.'

The Abbot slumped in his chair. Without Brother Xavier's costly double on the last board, they'd have saved 4 IMPs and won by a single IMP. 'Just imagine how amused Hoggitt will be when he gets the result card,' he declared. 'He rarely wins anything nowadays. This will be the high-spot of his year!'

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2016	Moscow Invitational Slava Cup
2016	South American Bridge Championships
2016	Spingold Master Knockout Teams
2016	World Bridge Games Open Pairs Championships

Just to get us started, why do you play bridge?

OK, well I used to play a lot of different games and I found it to be the most challenging. Some games like Chess are a little bit more scientific in terms of definitively determining a course of action in some instances, but bridge really has a unique combination of mathematical analysis combined with a sort of a psychological element, or an element of the unknown. So you really have to use probability more than science.

Not that probability isn't a science in itself, but there's no certainty. So most games have too much chance or too much skill. Bridge is a perfect

combination of both, I think. Plus, it never really repeats itself. You play Tic,Tac,Toe it's the same thing over and over again. Bridge is at the complete other end of the spectrum from my perspective.

What was it that hooked you in?

I have always found games interesting and challenging. I studied a lot of mathematics when I was young and I suppose the analytical element appeals to me in this and many other games. I just found this to be more appealing. There is a drawback in some sense that you are required to play with a partner or in a team so you don't always get to freely implement all of your ideas although you usually have to.

So do you mean that sometimes, because of your partner or team mate you can't really do what you would do if it was just up to you?

I think the best example is the stylistic view. I tend to try to do whatever I think is the best percentage action most of the time. Of course, that's not always the most sensible decision at that point in time. I mean, if you are ahead 50 with a few boards to go, then it might not make that much sense to make a very aggressive pre-empt, even if it is, in isolation, the best percentage action. But, I guess, more so if you're playing in a team, if you come back with unusual results, which I do, they start to wonder – gee what happened on that board? So, I guess it's because I go about bridge a little bit differently from a lot of people, so I am perfectly willing to take risks and assume that if I'm right two-thirds of the time, then that's fantastic. Of course, it also means that you have a result that nobody else has about a third of the time for whatever reason.

An example you gave there is the aggressive pre-empt – would you still take that action?

Well, you shouldn't in some situations, and in some situations you should. I don't let my team mates or the opinions of other people prevent me from doing what I think is correct generally speaking.

Would you still do that if you were something like 50 up?

Well then I think you should take that risk, I intentionally didn't do that on the last day in Croatia and the results were bad. Because we probably didn't need many Victory Points in the final day to qualify for the top six, which is one of the primary objectives really. But we thought, if we just get a few under our belt in the first match it would be nice and then we could do whatever we want to try to win a medal. But that strategy didn't work very well for us. I guess it's just not our style at least for me, it's to play aggressively.

How did that feel, going into that day 1st and coming out 6th. Obviously 6th was still great as you qualified, but how did that—going from 1st to 3rd and then to 6th—feel?

That happens all the time in Swiss Teams. When you are in anything that's run in a Swiss format, often you are playing the leaders in the last round, if you lose a couple of matches you are obviously going to drop several places. We lost all three of our last matches, some of them quite badly and so, it's always disappointing but it's something you get used to if you are a games player. If you play bridge all the time and it's a knockout match every match has a loser. So you have to get used to that.

But how do you get used to that?

By going through it enough times. I mean, in that specific example, I had played in the US Trials for many, many, many years hoping to earn a place in the Bermuda Bowl and never did.

I think you said in an interview in Croatia that you are quite famous for your come-backs. How do you manage to come back?

Well, it's the same style of playing that we have that it's very easy for us to not replicate the result of the other table. So the bidding is almost guaranteed to be different and we also have a very aggressive style, so sometimes we have team mates and they say well our opponents played really well. That almost never happens to us. That's not to say that we don't make mistakes or get caught speeding or we are more prone to accidents than some pairs as a result of this style, but it's also true that our opponents make a lot more mistakes than they normally do because uncertainty is created during the auction.

I'm afraid I don't actually have a feel for your system but I have heard that it

is quite unusual.

It is unusual, yes. That's been mentioned. Some people are adopting some parts of the system, for example, a lot of people have started to play transfer responses to a one club opener and that whole style has a lot of benefits and I think most people who don't play it don't realise what they are missing. Like the ability to let either hand decide that they don't want to be the Declarer or the Dummy depending on the make-up of their cards. There are a lot of advantages like that.

When you say you're creating uncertainty for your opponents, is that because of your unusual methods or is it because of your style of play?

There are some conventions that are intentionally designed to cause confusion, like the multi for example. We don't play multi, but there were many hands in Croatia where the strangest things happened as a result of somebody opening a Multi and both sides attempting to play in the same major—both sides. I mean it looked so stupid!

But how do you feel if some people are a bit critical of playing unusual methods? I think it's fair to say here in the US, some people are particularly anti playing something so different that your opponents don't know what is going on and they don't necessarily think it's fair?

Well, there are a lot of methods that are permitted so some of the methods that we play, I mean, we pre-empt a lot, so that causes problems for your opponents. I am a big believer in the more space of your opponents you take up, the better off you are. You take away a lot of their options and a lot of their science. So we do have some conventions that we play, but we are only permitted to play them as a defence to an unusual convention, Precision or something like that. So you don't get to do that stuff all the time. Technically it's a defence, just as a convention over a No Trump is considered a defence to their 1NT opening. So those people who don't wish to play against methods like that, all they have to do is play more standard methods themselves then they won't encounter them. They'll still encounter aggressive pre-empting, but to me that's all a part of bridge. I think you're giving money away when you don't pre-empt when you could have.

You said at the beginning that you recognise that you play a bit differently from other players. How did that come about?

Well, because I think it's an effective style, I don't like to give my opponents a free run in the bidding without any interference, so I overcall pretty aggressively. That's a lot of the style. Also when we are having a constructive auction, we try to make sure that they know as little as possible about the Declarer's hand. When we are bidding in an uncontested auction, one hand is describing itself to who is usually the Declarer and the Declarer doesn't say anything about their hand. So I am a big believer in that because it makes defence much more difficult. So, a lot of our system is geared towards intentionally not disclosing information about our hand that might be valuable to our opponents when we think it's our hand, and when it's their hand to try to interrupt their bidding best way we can.

And you don't really mind when it goes wrong—is that correct?

Well, you never want it to go wrong, but it's just part of the game, it's risk and reward. That's what some people don't like about bridge. They don't like being at the other end of a coin toss, which they perceive. I don't think it's a coin toss, I think I'm going to win 60% or whatever the percentage is. That's the way I view it, as an action that's more likely to win than lose and, yes, it's random. But it's probably less random for us than it is for our opponents.

Do your opponents or team mates ever get cross?

Sure, of course they do.

How do you cope with that?

I mean, we haven't had any trouble with any team mates for a long time. Of course you just know that your team mates are going what the Hell, was it a bidding misunderstanding when you're minus 600. Like we did in one of those matches. One of the unfortunate aspects of playing an extremely complex system is that sometimes there is an uncertainty in the auction. We have discussed and discussed our system and we have a lot of agreements, but that's the beauty of bridge, something comes along that you haven't discussed and that's one of the things we try to do to our opponents, make sure we introduce them to a situation that they haven't discussed.

What would you say are the key qualities of a top player?

Initially I think it's the same as almost every single thing in life which is that those who desire to learn and improve will always garner better results

than those who think that they understand and just play. There are a lot of bridge players today that play the same system they played that they learned 30 years ago. When it's their turn to lead if they have a Queen and a Jack in the same suit they lead the Queen of that suit. So I don't do that. I think, well what suit should be led? It doesn't matter what I have in my hand. I don't just lead the Ace King because I have it. I decide which suit will be the most effective lead and then, if I have a dilemma with respect to say the Ace King of clubs, sometimes you do that and sometimes you don't 'cos you're giving away information. So the people who continually try to evolve their bridge game or continue to learn will have a much better chance of being a great player some day. And then, if you add to that obviously you need some talent—I'd like to say that people have a talent for bridge, but sometimes people have a talent for analytical things. Doing things that are analytical and skills of evaluation, both of those are very important for bridge.

So if you have those elements combined with the desire to improve and educate yourself, if you want to phrase it that way, then I think the most important factor is the ability to focus and concentration. Because you see that all the time. Some players who are just real wizards, but don't necessarily do the best with their abilities as a result of that, and then there are some players who work really hard at the table and have to work amazingly hard because they don't play that much or they don't really have a real natural sense. I've played a lot of card games so I'm not saying, I think I'm above average and I could play without thinking and be OK, not that, of course I would make a lot of mistakes but I would just play a diamond and often it's right. And there's some players who don't really have any of that and they have to work really hard, and those that work really hard can still achieve a super high level of success. So, I think concentration has got to be right at the top of the most important.

Is that something you have to work at, concentration?

Yeah. Focus I'm good at. Focus and concentration I don't necessarily think of as exactly the same.

Can you explain what you mean by that?

When I say focus, OK, maybe I'm using the wrong word, maybe I should have used ambition instead of focus. I have always been very ambitious and have had a very strong desire to win and have no trouble focussing myself

on trying to give myself the best chance, but I am prone to a lapse in concentration during the play. Sometimes I play too quickly, or call a card from the Dummy that I shouldn't. So that's a weak spot for me. One of my old partners said that there are a few dozen players who just really seem to have a natural talent for bridge, and then there are also many players who are extremely studious and cautious. There are only a couple that are both and those are two of the best players in the world – Zia is an extremely talented and slow and careful player; Bob Levin is another, an unbelievably natural player who really takes his time. It shows in their phenomenal results over their careers so far. So I'd like to be more like them. I've always thought of myself as a fairly talented card player, but if I could just improve my concentration, take my time, I would do better.

And do you know how to do that?

I think I have been progressing. I've read recently a book called "Blink". I don't know if you're familiar with it. It was written by Malcolm Gladwell who is also more known for a book called "Outliers", but "Blink" was a very interesting book. I've always felt like, OK, it's true, if I take a long time at Trick 1 I'm more likely to come up with a better line of play and my opponents will be more likely to come up with a better defence. So it is a trade-off. I have always thought that my playing quickly often my opponents make more mistakes than I do than they would have otherwise. I might lose a little bit in my play, but I think that my opponents would lose more than I do in sometimes playing too quickly. So, there is a trade-off, so I can rationalise my own shortcomings in that manner if I so choose. But the book "Blink" was very interesting and it's exactly something I always sort of felt was true, the point basically that it makes is cognitive analysis doesn't necessarily improve evaluation of something. Often your brain has already, perhaps subconsciously, analysed something accurately. One of the best examples they gave is if you've witnessed a crime and you are asked to point out the criminal in a line-up, people, with a great degree of accuracy, are able to do that, but if before doing that, they are asked to describe the perpetrator, that pollutes their vision. If they have to try to translate a vision of what is in their brain first into words, then when they go to try to pick the person out of a line-up they are less likely to because their thought process has been perverted in essence. So what they started with was the vision

and then they tried to translate that into words. So that happens in a lot of media, I think, where sometimes you have a perfectly good evaluation of something and then if you try to over analyse it doesn't necessarily do it.

That relates to playing a hand, for example?

Well, sometimes, let's say you're trying to find the queen of trumps. It could be that your brain has noticed that your right hand opponent was fidgety a little bit or trying to behave normally and you didn't really consciously recognise that, but you might feel like he's got the Queen over there, and even though you couldn't count the hand, you'd go, he's quite likely to have three and you can talk yourself out of making the play that you would have otherwise made. So I don't like to do that to myself.

So you stick with the first ...

If I have an instinct to make one play, I usually do that, unless I have a really firm analysis of why it's wrong. After reading that book I'm more likely to do it than I was beforehand.

Where does bridge fit in your life?

Right now? It's always been a dream of mine to play more bridge, so I used to play in most of the US Nationals and a couple of International events and I was working fulltime for a lot of the time. I always hoped to be able to travel a bit more and play a little bit more bridge and so, in that respect, I am fulfilling a dream of mine to play more often and with people from different parts of the world and at a higher level.

So if you had your time all over again, would you want to be a bridge pro from a young age?

No. I wouldn't want to be a professional. I think it spoils the game a little bit. I think I have more fun playing bridge than any bridge professional. Often as a professional you're playing for a team sponsor or partnering a team sponsor and it's hard to compare the enjoyment of that. I mean, there are a lot of pairs who get to play with their regular partner and there are several sponsors that are quite good players and very successful, so I don't mean this as a knock on them, but we play with whomever we want to play with. We play with people that we like, and where we think we have a good chance to win and that's a luxury that not many professionals have.

What was your goal at that time?

I wanted to play in the Bermuda Bowl. I wanted to win a World Championship. We did win all three of the US Nationals and we played internationally in the World Championships in Istanbul in 2004 and lost in...that was a tough match.

What is the preferred term for a sponsor, are there any negative connotations—I've heard lots of terms?

Most people use the word "sponsor", some people say "client". I don't know, some people consider some of those negative connotations and some people don't. I'll tell you a story. I worked in a pool hall when I was a kid and it was a very, I'm not going to say fancy in that it was elegant, but there were some of the world's best players there and they would sit around and wait for a 'sucker' to come in and they would win most of their money from suckers.

So I saw this one guy. He came in about every three months. Very nicely dressed, sometimes with a date. He would play for two or three hours and lose a bunch of money, and then he would go off for a dinner reservation at 8 o'clock and I kept wondering, who is the real sucker? This guy comes in, he knows he's gonna lose, he enjoys playing pool with some of the best players in the world and a couple of hours go by, he's had a nice time and now he goes on with his life. So he is really just spending some money. They called him a sucker and I'm thinking they have it backwards. They're standing in a pool hall every day of their whole life waiting for that guy to come in and hoping he comes in and he is having a great life. They have a crappy life. So to me in that respect the sponsor is the person you want to be. That's the person with the better life. A bridge professional—I don't want to say anything bad about being a bridge professional, but they are waiting for a sponsor sometimes although some are good enough so that people are beating down their doors, but to me being a sponsor is a luxury, if you can afford it it's fine. I don't think it has to have a negative association with anything.

Can you explain a bit more about that conviction, why you think a sponsor has a better life.

I mean financially they have a better life which gives them flexibility. They play bridge, or don't play bridge, a bridge professional pretty much has to

play bridge. Maybe they can have another job and they are electing to do this but that's not the case with many people. I am sure a lot of them enjoy it a great deal, but if you have to play 330 days a year I think it takes a lot of the enjoyment out of it. For the people who really are full-time bridge professionals, if you ask them, "Hey, you want to play a few hands of bridge?" they're like, "Are you kidding?" They're not really looking forward to doing that in their spare time.

Can you describe the procession of the transition in you from going from being a sponsor to not being a sponsor?

I think it's really difficult. Brad Moss warned me about this before we ever played our first event. He said, once you sponsor a team you are forever a bridge sponsor and I said I didn't care. I don't really care about other people's perception. I mean, I do to some extent, but not about things like that. I don't care if people think I'm a bridge sponsor. But it was a goal for me to earn the bridge community's respect as a real bridge player and I think my successes have done enough to do that at least.

But you can choose whether to sponsor or not?

Yeah, but I don't want to do that. I don't really have any interest in sponsoring a bridge team. Because, firstly, it's really annoying—I want to be a member of the community, I don't want to be a sponsor. I want to be a world class bridge player, playing—I don't want to be playing as a sponsor. I always thought when I first started sponsorship who wouldn't, let's say you really loved tennis, and they said you could go play Wimbledon with John McEnroe in the doubles and actually play in Wimbledon and maybe get to the finals. If you really loved tennis and you could afford it, who wouldn't do that? Everybody would probably do that. So why is bridge any different? In bridge, it's even easier—practically speaking, you couldn't probably play with John McEnroe in the finals of the doubles, but in bridge you can actually do that. You don't even have to necessarily be a great player.

Do you mind, though, that inevitably some people still perceive you as a sponsor?

If they don't want to see things, what do I care? I mean, the facts are the facts, but I've had an extremely good record with several different partners with several different teams, and a record that is difficult for even the best players to match. I won the Player of the Year Award in 2007. I played with

five different partners. The list of winners is Meckstroth, Zia, people like that almost every year. And I played with somebody I had never played with in the first pair event and won that. I played in the Vanderbilt on a team with my wife at the time and we won, so I played most of the year basically ahead of the professionals. Crystal was on the Vanderbilt Team and the Spingold Team, she didn't play in the Reisinger, but we were playing on a team all year. And I played in pairs events with four or five different partners.

Why do you personally think that men, on paper, are better (statistically win more) than women?

I think it will evolve, but I think it probably begins from a social level. My belief has always been that bridge is something that you have to dedicate a lot of time to and when I decided to take up bridge that's all I did. I spent all day long at the bridge club.

In 1985, it wouldn't really be socially acceptable for a female to just hang out at a card haunt all day and all night or to play cards all night. That's not to say it doesn't ever happen, just that the pool of people from which you can choose the next great bridge player is a lot more likely to be, if it's going to be found in a roomful of people that play cards all day and night, there just aren't any women there. It has never really been socially acceptable. If someone's say Oh, what were you doing last night – I was playing cards all night – it's not the female thing to do. I don't know if it's a social reason or a desire reason. There are probably some other reasons. I don't know what they are. It's true in Chess also, there could be similar reasons, honestly I don't know. You should ask Sabine. She has some thoughts about it.

Do you think bridge is a sexist game?

The sexist viewpoint about the ability of players unfortunately, currently, it is mostly true. I think that the whole world of bridge creates a big disservice by actually having women's events because I think if they didn't have them they would be forced to compete and the result would probably be that women could compete equally with men. I haven't really dwelled on it that much. It's an unfortunate topic to discuss because it can probably be perceived as demeaning to some extent to women, more insulting.

It's unfortunate that the question is ever posed – why is it that women aren't able to compete at bridge? To those who think that all brains are created equal, I am one of those people. I mean, they are different, but I did

read something recently that could explain a little bit. One of my favourite books called "The Brain Rules" and the author, I didn't read it, I listen to audio books a lot, who was reading the book said that he had this young son, and his son was playing with some other kids, and one boy said, "I can throw this ball up to the ceiling." Another one says, "Oh, I can throw it higher." And then, he goes I can throw it up to the moon and they get competitive. And he said they were analysing the behaviour of girls of the same age. One girl says, "Hey, look, I can throw this ball up to the ceiling." And the response was, "Oh, I can too." A pretty big difference. So I don't know if that's instinct or, whatever it is, but I wouldn't rule out the possibility that, as a result of the evolution of man, that there are more competitive instincts in a male than a female, left over from the days of when they had to go hunting, or something. I don't know. I don't really want to talk too much about this topic because I don't really know anything about it.

How do you cope when it's not going quite so well? Do you never get cross with each other?

I think probably it's easier because I worked for a long time as a trader on the floor at the Stock Exchange and that's an industry where it's really just like I've described my bridge game. If I made money 55% of the time that was fantastic. But that must mean you lose 45% of the time so almost half of your life you were losing money and it's just part of the game. You have to look at it that way. Otherwise you'd just be pulling your hair out every other day, so in bridge it's the same way. Nobody wins every time they make a bid – sometimes you're gonna play badly, sometimes you're gonna lose and it's part of the game. If you don't accept that you probably shouldn't play.

So how did you decide to play for Germany and how did you feel about it?

In some ways it was very easy, in some ways it was difficult. It was an easy decision to make because I had never had so much fun playing bridge as playing with Sabine. We had a great system, we both loved playing and we have fun before, after and during bridge. We go to dinner, we have drinks afterwards, go running in the morning and I didn't want to play with somebody else in some other events because, to me, bridge at the highest level partnership is absolutely essential. Sometimes you can get away with not having it, but if you're gonna expect to compete on a regular basis you have to have a good partnership and bridge globally is just getting more and more

difficult every year. Look at the European Championships. I used to think, Oh, all you have to do is come in the top six over there, so easy, and now I'm over there – I'm like, what? Look at those teams! Look at the teams that didn't make it. France was a really strong team that didn't qualify and Norway. Some other really strong teams took part.

I've had a problem for a long time with the rules in the United States Team Trials. You are granted a very large advantage based upon your play during the course of the year in the three Nationals and the previous year's Trials, but *only if your team contains at least four American players*. So, for example, in one year I lost in the round of 8 in the Spingold and won the Vanderbilt and came second in the Reisinger but I would have had to play in the round robin.

Because you have team mates from elsewhere you mean?

Yeah, yeah. Originally the concept was they didn't want to have some sponsor who wasn't that good getting a bye into the semi-finals that he didn't really deserve or earn. But that wasn't what was happening here. I didn't expect anybody to make special rules for me but it's a significant handicap to have to play in a round robin, whereas if somebody else had those results they would have started in the semi-finals so they would play the worst team first and then allow the other teams to battle, so they'd probably have a 35% or 40% chance of being the Nation's representative, whereas my chances were probably 5-7% starting in the round robin because you have the round robin and then you have a round of 16, a round of 8, a round of 4, so they probably have 8 times my likelihood of earning a place.

Couldn't you then have picked team mates on that basis to have played with so that you could have got a bye to the semi-finals.

It's difficult to do that. The best American players are paid a lot of money, so for example, Meckstroth and Rodwell and Weinstein and Levin both play for Nickell and they are very well paid and that's the reason. I mean, you could get another really good pair, or you could get a team that's really good, the Monaco team for example, or even a team that's really good for a lot less money, but you wouldn't get that placing in the Trials. So I lost to Nickell almost every year, but many times after playing six days longer than they did. I lost three years in a row in the Finals. I played 11 days the first year, 10 days the second year and I don't remember how many days the

third year – I had a bye in it somewhere. It's a lot of bridge and by the end you might feel sharp, but even if you're fit and healthy, but when I analyse I thought I was playing really well, but when I subsequently analysed my play it was flopping because of fatigue, because playing every board for 11 days is a lot, 60 boards a day for 11 days.

So the rules make it really difficult. My chances of being the US representative were extremely small. Firstly, I couldn't play with Sabine, so I tried to do it every year, but then when Sabine and I started playing together then what was I going to do? If I played with Sabine in the US Nationals I would play in the round robin in a non-partnership. So what would be my chances of winning the US Trials? Close to zero.

Are there any differences that you see between playing in Europe and playing in the US?

Yes. Much nicer to play in Europe.

Why is that?

Well these bridge professionals, not all of them, but some of them make the game a lot less pleasant. Sometimes it's intentional and sometimes it's competitive or whatever but it's unfortunate. It's so much more pleasant playing there. We have had not one minute that was not pleasant bridge over there the whole time.

And when you said intentional?

There are pairs who try to make their opponents uncomfortable. It's a very specific objective to make their opponents uncomfortable at the table. So they are rude and curse and stuff like that, and do a lot of things just to throw you off balance. It's intentional. Wilful and intentional.

If someone's dishing that out how do you cope with that to make sure it doesn't throw you off balance?

I know what they are – I just think of them as assholes when they're doing that. I mean they probably get a great deal of success because of it. And there's also a lot more what I would call borderline unethical play here, where there is a little hesitation, just enough so would you go with it, was he thinking about winning the Ace when they don't have it...

Is there anything that is tangible that is more so here than in Europe?

I see that very rarely in Europe. I don't see very much of that at all.

Why—have you any idea why?

I guess there's a greater incentive to produce good results here, because it's your occupation—you have to. So if you have to win, if you have to cheat to win you'll cheat to win. I'm not saying everybody but some people will and some people have ...

So I guess that is a downside to professional bridge.

Definitely.

And are there any other downsides?

Well the upside is it has elevated the game. I don't think bridge would be this strong without professionalism in bridge so that is a really big plus—look at how strong the American Nationals have become because there are sponsors hiring all of these best players in the world to come over and play in it. It's a real pleasure to play in these events. It's something special, it's like whatever sport you compare it to, you are playing with all of the best players from all around the world. I think it is just the greatest thing, so that is a huge plus. The minuses—I don't know—other than it perverts the game a little bit. I mean, there are some issues of randomness which is unfortunate. With randomness, not in the knock-outs, but in the Reisinger or in the Swiss Teams, if you play, say for example a team with a weak sponsor in the afternoon when the sponsor is playing, that's a big advantage. So that you have that kind of effect where you're just really unlucky if you have to play a really strong four-handed team, and somebody else plays the sponsor.

A final question, what would your advice be to someone trying to get better?

I've watched a lot of bridge, I've always watched a lot of bridge. I used to come to the Nationals when I wasn't playing that much and so I would have some lousy team. And I would just watch instead of playing in some pair event I would watch the Spingold. I loved doing that, so I would sit behind Zia or somebody like that and watch how the best players played, and pay attention.



Roy Welland

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The Auction Room

Mark Horton

Welcome to the Auction Room, where we examine bidding methods from recent events.

This month we feature deals from the Women's Teams at the IMSA Elite Mind Games in China, which involved England, Sweden, the USA and the recently crowned Venice Cup Champions, China.

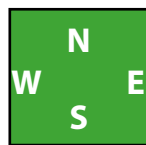
The teams contested a double round robin followed by a final and a play-off for third place.

The Hands

(This month all the deals were played at IMPs.)

Hand 1. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ A762		♠ 104
♥ 104		♥ AKQJ6
♦ J109632		♦ KQ5
♣ K		♣ A103



West	North	East	South
Clementsson	Brown	Rimstedt	Brock
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠*	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Having bid a modest 2♦ on the previous round West clearly had the values to go to game.

North led the jack of spades from her ♠J3 ♥8752 ♦84 ♣J9742 and declarer ducked, won the next spade, unblocked the king of clubs and played five rounds of hearts. There was no squeeze, so she was held to eight tricks, -100.

Could the English pair reach 5♦ in the replay?

West	North	East	South
Senior	Larsson	Draper	Bertheau
2♦*	Pass	2NT*	Pass
3♠*	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♦*	Pass	6♦	All Pass

- 2♦ Weak
- 2NT Forcing enquiry
- 3♠ Feature, not minimum
- 4♠ Cue-bid
- 4NT RKCB
- 5♦ 1 key card

As soon as West had opened it was clear that the diamond game would be reached – and East was even more ambitious.

North led the two of clubs and after winning with the king and knocking out the ace of diamonds declarer could claim, +1370 and 16 IMPs to England.

Not easy for North to find a spade lead, I'm sure you will agree.

Recommended auction: Obviously opening 2♦ made life relatively easy for E/W. It was much tougher for the Swedish pair. Even if West had jumped to 3♦ in response to her partner's double it is hard to imagine East doing anything other than bidding 3♠ when once again the doomed 3NT will be reached.

Marks: 5♦10, 6♦8, 3NT4.

Running score: England 10 (16) Sweden 4 (0)

Hand 2. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 6 ♠ KQJ108
 ♥ 2 ♥ K108
 ♦ AQJ973 ♦ K5
 ♣ Q10976 ♣ A54



West	North	East	South
Brock	Clementsson	Brown	Rimstedt
–	–	1NT	Pass
3♣*	Pass	3NT	All Pass

3♣ Game forcing with both minors

South led the three of hearts from ♠74 ♥Q9643 ♦10864 ♣32 and North won with the ace and returned the five for the ten and queen. South returned a heart and declarer won, pitching a second club from dummy and cashed six diamonds. However, there was no squeeze and when declarer took the decent shot of playing dummy's queen of clubs, North covered and the contract was one down when the jack did not appear, -100.

West	North	East	South
Bertheau	Senior	Larsson	Draper
–	–	1♠	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♣	Pass	5♦	All Pass

I can't be sure about the meaning of 3♦ (Perhaps limited with both minors) but it got the job done.

North led her trump and declarer took four rounds pitching two hearts from dummy and then played a spade, +600 and 12 IMPs back for Sweden.

There is a way to defeat 5♦ – can you see it?

North must cash her aces and then switch to the king of clubs – a brilliant example of the Merrimac Coup.

Recommended auction: This strikes me as an extraordinarily difficult deal for E/W to cope with. Even though Sally Brock had a bid to show both minors it is by no means clear to me that East should insist on playing in a minor suit game – and even if she did she might choose clubs, when there are at least three losers.

Marks: 5♦10, 3NT 5, 5♣ 3.

Running score: England 15 (16) Sweden 14 (12)

Hand 3. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ Q62 ♠ AK1085
 ♥ A76 ♥ 5
 ♦ J ♦ AK842
 ♣ AJ10654 ♣ K3



West	North	East	South
Shen	Rimstedt	Wang	Gronkvist
–	–	–	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦*	Pass
3♣*	Pass	3♦*	Pass
3NT*	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♥*	Pass	6♣	All Pass

2♣ Precision style

2♦ Relay

3♣ Minimum, 6+♣

4NT RKCB

5♥ 2 key cards

I'm not sure about the meaning of 3♦, it may have been asking about stoppers, 3NT showing both majors held. Both black suits broke, so there were no problems in the play.

West	North	East	South
Bertheau	Lu	Larsson	Liu
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT*	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♠*	Pass	6♠	All Pass

2NT Game forcing

4NT RKCB

5♠ 2 key cards +♠Q

I was expecting East to bid 7♠ over 5♠, but she was probably worried about a heart lead that might remove a vital entry to dummy. On the other hand West might have held stronger clubs. On a diamond lead declarer took all the tricks to collect a couple of IMPs.

In the match between the USA and England the USA took no time at all to reach the top spot:

West	North	East	South
Sanborn	Senior	Eythorsdottir	Draper
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♠*	Pass	6♦*	Pass
7♠	All Pass		

4NT RKCB
 5♠ 2 key cards +♠Q
 6♦ Grand slam try

Meanwhile England had an accident, stopping in 4♠ – luckily the computer has hidden their auction from prying eyes.

Recommended auction: 1♣-1♠-2♣-2♦-3♠-4♣*-4♦*-4♥*-4NT*-5♦*-7♠.

Marks: 7♠ 10, 6♠/6♣ 7. 4♠ 5, 6NT 3, 7♣/7NT, 2.

Running score: England 15 (16) Sweden 14 (12)
 Sweden 7 (0) China 7 (2)
 England 5 (0) USA 10 (17)

Hand 4. Dealer East. Both Vul

♠ K5		♠ A107
♥ AKJ4		♥ 62
♦ K3		♦ A10752
♣ AK542		♣ J98



West	North	East	South
Huang	Eythorsdottir	Wang	Sanborn
–	–	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	
All Pass			

North led the ten of hearts from ♠J8 ♥109853 ♦QJ ♣Q763 and declarer finished with twelve tricks, +690.

West	North	East	South
Sokolow	Wang	Seamon-Molson	Shen
–	–	Pass	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠*	Double
3NT	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♦*	Pass	5♠*	Pass
6♣*	Pass	6♦	All Pass

- 2♣ Forcing to 2NT or 3♥/♠
- 2♦ Waiting
- 3♠ Diamonds
- 4NT RKCB
- 5♦ 3 key cards
- 5♠ ♦Q
- 6♣ ♣K (cheapest king)

There is note on the convention card (by the way, one of the best you will find at this level) that says RKCB: cheapest non trump suit ask trump Q, bid 1st king held.

I am not a fan of South's double – despite the application of Burn's Law of Total Trumps 3♠ redoubled can be made, as I am sure you can see when you consider the full deal:

♠ J8		
♥ 109853		
♦ QJ		
♣ Q763		

♠ K5		♠ A107
♥ AKJ4		♥ 62
♦ K3		♦ A10752
♣ AK542		♣ J98

♠ Q96432		
♥ Q7		
♦ 9864		
♣ 10		



Against 6♦ South led the ten of clubs and declarer won with dummy's ace, cashed the king of diamonds and continued with the three. Alas, the rest of the play was not recorded, declarer managing only eleven tricks, -100, which cost 13 IMPs.

However, I can see a way to arrive at twelve tricks.

Declarer plays four rounds of diamonds, giving South the lead, discarding two clubs from dummy. She wins the spade exit with dummy's king, cashes the king of hearts and the king of clubs and returns to hand with the ace of spades. Now she plays her last trump discarding dummy's club, and North, down to ♥1098♣Q is squeezed.

There is way to defeat 6♦ – South must lead a heart at trick one. Then, when she gets in with a diamond she plays her remaining heart, breaking up the squeeze – very tough indeed.

As the cards lie 6♣ is relatively easy to make – declarer will cash a top club and, seeing South's ten, continue with a low one, losing only one trump and subsequently establishing the diamonds. Not easy to reach after a 2NT opening.

6NT should make unless declarer does something foolish.

Recommended auction: If West opens 2NT the East hand is hard to evaluate, but you will observe that even though the West hand is rich in controls no slam is close to being a lay down. Perhaps the sort you bid when you are in need of IMPs.

Marks: 3NT/5♣/5♦ 10, 6NT/6♦/6♣ 5.

Running score: England 15 (16) Sweden 14 (12)
Sweden 7 (0) China 7 (2)
England 5 (0) USA 10 (17)
USA 5 (0) China 10 (13)

Hand 5. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ AKQ865		♠ J2
♥ –		♥ AK832
♦ 865		♦ AJ3
♣ Q632		♣ A94



North opens 2♥

West	North	East	South
Gronkvist	Huang	Rimstedt	Wang
–	2♥	2NT	Pass
3♥*	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4♠	All Pass
3♥	Transfer		
4♥	Cue-bid		

Although she had very good controls, East's spade support was modest and she might have had a little more for her overcall.

Declarer won the heart lead – it was from ♠10973 ♥4 ♦K942 ♣KJ87 and drew trumps. She played a club to the nine and took eleven tricks, +650.

West	North	East	South
Liu	Rimstedt	Lu	Clementsson
–	3♥	3NT	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♥*	Pass	6♣	Pass
6♠	All Pass		
4♥	Transfer		
5♥	Cue-bid		

The higher level preempt gave E/W less room to manoeuvre and as a result they pushed to the slam.

South led the three of spades and declarer won with the jack, drew trumps, played a club to the ace, cashed the ace of diamonds, pitched two diamonds on the top hearts and played a club to the queen. When North discarded on the next club declarer was one down, -100 and 13 IMPs for Sweden.

Recommended auction: When the opening bid is 2♥ the Swedish auction is fine. When North opens 3♥ the lack of space is a problem. Perhaps East should decline West's invitation and sign off in 5♠ – a heart control opposite the ♥AK is not ideal.

Marks: 4♠10, 5♠9, 6♠4.

Running score: England 15 (16) Sweden 14 (12)
Sweden 17 (13) China 11 (2)
England 5 (0) USA 10 (17)
USA 5 (0) China 10 (13)

Hand 6. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AQ109
♥ AQ83
♦ A8
♣ AJ9



♠ K652
♥ K
♦ Q7
♣ KQ10762

West	North	East	South
Huang	Rimstedt	Wang	Gronkvist
–	–	–	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥*	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♣*	Pass	5♦*	Pass
5NT*	Pass	7♣	Pass
7♠	All Pass		

That looks like a Puppet auction plus a few cue-bids and a dash of RKCB. Of course you would prefer to be in 7NT (or 7♣) just in case the spades were unfriendly. +1510.

West	North	East	South
Rimstedt	Lu	Clementsson	Liu
–	–	–	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	7♣	All Pass

+1440 meant China gained a couple of IMPs.

In the other match the target was missed in the Open Room:

West	North	East	South
Weingold	Senior	Cappelletti	Draper
–	–	–	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Double	Pass	Pass
6♥	Pass	6NT	All Pass

That was an undistinguished +1020 and when Nicola Smith and Lizzie Godfrey reached the top spot of 7NT England had 11 IMPs.

Recommended auction: Accurate bidding after a 2NT opening (or the analogous sequences 2♣*-2♦*-2NT or 2♣*-2♦*-2♥*-2♠*-2NT) is far from easy. The method described by Eric Kokish called Flags & Scrambles is very good, but this is a simpler option when you have a strong minor suit facing a 2NT opening:

2NT	3♠	
3NT	4♣	5+♣, 4+♦
	4♦	5+♦, 4+♣
	4♥	6+♣, slam try
	4♠	6+♦, slam try
	4NT	5+♣, 5+♦, non forcing
	5♣	to play but can be raised, stronger than a direct 5♣
	5♦	to play but can be raised, stronger than a direct 5♦
	5NT	5+♣, 5+♦, forcing

The East hand is such that a slam is very likely. Suppose East ignores the weak four card major and concentrates on the club suit. The bidding might go: 2NT-3♠*-3NT-4♥*-4♠*-4NT*-5♣*-5♥*-7♣-7NT. Once West cue-bids 4♠ agreeing clubs East asks for key cards and then makes a grand slam try which West is more than happy to accept.

Marks: 7NT/7♣ 10, 7♠ 9, 6NT/6♠/6♣ 6, 4♠/3NT/5♣ 3.

Running score: England 15 (16) Sweden 14 (12)
Sweden 26 (13) China 20 (4)
England 15 (11) USA 6 (17)
USA 5 (0) China 10 (13)

Hand 7. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ 8
♥ Q432
♦ A432
♣ QJ87



♠ AKJ4
♥ J75
♦ KQJ86
♣ 10

North opens 1♣ and if possible bids 1♠ on the next round

West	North	East	South
Brock	Clementsson	Brown	Rimstedt
Pass	1♣	Double	Pass
1♥	1♠	Pass	Pass
Double*	2♣	Double*	2♠
3♦	All Pass		

Dble Takeout
Dble Takeout

North led the ace of clubs from ♠Q1032 ♥A6 ♦- ♣AK65432 and continued with the two. Declarer pitched a heart from dummy and South ruffed, cashed the king of hearts and played a second heart to North's ace. Declarer ruffed the club return high and could claim nine tricks, +110.

Here's a thought.

Suppose West prefers 3NT to 3♦ (after all, there is a bonus for making a vulnerable game).

If North leads a low club nine tricks are readily available via a spade finesse. If North starts with a spade then declarer can put in dummy's jack and play the jack of hearts (a manoeuvre I recall being suggested by Terence Reese in *Play These Hands with Me*) to build a heart trick.

West	North	East	South
Gronkvist	Godfrey	Rimstedt	Smith
Pass	1♣	1♦	Pass
3♣*	4♣	4♦	All Pass

3♣ Good raise in diamonds

South led her club and North won with the king and returned the two. Declarer ruffed high and cashed the king of diamonds. When the 4-0 split was revealed she had to go one down, -100 and 5 IMPs to England.

Recommended auction: (1♣)-(Dble)-(Pass)-2♥-(Pass)-3♣-(Pass)-3NT. I'm not totally sure about jumping to 2♥ – the suit is weak and 4-4-4-1 is a

notoriously poor shape – but as 1♥ might be based on a dreadful hand I think you ought to let partner know you have real values. If East starts with an overcall of 1♦ then West might bid 2♣ and rebid 2NT if East bids 2♠, when 3NT should be reached.

Marks: 3NT 10, 3♦ 6, 4♦ 4.

Running score: England 21 (21) Sweden 14 (16)
Sweden 26 (13) China 20 (4)
England 15 (11) USA 6 (17)
USA 5 (0) China 10 (13)

Hand 8. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ KQ754
♥ QJ7
♦ K107
♣ 86



♠ A10962
♥ AK105
♦ 8
♣ AJ2

South overcalls 3♦

I don't know the precise meaning of 3NT, but it did not prompt West into doing anything other than signing off. No swing. With every suit controlled the East hand (which rates 19.95 on the Kaplan Rubens Hand Evaluator is certainly worth some sort of effort.

Let's take a look at what happened in the play-off for third place:

West	North	East	South
Huang	Eythorsdottir	Wang	Sanborn
–	Pass	1♣*	1♦
1♠	2♦	4♦*	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♣*	Pass	6♠	All Pass

1♣ Strong
4♦ Splinter
4NT RKCB
5♣ 1 key card

It looks as if 4♥ was 'Last Train' suggesting a hand that had some interest in slam – well done, +1430.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weingold	Lu	Cappelletti	Liu
–	Pass	1♣*	2♦
2♠	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

4♦ Splinter

Declarer took all the tricks, but lost 12 IMPs.

Recommended auction: After 1♠-2NT there are many ways in which the auction can be developed. One that is gaining in popularity is for opener to rebid 3♣ with any minimum (but not a hopeless 5-3-3-2 which rebids 4♠). 3♦ shows a non-minimum with a side suit singleton and responder can ask via 3♥, with opener rebidding via steps-1, a void somewhere, 2 singleton in lowest side suit (♣) 3 singleton in next side suit (♦) 4 singleton in highest side suit. After the void showing step responder can ask with the next suit for the void.

When South overcalls 3♦ West is more or less forced to bid 4♠. Suppose East makes a try with 5♣? West bids 5♦ and East 5♥. Does West have enough to justify going on to 6♠?

Marks: 6♠ 10, 4♠ 5.

Running score:

England	26 (21)	Sweden	19 (16)
Sweden	26 (13)	China	20 (4)
England	15 (11)	USA	6 (17)
USA	10 (0)	China	20 (25)

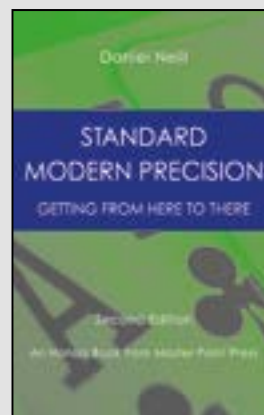
It was Sweden and England who reached the final, the Scandinavians gaining a measure of revenge for their defeat in the Venice Cup semi-final by winning 115-95. Meanwhile the USA defeated China 118-88 to secure third place. You can play through the deals mentioned in this article.

Just follow the links:

Hands 1& 2: <https://tinyurl.com/ycj2wl2f>, <https://tinyurl.com/yccz85e2>
 Hand 3: <https://tinyurl.com/y82copn9>, <https://tinyurl.com/yaw327xh>
 Hand 4: <https://tinyurl.com/y849he5e>
 Hand 5: <https://tinyurl.com/yaom4sb4>
 Hand 6: <https://tinyurl.com/yaom4sb4>
 Hand 7: <https://tinyurl.com/y7vza9tv>, <https://tinyurl.com/ycq4hgee>
 Hand 8: <https://tinyurl.com/ycq4hgee>, <https://tinyurl.com/y8h68noh>

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STANDARD MODERN PRECISION: SECOND EDITION

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Over the last 20 years a consensus bidding system among American national champions has been chosen and is now the *lingua franca* for hundreds among the pro circuit, top junior players and strong tournament players. This book will introduce you to the system, called Standard Modern Precision, with lots of examples, quizzes and real-life hands bid by actual world champions.

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Master Point Bidding Battle Competition – Set 1

Open to All – Free Entry

PROBLEM 1

IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ A9876
♥ 2
♦ A1098754
♣ —

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
?			

PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ —
♥ A5
♦ AQJ109
♣ AK10963

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	Pass
?			

3♥ Natural, 5-5 at least, FG

PROBLEM 3

IMPs. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ AK865
♥ AKQJ4
♦ A
♣ 75

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ J10
♥ KJ4
♦ Q1053
♣ A1065

West	North	East	South
1♦*	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
?			

1♦ System opening for this pair on 4-4ms
2♦ FG Checkback
2NT Not 4♥, not 3♠, not five good ♦s
3♣ Natural

PROBLEM 5

Pairs. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ AQ5
♥ AJ863
♦ 6
♣ AQ74

West	North	East	South
—	2♠*	Pass	Pass
?			

2♠ 5♠ & 4+ any other suit, 5-10 HCP

Send entry to biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com
or enter via the website www.newbridgemag.com.
Entries to arrive before the end of the month.

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer North. All Vul

♠ A53
♥ AQ10962
♦ AJ
♣ A5

West	North	East	South
—	2♠	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	3♦*	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♦	Pass
?			

3♦ Lebensohl, constructive but not forcing

PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ QJ8
♥ J103
♦ A63
♣ A543

West	North	East	South
—	Pass	Pass	3♦
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 4
♥ AKQ72
♦ A1063
♣ KQ4

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

A New Bridge Magazine Bidding System

Basic Method

Natural

Five-card majors

Minors are three cards in length minimum. Always open 1♣ with 3-3 or 4-4, so 1♦ is 3 cards only if precisely 4-4-3-2 shape

15-17 no-trump in all positions and vulnerabilities

Two over one is game forcing in all uncontested auctions

A 1NT is up to a non-game force but it is not-forcing. However the only hands that Pass are weak no-trump types.

Jumps at the two-level are weak (eg, 1♦ – 2♠) and at the three-level are invitational (eg 1♥ – 3♣)

1M – 3M is a limit raise

Inverted minors are played. 1m – 2m is F2NT and 1m – 3m is pre-emptive. Over 1m – 2m, 2NT is a WNT and is non-forcing, 3m is unbalanced and non-forcing. All other bids are at least quasi-natural and FG

Weak 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ (5 – 9, six-card suit). In response 2NT is a relay asking for a high-card feature if not minimum with 3NT showing a good suit, non-minimum. 3♣ asks for a singleton with

3NT showing a singleton ♣. 4♣ is RKCB

Three-level openings are natural and pre-emptive. Over 3♦/♥/♠, 4♣ is RKCB and over 3♣, 4♦ is RKCB.

3NT opening is Acol gambling – solid suit and at most a queen outside.

Four-level openings are natural.

No-trump bidding:

After 1NT 15 – 17, 2♣ = Stayman, 2♦/2♥ = transfers, 2♠ = ♣s with 2NT/3♣ denying/showing a fit, 2NT = ♦s with 3♣/♦ denying/showing a fit. After this new suits are splinters. 3♣ is 5 card Stayman, 3♦ is 5-5 ms FG, 3♥/♠ 1-3-(4-5) / 3-1-(4-5) and FG. 4♣ is 5-5 majors, game only, 4♦/♥ = ♥/♠s (then 4NT = RKCB and new suits are Exclusion).

1NT rebid = 12 – 14 with 2♣ a puppet to 2♦ to play in 2♦ or make an invitational bid, 2♦ is game forcing checkback, new suits at the 3 level are 5-5 FG and higher bids are auto-splinters.

Jump 2NT rebid = 18 – 19 with natural continuations.

After 2 over 1, 2NT is 12-14 balanced or 18-19 balanced and 3NT is 15-17 range with a reason not to have opened 1NT

3NT rebid after a one-level response shows a good

suit and a good hand.

After 2NT, 20-22, 3♣ = Stayman, 3♦/3♥ = transfers, 3♠ = slam try with both minors. Four-level bids are as after 1NT opening.

Kokish is played after 2♣ opening (2♣-2♦-2♥-2♠-2NT is 25+ balanced FG, and 2♣-2♦-2NT is 23-24 balanced NF)

Initial response:

Jump shifts are weak at the two-level and invitational at the three-level. Bidding and rebidding a suit is invitational, bidding and jump rebidding a suit is FG (eg 1♦, 2♥ is weak, 1♦, 1♥, 2♣ 2♥ is invitational; 1♦, 1♥, 2♣, 3♥ is FG).

2NT after 1♣/1♦ is natural and invitational without 4M.

2NT after 1♥/1♠ = game-forcing with 4+ card support. Continuations in new suits are splinters, 3♥/♠ extras with no singleton, 3NT = 18-19 balanced, 4 new suits are 5-5 good suits, 4♥/♠ minimum balanced.

Continuations:

1x – 1M – 2M promises four-card support or three-card support and an unbalanced hand. Balanced hands with three-card support rebid 1NT

Reverses are forcing for one round after a one-level

How to Enter

Send your chosen bid in each of the eight problems, by email to biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com or enter via the website www.newbridgemag.com. Entries must be received before the end of the month. Include your name, email address and number of the set which you are entering.

response. The lower of 2NT and 4th suit encompasses all weak hands, responder's rebid of own suit is F1 but not necessarily strong, all other bids are FG.

All high reverses are game-forcing.

Jumps when a bid of the suit one level lower is forcing are splinters, as are four-level responses in a lower-ranking suit to 1♥/1♠. Jumps when the previous level is forcing are splinters.

4th suit = game-forcing.

When responder's suit is raised a return to opener's suit is forcing.

Slam bidding:

Roman Key Card Blackwood (1 or 4, 0 or 3, 2, 2 + trump Q).

Exclusion Blackwood only in clear circumstances including a jump to the five-level in a new suit and after 1NT – 4♦/♥. Responses are 0, 1, 2.

Cue-bids are Italian style, that is the lowest control is shown regardless of whether it is first or second round or a positive or negative control and skipping a suit denies a control in that suit. Exception: a negative control in partner's suit is not shown immediately.

The default for 5NT is "pick a slam".

Competition:

Responsive and competitive Doubles through 3♠ – after that, Doubles are value-showing, not penalties.

Negative Doubles through 3♠ – after that, Doubles are value showing, not penalties.

After a 1M opening bid and an overcall, 2NT = four-card limit raise or better and a cue-bid is a

three-card limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive, change of suit forcing one round but not FG. New suits at the three-level are FG.

After a 1m opening and an overcall, 2NT is natural and invitational and the cue-bid is a limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive, change of suit F1 but not FG, new suit at the three-level is FG.

Fit-jumps after opponents overcall or take-out Double.

Fit jumps after our overcalls. Jump cue-bid is a mixed raise (about 6-9 with four-card support)

Double jumps are splinters.

Lebensohl applies after interference over our 1NT. An immediate 3NT shows a stopper but not 4oM, 2NT then 3NT shows a stopper and 4oM, 2NT then cue-bid shows no stopper but 4oM immediate cue-bid shows no stopper and no 4oM. In summary 3NT at any time shows a stopper and cue-bid at any time denies one, a jump to 3♠ (eg 1NT – 2♥ – 3♠) is FG.

2NT is rarely natural in competition (except as defined above). Possibilities include Lebensohl or scramble if game is not viable.

Overcalls:

After a 1M overcall, 2NT = four-card limit raise or better and a cue-bid is a three-card limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive, change of suit forcing one round. Fit jumps, jump cue is a mixed raise (about 6-9 and four trumps)

After a minor-suit overcall, 2NT is natural and invitational and the cue-bid is a limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive. Fit jumps, jump cue is a mixed raise (about 6-9 and four trumps)

Weak jump overcalls, intermediate in 4th.

Michaels cue-bids. 1m -2m = Ms, 1M – 2M = oM and m with 2NT asking for the m, inv+ and 3m P/C

Defences:

Against all pre-empts, take-out Doubles with Lebensohl responses – same structure as above.

2NT is rarely natural in competition (except as defined above). Possibilities include Lebensohl or scramble if game is not viable.

Over 2M, 4♣/♦ are Leaping Michaels (5,5 in ♣/♦ and oM, FG). Over Natural weak 2♦, 4♣ = Leaping Michaels (5, 5 in ♣ & a M with 4♦ to ask for M). Over 3♣, 4♣ = Ms and 4♦ = ♦&M with 4♥/♠ as P/C. Over 3♦, 4♣ = Nat and 4♦ = Ms. Over 3♥, 4♣/♦ = Nat, 4♥ = ♠&m, 4NT = ms. Over 3♠, 4♠/♦/♥ = nat, 4♠/4NT = two-suiter

Over their 1NT, Double = pens, 2♣ = majors, 2♦ = 1 major, 2♥/♠ = 5♥/♠ & 4+m 2NT = minors or game-forcing 2-suiter.

Over a strong 1♣, natural, Double = majors, 1NT = minors, Pass then bid is strong.

Grand Prix

In addition there is an annual Grand Prix with Master Point Press prizes of £100, £50 and £35. Only scores of 50 and over will count and the maximum score is 400. Each contestant's Grand Prix total is their five best scores over the year (January – December).

WEST

Hands for the
January 2018 Auction Room

Bid these hands with those on the following page with your favourite partner; then turn to The Auction Room inside to see how your score compares to that of the experts

Hand 1. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ A762
♥ 104
♦ J109632
♣ K

Hand 2. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 6
♥ 2
♦ AQJ973
♣ Q10976

Hand 3. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ Q62
♥ A76
♦ J
♣ AJ10654

Hand 4. Dealer East. Both Vul

♠ K5
♥ AKJ4
♦ K3
♣ AK542

Hand 5. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ AKQ865
♥ —
♦ 865
♣ Q632
North opens 2♥

Hand 6. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AQ109
♥ AQ83
♦ A8
♣ AJ9

Hand 7. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ 8
♥ Q432
♦ A432
♣ QJ87
North opens 1♣ and if possible bids 1♠ on the next round

Hand 8. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ KQ754
♥ QJ7
♦ K107
♣ 86
South overcalls 3♦

MASTER POINT BIDDING BATTLE



Here you will normally find the results of the Master Point Bidding Battle. As this is the first edition of the magazine we do yet have any results.

Each month there will be prizes for the highest scoring entries. These take the form of vouchers for Master Point Press books and their value is £50, £25, £15 and £10 for the top four contestants. In addition there is an annual Grand Prix with Master Point Press prizes of £100, £50 and £35. Only scores of 50 and over will count and the maximum score is 400. Each contestant's Grand Prix total is their five best scores over the year (January – December).

The scores will be monitored by Herman De Wael. Please send your entries to him by email at biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com or enter via the website at www.newbridgemag.com. If you have any queries with regard to the scores then please contact him through email.

When entering do not forget to indicate which Set you are answering and include your name and an email address.

When we have the first winners we will explain how to claim your prize.

EAST

Hands for the
January 2018 Auction Room

Bid these hands with those on the following page with your favourite partner; then turn to The Auction Room inside to see how your score compares to that of the experts

Hand 1. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ 104
♥ AKQJ6
♦ KQ5
♣ A103

Hand 2. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ KQJ108
♥ K108
♦ K5
♣ A54

Hand 3. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ AK1085
♥ 5
♦ AK842
♣ K3

Hand 4. Dealer East. Both Vul

♠ A107
♥ 62
♦ A10752
♣ J98

Hand 5. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ J2
♥ AK832
♦ AJ3
♣ A94
North opens 2♥

Hand 6. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ K652
♥ K
♦ Q7
♣ KQ10762

Hand 7. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ AKJ4
♥ J75
♦ KQJ86
♣ 10
North opens 1♣ and if possible bids 1♠ on the next round

Hand 8. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ A10962
♥ AK105
♦ 8
♣ AJ2
South overcalls 3♦